Journal of Basic Writing

JBW

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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.

EDITORS' COLUMN

The return of early morning birdsong in the spring always calls to mind one of Emily Dickinson's most recognizable lines: "Hope is the thing with feathers." If there was ever a time for finding hope in our everyday surroundings, it has been the spring of 2020, when the unfolding Covid-19 crisis threatened to overwhelm many of us. In March, we brought our courses online, midstream and in the midst of rising panic, and struggled to sustain scared and afflicted students and colleagues. In cities and towns where the coronavirus hit hardest, students went off the grid and teachers worried—not if students would complete their coursework, but if they were alive. We tried to reimagine the place for learning and teaching in an upended world. As of this writing, a few short months into this experiment, the future of higher education in that world remains unclear. Will we be teaching in person or online in fall 2020, or will we have to manage some unpredictable combination of these approaches? Will many of us even be teaching at all?

To strengthen the fragile threads of hope in an upended world, we remind ourselves that we have resources. We are not alone; we are not without support. In the awareness of this support, we can generate hope through our practice: anticipating or understanding students' needs, visualizing possibilities, and creating new resources, often through the sheer force of our collective imagination.

Hope, imagination, and the resources they generate are at the foundation of the field of Basic Writing. In the introduction to the second issue of this journal, published in Fall/Winter of 1976 with a focus on courses, Mina Shaughnessy notes the "diversity of purpose and method" across the courses featured in the issue. This diversity, however, does not suggest a muddied purpose; rather, Shaughnessy contends, it "reveals to us how variously we perceive the difficulties of students and how differently, therefore, we define 'basic.' It suggests, too, that while the remedial situation dictates that we reduce the universe of writing to 'basic' subskills, the skill of writing seems to defy such reduction." Our current crisis reminds us again of the dangers of reduction and the urgency attached to seeing the diverse needs of our students and with the many shades of their challenges. In seeing them as fully as possible, we are better positioned to generate further hope and resources, both in our students and within our profession.

Across our classrooms and scholarship, we have long worked to resist reductive notions of writing, our students, and our methods. Rather than reduce, we try to keep imagining new possibilities, buoyed by the resources

we create, gather, and share. As Shaughnessy goes on to say in her introduction to the second issue of *JBW*, the diversity of courses featured, "rather than urging us toward a uniform system of teaching basic writing, should encourage us to explore further this many-mansioned skill we are learning to teach, and to view the variety we find wherever skilled and imaginative teachers are at work as a *resource* rather than a flaw" (emphasis added).

In our current issue, we again highlight the diversity of resource creation and sharing at the heart of teaching and learning. And we remember that honoring imagination in our classrooms, programs, and scholarship is the foundational resource in our field. The authors included here explore resources variably—as material, spatial, social, educational, economic, institutional, and emotional. They unpack these resources in order to feed resilience and honor the role of self and identity in learning to write.

In our first article, "Subsidizing Basic Writers: Resources and Demands in Literacy Scholarship," Ann C. Dean examines the foundational resources—time, space, and social support—that subsidize successful students. Dean looks at the nuances of these resources as they might apply to struggling students, both those who report specific challenges outside the classroom such as demanding work schedules or illness, and those who "need more" but whose needs are not entirely or immediately clear. To better understand the more abstract needs of the second group, Dean shifts her focus to outside forces that "contextualize students' writing as a practice structured by larger social forces," including the many everyday ways that students' lives can interrupt learning. What are the material, educational, and temporal resources that subsidize their success? Knowing how certain resources are accessed (or not) to support students can impact many of the structures and opportunities we create, from classroom interventions and program models to the very policy decisions that can help ensure or deny access and retention support.

Next, Maureen McBride and Meghan A. Sweeney turn to one type of foundational resource we all bring to the classroom: emotion. In "Frustration and Hope: Understanding Students' Emotional Responses to Reading," McBride and Sweeney tap into the evolving scholarship on reading studies to explore how students' emotional responses to class texts—including feelings such as pride, boredom, and anxiety—factor into students' self-perceptions as readers. When McBride and Sweeney layer together the emotional and cognitive responses to reading that students describe, they find that many of their students have developed a debilitating sense of an ideal reader: someone whose reading practice and ability to absorb information are vastly

superior to their own. Their sense of distance from the ideal reader only grew as the students transitioned to college and were assigned more difficult texts. The students "expressed a sense of loss and longing in their relationship to reading," which McBride and Sweeney situate alongside students' resilient sense of hope about their growth and potential. Taken together, students' affective responses to reading, ranging from loss to hope, offer a path toward new pedagogical approaches.

In "'That's Me on a Horse of Many Colors': Native American College Students' Self-Portraits as Academic Writers," Barbara Z. Komlos draws our focus to Native American college students' self-perceptions as writers, and the lessons they hold for instructors. By having students draw pictures of themselves as college writers, Komlos identifies six themes as representative of their writerly identities. She explores these themes to "illustrate students' emerging identities as academic writers, and the role of culture in shaping their writing." Once we acknowledge the relationship between culture and writing, and particularly once we see students' own constructions of it in their self-portraits, we can begin to "ask ourselves how to recognize and draw upon students' cultural assets, such as orality, relationality, connection to land and water, and respect for elders." Komlos' essay opens the way for greater cultural recognition and suggests directions for working with students across a variety of contexts.

Finally, Tessa Brown's "Let the People Rap: Cultural Rhetorics Pedagogy and Practices Under CUNY's Open Admissions, 1968-1978" keeps the focus on cultural resources while also turning back to our foundations as a field, to the variety of resources that teachers developed and drew from during Open Admissions. Brown shows how writing instructors working alongside Mina Shaughnessy and across CUNY campuses in the late 1960s created culturally and materially resourced writing, speech, and literacy classrooms for their Open Admissions students. These instructors, including June Jordan, Adrienne Rich, Toni Cade Bambara, Addison Gayle, and Audre Lorde, took the students' Black and Puerto Rican urban cultures as rich pedagogical resources that supported student engagement and learning. Brown herself uses hiphop culture as a methodological resource for her project to draw attention to the multimodal rhetorical education that Open Admissions students received in the context of their wider education across disciplines from critical ethnic studies to sound engineering and media production.

Taken together, the articles in this issue illustrate that our resources and the paths we use to locate them are indeed varied. Diversity of purpose and method promotes creativity; it helps empower the imagination that we

need now, more than ever, as we work to create new spaces for our students to learn and become the ideal readers and writers *they* envision. The "many-mansioned skill" of writing calls upon us to continually build our resources and be more creative—and more expansive—at every turn.

--**Cheryl C. Smith** and **Hope Parisi**

Subsidizing Basic Writers: Resources and Demands in Literacy Sponsorship

Ann C. Dean

ABSTRACT: *After eliminating a developmental writing course and creating an accelerated "Studio" composition course for basic writers, I investigated these students' needs (uninterrupted time, quiet spaces, social support, and academic help) and the resources that met those needs. Qualitative analysis of interviews with forty-nine students demonstrated that successful students were able to draw upon more resources, including time, space, and social support, than unsuccessful students, who ran short. I theorize, using terms developed by Deborah Brandt, that the literacy of the less successful students was not fully subsidized. These results support basic writing course models that integrate academic, affective, and social support into classroom work.*

KEYWORDS: *basic writers; literacy sponsorship; resources; support services; writing centers*

"Struggling—doesn't seem to understand the assignment." An experienced instructor made this note on a roster, describing a particular student enrolled in a 4-credit, "Studio" version of first-year composition. By the end of the semester, the student had stopped attending, and she did not return to college the following fall. In the program I directed between 2000 and 2015, many other students, whose instructors described them in similar ways, also disappeared. What caused these students to fail? Did they lack preparation or aptitude? Did segregating them into a "special" version of first-year composition stigmatize and demotivate them? Did the "accelerated" nature of their basic writing course move too fast and leave them behind? In the analysis that follows, I will suggest that none of these questions identify the crucial element for all these students—literacy subsidies. Understanding subsidies can help students themselves, and also instructors and programs, to find the time, space, and mental states within which writers learn and grow.

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For those of us who teach basic writing, it is easy to assume that our courses *are* spaces where writers can learn and grow. Even twenty-five years after its publication, David Bartholomae's critique of "those of us who work in basic writing, who preserve rather than question the existing order of things," can sting a little (15). Bartholomae's critique focuses most clearly on two areas: placement testing and curriculum. By separating students from each other, and by giving some students a different curriculum, he argues, we produce "the basic writer." Ira Shor takes this argument to its rhetorical limit by naming basic writing as "apartheid," calling out the separation that seemed inherent in the work. Karen Greenberg's response focuses on program design, explaining how attention to pedagogy and assessment could mitigate the negative effects pointed out by Bartholomae and Shor. This debate still lives for us in the field, as we continue to question how or whether to separate a group of students from others and provide different, or more, writing instruction to them. If we design a program thoughtfully and well, as Greenberg and her colleagues did, can we get outside the dynamic of separation and definition identified by Bartholomae and Shor?

A more specific and recent version of the Bartholomae-Shor-Greenberg debate has been carried out around "accelerated" basic writing programs. These programs move students directly into credit-bearing, 100-level writing classes, often with incorporated supports such as extra class time, one-on-one help from tutors and advisors right in the classroom, and explicit attention to non-cognitive issues such as academic anxiety and time management. Systematic studies of the Accelerated Learning Project at the Community College of Baltimore County, the California Acceleration Project, and others, have shown that such programs can enable more students to complete 100-level courses, lower cost-per-completer, and improve students' experiences (Adams et al.; Anderst, Maloy, and Shahar; Cho et al.; Hern and Snell; Hodara and Jaggars; Jaggars et al.; Jenkins et al.).

This model's notable successes have been important for the students who have benefitted, and for the programs that have been able to serve those students. But it is important to understand why accelerated programs are successful, and for whom. When the accelerated model is taken up, as it lately has been, by state legislatures, boards of higher education, and other policymakers who work at a distance from the classroom, we in the field need to be able to advocate for the elements of the model most crucial for students. Patrick Sullivan shows how high the stakes are in his critique of the Connecticut State Legislature's requirement that all basic writing courses in

state institutions become accelerated ("Ideas about Human Possibilities"). Sullivan shows how many students will have no access to college if Connecticut's model becomes a national standard. Hunter Boylan and Alexandros Goudas support the argument that not every student will succeed in an accelerated course, pointing out that the good effects cited in the literature on acceleration come from students whose test scores fall just below the cutoff for placement into the 100 level, not from all students (3). A fuller picture of such a student, and such a course, can be found in Emily Schnee and Jamil Shakoor's coauthored article. They synthesize a student's perspective with an instructor's, providing compelling evidence of the importance and potential of students for whom an accelerated program is not enough:

> Time spent in developmental courses is often seen as derailing students from their pursuit of a degree, yet Jamil's two semesters of basic writing provided him a foundation of confidence and academic skills without which he is convinced he would have 'failed miserably' in college. (104)

If accelerated programs keep students from getting lost in an ever-expanding developmental pipeline, but also have the potential to exclude students entirely from the opportunity to attend college, how should programs be designed? I suggest in this article that the concept of "literacy subsidy" can help us focus on the wider social context of students' experiences with writing, rather than on the institutional containers for those experiences. This focus on subsidies can help us understand what resources are required for students to successfully complete first-year writing courses. I will describe how people and conditions inside and outside the university subsidize students' literacy, and also how those people and conditions make competing demands on students' time, effort, and attention. Colleges, families, friends, bosses, and the larger economy all influence students' progress toward and within academic literacy, accelerating it or slowing it according to interests formed and located outside a single classroom. I will suggest that to help these students succeed, writing programs and institutions must be able to provide support calibrated to outweigh the competing demands students face.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

My experience as director of first year writing has followed the trajectory of the wider conversation about developmental courses, acceleration,

and student success. In 2005, five years into my time as first-year composition director at a 10,000-student public university in a rural state, I began to focus on our developmental course. This course was not part of any academic department, being offered by the Academic Support division of Student Affairs. It was graded pass/fail and did not earn graduation credits for students. Hiring and curriculum were handled by staff outside the writing program. All of these elements led to frustration on the part of students and faculty. Students wondered whether the course was a waste of time, and resented spending money on a course that did not advance them toward graduation. Faculty had difficulty motivating students in this situation, and did not have access to professional development in the English department. When the staff member who had been scheduling and staffing the course decided to retire, she suggested to me that we take her position apart and add the developmental courses to the English department. I saw this as a good idea and worked with her during her last year to change the placement processes for these students.

I spent a year working with this colleague and with faculty in the English department, which offered first-year composition, to create a new, four-credit, "Studio" version of our first-year composition course, modeled on the one Rhonda Grego and Nancy Thompson describe in their 1996 article "Repositioning Remediation." The new course followed the practices and aimed at the outcomes of our existing 100-level first-year composition course. This existing course focused on source-based academic discourse, using sequenced assignments modeled on those found in textbooks such as *Ways of Reading* (Bartholomae and Petrosky), *Rereading America* (Colombo et al.), and *Literacies* (Brunk et al.). Individual instructors, all experienced full- and part-time faculty, had different ways of assigning low-stakes writing, of weighting grades, and of conducting classroom writing and discussion. Since course assessment and student evaluations had demonstrated that these varied models were effective, I saw no reason to ask people to change or standardize them. Faculty chose their own readings and paced their courses themselves. In each section, students wrote four formal essays totaling 20-25 pages of finished work, accompanied by prewriting, drafting, revision, and peer review. The Studio sections would follow the same course outline.

Added pedagogical supports for the Studio sections were taken from Hunter Boylan's 2002 report *What Works: Research-Based Practices in Developmental Education*. A committee of full- and part-time faculty held workshops to discuss the rationale for each pedagogical element and created sample

materials incorporating them. Individual instructors chose how to incorporate these elements into their own sections:

- Limit the use of technology
- Provide frequent and timely feedback
- Teach comprehension monitoring
- Use active learning

While the conversation around classroom technology has developed significantly since Boylan's work was published, the recommendation to limit technology worked for us at the time. It was congenial to the approaches of many our faculty, many of whom saw technology as a distraction rather than a tool. Boylan's research also helped us explain to the administration why this course should not have an automated or online "extra help" feature, but instead have 50 more minutes of class time, with the same teacher and students as the other 3 credits.

To provide frequent feedback, another of Boylan's recommendations, we tracked and graded not only on attendance, but preparation and participation, so students could see how their engagement in class related to their grades. Each instructor held one-on-one conferences with all students at least once a semester. Each instructor designed classroom activities that would help students develop and monitor their comprehension. These approaches comport with recommendations in the ALP literature (see Hern and Snell 2013, Rounsaville et al., Sullivan et al. 2017). The other key element we added to our Studio sections was explicit attention to sentence-level reading and writing. Faculty developed this approach in workshops using Martha Kolln's 1991 book *Rhetorical Grammar*. Some instructors used Nora Bacon's *The Well-Crafted Sentence* with students in class, and others developed their own materials based on this approach. Our goal was to focus on style rather than error, and to teach students phrase and clause structure.

The following academic year, we placed all basic writing students into this new Studio course, using an SAT cutoff of 500. At the end of the first semester, many skeptics among the faculty were convinced. A committee including full- and part-time faculty carried out an assessment, reading graded papers from both courses. The committee reported back to the department that B papers in the 3-credit version of the course met the course outcomes and were consistent with B papers from the 4-credit course. The same was true of C papers and A papers—the work done in each version of the course was meeting the program objectives, and meeting them in consistent ways.

Identifying Problems

This assessment led to another, more difficult question: what about the students who failed or bailed? Did some really need that extra semester of developmental work we had eliminated? Could we develop a curriculum, pedagogy, or support system that would help them succeed? Students had shared some stories with me about difficult life situations that made it impossible for them to attend, concentrate, and succeed. My colleagues had similar anecdotes, leading us to suspect that some students were just too stressed by life events, or too disengaged from college, for any curriculum or program to reach them. The clearest and most extreme form of this disengagement appeared when students registered and did not attend. The best curriculum, the most inspired teaching, the most thoughtfully-designed program will obviously still not improve the writing of a student who never attends. By separating out students near this extreme, I hoped to locate another group of students whose needs I could learn about and address. Targeting these students could keep them from disappearing and raise the number of successful completers each semester. Looking at student work could not help us locate this group, because in many cases these students' work did not come in at all. By midterm, many of these students were not present in class, or were not handing in work. I needed a form of assessment that derived information from something other than student work.

To learn about students' needs and problems, I turned to their teachers, suspecting that their knowledge about students would provide richer, deeper information than even the best test scores or third-party portfolio assessments. Gathering knowledge from instructors is supported by Brian Huot's approach to assessment, which aims for "appropriate, contextual judgment" over standardized, "reliable," narrow measures (169). I wanted to know which problems were basically academic, in their origins or their solutions, and which were outside the arena of a writing class. I also wanted to get this information early in the semester, and to make as little demand on faculty time and attention as possible.

Early Results

To fit all these requirements, I devised a quick assessment to carry out early each semester. I sent rosters to all basic writing instructors (our staff ranged from fifteen to twenty people, depending on the semester), and asked them to make a brief notation next to each student name. I proposed that they sort students into three groups:

"Doing Fine" If the student keeps up current learning and behavior, he or she will earn a C or better in the course.

"Needs More" The student is doing the work but seems to have academic problems. More time and assistance with writing and reading are needed for this student to earn a C or better in this course.

"Other Problems" The student's academic performance is being disrupted by a nonacademic problem.

A critical reader might wonder at this point whether this scheme simply created the effect that I hoped to find. By saying that this "needs more" group existed, did I impose spurious order on a more complex situation? Perhaps all the students who appeared to "need more" academic support actually also had significant "other problems." Or perhaps the students who appeared to have significant "other problems" were focusing on them to avoid primarily academic concerns. While it looked possible that the two groups were inextricably mixed, I did have two early indications that the distinction between "other problems" and "needs more" was not entirely in my head: teacher responses and student retention.

Teacher responses fit students into the three categories of "doing fine," "needs more," and "other problems," with intuitive ease. The rosters teachers returned were heavily and poignantly notated with comments on students' situations and behavior. Students "doing fine" were easy to identify, with some instructors adding refinements such as "excellent student. Could teach the class," or "will pull through." Students in the "other problems" group had given their instructors information about significant problems that were impeding their academic engagement and performance, such as accidents, unpredictably shifting hours at work, or sick children: "3 jobs and can't organize things"; "left class recently in an ambulance"; "works 40 hours a week"; "thinks she might be pregnant." Instructors had gotten this information from conversations about missing work or missed class, from students' writing, and from casual hallway conversations. Students who missed a lot of class during the first month also went into this group, whether or not instructors knew the reason for their absences.

The "needs more" group, however, was annotated differently by instructors. These students had not shared stories of significant life problems. They came to class during the first month, and handed in homework

and papers. But instructors did not see a clear path toward success in the course for them. Characteristic comments described students' effort and frustration: "struggling. Unresponsive in class. Writing is superficial. Has trouble digging conceptually"; "struggling but trying"; "underprepared"; "weak student. Tries"; "didn't seem to understand the assignment." These comments differ from the comments on the "other problems" students in their abstraction. Rather than naming ambulances, jobs, and children, these comments frequently characterize the students themselves (as in "weak") or the students' actions ("struggling" or "trying"). These comments also differ from the descriptions of the "other problems" students in their attention to learning and writing itself, although that attention tended to be negative, describing what students were *not* learning or achieving.

Despite their nebulousness in describing "needs more" students, teachers' comments did differ significantly between the three groups. This difference gave me one indicator that this grouping scheme might help me understand our students. A second indicator that this grouping could be useful was student retention data. I followed the students from one year to the next, and found that the rates at which they returned to the university correlated with the group into which their basic writing instructor had placed them. Students who appeared to be "doing fine" in October of their first year had a 64% rate of returning the following fall, over the 6 years for which I collected data (fall entering cohorts from 2008-2013). The other two groups differ both from the "doing fine" students and from each other. The students experiencing "other problems" had a low rate of return the following fall: 40%, over the same 6 years. Considering the severity of the problems instructors reported, perhaps this low retention rate is unsurprising. The "needs more" students also had a low rate of return for the fall semester following their entry year, averaging 54% over the six years. This number distinguishes this group overall from the other two, and gave some substance to my hunch that there was a distinction between the three groups.

If our program included these three distinct groups of students, then it might be possible to tailor our program and pedagogy to address each group's particular challenges and needs in order to maximize success in the program. The "other problems" could not be addressed directly through classroom pedagogy, because so many of these students' difficulties kept them out of the classroom and away from their books. In fall 2010, I began sending the names of these students to advising services as soon as teachers sent them to me each semester—we made sure this happened before midterm. Advisors called and emailed students, and in some cases were able to connect students

with support services such as counseling and legal aid. This effort, sadly, did not seem to positively influence retention numbers for this group of students:

Table 1. Percentage of students in the "other problems" group who registered at the University the fall semester following their entry year.

Fall 2010	43%
Fall 2011	23%
Fall 2012	60%
Fall 2013	30%

If only 23-60% of the students in the "other problems" group were able to stay in college, even with the early warning provided by their instructors and the offers of help from their advisors, a much more robust program is likely needed. The complex issues surrounding such students and their needs are not my focus here, despite their importance. For examples of well-developed programs connecting students with support services, see *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success* (McNair et al.). The complex issues surrounding the "other problems" faced by students suggested even more strongly the need to clarify the academic issues faced by the students in the "needs more" category, who were more likely to benefit from our instructors' expertise.

Limitations to the "Needs More" Label

Instructor comments and retention data provided some indications that the three-part division of all students into "doing fine," "other problems," and "needs more" corresponded with definable elements of students' lives and writing experiences. But the scheme also had significant limitations, particularly in relation to the students in the "needs more" category. Unlike the "other problems" group, the "needs more" group had issues that appeared to be academic, and possible to address in a writing program. But the labeling scheme did not give me clear information about what would help these students. They were not sharing horror stories with their instructors, as students in the "other problems" category were. Yet they were not apparently benefiting from the instruction in class. If my label, "needs more," was correct, what did they need more *of*?

Since the students' work was not giving teachers a "way in" to helping them, or giving me, from my bird's eye view of the program, a clear idea of what students needed, I developed interviews about the conditions

and situations in which students did their work. I had a hunch that these students were being interrupted by demands in their lives, and that these interruptions were a crucial part of their academic profile. An exchange with one of my own "needs more" students served as the inspiration for this approach. I asked a student to stop texting in class, and she responded "I'm sorry—I'm helping my Dad buy a truck, and I just have to answer this question. . ." This comment stuck in my mind as an example of the ways in which family and money could intrude into the space of the classroom, or into the metaphorical mental space in which a student engages with reading and writing. I wondered if this moment represented a larger pattern in students' academic lives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To develop my hunch into a question I could investigate systematically, I looked for framing concepts that would make sense of situations like the one my student found herself in with her Dad's truck. In the work of Pegeen Reichert Powell and Deborah Brandt, I found these framing concepts. Both writers move outside the classroom and both contextualize students' writing as a practice structured by larger social forces. Rather than looking for the influence of larger social forces on *what* students write, these scholars help us see the influence of larger social forces on *whether* students write at all, and when, and with and for whom.

Powell's *Retention and Resistance* is both a critique of retention discourse as it is used by administrators and institutional programmers outside first year writing, and a call for people in composition to attend to this discourse. Powell notes that the retention literature tends to place responsibility for retaining students on the shoulders of those who teach first-year students, at the same time that retention initiatives often ignore faculty expertise and students' communities. Many of these initiatives, while well-intentioned, "only attempt to align the individual student more thoroughly with pre-existing intellectual and social values of the institution" (94). Instead, she invites readers to think about communities, rather than individuals. Such thinking, attentive to "community conditions" instead of "individual conditions," has the potential to change the "intellectual and social values of the institution" in positive ways (94).

A thoroughgoing analysis of literacy in relation to community conditions can be found in Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives*. Brandt examines the ways in which literacy has been demanded, regulated, and

conditioned by social groups reacting to economic change over the course of the twentieth century. She borrows the idea of "subsidy" from public policy and develops a conception of subsidy systems for literacy (8). A subsidy is a sum of money or some other medium of value, provided to someone to achieve an aim that is in the public interest. Brandt explains that in the interviews she conducted, "people sometimes turned their attention to the resources on hand for developing as writers or readers – that is, where it was that they found opportunity, assistance, inspiration, or information" (6). Such a collection of resources, in her conception, is the "subsidy system" for that person's literacy. Using this idea to frame our view of college students, we can see that subsidies come in multiple forms, from multiple sources: a boss lets a student use the office computer to print a paper; a parent pays for books; a friend spends time working quietly alongside a writer. Not all of these subsidies are financial: time, space, attention, and emotional/social support also subsidize literacy. Brandt subsumes all of these subsidies in her concept of "sponsorship," which includes social and emotional, as well as financial support (19). Crucially, Brandt sees sponsorship as serving the sponsor as well as the student. The sponsor has something to gain from a particular type and experience of literacy. Sponsors "regulate" literacy to correspond with that interest, speeding it up or supporting it when it serves that interest, and slowing it down or withdrawing support when it does not.

It seemed likely to me that the difference I was looking at, between more- and less-successful basic writing students, could be explained in the larger context of "different and often unequal subsidy systems for literacy, which often lead to differential outcomes and levels of literacy achievement" (8). This conceptual framework helped me think about my student and her Dad's truck. Her Dad was depending on her literacy by texting her to ask for her help, whether it was with the paperwork, with money, or with logistics at home. He was also slowing down the development of her academic, college literacy by interrupting her work in class. This is an example of "regulation." To find out whether subsidy and regulation might explain larger patterns among students, I developed an interview process framed around these ideas. I wanted to ask students where they did most of their writing, and how important people in their lives provided "opportunity, assistance, and inspiration," as well as interruption and regulation, as they practiced college literacy. Understanding these conditions would, I hoped, clarify my muddy idea that certain students "need more," replacing it with conceptual understanding of the students as a group, and leading to practical actions I could take to help them succeed.

RESEARCH METHOD

Undergraduate interviewers seemed more likely than teacher interviewers to set students at ease when talking about the conditions in which they wrote, and especially about the conditions in which they did not write. After obtaining IRB approval for the project, I needed to find some interviewers. I created a one-credit course, "Internship in Writing Research," for advanced undergraduates in English and Psychology. English students took the course because they were interested in teaching and literacy theory. Psychology students wanted to get their feet wet with qualitative research. These students read a qualitative research article as a model, and we met to discuss the questions and problems I was investigating. Each student took the CITI training on ethical research with human subjects, and we talked through the process of obtaining consent and asking questions using the interview script.

Next we needed to find basic writing students to interview. Using a random number generator, I chose students from the Studio composition sections of instructors who had agreed to be interrupted for this purpose. The interviewers went to classrooms and called out individual students who had been chosen at random. Taking the basic writing student to a quiet spot, the interviewer explained the purpose of the project, outlined the process we would use to keep their comments anonymous, and assured the student that they could decline to participate, with no effect on their grades or progress. After this introduction, the interviewer asked the student whether they would like to participate. Some students declined, in which case the interviewer would walk the student back to the classroom and call the next name on the randomly-generated list. Students who agreed to participate signed a consent form, and the interviewer started the recording and began asking the questions on our interview script. Interviewers did not know whether the students they spoke with had been identified as "doing fine," "other problems," or "needs more."

We conducted a total of forty-nine interviews during the fall 2013 and fall 2014 semesters combined. Because I wanted to zero in on the "needs more" group, I focused on getting as many interviews with them as possible, and on interviewing students in the "doing fine" group for contrast. Because the instructors had provided so much information about challenging life issues faced by the group identified as having "other problems," I did not see the need to investigate further why they were having difficulty completing their coursework. Thus we interviewed fewer of them. We carried out

the project over two fall semesters, 2013 and 2014. In total, we conducted twenty interviews with students "doing fine," twenty-four with students in the "needs more" group, and three with students in the "other problems" group (plus two students who were not labeled by their instructor).

In fall 2014, we had to cope with the intrusion of administrative and political forces into our program design. In the midst of an institution-wide budget crisis, the administration eliminated the 4-credit Studio version of first-year writing and mainstreamed all first-year students into 3-credit first-year composition. Because thirty-four of these interviews were conducted in fall 2014, when the studio version of the course had been eliminated, we talked to a mix of students who might be designated "basic writers" and others. Of the forty-nine total interviews, ten were with students who would not have been designated as "basic writers" under our institution's former practices. Tellingly, not all ten students in this group who would not have been placed into basic writing were labeled by instructors as "doing fine." This discrepancy underlines the arbitrary nature of an institutional "basic writer" designation based on standardized test scores.

When all the interviews had been transcribed, I began qualitative analysis, based on the grounded theory approach presented by Johnny Saldana. I split students' responses to interview questions into sentences, and assigned each a code, as defined by Saldana: "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data"(3). Because I was interested in the subsidies described in Brandt's work, and in Powell's concept of students' communities, I began coding for descriptions of "help": where did students get support for their work? Where did they turn when faced with challenges? If a student mentioned a helpful friend, or a quiet place that made it easy to concentrate, or a teacher's clear explanation, I coded the comment as "helpful" and specified whether the help was academic, emotional, or attentional. I also coded for something I originally thought of as "the opposite of help": distractions, interruptions, stresses, painful emotions. Through these categories, I hoped to change my phrase from "needs more" to a specific description of what students needed, and where they would be likely to find and use that support.

As I read and reread each interview, revising the coding to account for the students' words, larger themes began to appear. Saldana describes the next stage of analysis as part of a "coding cycle," in which the researcher critically rereads the data and the first set of codes, "generating categories, themes, and concepts, grasping meaning, and/or building theory"(8). In this

process, I noticed that all the various types of "help" seemed more specifi-
cally to depend upon resources. Whether the student's problem related to
their reading comprehension, their ability to focus, their resilience, or their
bank account, the student needed to draw upon a resource. Similarly, all the
challenges grouped together as "demands." I could almost hear voices calling
the students away from their writing: friends, bosses, parents, and devices
asked for students' time, attention, and care.

When all the interviews had been coded, I began to count the codes,
separately and also grouped into "resources" and "demands." I noted the
total number of times that a code appeared in the data, and also the number
of individual students who made such a comment. For example, the most
frequent code in my whole data set is "instructor—academic support." When
asked to describe their practices and experiences with writing, students most
frequently mentioned help and support from their teachers. In all forty-nine
interviews, I identified seventy-six such comments, made by thirty-seven
different students. One student described a teacher's help with organization:
"She's been really great with helping with that, because she'll tell us straight
up right away, like 'this is not in any way related to your thesis.'" Another
student described the teacher's mix of truth-telling and specific instruction:
["Who helps you the most with this writing class?"] "Definitely my professor
herself, yeah. She's great and she gets to the point right away. She doesn't
want to. . . she wants you to feel good about your papers, but she isn't going
to baby you about it. Like she's going to tell you how to fix it so you know
for the future what to do."

Collecting all the coded comments together, we can compare resources
to demands overall and develop a picture of how frequently students men-
tioned them:
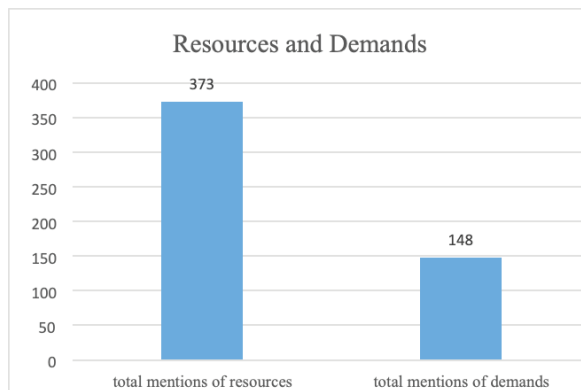
Figure 1. All mentions of resources and demands in all interviews.

Figure 1 suggests that students are aware of many more resources for their academic work than they are of demands pulling them away from it. Supportive instructors, quiet and solitude, comfortable spaces, friends, classmates, and family, all mentioned frequently by students, provide what Brandt would call "subsidies" for students' growth and development as writers.

After teachers' support, the most frequently mentioned resources in the data set are quiet, solitude, and university buildings that provide them. Forty different students mentioned the importance of quiet and solitude, for a total of seventy different such statements, in response to interview questions such as "Where do you do your writing?" and "Do you write better with people, or alone?" Many student responses are quite emphatic: ten students used repetition or adverbs for emphasis, as in these two examples: "Complete silence. No music, nothing. Just silence." "Alone. Definitely." Students mentioned both distraction and embarrassment as reasons for avoiding company while composing, as in these three examples:

> Since I am dyslexic I don't like other people possibly looking over my work. . .

> But definitely writing alone is easier, because you can talk out ideas to yourself, and not have to listen to other people talk about their ideas. And you can be original about your own ideas.

> If I work with someone, I'll try and go off their ideas, even though I don't really have the evidence to back it up. I'll just try and make it work.

Thirty different students identified university buildings as the best places to find quiet working conditions, making a total of fifty-two different comments about dorms and libraries as comfortable, peaceful spaces for work: "if I'm like, you know, in my dorm, on the bed, all comfy and cozy, then it's fine."

The most frequently-mentioned demand in the whole data set was a difficult or confusing instructor, with twelve different students making a total of thirty-five different comments about conflict with an instructor. Students described teachers they perceived as unfriendly or unhelpful:

> Even just. . .asking her questions in class, like about a homework assignment, she'll immediately shut us down and be like, you need to look in your packet, . . .even if you're just double checking. . . I'm

just making sure this essay is due on Thursday and she'll be like, what did I just say?

After conflict with a teacher, the most frequently mentioned demands come from friends and family. Eleven different students mentioned friends, or sometimes just "people," interrupting and distracting them from their work: "I talk a lot, so I would get distracted I feel like. I get distracted talking, then I'd want to get on my phone, and then I wouldn't pay attention to my paper." Families were also frequently mentioned as making demands that took students away from work. Leaving aside family emergencies, the data set contains twelve different comments from ten different students: "Two weeks ago I had to go all the way back home to drive my sister to practice. But I got it done!"

COMPARING SUCCESSFUL AND STRUGGLING STUDENTS

The relationship between resources and demands is not distributed evenly across groups of students. Displaying the information in Figure 1 in a different way clarifies the relationship between more and less successful students. Recall that Figure 1 reflects every individual mention of a resource or a demand, by all forty-nine students in all the interviews. It presents a picture of college students drawing on many resources to meet the demands they face. If we separate the students "doing fine" from the students who "need more," we can see that the relationship between resources and demands differs sharply between these two groups.

Table 2. Comparing resources to demands for more and less successful student groups

	# of times resources were mentioned	# of times demands were mentioned	Resources compared to demands
Students "doing fine"	167	54	3/1
Students who "need more"	155	78	2/1

All students experience demands. The significant difference between these groups is the number of resources students mentioned for each demand. For successful students, this ratio is 3/1. For each mention of a demand by a student in the "doing fine" group, there are three mentions of resources. For

students in danger of failing, the ratio is 2/1. For each mention of a demand by a student in the "needs more" group, there are two mentions of resources.

The difference between these two groups suggests that success in college requires significant resources. Two resources to one demand is not enough for a large group of students. The lower number of mentions of resources, in relation to demands, provides a possible explanation for the low retention rate of the "needs more" students, which hovered around 54% over six semesters. To use Brandt's terms, students draw heavily on the subsidies provided by their families, friends, and colleges to support them as they meet education's demands. The subsidies for literacy that Brandt describes allow sponsors to "enable, support, teach, and model," and also to "recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy" (19). My results provide an example of how social forces and actors "regulate" literacy. They "fix or adjust the time, amount, degree, or rate" at which learning occurs (Merriam Webster). All these students described multiple sources of support, and all of them described learning and writing. But the rate at which their resources outweighed their demands regulated their eventual performance and persistence.

The comparison between resources and demands mentioned by students in the two groups also calls into question the original labels that I had used to distinguish the groups. In our original assessment project, we had attempted to distinguish between students with "other problems" and students whose needs were primarily academic. We thought of the "needs more" group as students significantly underprepared for the academic demands of first-year writing, those who might benefit from an extra semester of work or perhaps from tutoring. The patterns in the data, however, suggest that the students in this group don't "need more" of some academic program or an internal quality like "aptitude" or "college readiness." What they need more of is the subsidies provided by instructors, spaces, friends, and family.

What is the nature of the demands faced by the students who "need more"? Notable patterns emerge around two issues: social ties and mental distractions. Combining all the mentions of demands from social ties, we see that the two groups mention these demands with very similar frequencies:

Table 3. Demands from social ties: friends, family, spaces outside the University

total mentions	44
"doing fine"	17
"needs more"	18

If the demands are similar, what creates the difference between more and less successful students? The difference that emerges is between the number of demands and the number of resources students mention. Their descriptions of writing at home are noticeable here:
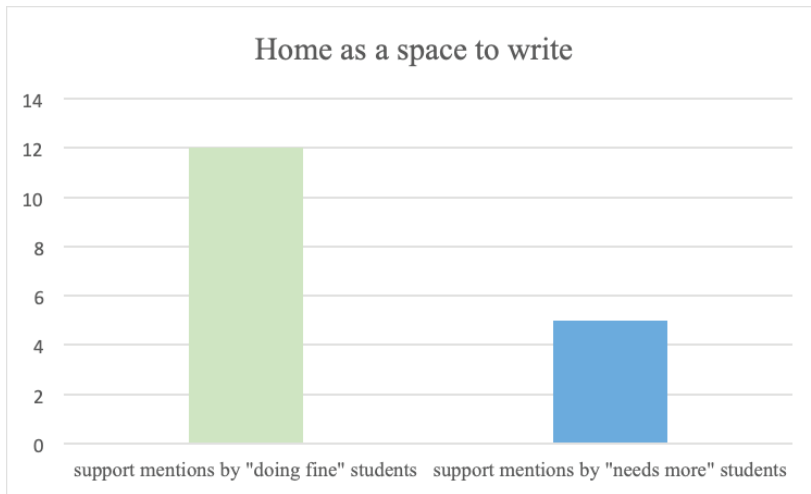
Figure 2. Mentions of home as a space to write, by more and less successful students

Students who were "doing fine" mentioned their kitchen tables and bedrooms as comfortable, productive spaces to write more than twice as much as students who were not doing fine. This particular set of comments is an example of the larger pattern in which the ratio of resources to demands differs between the two groups of students. If all students experience demands from their social ties (which of course all humans do), then it makes sense that more successful students will have drawn upon more resources for meeting those demands. These students who "need more" are characterized by their limited access to resources.

Most of the patterns emerging from this data set are social and economic, rather than individual or cognitive. But this observation must be

qualified, because the students also differed in the way they described mental distractions: too much background noise, too much quiet, temptations from devices. Students in the "needs more" category mentioned these types of distractions almost twice as much (15 mentions) as students in the "doing fine" category (8 mentions). Perhaps students in the "needs more" category find the same conditions (noise, quiet, music, TV) more distracting than other students do. Whether the demands are internal or external, however, the key finding here is that less successful students mentioned fewer resources for meeting them.

INFLUENCES ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE

To think about the relative importance of people and situations inside and outside of college, I grouped them together as influences. By collating all the mentions of influences (either as resources or demands) in the data set as a whole, I looked at which were the strongest.[1]
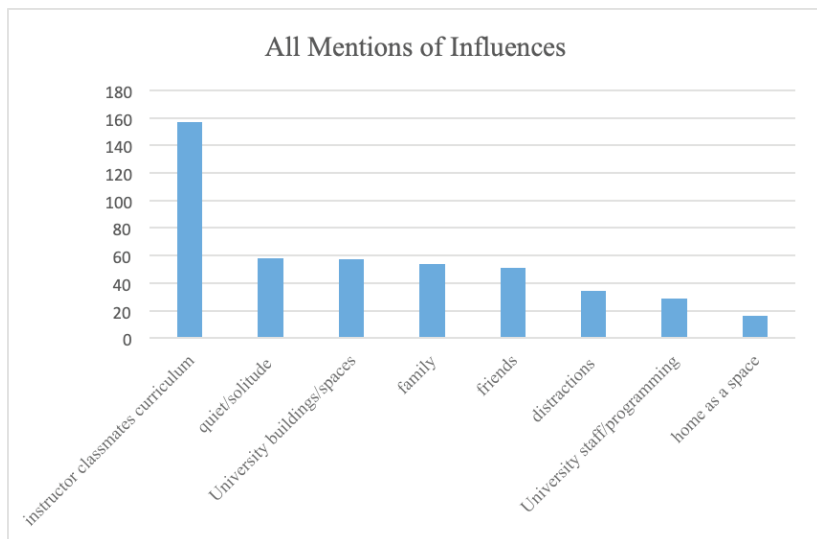
Figure 3. All influences mentioned in all interviews.

For instructors and programs, it is important to understand these influences, because these are the resources students draw upon and the demands they meet. Thus the results in Figure 3 have implications for the relation between writing courses, writing programs, and the colleges and universities that house them. Instructors, classmates, and the curriculum were mentioned more than twice as often as any other factor. It is in class that students

receive the strongest subsidies, in both academic and affective support, and also experience the strongest demands. Other structures, such as the writing program, learning center, or advising center, are mentioned much less frequently in these interviews. One student argued explicitly that the classroom is more important than the program or institution. In response to the final interview question, "What could the university do differently to help students succeed in the course?" Amanda[2] responded,

> I think the class is fine the way it is. I don't really think the school did much to do that.

> Interviewer: Who do you think is responsible for [you] being successful in the class?

> Amanda: The teacher. I think the teacher. The way the teacher, . . . how my teacher puts us into groups and makes us expand our ideas and explain more and I think that's really what a college writing teacher should do, because it helped me a lot with my writing.

Amanda explicitly rejects the question's premise that the university is or could be providing support for students' success in the course: "I don't really think the school did much." Instead, the teacher's classroom practices and her classmates' listening and discussion account for her success. Amanda's claim, and the large number of mentions of instructors and classmates in the data set as a whole, support the strong emphasis on pedagogy in basic writing scholarship.

The corollary of the teacher's influence is that conflict with a teacher is perceived by the student as a significant demand on motivation and attention. Heather describes her response to her teacher's expectations:

> Writing is hard in college. I've had the worst time in this class.

> . . .This is probably my first time [writing a paper longer than two pages]. And it's like, even in my other classes they're two pages, so it's like, that would make, that's easy. And he doesn't build us up to it. The homeworks, the "rough drafts" he calls them, of the essay. The first rough draft is one page. And then the second rough draft is two pages, and then we jump from two pages to five. So it's like, I think in a way he. . . they expect a lot from you. Not knowing what

your background was, not knowing that you came from a [high] school that didn't care.

Heather's account of her difficulties provides an example of the importance of the comparison between resources and demands. Many college faculty would see a sequence of three drafting assignments as an example of support, and of "building up to" a five-page paper. But Heather sees the jump from two to five pages as such a significant and unfamiliar demand that it outweighs other resources. And she interprets it as an example of her teacher's "not knowing what your background was." This "not knowing" seems to have an emotional weight separate from the specific academic problem of how to develop a two-page draft into a five-page draft. For Heather, this instructor's teaching is a demand, separate from and adding to the academic demands of the coursework itself. As a single instance of the large number of mentions of the instructor and classroom as influences, Heather's story suggests that literacy is always "regulated," in Brandt's terms, by subsidies and demands, inside the classroom as well as outside it.

Like the instructor and the social world of the classroom, students' families and friends regulate their literacy. Students in my sample gave many examples of family and friends providing academic help:

> If I'm working with my friends who are in the same class, they kind of know the style better than me. So I'll ask them questions on the format of how to write it. But if I'm alone, then I'm like "whew, I don't know if this is right."

> Peers working on [the project] . . .helps me a lot. I'd rather have them and not need them, than need them and not have them.

> Interviewer: Who helps you with your writing? Student: I guess my Dad. He kind of, he's a good writer, so, he kind of looks it over with me sometimes, and gives me advice.

> After I write something I usually give it to my Mom to look over and then we'll discuss it after that.

> My sister's probably the most helpful. I think she takes it more serious than my friends do sometimes.

At home, with the family. . . that's how I get my ideas.

Students described their social connections as both supporting their work and making other demands, sometimes simultaneously. Consider Madalyn's account of the demands she experienced in her first semester:

> Yeah. I was working at a pizza place, that I had worked at for three years in high school, and I was nannying for a family and going to school. And college . . . I thought it was going to be easy. Like I did it in high school, I can do it in college. No. College, I have to study, I have to work on everything, there's . . . it's not just doing the homework, I have to understand it, so when I'm in class, I get called on, I know what I'm talking about.

> So I was running back and forth from here, and [another town, 18 miles away] for classes and work, and then I decided to move on campus, because I thought "Oh, if I just go to class, come home, do my homework, I'll focus." I wasn't focusing when I was at home. I was working, and my mom was home, and I was talking to everybody else, and nothing was getting done for school.

> And so, I moved here . . . I just kept one job, and school, and I'm not as stressed out anymore. I have time to sit down and do my homework. And living on campus has helped that. Like being able to go to my dorm room—it's quiet—and focus on my homework. No distraction, no family, friends around at the time.

This passage describes a series of different demands: more difficult academic work, commuting, work for pay, family interaction. Home, in Madalyn's account, is not a good place to write, not because the family is conflicted or stressed, but because they are close—they all talk to each other. In this way, family and friends demand attention and energy from Madalyn. The resources she draws upon come from the institution's physical space, a quiet dorm room. Together, family, friends, and the institution subsidize and regulate Madalyn's access to literacy.

Other students described family commitments that took them away from the campus and from class. Brittany explained,

> I go to a Christian women's meeting with my grandmother on

Monday nights before I came to school. So, I haven't been able to do that, so, a couple weeks ago I had to make the decision to either stay in my class the whole time, or go to the meeting.

Interviewer: And which did you decide?

Brittany: I decided to go to the meeting.

Like Madalyn, Brittany clearly has a close relationship with a family member that provides significant emotional (and spiritual) support. In this case, however, it also demands her time and attention during hours when the university requires her to be in class.

Courtney's anecdote presents a more difficult example of a family member calling upon a student's time and attention:

We had a class but I volunteer over at [a therapeutic horseback riding center] and my Dad wanted to go with me in the morning 'cause I do the barn tours in the morning on Thursdays every once in a while. And he actually wanted to go with me for the first time. So I was wicked excited about that. And then I had a doctor's appointment after that. And I had class at 1:00, and I just didn't feel like going to class, and I didn't go to the class and we went out to lunch and it was my Dad and I and we don't have the best relationship, but that day we had a lot of fun. . .

Interviewer: Did you have anything due for the class?

Courtney: It was just a reading, so it wasn't too bad, but. . .

Interviewer: So, let's say if you had. . .a big paper due or something.

Courtney: Then I would go to class.

Courtney describes an opportunity to grasp a positive moment with her father. Because they "don't have the best relationship," she must expend time and attention to maintain it. I do not present Courtney's story to argue that families are an irrelevant distraction, or that students should choose academics over social commitments. Instead, stories like Courtney's

can help us reframe the question "What is a basic writer?" In the passages above, Madalyn, Brittany, and Courtney describe "other problems," rather than particular academic needs. From their teachers' perspective, however, all three students had needs that were primarily academic—all had been put in the "needs more" group in the early weeks of the semester. This mismatch between the teacher's perception and the student's account of her resources suggests a problem in my classification scheme, which mirrors the larger debate around basic writing about whether "need" is in the students or in the larger society. In separating out academic need from social resources, we have not been able to focus on the crucial interaction between the demands a student must meet and the resources the student has for meeting them. The importance of subsidies from family, employers, and friends is supported by other studies of students who stop out of college. Barbara Maroney identifies school-leavers as students facing more demands than they can meet. Kai Dreckmeier and Christopher Tilghman's multi-institution study found that finances and difficulty managing multiple commitments far outweighed academic reasons for leaving school (5; see also Sulllivan and Nielsen 326). Looking at this research in the context of my analysis suggests that subsidies outweigh aptitude in their influence on students' eventual performance and persistence.

All these patterns together suggest that we should characterize students in terms of the resources upon which they can draw. Doing so gets us away from the problem of whether the "basic writing" quality is in the student (cognitively or culturally) or in the institution or larger society. It is the interaction that matters. Thinking about the interaction between resources and demands also suggests practical steps forward for programs. The answer to our dilemma is not "more basic writing" or "faster basic writing," but rather "successful students need multiple resources, calibrated to meet the multiple demands they face." Institutional programming, whether it is curriculum, pedagogy, or a retention initiative, should be perceptible to the student as a resource, and should be congruent with the other resources the student is drawing upon. In the case of our program, the curriculum and pedagogy of mainstreamed basic writing provided enough resources for only some of the students. For another group, our course was not enough.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

How should instructors, writing programs, and institutions interpret these results? If studio or mainstreamed first-year writing is not enough,

what else do students need, especially as, in Amanda's words, "I don't think the school did much"? Her comment indicates that students do not see the institution's programming and support the way I do—as a smorgasbord of opportunities to find mentors, get tutoring, join clubs. Instead, the perspective that emerges from these interviews puts the classroom front and center, surrounded by students' friends and home communities. If we look at students' writing development in this framework of classroom and community, we can derive recommendations for instructors, writing centers, and institutions.

For Instructors

Instructors are important. Their words and practices dominate all other influences on student writing in these interviews. To fortify their own influence by drawing on the other important subsidies in students' lives, instructors can integrate a wider network of family and friends explicitly into classroom work. Below are some suggested practices that draw upon the influence of both classroom and community.

- *Community Peer Review Activity*. Along with considering the comments of their classmates, students can be encouraged to discuss, share, and reflect upon the comments they get from others: How are your Mom's comments on the paper different from your classmate's or your teacher's? What does that mean about "good writing," or process, or this topic? When you talk with your friends about their papers, what do you find yourself noticing/doing that doesn't happen in class? What does that mean about ideas and audiences?
- *Resource Assessment*. Instructors can help students chart out the resources that they draw upon, identify gaps in their resources, and try out new sources of support. If their family and friends are not resources for them, who might serve that role in their lives? What physical spaces support students' writing, and who or what helps them get to those spaces when they need to be there? Who or what helps them tune out distractions and interruptions? Students could create a visual representation of these resources to accompany a literacy narrative.
- *Writing Environment Journal*. Assign students to try writing in different physical spaces and at different times of day, each day for a week. Students can note how long they were able to write, and

why they stopped. How many times were they interrupted by a person? By a device? By internal distractions or worries? This assignment could be integrated with other process assignments or self-assessments.

- *Emotional and Metacognitive Classroom Work.* Because emotional difficulties with instructors, classmates, friends and family appear as demands in this data, they can have a significant negative impact on students' experience and success in writing courses. My analysis supports the ALP emphasis on the non-cognitive elements of college work. For example, Katie Hern recommends "[p]edagogical practices [that] reduce students' fear, increase their willingness to engage with challenging tasks, and make them less likely to sabotage their own classroom success" (8). One way to include affective material in a writing course is to include learning about metacognition and self-regulation. Specific strategies for incorporating emotion, self-awareness, and self-regulation into classroom work can be found in Raffaella Negrettti's study and in Angela Rounsaville, Rachel Goldberg, and Anis Bawarshi's 2008 article "From Incomes to Outcomes."

For Writing Centers

In the picture of student writing experience derived from these interviews, classrooms are in the foreground, surrounded by students' friends and communities. Because writing centers are located in neither place, finding and using them can easily become a demand for students. My analysis supports embedded tutoring, writing fellows, and other models that integrate support into the structure of the classroom as students see it. Steven J. Corbett advocates such projects that "synergistically bring writing classrooms and tutoring programs closer together" (10). His book describes several models, while also investigating how tutors work, and how students learn to work effectively with peers. The embedded or classroom-based tutor approach is also endorsed in articles by Lori Ostergaard and Elizabeth Allan and by Mark McBeth, which provide detailed models and evidence of their positive impact.

From the perspective of resources and demands, these program models draw upon resources that students mention most frequently in my data set: their instructor, classroom, and classmates. The students are already spending time and effort getting to know this group of people in this

space. Embedding the tutor in the classroom brings support to a place and a group of people that students see as resources. In my interviews, students mentioned tutoring 40 times. Of these mentions, 36 described tutoring as a demand, or as something for other people: "I have no clue where to go"; "I don't have the time, and I want to work on my own." I do not see this pattern as evidence of problems with the tutors or tutoring center. Instead, the scarcity of descriptions of tutoring as a resource suggests that going to a writing center or learning commons is experienced as a demand, one that must be outweighed by resources for students to be successful.

Mutiara Mohamed and Janet Boyd address the demands of seeking help by making a visit to the writing center a requirement in their course serving multilingual students. While there is debate about such requirements in Writing Center studies, as is clear in Eliot Rendleman's annotated bibliography, Mohamed and Boyd show how such a requirement could help students experience writing center visits as a resource, rather than a demand. Because students get credit in their writing class for the assignment, the work of the visit fits into the framework of classwork and can be understood as part of the help provided by the teacher. The time demand and the emotional demands of entering a new space and new relationships, as well, are part of the work of the course and less likely to be experienced as "extra" by already burdened students.

Rachel Rigolino and Penny Freel take the "embedded" model further and locate writing workshops in residence halls. These meet twice a week, with composition instructors (58). In the interviews I analyzed, residence halls are a resource, a place where students are "comfy," where they have friends and classmates to work with, and where they don't have to travel. Thus Rigolino and Freel's model exploits a resource students are already drawing upon, rather than making a separate demand. A corollary here, unfortunately, is that this model might prove more demanding for commuter students, who are not already on campus and in residence halls. Thinking about resources and demands in relation to embedded support and commuter students suggests an area for further research—how can we build upon the resources that commuter students are already using? If they are drawing upon spaces and relationships in their communities, how can instructors and programs learn about and ally with those spaces and relationships?

For Writing Programs and Institutions

The overall message of my results for institutions is that they should support instructors, support students, and design programs that are informed about, and complement, the other subsidies in students' lives. Instructors are the most available and visible resources for students. For many institutions, graduate students and adjunct faculty represent the institution in students' first crucial months. Thus, providing resources for basic writers requires providing professional development and basic writing expertise for these instructors. This is an up-front cost that is often difficult to justify to administrators, who can balk at the idea of professional development for adjunct faculty or graduate students. Calculating cost-per-completer, rather than cost-per-student, as in Katie Hern and Myra Snell's 2014 analysis, can be rhetorically useful in this context. Allying these instructors with support services and publicly recognizing their important role is likely to amplify the support they already provide.

For basic writing programs, my results suggest that choices about mainstreaming and acceleration should be based on rich information about the specific student population a particular program sets out to serve. An inventory of the demands faced by an institution's student population should inform program design, so that structures built for support do not turn into demands. Knowledge about basic writing students' subsidies, at many institutions, will quickly reveal significant financial problems. This issue has been one thread in conversations about basic writing for many years: Susan Naomi Bernstein points out that the NCTE published a "Resolution for Motivated but Inadequately Prepared Students" in 1974. It states, in part, "We believe that all colleges and universities, by the act of admitting students, become responsible for creating conditions that will permit those students to exercise their own right to learn." Bernstein fleshes out this recommendation by naming "financial aid counseling" as a crucial support. Some colleges are beginning to develop such resources through partnerships with community nonprofits. The recent volume *Becoming a Student-Ready College* describes

> [partnerships with] state and local workforce investment boards that offer specialized funding and counseling resources for low-income students, veterans, and adult students, . . .partnerships with financial institutions to provide financial coaching and access to resources such as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). . .[and] Partnerships that provide on-campus access to legal assistance, car

repair, and tax preparation services (121).

It is important to note that the last sentence includes car repair. To think of car repair as an aspect of literacy is to understand how fully Brandt's idea of a "subsidy" underpins an assessment of whether a student is "ready for college." Students who can reliably get to class are more engaged and college-ready than students who cannot, whatever their other cognitive or academic resources. Healthcare, housing, and food play similar roles in students' daily lives, and institutions which connect students with benefits are subsidizing their academic work. Wendy Erisman and Patricia Steele describe programs such as Single Stop that connect eligible students with "a range of public benefits, including food stamps, subsidized child care, Medicaid or Affordable Care Act subsidies" (28).

Together, these recommendations for instructors, writing centers, programs, and institutions all treat students' resources as central. Such a perspective supports Powell's argument that the term "integrate" is used in a very one-directional way in our current retention discourse. We think about integrating "a student" into "the academic community," but we do not imagine integrating multiple communities: the college and the family, friends, workplaces, and neighborhoods of the students (94). Integrating home and college communities is particularly relevant for students who attend college near home, as the majority of US college students do (McNair et al. 118). For instructors, writing programs, and institutions, the crucial question of how to support basic writers should come back to an assessment of the relation between resources for students and demands on students. This assessment should include factors inside and outside the institution, heeding Powell's call to consider the "conditions of communities" in which our students live, mingled with their families, friends, and the consumer culture of their devices (94). The concept of literacy subsidies provides an analytical tool for this consideration. Colleges create new demands and new resources; to do so equably, we must learn about and work with the other demands and resources in students' lives.

Notes

1. Unfortunately, we did not ask students whether they were residents or commuters. This would have been helpful information for interpreting comments about the influence of contexts inside and outside the university.
2. All student names are pseudonyms.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe what you do when you sit down to write the papers for this college writing course. Where are you? Who is around? What do you do first? After that? (Follow-up: Is this different from how you did your work before you came to college?)

2. Who do you talk to about your papers? Have you helped anyone with their papers? Does anyone help you? (For people who say they don't talk to anyone about their papers: What do you think would happen if you did?)

3. Who at the University has helped you most with your college writing class?

4. Do you write better with people around, or alone? How do you decide where to go and who to be with when you are writing?

5. What's the easiest thing about college writing? What's the hardest thing about college writing?

6. Of all the things you spend time on in an average week, which is the most important to you right now? School, family, work, children, sports, friends?

7. Some students get into situations where they have to choose between schoolwork and their families or jobs. Maybe you have a paper due and your boss calls and says it's an emergency and they need someone to cover a shift. Or maybe your Mom calls and says her car broke down and she needs someone to pick up your sister from work. Have you ever been in a situation like this? What did you do and how did you decide?

8. What do you think the university could do better to help students succeed in this writing class?

Frustration and Hope: Examining Students' Emotional Responses to Reading

Maureen McBride and Meghan A. Sweeney

ABSTRACT: *Resurgence in college-level reading research has led to studies on rhetorical reading and reading transfer, but often absent from these discussions are student emotions about reading and themselves as readers. Our qualitative study explores these emotions by examining how basic writing students perceive ideal readers and reading difficulties. Our findings suggest students' emotional responses play an important role in how they interact with texts and how they view themselves as readers and learners. Specifically, our research suggests students experience a sense of disassociation with a readerly identity, but they still maintain a sense of hope for developing reading strategies and identifying as readers in the future. We argue for more scholarly examinations of the role of emotions in reading and basic writing research.*

KEYWORDS: *basic writing; critical reading; emotion; ideal reader; identity; reading in basic writing; rhetorical reading; student perceptions*

Scholars, administrators, and teachers often point to problems created by a perceived literacy crisis of students who can decode but not make sense of texts (Beers; Hock and Deshler; Hock et al.; Kieffer and Lesaux; Riddle and Rose). At all levels, educators have attempted to identify critical developmental moments for students and curricular changes that might alleviate the perceived crisis. Reflecting on the renewed interest in reading and its effect on literacy instruction, Mariolina Salvatori and Patricia Donahue speculated about the potential new directions reading scholarship might take us as teachers and scholars ("What is College English?"), noting

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that reading studies within writing research had gone dormant for decades after the 1980s.

However, reading *has* become relevant again. Since the publication of Salvatori and Donahue's article in 2012, several studies have added new directions to the growing body of reading research. Many of these studies run parallel to, while also extending, reading research from the 1980s as scholars ask questions about how students should read and how they actually do read. For example, Ellen Carillo argues for reflective reading practices to help students be more mindful readers. Doug Downs calls for rhetorical reading as part of the writing-about-writing pedagogical framework. Michael Bunn supports a reading-like-writers stance to increase student motivation. Others have joined conversations about transfer, including Tara Lockhart and Mary Soliday, who report on successful transfer of reading concepts from an integrated reading and writing curriculum into their upper-division courses. In addition, Brian Gogan found that rhetorical genre awareness operates as a threshold concept in first-year composition. Finally, since many students taking reading courses in college are placed into basic reading and writing classes (whether integrated reading-writing or discrete reading courses), scholarship such as Cheryl Hogue Smith's research on students' deferent stances and Meghan Sweeney and Maureen McBride's study of difficulty papers are needed to address the issues of reading instruction for students labeled as under-prepared.

When we move reading from the periphery to the center, as Salvatori and Donahue recommend, we simultaneously find ourselves moving toward the direction of the basic reading and writing classroom to understand how students in these courses perceive reading and perceive themselves as readers, and how those perceptions complicate their interactions with texts. As basic writing instructors, we are particularly interested in those students who are placed in a literacy intervention, such as a basic reading and writing courses, since that placement has the potential to disrupt students' self perceptions as well as their perceptions of reading itself. Much of the current reading research focuses primarily on cognitive aspects. To add to our understanding of the intersections of reading instruction and student learning, scholars can examine how students' perceptions are influenced by their emotional responses to reading. As an example, David Jolliffe and Allison Harl's research, which includes some examination of students' perceptions, found that students had a negative perception of college reading primarily attributable to dull and unnecessary texts. We are left wondering how this perception of college reading is related to how students see themselves as

readers and if a better understanding students' emotional responses will help us as instructors of students in basic reading and writing classes.

To add to the growing body of literacy scholarship and explore our questions as basic writing instructors, we examine how students' emotional responses to reading offer insight into their perceptions of reading. Our goal with this research is to better understand students and their interactions with texts to find ways to more effectively engage them in reading tasks specifically and reading-writing tasks generally. We hope to better understand the complex relationships students have with reading and with being readers by looking at emotional responses. To this end, our qualitative research study examines emotions related to reading that students in basic reading and writing classes reveal through their reflections about reading and being readers to bring attention to the affective dimensions of learners.

The Importance of Emotion

In higher education, indifference to emotions and emphasis of rationality have dominated formal education (Leathwood and Hey). Zambo and Brem suggest that "educators must realize that emotion and cognition act in parallel in subtle and powerful ways" (189).

If instructors can better understand the connections between students' emotions and performance, we can help guide students to gain more control over their learning. Specific to the college composition classroom, Christy Wenger claims that we need to move past our dismissal of how feelings impact learning and revalue students' emotions. Wenger says emotions should be part of our understanding and examinations of social theory and social transformations, which could include helping our students transition from previous educational experiences, such as high school or work environments, to expectations for college-level reading and writing. Wenger suggests that composition instructors have a responsibility to help students use their emotions to understand themselves and their world as they develop their stances as critical beings. Wenger also draws on the research of composition scholars Laura Micciche and Lynn Worsham to point to the shifts in scholarship that examine the impact of emotions. Wenger states, "If our rituals and practices of teaching writing do not account for the emotional experience of writing, learning and meaning-making, we do ourselves and our students a great disservice" (48). In her research, Wenger claims that focusing on students' emotions provides a way into texts for students who might otherwise struggle to engage with reading and writing and reduces students' resistant stances.

Examining student reading experiences, we focus on emotion to better understand students' experiences and help them navigate their interactions with texts to guide them toward more positive interactions with reading and with their self-perception of themselves as readers.

Initial research into emotions within educational situations focused primarily on test anxiety, but more recent research is moving beyond testing situations and examining how emotions play a role in other learning situations. New research suggests that emotions are critical to not only students' motivation but also their learning and identity development with established links between emotions and student engagement and performance (Pekrun et al.). Achievement emotions, including affective, cognitive, motivational, and physiological, with specific emotions, such as hope, anxiety, pride, and shame, are linked to success and failure (Pekrun et al.). Pekrun et al. suggest that perceptions of control impact the emotions students experience and become particularly important when the student values it but feels a high level of uncertainty about the outcome, which could describe basic writing courses for many of our students. Negative emotions about reading are particularly important to consider because they can trigger a flight or fight reaction, impeding comprehension and interaction with a text (Zambo and Brem). Ultimately, students' achievement emotions affect their use of strategies and their regulation of learning as well as their motivation. Pekrun et al. claim that the impact of emotions is significant and should be examined as part of our scholarship.

Scholars' incorporation of emotion in research about reading and specifically within basic writing contexts may provide researchers and instructors with more information that we can use to better support our students' learning and develop more effective literacy instruction. Abdolrezapour points to several studies that highlight the importance of acknowledging emotions in educational environments and the capacity of emotions to impact academic performance. Particularly, Abdolrezapour claims that emotions play an important role in reading comprehension and that reading comprehension has the potential to transfer to other academic contexts to support overall learning performance. For instructors and scholars of reading-writing connections, specifically in the basic writing classroom, Abdolrezapour's claims substantiate a focus on the emotional responses related to reading.

When we examine student reflections to identify emotional responses, we can start to identify and understand the psychical attitudes of students which Ira James Allen refers to in his article "Reprivileging Reading." As

researchers, when we identify emotions, we can examine the "full sense of experience," the "phenomenological sense," of reading that matters to readers. Scholars' and instructors' examination of emotions also aligns with the mindful reading suggested by Ellen Carillo, who defines mindful reading as readers being "knowledgeable, deliberate, and reflexive about how they read and the demands that contexts place on their reading" (117). Carillo claims that a reader's mindful stance creates "an intentional awareness of and attention to the present moment, its context and one's perspective" (118). Carillo encourages scholars to teach students about reading instead of just assigning and assuming reading familiarity and strategies. Carillo's perspective on reading in first-year writing is adaptable to basic writing perspectives as well.

Much of the research about emotions that can be applied to basic writing pedagogy focuses primarily on writing and writing instruction. Alice Brand claims that to understand how students write and learn to write, emotional, as well as cognitive, phenomena must be included (436). Brand says that generating meaning is "saturated with affect" (437) even while "emotional neutrality" is used as a test for moral advancement (438). For writing process, Brand claims that students would benefit from understanding their emotional cues, such as those that tell them they are ready to write or ready to stop writing. These same emotional cues could be said to be of benefit to students' reading, in which they examine not just their thoughts about the content, genre, and applicability of the information, but also their emotional reactions to the process of reading (441). Brand even suggests that writers understand how their emotions are affected by "audience, topic, and time restrictions" (441), all of which are relevant to reading process. Brand claims that examining emotions can help instructors understand why some problems occur and how we can address them by helping students to be aware of and employ emotions during their writing processes (441). Again, this applies to reading in which students may experience problems and can use their affective responses to help them with their reading process, including the cognitive aspects of reading. Micciche claims that emotions are "an integral dimension of all meaning-making and judgment formation" (163). Micciche explains that emotions are essential to change or action, a concept that can be applied to students' reading processes, especially when they are struggling with texts. Ignoring emotions as part of how students learn is to distance students from their cognitive responses. Instructors who allow and encourage emotions can help students make stronger connections to what they are learning, which is our goal in regard to reading.

What is not typically included in research that examines readers or reading research is the impact of emotional responses in texts and on (non) reader identities. We can better understand student identity constructions and interactions with texts by examining the importance of emotions in these contexts and situations, especially when academic achievement has been correlated in part with emotional intelligence (EI)—the ability to perceive, integrate, understand, and regulate emotions for personal growth. Allen suggests teaching "reading as a mode of negotiating uncertainty," allowing instructors to examine students' emotional responses to texts and (non) readerly identities to help students successfully navigate motivations and consider how uncertainty impacts their reading (99). Allen encourages instructors to find ways to make reading safe and points to assignments such as Salvatori and Donahue's "difficulty paper" as one way to begin the process. Reflective assignments, like the difficulty paper, can expose students' uncertainty and make reading habits visible to students, who can then use that knowledge to make decisions in reading. The reflective analysis also provides students with meta-awareness that allows them to participate in conversations about what reading can be and why academics read. Allen wants instructors to help students "see their own reading processes more closely, turning their attention to the ways in which they are affected by a text so that they might broaden their horizons of understanding" (115). Ultimately, Allen claims that effective readers understand themselves as experiencers of sensation and as active participants in the reading process. Reflection allows for these reading complexities, such as balancing emotional reactions with externally imposed purposes for reading, to be teased out.

Scholars who focus on foreign language acquisition and specifically foreign language reading (Mikami, Leung, and Yoshikawa) have also examined the role of emotion. In foreign language reading studies, research confirms that "psychological attributes (e.g., motivation, belief and emotion) affect our reading and learning behavior" and are "connected to the development of reading skills through learning behavior" (Mikami et al. 49). Particularly the way that motivation drives actions, what students think about themselves and reading, and their affective states have direct and indirect connections to learning effort and reading behaviors. Students who lack motivation show a negative correlation with reading proficiency, while students who exhibit motivation show a positive correlation with reading proficiency. Similarly, students who struggle with self-belief (i.e., do not believe they are readers or can effectively complete a reading) have a negative correlation with reading proficiency, while students who believe they are readers and

can effectively complete a reading have a positive correlation with reading proficiency. Educators who can draw on this information by understanding their students' motivation and learning identities may be better positioned to help students reduce reading anxiety and engage both emotionally and cognitively with texts.

We believe it is important to better understand the perceptions that college students in basic reading and writing classes hold about readers and reading as these relate to identity and literacy. Many literacy experts, especially those researching middle and high school situations, study the relationship of identity to literacy, or what Elizabeth Moje and Allan Luke call the "identity turn," encouraging research questions about how identity affects literacy in different contexts (415). By viewing literacy in this way, as a social practice, scholars are able to push back against skills-based literacy instruction and the marginalization of struggling readers (Moje and Luke 416). As individuals work to create their own identities, that creation hinges on recognition from others (Gee), and their identities mediate and are mediated by the texts they read (Moje and Luke 416). Theorists have expanded that lens even further, now seeing the construction of space and time as a factor in identity creation (Moje). For college students, this means that their identity is constructed by the space and context of the classroom, the relationship between teacher and student, relationships among students, and placement. According to Moje, Dillon, and O'Brien, as students explore different subject positions and as they are positioned by others, they enact various identities (e.g. good student or resistant student). Classroom discourses about what it means to "do" school are particularly influential in this process as students position themselves by enacting certain kinds of identities, performing different roles to see which ones fit in particular contexts. As students note the outcomes of these interactions, they further define how they see themselves as students (Fairbanks and Ariail). These identities can range from agentive, in which students view themselves as responsible for learning, to passive, in which students view themselves as dependent on others for learning (Johnson). For students who view themselves as non-experts, or perhaps struggling readers (either as a socially derived identification or one attributed to the student through testing and placement procedures), these "identities" shape how they see themselves and also how they learn and interact in classrooms (McCarthey and Moje; Wortham).

We think there is potential importance to examining students' identity constructions within basic writing classes as it relates to writing. We bring this perspective into our research through the use of reflective assignments

that ask students to examine readerly identities of themselves and others. In our project, we look at how students' reflections about texts, reading, and being readers, specifically their emotional responses, help them to learn about themselves as readers. In the examination of emotions, instructors, especially of students in basic writing courses, can better understand how to help students negotiate the demands of academic reading and of identifying as a reader (Allen 99). Through our research, we show that students in basic reading and writing classes experience complex emotional responses when reading. These emotions play an important role in how they interact with texts and how they view themselves as readers and learners. Specifically, our research suggests students experience a disassociation with a readerly identity as they transition to college while they still maintain a sense of hope for developing reading strategies and identifying as readers in the future.

The Design of Our Study

Our study takes place at a large public, research university. Student course placement decisions were based on either standardized test scores or student-submitted writing portfolios. A mandated lowering of placement scores from the state level initiated a new course to support students who would have previously placed into a non-credit bearing basic writing course but were now placed into a three-course combination, which included a merged basic writing and first-year curriculum, a course dedicated to editing for style, and a rhetorical reading course. This course combination was credit bearing; however, because it required extra units, students might perceive it as a form of remediation. The three-course sequence and specifically the reading specific course were considered a form of intervention on our campus, and class sizes were under 15 students for the reading course. Students placed into the rhetorical reading course were considered under-prepared for first-year composition and therefore labeled by the institution as basic readers and writers.

This institutional shift offered us a kairotic moment to ask many of the questions that education scholars have asked about literacy experiences. Specifically, we explored the effects of identity and perceptions on literacy. Our initial research question was focused on how students in basic reading and writing courses perceive reading *and* themselves as readers. To explore our research question, we collected reflective texts from students and analyzed emotional responses in those texts.

The reflective texts came from students in one reading course. For the first text, students reflected on difficulties they encountered when reading texts (an assignment inspired by Salvatori and Donahue *The Elements and Pleasures of Difficulty)*. Our difficulty paper assignment asked students to identify specific difficulties they encountered when reading a complex text, noting moments that were confusing, were frustrating, left them with questions, and/or complicated their reading process. Students were encouraged to focus on one or two examples and discuss ways they were able to move beyond these difficulties. For the second reflective text, students discussed their perceptions of ideal college readers; specifically, students were asked to identify characteristics of effective college readers based on their experiences as well as an interview with another student who they felt was a good reader, and to compare their perceptions of themselves as readers with their description of a good college reader. We had a small sample size of 9 for the ideal reader texts, and 16 for the difficulty papers written about "A Modest Proposal" (Swift) and "Tattooing the Body, Marking Culture" (Fisher).

Initially, we examined the reflective essays using the grounded theory method (Corbin and Strauss), looking for patterns of language use about reading and readers. We discussed the patterns then reread the essays to identify specific instances of the patterns identified. In our first round of coding, we identified the following categories: identity, self-efficacy, and agency. However, as we started to re-code for these categories, further distinctions among the original codes emerged. We then had definitions of reading (i.e. passive or active descriptions of reading), problem-focused and emotion-focused relationships to reading, themes of difficulty, and identity. Once we agreed upon the codes, we both re-coded every student essay confirming that we had inter-rater reliability.

Since grounded theory method requires flexibility and willingness to keep an open mind with the data, we coded and discussed and revised our analysis several times. However, upon further reflection, we discovered that the emotion-focused relationships to reading in the student reflections warranted further analysis. To do so, we moved away from grounded theory and embraced research on the relationship between students and emotions.

We read through the student reflections again, coding emotional reactions students expressed by using achievement emotions identified by educational psychologists Pekrun et al. Achievement emotions are those that students commonly experience in academic settings. Pekrun et al. categorize these emotions in three ways: prospective outcomes, retrospective outcomes, and current achievement-related outcomes. Students experience emotions—

such as hope, anxiety, and hopelessness—when predicting possible success or failure: prospective outcomes. They also experience emotions—such as pride, relief, and shame—when recalling past success or failure: retrospective outcomes. In addition, students experience emotions—such as enjoyment, boredom, and anger—related to current achievement activities. According to Pekrun et al., achievement emotions "are induced when the individual feels in control of, or out of control of, activities and outcomes that are subjectively important" (38).

We first coded the ideal reader reflections using these nine emotions from three categories: prospective (hope, anxiety, and hopelessness), retrospective (pride, relief, shame), and current (enjoyment, boredom, anger). These emotions frequently occur for students and represent a range of positive and negative emotions. To code them, we first determined if the student was expressing an emotion. We then determined whether the emotion was prospective, retrospective, or current. Finally, we determined where it fell within that category. We coded each instance at the sentence level. After coding the ideal reader reflections independently, we then confirmed inter-rater reliability. Then, we coded the difficulty papers using the same method. See Table 1 for a summary of our coding categories.

Certainly our study has several limitations, which must be acknowledged. First, using the reflective essays from one class gives us a focused but limited sample. Second, since we are looking at texts completed for the purposes of a basic critical reading class, our analysis only includes the information presented in the essays. Adding in interviews with students could expand our understanding of how students in basic writing and reading-writing integrated courses address reading assignments and specifically how they interact with texts. Third, the reading course from which this sample was derived was a linked reading course. It would be useful to have similar studies completed in integrated reading-writing courses. A fourth possible limitation is the honesty that students used in their assignments regarding their emotional responses, but we must trust that they were responding

honestly. Despite these limitations, we believe that the recursive coding, inter-rater reliability, and the analysis of the findings contribute to literacy scholarship and to a foundation on which other post-secondary reading research can build.

Table 1. Summary of Our Coding Categories

Prospective:	Current:	Retrospective:
Hope: Reflection on the future and the possibility for growth and change	**Enjoyment**: Expression of pleasure in current reading tasks	**Pride**: Reflection of past or former feelings of pride or accomplishment related to reading tasks
Anxiety: Reflection on the future with concern and stress for what is to come	**Boredom**: Expression of boredom or lack of interest in current reading tasks	**Relief**: Reflection of past or former feelings of relief in completing reading tasks
Hopelessness: Reflection on the future with no hope for change or control	**Anger**: Expression of frustration or anger on current reading tasks	**Shame**: Reflection of past or former feelings of shame related to not reading, enjoying reading, or reading enough

Perceptions of Readers and Reading

During our initial, open coding, we confirmed several findings made previously by other researchers. Overall, we found that students in our study have a debilitating perception of college readers and reading. Students believe that ideal college readers consistently read a text multiple times, read quickly, avoid distraction, and annotate effectively. According to the students, ideal readers (e.g. effective college readers) do not struggle with long documents or comprehension of difficult texts and easily analyze texts whether topics are familiar or unfamiliar. These ideal readers read even if there is no incen-

tive, and ideal readers never procrastinate. In fact, ideal college readers do all of this and enjoy the process at least most of the time. Obviously, this list of what ideal readers do would overwhelm even the most practiced and proficient reader. Notably, the students in the basic reading course had the perception that reading comes easily for effective readers and requires minimal effort. In addition, they dis-identify as ideal readers, instead identifying primarily as non-readers. This finding that students who have been labeled as struggling by an additional reading course (i.e. remediation) has been well explored by Leigh Hall in her work on middle school students. Our findings further strengthen that understanding.

We also found that students viewed reading as a task designed for information gathering, with themselves as receptacles for reading, rather than reading as a process of construction or meaning making. Students expected texts to provide them with information with little effort on their part as readers. Several scholars have noted that convincing college students that reading is an act of construction is difficult because the educational system, in which the students are enmeshed, favors factual recall (Halpern; McCormick; Santa). Our finding further confirms, not necessarily the cause of students wanting texts to just provide information, but that they do still hold this expectation, or what Hall calls a print-centric view of texts.

Specific to impeding the students' ability to complete and comprehend the readings were two specific challenges: vocabulary and interest. Students were often challenged not only by a lack of understanding of what words meant but also by the unfamiliarity of language or usage. Lei et al. note the importance of "a large vocabulary" to understand college-level reading (40). In addition to discussing the difficulty of vocabulary, students also mentioned their struggles with interest, or lack thereof. While students imagined an ideal reader who was interested in all texts, but who could read adeptly even when not interested, the students identified with the typical college student who suffered from a lack of interest. Jolliffe and Harl made a similar finding when they surveyed college students and found that students describe assigned texts in college as dreadfully dull.

Since our initial findings corroborated existing research, we returned to our data to examine other ways that the students were discussing reading and being readers. Through our further exploration of students' retrospective, current, and prospective emotional responses to reading, we found that students' emotions were actively impacting their reading as well as their perceptions of themselves as readers. Examining the different activity emotions and the ways in which emotions were used by students in this course,

we are able to examine their reading interactions and relationships in new ways. See Table 2 for our full findings.

Table 2. Findings: Total Instances of Achievement-Related Emotions

		Diff. Paper	**Ideal Reader**
Prospective	Hope	2	3
	Anxiety	1	3
	Hopelessness	0	1
Current	Enjoyment	10	19
	Boredom	27	18
	Anger	41	24
Retrospective	Pride	1	5
	Relief	1	0
	Shame	2	2

Reflecting on the Past: A Loss of Pride and Confidence as Readers

The emotions students expressed in their reflections about their past experiences as readers most often suggested a loss of pride and confidence as readers, especially as it related to transitioning to college-level reading situations. Most of the reflections about past emotional responses to texts were identified in the ideal reader assignments. When reflecting on their past selves as readers, the emotions that emerged vacillated between pride/competence and shame/inadequacy. Difficulty papers (16 papers total) only produced four (4) total instances of emotional reflections on the past: two (2) of shame (50%), one (1) of pride (25%), and one (1) of relief (25%). In comparison, in one ideal reader paper, there were seven instances (7) reflecting on the past: five (5) of pride (71.4%) and two (2) of shame (28.6%).

When students expressed feelings of pride in their past selves, they pointed to being good readers, who had once found pleasure in reading and who read a lot when they were younger or prior to coming to college. For example, one student said, "I used to be able to read for fun." This same student followed that comment with "but not anymore." Students suggested that their relationship with reading was positive in elementary and middle schools but less frequently mentioned their relationship with reading in high school reflections. One student said, "I figured that being able to read a chapter book like *Harry Potter* and finish it in a couple of days made me a good reader." Many students indicated that choice was more prevalent when

they were younger and that the control they had over texts created motivation to engage with texts in different ways as well as more frequently: "I had motivation, because I either had nothing else to do, or I had leftover time in my day to read my new magazine or my favorite book." Students reflected on difficult reading experiences they were able to complete and comprehend with a sense of pride: "I have recently learned how to use different strategies to make it easier for me to enjoy reading and writing." Students who expressed pride were almost always hopeful about their future reader identities.

In contrast with their positive reflective emotions, students who expressed feelings of inadequacy wrote about feeling unprepared for being a reader at a college level: "I have learned that as a reader I need to be more disciplined." Another student said, "In comparison with the ideal college reader, I find myself nowhere close to what is expected." Students expressed anxiety that their reading for enjoyment, such as loving and consuming the *Harry Potter* series when they were younger, did not help to prepare them to be engaged readers in college. One student wrote, "I think as a reader, I am only good when I read something I actually want to read."

Shame was noted in a few papers; however, it was not a frequently coded emotion, with only 13 instances total. When shame was noted, students were discussing not being a good reader or not identifying as a reader: "I actually struggle reading a whole book or even a short story"; "I found out the harsh reality that I actually was a reader that had many difficulties when it came to academic readings."

There was only one instance of the emotion "relief," which occured in a difficulty paper referring to completing the text: "Eventually I was able to do it and finish the article without too much difficulty."

The focus on the past in the ideal reader reflections suggests that these students were experiencing a cultural shift that was affecting their engagement with texts. They noted how their identity as a reader in the past did not always fit with the expectations of their college contexts. Their readerly identities also related to their sense of motivation, such as only being a good reader if they enjoyed the text. They expressed a sense of loss and longing in their relationships with reading. They implied a sense of imposter syndrome as they were attempting to engage with texts, trying different techniques, and holding onto hope for the future.

Current Achievement-Related Emotions: Bogged Down by Boredom and Frustration

The emotional responses that students expressed relating to their current reading experiences were most frequently negative and suggested that they got stuck in this emotional response. When students reflected on the ideal reader, they often described their general experience reading during their first semester of college, or current achievement-related emotions. As we expected, these emotions moved among the three types recorded by educational psychologists—enjoyment, boredom, and anger or frustration. Out of the 16 difficulty papers from this class, there were seventy-eight (78) total instances of current achievement related emotions: ten (10) of enjoyment (12.8%), twenty-seven (27) of boredom (34.6%), and forty-one (41) of anger or frustration (52.6%). From a statistical perspective, students were not enjoying their reading experiences 87.1% of the time. In comparison, in the nine ideal reader reflections there were sixty-one (61) total instances of current achievement-related emotions: nineteen (19) of enjoyment (31.1%), eighteen (18) of boredom (29.6%), and twenty-four (24) of anger or frustration (39.3%).

Unfortunately, enjoyment was not the primary emotion students felt while reading for college. Instead, it was either an imagined emotion, projected onto the ideal reader—that person who enjoys academic texts, who can pick up any text on any subject, sit down and read it well, with little difficulty, and a lot of pleasure. Or it was a reflection on enjoyment they experienced reading anything outside of the college setting. When discussing what they enjoyed reading outside of the college setting, students often referred to genres or types of texts. For example, one student wrote "The main things I like to read and that motivate me are magazines, pretty much any kind. . . and definitely any good novel that I find." A different student shared a similar sentiment: "Reading is one of my favorite things to do in my free time. . . cuddling up with my blankets and pillows with my current read is relaxing and entertaining." In general, the students who identified as readers shared enjoyable emotions when they were reflecting on reading done beyond the confines of academic settings. The exception is the imagined ideal reader for many of these students. For example, another student, one who did not include any information about self enjoyment, said, "The ideal college reader reads for pleasure not just because they are forced to. They enjoy picking up books and reading about something they did not know before."

In contrast, more students experienced boredom and frustration or anger during the task of reading for college. Primarily, the content in academic texts bored students. For example, one student said, "I do not normally read academic journals or texts, unless I am required to. I find them to be monotonous." The boredom they reflected sometimes extended beyond the composition classroom: "When given an assigned article to read or a chapter of a textbook for class, I don't get too excited, especially if it is from my economics book, or an article on statistical facts."

Academic texts frustrated the students; however, the frustration and anger was often directed at the course or the professor because the reading was not actually needed for learning. They also expressed anger because the joy of reading they once experienced has been taken away from them—caused by too many reading assignments, dull reading assignments, and pointless reading assignments. For example, one student shared the following frustration in her reflection:

> I wanted to crawl into my bed, hide, and never come out [after assessing all of the reading the student had to complete over a weekend]. I couldn't understand how my professors expected this out of their students. By the time I have finished the assigned chapters, my eyes are strained, I am tired, and I am most likely so stressed out I want to fall asleep. It gets frustrating when students take a lot of classes, like myself.

The student identified as a reader, but her frustration was derived from her inability to find enjoyment in her assigned college reading tasks. Another student shared frustration that was also directed at the professors or college: "We don't want to read these long and seemingly pointless stories for fun, and that is why many of us have a hard time getting the full meaning out of a piece of text." Students pushed back against reading that did not have a clear purpose or interest to them.

While the ideal reader reflections gave us information about the emotions that students brought to the task of reading, the difficulty papers further confirmed that students are primarily frustrated and bored when reading for college. On one hand, the difficulty paper as an assignment invites students to share emotions like frustration and boredom. The entire premise of the assignment supports students using negative emotions as a way into a text. However, it is interesting to note that the two texts students wrote difficulty papers about varied in topic and genre—two things that students suggested

affected their emotional responses to reading. "A Modest Proposal" is a genre with which students may already engage—satire. And the other text explored tattoos, a topic that one might suspect interests students. Despite these connections that students could potentially make—either through genre or topic—they did not respond with positive emotions, instead expressing anger because of the content or boredom because of the academic characteristics of the text.

When responding to "A Modest Proposal," all the students responded with some boredom or frustration. Even students who understood that the text is satirical could not move past the emotional response they had to the topic: "Although I was very well aware of the fact that this essay was satire, it was still very difficult for me to get past it while I was reading." For those students who read the text literally, the emotional response of anger and frustration was even stronger: "Since he was so graphic with disgusting details, I found myself not wanting to read more." These emotional responses lead us to question the value of triggering strong emotional responses to texts and how those intense emotions may shut down the reading process.

Emotional responses to the academic journal article on tattoos were different, yet still exclusively negative. The emotional response of boredom and anger was not about the topic, but instead how journal articles are written. Students may benefit from more instruction on how to read journal articles: what to look for and how to negotiate their understanding of texts. Doug Downs has advocated for us to teach students to read journal articles not for information, but instead to understand provisional arguments. Ira James Allen has suggested we help students negotiate uncertainty when reading. However, the students' responses to the academic journal article as a genre were primarily based on their emotional reactions. While students' emotional reactions may be partially due to a lack of strategies to use for reading journal articles, their emotional reactions of boredom and frustration may require acknowledgement and further exploration: "Facts, statistics, numbers, and references are difficult for me to read through, as I often get bored and want to skim over the paper until I find something interesting." Even for a student who said the topic of Fisher's article, tattoos, was more interesting than Swift's, the genre of the academic article generated negative emotions: "Right off the bat I knew this [reading a 17 page academic article] was going to be a challenging assignment." These responses suggest that helping students get past emotional reactions is needed before a student can engage in applying strategies, such as Allen's negotiating uncertainty or Downs' considering provisional arguments.

Projecting to the Future—Students Are Hopeful

Hope about developing as readers was the most common emotion expressed by students when they were projecting about the future. As with reflecting on the past, the majority of emotional references that projected to the future were in the ideal reader papers. Out of the 16 difficulty papers from this class, there were three (3) total instances of projecting to the future in the difficulty papers: two (2) of hope and one (1) of anxiety. In comparison, in one ideal reader reflection there were seven (7) total instances of projecting to the future: three (3) of hope, three (3) of anxiety, and one (1) of hopelessness.

In the ideal reader texts, students projecting about their future most strongly expressed hope. There was only one (1) instance of hopelessness (4.6%); three (3) instances of anxiety (13.6%); and 18 instances of hope (81.8%). Students believed they were on the right path, developing their abilities to read academically: "I am nowhere near my idea of the ideal college reader, but as the year goes on I am getting closer and closer." Students have hope that they can become better academic readers: "I may not be the best right now, but I think I am certainly working on ways to get there." They note that focusing on reading academically helps them, but highlight their lack of engagement. Additionally, students who were hopeful about themselves as readers talked about returning to reading for pleasure as a way to improve as readers more broadly: "If I pick up a book from those genres [genres the student enjoys] I think I could have a chance of enjoying it." Students equated enjoying reading with being a good reader in their reflections and so sought ways to anticipate this outcome in their futures.

Even with the positive position that most students took about their future relationships with reading, they still expressed some anxiety about not being their version of an ideal reader or not ever becoming one. One student noted, "For example, if a student had to read an academic article, they would probably be uninterested in it because not many people like to read those types of articles." Another student commented on their anxiety about finding pleasure in reading: "It might be a challenge because I do not see myself reading for enjoyment anytime soon." Students understood that they would need to read texts they were not engaged in: "To be a good student you have to be able to read and write on what you really love and enjoy, but also on topics that are the exact opposite." While students expressed anxiety and hope, they often indicated that they wanted to identify as readers and specifically as good readers; they noted the primary hurdle to accomplishing this was finding purpose in reading tasks that they had not chosen.

There was almost no expression of hopelessness, but the one instance was notable: "I do not think I'll ever be able to just be able to read a book whenever and wherever." This student's hopelessness extended beyond their academic experiences and into their projections of their life experiences, indicating a sense of not being able to identify as a reader (even if they wanted to) and experiencing a loss of motivation because of this.

Implications

Much like the students in the reading class, we see a great deal of hope in our findings. The emotions students felt about being college readers (examining their current situations, not their past experiences or projecting to their future experiences) spanned a range of emotions from enjoyment, into boredom, and then to anger. Still, through the reflective assignment asking students to examine their conceptualization of an ideal college reader (an assignment given in the latter part of the semester), we were able to see additional emotions experienced, with two discoveries proving particularly promising. First, when students reflected on the future, the emotions felt were hopeful, specifically about being able to see themselves as identifying as readers in the future (even if they did not identify as a reader in the current context). Anxiety about the future was also felt, but hopelessness was almost nonexistent. Second, when reflecting on the past, the majority of students in this study had previously identified as a reader, as someone who enjoyed reading for the simple pleasure of reading. These reflections on past enjoyment were marred by current displeasure in the difficulty and the sheer overwhelming amount of college-level academic reading. Since we are capturing a moment when students are taking their first semester of college composition, we might argue that students transitioning to college, and specifically students in basic writing and reading courses, are suspended between hope that they can become better readers and anxiety for the types of texts they will encounter and their ability to understand those texts. Students want to see themselves as becoming more competent and confident readers of academic texts even as they long for the return of reading for pleasure. These emotions were not something we were aware of before we integrated these reflective assignments into the reading classroom, but the discoveries support the recommendations from scholars like Ellen Carillo, Mariolina Salvatori, and Ira James Allen who advocate for continued rediscovery of how students experience reading.

The lack of hopelessness remains the most surprising and promising finding from our study. Students believe that it is possible to become more like their idealized version of college readers. In the ideal reader reflections, hope was an expressed emotion 16 times, the most predominant emotion when students reflected on the future. Typically, when discussing readers who may struggle, issues of identity complicate the students' abilities to develop reading practices (see Hall). Yet when we study reading through the lens of emotion, we are able to see the possibilities for developing new reading practices through students' positive projections about their future reading identities. As Pekrun et al. note, "positive activating emotions are likely beneficial for students' engagement and learning, whereas negative deactivation emotions are likely detrimental" to learning and performance (45). Further, positive emotions, like hope, correlate positively to "intrinsic motivation, effort, elaboration of learning material, and self-regulation of learning" (Pekrun et al., 45). In other words, the hope students feel for their future as academic readers (and the lack of hopelessness) will help them succeed.

A less positive, but still promising, finding was that students lamented their loss of reading for pleasure. When reflecting on the past, students primarily expressed pride in their past reading enjoyment, with 18 instances in the ideal reader reflections. In contrast, shame about their loss of reading for pleasure was mentioned 11 times. Since it is a moment of transition for students, this vacillation between shame and pride is notable. Deborah Brandt through her ethnographic studies has shown that reading is remembered fondly. Her research participants have fond memories of their parents reading to them as children. Several of the students in this reading class had similar fond memories of their enjoyment of books. They sounded like Ira James Allen in his own reflections as a person interpellated as a reader, the privileged readers that many of us, as professors, graduate students, or undergraduate students often identify as. Particularly in transitional moments, like the first semester of college or the first semester of a doctorate program, the task of reading can change, and students may not be aware of how to read for new purposes or how to approach more difficult texts. With the changes in their perceptions of themselves as competent and confident readers, students may experience feelings of shame that they are encountering difficulties as readers, as our findings suggest.

So what does this mean for us as researchers and teachers of students in basic reading and writing courses? Reflective assignments that encourage metacognitive examination provide opportunities for instructors and stu-

dents to better understand what their reactions are to texts and why those are their reactions. This is similar to the suggestions of Ellen Carillo, a first-year composition scholar, who advocates for the inclusion of assignments that help students develop as mindful readers through improved metacognition. Mindful reading activities, such as those suggested by Carillo and used in this study, allow students to become more aware of their current reading practices. Our study also suggests that we should also assign reflective assignments that encourage students to reflect on their past and their future as a way to further explore their practices and develop the metacognition necessary to make purposeful choices when reading in college. Our findings echo the recommendations of Driscoll and Powell that instructors can help students become emotional managers, which will help students gain control and be able to use their emotions in the ways suggested by Brand. By understanding their responses to academic reading, students may be able to work more toward understanding of difficult texts and avoid getting stuck in their initial responses. Reflecting on their future selves as college readers may evoke positive emotions that may help them persist as college students. This reflective approach is being used by scholars who focus more on writing, such as the scholarship on reflection included in Kathleen Blake Yancey's book *A Rhetoric of Reflection*. Reflection can become a tool to help students develop "strategic self-management" as Susan McCleod suggests (33).

Second, understanding the relationships our students develop with reading, such as their emotional responses to texts, may offer authentic opportunities to help students move from the passive positions of information receivers to more active roles of information makers. Reflecting on their emotional responses to texts they read may help students see that readers make meaning, not just receive information. Instructors could help students examine their emotional responses and help them see how they can use their reactions to examine the texts they are assigned. Moving students into positions of inquiry about their reading responses, specifically their emotional reactions, could help them see themselves as active participants and start to shape their reader identities in ways that could lead to more engagement.

Third, our findings suggest that we should continue to give students more choice with reading. To address students' concerns with their sense of loss (for enjoying reading) and lack of control (with content and genre), allowing students more choices in text selections may offer ways for students to reconnect with their identities as readers. The concept of control, as discussed by Pekrun et al., can have motivating implications for learners, offering something from which our students in basic reading and writing

courses can greatly benefit. While there is a need for students to learn how to read assigned texts in which they don't have choice, offering them the choice of a few texts selected by the instructor may help motivate students to better understand the text they selected. Additionally, choice could be offered in how students demonstrate their understanding of a text, such as offering different options to assess comprehension, such as summarizing the text or responding to comprehension questions. Providing students with some options to control aspects of their academic reading situations may offer more points of access for our students in basic reading and writing courses as well more motivation to move past difficulties, emotional or other, that students encounter while reading.

Finally, the emotional responses students had when reading "A Modest Proposal" show us that we should continue to research the place of emotion in the classroom. Some of the students had visceral reactions to the thought of eating babies, even those students who knew it was satire. But as teachers what do we do with these emotions? If we ask students to read a text that triggers them emotionally, to the point of anger, does that hinder their learning? Wenger has argued that we embrace emotion in the composition classroom. However, we need to discuss further how that can best be achieved knowing that this extensive research in educational psychology has shown that anger may hinder learning.

Ultimately, our research points to the individual emotional complexities that students encounter in literacy instruction that makes singular approaches to reading instruction ineffective. Instructors of basic writing can use reflective assignments that allow students to explore their transactions with texts, and their relationships with reading may begin to help students transition to college reading and writing. Scholars' examination of student emotions helps address these complexities and encourages instructors to differentiate for students' learning needs. Our research investigated what emotions our students had and how those emotions influenced their sense of efficacy and identity as readers. We argue for more scholarly examination of the role of emotions in reading and basic writing research. By making these arguments, we strive to continue pushing reading into the center of the conversation while adding new layers of research to better understand the challenges of reading and being a reader in our current educational climate.

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"That's Me on a Horse of Many Colors": Native American College Students' Self-Portraits as Academic Writers

Barbara Z. Komlos

ABSTRACT: Native Americans are largely absent from the basic writing literature, yet their experiences and identity construction as emerging academic writers offer important insights for college writing instructors. This study addresses previous research on Native American college writers, the legacy of education and writing in Native communities, and the role of cultural identity and the connection between self and writing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native enrolled at a public university and two tribal colleges. To generate discussion around writing identity and experiences, participants were asked to draw portraits depicting themselves as academic writers. Six themes emerged as representative of students' identities as writers. Findings also highlight the influence of culture and community on writing perception, which are triangulated with results from semi-structured interviews with faculty and staff. Recommendations are provided for integrating Indigenous literacies into college composition curricula.

KEYWORDS: basic writing; college writing; identity; Native Americans; place-based pedagogies; qualitative research

I had taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and developmental writing for several years before moving to Bozeman, Montana. There, I continued to teach ESL and basic writing, but also provided writing support to American Indian students who I came to learn have persistently low college graduation rates.[1] Almost three decades ago, George Ann Gregory, then an English instructor at Oglala Lakota College, noted that Native American students' difficulties in producing acceptable academic writing serves as one of the major stumbling blocks to academic success. In working with American Indian students on their essays, I became intrigued by similarities

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in their writing styles with Generation 1.5 students I had previously taught. Initially, I aspired to conduct textual analyses of students' writing; however, under the guidance of my doctoral advisor, I realized the need for a holistic understanding of American Indian college writers, which led me instead to explore their perceptions of and experiences with writing.

My subsequent conversations with students, faculty, and staff revealed ways in which Native students' families, communities, and culture shape academic writing identities, and became the impetus for a Native-centered first-year composition course.[2] Before I share insights and pedagogical implications, I would like to situate my work within the field of composition/ rhetoric, specifically basic writer identity construction. I draw upon existing research on Native American college writers, perspectives of Indigenous educators, and connections between cultural identity and writing to pave a path for including "Indigenous literacies" in college composition. Undertaking this challenge would extend an invitation to our Native students to engage in our classes without checking their identity at the door, and pedagogically offer opportunities to expand definitions of "literacy" and explore Indigenous thinking and rhetoric. Composition studies has yet to come to terms with the paradox of teaching Native Americans to become proficient in wielding a tool of their colonization. I propose that by recognizing this reality and helping students to appropriate writing on their own terms, we can introduce a new chapter in our discursive history.

In discussing culture and identity, an important caveat is that American Indians identify culturally along a continuum from being "traditional"— knowledgeable about their tribal language, immersed in their traditional ways, and having grown up on tribal land—to the other end of the spectrum of having limited or no exposure to their language or tribal traditions and having grown up in an urban community. In this study, I asked participants to use their own criteria to define how culturally traditional they considered themselves to be. Based on their descriptions, such as participating in ceremony, or speaking their tribal language, I created four categories: (a) very, (b) fairly, (c) somewhat, and (d) less, as one way to identify possible patterns in students' narratives around writing. Terry Huffman finds that a high degree of traditionalism positively influences Native students' identity and confidence in college. Barbara Monroe explains that for American Indians, defining identity entails "an intimate, coterminous weave of personal autonomy, family lineage, and ancestral land" (324).

In this essay, I draw from the findings in my study to illustrate students' emerging identities as academic writers, and the role of culture in shaping

their writing. In line with Roz Ivanič's model of writer identity, one of the most interesting findings that emerged in this study was with respect to the authorial self. Among the students, perceived sense of self as an author spanned descriptions of "having voice" to a rejection of identifying as a writer. Specifically, depicting and describing themselves as academic writers proved challenging for some participants. Students' self-portraits provided the initial clue that they were aware to varying degrees of themselves as writers and what being an academic writer meant.

In her 1999 *JBW* essay, "Investigating our Discursive History: *JBW* and the Construction of the 'Basic Writer's' Identity," Laura Gray-Rosendale notes efforts to shift the field away from the diagnosis-cure model. In her 2006 follow-up review, the author identifies three new approaches to the construction of basic writing student identity: 1) in situ; 2) theory, academic discourse, and/or history reformer; and 3) set of practices in action. Gray-Rosendale places her essay on Native American writers, "Rethinking the Basic Writing Frontier," in the category of context-dependent theorizations of basic writers' identities. Similarly, I maintain that identities of Native writers hold the power to reform our theories, and offer place-based considerations for practice. For example, tribal college students are likely to have different attitudes toward and experiences with writing than Native students at a predominantly white institution (PWI). I am particularly interested in how cultural factors in different learning contexts influence Native college students' experiences with and attitudes toward writing, and consequently shape their writing identities. I recognize that the concept of culture in Indigenous contexts is not separate from the histories of independent nations, the legacy of colonization, nor the persisting politics around indigeneity that together necessitate a unique framework for conceptualizing the academic writing identities of Native students.

A great deal can be learned from Native American students' perceptions of writing, and of themselves as writers to inform current theories and pedagogical approaches. Only a glimpse is available into their attitudes toward writing (D. Wilson) as previous research has been preoccupied with learning styles (Macias; More; Swisher and Deyhle; Van Hamme) and effective teaching strategies (Frestedt and Sanchez; Wescott), approaches that tend to reinforce the deficit model. Thus, not surprisingly, Native students have been marginalized in basic writing research and sometimes automatically tracked into remedial English based on tribal affiliation, and labeled as having ESL issues (Gray-Rosendale et al.). A concerted effort to understand Native students' writing development and experiences with college composition

is long overdue. Continuing to lump Native writers together with all basic writers means ignoring the unique cultures and languages of the more than 560 federally-recognized tribes within the United States, consequences of their systematic defrauding by means of the written word, and the assimilationist practices of Western education that persist today. If we acknowledge that "learning to write is always ongoing, situational, and involving cultural and ideological immersion" (Scott 48), then we need to examine the ways in which our classrooms might be promoting assimilation by restricting Native students to a dominant discourse or worldview. For example, the contrast between Western linear and Native circular thinking (Fixico) can manifest in students' struggles to write according to a linear process (Chávez; Macias). A Native student's "disorganized" essay could very well be a manifestation of circular thinking, and such a recognition can help both instructor and student transform what seem to be writing deficits into assets. Thus, our conceptual framework must account for Indigenous ontologies.

While we can expect Native "basic writers" to share characteristics of other basic writers, we need to better understand what sets them apart—not to address deficiencies, but rather to identify strengths and assets. Sweeney Windchief and Darold Joseph remind us that postsecondary institutions still maintain assimilationist practices that imply a need for Indigenous students to set aside their identity in order to succeed. The authors advocate for a recognition of the unique cultural and linguistic traits of students as assets rather than deficits. Bryan Brayboy points out that the oral tradition, the Indigenous vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and culture, has not always been valued or privileged in Western education. As a result, American Indians have often struggled with acquiring academic language, and have therefore been viewed as deficient. It is encouraging that the field of composition studies is beginning to embrace the notion that people's difficulties with writing are not necessarily a result of a lack of intelligence or limited literacy skills, but rather a disconnect with participating in a particular community (Roozen). Thus, we should consider how our course content and personal assumptions and expectations with respect to writing might be alienating Native students. Or in more positive terms, we need to ask ourselves how to recognize and draw upon students' cultural assets, such as orality, relationality, connection to land and water, and respect for elders. Ray Barnhardt and Angayuqaq Kawagley propose that Indigenous ways of knowing and Western formal education can be blended to create a system of education in which Indigenous students not only survive, but thrive, academically.

The influence of cultural identity on writing practices can be situated within our current conceptualizations of writing. In his discussion of a threshold concept about identities, Tony Scott posits that if we subscribe to the understanding that "writing is an ideological, socially involved practice" (50), then by extension we need to recognize that writers are not separate from the writing they produce. In fact, as Kevin Roozen argues, the act of writing is less about using a particular skill set than about developing a sense of who we are. Culture partly defines our students, but their identities and identifications do not necessarily produce positive experiences in the real world or in academic writing. While international students may perceive their culture as assets in their writing (Cadman; Fisher), historically marginalized minorities are more likely to have experiences that attempt to negate their cultural identities and rhetoric. As Barbara Monroe explains, "because discourse and identity are mutually constituent, involuntary minorities are even more likely [than immigrants] to actively maintain their traditional ways with words as acts of resistance against cultural erosion and loss" (323). Therefore, exploring the intersections of Native Americans students' cultural and writing identities is important for understanding their writing practices and development. Moreover, Indigenous epistemologies can play a powerful role in Native students' "survivance" (to borrow the term from Gerald Vizenor) in the construction of their academic writing identities, articulation of what they want from writing, and reframing of assignments.

What American Indians want from writing, or conversely what they don't want, was explored at length by Scott Lyons almost two decades ago and subsequently advanced by others. Lyons' "rhetorical sovereignty" aims to restore Native communities' faith in writing that was repeatedly compromised by the hundreds of treaties dishonored by Whites and then by boarding school experiences, and to reframe writing as an important tool that can empower Native peoples. Rebecca Gardner uses the lens of rhetorical sovereignty to interpret findings about the writing processes and awareness of language agency of four American Indian college students. As an instructor, she hopes that students use their writing to reflect on their lives, cultures, and roles in shaping them. In a similar vein, Gloria Dyc proposes a tribal-specific literacy fusing oral traditions and essayist literacy: "one that embraces the cultural values and language practices of the people and ultimately empowers the learner" (212). Similarly, Christie Toth draws upon David Gold's "locally responsive pedagogy" (6-7) to promote social justice in her basic writing course at Diné College. It is noteworthy that Toth's tribal college context and mission drive her pedagogical decisions to structure her

basic writing course around "the exigencies of U.S. settler colonialism" (4). She invites students to consider the relevance of writing in their lives and to use it to further the interests of their communities given the structures and ideologies of the settler state that attempt to obscure the existence of Indigenous peoples and/or prevent their survival as distinct nations and cultures. My aim is to build upon this rich discourse around academic survivance and these culturally affirming and context-specific pedagogies of literacy. Incorporating Indigenous literacies into Basic Writing as a field has the potential to not only affirm and empower Native student writers, but also enable composition instructors and their students to gain a better understanding of and appreciation for Indigenous thinking and rhetoric within specific historical and place-based contexts.

Methods: A Writer Identity Model for Research

As writing instructors can attest, student identity formation unfolds through academic writing. Romy Clark and Roz Ivanič in their seminal work, "The Politics of Writing," assert, "[w]riting cannot be separated from the writer's identity" (134). Likewise, Theresa Lillis postulates, "meaning making is not just about making texts, but is also about the making of our selves, in a process of becoming" (48). In her study, Gardner asks her Native American participants to imagine how people in their lives would define who they are, and then to describe those identities with the help of "mind maps." Their exploration and positioning of self serves as a starting point for all writing. Similarly, I aim for students to reflect on how their identities and corresponding "lenses" by which they make sense of the world shape what and how they write, and also how they see themselves as writers.

Ivanič's writer identity model—consisting of the autobiographical self, the discoursal self, and the writer's authorial presence in the text—is embedded in the writer's socio-cultural context. For Ivanič, a writer's "voice" is reflected in the decisions made regarding language (discoursal self) and content (authorial self). As Barbara Bird beautifully explains, Ivanič recognizes that for students to develop a "holistic and authentic writer identity rather than a superficial, mimicked writer performance" (66), they must engage in negotiating what values or roles pertaining to writing they choose to adopt as well as reject. I apply Ivanič's model in combination with the concept of "survivance" to interpret findings from my study about the writing decisions and identity constructions of Native writers. In particular, I am curious to what extent and in what ways students are blending their autobiographical

identities (life stories, cultural influences) with their academic ones. In the discoursal dimension, I am looking for interpretations of expectations with regard to academic writing conventions. Finally, in the authorial component, I explore confidence not only in terms of effectiveness as a writer, but also the extent to which students recognize themselves as possessing the authority to voice their ideas as part of the larger academic discourse.

Sample Group. Given limited knowledge about Native American writers, I wanted to capture the lived experiences of students through qualitative analysis of narrative data. Furthermore, I aspired to engage with more than the two to six participants typical of research with Native American college writers. Such small samples problematize attempts to draw conclusions given the diversity of tribes, the cultural identity continuum, and tribal college versus other institutional contexts. Thus, after receiving IRB approval and signing memoranda of understanding with two tribal colleges, I elicited the help of either the dean of students at the tribal colleges or Native American student support services to ask first-year students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native whether they were interested in taking part in the study. I ended up interviewing a total of twenty students (eight females and twelve males ranging in age from 18 to +40) representing eight different American Indian and Alaska Native tribes; nine of the twenty were enrolled at either Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC) or Little Big Horn College (LBHC), and eleven were enrolled in their first year at Montana State University (MSU), taking at least two courses requiring writing. CDKC and LBHC are located on their respective Indian reservations five to six hours from MSU, located in Bozeman. The tribal colleges each enroll less than 400 students while MSU enrolls more than 15,000. While the tribal colleges mainly serve their community members, MSU serves Native students from within and beyond Montana with a Native student population of around 3% at the time of this study. (For an in-depth look at the unique learning environments provided by tribal colleges and tribal college students' perceptions of PWIs, see Polacek).

A Two-Part Interview. The semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A) included a task for participants to draw a portrait depicting themselves as an academic writer, followed by completion of a flow-chart worksheet (see Appendix B) to shift the discussion to their writing process. By means of the self-portraiture, I aspired "to tap into an often underutilized yet powerful interface between the mind, emotions, and imagination to present ideas in representational signs and symbols" (Welkener and Baxter Magolda 580). Eliciting cartoon-like illustrations from writers about their literacy acts and

dispositions has rendered visible the linguistic and cultural struggles and metalinguistic awareness of multilingual basic writers (Wang), and articulated the challenges and successes with the process of writing across time-place-events (Prior and Shipka). The self-portraiture in this study invited unconditional depictions of self, including cultural representations, and unveiled participants' understandings of and dispositions toward academic writing.

The flow-chart worksheet provided a common language to discuss the writing process and allowed for comparisons across participants[3]. It consisted of 30 bubbles with descriptions of what a writer might do as part of the writing process, such as "Talk to someone about assignment and ideas before starting to write"; "Imagine the whole 'story' (message or point) before beginning to write"; and "Read paper aloud to listen for mistakes." I chose statements that characterized "good writers" based on the literature as well as a few that Native students might prefer given the use of oral language or more holistic thinking. There were also two blank bubbles for participants to write their own statements describing what they did as writers that were not already listed. Students selected the bubbles that described aspects of their writing process, and then elaborated, for example, whom they preferred to approach for writing help.

Correlation. Students' identities and "voices" as writers and descriptions of their writing are presented in their own words. I employed the constant comparative method and member checking (Holton) to help corroborate findings. The study also included semi-structured interviews with faculty and staff at all three institutions who were involved with the teaching of writing or providing tutoring. After transcribing verbatim audiotaped data, I sent all participants their member-checking files via electronic mail, but also provided those who had a follow-up interview with a printed copy of the summary and asked them to review it at the beginning of the session. I used the QSR NVivo software program to aid organization, coding, and analysis of data[4] on the following aspects of participants' writing experiences: motivations, definitions of success, prior experiences, self-concept, academic writing literacy, writing process, instructor feedback, and writing resources.

Students' Self-Portraits Reveal their Writing Identities

In line with qualitative research methodology, I looked for themes in participants' illustrations, and their descriptions and explanations of what they had drawn. The following categories emerged that captured the

identities of these writers: (1) Seekers, (2) Feelers, (3) Planners, (4) Travelers, (5) Learners, and (6) Creators. These themes are not exclusive, and students' illustrations could potentially fit under more than one category; however, I found these categorizations to best capture the prevailing themes in students' narratives. While these categories reflect the degree of students' awareness of themselves as college writers at the time of the interview, they provide but a glimpse into their actual writing development. Participants had the option of providing a pseudonym to provide anonymity or using their real name to be acknowledged for their participation, which is more in line with Indigenous research methodologies in terms of addressing confidentiality in a manner desired by the research participants (S. Wilson). The tribal college students preferred their real names, while the students at the PWI chose pseudonyms.

Seeking answers at the threshold of academic writing. The **Seekers**— Robert, Jim, Autumn, Lionel—(see Figures 1a-1d, respectively) were students who indicated that they were either unsure of what an academic writer was or how they themselves embodied that role. It is as if these students were at the threshold of their academic writing engagement, as if peering into the classroom to see how academic writing practices and expectations aligned with their own perceptions. An image of a sports writer popped into Robert's head when asked to draw himself as an academic writer. He connected the image with college writing because it depicted "using your own words," "telling a first-hand view of what's happening," and "relaying information," but he expressed uncertainty as to whether these were a part of academic writing. Similarly, Jim candidly shared his lack of understanding of academic writing and demonstrated a reluctance to self-identify as a writer, "I just drew a person who still doesn't know. I know there are certain types of writing; I haven't really found a comfortable way with writing my papers. I don't think I am much of a writer." Robert and Jim were first-semester students, and even though I talked with them on two separate occasions, they had limited experience regarding academic writing.

In terms of Ivanič's model, the Seekers do not have a developed authorial self and are still searching for who they are as writers. Autumn drew a picture of a classroom with a teacher at the front. When asked where she saw herself, she replied with a laugh, "In the hall." She admittedly was not eager to "come in." Lionel offered a big question mark as his self-portrait. When prodded as to how he could do so well in his composition course, he retorted that expressing his ideas in writing was not in his nature, but he could do it for an assignment. This suggests that Lionel may be more of a competent academic writer than he perceived himself to be or wanted to

Figure 1a. A Seeker: Robert's Self-portrait.

Figure 1b. A Seeker: Jim's Self-portrait.

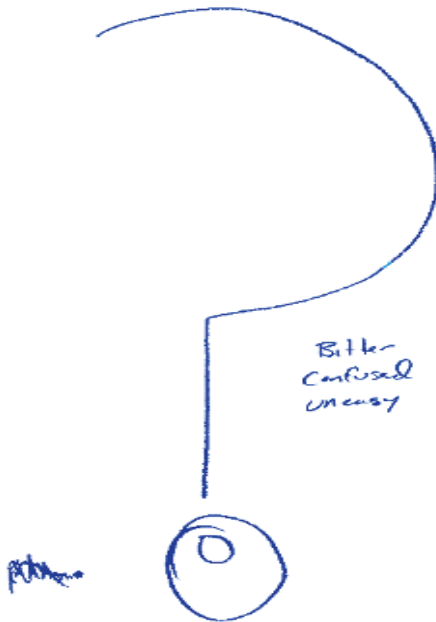**Figure 1c**. A Seeker: Autumn's Self-portrait.

Figure 1d. A Seeker: Lionel's Self-portrait.

admit. The complexity of this student may also stem from a misunderstanding of academic writing since he expressed doubt that he would be able to write fiction given that he could only write based on personal experience. Therefore, it seems that Autumn and Lionel could not draw themselves as academic writers because they were unsure of their role and/or whether they wanted to embrace it. Clark and Ivanič explain that "feeling the right to exert a presence in the text is often related to the sense of power and status writers bring with them from their life-history" (152). Autumn's detachment from the academic writing space, more than Lionel's possible misconceptions, could signal cultural dissonance or rejection of an environment that otherwise does not feel open and accepting.

Unpacking **feelings** *about constructions of writing identity.* The **Feelers**—Kyle, Samuel, Shanelle—(see Figures 2a-2c, respectively) principally identified with writing on an emotional level. Kyle expressed being happy upon completing an assignment. Samuel described his boredom, frustration, and anger when attempting to write a paper on a topic that did not interest him. Shanelle used the emblem of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Tribe as the foundation of her drawing to symbolize the important place writing had in her heart and how happy it made her feel:

> And then the teepee represents our home, like where our heart is. And writing comes from my heart. . . . And since I know how to write all kinds of different ways, it's like how my clans are. Since there are so many. It just makes me happy. . . . So it's like a sunny day in my teepee. (Shanelle)

The Feelers illustrate students who want to do well on assignments but in order to do so need to represent themselves in ways in which they are not entirely comfortable. For example, Shanelle explained that she was happy writing poems for herself—the type of writing she associated with her teepee illustration—but was less confident when she wrote for an audience. Thus, in terms of Ivanič's model, these students' feelings of uncertainty and frustration may result from conflicts within the discoursal self and attempts to position themselves in ways that don't align with their identities. The Feelers are more experienced than the Seekers in recognizing writing expectations. However, they have mixed emotions about academic writing, and fulfill assignments without necessarily connecting personally. These students seem to be vested emotionally in completing their assignments, while at the same time reserving their personal engagement for Facebook or poetry. We
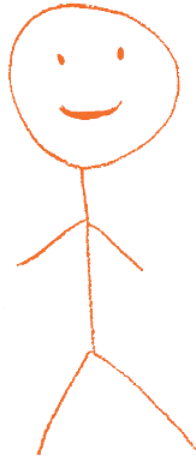
Figure 2a. A Feeler: Kyle's Self-portrait.
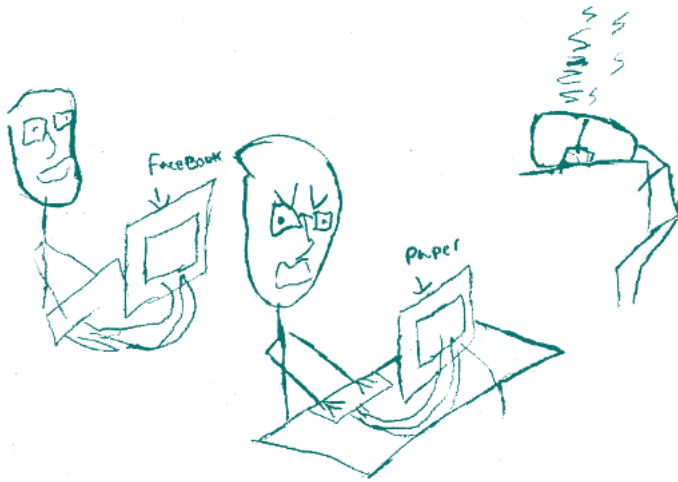
Figure 2b. A Feeler: Samuel's Self-portrait.

should recall the importance that Ivanič places on negotiation in identity development. Perhaps these students are enacting an identity in response to what they should be writing (Scott), or are divorcing the self from their writing in order to be successful (Windchief and Joseph).

   Planning as a means of advancing discoursal identity. Five of the participants demonstrated metacognition with respect to academic writing by reflecting on different aspects of their writing process. These **Planners**— Will, Jessica, Albert, Ed, Danielle—(see Figures 3a-3e) viewed writing as a
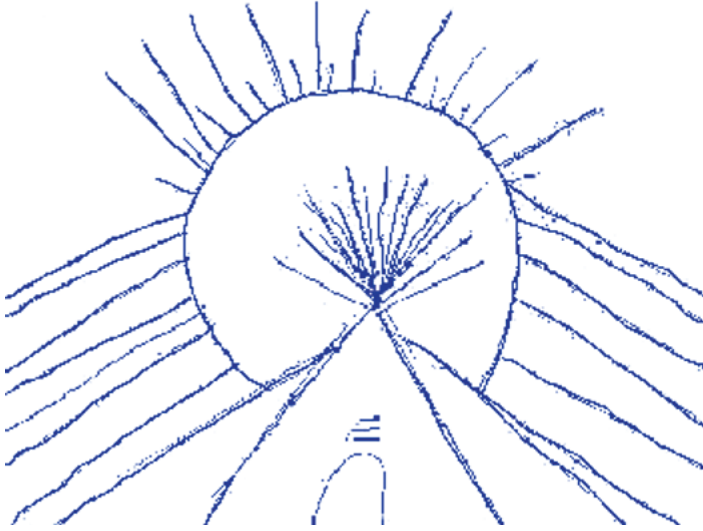
Figure 2c. A Feeler: Shanelle's Self-portrait.

series of steps and/or reflected on one aspect of their overall writing process. Will described himself staring at a blank computer screen with his notes and textbook open while he tried to analyze a reading to connect his ideas and arguments. Jessica focused on brainstorming ideas. Albert and Ed, both nontraditionally-aged students, described the actual writing as the least daunting part of completing a writing assignment. Ed recognized that "the research part and putting it all together is the big part of making a paper. And the actual . . . writing part is, I'll be honest, not that hard. It's just sitting down and doing it." Albert was aware of the importance and difficulty of successfully communicating his message to an audience, "for me the dream and the idea of what I am writing is easy to put down but to actually make it readable for somebody else is where I am lost." Danielle depicted the drafting process with one peer review and a final draft that usually earned her a B grade. She was satisfied with writing papers in this way and doubted further drafts would result in a better product. Nevertheless, she understood that even good writers revise. These students provided snapshots of the parts of the writing process that seemed to draw their time and energies, and at least partially defined what academic writing entailed.

The Planners' awareness of and engagement in the writing process means that they were shaping their discoursal self. It is not clear if they were concerned more with the content or their language, but they were focused on

Figure 3a. A Planner: Will's Self-portrait.

Figure 3b. A Planner: Jessica's Self-portrait.

shaping the message they wanted to communicate. These students' perceived success of their discourse fostered their burgeoning confidence and identity as writers. At the end of their first year, Will shared that he had learned he could handle college writing, and Danielle reflected, "I am getting to know who I am as a college writer but I'd definitely like to work more on trying to become a strong writer." Ed did not feel eloquent but nonetheless efficient in his writing. Although not having written much before college, by her second semester Jessica was beginning to identify as a writer.

Albert recounted how in researching his high school paper on Manifest Destiny he had wanted to speak out on the topic. Since "it wouldn't have

Figure 3c. A Planner: Albert's Self-portrait.

Figure 3d. A Planner: Ed's Self-portrait.

been very well received to speak out vocally," he found his voice through writing: "I still have that paper and I just remember thinking, 'This is the way I can shout . . . my voice and write it down on paper and somebody would have to listen to it, even though it was just one teacher'." Albert added that
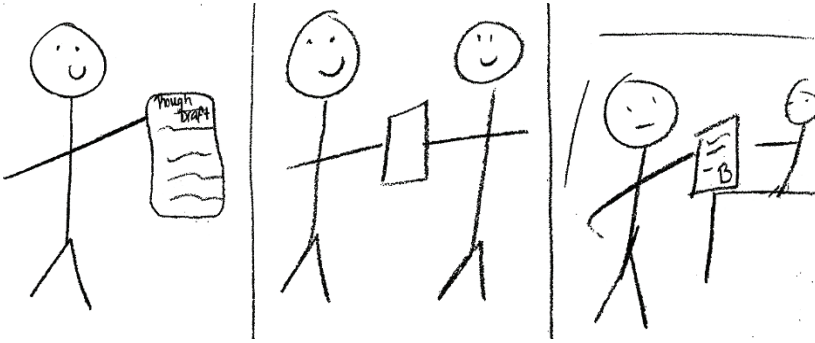
Figure 3e. A Planner: Danielle's Self-portrait.

furthering his skills as a writer in college "has really helped me to fan that passion cuz I think the more I learn the more confident I'll be."

In contrast to the Seekers and Feelers, the Planners not only demonstrate greater confidence as writers, but also exercise rhetorical sovereignty (Lyons) in basing decisions regarding topics and revision, for example, on their own interests as opposed to principally an instructor's expectations. The positive connection between students' identification as writers and perceived skills isn't surprising, but I wonder, given the limited visibility and marginalization of Native Americans in mainstream society, whether writing assignments that serve as a platform for students to explore and project their voices do not also positively impact their development as writers.

Traversing the path to authorial identity. The **Travelers**— Quincy, Juan, Dieter, Ellsworth—(see Figures 4a-4d, respectively) were similar to the Planners in their recognition that they were developing as writers, but they were more reflective on where they were along their path. These students' journey of discovery also transcended the academic domain and intertwined with other aspects of their life. Quincy and Juan were in their second semester of college and used similar metaphors to depict the long and hilly process of both becoming a writer and completing a writing assignment. For Quincy, "a sunset . . . the end of I guess whatever you are trying to do is always beautiful" because "any sunset can have its own . . . different kind of beauty in someone else's mind." Juan used the metaphor of a rider to illustrate how he acquires writing skills to become more colorful (beautiful, skilled, complex):

> There's me on a horse . . . of many colors. It kind of signifies I have a
> lot of traits and it's come from where everyone else has come from
> and I've made it on top of a hill but there's many more hills to climb

and that's kind of incorporated with the colors I guess . . . it brings more color than I used to have I guess.

Dieter, a first-semester tribal college student, drew the world in a large sky with rays of the sun to demonstrate being "high on writing" and express the potential in becoming a good writer, "[I]f I was a good writer, enough to be at the college level. . . I think that possibilities are endless because I think if you can write. . . you can write a story for somebody who can't speak or something and it would be good because everybody has a story." His use of "if I was a good writer . . . at the college level" suggests that he did not perceive himself to be a strong academic writer, but he also expressed an awareness that becoming a good writer is a process and that he would become a good writer "sooner or later." Ellsworth disclosed a lack of confidence in his ability to complete his writing assignments, but also reflected the motivations of the other Travelers in his desire to "touch the sky as a writer." In Juan's words, these students feel they "gonna have a lot more places to go" both in developing as writers and in terms of what they can accomplish through their writing.

Given that the Travelers all expressed having something worth saying, they are on the road to encountering their authorial presence. Quincy explained that he wanted his writing to be judged based on its own merits and not in comparison to what others have written. Juan provided an example of having a "clear voice" in an argumentative essay on the effects of prison and showing the reader why a certain viewpoint is important. He elaborated that it is not effective just to quote others to provide a convincing argument and strong voice: "It may be *your* [emphasis in original] writing but you're reflecting on their paper and you have to have your own opinion on it and show your opinion." Dieter and Ellsworth perceived written discourse as a way to lend their voice to others. Dieter hoped to write people's personal stories or work for the tribe, and Ellsworth composed song lyrics to express the struggles he and other youth faced in his community. Similarly to the Planners, the Travelers found a personal reason to write, but for the latter, the purpose also included an element of agency (Gardner) in writing to a specific audience or on behalf of others. Furthermore, Quincy clearly embraced academic survivance in defining his expectations for assessment by specifically resisting being compared to others and underscoring the importance of his authorial voice.

*Conceptualizing **learning** within the writing classroom.* While all of the students reflected on the autobiographical self as developing writers, three
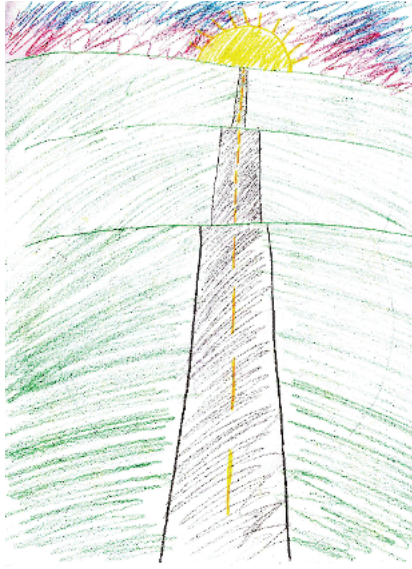
Figure 4a. A Traveler: Quincy's Self-portrait.

Figure 4b. A Traveler: Juan's Self-portrait.

Figure 4c. A Traveler: Dieter's Self-portrait.

Figure 4d. A Traveler: Ellsworth's Self-portrait.

of the participants focused specifically on where and how they were learning to write academically. These **Learners**—Dawn, Victoria, Courtney—(see Figures 5a-5c, respectively) depicted themselves as writers in the classroom. Dawn saw herself at a desk, "taking notes on what I am supposed to be writing academically. . . what I am supposed to be using for my writing." Victoria drew herself watching the instructor write on the board, whom she identified as an important model, "I think the only way that I can learn is if somebody shows me before I do it." Courtney created an aerial view of

herself in a classroom surrounded by other students collaboratively learning about college writing. An interesting aspect of her image is the absence of the instructor, which Courtney explained is because of the role students play in teaching one another, "[I]n our class you help each other out and if one has a problem we help 'em and if we all have the same problem we help each other."

Whether taking notes or collaborating with peers, these students' illustrations depict what it means for them to learn in a classroom setting. Unlike the Planners, the Learners were not focused on an aspect of their writing, rather they were attempting to uncover the practices and discourses they needed to assume as college writers. These three students provide insights into the learning spaces in which they readily engage: those in which they can observe others model academic discourse, as well as work collaboratively with other students. In the Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications section, I will address the significance of this variability in classroom experiences, and offer suggestions for creating a supportive learning space.

Creating academic discourse with authorial presence. Just as all the students are learners, they are also creators in the sense of producing writing for their courses. However, one participant, Jane (see Figure 6), categorized as a **Creator**[5], drew a self-portrait that reflected the nature of her written products. Jane was in her second-semester of college but because of Advanced Placement credits in English had placed out of first-year writing. She provided a unique glimpse into the experiences of first-year students who were placed in a higher-level writing course. Jane drew herself with a paper in hand with "the story kind of jumping off the page." The flowers and butterflies represented the creative energy of her words. When asked how the illustration would change for a chemistry lab, she reflected, "Maybe I'd have scientific concepts jumping out or like equations for how to find the density of something jumping out. . . maybe I'd have photons and atoms. . . things that pertain to chemistry jumping out."

Jane clearly anticipated her written work to turn out a certain way. Although in her self-portrait she did not focus on the process leading up to the final product, her descriptions of her writing suggest an awareness of discourse communities (English composition vs. chemistry) and the need to employ different strategies within them. As a Creator, Jane considered the degree to which her writing captured her readers' attention. She demonstrated a strong discoursal self in her choice of certain discourse conventions to stylize her language. Jane also remembered favorable feedback from high school that indicated a notable authorial presence in her writing, "I had a lot

Figure 5a. A Learner: Dawn's Self-portrait.

Figure 5b. A Learner: Victoria's Self-portrait.

Figure 5c. A Learner: Courtney's Self-portrait.

of teachers that said I have really good voice." Among the participants, Jane was the most developed as a writer in terms of confidence, metacognition, and skills writing across disciplines.

Describing their self-portraits provided a starting point for the students to talk about their writing and themselves as writers. These self-portraits provide insights into the threads that weave students' academic writing identities: past experiences with writing, confidence as writers, understanding of writing expectations, and the writing process. A self-portrait with the "self" missing reveals something that the student likely would not have been able to express in words. Illustrations invite metaphors and descriptive language such as "a sunny day in my teepee, "a beautiful sunset," "a horse of many colors," and "words as flowers and butterflies." Drawing also creates a safe space for expressing emotions and insecurities. Overall, the self-portraits offer a snapshot of where the students are in their journey as college writers, and ways in which they perceive or do not perceive themselves in that role. Conversations with participants also revealed that their self-perception as academic writers was influenced by how important they perceived writing to be within the context of their families and communities.

Writing Identity Shaped by Families and Communities

Given the historical context of writing in tribal communities and the significance of family and relationships, I included questions in the interview protocol that explored possible connections to writing and students' extended circle. To gain insights into writing in their communities and families, I asked students about role models in their lives who were also writers of some kind, and how important they thought writing was in their community. *I found that students with immediate family members or close friends who wrote regularly or who encouraged them to write regularly tended to view writing in the community as important.* One of these students recalled writing as a way to have fun:

> I'd say [writing] was pretty important because . . . me and all my cousins and some of my friends, we'd watch a movie and we'd start writing about it and then we'd kind of guess the ending and then we would watch the movie and the ending would be like the complete opposite of it. It was pretty fun. (Jessica)

Another participant shared how her mother assigned writing during her high school years:
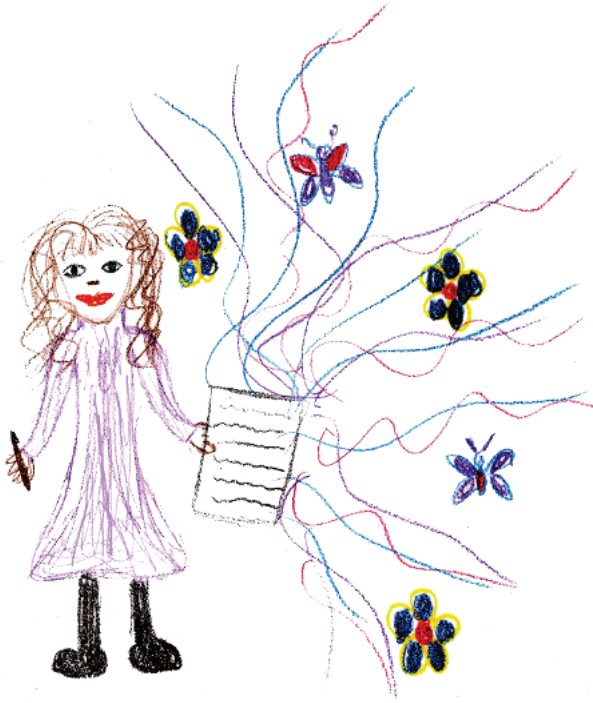
Figure 6. A Creator: Jane's Self-Portrait.

> From when I was fourteen all the way up until I was seventeen . . .
> my mom made sure [my sister and I] read articles [and] maybe like
> out of the newspaper and there was this one book I really liked . .
> . and she would have us write maybe about that much of what we
> read and to this day she still has them. (Courtney)

A third participant related how one friend with a weak educational
background and rough life went on to attend graduate school, and how a
relative of that individual received a perfect score on the writing section of
the ACT. The fact that Native Americans were achieving success in the area
of writing made an impression on these participants.

Native American authors and famous orators were also among stu-
dents' influences. The words of Chief Plenty Coup and Chief Joseph inspired
two students. Sherman Alexie was the most cited influential Indian author,
mentioned by three students, one of whom tried to emulate his style of
writing, but Leslie Marmon Silko, James Welch, and Woody Kipp also made
the list. Lastly, one participant depicted his elders and teachers in his self-

portrait as flying birds, watching over him and influencing decisions about his writing. The fact that some of the students' role models include orators addresses the importance of acknowledging the oral tradition as valid and valuable as written discourse (Brayboy).

With respect to their own writing practices, participants frequently involved people in their extended circle in their process of planning or reviewing their assignments. The third most cited writing strategy from the flow-chart activity was: have friends, classmates, professors who are good writers proofread. Most of the students either asked friends or classmates to read their work, but two turned to family members. Additionally, a few had received proofreading assistance from past or current instructors or Native American program advisors. Talking to someone before beginning to write, especially to come up with a topic, was also a popular practice. One described consulting with her sister as a part of her planning process:

> [I]f it's something I am interested in or I know someone else's opinion will help, I usually talk to them first, like my sister. I always do that with her cuz me and her have a lot of the same ideas and if there is a good topic we can talk about it for days and we can get into pretty good discussions. (Danielle)

For Juan, just being at home enabled his creative juices to start flowing, "[D]uring the weekend I'll work on [the assignment] cuz I'll probably go home and have time to think on it and other ideas come back from just being home; it's like a comfort zone." The power of place is especially striking in Juan's example, and underscores the strength that Native students draw from their families and home communities (Huffman et al.). The influence of students' families and communities went deeper than providing ideas for content and help with proofreading. In the next section I share how specific aspects of their culture and community shaped their writing perceptions and practices.

Writing Identity and Practices Shaped by Culture

Aspects of participants' cultural backgrounds dotted the landscape of their writing experiences and shaped the development of their identities and practices as writers. Participants' autobiographical selves emerged from the data in references to the influence of tribal culture[6]. While my interview questions did not directly address relationships between culture and writing, sometimes the topic arose in the course of conversations. Naturally, a number of par-

ticipants considered Native American-related topics for their assignments, such as aspects of reservation life, Indian mascots, or being bicultural. One student expressed a conscious effort to write his papers from a "Native perspective. . . Like the community aspect. . . like seeing things as it affects the whole instead of just one's self" (Juan).

Possibly as a reflection of the collectivist values of their cultures, two participants mentioned using writing as a tool to create positive change beyond themselves. Juan linked agency with writing, as a "willing[ness] to do something and. . . make the world a better place to live." Further reflecting on his self-portrait, he applied the concept of "color" to explain how sharing with others what he had learned was for him part of being a successful writer, "I'm colorful as a writer. I can go off about anything but. . . just incorporating these colors into the aspect of writing, not just doing things one way because that gets bland for me, but. . . just reflecting the stuff I've been taught, showing them to others."

Dieter also envisioned that becoming a good writer could enable him to help others. He was more specific in identifying his tribe as the intended beneficiary of his success, and gave examples of how writing could translate into a profession he could practice in his community:

> I think I can help anybody I think just by, like if I became real smart in English, real good at it, I think I could come back here and work for the tribe or something like that. Or, something else, psychologist or something. Let's see. Help other people, like teach or something. Or journalism or something like that.

When further prompted about the relationship between writing and helping others, he confirmed its importance and gave a practical example of how he could give others a voice through writing, "I could be able to tell somebody else's story or talk about like struggles and stuff like that, whatever people go through."

In contrast, two participants at different tribal colleges did not recognize such inviting opportunities for the use of writing in their communities. As Ed explained, being a good writer on the reservation leads to an involvement in tribal politics, "Well, I don't want to say, I want to be into politics here on the Rez or anything like that but I think that if writing [for] a person who's eloquent and who can voice their opinions that's where they are headed. And that's not what I want. I just want to survive." Thus, these tribal college students shared a perception of the role of writing in their

respective Indian communities that deterred them from wanting to be an especially skilled writer. In the next section, faculty in those communities expound upon this striking observation.

Several participants shared ways in which tribal language, and other aspects of culture including the oral tradition (history, teachings, and traditions transmitted orally) shaped their identity and practices as academic writers. A tribal college student enrolled in a Native language course expressed a desire to not just speak, but also write in his tribal language, which he saw as potentially helping his English writing skills. Additionally, a non-tribal college student explained that when he was able to go home and reconnect with where he was from, he found it easier to write on given paper topics. Similarly, in reflecting on the specific influences that contributed to how she viewed herself as a writer, Jessica commented, "Probably I would have to say my culture and like my background from all the stories that my grandma and my mom and everyone told me." Juan described learning from his grandfather how to connect the oral tradition to stories in written form. Even after his grandfather's passing, he emulates the bridging of the written and spoken word by reading a book or story and then talking about it with his mother, inspiring her to want to read it as well. Juan was also able to identify aspects of orality in his writing style, such as having an interesting angle, including humor, and focusing on the "journey" he creates for his reader.

Overall, students described the influence of their culture and the oral tradition on their writing in positive terms, especially with regard to their autobiographical and authorial selves. However, in discussing aspects of their discoursal selves, I noticed that some students were critical of their organization of ideas. Students described themselves as "skipping around," "jumping from idea to idea," "going off in tangents or meandering," "shifting in tones," and "clustering ideas that don't belong." While non-Native students could just as easily describe themselves in these ways, it is important to keep in mind that these labels represent expectations for linearity valued in Western discourse that are contrary to Indigenous thinking. Employing orality—verbal expression in writing, particularly as it applies to societies where writing is fairly recent (Catlin)—sometimes blurs the distinction between oral and written discourse, manifesting in a non-linear organizational style, non-standard grammar, homophone errors, and missing punctuation. Although the students did not attribute their divergence from linearity to a strong oral tradition, the faculty participants confirmed this connection and underscored other findings that emerged from the student interviews.

Faculty Confirming the Influence of Community and Culture on Writing Identity

I found that faculty and support staff in my study were engaged in supporting not only the writing skills, but notably also the writing identity development of their students. These faculty—both Native and non-Native— viewed writing identity as intertwined with cultural identity, and reflected on how their students' autobiographical identities may be influencing their decisions as writers. One theorized, "[t]here's a cultural dissonance to who they are and . . . having worked in . . . other parts of the country and looking at the struggles that minority students have, it often comes down to language and culture and identity and their [self-]esteem . . . And if they don't have the confidence, if they don't view themselves [in that space], or if the environment or the classroom is not conducive to learning, they'll shut down." Others observed that students' difficulties formulating opinions stemmed from the perceived lack of value or validity of their ideas. Two faculty participants at different tribal colleges explained how politics in the community and fears of expressing opposing viewpoints, or the crab in the bucket syndrome (i.e. cultural importance of standing with one's community) deterred students from expressing their opinions or even excelling in writing. For culturally traditional students, persuasive writing and taking a stand on an issue were more of a struggle than for more assimilated students. However, it was observed that maintaining one's traditional culture and language increased confidence in writing and college persistence. One tribal faculty member noted, "I found that the [students from] really traditional families who are bilingual are actually higher in their academic quality of work. But then when you have the more modern student . . . they express their confidence a little more loudly." To help students develop their authorial selves, faculty encouraged students to study literature and other forms of expression, including beadwork and traditional Indian songs, and to trust their own opinions.

Aspects of students' discoursal identity development surfaced in interviews with faculty in discussing the influence culture has on thinking and organization of ideas. A tribal college faculty participant explained that because of the nature of oral discourse strategies, some students tend to repeat themselves when they write, "You'll bring back a point, embellish on it or you won't get to the point. The journey to get to the point is equally important because it is a descriptive language." Another faculty member remarked that the more culturally traditional students tended to write as if

they were "talking in the good way." This "writing in the Indian way" means establishing a certain mood or feeling, and using facts in support of that goal, but to an outsider the train of thought may seem rambling and without a point. These observations echo student participants' self-criticism of "going off in tangents," which undoubtedly stem from having experienced their style of writing being labeled as redundant and incoherent. Brayboy would likely deem such negative perceptions around orality-enhanced writing as detrimental to American Indian students' academic writing success.

While students may not be cognizant of all the ways that their culture and community influence their writing identity, perceptions, and practices, faculty and writing support staff working directly with Native students can pinpoint many ways in which these interactions manifest. These influences naturally weave themselves into the development of the autobiographical identity, but they continue to stitch their threads through the discoursal and authorial identities as well. Faculty observations related to the benefit of strong cultural ties and bilingualism align with the research on tradition-alism and academic success (Huffman et al.). Also, the cited importance of the classroom environment in determining students' willingness or ability to engage as writers underscores the need to be cognizant of exclusionary acts on the part of classmates or isolating classroom discussions that could contribute to a student feeling disconnected from a particular community (Roozen).

An important caveat for this section is that I chose to highlight faculty and staff participants who shared observations regarding the influence of community and culture on their students' writing, and these participants' ideas happened to align with research on Native writers, and support many of the thoughts shared by the student participants. This does not mean that all the faculty and staff were similarly knowledgeable about cultural influences on their students' writing, nor that dissonance around Native American identities and rhetoric in the field does not exist. The fact that most of faculty at the PWI in this study commented more on the struggles of Native students, rather than their strengths suggests that they have much to gain from insights provided by the tribal college faculty to inform culturally responsive practices in the writing classroom.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

My investigations have tried to discover the factors that shape the construction of Native college students' writing identities, and capture the

effects that culture may have on their dispositions and writing practices. I came to discover that the similarities between Native and Gen 1.5 students that had sparked my research interest were superficial given the rich knowledge I gained from my interviews. Prior to my study, I suspected that culture influenced Native writers, but I did not anticipate that it would surface not only in choices for writing topics, but also in types of messages targeted to specific audiences, who or what is involved in the planning process, how ideas are organized, and attitudes toward writing. Participants' prior experiences with writing and role models are especially important given the tribal legacy of the written word and trauma of the boarding school era for which the case has been made by Scott Lyons and Bryan Brayboy among others. Even though there are similarities among all first-year college writers irrespective of cultural backgrounds, the need to recognize the unique experiences and perspectives of our Native students continues to be just as important as in 2003 when Laura Gray-Rosendale, Loyola Bird, and Judith Bullock asked to rethink the basic writing frontier for Native American students.

Excerpts from my conversations with students, faculty, and staff in this study highlight perceptions of writing that are typically marginal if at all present in the college classroom: 1) writing is about collaboration; 2) the writer is inseparable from their family and community; 3) writing is influenced by cultural values and ways of knowing; and 4) the underlying purpose of writing is the creation of agency. These views of writing may be shared by many college students; however, collectively they may be more important for Native students.

In terms of Ivanič's model of writer identity, the students in this study underscored the importance of the autobiographical self. They mentioned not only a preference for writing from personal experience, but even a desire to "return home" to explore their identity, and allow for deeper connections in their writing. The metaphoric depiction of one student as a "horse of many colors" beautifully illustrates the worldview held by many Native students that their selves are intimately connected to and shaped by those who came before them, their families, and other community members (Monroe). Elders and teachers, like "birds flying overhead," may serve as respected guides influencing decisions about writing. Although my study didn't include textual analysis, the students I interviewed provided a glimpse into their discoursal selves. Their decisions about textual representations took place in the context of their emerging conceptualizations of academic writing. They were cognizant of the need to "understand the language" of academic discourse and instructor expectations. Students also made decisions about

how much to reveal of themselves in their writing depending on whether it was for personal or academic purposes. The intimate nature of writing ("writing from the heart not just the head") manifested in some students' hesitation to share their work, and a resistance to being compared to others. More experienced students expressed an awareness of authorial presence. They describe themselves as having a "unique way of writing," and also evaluated their decisions about content and style in light of their audience.

Since Native American students find strength in writing that connects to their cultures and tribal communities, place-based pedagogy can help inform the design and implementation of writing curricula. Wendy Pfrenger notes the strong sense of place of college composition students in rural Appalachia that drives the underlying mission of writing center consultants to help their writing clients draw upon what is familiar (self and community) and transpose it to other areas of learning, thus creating "layered" literacies as they "fold" in knowledge from their communities. Similarly, Susan Catlin explores the idea of "place-conscious writing practices" with non-Aboriginal teachers in the Canadian Northwest Territories as a way for students "to explore who they are, where they live, what they wish to express and understand in a manner conducive to their thinking and sensibilities (140). I would like to extend these authors' conceptualizations around "hybrid literacies" and "mulitiliteracies" to include the concept of "survivance," and offer three approaches for infusing "Indigenous literacies" into college composition curricula.

Fostering community-based and culturally-affirming identities as writers and readers. As the participants in this study illustrate, their identities as writers are linked to their tribal communities, including traditional ways of knowing and imparting knowledge. The writing classroom can serve as a supportive space for Native students to develop their identities as writers, but first instructors have to create an environment and curriculum that will encourage students like Autumn to "come in" and want to engage and write. We have to recognize that Native students bring into our classrooms their communities' complex historical and current relationships with writing, which can surface as distrust, disinterest, or defiance. We also need to acknowledge that students write to not only tell their personal account, but also to lend their voice to their extended circle. Tribal college students[7] in particular write "for community" as well as "in community," drawing upon and even collaborating with others in their writing process. Regardless of institutional type, creating a culturally affirming learning environment requires recognition of the cultural values, languages, dialects, and rhetorical

practices of Indigenous peoples, and when possible specifically those of the tribes represented in a class.

I am not suggesting that writing instructors need to become experts on all the tribes with which their students are affiliated—although I recommend some familiarity with local tribal communities and/or traditional tribal homelands where one is teaching. We can learn much about students' literacy practices and influences through writing assignments that invite them to position themselves as writers while exploring and affirming their identities. Autobiographical writing assignments invite students to explore their journey thus far with reading and writing, and also reveal to instructors the moments that have defined each student's relationship with writing. I vary the ways in which I ask students to reflect on their history and relationship with literacy, such as exploring the intersectionality of their identities, or responding to Scott Lyons' hallmark question, "What do American Indians Want from Writing?" or rephrased for both Native and non-Native students: "What do YOU want from writing?" Undoubtedly, all students can find strength in autobiographical writing, but Native students may find it especially empowering, especially at PWIs where they may not find many places where they feel comfortable to share aspects of their cultural identities.

Blending Indigenous and Western content and perspectives. My study participants' references to tribal language and the oral tradition suggest that some are consciously looking for ways to weave aspects of their linguistic and cultural heritage into their writing. Writing instructors can help empower Native basic writers through reading assignments that are relevant to their lives and include the perspectives of Indigenous thinkers, especially those from communities closest to or most represented at the college or university. American Indians rarely appear in college course content outside of general mentions in history textbooks, and they are represented in advertising and entertainment as caricatures, stereotypes, and appropriated symbols. The blending of Western and Indigenous content and perspectives should not reside solely within the purview of tribally controlled institutions. All students, Native and non-Native, can benefit from discussions and assignments focused on an analysis of historical artifacts, such as the Doctrine of Discovery or Manifest Destiny, through an Indigenous lens. Or a course theme on environmentalism can incorporate Indigenous views of land through the study of speeches by tribal leaders from the treaty period, and more contemporary orators like Russell Means and Winona LaDuke; writings of Oren Lyons, Daniel Wildcat, and Robin Wall Kimmerer; and media coverage of the #NODAPL (No Dakota Access Pipeline) movement. In addition, exposing

students to tribal oral history projects, and historical accounts, such as *Crazy Horse: The Lakota Warrior's Life and Legacy*, will help position oral tradition as a valid source of knowledge within academic discourse. The instructor does not need to be an expert on Native issues and perspectives, but rather serve as a facilitator and model the process of inquiry to help students draw conclusions based on their readings and class discussions. Having Native students in a class can enrich discussions, but I would like to emphasize the importance of not expecting Native students to be knowledgeable about topics related to Indigenous peoples, or even to provide a "Native perspective." Any honest and educated attempt at including Indigenous voices and perspectives in the writing curriculum will be a step toward legitimizing tribal histories and cultures in academic discourse.

Employing Indigenous discourse as survivance. Many students in my study associated writing with the creation of agency. Indigenous literacies not only reflect "layered" and "hybrid" literacies as manifest among other community-based and marginalized writers, but also uniquely, sovereign peoples' right to determine the nature of their textual representations. Catlin's concept of "multiliteracy" emphasizes the writer's role, as opposed to the teacher's, to determine who is included or excluded in a text and how certain groups are portrayed. However, "survivance" as applied to writing offers a more comprehensive lens by which to understand how students construct their academic writing identities, articulate what they want from writing, engage in the writing process, employ rhetorical strategies, and reframe assignments. In addition, the "resistance" implied in "survivance" allows that students can exert their authorial voice and reject aspects of Western discourse. Clark and Ivaniĉ remind us that the power compelling adherence to writing conventions is socially constructed and thus, can be socially challenged.

In order to shift "survivance" from theory into practice, writing instructors can support students in their efforts to survive and succeed on assignments even when they resist aspects of academic discourse in favor of Indigenous discourse strategies. Specifically, instructors can invite students to study the different styles that orators and writers use to communicate their message, including the use of irony, false flattery, logic, and humor (Monroe). Additionally, they can encourage students to experiment with the rhetorical strategies that they discover in texts such as the Alcatraz Proclamation, as well as to incorporate words from their Native language in their essays to effectively embed layers of meaning. Because many students have heard too often that their writing goes off topic (Chávez; Macias), it is

helpful—indeed for all students but especially for those who speak "non-standard" languages and dialects—to discuss the role of culture in how we think, and therefore write.

One way to introduce the connection between culture and rhetoric is by sharing Robert Kaplan's cross-cultural writing patterns, and then asking students to draw the thought pattern of an elder or other storyteller in their lives. Because frequently the ensuing pattern is not linear, it leads students to reflect on their own organizational style in comparison to what is expected in Western academic discourse. It is important that the self-exploration be followed by a discussion of how the flow of ideas reflects a speaker's or writer's purpose, which for an elder could be to guide listeners to their own conclusions, and for an academic writer to steer readers to the point as directly as possible.

Overall, instructors need to find ways to counter the dichotomy of academic writing as "good" versus their own writing as "bad" that has been ingrained in so many students during their prior schooling. A good start is encouraging students to identify possible cultural influences on their writing style and to embrace them as assets. If students wish to defy linearity, an instructor can show them how they can both survive and resist by "looping back" to their main point every paragraph or so. Employing this common writing technique can be rationalized as "taking pity" on their readers who might otherwise get lost, with the subsequent result that their readers are more likely to deem their writing as "organized."

Native students in this study, like Albert, hope that "writing can be healing" and provide a platform to "shout [their] voice[s]." They demonstrate "survivance" in constructing their academic writing identities, articulating what they want from writing, and reframing writing assignments accordingly. Their assets as writers can include an ability to think non-linearly, identify connections among disparate ideas, bridge the spoken and written word, incorporate tribal language and cultural references, and use their writing to advocate for their community. There are many ways in which basic writing instructors can simultaneously affirm and help strengthen Native students' writing. As such strategies become more common place, we can move beyond theorizations of Native students' writing identities, and begin to study their actions as emerging context-specific practices of Indigenous literacies.

Notes

1. Just under 40% of first-time American Indian/Alaska Native college students attending a four-year institution full-time graduate within 6 years (Keith).

2. I use the term "Native" and "Native American" interchangeably to be inclusive of both Alaska Natives and American Indians. I acknowledge that people who identify as "Indian" prefer a variety of terms for their collective ethnic group.

3. Only findings related to identity, self-concept, and role of writing in the community are included from the flow-chart activity. More insights into students' writing process, and thoughts on revision, instructor feedback, and writing resources are detailed in "Constructing a Model of Success for First-Year Native American College Writers."

4. My conceptual framework and research questions informed the initial tree nodes (hierarchical categories), and the constant comparative method helped me identify new areas of inquiry (additional tree nodes). The recursive process of coding and analysis allowed the grouping of data in different ways for concepts to emerge, and to explore how these emerging categories fit together and what relationships seem to exist between concepts.

5. A pilot study with students representing all four years of college yielded additional participants categorized as Creators. These tended to be more experienced writers, which explains why more participants from this first-year sample do not fall into this category.

6. I recognize that there is not one American Indian culture and that there are considerable differences among tribal languages, religions, and traditions. For example, the Northern Cheyenne and Crow nations are close neighbors geographically; however, historically they were enemies and have conflicting religious beliefs. In addition, Cheyenne belongs to the Algonquian language family while Crow belongs to the Siouan language family. This section rests on the premise that despite these great differences, these and other Native American tribes share certain cultural orientations, namely a collectivist orientation, an oral tradition, a circular philosophy, and transference of language characteristics between an indigenous language and English. These traits manifest in conversations with the participants to varying degrees.

7. I would like to note that the participants in my study were attending two-year, and not four-year, tribal colleges, and I caution against general-

izing findings across all tribally controlled institutions. I do, however, find that there are some noticeable differences between the experiences and perceptions of tribal college students and American Indian students attending a PWI. More research is needed to tease apart how much tribal college curricula and instruction, or perhaps the degree of "traditionalism" of students contribute to these distinctions. I provide more insights into the writing experiences and expectations of tribal college students in my 2015 article in the *Tribal College Journal*.

Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: INITIAL INTERVIEW

1. Let's start by you telling me a little about your background.

    a. Where did you grow up?

    b. Where did you attend high school?

2. What is your home community like?

    a. What language(s) did you speak at home growing up? (use as follow-up if needed)

    b. How bilingual do you consider yourself to be? (use as follow-up if needed

    c. How culturally traditional or untraditional would you consider your family and yourself. Why?

    d. How important was writing in your home and community?

    e. Can you think of any role models in your family or community who are also writers of some kind?

    f. What role did family/community members have in your academics, especially writing?

3. How would you describe your writing experiences in high school? (Qs below as follow-up)

    a. What are teachers/classes that stand out in your mind in terms of writing?

    b. What writing assignments stand out in your mind? How did you do on them?

    c. How did you feel your high school writing assignments prepared you for college writing?

    d. How prepared for college writing do/did you feel compared to other students?

4. I would like you to see what image comes to mind for the next question. Then, I would like you to draw an illustration of what comes to mind using this paper and these colored pencils. How do you picture yourself as a writer, and specifically a college writer of academic-type assignments?

    a. Please describe your illustration for me.

    b. What feelings do you associate with this image? How confident do you feel as a writer?

    c. Where do you think those feelings/degree of confidence and/or the image originate?

d. Are there any other specific influences or people that you think contribute to your perception of yourself as a writer?

e. Has this image changed from when you started college or from high school? How?

f. How would you describe someone who is a "successful" writer? What elements do you see in this picture that demonstrate these characteristics?

g. Is it important for you to be a "successful" writer in college? What are your goals for this semester in terms of your writing? How are you going to achieve these?

5. Did you bring a graded assignment with you today? If yes, proceed:

a. Please tell me about this assignment, such as what class it was for, when you completed it, and what your experiences were like with it.

b. Here are some elements of planning and writing a paper. Please pick out the ones that you used for this assignment. Then, glue the strips of paper onto this larger paper to illustrate the process you used to complete the assignment. If you did something more than once than you can write it in on the paper.

c. Using your diagram, please describe your process for completing this writing assignment. Is this typical of what you do when you write?

d. Do you have any questions about any of the slips that you did not use this time? Have you used any of them in the past? Would you potentially use any of them in the future? Why or why not?

6. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your writing experiences?

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW: FLOW CHART ACTIVITY

Brainstorm ideas on paper before writing

Ask instructors what they expect/for clarification

Analyze the assignment handout

Set high standards for oneself

Visually organize ideas (web, outline, etc.)

Use MLA/APA handbook

Read textbooks & articles and think about ideas to write

Write questions in text while reading

Write out list of questions to try to answer and expand on in paper

Think a lot before starting to write

Talk to someone about assignment & ideas before starting to write

Listen to music while writing

Jot down ideas by hand before starting to write on a computer

Write down question first to remind oneself of the topic/focus

Sit and write until done, take break and then proofread and revise

Rewrite first paragraph numerous times to get the beginning just right

Rewrite sentences multiple times to get them to express ideas just right

Take short 5-10 minute breaks

Use first paragraph to organize ideas & structure paper

Make decisions to revise based on feedback

Proofread own work

Read paper over with the audience in mind, as if somebody else were reading it

Have friends, classmates, other professors who are good writers proofread

Expand relevant ideas and discard irrelevant ones

Read paper aloud to listen for mistakes

Use Writing Center or other tutors

Use pressure of deadline to generate ideas, to do well

If it is a big assignment, plan ahead and finish a couple days before and look it over and make any changes needed

Imagine the whole "story" (message or point) before beginning to write

"Let the People Rap": Cultural Rhetorics Pedagogy and Practices Under CUNY's Open Admissions, 1968-1978

Tessa Brown

ABSTRACT: This article writes the histories of CUNY Open Admissions and hiphop toward each other, illuminating both. Bringing Open Admissions to bear on hiphop history helps us see that, while historians locate the birth of hiphop culture in a 1970s New York gutted by divestment and displacement, in fact the decade before hiphop's birth was characterized by a flourishing Black and Puerto Rican arts scene in New York and the radical education of tens of thousands of students of color in the CUNY system. Revisiting the archives of Open Admissions with a hiphop lens draws attention to the cultural rhetorics education being taught in remedial writing classrooms by adjunct lecturers like June Jordan, Adrienne Rich, and others, who drew students' attention and inquiry to their own communities and language practices. Looking at a selection of documents chosen for their use of the term "rappin," including teachers' reflective writing, administrative documents, and community writing, this article argues that, as bureaucratic language evolved to disguise racism in the 1960s and 1970s, a resistive, identity-based language of rappin evolved in response. Ultimately, hiphop language only entered the commodity market at the end of the 1970s when CUNY instituted tuition for the first time in its history, pushing out many of the students Open Admissions had been designed to welcome in.

KEYWORDS: Adrienne Rich; Basic Writing; Black Arts Movement; cultural rhetorics; hiphop; June Jordan; Open Admissions

Histories and hagiographies locate the birth of hiphop culture at a Back to School party thrown by Clive Owens and his sister Cindy Campbell in the Bronx, New York, during the summer of 1973. A Jamaican immigrant, Owens arrived to New York with knowledge of Jamaican DJ culture, lessons he continued learning from his father (Chang 79). Known as DJ Kool Herc, Owens is credited with looping the first break beats, using duplicates of records spun back by hand, his technical and rhetorical innovation making the dancers go wild. That night in '73, when he became the first MC to rap over the break beat, hiphop was born.

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But why Owens and Campbell were excited to go back to school, historians don't know. By the early 1970s, massive deindustrialization had gutted New York's labor market, and intrusive city planning projects led by Robert Moses had been uprooting these increasingly unemployed communities. Jeff Chang and Tricia Rose both open their hiphop histories with the construction of Moses's Cross-Bronx Expressway, which displaced 170,000 Black, brown, and ethnic white residents of the borough, re-creating the city in the interests of white commuters and the financial industry they sped to past the neighborhoods of the city's increasingly desperate working poor. Literary theorist and CCNY professor Marshall Berman recalled that during his childhood in the Bronx, "through the late 1950s and 1960s, the center of the Bronx was pounded and blasted and smashed," creating a "deafening noise" (293-94) that may well have inspired hiphop's powerful early sounds. While Berman's Jewish family moved to the suburbs, Black and Puerto Rican families like Owens' were increasingly pushed into housing projects being built in the South Bronx. By 1970, Daniel Moynihan would famously suggest that these communities be handled with "benign neglect" as federal policy (qtd. in Chang 14).

Despite this dominant framing, scholars know that hiphop did not emerge *sui generis* from Black and brown youths' survivalist response to structural devastation; hiphop culture's five elements of rapping—DJing, graffiti writing, breakdancing, and "dropping knowledge"— also drew on generations of African-American and African practices of storytelling, sound organization, and dance. Less consideration has been paid to hiphop's immediate cultural precedent in the African American artistic community in New York, the Black Arts Movement (BAM) although Marvin Gladney has argued that hiphop's rage, Black capitalism, and Black aesthetic emerged directly out of BAM, an argument taken up by Gwendolyn Pough when she charted connections between hiphop and the Black Power Movement. And no one to my knowledge has interrogated the relationship between hiphop culture and the Open Admissions years at the City University of New York system, a shift in admissions standards that brought hundreds of thousands of additional students into the multi-campus college system, including its flagship campus, the City College of New York (CCNY). Located on the north side of Manhattan, between Harlem and Washington Heights and just south and west of the South Bronx, the CCNY campus was "a major site of protests and uprisings for Black and Puerto Rican students" in the late 1960s (Kynard 160). These protests, taken up by New York legislators of color, led the state to found the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) Program

in 1966 with a small class of students of color who would be traditionally excluded from the CUNY system. Compositionist Carmen Kynard carefully recounts how "it would be the SEEK students who [then] led the way for campus inclusion policies" (161). In 1969, students led a sit-in at CCNY with one of five key demands being that the racial makeup of the CUNY system reflect the racial composition of New York's public high schools (Arenson).

After 1970, the year Open Admissions was fully implemented, the freshman class across all CUNY campuses ballooned from 17,645 to over 34,000 (Lavin and Hyllegard). Racially, the numbers of white students rose to about 26,000 from 15,000, while the numbers of students of color rose to over 8,000 freshmen annually from about 1,600 in 1969. With these numbers, which admitted an increase of over 50,000 students of color between 1970 to 1978, CUNY reached its goal of matching its demographics to New York's public high schools (Arenson). David Lavin and David Hyllegard's important study of the impacts of Open Admissions show that 50% of students admitted to community colleges ultimately transferred to four-year colleges (48), a number made easier by the Open Admissions policy allowing automatic transfer between CUNY's community and four-year colleges. They also show that, although degree attainment by students of color was lower than that of their white peers, Open Admissions tripled the number of Bachelor's and Associate's degrees going to Black students and significantly multiplied those for Hispanic students as well (67).

Beyond merely admitting students to college, the SEEK program offered counseling, stipends, tickets to cultural events, and free textbooks ("The CUNY Center Seek Program 1969-1970 Catalogue" 7). Thus, during the decade that hiphop culture germinated as a local culture and launched into a major musical and culture industry that has overtaken global fashion, music, and dance trends, tens of thousands of New Yorkers of color, predominantly Black and Puerto Rican students (including AfroLatinx Puerto Ricans), as well as immigrants and ethnic whites, streamed through often POC-led classrooms at CUNY where before had been underfunded and undervalued, functionally segregated K-12 public education. The energy of the Black Arts Movement rushed into the schools as community educators, artists, and organizers became university professors—often off the tenure track, as adjuncts.
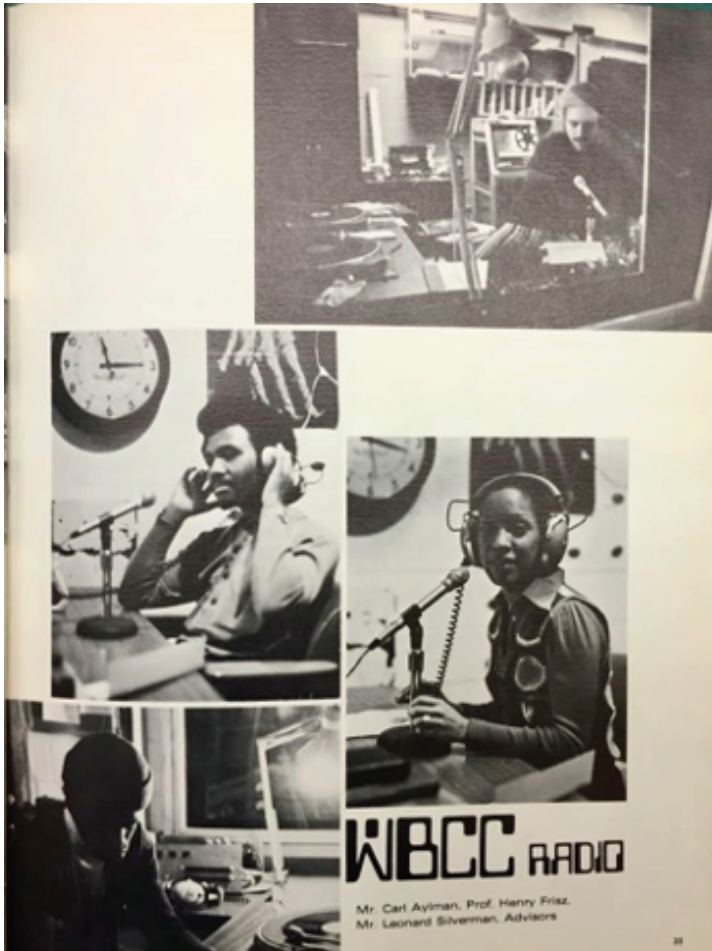
Figure 1. Photos of WBCC Radio operators from: *Bronx Community College Yearbook 1975*. Archives, Bronx Community College, Bronx, NY. Accessed 4 August 2016.

In *Vernacular Insurrections,* a book inflected with hiphop but not about hiphop's origins, Kynard shows that, in New York and nationwide, the Black Arts Movement was deeply intertwined with the Black freedom struggle, a fusion that profoundly shaped late 20th century American literacies. Rewriting the Black Arts Movement into the history of postsecondary writing instruction, Kynard argues that the new literacies of Black and Puerto Rican student protestors, embedded in chants, signs, demands, leaflets, course proposals, and other extracurricular writings (Kynard 125), "redefined what it means

to be successful and literate" (65). While compositionists have long studied the history of the Open Admissions period at CUNY with a focus on Mina Shaughnessy, the white woman administrator of the CCNY Basic Writing program, Kynard re-roots that history in artistic Black activism, identifying compositionist, sociolinguist and Black woman Geneva Smitherman as a more appropriate avatar for the period. While Kynard clarifies the contributions of BAM and the Black liberation struggle to composition studies, these twin cultural and activist movements have not been adequately theorized for hiphop's history.

In this study, I return to CUNY's archives to interrogate the coincidence, in both time and space, of the birth of hiphop culture with the Open Admissions period at CUNY. My attention to what Amy Devitt calls the "origin of genres"—in this case, hiphop genres of rap, graffiti pieces, DJ compositions, and break dances—shapes a study of rhetoric pedagogy and production at CUNY under Open Admission that extends beyond the disciplinary limits of writing and speech classrooms. In my archival visits—to institutional archives at CCNY, Hunter College, Medgar Evers, Bronx Community College, and Queens College, to Radcliffe to look at Adrienne Rich's and June Jordan's papers, both writing instructors in SEEK at CCNY, as well to Spelman to look at the papers of Toni Cade Bambara (from CCNY) and Audre Lorde (from John Jay)—I used my knowledge of hiphop's roots in musical, poetic, technological, and protest traditions to guide the materials I studied. Beyond looking at institutional documents relating to SEEK, Open Admission, and Basic Writing on multiple campuses, I also looked at yearbooks, student publications, and in course catalogs at departments of English; Ethnic, Black, and Puerto Rican studies; Music; Speech; Visual Arts; and Engineering. This purview allows me to expand on the work of composition scholars like Steve Lamos and Mary Soliday whose focus has been restricted to writing classrooms. This widened scope for rhetorical research allows me to recognize the wide-ranging and overlapping studies in rhetoric, critical ethnic studies, and artistic and technological production undertaken by tens of thousands of poor and working-class New York college students during the decade of 1968-1978 at CUNY, an enormous educational movement that has not been previously theorized as part of the history of hiphop.

Building on Kynard's attention to Black teachers and specifically Geneva Smitherman as a foil to Shaughnessy, as well as Sean Molloy's attention to the lecturers teaching in the SEEK program at CUNY, in this article, I repopulate our historical memory of the Open Admissions years across multiple CUNY campuses, focusing on the teacher-artist-activists Shaugh-

nessy managed—Toni Cade Bambara, Barbara Christian, Addison Gayle, and in particular June Jordan and Adrienne Rich. Claimed by women's and Black studies, these individuals, active in the Black Arts Movement and the women's movements, all taught in Shaughnessy's Basic Writing program at CCNY yet their presences and pedagogies have not been studied by compositionists. I conclude with attention to course offerings and writing in student newspapers and yearbooks during the same time frame, looking at materials from Hunter College, Queens College, and Medgar Evers to better understand the rhetorical culture of CUNY students during Open Admission, in the years immediately preceding and coinciding with hiphop's rise. Ultimately, I argue that a resistive literacy of rappin was growing and cultivated within the CUNY system during this decade, developing dialogically with an emerging bureaucratic language of standards developed in response to the Civil Rights gains of the late 1960s.

The intellectual, cultural, and political clashes between progressives and reactionaries from 1968 to 1978 in New York City are important sites for understanding the current ideological moment, and its genesis over the last fifty years. In the decade after 1968, when Black people protested the unmet promises of the Civil Rights movement across the nation's major cities, state power moved to reconstruct racism as what Ferguson has called an "increasingly illegible phenomenon" (58), developing new colorblind or what Kynard has termed "race-evasive" (166) discourses to reinscribe white power using unraced language. In the papers of CUNY's teachers and students, unspooling across a decade of investment in and then divestment from equitable public access, we can see the development of resistive rap discourses that use the language of personal identity and experience to counter the dehumanizing language of the white bureaucracy. These language practices are developed in the context of bureaucratic processes around funding and hiring, defunding and firing, that disproportionately affected students and teachers of color, but never using the language of race. While hiphop scholars root the culture's history in destitution, it was only after the CUNY retrenchment took hold with the institution of tuition for the first time in the school's history, in 1976, that hiphop transcended its roots as a community art form to enter the commodity market. By the 1982, when Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five released "The Message," with its snarling chorus—"It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder/ how I keep from going under"—hiphop's critical thesis of bureaucratic abandonment, urban decay, and racial capitalism had solidified in an idiom borne, I argue, out of a decade of critical and open access education.

Liner Notes: Toward a Hiphop Feminist Composition Historiography

If this article were a hiphop track, Carmen Kynard's *Vernacular Insurrections* would be the bassline, Roderick Ferguson's *The Reorder of Things* would be the snare, and Sean Molloy's research, some for this journal, the hi-hat. Looped as the chorus would be Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations,* pitched up, sped up, and reversed. Rapping over this track are all the Black, Puerto Rican, and queer students and adjunct teachers of Open Admissions, theorizing their world in their own words, many quoted here. June Jordan sings the hook; Dean Ted Gross mutters in the cut. The riddim is a faint sample of Jeff Chang's "dub history," a hiphop history from below.

But if this article were an article, it would continue like this:

Hiphop, an increasingly important exigence in the study of student writing practices, is what originally drew me to the archives. Hiphop culture, now a dominant feature of the U.S. cultural landscape, has been prompting compositionists, rhetoricians, and literacy researchers to account for the rich composing processes that occur in hiphop's multimodal culture of five elements: MCing (writing and delivering raps); DJing (producing or spinning beats); drawing, spray/painting, or "writing" graffiti art; breakdancing; and philosophizing or "dropping science" (see Alim, Banks, Craig, Green, Kirkland, Milu, Pough, Richardson). Across multiple disciplines, hiphop feminists draw attention to the contributions and negotiations of Black and brown women, girls, queer people and femmes within hiphop culture (Lindsey). Emerging from a vernacular artistic culture, hiphop's continued resistive politic is in tension with its contemporary shape as a source of mass-marketed commodities. Using a hiphop lens to study rhetorical production foregrounds multimodality and cross-genre composing, because hiphop's intrinsic multimodality reflects African American cultural priorities that resist Western taxonomies that separate communicative modes like speech, language, music, and dance.

Studying cultural rhetorics like hiphop redirects our attention to the rhetorical production and theorizing of marginalized groups, while also defamiliarizing the Euro-American discourses we regularly accept as normative (Powell et al.). Cultural rhetorics provides a useful framework for understanding the ways that SEEK's Basic Writing lecturers, themselves active in local ethnic and gender liberation movements in New York City, theorized out of their own locations and explicitly invited students to do the same. Their pedagogies were "culturally relevant," defined by Gloria

Ladson-Billings as pedagogies which "empower[ ] students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (16-17). In the U.S. context of composition and rhetorical studies, cultural rhetorics approaches have enriched studies of and with indigenous peoples, Latinx communities, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, white-identified groups, queer people, disabled people, digital media users, and rhetorical relations between and among them (see Banks; Bratta and Powell; Gubele, King, and Anderson; Haas; Hitt and Garrett; Mao and Young; Powell; Pough; Pritchard; Royster; Ruiz and Sanchez). As a critical scholar of white femininity (Brown), I recognize how cultural rhetorical studies can help us critique dominant rhetorical frameworks like those ultimately embraced by Shaughnessy (Molloy) while also reminding us to decenter whiteness and center the work of rhetors of color, as I do here.

Culturally relevant pedagogies that directed students to their communities' rhetorical practices were embraced by CCNY SEEK lecturers, including June Jordan and Adrienne Rich. Yet the story of Jordan and Rich must be understood intersectionally, because the differences in how they were treated by Shaughnessy's Basic Writing program, and the white English Department professors she reported to, highlights how systems of power intersect to create different experiences of privilege and oppression for groups and individuals with different identities (Crenshaw). Although Mina Shaughnessy was a powerful woman administrator, her experiences as a white woman gave her considerable advantage over her female colleagues. None of the adjunct women instructors I consider here—Adrienne Rich, June Jordan, Barbara Christian, Toni Cade Bambara—had the same normative female identity as Shaughnessy, a cisgendered heterosexual white woman, who was, by many accounts, considered very pretty by other white people. Shaughnessy's identity gave her an advantage vis-a-vis the white power structure, run by straight white men like English Department chair Theodore "Ted" Gross, over queer white women like Rich and queer Black women like Jordan.

Intersectionality is also a rejoinder to remember Puerto Rican faculty who do not appear in this study but who are present in the archives as pedagogical innovators and objects of discrimination. While my study focuses on Black students and teachers, their studies, and their language practices, Puerto Rican students and teachers fought for and participated in Open Admissions, and the archives are full of their presence and their languaging. Indeed, even thinking of these groups separately obscures the identities of Afro-Boricuas in New York and surely present in Open Admissions classrooms.

Recognizing the tension between administrators like Shaughnessy and Ted Gross and radical lecturers like June Jordan is a recognition that the forces that would undo Open Admissions were present from its beginning. Derrick Bell's critical race theory of interest convergence holds that "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of whites" and not when it diverges with whites' interests (23). This notion is crucial for understanding the wave of investment and divestment that swept CUNY and communities of color nationwide from 1968 to 1978. Interest convergence is engaged by multiple historians of Basic Writing, including Kynard and Steve Lamos, as well as literary and higher education theorist Roderick Ferguson, to explain how the impetuses that made Basic Writing and Open Admissions possible seemed so quickly, a decade later, to disappear. The mass anti-racism protests of the late 1960s (including uprisings in Philadelphia, Watts, Newark, Chicago and Pittsburgh as well as student protests across the country) coupled with the U.S.'s international Cold War persona as the land of liberty against Soviet autocracy, put it in the white power structure's interests to make concessions to the demands of marginalized groups—for example, the higher-ed investments advised by Nixon's 1970 President's Commission on Campus Unrest (Kynard 120, Lamos 23-24). Compared with a narrative of racial progress, interest convergence and divergence better explain how between 1968 and 1969, 700 higher-education institutions added "ethnic studies courses, programs, or departments" (Ferguson 33) and by 1971 600 Predominantly White Institutions had created remediation programs for newly admitted poor students and students of color (Kynard 166), yet, by changing admissions tuitions requirements, the presence of people of color in higher education collapsed from the mid-1970s into the 1980s. Kynard recognizes this austerity move as part of a "united front in social policy" (Kynard 230) that starved communities of color, while independent scholar Alexis Pauline Gumbs theorizes Open Admissions alongside the expansion of prisons in New York as "two sides of the coin of population control" for New Yorkers of color (241).

"On location" (Kirsch) in the archives, I found that moving through the materials was an emotional experience. The early documents from SEEK at CCNY are suffused with positive affect: teacher and student enthusiasm, a sense of a changing and opening world, the joys of learning and teaching. Course catalogs are full of revolutionary curricula, and student newspapers and yearbooks are full of vibrant student voices. Yet even in the files from the 1960s, I could feel the coming retrenchment like a tide, like when you

can feel the undertow pulling away at your ankles even as the water is still rushing in at your waist. The pressure is there, but no single drop is to blame. Drawing on interest convergence, Ferguson theorizes the institutional discourses that developed to reinstate white rule against desegregationist civil-rights era policy, positioning "excellence" as a discursive caveat to policies that opened the doors of white colleges and universities in the 60s and 70s. Looking specifically at Open Admissions CUNY, and closely engaging June Jordan's writings from her time at CCNY, Ferguson argues that the advance of standards-based arguments was a way for schools to present *de jure* desegregation while maintaining "standards" that functionally locked out people of color. In my study, I match a rhetorical attention to bureaucratic and identity-based discourses with an intersectional, materialist attention to racialized and gendered labor relationships. I follow contemporary scholars of Writing Program Administration like Stacy Perriman-Clark, Collin Craig, and Asao Inoue in seeking to racialize discussions of workplace management in writing programs across hiring, curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment practices.

Gesa Kirsch and Jacqueline Jones Royster's notion of "critical imagination" as feminist rhetorical research practice grounds my inquiry into previously untheorized intersections of hiphop and Open Admissions, and grants me the gumption to challenge the near-ossified narratives of hiphop's birth. Writing separately, Kirsch with Joy Richie also enjoin me as a white feminist researcher to recognize how "whiteness structure[s my] thinking" (10), and with Royster reminds me to demonstrate "respect for the communities [I] study" (226). As a white Jewish woman, a queer teaching off the tenure track, I come to this history in solidarity with my sisters of color and with an intersectional recognition that the unjust systems I navigate are magnified for my colleagues of color.

The remainder of this article is constructed around a selection of documents from teachers and students loosely chosen for their engagement with "rap," a word with long roots in Black American speech (Campbell 36). When Wonder Mike of the Sugarhill Gang intoned incredulously in 1979, "Now what you hear is not a test, I'm rappin to the beat," he was acknowledging the transference of the verbal art of rappin onto and into a four-beat musical line in the first-ever recorded hiphop song. In studying these instances of "rap" under Open Admissions, I see the cultural rhetorics of rappin being sharpened in dialogic opposition to neoliberal discourses of standards and excellence. I theorize the "rap literacies" of Black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers as reveling in the opposite of whatever it is that "standards" mea-

sure—the richness of identity, experience, and language, the opposite of administrative doublespeak that only Jordan (and recently, Kynard) had the nerve to call racist. In the documents I sample from the archives, rappin refers to making connections the man doesn't want you to make, using language he doesn't want you to use, in genres he doesn't know how to standardize. The language of rap offers one through-line between the cultural rhetorics of Black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers in the late sixties, CUNY classrooms, and the emerging hiphop culture of the 1970s. In the sections that follow, I focus on a 1968 NEA report in which several lecturers reflect on their summer writing workshops; pedagogical materials by as well as institutional documentation about June Jordan and Adrienne Rich, and writing by students and staff for campus papers in the context of on- and off-campus Black poetic culture. These texts demonstrate a sense of reflexive, critical rap literacies as a discursive tool marginalized teachers and students, all scholar-artists, used to self-define and self-defend against encroaching bureaucratic abjection.

"The Square People Versus the Globular People": Rap and Resistance in a 1968 SEEK Summer Session

A coauthored SEEK report from an NEA-funded summer seminar in 1968 offers compelling evidence that Black teachers rooted in the Black Arts Movement pioneered rap pedagogies at SEEK centered around the cultural rhetorics of Black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers and their ancestors, pedagogies that were not fully appreciated by Shaughnessy and were never taught to scale. While Molloy shows that Shaughnessy moved CCNY's writing instruction from a more rhetorical model towards grammar-focused test prep ("A Convenient" 8), my research suggests that, at least for a time and at least in individual classrooms, lecturers of color were teaching a deeply rhetorical curriculum focused on the rhetorics of modernity, the African diaspora, the postcolonial world, New York City's communities of color, and students' own experiences of these spaces and heritages. In the typescript report on the 1968 summer seminar, prepared to document their work for the NEA, instructors Mina Shaughnessy, Fred Byron, Toni Cade (later Cade Bambara, and referred to such throughout the following), Barbara Christian, David Henderson, and Addison Gayle were each tasked with describing and reflecting on their assignments' successes after being given significant freedom to design their own courses. In the instructors' descriptions of and reflections on their courses, we can see how, although all the teachers were deeply invested in their students' successes, the white teachers tended

to teach toward school literacies, forwarding the discourses of lack that plagued the students, while teachers of color and creative writing teachers were more driven by introducing students to the unseen richness of their home cultures. Paradoxically, the existence of the report itself both attests to a culture of reflexivity within the teaching ranks of SEEK Basic English even as it demonstrates how the program's reliance on grants for funding, under Shaughnessy's leadership, immediately imbued it with a research agenda that had been deprioritized only a year earlier as reported in other records.

Comparing Gayle, Christian, and Cade Bambara's pedagogical reflections with Byron and Shaughnessy's dramatically illustrates the differences between culturally relevant, cultural rhetorics pedagogies that move across multiple rhetorical modalities, and pedagogies oriented toward institutional whiteness. Addison Gayle's class centered on storytelling culture from African and African American history, and worked to root students' writing and storytelling in a grand literary culture. He reflected that

> we also made the point that many of the successful black writers have also excelled as orators, in the cases of Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Eldridge Cleaver, Malcolm X, and Lester. And that as orators they were aware of the way words sounded to the ear and of the order in which a talk is organized. This knowledge, we maintained, was an essential element in the discovery of one's own voice. (26)

Gayle's reflection showcases an integrated understanding of written and spoken rhetoric rooted in the Black literary tradition. In his section of the course, students focused on two main texts: *Look Out Whitey, Black Power's Gonna Get Your Mama* by Julius Lester, and *Tales from the Arabian Nights*, by Richard Burton. Gayle built up student confidence not by directing students to school culture but by turning them away from it to reconsider the home cultures and heritages they could draw upon in their own rhetorical production across writing and speech. He wrote:

> we held a lot of discussions. We had the students relate anecdotes, write them down and then compare them. . . We talked a great deal about the oral tradition in Africa. Of how African people were used to hearing news and stories instead of reading them. We read *The Arabian Nights* and talked a great deal about the literary devices employed in the rendering of these tales by Shahrazad. . . We also had the running assignment of interviewing our older relatives, our grandmothers and grandfathers, grand aunts and the like, so

as to give us clues to the ways of our clan. We discussed at length the fantastic Odyssey of Alex Haley, the editor and compiler of the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, in discovering and tracing his ancestors back to a small town in Africa. In general, we attempted to provide our aspiring writers with a base from which to work. And to buttress them with historical fact and tradition. (26-27)

Connecting students' "grandmothers and grandfathers" to Shahrazad and Malcom X, Gayle's pedagogy is an example of the culturally situated Black Arts pedagogies that were present at CUNY in the years before hiphop's emergence as a dynamic Black rhetorical culture.

In another reflection, Barbara Christian noted that she specifically asked students for input and recommendations, then built "a course that they would like." Student suggestions led to a "focus on Black literature, contemporary preoccupations, techniques of argument" (10), using texts like Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, and LeRoi Jones's *Home* to study "Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, and Liberation." Beyond recommending newspapers to them, she wrote, "good libraries and bookstores were suggested to the students" (1). That the students recommended these texts speaks to our need to re-contextualize this curricular moment in the broader New York City cultural moment, in which Black bookstores were thriving and seeing city and state investment, and students descended from the overlapping African and Caribbean diasporas were taking a broad-minded interest in third-world solidarity and the transition out of the colonial era. Looking beyond the SEEK archives, we can see that by 1969 the SEEK program already had curricular offerings in ethnic studies, so that students learning about the rhetorics of Black and Puerto Rican communities in their Basic English courses were also learning these cultures' histories, philosophies, and literatures elsewhere across the curriculum.

Kynard's argument that literacies from the Black Arts Movement anticipated a range of later composition trends is borne out by Christian's suggestion, in line with later pedagogies like literacy narratives or Writing About Writing, that students' research begin with themselves. She writes:

The students suffer from a lack of awareness of the importance and relevance of their own lives. The most frequent complaint in just about any beginning course is "I don't have anything to write about." And particularly for our students, who are mostly black and Puerto Rican and who therefore have seen little resembling their

own lives in a written form, the problem is compounded. The books that I chose to work with in this course, then, were crucial. (17)

Like Gayle, Christian saw students as unaware of their own cultural context as resources for their own writing. Christian continued on to discuss her section's focus on integrated discussions of literature and music:

> I had intended *Blues People* to be a counterpoint to *Invisible Man* since it is primarily a book-length essay rather than a novel. But the students saw a tie-up between Ellison's constant use of the blues in his novel and Jones' analysis of them. We got into the music much more than we did into the essay form. They all knew this music, some of them were ashamed of it, some proud but they were all surprised to see that it could be analyzed, discussed and related to a cultural history of a people. Along with the reading of the book, I brought records to class, dating back from Work Songs, Early Primitive Blues all the way to Contemporary Rhythm n blues and New Jazz. It is particularly noteworthy that most of the students were not aware of Contemporary Jazz and had not even heard of such classic names as Charlie Parker or John Coltrane. . . I left the summer session with a feeling that we had just gotten started, that the jump to more rigorous writing could be made in a few weeks, that some though not all of the students had begun to overcome their fear of writing. (18)

Despite Christian's in-class focus on music, she sees her students quickly becoming more advanced writers as well, and develops her own improvisational ethic in course design and her attention to the integration of different modes of cultural production in Afrodiasporic cultures. Thus, in Gayle and Christian's reflections we can see the similarities between their pedagogical strategies and the work of cultural rhetorics, as they drew students' attention to the rhetorical practices they had already, perhaps unknowingly, learned from their home cultures, or could root in their cultures' historical and current practices.

Meanwhile, Cade Bambara's reflection on her course included an extended discourse by one of her students which we might view as a self-assessment given and received in a culturally relevant pedagogical context. What better way for a student to synthesize course concepts, than to rap? In any case, Cade Bambara saw fit to reproduce this extensive account of her student's speechifying, and I follow her in doing so. She writes:

>At least one hour was given over to students. . . The last meeting, for example, ran two hours over the usual end because one student needed "uninterrupted time to rap." He delivered non-stop machine gun style interrupting his interrupters on the third or fourth syllable a two and a half hour dissertation on at least 80% of themes we had touched on in the last two and a half month time and hit upon related ideas which cemented the themes together: the irrationality of logic, the impossibility of objectivity, the stultifyling [sic] effects of the English language, the masking role of reason which makes mental gymnastics pass for reality, the defects in Black Nationalism, the holes in Fanon, the criminality of education, the paternalism of the Seek Program, the stupidity of students who kept raising their hands to challenge him as he spoke ("Do you think Paul McCartney and John Lennon ran all the way up to the mountains to bug the guru with 'hey Mahareeshi, you wrong baby'? No, they sat and listened.") point omega in one's consciousness, the square people versus the globular people, the evolution of the Black man, the foolishness of "things are getting better," the limited role of regular teachers as opposed to real mentors. After his treatise on the freedom and limits of learning, he offhandedly congratulated the instructor as the only one who had sense enough to listen and urged the others to realize that had they been sure of who they were, they would have felt no compulsion to argue audibly but would simply have checked him out and separated the brass from the gold quietly, privately, within their own "globe." Quite a wind-up. (11)

In this excerpt we see rap as a space for verbal play, for making connections, for critique. In quoting this passage at length, Cade Bambara valorizes this student's speech as knowledge-making of value to the academy. Its description as a "dissertation" and a "treatise," connecting and "cementing" the themes of the course, suggests a view of assessment on Cade Bambara's part that is far distant from standardized language exams and is rather rooted in the student's own culturally-situated ways of making meaning and discourse, that is, by rapping. In this extended student speech we can see the outcome of a pedagogy that invites students to compose from their own personal and cultural locations—that is, to rap about what they learned.

In the report, the pedagogical approaches of Gayle, Christian, and Cade Bambara, which rooted instruction and assessment in students' home cultures, differed from those of their colleagues Fred Byron and Mina

Shaughnessy, who taught toward school literacies and seemed more attuned to what students lacked than to the cultural resources they already held. For example, Shaughnessy's reflection relays that "I have often noticed. . . that students usually 'talk' a better-organized paper than they write" (30), but doesn't make any note of the value placed on oral communication in Black cultures. And Fred Byron, teaching an all-male, almost all-European syllabus of Chekhov, Sartre, Akutagawa, Stevenson and plays from Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Shakespeare, wrote that "My particular aim in the scope of this summer course was. . . to provide these students with a broad (liberal arts), classical foundation or background of knowledge." He continued:

> I am sure that I am not alone in having been told by students as they have sat in my English classes that they are sorely "lacking" or "deficient" or "weak" in background reading, especially the "classics," and so they are pitifully unable to make the necessary cross-references or to understand the allusions which continually barrage them in their English and Social Science/Humanities courses. Hence, my two summer seminar courses (which I trust will be readily replicable) were, in a sense, attempts to supply this much-needed background material to students who feel inadequate. (6)

To his credit, Byron goes on to describe some very successful lessons, noting that students "began to radiate with confident knowledge and rewarding self-achievement" (6) after delving deeply into the character of Iago. But his focus on student deficit regarding European classics—his characterization of students as "pitiful[ ]," "barraged," and "inadequate" in their attempted acculturation to white liberal arts study—is a different approach than that of some of his Black colleagues, Cade Bambara, Christian, and Gayle, all of whom were writers active in the Black Arts Movement.

Taken together, these reflections show a program of writing teachers working collaboratively and reflectively to support experimental pedagogy that engaged students' hearts as the way to their minds. All the teachers were deeply motivated by igniting student pleasure in learning—Shaughnessy concluded her reflection by remarking that, "I can only say that we seemed often to be talking about writing in a way that made sense to the students and a way that they seemed to enjoy" (34). But when we think back to the innovations and student successes under SEEK Basic English, it behooves us to remember and foreground the major pedagogical contributions—in what

today we'd call multimodality, translingualism, remix theory, and cultural rhetorics—of teacher-practitioners active in the Black Arts Movement and foundational to Black Studies like Toni Cade Bambara, Barbara Christian, and Addison Gayle, those teachers granting their students time and space to rap.

"Alas": An Intersectional Comparison of Adrienne Rich and June Jordan's Working Conditions
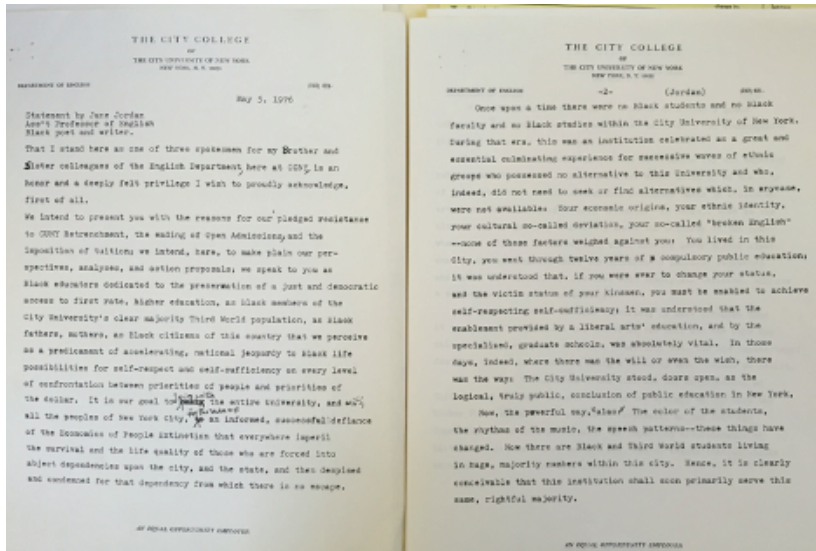

Figure 2. Manuscript pages from: "Statement by June Jordan/ Ass't Professor of English/ Black poet and writer." TS. Box 76, Folder 14. 5 May 1976. June Jordan Papers, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. 8 August 2016.

An "integrationist narrative" (Kynard 150) of Shaughnessy's work at CUNY casts her as the hero who made change for students of color. However, the archives attest to the rich poetic culture of Black New York in the 1960s, a culture that Open Admissions did not create but simply allowed onto campus. Audre Lorde's collection of ephemera from her years at John Jay includes references to numerous grassroots organizations for Black poets in the city, including the Harlem Writers' Guild, Black Poets Reading, the Black Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center. Her papers hold a clipping from a 1972 copy of the new publication *Essence* Magazine on "The Explosion of Black Poetry"

which highlights the role of identity and self-definition to the new Black poetry. The article quotes June Jordan as well as Lorde herself on this subject, with Jordan stating that "Poetry is the way I think and the way I remember and the way I understand or the way I express my confusion, bitterness and love," and Lorde adding, "I am Black, Woman, and Poet—in fact and outside the realm of choice. I can choose only to be or not to be, and in various combinations of myself. . . The shortest statement of philosophy I have is my living, or the word 'I'" (66). In 1977, Columbia and the Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center on 104th Street co-hosted a Cultural Festival in which Black poets were featured prominently. Organizer Quincy Troupe told the *New York Times* that

> black poetry was "entering a new phase, evolving." "It is drawing more on personal experience," he explained, "becoming more personal and relating back to the African- American folk roots, especially in its use of idiomatic speech, colloquialisms and the vernacular. It is also drawing on the rhythms of jazz and blues. . . [It] has located itself in black American culture and, like a tree, it is branching out to communicate internationally with cultures around the world. . . We are being listened to now. . . The speech and language of the African-American has had an impact. (Fraser)

With Open Admissions, this blossoming poetic culture was welcomed onto campus especially through the staff and non-tenure-track faculty who were hired to teach the newly admitted students. Beyond this reflexive poetry's presence in classrooms, SEEK provided curricular and extracurricular support—through theater tickets, movie screenings, and course offerings—for newly admitted CUNY students to embrace off-campus culture and bring those cultural happenings back onto campus as well.

Before I visited the archives, my inkling that rap might have been present at CUNY during Open Admissions was first confirmed by Adrienne Rich in her essay, "Teaching Language in Open Admissions." Rich recalls:

> Some of the most rudimentary questions we confronted were: how do you make standard English verb endings available to a dialect-speaker? how do you teach English prepositional forms to a Spanish-language student? where are the arguments for and against "Black English"? the English of academic papers and theses? Is standard English simply a weapon of colonization? Many of our students

wrote in the vernacular with force and wit; others were unable to say what they wanted on paper in or out of the vernacular. We were dealing not simply with dialect and syntax but with the imagery of lives, the anger and flare of urban youth—how could this be used, strengthened, without the lies of artificial polish? How does one teach order, coherency, the structure of ideas while respecting the student's experience of his thinking and perceiving? Some students who could barely sweat out a paragraph delivered (and sometimes conned us with) dazzling raps in the classroom: how could we help this oral gift transfer itself onto paper? (261)

This quotation is remarkable, first of all, for how many of these questions composition teachers are still grappling with, now often under the labels of translingualism, code-meshing, and contact-zones. It resonates, too, with Kynard's critique of Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* as valorizing revisions of student writing that elevate "artificial polish" over the "anger and flare" of earlier drafts (Kynard 205-209). Yet in the workplace of SEEK at CCNY, Rich was Shaughnessy's ally, not her critic. To understand the racialization of workplace dynamics in the context of innovative student-centered pedagogies, it is instructive to compare the records of Adrienne Rich with June Jordan's. Even as defunding already threatened Open Admissions from its earliest days, individual teachers like June Jordan and Adrienne Rich worked to theorize and teach writing as a practice that would allow students to intervene in worlds that sought to control and limit their fates. Jordan and Rich both used and developed the intellectual practices of reflexivity that were being strategically engaged in the rhetorics of the 1960s liberation movements to theorize from their own experiences and identities, and teach their students to do the same. Their pedagogies built on the Black poetic tradition—writing from the word "I"—that emerged in Lorde's archives.

In her Basic English syllabi, Rich stressed the value of theorizing the world from personal experience, and from a willingness to engage with the real world—what Kynard theorized as anticipating our field's "social turn" (33). In a 1969 syllabus, Rich wrote:

I am concerned with the student's response to literature as a part of his life, rather than as a preparation for scholarship in an English Ph. D. program; and with his discovery that one writes because one needs to say things to others, that he himself has much to say, and that when writing effectively one is addressing a potential reader,

not simply fulfilling an academic requirement. (2)

Rich's socially-situated pedagogies root rhetorical production in the world, which is to say, in culture and in identity. Her theorizing continues in a 1971 syllabus, which began:

> This class will start from the idea that language—the way we put words together—is a way of acting on reality and eventually gaining more control of one's life. The people in the class and their experiences will be the basic material of the course, about which we will be talking and writing. In writing, we will be trying to define the actual experiences we ourselves are having, and to make others more aware of our reality as we perceive it. The reading will consist of writings in which the authors or their characters have tried to understand and criticize their situations, and to change or move beyond them.

Although Rich was a white Jewish woman, her archives reveal a significant effort to engage with Black and Puerto Rican students' home cultures and to encourage them to do the same, for example by visiting local bookstores listed on a handout titled "Books to buy, beg, borrow, steal, or read standing up in the bookstore."

While Rich's attention to students' home rhetorics are admirable, an intersectional comparison with Jordan's materials show how Jordan's pedagogy, own writing, and experiences of institutional discrimination were shaped by her Black identity. In a handwritten journal from 1969, we can see Jordan theorizing writing for her pedagogy and for her essay "Black Studies: Bringing Back the Person," which Ferguson engages extensively in his book. In one undated entry, Jordan wrote, "Now language is our medium of community. . . For these reasons and for other reasons, reasons I hope our course of studies will articulate and analyze, language is always political. Always political. . . As a Black person and poet, I entertain an excruciating sense of language as political" (12-13). On another page, perhaps addressing her students, she writes, "I call upon you to self-consciously abandon the passive voice, in your writings + also watch the verbs you choose so that you don't combine 3 verbs where one would serve more forcefully" (65-66, formatting in original). A few pages later, a strange note appears in hard blue ink, forceful against the pencil on the rest of the page:

    obe | is | ant

    written description of course

        AND Reconsider curriculum (76, formatting in original)

This entry in particular suggests that even as Jordan was theorizing writing for her students in ways that would have a national and historical impact, she was receiving pushback from administrators—presumably Shaughnessy—for her curriculum. In 1970, Jordan penned an extended letter to Shaughnessy highlighting her students' work investigating issues in their communities in papers with titles like "Inferior Education in the Williamsburg Community"; "Self-Concept As A Determining Factor in Choice of Occupation: The Black Male Hustler"; "Inadequacy of Acceptable Food and Inadequate Systems of Food Supply in Harlem"; and "Drug Addiction in the South Bronx" (1). In this letter, Jordan inveighed against the testing regime Shaughnessy implemented for the English Department. Jordan wrote:

> I object to the value placed upon writings accomplished under stress. . . If you want to know what a student thinks, how a student can synthesize different ideas and aspects of material given to him, then so-called leniency should be the rule. Leniency: Extra time granted, as requested, consultation of books, as desired, and so forth. . . [C]onsider what our literary heritage would be, if writers were forced to submit their manuscripts, ready or not, on the day of the contracted deadline. I guess I am saying that the problem papers, for example, reveal more important data about a student, when the student is working hard, and trying for excellence, than any contrived examination-essay. (2)

In this passionate statement, Jordan draws on her own expertise as a professional writer to fundamentally challenge the validity of timed, standardized tests. With its plea for "leniency," this statement challenges the validity of the "standards" students at CUNY were held to, arguing that such standards are arbitrary, "stress[ful]," and invalid measures of students' thinking and writing skills which bear no resemblance to the demands of real-world writing situations. This letter resonates with Ferguson's analysis of Jordan's 1969 essay, in which he argues that "One of the ways Jordan summarized the 'deadly' and 'neutral' aspect of excellence was by demonstrating how it

rendered black and Puerto Rican students as the antithesis of standards and achievement" (86-87). In the letter above, we can see Jordan longing for a view of assessment that makes space for rapping, like Toni Cade Bambara did in 1968.

By 1976, as the defunding of Open Admissions deepened into crisis and full reversal, Jordan spoke more holistically about the role of standards and testing in the oppression of Black and brown students. In May 1976, she wrote:

> We intend to present you with the reasons for our pledged resistance to CUNY Retrenchment, the ending of Open Admissions, and the imposition of tuition... we speak to you as Black educators... Now, the powerful say, 'alas:' The color of the students, the rhythms of the music, the speech patterns—these things have changed... Now, the powerful say, 'alas:' CUNY is no longer 'a great university;' it has become a 'jungle', a 'carnival', 'an unmanageable problem.' What do they mean?... We say that the judgement, the aim, and the consequences of this changed attitude towards the City University, we say that the Kibbee Plan, Marshak's Retrenchment Proposals, we say that the impending end of Open Admissions, the impending establishment of tuition requirements are, one and all, racist events that we cannot countenance, nor in any wise [sic] accept. If you do not agree with this analysis then how can you explain the elimination of The Hostos and Medgar Evers Colleges as fully operating, distinct schools serving predominantly Black and Hispanic students?... How can you explain official estimates that the proposed transformation of the City University will result in a 65% decline in Black enrollment, come September, 1976: Sixty-five percent! [Yet this is] the City of New York that can spend more than two hundred million dollars on Yankee Stadium... ("Statement by June Jordan" 1-4)

This statement has commonalities with Jordan's 1969 essay "Black Studies—Bringing Back the Person." According to Ferguson, Jordan's careful efforts to clarify the racist effects of race-evasive funding decisions occurred in response to the move by state powers in the post-Civil Rights era to "construct racism as an increasingly illegible phenomenon" (58). By calling for "Black studies as life studies" (Jordan qtd. in Ferguson 109), Jordan works to rhetorically analyze the race-evasive discourses of standardized assessment

and dispassionate financial policy decisions that profess equal access to all while materially damaging the possibilities for Black and brown lives.

The quoted statement above was written in May 1976. In August of that year, Jordan received a dismissal notice from the college which noted that "The College's budget for fiscal 1976-1977 compels us to discontinue the services of persons currently holding appointments. The reason your services are being discontinued is that all employees in the rank of Assistant Professor with less than four years of continuous full-time service are being discontinued" (Marshak). Jordan was then rehired in 1977, but lost her seniority (Malkoff). Meanwhile, in 1975 Adrienne Rich was granted a "Special Leave of Absence" through January 1976 with no loss of seniority (Marshak). These disparities between the institutional treatment of Rich and Jordan are reflective of the ways that funding cuts disproportionately affected women of color instructors, especially vulnerable because they were often adjunct instructors, off the tenure track, who had been recently hired. For example, in 1970 the *New York Times* covered ten SEEK lecturers' claim that they were "purged" from the SEEK program at CCNY for being disruptive, that is, for protesting with students (Farber). And a letter from the Black and Puerto Rican Faculty at John Jay College from 1972 informed the Personnel Review Committee that three-fourths of the adjunct faculty not rehired were women of color.

In the spirit of critical imagining (Kirsch and Royster 21), it is worthwhile to consider these firings and layoffs juxtaposed with the extremely rapid promotion of Mina Shaughnessy, a process carefully reconstructed by Sean Molloy, who finds that "in the spring of 1967, Shaughnessy was hired as an untenured lecturer" in City College's new SEEK program; "before she even started work in September, Shaughnessy was promoted to be SEEK's English Coordinator" (106). Molloy continues:

> As a City College lecturer with no PhD and almost no academic publications, Shaughnessy normally would have had little hope for a tenure track appointment. But in the chaos of open admissions, normal faculty politics were temporarily suspended. In December of 1969, Shaughnessy was promoted to assistant professor. . . The new English Chair Ted Gross noted that Shaughnessy's abilities had already "won her recognition, unusual for one of lecturer rank, throughout the college" (1969 3). Even for a promotion endorsement, Gross's personal admiration was remarkable: "A woman of rare and keen intelligence, poetic sensibilities, and humane warmth,

> she is an extraordinary teacher and a fine human being who has
> won the unstinting admiration of her students, her Seek staff,
> and her colleagues in this Department" (1969 2). . . Gross named
> Shaughnessy as "an Assistant Chairman in charge of all composition
> work in the English Department" (Gross 1970). Shaughnessy now
> administered all City College composition courses and all writing
> placement tests for incoming students (Shaughnessy 1970). She
> quickly expanded her program and asserted her authority over it.
> (114-15)

Shaughnessy was not the most qualified lecturer employed by the new SEEK
program in 1967. While she may have possessed a "poetic sensibility," her
colleagues—later her charges—were poets. June Jordan, also an untenured
lecturer in the program, by the time of her employment by CUNY was a
published writer and had already successfully run writing workshops for
teens of color. It is important to consider Shaughnessy's rise in the context
of other forces at work at CUNY, not all of which supported the equalizing
mission of Open Admissions. That Shaughnessy's rise was supported by
Theodore "Ted" Gross is also noteworthy. In many ways, Gross—who left
his position in the English department to become a Dean—was responsible
for turning the public against Open Admissions. In 1978, the *Saturday Review*
published a salacious excerpt of his forthcoming memoir, with the article
titled "How to Kill A College: The Private Papers of a Campus Dean." The
article, in which Gross pays lip service to Open Admissions' mission but
insists it led to a lowering of standards and student quality, led to public
outcry from students and a public repudiation by City College president
Robert Marshak. To Gross's description of "black, Puerto Rican, Asian, and
varieties of ethnic white [students] playing radios, simulating sex, languidly
moving back and forth to classes, dancing and singing, eating and studying
and sleeping and drinking from soda cans or from beer bottles wrapped in
brown paper bags" (Gross "How to" 78), Marshak wrote in a public letter:

> I find it hard to believe that the Dean of Humanities would publish
> an article so deeply offensive to our students and faculty and so
> devoid of understanding of the progress made in the past few years
> at City College. . . I also question the tone, style, and insensitivity
> of your article. Your use of code words and stereotyping language
> about women and minorities constitutes a dangerous appeal to
> the forces of unreason and bigotry in our society. ("Open Letter")

As we reconsider writing pedagogies under SEEK, we must remember how the forces of white supremacy still constrained the teaching and promotion opportunities for writers and teachers of color on the faculty, limiting their implementation of meaningful cultural rhetorics pedagogies.

"Who We Intend to Be: Ourselves": Developing the Rap Idiom While Being Pushed Out of School

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, ethnic studies offerings expanded rapidly throughout the CUNY system. Black, Latino, and Caribbean literatures were included in the SEEK curriculum at CCNY as early as 1969, with separate SEEK courses in Black Literature and Latin American Literature and Romance Languages courses in Puerto Rican Literature, Contemporary Spanish, and Spanish American Literature ("The City University of New York University Center Seek Program 1969-1970 Catalog"). Meanwhile, students in the Music Department could take a course called "History and Literature of Jazz" offering a "return to personalized expression in rediscovery of origins leading to 'soul', rock, etc. and experimentation and development of new techniques" ("Spring 1970 Course Descriptions"). During the early years of SEEK, these offerings were also supplemented with film screenings and theater workshops that similarly blended white institutional boundaries between literature, music, and visual art ("SEEK Alamac Cinemateque"). Hunter College's Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies also offered significant coursework in nonwhite literatures. In 1972-1973, the department's courses included "African Literature," "African-American Literature," "Puerto Rican Literature" (Hunter College Bulletin 72-73), and by 1975, offerings had expanded to include "Puerto Rican Folklore" and "The Image of the Puerto Rican National Identity in Its Literature." Courses were also offered in Afro- American Humanism, African Literature, Afro-Caribbean Literature, Puerto Rican Literature, Spanish Language in Puerto Rico, and Autobiography As a Special Theme in Black Literature ("The Hunter College Bulletin 75/76"). Medgar Evers College, founded in 1971 to serve Brooklyn's populations of color, offered courses like these and more, with Economics courses on "Economics of Poverty and Racism" and "Economic Development of the Inner City" (MEC 117 Bulletin 1973/74). In the Speech Department, the course descriptions promised analysis of speeches by only Black orators—mostly male, though students could alternatively register for "The Black Woman Speaks." All these courses were part of the context of students'

educations in their writing classrooms, especially in classrooms like Cade Bambara's, where student input directly shaped curriculum.

Access to school resources gave students opportunities to develop the literacies of their home communities, and learn new modes of communication. Yearbooks from these years are full of pictures of desegregating academic departments and clubs, including new clubs based around ethnic identities and the desegregation of older extracurriculars like campus radio stations and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (*Genesis* 1967). In a 1969 speech contest at City College, "two of the eight finalists were in the SEEK Program, and a freshman SEEK student took second place" (Berger "University Programs"). In 1978, Medgar Evers College students placed second in the New York Reggae Festival Song Competition, singing an original song about Jamaican women's role building the modern state of Jamaica ("Everites Place 2nd in Reggae Contest").
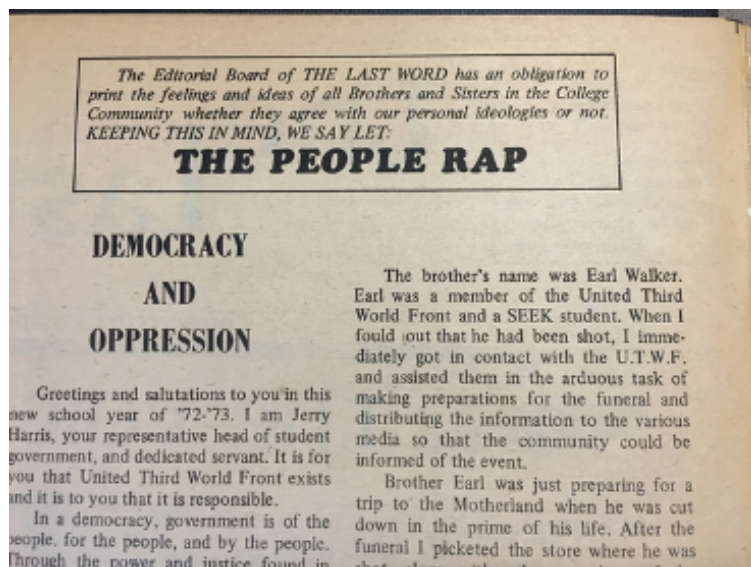

The Editorial Board of THE LAST WORD has an obligation to print the feelings and ideas of all Brothers and Sisters in the College Community whether they agree with our personal ideologies or not. KEEPING THIS IN MIND, WE SAY LET:

THE PEOPLE RAP

DEMOCRACY AND OPPRESSION

Greetings and salutations to you in this new school year of '72-'73. I am Jerry Harris, your representative head of student government, and dedicated servant. It is for you that United Third World Front exists and it is to you that it is responsible.

In a democracy, government is of the people, for the people, and by the people. Through the power and justice found in

The brother's name was Earl Walker. Earl was a member of the United Third World Front and a SEEK student. When I fould out that he had been shot, I immediately got in contact with the U.T.W.F. and assisted them in the arduous task of making preparations for the funeral and distributing the information to the various media so that the community could be informed of the event.

Brother Earl was just preparing for a trip to the Motherland when he was cut down in the prime of his life. After the funeral I picketed the store where he was

Figure 3. Detail from: "Letter from the Editor." *The Last Word 1.1*. 29 September 1972. Box 1. Open Admissions Collection 1969-1978, Queens College Archives, Queens, NY. 3 August 2016.

Against the ebb and flow of investment and retrenchment at CUNY, with the help of non-tenure-track instructors of color, students engaged what they themselves described as rap literacies to theorize themselves and their worlds in student publications. The three student papers I studied, from Hunter, Queens College, and Medgar Evers, all used the language of "rap" to

describe speech that was purposive and productive, whether describing letters to the editor, exchanges with faculty, or conversations between friends. *The Last Word*, the SEEK paper at Queens College, proclaimed at the top of its letters to the editor page: "WE SAY LET: THE PEOPLE RAP!" ("Letter from the Editor.") These publications also demonstrated a tremendous interest in poetry among youth of color in New York, and specifically articulated a BAM-aligned orientation to poetry that was about self-definition, community uplift, and political action, with all three papers, not to mention several yearbooks from these years, devoting significant space to student poetry. In fact, *The Last Word* devoted two pages in every issue to student poetry, and in one issue from 1970 the editors remarked:

> So far we have received a great deal of poetic material. Because of the tremendous interest in poetry, we think that it would be a good idea if the COMMUNICATOR sponsored and invited some well-known poets of the Third World to Hunter College. . . The over-all purpose of such a meeting would be to discuss methods and ways to improve, and, moreover, create more effective poetry, and thus better poets. ("Editor's Note")

This wasn't an idle hope, since the papers from both Hunter and Queens described campus visits by BAM poets Amiri Baraka and Nikki Giovanni.

The *SEEK Communicator*, the SEEK paper at Hunter College, showcases how newly hired SEEK staff members from the community—not all as famous as June Jordan—helped shape student literacies. In an issue from October 1970, a staff member, a self-identified Black woman named Yvonne Stafford, penned an extended history of SEEK which rooted the program in the rise of Black Power, the rhetoric of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, the English translation of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, the rise of Black Art as defined by LeRoi Jones, the music of James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Coltrane and others, and Black dance like the Jerk and the Boogaloo ("The Idea of Student Action in the SEEK Program"). As in Barbara Christian's class discussions, Stafford's intellectual history of SEEK at Hunter collapses categorizations between the poetry, music, dance, and theory of this activist, artistic, decolonial moment. As a SEEK counselor, she writes, "the object as I saw it was not destruction, but construction. I had to lend my help in getting students through in such a way that they would not be jammed by the traditional European educational rap." With this goal in mind, Stafford helped set up the theater workshop

students had been asking for by starting as a poetry group with the theme "Black is (a definition of Blackness)" (Stafford "The Idea"). This genesis is expanded upon in another *Communicator* article. Information Officer Joel Washington penned a "Philosophy and History—What We Are About— What We Intend to Be: Ourselves." He wrote, "seizing the opportunity to introduce ourselves, we have decided to rap a little about definition. We are about meaningful expression. . . We are about being a workshop. . . We are about culture" (7). In the explicit language of "definition," we can see the context of an audience that was not listening to how these young people defined themselves, despite allowing their presence in the CUNY system. The explicitness of Stafford's institutional history stands in stark contrast to a poem she wrote in another issue which asked, rhetorically, "If we wrote them a revolutionary poem/ Would they read it?" ("IF").

Yet as Ferguson has theorized, demands for disciplinarity are contradictory and ironic: creating new departments insulates the old ones. Curricular spaces remained hostile to Black and Puerto Rican students' cultural rhetorics, and the opening of new spaces often insulated legacy institutions from change. While in 1972-72 Hunter's Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies offered extensive coursework in Afrodiasporic and Caribbean literatures, in the 75-76 course catalog, only one writer of color, Ralph Ellison, was mentioned in any of the English Department's class descriptions ("The Hunter College Bulletin 75/76"). And at CCNY, one essay topic on a 1972 Proficiency Exam, which determined whether students could graduate, went like this: "The world that college graduates will be entering requires writing and reading skills of a high order. I refer not to the 'gift of gab' but to those forms of communication that have been developed for the academic, political, and scientific professions. . . . They [future workers] will have to carry on the counseling, conferring, interviewing, proposing, reporting, reading, interpreting, and writing that most jobs are already requiring." ("Essay Topic").

Despite this resistance, throughout the '70s, student newspapers helmed by students of color contained creative writing, institutional histories, reviews of popular cultural events, and opinion and reporting on issues like international third world politics, socialism, campus administrative policies, and local and state education policy. In the Medgar Evers *ADAFI*, student writers chronicled the decay of school funding and morale as policy priorities shifted. In 1974, amidst the joy at receiving teacher certification capabilities, the paper noted that faculty were already leaving due to "apathy. . . because of gradual deterioration in school services and subjective admin-

istrative policies" ("Why are M.E.C. Faculty Leaving?"). Amidst coverage of underfunding and the state's plan to begin charging tuition for the first time in CUNY's history, the paper reprinted students' protest cries as headlines: "Don't let them kill free tuition" and "Medgar Evers must not die twice." Amid a 20% overall drop in applications to CUNY for the 1976-1977 school year, the paper published a special issue to be distributed within Brooklyn, countering the rumor that the school had closed and informing community members about new federal grant programs. But the paper's archives abruptly end after 1978, suggesting the end of the story students had fought so hard to keep alive.

Further research is needed to see whether individual CUNY students, admitted through the Open Admissions policy, were active in the New York hiphop scene that became a serious presence in the mid-to-late 1970s. We do know, however, that students admitted through Open Admissions were sources of rhetorical excellence. The tens of thousands of Black and Caribbean students who flooded into CUNY during these years—and then were pushed back out with the onset of tuition in 1976—have not been taken into accounts of hiphop history. And the historical record is clear: hiphop did not emerge as a commodity product—that is, hiphop was not pressed onto wax and labelled "For Sale"—until 1979, in the years immediately after the retrenchment took hold at CUNY. Perhaps the story of hiphop's early history is not of a culture rising from the ashes, but a culture negotiating with a stark economic reality: when the door of funded public education closes, the window of individualist pursuit of capital stays open, beckoning.

Outro: Reflexin, Or, Why Pedagogy Is a Labor Issue

As a white Jewish woman I have a queer relationship to the histories I promote here. I am white like Shaughnessy, part of a history of white women literacy educators in a colonial U.S. education system. I am also a white Ashkenazi queer like Adrienne Rich—who, though a radical educator and thinker, was politically aligned with whiteness in the CCNY Basic Writing program, a friend and ally of Shaughnessy's while working alongside the specifically Black brilliance of June Jordan, Toni Cade Bambara, and Barbara Christian. Throughout the archives, though I do not dwell on it in this paper, I noticed how Jewish community groups appeared in tension with the prerogatives of Open Admissions: Jewish alumni fought Open Admissions at City College; Jewish students charged the Queens College SEEK paper *The Last Word* with anti-Semitism. Yet a mere thirty years earlier, Jewish students had been those

newly admitted minorities whom conservative faculty wanted cleansed of their accents and identities. The later alignment of Jewish communities with white supremacist priorities suggests the ways that white power pitches its own interests to other minoritized groups in the service of anti-Blackness. As we continue to enrich our understandings of the diverse rhetorical production during the Open Admissions years, the earliest years of hiphop culture, we must stay attuned to the complex interplay of "interests and opportunities" (Lamos) that opened, closed, and guarded avenues toward equity, advancement, and autonomy, and be willing to reflex on our own place in these historical movements.

In my case, I notice that my research for this article was funded by the continued support of a Mellon Mays fellowship I received as an undergraduate, meant to diversify the ranks of university faculty. Yet the open-ended language under whose guidelines I was awarded the fellowship—"This goal [of a diversified faculty] can be achieved both by increasing the number of students from underrepresented minority groups (URM) who pursue PhDs and by supporting the pursuit of PhDs by students who may not come from traditional minority groups but have otherwise demonstrated a commitment to the goals of MMUF" ("Mission")—was developed in response to a call from the second Bush Administration's Office of Civil Rights for "colleges and universities to change or drop race-and ethnic-specific academic enrichment and scholarship programs" (Roach). Despite NAACP complaints, this anti-affirmative action direction from the Bush Administration opened the way for white and structurally privileged students like me to take advantage of programs and funds meant for structurally disadvantaged students of color. Perhaps as much as anything in the archives, this element of my own story clarifies how, as Ferguson says, neoliberal discourses emerged "as a way of preempting redistribution," (191). By acknowledging how I, a white woman, profited from race-blind discourses, I hope to demonstrate even further how reflexive narratives, a discursive tool developed by Black poets like June Jordan in the 1960s and 70s, have transformational power to disrupt such processes. The tensions and play of privilege between June Jordan and Adrienne Rich continue to question how a minoritized white woman can stand in solidarity with her sisters of color.

Twenty years ago, Ira Shor insisted that "if we are serious" about good teaching and learning, "then we need a Labor policy on the one hand and a curricular policy against tracking, testing, and skills-based instruction on the other" (100). This paper's archival findings suggest that protecting vulnerable faculty and promoting valid, culturally relevant assessment prac-

tices are not two tasks, but one, and that providing innovative, culturally relevant pedagogies to diversifying student bodies is primarily a labor issue, a question of hiring, retaining, promoting, and following the lead of faculty whose identities resemble in some ways those of their students. Put another way—as woke as I may be or become, I just can't teach Black discourses like that. With their knowledge, their language, and their pedagogies rooted in their identities and their experiences, Black queer women poets like Audre Lorde and June Jordan remind us that supporting minoritized pedagogies is not separable from supporting minoritized teachers.

When we think of hiphop's emergence in mid-to-late 1970s New York, we must remember the decade beforehand when tens of thousands of students were formally educated in the rhetorical practices of their home communities by members of those communities; free books and theater tickets were distributed by SEEK; the academy directed newly admitted students to their home bookstores and theater workshops; a large network of community literacy and poetry organizations received city, state, and national funding and attention; students received education in media production in TV, radio, and sound engineering; and wide swaths of students at the college and high school level brought the lessons of the Black Arts Movement into their lives, using first-person poetry, fiction, and essays to define themselves in the context of their cultures, their communities, and their plans to change the world. As hiphop embraced the commodity market at the beginning of the 1980s and took the world by storm with its third world consciousness, griot poetics, and Caribbean beats, it emerged not merely out of destruction but out of the destruction of a funded public education system deeply oriented to cultural rhetorics, taught and theorized by untenured faculty of color inviting students *to rap*.

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