Basic Writing and Resisting White Innocence

Sean Molloy and Alexis Bennett

ABSTRACT: In this archival history, a college writing teacher and recent graduate together challenge the integrationist narrative of Basic Writing, grounded in "white innocence" and dating back to the 1970s. Joining other studies of physical and linguistic segregation in higher education, we recover the true birth of Basic Writing from 1969 to 1971 at City College and we find that racism was not an unintended bug of the first "Basic Writing" program, but it was rather the principal intended feature—a feature that was carefully concealed from students and outsiders with euphemisms and codes. We consider what this troubling birth means for the Basic Writing field today and enduring forms of white innocence that support monolingualism, including in our own experience together. We ask if it is still tenable for college writing teachers and researchers to remain "innocent" or neutral about Basic Writing and monolingualism.

KEYWORDS: Basic Writing; basic writers; City College; double consciousness; euphemism; linguistic racism; linguistic supremacy; Mina Shaughnessy; monolingualism; racism; segregation; testing; white innocence; writing assessment

In 2017, the California legislature found that California community colleges were referring over 75% of their incoming students (especially students of color) into uncredited "remedial courses." These placements discouraged students, burdened them with higher costs, and delayed their degree plans. To reduce these inequitable harms, California ordered its community colleges to reduce remedial placements by 2019 using multiple measure systems (not placement tests) which are "sensitive to cultural and language differences between students" ("Success Act"). The preliminary results of this

---

A college writing teacher since 2003, ***Sean Molloy*** *is an Associate Professor of English and the Director of the Writing Center at William Paterson University. His work has appeared in* JBW, College English, WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship, Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy, *and two edited collections. He has also curated a collection for the* CUNY Digital History Archive *and published a dozen oral history interviews on YouTube.*

Alexis Bennett *is a 2022 graduate of William Paterson University with a bachelor's degree majoring in Management and minoring in Public Health. She currently works as an educational instructor helping justice-involved youth obtain their high school diplomas and pursue post-secondary programs. She worked for two years as a senior writing consultant at William Paterson University's Writing Center.*

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2022.41.1.02

mandated reform are striking. In 2015-16, only 10% of Black students, 18% of Hispanic students, and 20% of white students in California's community colleges completed any college-level, transferable English course within their first year of study. In 2020, under the new legal mandate, 22% of Black students, 32% of Hispanic students, and 29% of White students passed a college-level English class within a year (Cal-PASS Plus). Texas, Florida, and Connecticut have now passed similar laws and California is considering additional mandated limits on remediation (Zamudio-Suarez).

Providing effective support for every college student is a daunting and complex challenge. But given the massive failures of California's community college remedial systems, why were those placement tests and remedial writing courses still in place in 2016? Why has it sometimes taken legal mandates to force public college educators to reform remediation systems?

We believe part of the answer lies in the powerful narrative and related "white innocence" that have rationalized and protected Basic Writing systems since the early 1970s. Beginning with a 1970s Basic Writing origin myth that was principally shaped by Mina Shaughnessy, the Basic Writing narrative continues today to argue that some entering college students are more basic writers than their peers. For their own good, these "basic writers" must be identified, labeled, and often physically segregated into Basic Writing courses in which they are taught to linguistically segregate their Englishes from "academic English."

In 2013, Carmen Kynard closely examined the origin myth of Basic Writing as Mina Shaughnessy crafted it in her 1977 *Errors & Expectations*. Kynard positioned *Errors* as an "integrationist narrative" that relied on "white innocence" to feed a larger "white integrationist stance in composition studies," all of which obscured the work of HBCUs, Black teachers, and Black student protest movements (150). To Kynard, this integrationist narrative and stance in fact rationalized the "admissions and enrollment schemes" which have been "always used to keep students of color out of white colleges" by casting those students as "outside the bounds of school culture" either to be excluded or "paternalistically saved" (151). In 2022, Annie Mendenhall expands Kynard's thesis by tracing how all American school and college integration during the 1970s was reframed as remediation—a national narrative based on misapplied psychological research and grounded in racist and euphemistic stereotypes of cultural deprivation. Remediation as integration then shaped "college writing for decades" as it preserved the convenient innocence of predominantly white colleges—rationalizing in "the white imaginary" a system of "pre-college, non-credit literacy remediation [that]

integrated Black students into white mainstream literacy norms to compensate for literacy deprivation" (Mendenhall, 33-35). This "remediation as integration" narrative had an immediate and overwhelming impact on American education. In 1971 and 1972 the Nixon administration diverted $1.5 billion to fund remediation programs and by 1970, American colleges had launched 900 "remedial and equal opportunity programs" (37-38). Like Kynard, Mendenhall argues that this false narrative was really a conservative backlash to integration. For example, Mendenhall sees remedial placement policies as "rooted in anti-Black linguistic racism," a backlash to efforts like the 1974 "Students' Right to Their Own Language" NCTE resolution (65).

In sum, Kynard concluded that the "primary function and contribution" of Shaughnessy's *Errors* "was to offer the field a white, integrationist discourse as it simultaneously birthed and legitimated the field's canons on Basic Writing, writing program administration, and pedagogies for nonstandard language varieties" (154). What were in fact tools of erasure, marginalization, and exclusion were thus recast as inclusionary reforms. Kynard argued that (even in 2013) *Errors* was being used to "center white comfort and a white voice" in composition studies (197). Similarly, in 2012, frustrated with the convenient, enduring myopia of white innocence, Ian Marshall argued that "the project of Basic Writing" evidences both an institutional and American cultural inability "to fully and completely face the consequences of racism." He suggested "that it takes hard work not to see this" (60).

JBW and the Narrative of Basic Writing

The first words ever written in this *Journal of Basic Writing* were Mina Shaughnessy's introduction to its first issue as its founder. By the Spring of 1975, Shaughnessy was an Associate Dean of the City University of New York and the director of its new "Instructional Resources Center." She was the administrator responsible for all the growing systems of skills testing and prerequisite instruction in writing, reading, and math for the entire CUNY system and its 220,000 undergraduate students (Molloy, "Myopia" 345, 364). Shaughnessy wrote:

> A policy of admissions that reaches out beyond traditional sources for its students, bringing in to a college campus young men and women from diverse classes, races, and cultural backgrounds who have attended good, poor, and mediocre schools, is certain to shake the assumptions and even the confidence of teachers who have been

> trained to serve a more uniform and prepared student population. ("Introduction" 1)

Shaughnessy's advice for those shaken (and presumably white) college writing teachers, rather than "to abandon old standards" (2), was to enter the "unmapped territory" where they could teach more sophisticated grammar instruction to "intelligent young adults who want to be right [but] seem to go on, persistently and even predictably, being wrong" (3). In her first sentence, Shaughnessy wove together a Basic Writing origin myth that launched a narrative of integration, white innocence, and cultural deprivation.[1]

We do not attempt to untangle Shaughnessy's true innermost thoughts and values. She was a critical actor in the early expansion and promotion of Basic Writing and a complex woman. She was a caring, conservative, and formalist writing teacher at City College from 1967 to 1971 (White; Mayes; Arce; Shaughnessy, "Summer Seminar"; Molloy, "Myopia" 294-95; Maher). She studied deeply in the emerging field of composition, as is evident from her "Suggested Readings" section of *Errors & Expectations* (298-306). And yet Shaughnessy also—from 1969 to within months of her death in 1978—steered all writing instruction at City College and CUNY toward a tiered and segregating course system grounded in sentence formalism and enforced by relentless testing and tracking— all of it rebranded within the Basic Writing narrative as necessary, supportive, and caring. All those efforts were part of a nationwide white backlash to school and college integration (Mendenhall). Indeed, none of Shaughnessy's arguments would have survived her death in 1978 if her Basic Writing narrative did not serve the larger institutional and cultural interests of white power structures within higher education that sought to resegregate PWIs and preserve white innocence.

Our Purpose and Positionality

Here a recent college graduate (Alexis) and her former writing teacher and writing center supervisor (Sean) explore the space between the narrative of Basic Writing and the harm that the first Basic Writing system actually did to Black and Brown students at City College (and indeed all students) after it was created in a January 1969 City College English Department meeting— as well as what current tracking, and monolingual writing pedagogies actually have done to us.[2] Mindful of Kelly Ritter's 2018 call for historical work about writing programs to recover and preserve polyvocal accounts and enable "opportunity for response, revision, and re-appropriation" (40), we recover archival voices to debunk the origin myth that has sustained

Basic Writing since 1969. We also see limits to adopting collective memory as a rhetorical response to local and critical archival histories where that collective memory (as has been true with Basic Writing) has been shaped by self-interest, powerful cultural biases, and myopic rationalizations. We conclude that Basic Writing at City College was an intentional backlash to integration—a coded system that demeaned Black and Brown students and teachers in order to resegregate City College both physically and linguistically. We agree with Carmen Kynard, Min-Zhan Lu, and Ian Marshall that the Basic Writing narrative has always relied on and appealed to forms of "white innocence" that (of course) have never been truly innocent. We examine the ways monolingualism and white innocence have harmed Alexis throughout her school and college career. In conclusion, we ask if it is still possible to remain "innocent" or neutral about the core tenet of Basic Writing that colleges can and should label some entering students as more "basic" than others?

Alexis is an African-American woman who has just completed her undergraduate degree and who worked for two years as a peer Writing Center consultant at William Paterson University. Over two years, Alexis completed over 600 peer writing sessions. Alexis grew up surrounded and constantly nourished by the Black women and men in her family. She was able to watch and learn from the vast life experiences of the people around her. She debated with other students at school lunch tables about women's rights and the existence of mistreatment towards Black students by teachers and administrators. She once had to educate a white teacher on why it was disrespectful to say the n-word, even if he was just "reading it from the book." She struggled with horrific events in the world, like the senseless murders of Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, and other people like her.

Sean is a white man who has taught writing courses at four colleges since 2003, including many sections that were labeled as introductory, "Basic Writing," or "English Basic Skills." Since 2016, Sean has taught full-time at WPU, where he has directed the Writing Center since 2018. Sean met Alexis when she took his mainstream, first-year honors writing class in the Fall of 2019. In the Fall of 2020, Sean hired Alexis in the Writing Center as a peer undergraduate writing consultant.

The differences in our race, age, gender, power, experiences, and perspectives raised some nuanced issues of collaboration and polyvocality in our work here. We have previously collaborated on several video oral history interviews of 1970s peer tutors in the Brooklyn College Writing Center, so we have had time to develop our collaborative rhythms (Berardi, Skerdal, and

Villamanga) and explore our power relationships. Being a former teacher/student and supervisor/employee writing team gives us a chance here to reflect more deeply both on our experience and the experiences of students subjected to the original Basic Writing systems at City College and CUNY.

Linguistic Innocence and Linguistic Segregation

In 1991, Min-Zhan Lu credited Shaughnessy with recognizing the validity of multiple Englishes. (We read Shaughnessy as more often simply designating all non-white Englishes as simply "wrong" and in "error" ["Introduction" 1-3, "Errors" 11].) Even crediting Basic Writing as a code-switching pedagogy, Lu argued that it promoted a "politics of linguistic innocence. . . which preempts teachers' attention from the political dimensions of the linguistic choices students make in their writing" (27). Lu recognized that student writers "need to decide how to respond to the potential dissonance between academic discourse and their home discourses" (27). But Basic Writing required writing teachers to ignore that often painful reality.

In 2009, Vershawn Ashanti Young laid out a detailed argument that all code-switching pedagogies effected "linguistic segregation" that caused harm to Black students comparable to systems of physical school segregation like the so-called "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v Ferguson*. Young argued this linguistic segregation pushes Black students into a kind of painful "double consciousness," like the suffering W.E.B. Du Bois had described as a "racial schizophrenia" caused by segregation. Young argued that "to teach students that the two language varieties cannot mix and must remain apart belies the claim of linguistic equality and replicates the same phony logic behind Jim Crow legislation" (54). In 2018, Young recognized that code-switching still "emanates from well-intentioned educators and is pervasively accepted," but argued again that "it appears nonetheless to be a vestige of legalized segregation [which] forces African Americans to view their language, culture, and identity, as antithetical to the U.S. mainstream, and becomes a strategy not only to teach Standard English but to negotiate racism" (6).

In 2020, April Baker-Bell, Bonnie J. Williams-Farrier, Lamar Johnson, Carmen Kynard, and Teira McMurtry coauthored a Conference on College Composition and Communication "DEMAND" for linguistic justice, drawing in part directly on Young's work. They demand that "teachers stop using academic language and standard English as the accepted communicative norm" because such teaching is "rooted in white supremacy, whiteness, and

anti-Blackness. . . that. . . has a deleterious effect on Black Language speakers' humanity. . . [and] and creates a climate of racialized inferiority toward Black Language and Black humanity."

Kynard, Mendenhall, Young, Marshall, and Lu make clear that white "innocence" has never really been innocent and it has never been harmless. Alexis was never labeled as a "basic writer." But since she entered first grade, she has felt the pain inflicted by white linguistic innocence and code-switching expectations. She learned at once that "standard" English was the goal and anyone who couldn't quickly assimilate would be considered "less than" their peers. She couldn't help but notice that this language differed from the AAVE many Black students spoke to her, but she couldn't fully conceive the deeper meaning behind it. No school teacher ever told Alexis her home language (AAVE) was a sophisticated and rich form of English—only that there was a right and wrong way to speak and write. These assertions of white linguistic superiority harmed her sense of herself in powerful ways, especially coming from the places where she was supposed to learn and from the people who were supposed to teach her. All of this soon seemed very normal.

Attending a diverse school district, at first, Alexis always felt seen by, and could relate to, her classmates. But starting in fifth grade, as she grew older and mastered code-switching, Alexis was tracked into more "accelerated," "advanced," and eventually "honors" classes. Alexis saw fewer and fewer Black students around her in the increasingly segregated "advanced" tracks in middle and high school. Linguistic segregation and physical segregation merged. Her need to switch from her casual comfortable language to her schoolwork language became more drastic and overt. She excelled academically and she knew her adaptability was impressive—but was it something to be proud of? Alexis wasn't sure if she felt "less than" because of how her Black language was demeaned and rejected—or because she was succumbing to this white power structure.

In her first week of college, Alexis took a writing class with Sean that felt different. She remembers: "I was trippin at first at the thought of calling my new writing teacher (Sean) by his first name. The class was rough and we did a whole lotta writing, rewriting, and rewriting again! This man had us doin some research studies, video essays, and creating websites, and I'm thinkin to myself, is this an English class or did I miss and sign up for a video design class? I'm not gonna lie though, it was fun to try these new things and challenge myself, I love a good challenge. It was probably one of the few times in college where I was always talkin to my classmates and

I grew to love em all. This class really showed me what college learning and writing could be like and man, it spoiled me."[3]

But in all her other classes, Alexis knew that she had to separate her "at home" language from her school language, deepening her double consciousness. In her honors classes, (except for the one class with Sean) she could tell that there was a set expectation that students should write in "standard" English. Covering her frustration with a smiling, cheerful demeanor, Alexis quietly filtered out her AAVE, not even giving the professors a chance to think that she was in any way a lesser student. Significantly, Alexis never had a Black honors professor and only ever had one Black professor in her entire time in college.

Working at the WP Writing Center gave Alexis the real tea on what happens in the university in ways no tour or orientation ever could. Many students were told by their professors to work on grammar corrections or picky edits. Assignments often required white English to receive a top grade, typically made clear by the rubrics. Students saw white English notes on their drafts. They heard white English advice when they asked professors what they could improve. Sean trained the writing center staff to focus on higher-order, bigger concerns. He knew if we just copy-edit papers, some teachers would be happier. But our clients would not become more confident and fluid writers and thinkers. Still, it pained Alexis to work with students who could not achieve the high grades that would make the thousands of dollars they pay for tuition worth it. It was nonsensical to all the consultants and students that their professors could not see past their very reasonable strays from standard English to truly understand the depth and meaning behind their writing. It reminded the consultants that even though they were being empowered through education, they were also being suffocated by it.

For two years, Sean was comfortably unaware of Alexis's pain, confusion, and frustration. Alexis chose to share her experiences for the first time in a summer writing center training seminar led by staff members and dedicated to biases, microaggressions, and intersectional identities. These candid staff conversations startled Sean out of some of his white innocence. He had designed his writing courses and the writing center pedagogy to reject monolingualism and formalism. But he had not directly confronted those issues either—which left students like Alexis with few tools to critique, resist, and navigate a university culture deeply shaped by white linguistic superiority.

Erasure and Distortion Within the Basic Writing Narrative

The Basic Writing narrative frames integration at CUNY through the actions and reactions of white writing teachers to Open Admissions in the Fall of 1970. As Kynard has traced in detail, this frame enacts multiple forms of erasure and distortion. We discuss three aspects of that erasure here. First, the narrative erases the four decades of civil rights struggle before 1969 to end racial exclusion at white American colleges. Second, it erases the history of the Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that educated hundreds of thousands of Black students before 1970. Third, it ignores the pressure that was building for CUNY to end its systemic exclusion of Black and Brown students through 1965 and the desegregation programs that did end it between 1965 and 1970.

As few as 28 total Black students graduated from *all* American colleges in *all* years before 1860 (Crossland 26). HBCUs— formed in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and the south after 1865— produced an estimated 1,151 graduates by 1895. Across those thirty years, white colleges[4] together graduated only 194 Black students, and 75 of those were graduates of Oberlin (Crossland 27). From 1900 to 1950, overall Black college student enrollments increased; but in 1950, there were still only about 100,000 Black American collegians, with over half of them studying in HBCUs (Crossland 28-29).

Beginning in the mid-1930s, civil rights activists and excluded Black students fought successful legal battles to gain access to white public universities (Pearson; Gaines; Sipuel; Sweat). These cases culminated in the unanimous Supreme Court 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision which concluded "that in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (495).

In *Brown*, the Court found that public education is perhaps "the most important function of state and local governments. . . In these days it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education." As such, education is "a right which must be made available to all on equal terms" (493). The Court found that segregation caused Black children "a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (494).

Brown brought increasing legal and political pressure on all white college systems to admit more Black and Brown students.[5] From the 1930s until 1957, New York City's public colleges (City, Brooklyn, Hunter, and Queens)

operated as four largely autonomous institutions, loosely overseen by a Board of Higher Education appointed by the Mayor. CUNY only became a single (and rapidly expanding) system in 1961, after the Heald Commission recommended massive expansions of the New York State and New York City university systems (Gordon 21-24, 82-83). Yet CUNY remained overwhelmingly white. In the mid-1960s its entire student body was "by all accounts" 94 to 97% white (Warren 2, 35). Even in 1967, only 3.6% of CUNY senior college matriculants were Black and only 1.6% were Puerto Rican—at a time when black and Puerto Rican students comprised 57% of all City public elementary students and 38% of high school students (Berger, "1973" 5). In 1963 (as the CUNY system was receiving increased New York State funding to expand) Republican Assembly Speaker Joseph Carlino directly charged CUNY with unfair racial exclusion. According to Carlino, "only 1.9 per cent of the [CUNY] student body was Negro." As such, CUNY "had become a haven for the elite," with high GPA requirements that forced Black and Latino students "to forgo college" (Currivan).

As pressure to integrate CUNY increased, in February of 1964, a new CUNY Chancellor Albert Bowker called for the launch of several new desegregation programs ("Three Pronged"). The most effective answer to Bowker's call would prove to be the SEEK Program.

In the Fall of 1965, City College launched the pilot version of what would soon be named the SEEK Program ("Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge"). SEEK was an affirmative action admissions, supportive teaching, and holistic support bridge program. The first SEEK students who arrived at City College in 1965 entered a program that holistically supported them with a sophisticated and diverse staff of administrators, counselors, and teachers—including writing teacher Toni Cade Bambara, who was soon joined by Barbara Christian and Addison Gayle (Bambara, "Sections"; Ballard, "Oral History;" Christian; Covington; White; Wiltshire; Holmes; Molloy, "Human Beings;" Brown). In 1965, SEEK likely seemed a small threat to conservative white faculty at City College. Many desegregation programs remained small; they admitted few students and suffered high attrition rates. For example, a 1964 Brooklyn College desegregation program named the "Academic Talent Search Project'' admitted only 42 total students in a single cohort. By 1968, 26 ATSP students had dropped out and only four had been fully matriculated (Furcron).

But SEEK successfully supported its students to succeed and it grew rapidly both at City College and across CUNY. Between Fall 1965 and Spring 1969, City College admitted a total of 915 SEEK students; as the Spring se-

mester began in January of 1969, 731 of those 915 were still active students. Only 184 had dropped out (Berger, "1968-1969" 46). SEEK obtained millions of dollars in New York state funding and quickly grew into the largest affirmative action program in any white four-year college system (Ballard, "Oral History; Berger, "1968-69"; Healy). By the Spring of 1969, SEEK had admitted about 4,000 students to CUNY's four-year colleges and 3,000 were still active students. About 10% of those SEEK students were white; 90% were Black and Brown (Berger, "1968-1969" 104). In mid-1969, Karen Sheppard became City College's first SEEK graduate ("In Retrospect"). Many other SEEK students soon joined her: close to 40% of the 1965 to 1967 SEEK cohorts would graduate from City College by mid-1972 (Frost).

With 731 SEEK students attending City College in January of 1969, it would have been clear to the English Department that SEEK and SEEK students were a permanent and growing part of City College. Moreover, many City College SEEK teachers, counselors, and students were already demanding fairer, more expanded admissions and greater curricular reforms, including direct criticisms of the English Department (Gayle, "Strangulation," "Not So Soon," "White Experts"; Bambara, "Black University"; Molloy, "Myopia" 196-217). In the Spring of 1969, student protests at City College and across CUNY would soon pressure Bowker and CUNY to adopt its 1970 "Open Admissions" policy (Ballard, "Jericho" 229-31). At City College, many of the 1969 student activist leaders (including Francee Covington and Henry Arce) were SEEK students (Arce, Covington). But as Kynard notes, the Basic Writing narrative soon largely erased the success, activism, and advocacy of the SEEK teachers and students.[6]

The City College English Department in 1969

Within the English Department, overt complaints about the racial integration of City College were largely limited to the openly racist, misogynist, and homophobic Associate Professor Geoffrey Wagner—for whom racial integration represented *The End of Education* (1976). But more subtle, covert, and/or unconscious reactions to integration began taking shape within the English Department as early as 1965. The English Chair, Edmund Volpe (then a 42-year-old William Faulkner scholar) publicly supported the new SEEK program (Platt; Volpe, "Confessions"). He hired a racially integrated teaching staff of special SEEK lecturers to teach SEEK's growing number of writing sections. But Volpe also kept this special SEEK faculty physically and functionally segregated from the rest of the department. The English Depart-

ment did not allow "regular" English faculty to teach any SEEK courses from 1965 to 1967, even when they volunteered ("Minutes," [2 Mar 1967] 2; Molloy, "Myopia" 170-72). The Department also added a new high-stakes grammar section to its mandated final exams for all first-year-writing courses (Molloy, "Myopia" 147-51). The SEEK teachers refused to use the exam (Covington 7; Wiltshire; Molloy, "Myopia" 214-15). The Department also began to plan a new writing certification exam that would be required for graduation (Volpe "Open Letter" 1; Molloy, "Myopia" 246-47).

Volpe's January 1969 Plan for a "Basic Writing" Course

The English Department's covert pedagogical resistance to integration came to a head during a January 16, 1969 department meeting led by Volpe where they discussed and approved changes to the English curriculum (Boxhill). Assistant Professor Roger Boxhill kept the minutes. In this meeting, Basic Writing was born and so we look closely now at those minutes.

Seventy of the English Department's 76 tenured/tenure-track (and therefore voting-rank) professors were white men aged about thirty to almost seventy (CCNY, "1969-70" 62-65). An English Department rule had excluded all women faculty until about 1959 (Johnson 24), and a decade later the tenured ranks still included only five women assistant professors. (Molloy, "Myopia" 165-73, Tables 1, 2, 3). The poet James Emmanuel had been promoted to be the Department's only Black professor after completing his Ph.D. in 1962, but Emmanuel was on leave during 1968-69 (CCNY, "1969-70" 63-64). The young poet and literature critic Wilfred Cartey was then being hired from Columbia to join the City College English Department as its second Black professor (Seifman). But Cartey was not present at the January meeting.

In a time when faculty seniority, rank, and white male privilege all carried substantial weight, the dominance of the senior men is evident from how often they spoke. Volpe talked by far the most. Several of the six other full professors and seven associate professors who were present (all white men) jumped in often. Of the eighteen assistant professors present, fourteen did not speak at all. Only two women, Assistant Professors Marcia Allentuck and Madeline Cosman spoke briefly. Before 1960, the Department had employed few non-tenure track teachers. But the rapid growth of SEEK had prompted the Department to hire many more lecturers. (No SEEK writing teacher had yet been offered a tenure-track position.) The 52 English lecturers that year were far more diverse in sex, race, and age than the professors; they included:

Toni Cade Bambara, Barbara Christian, Addison Gayle, Audre Lorde, Janet Mays, Lawrence Neal, Raymond Patterson, and Adrienne Rich.[7] They may have been present at the meeting. But lecturers could not vote and their presence was not recorded in the minutes unless they spoke. Only one did: Lecturer Mark Mirsky spoke briefly about new elective writing workshops (Boxhill 3). Shaughnessy was still an untenured SEEK lecturer; the minutes do not show her as speaking or listed as present.

Recoding English One, Two, and Five

Volpe explained that several committees had prepared proposed curriculum changes and language for the 1969-70 City College course "catalogue," all collected into a 12-page document by a committee led by Volpe.[8] While it is easy to get lost in old writing course numbers and descriptions, we discuss some of them here to trace why and how Volpe and the English Department created "Basic Writing" and how they carefully encoded confusing signals within it.

For about three decades until 1965, City College had "prescribed" two mainstream writing courses for all incoming students: the required, two-credit English One and English Two. For most of these years, the only "remedial" course had been English Five "for students who are reported deficient in the mechanics of English composition" (CCNY, "1968-69" 71). By 1968-1969, the listed "remedial" courses also included English Six, offered only as an evening class to "foreign students" (71).

In 1965, the City College SEEK pilot program had placed all of its 113 incoming students into special stretched versions of the mainstream English One and Two. Few SEEK students entering in 1965 and 1966 were placed into any English Five sections. In 1965, the Department combined English One and Two into a single, four-credit English One, reducing required composition to a single semester. English One was described as:

> 1. **Composition.** An intensive course in writing, extending from a review of basic grammatical principles to an introduction to the research paper. It stresses written composition in the essay form. The teaching of writing is coordinated with course readings. Frequent conferences required. (CCNY, "1968-69" 71)

Although English Two was eliminated for mainstream students after 1965, the SEEK Program continued to offer it (Molloy, "Myopia" 72-73). SEEK Director Allen Ballard wrote that by 1967-68, City College SEEK offered

"basic, stretched out credit bearing courses to students in areas of English, Speech, Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies and Romance Languages" (Ballard, "1967-68" 1). Ballard used "basic" to mean required gen ed courses—a common usage at City College at that time (Molloy, "Myopia" 74, n. 16). For example, the 1970-71 School of Engineering Bulletin listed 60 credits of "Basic Courses" required for all Engineering students, including Chemistry, Biology, and Physics (50). These SEEK "stretched-out" mainstream courses followed "the syllabus of the regular college courses" but were "smaller in size and" met "for more classroom hours per week" (Berger, "1968-69" 46). In this way, SEEK argued to the college that the SEEK students—from day one—were completing the same work in the same required courses as all City College students. As such, SEEK's "stretched" course model anticipated (by about 25 years) the core concepts and structure of the 1992 Arizona State writing course stretch model (Glau 79-80). While offering smaller classes and extra instruction, the SEEK model argued for the dignity and equality of the SEEK students.

But in the January 1969 meeting, Volpe proposed a whole new writing course system.

In past Bulletins, English courses had been listed under the headings "remedial," "prescribed," or various groups of electives. Volpe explained that the prescribed English One composition course would now be eliminated. So would the "remedial" and "prescribed" course categories. Volpe instead proposed a new category of "Departmental Courses" which would be coded language:

> Professor Volpe explained that in the context 'departmental' was a euphemism for 'remedial.' He pointed out that the new English One was actually the old English Five, a course that would be required of a student whose performance on the achievement exam was below standard. . . " (Boxhill 2)

Volpe did not describe the new "Department" courses in the January meeting minutes, but they were later published in the 1969-70 Bulletin. The first was:

> 1. **Basic Writing.** Prescribed for students who do not meet minimal standards on the Achievement Examination. An intensive course in the writing of essays, extending from a review of grammatical principles to an introduction to the research paper. Conferences required. P/J. 3 hrs wk. 2 cr." (CCNY, "1969-70" 67)

Volpe had to explain his new "euphemism" to his own Department because the new "1. Basic Writing" course looked a lot like the newly discontinued "1. Composition" mainstream gen ed course. "Basic Writing" was also numbered as English One and the substance of the coursework was almost identical to the old mainstream composition course. All this made it look like a mainstream required course. "Departmental Courses" also suggested mainstream required courses, like those previously listed as "Prescribed Courses." But the new Basic Writing carried only two credits instead of four, students would be placed into Basic Writing only when they failed a new "Achievement Examination," and Basic Writing would be graded on a pass/no pass basis.[9] The now discontinued "5. Remedial English" course had been a callous, but clearly understood and little used tool, openly designated as a pass/no pass, sub-college course (CCNY, "1968-69" 71). Basic Writing was something new— a course designed to appear to be mainstream but coded to be understood by college insiders as remedial.

Further complicating the new system, Volpe explained that the Department also created two new writing elective courses, "40-41—courses which in the revised curriculum correspond to the old 1-2" (Boxhill 3). In the 1969-70 Bulletin, this new English 40 was described as: "40. Writing Workshop I. The writing of essays. Emphasis on clarity, coherence, and personal expression. Some work in research methods. Frequent conferences required" (69). Although the course content was not much different than the new Basic Writing and both courses were graded on a pass/no pass basis, this workshop carried three credits and a much higher, more prestigious course number.

Why was Volpe (for the first time in City College's 120-year history) creating euphemistic categories and describing courses in ways that implied they were mainstream, while they were in fact meant to be understood by insiders as remedial? Why all these shuffled course numbers and blurred lines? And which students would be placed into these new coded remedial courses? As recorded in the January meeting minutes, Volpe explained:

> Professor Volpe then asked for and received the permission of the department to rely on his own discretion in rewording the description of courses in the [Departmental] list in order to imply, insofar as possible, their appropriateness for pre-baccalaureates and the foreign born, as well as for those whose main language was not English. (Boxhill 2)

The "Pre-Baccalaureate Program" was the title of SEEK in its pilot year (Levy). City College English faculty continued to use "Pre-baccalaureates" as another name for SEEK students. Volpe and the English Department fully and openly intended to steer, "insofar as possible," these mostly Black and Brown students into their new remedial "Basic Writing" course. How did the English Department plan to segregate their students in this way? They planned to connect the Basic Writing course to a new system of high-stakes writing tests. Assistant Professor Madeline Cosman explained:

> the Achievement Examination determine[s] whether a student is required to take a remedial course in writing or is free to elect what courses in the department he wishes. The Qualifying Examination determines whether a student has satisfied the standard of composition set by the department for graduation. Although the Qualifying Exam is of course more difficult, the two examinations are similar in form. (Boxhill 1)

In this way, the English Department did not merely create a coded new remedial "Basic Writing" course specifically intended for Black and Brown students: they also integrated that course with a new testing system that they intended would push Black and Brown students into Basic Writing.

Having heard Volpe's plan, the English professors at the meeting at once voted to ratify it, and "Basic Writing" was born.

Consider the harm these English professors were willing to inflict in order to create their new segregative course and testing system. They eliminated all required first-year-composition. Many entering City College students would receive no writing instruction at all from the Fall of 1969 to the Spring of 1971 (Molloy, "Capitulation"). The total number of English courses offered would be greatly reduced. As the faculty body in charge of writing instruction, the English professors also deliberately demeaned their own work within the University. With the new "Achievement Test," they were building a system where many new City College students would be told that they were either "unexceptional" or "basic." The new "Qualifying Exam" would block other successful students from graduation.

This original Basic Writing system was not in fact created to foster integration. It did not help any City College students with new or better writing instruction. Rather it merely converted required writing instruction for most white students into elective courses and it secretly recoded required mainstream writing courses for mostly Brown and Black SEEK students

into remedial ones. SEEK writing teachers, students, and courses would be demeaned as remedial. They would be pushed toward shallow formalism in order to align with the new high-stakes writing tests required for graduation.

To Alexis, looking deeper at the systemic inequities that existed then and persist today, it appears that English Department leaders may have been intimidated by SEEK students' potential. Not only were SEEK students equal to other college students, they had the capacity and will to be extraordinary. Since SEEK students were often marginalized and disadvantaged in more ways than one, they were surely aware that they had to unjustly work twice, and maybe three times as hard to reach City College and then succeed there. Although unfair to them, the hurdles erected by the English Department and other parts of City College undoubtedly made SEEK students more resilient and motivated (Covington; Wiltshire; White). Their ability to overcome those hurdles and succeed alongside other, more privileged students, would certainly have been seen as a threat to the established educational power structure that preyed on minorities. In other words, the 1969 English professors did not fear that the SEEK students would fail; they feared that they would succeed.

SEEK Students are Transferred into Basic Writing (Fall 1969 and Spring 1970)

The new Basic Writing system launched in Fall 1969. The 1969-70 Bulletin explained that incoming students would be sorted by a "Placement Examination" into three levels. Those "failing to meet minimal standards in writing skills" were "assigned to remedial classes." (Here, the euphemisms slipped a little.) Those "exceptional students" with high test scores would be exempt from any writing courses as well as the new "Proficiency Examination." Those with middle scores would be "counseled" to take the new English 40 "Writing Workshop course or to continue with self-study." However, all those *un-exceptional* students would also be required to pass the new Proficiency Examination (a timed, prompted essay test) in order to graduate (66).

We do not know whether Shaughnessy played any role in shaping this first Basic Writing course system before January 1969. She certainly did not agree to abolish required writing courses and she would actively oppose that decision for years (Molloy, "Capitulation"). And we can find only limited course placement records from 1969-70. But Shaughnessy's growing power within the department soon became evident. She was promoted to Assistant Professor in November of 1969 (Volpe, "Letter"). In the fall of

1970, Shaughnessy was given a newly created title: "Assistant Chairman in charge of all composition work in the English Department. This means that she supervises the remedial courses" (Gross, "Reappointment"). And it was Shaughnessy who implemented the Department's new Basic Writing scheme in 1970 and 1971.

In 1969-70, the physical segregation effected by the Basic Writing program is clear when we track the SEEK sections of Basic Writing 1 against the new elective Writing Workshop 40. The Fall 1969 Course Schedule listed nine non-SEEK Basic Writing One sections and fourteen English 40 sections (32-34). But by the Spring of 1970, almost no non-SEEK students were in Basic Writing 1. Only three mainstream sections were offered, as compared to eighteen Writing Workshop 40 sections (Spring 1970 Course Schedule 34-36).

The SEEK course sections were not in the public Course Schedule as non-SEEK students could not register for them. But Shaughnessy later reported to Gross (who was by then the new English Chair) that all the SEEK Composition courses had been renamed as Basic Writing courses in the Spring of 1970 when 402 SEEK students had been placed into 31 course sections of what she described as "Basic Writing 1, 2, 3 (old 5.8, 1.8, 2.8)" ("Progress" 2). SEEK course sections were marked with a ".8" (Arce, Rich) so Shaughnessy meant that the Department had simply converted all the SEEK writing courses (two of which had been mainstream courses before) into a new three-course version of Basic Writing. Moreover, in Spring 1970, only SEEK students had been placed into Basic Writing 2 and Basic Writing 3 courses; the Spring 1970 course schedules for all non-SEEK students listed no such sections at all.

In total, in the Spring of 1970, there were 31 sections of SEEK student Basic Writing and only about three sections of non-SEEK student Basic Writing. And this conversion of SEEK courses into Basic Writing was not done based on any careful and neutral assessment of each student as in Shaughnessy's myth; the entire SEEK writing course system was simply redesignated as Basic Writing. The English Department simply recoded all the SEEK writing students, and all SEEK writing courses, as remedial.

City College Expands Basic Writing (1970-71)

In September 1970, CUNY launched its open admissions program, greatly expanding access to all of its colleges. Shaughnessy was now an "Assistant Chairman" of the English Department in charge of composition. This title was also a kind of code. Gross explained in an October 30, 1970,

memo to Provost Abraham Schwartz that it meant that she supervised "the remedial courses and will therefore be largely responsible for the future success of the open admissions program" (Gross, "Schwartz"). Shaughnessy did not control those English 40/41 writing workshops, which the Department considered to be mainstream courses.

The entire three-course "Basic Writing" sequence was now listed in the Bulletin under the euphemistic "Department" remedial category:

> **1, 2, 3. Basic Writing.** (1) Diagnosis of individual writing problems, introduction to grammatical features of Standard English, introduction to description, narration, and analysis. (2) Organization and development of the expository essay. Techniques of quotation and citation. (3) Application of the techniques of summary, analysis, and research to significant works of literature. Frequent conferences are required in all basic writing courses. P/J. (CCNY "1970-1971," 82)

Continuing to blur the lines between mainstream and remedial courses, these descriptions could have referred to college-level (or even advanced) writing courses. But their remedial status was signaled by their "P/J" (pass/no-pass) grades and their low status as "Department" courses.

In Fall 1970, Shaughnessy continued to place almost all SEEK students into the new Basic Writing courses: 171 into Basic Writing 1, 125 into Basic Writing 2, and 160 into Basic Writing 3. There were 308 incoming SEEK students that Fall but Shaughnessy placed only 41 SEEK students into the higher-status elective English 40 writing workshop. Shaughnessy also placed about one-quarter (596/2,351) of all other incoming students into Basic Writing 1. About one-tenth of entering non-SEEK students (228/2,351) either elected or were placed into English 40 (Shaughnessy, "Progress" 1-2). In sum, while the new Basic Writing system funneled about 90% of entering SEEK students into between one and three semesters of coded remedial Basic Writing courses, only 25% of the non-SEEK entering students were placed into Basic Writing. Again, no non-SEEK students at all were placed into the new Basic Writing 2 and 3 courses, which were still segregated entirely for SEEK students.

In sum, by December of 1970, Volpe's January 1969 intention had been fully realized. SEEK and the remedial Basic Writing courses were closely intertwined. Inside SEEK writing classrooms, little had changed. Tests did not yet control everything. Following a practice begun in SEEK in about 1966, current

Basic Writing students were placed into future writing courses largely based on their writing teacher's overall assessments. Mary Soliday preserved many of the Basic Writing mid-term reports from Fall 1970. She found them to be "crammed with stories about students' lives, observations about language learning, and descriptions of coursework " (Soliday 93). A rich source, the reports show a large group of amazing teachers with differing approaches, all diving in to meet the needs of each student, and pushing them to become better writers (Molloy, "Myopia" 262).

Yet the new "Basic Writing" system had now deemed all those amazing teachers, courses, and students to be remedial.

Other New Barriers for SEEK Students

Once the segregative Basic Writing 1, 2, 3 and Writing Workshop 40, 41 system was in place, the English Department quickly used it to further exclude SEEK students. A new prerequisite for many English elective courses required either a passing grade on the new writing Proficiency Examination or in English 40 (CCNY, "1970-1971" 83). But Shaughnessy placed almost all the SEEK students into the Basic Writing 1, 2, 3 sequence, not English 40— so it was harder for them to qualify for English electives. As an extra twist, Basic Writing students were not allowed to also take the English 40 writing workshop as an extra writing course (and an alternate to the Writing Proficiency Examination) because completing "the entire 1, 2, 3 sequence in Basic Writing. . . is considered an equivalent" to English 40 (Shaughnessy, "Basic Writing" 11). In combination, the new rules reduced the number of Black and Brown students who could take many advanced English courses.

Other departments apparently understood the code because they soon followed the English Department's example. In December of 1970, Shaughnessy complained to Gross about "the academic penalty some students must pay for being placed" into Basic Writing ("Basic Writing" 11). The Nursing School had begun to refuse to give credit for non-letter grade classes, negating all the credits SEEK students earned in the three Basic Writing courses. Shaughnessy also complained that "the schools of Engineering, Architecture and Nursing" were requiring a passing grade on the Proficiency Exam or English 40 as a prerequisite for their advanced courses (Shaughnessy, "Basic Writing" 11-12). The Engineering school quickly offered its students the option of avoiding the new Writing Proficiency Exam completely by instead passing English 40 (CCNY, "Engineering 1970-1971" 50).

After the Fall of 1970, many more non-SEEK students would be placed into the Basic Writing sequence. But most of the first students to be designated as basic/remedial writers were the SEEK students— just as Volpe and the English Department had intended in their January 16, 1969 meeting. This first Basic Writing course/testing system intentionally trapped the SEEK students into a stigmatized and segregated course track with added barriers to success. This Basic Writing system also led the way for other academic departments to create similar barriers to success, all of which discouraged, defeated, and excluded SEEK students.

Basic Writing Fails Students at City College from 1971 to 1976

By 1971, the City College SEEK writing program had been fully merged into the Basic Writing system. The SEEK students struggled within this new system, with "the percentage of SEEK students failing Basic Writing courses. . . somewhat higher" than other students over several semesters "preceding" Spring 1973 (Skurnick, "1973" 4). In addition, SEEK students were far more likely than other students to be placed into the grammar-intensive Basic Writing One class. In Fall 1972, the new City College WPA Blanche Skurnick placed 47% (161/338) of SEEK students and only 24% (430/1782) of other students into Basic Writing 1. In Spring 1973, 61% of Basic Writing One placements (164/271) were SEEK students (Skurnick, "1973" 1). The combination of high Basic Writing One placements, high course failure rates, and the additional proficiency exam gateway (launched in 1969 and validated by Shaughnessy in 1972) combined to target and segregate SEEK students away from mainstream, full-credit courses.

In the Spring of 1975, as Shaughnessy was promoted to be a CUNY Associate Dean and as *JBW* was born, the failure of Basic Writing at City College was growing more evident. In March, lecturer Pat Laurence and assistant professor Bill Herman cited the "basic dissatisfaction. . . some of us have felt" with Basic Writing: "Broadly speaking, not only is the failure rate too high in the sequence, with many students repeating courses a number of times, but the achievement level of those passing through the sequence is frustratingly uneven" (1). By 1975, many City College writing courses were taught by adjuncts. But tenured faculty from other departments with few majors also began to teach writing courses beginning in the Fall of 1974. In 1975 and 1976, CUNY imposed drastic budget cuts and layoffs. These layoffs devastated the largely untenured writing faculty. Skurnick reported that from

Fall 1975 to Fall 1976, seventy writing sections at City College had been taught by tenured faculty assigned from other departments (Skurnick, "1977" 1-2).

Skurnick reported even higher failure rates in all the Basic Writing courses and the Proficiency Examination—which since at least 1973 had also served as a Basic Writing Three course exit exam (2). Failure rates for non-SEEK students in all Basic Writing courses over the three semesters from Fall 1975 to Fall 1976 ran from 22 to 37%. SEEK student failure rates in all writing courses ran from 24 to 41% (3-4). Budget cuts in 1975 even forced Skurnick to run six 100-student lecture versions of Basic Writing courses. She ran three more 100-student Basic Writing sections in the Spring of 1976 (Skurnick, "1977" 2; Molloy, "Myopia" 366-67).

Shaughnessy Promotes Exclusion and Testing Systems (1975-1978)

In April of 1976, Dean Shaughnessy privately urged CUNY's top administrators to adopt a "selective retention" policy (CUNY, 1976, April 2). Shaughnessy also reported to top CUNY administrators her many actions to develop, study, and promote skills testing across CUNY. She warned them that a new CUNY-wide testing system would be "deeply, pervasively controversial on several grounds" and urged the CUNY Board of Trustees and campus "policy makers" to use "a firm implementing hand" to overcome resistance ("Memo to McGrath" 7). In a December 5, 1976 memo, Shaughnessy recognized that the "penalized testing" system she was planning would eliminate Black and Latino students in a way that would strike many as a "desperate and educationally irresponsible move" (Shaughnessy, "Note to Murphy" 3). Yet, she continued to build it.

The reality of Basic Writing was a system of barriers, segregation, and exclusion, all grounded in a false and conveniently myopic white innocence. In the Fall of 1978, CUNY launched a massive, system-wide, mandatory basic skills testing and tiered course system. In 1978, over half of the 22,000 entering CUNY students failed some part of the new writing, reading, and math exams. Between 1978 and 2016, CUNY labeled close to 750,000 students as "basic" and tracked them into stigmatized sub-college writing courses (Molloy, "Myopia" 388-90).

Basic Skills Systems Segregates American Colleges for Four Decades

As Mendenhall notes, CUNY was hardly alone. Across America, college systems added layers of discouraging, costly, and demeaning new "remediation" barriers. For example, in 1971 (ten years after a federal judge had ordered the University of Georgia to admit Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter, its first two Black students) Georgia developed a minimum skills proficiency reading and writing test program for sophomores across its thirty-three campuses (Ridenour 338, 343; Pounds 327; White, "Misuse" 31). Georgia soon added new first year writing placement, course exit, and admissions tests (Ridenour 332-334). In 1974, the University of Georgia system adopted a "Retention of Black Students" plan which expanded remediation grounded in arguments of cultural deprivation. (Mendenhall 41-42, 68-69)

In 1978, New Jersey implemented a new mandatory "Basic Skills Testing Program" that required its public colleges to administer new Basic Writing, reading, and math tests and place students who failed the tests into sub-college level courses. That year, about 43% of all entering students failed some part of those new tests (Molloy, Fonville, and Salam 11-14). Our university eliminated "Basic Writing" here in 2018. However, reading and math placement tests and mandated zero-credit reading and math courses remain in effect here.

A zero-credit "English Writing Laboratory" course first appeared at Wisconsin's Stout State University in 1968. This new course description did not refer to any placement test requirements; it instead promised "new structural and linguistic approaches to basic writing." (Stout, "1968-1970" 94, "1964-1966"). But in 1976, Stout added an "English Department Placement Examination" to block access to its mainstream course (Stout, "1976-1977" 123). In 2020, Basic Writing course/testing legacy systems were still in effect across the Wisconsin University system (Nicoles and Reimer).

In the California State University system, after the English Department chairs collectively embraced new mandated writing course exit tests in 1972, the entire system implemented them in 1973 (White, "Opening" 310, 315). More tests soon followed. After decades of pushing close to half of its incoming students into prerequisite courses based on placement tests and seeing low graduation rates, CSU eliminated both those tests and courses in 2018 (Mlynarczyk).

Resisting White Innocence

Alexis is typically the type of person that prefers to endure rather than to complain. So she never thought she would reveal her vulnerability in our summer 2021 writing center training session. However, she felt safe enough to say what was on her mind, supported by her fellow consultants. She expressed the way she felt living at the intersection of being a Black woman and how it shaped her experiences at the writing center. "I told everyone that sometimes, I get uncomfortable. The way that I am approached, the way I'm perceived, the way I'm treated. Living at this intersection, it's hard to pinpoint exactly what about you makes people mistreat you. Is it cuz I'm Black. . . a woman . . . or both? I talked about feeling demeaned by students, sometimes being treated like an eligible bachelorette and sometimes being treated like I was useless before I even got the chance to help. I was talking about microaggressions, and many times, they felt very loud."[10]

Sean realized we had to speak directly in the writing center (and in his writing courses) about white English. The staff read and discussed Young's "Naw, We Straight," and the 2020 "DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice." For Alexis, it wasn't until reading Young's article and learning more about code-meshing, code-switching, double consciousness, and "Standard English" that she realized how this structural linguistic racism had been harming her since first grade. As a young Black college student, Alexis felt like she was being oddly validated or recognized for years of strenuous actions she had no idea she had been taking.

Our discussions as a staff about the harms of linguistic racism at WP have led us to take new actions. We invited a dean to join us for an hour-long discussion about white English expectations at our university. Sean has added labor contracts to all his courses modeled on Asao Inoue ("Grading Contract") and Sean explains why they are an option. He is adding new readings to writing center training and writing courses as well. Of course, resisting his own white innocence is an ongoing challenge.

A Fraught History and a Polemic Battlefield

In her critique of the false and harmful narrative of Basic Writing, Kynard also recognizes that the research within the field of Basic Writing has been "a polemical battlefield," citing harsh criticisms of *Errors* and Basic Writing dating back to *College English* articles by John Rouse in 1979 and Min-Zhan Lu in 1992 (Kynard 154, 198). After Shaughnessy founded *JBW* and edited four issues that focused on errors, grammar, and writing tests

from 1975 to 1978, *JBW* was reborn as an independent, peer-reviewed journal that has published both some harsh critiques (and also many defenses) of Basic Writing. Many of the writing teachers who have dedicated themselves to fight for dignity and justice for all college students have joined the academic conversations within Basic Writing and *JBW*. As we note above, *JBW* published Lu's 1991 article that argued Shaughnessy had propagated "an essentialist view of language and a politics of linguistic innocence" (37). In 1993, William Jones argued in *JBW* that the racism at the core of American life situated "basic writing programs as Jim-Crow way stations. . . for. . . thousands of Black and Latino students" (72). Jones believed that America's "bedrock conviction that Black and Latino youths are incapable of high academic achievement" distorted both the writing instruction they received and their own self-images. Reading "basic writer" as a euphemism for minority students (73-74), Jones complained that sophisticated and successful process and dialogic approaches to teaching writing and the "accumulated knowledge of the profession" were seldom "delivered in the service of Black and Latino students" (77). In 1997, Ira Shor argued openly in *JBW* that Basic Writing had emerged as a conservative response to the expanded college access of the 1960s, serving as "a new field of control to manage the time, thought, aspirations, composing, and credentials of the millions of non-elite students marching through the gates of academe" (93). Shor attacked Basic Writing as "an empire of segregated remediation" (95).

Despite this rigorous debate, an unavoidable implied meta-argument in a journal (and in a field) that still keeps the name "Basic Writing" is that the enterprise of determining which entering college students are more "basic" than others (usually based on their facility with white English) continues to have arguable merit. We recognize that many hundreds of researchers and tens of thousands of writing teachers have done amazing work under daunting conditions within the umbrella of BW over the last fifty years. Nonetheless, in *JBW* in 2020, Sean and two formerly designated "Basic Writers" at WPU studied the racism that shaped Basic Writing at our university, reflected on the ways Basic Writing had harmed us all, and concluded that:

> so long as college writing programs and teachers define their work by searching out and measuring student deficits—by finding ways to argue that some incoming college students (like Sil and Abdus) are more "basic," less able, less likely to succeed, and less valued than others, colleges will fall short of their missions to fight for racial and social justice. The poisoned trees planted four or five decades

> ago will not be fully rooted out. . . In the end, we must oppose, rethink, and reimagine these biased old legacy systems until the day sometime soon when they are all "eliminated root and branch." (Molloy, Fonville, and Salam 27)

The first version of Basic Writing did not help to integrate City College. It was in fact a pedagogical white backlash to integration that segregated Black and Brown writing students into remedial courses, created barriers to their success, and denigrated them as "less than" other students—all in ways that were carefully obscured with euphemisms and codes. Basic Writing falsely equated integration and remediation by simply recasting writing courses for Black and Brown students as remedial and recasting Black and Brown writing students as the original "basic writers." In no sense was this terrible harm accidental or truly innocent. Racism was not an unintended, accidental consequence in the original version of Basic Writing: it was instead its principal intended feature.

Leaving Basic Writing behind will not end monolingual writing pedagogies, euphemisms and codes, invalid placement systems, and white linguistic supremacy. It will only be one important initial step in a much larger and longer struggle. Resisting white innocence, like resisting all forms of convenient myopia, is an ongoing, uncomfortable, and reflective process. But we believe it is time to directly reject the narrative of Basic Writing and the core assumptions embedded into it since 1969.

Notes

1. Here we sometimes use "origin myth" to refer to Shaughnessy's specific Basic Writing narrative, offered in similar forms from 1971 to 1978. While the Basic Writing story has grown larger and more complex, we believe that core and troubling elements of the original Basic Writing narrative have not changed since 1975—and cannot change within this paradigm.
2. Here (with gratitude to Conor Tómas Reed) we capitalize "Black" and "Brown" as chosen formal designations by people of African, Caribbean, Indigenous, and Latin American descent whose self-naming was part of their emancipation, while we lower-case "white" to signal that this umbrella term homogeneously designates people of European descent (but also other ethnicities at different periods of political racialization in U.S. history).
3. While we write together here in third-person (and mostly white English) through most of this article, Alexis wanted to reflect here her sense of

alienation as she entered a white college. The language used here reflects Alexis' AAVE as a first-year college student.

4. We sometimes refer to predominantly white colleges/institutions (or PWIs). But prior to the 1960s, with the notable exception of Oberlin, we think it is more accurate to call them white colleges.
5. While the facts in *Brown* involved public schools, it also invalidated apartheid public college systems. In 1956, *Brown* was further extended to invalidate all other apartheid systems (Browder v Gale). But *Brown* was only partially extended (after a seventeen year delay) to those "de facto" northern segregated school systems which showed evidence of "segregative intent" in 1973 (Keyes v. Denver; Molloy, "Myopia" 318-20).
6. While we discuss some aspects of the SEEK desegregation program here, a full description of the 1960s City College SEEK model, its writing program, and its remarkable early writing faculty are far beyond our possible scope. But a growing body of recovery scholarship over the last decade has recovered and preserved many of the voices of 1960s and 1970s CUNY SEEK and other students, teachers, and administrators. Recovered primary sources and SEEK voices include: a twenty-item collection within the *CUNY Digital History Archive* ("SEEK's Fight") which links to YouTube oral histories by Allen Ballard, Francee Covington, Marvina White, and Eugenia Wiltshire; Bambara "Lost & Found," "Sections," "Something"; Berger "1968-1969"; Christian. Secondary sources include Holmes; Reed; Brown; Molloy, "Myopia" 60-217, "Human Beings, "SEEK's Fight." Alexis, Sean, and Conor Tómas Reed have also recovered other 1970s CUNY student and teacher voices (Berardi, Simms and Adams Simms, Skerdal, Villamanga, Zanderer).
7. (CCNY, "1969-70" 65; Molloy "Myopia" 168-173). We use the 1969-70 Bulletin to count faculty as the CCNY Bulletin faculty lists always looked back to the preceding year. It is possible that more lecturers (like David Henderson and June Jordan) were teaching but not listed (CCNY, "1970-71" 80).
8. (Boxhill 1). This 12-page document was not preserved with the surviving minutes. But the professors edited and discussed its contents in some detail during the meeting and the 1969-70 CCNY Bulletin corresponds closely to their discussions and proposed edits. We rely on the minutes and bulletin here.
9. The other "Department" courses were a sequence of five ELL courses collectively titled "Grammatical Principles and Writing." The students

likely to be prescribed into these courses were listed in the 1969-70 Bulletin as "those for whom English is a second language" (68).

10. This is Alexis's raw reflection on what happened the day she opened up to writing center colleagues about her experiences. The register here is different from her earlier code-meshing example. Studying concepts including intersectionality and microaggressions has empowered Alexis and affected her language uses in different situations. She is a dynamic human being and the way she speaks and communicates is not monolithic.

Works Cited

[Note: Below, we abbreviate the Archives and Special Collections, Morris Raphael Cohen Library, CCNY. New York, NY, down to "CCNY Archives" for brevity. Other archives are more formally listed. In all cases, we use full URLs so that links are viable.]

Arce, Henry. "An Oral History of the CCNY 1960's and 1970's SEEK Program," 9 June 2016. In Molloy "Myopia," at pp. 504-506.

Baker-Bell, April, Bonnie J. Williams-Farrier, Lamar Johnson, Carmen Kynard, and Teira McMurtry, "This Ain't Another Statement: This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice." *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, July 2020. https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/demand-for-black-linguistic-justice.

Ballard, Allen B. "1967-1968 Annual Report Pre-Baccalaureate Program." *The City College of New York*, 22 August 1968. (SEEK Box One). CCNY Archives.

—-. "Allen B. Ballard: An Oral History of the CCNY 1960's SEEK Program." *YouTube.* 13 August 2014. https://youtu.be/xqOSvD056LY. Transcript at Molloy, "Myopia," pp. 406-17.

—-. *Breaching Jericho's Walls: A Twentieth-Century African-American Life.* SUNY P, 2011.

Bambara, Toni C. "Miss Toni Cade Sections B, C & D." [Teaching report]. *Pre-Baccalaureate Program Report on The Summer Seminar, July 1, 1968–August 30, 1968,* edited by Mina Shaughnessy, Fall 1968, (Adrienne Rich Box 385). Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA, pp 10-16.

—-. "Realizing the Dream of a Black University." *Observation Post, 14 Feb. 1969,* pp. 4-6. CCNY Archives.

—-. *"Realizing the Dream of a Black University" & Other Writings (Parts I & II).* Co-edited by Makeba Lavan and Conor Tomás Reed. *Lost & Found: The*

CUNY Poetics Document Initiative, Series 7. The Center for the Humanities, Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2017.

—-. "Something In the Wind." *The Paper,* 25 April 1968, p. 4. Berger Family Archives, New City, NY.

Berardi, Loretta. "Tutor to Tutor: Loretta Berardi Interview." *The WPU Writing Center*. [Video oral history co-produced and edited by Alexis Bennett and Sean Molloy] 20 Apr 2021. https://youtu.be/_yEYRmduDXs.

Berger, Leslie. *Annual Report 1968–69 SEEK program.* The City University of New York, 21 Oct. 1969. (SEEK Box One). CCNY Archives.

—-. "Draft—History of Open Admissions." [With Cover memo to Healy, Meng, Ballard, Irby, McGrath and Murphy.] 10 Sep. 1973. Academic Affairs Box 172. CUNY Central Archive. LaGuardia Community College: Long Island City, NY.

Boxhill, Roger. "Department of English Minutes of the Regular Meeting, January 16, 1969," CCNY Archives.

Browder v. Gale, 147 F.Supp.707 (M.D.Ala. 1956) *aff'd per curiam* 352 U.S. 903 (1956).

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 383 (1954).

Brown, Tessa. "'Let the People Rap': Cultural Rhetorics Pedagogy and Practices Under CUNY's Open Admissions, 1968-1978." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2019, pp. 106-43. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.2019.38.2.05.

California Legislative Information. "Today's Law As Amended: AB-705 Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012: matriculation: assessment. (2017-2018)" 13 Oct 2017. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB705&showamends=false.

Cal-PASS Plus. "Student Success Metrics." California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx.

Christian, Barbara. [1968, Fall]. Barbara Christian sections A, E & F. [Teaching report]. *Pre-Baccalaureate Program Report on the Summer Seminar*, July 1, 1968–August 30, 1968, edited by Mina Shaughnessy, Fall 1968, (pp. 17-23). (Adrienne Rich Box 385). Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA, pp. 17-23.

Covington, Francee. "Francee Covington: An Oral History of the CCNY 1960's SEEK Program and The Paper." YouTube. 8 June 2015.https://youtu.be/rBfCRp0fTkg. Transcript at Molloy, "Myopia," pp. 429-42.

The City College of New York. *Bulletin, 1969–1970, Undergraduate Division, College of Liberal Arts and Science, The City College,* 1969. CCNY Archives.

—-. *Bulletin, 1968-1969, Undergraduate Programs, The City College, College of Liberal Arts and Science,* 1968. CCNY Archives.

—-. *Bulletin, 1970–1971, Undergraduate Division, College of Liberal Arts and Science, The City College,* 1970. CCNY Archives.

—-. *Bulletin, 1970–1971, Undergraduate and Graduate Programs, The City College, School of Engineering,* 1970. CCNY Archives.

—-. Department of English Regular Meeting. (1967, March 2). [Minutes 2 Mar 1967]. (English Department Box Two). CCNY Archives.

—-. *The City University of New York, The City College, Schedule of Classes, Day Session Undergraduate, Spring 1970*. CCNY Archives.

—-. *The City University of New York, The City College, Schedule of Classes, Day Session Undergraduate, Fall 1969*. CCNY Archives.

The City University of New York. "A Three-Pronged Experimental Approach to The Problem Of Undiscovered College Potential Among the Young Men and Women of New York City." [Memorandum from the office of the Chancellor,] 7 Feb. 1964. Leslie Berger Family Archives. https://cdha.cuny.edu/items/show/6972 .

—-. "Task Force on High School-College Articulation: Progress Report." (Box 4). 2 Apr. 1976. (Maiz/Maher, Box 4). CCNY Archives.

Crossland, Fred E. *Minority Access to College. Ford Foundation*. Schocken Books, 1971. https://archive.org/details/minorityaccessto0000cros .

CUNY Digital History Archive. "SEEK's Fight for Racial and Social Justice (1965-69)." [Archival Collection.] https://cdha.cuny.edu/collections/show/252.

Currivan, Gene. "Carlino Bids City University Drop Free Tuition." *New York Times*. (27 Nov. 1963) www.nytimes.com/1963/11/27/archives/carlino-bids-city-drop-free-tuition-says-student-body-would-be.html?searchResultPosition=1.

Frost, Olivia. "Table Showing Distribution of Spring 1972 SEEK Student Registration." [Memo to Dean Robert Young et al.]. (1972, April 19). (Olivia Frost Papers, Box 10, Folder One). Research Collections at The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. New York Public Library. New York, NY.

Furcron, Margaret. (1968). To help them achieve: The academic talent search project 1966-68, Part II. Brooklyn College School of General Studies and the Rockefeller Foundation. Bowker Box 245. CUNY Central Archives, LaGuardia Community College: Long Island City. https://cdha.cuny.edu/items/show/7032.

Gayle, Addison. "Cultural Strangulation: Black Literature and the White Aesthetic," 1969. *The Addison Gayle Jr. Reader*, edited by Nate Norment, U of Illinois P, 2009, pp. 101-106.

—-. "Perhaps Not So Soon One Morning." *Phylon*, vol. 29 no. 4, pp. 396-402. doi.org/10.2307/274025.

—-. "White Experts—Black Subjects," 1967. *The Addison Gayle Jr. Reader*, edited by Nate Norment, U of Illinois P, 2009, pp. 3-7.

Glau, Greg. "The 'Stretch Program': Arizona State University's New Model of University-Level Basic Writing Instruction." *Writing Program Administrator,* vol. 20, no 1/2, 1996, pp. 79-91.

Gordon, Sheila C. *The Transformation of the City University of New York, 1945-1970*. [Doctoral Dissertation.] Columbia University: New York. (1975). Xerox University Microfilms. (77-27,856).

Gross, Theodore. [Memo to Abraham Schwartz,] 30 Oct.1970. (Maher/Maiz Box 4) CCNY Archives.

—-. Board of Higher Education Recommendation for Appointment, 9 Dec. 1969. (Shaughnessy Box One). CCNY Archives.

Healy, Timothy. "Will Everyman Destroy the University?" Dec. 1969. (Academic Affairs Box 172). CUNY Central Archive. LaGuardia Community College: Long Island City, NY. https://cdha.cuny.edu/items/show/7282.

Holmes, Linda J. *A Joyous Revolt: Toni Cade Bambara, Writer and Activist*. Praeger P, 2014.

Inoue, Asao. "Our Grading Contract for First Year Writing." *Translingualwriting.com.* www.translingualwriting.com/resources/Inoue%20Contract.pdf.

"In Retrospect: Operation SEEK." *New York Voice.* 28 June 1974. Berger family archives, New City, NY.

Johnson, Edgar. [History of City College English Department,] 1973. (Edgar Johnson box). CCNY Archives.

Jones, William. "Basic Writing: Pushing Against Racism." *Journal of Basic Writing,* vol. 12, no. 1, 1993, pp. 72-80. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.1993.12.1.08.

Keyes v. School District No 1, Denver, Colorado, 413 U.S. 189 (1973).

Kynard, Carmen. *Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition Literacies Studies*. SUNY P, 2013.

Lawrence, Patricia, and Herman, William. [Memorandum.] (Shaughnessy Box Two). 20 Mar. 1975. CCNY Archives.

Levy, B. (1965, December 2). Informational Report by professor Bernard Levy on the Prebaccalaureate Program." Buell Gallagher files, "SEEK Program 1964-69." CCNY Archives.

Lu, Min-Zhan. "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence." *Journal of Basic Writing,* vol. 10, no. 1, 1991, pp. 26-40. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.1991.10.1.04.

Maher, Jane. *Mina P. Shaughnessy: Her Life and Her Work.* NCTE, 1997.

Marshall, Ian. "Whiteness (as) in Basic Writing." *Reading, Writing and the Rhetorics of Whiteness* by Wendy Ryden and Ian Marshall, Routledge, 2012, pp. 39-67.

Mayes, Janet. "An Oral History of the CCNY 1960's SEEK Program," 29 June 2016. In Molloy "Myopia," at pp. 507-12.

Mendenhall, Annie S. *Desegregation State: College Writing Programs After the Civil Rights Movement.* UP of Colorado, 2022.

Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*,* 305 U.S. 337 (1938).

Mlynarczyk, Rebecca Williams. "Rethinking Basic Writing: Reflections on Language, Education, and Opportunity." *Talking Back: Senior Scholars Deliberate the Past, Present, and Future of Writing Studies*, edited by Norbert Elliot and Alice Horning. Utah State UP, 2020, pp. 261-71. doi.org/10.7330/9781607329763.c015.

Molloy, Sean. A Convenient Myopia: SEEK, Shaughnessy, and the Rise of High Stakes Testing at CUNY. Dissertation, Graduate Center, City University of New York. 2016, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2558&context=gc_etds.

—-. "Diving In or Guarding the Tower: Mina Shaughnessy's Resistance and Capitulation to High-Stakes Writing Tests at City College." *Journal of Basic Writing,* vol. 31, no. 2, 2012, pp. 103-41.

—-. "'Human Beings Engaging with Ideas': The 1960s SEEK Program as a Precursor Model of Ecological and Sociocultural Writing Pedagogy and Assessment." *Writing Assessment, Social Justice, and the Advancement of Opportunity. Perspectives on Writing*, edited by Mya Poe, Asao B. Inoue, and Norbert Elliot, WAC Clearinghouse/UP of Colorado, 2018, pp.71-104. https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/books/assessment/chapter2.pdf.

—-. "SEEK's Fight for Racial and Social Justice (1965-69)." (23 June 2017). *CUNY Digital History Archive*. https://cdha.cuny.edu/secondary-sources/seek.

Molloy, Sean, Silvester Fonville, and Abdus Salam. "'Root and Branch': Resisting a Basic Writing Legacy System." *Journal of Basic Writing,* vol. 39, no. 1, 2020, pp. 5-35. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.2020.39.1.02.

Nicoles, Justin, and Cody Reimer. "The Impact of Taking Basic Writing on Later Writing Course Performance and Graduation at a Career-Focused

Four-Year University" *Journal of Basic Writing.* vol. 39, no. 1, 2020, pp. 36-63. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.2020.39.1.03.

Platt, Tevah. "First President of Staten Island College, Edmond Volpe, Dead at 85," *Staten Island Advance.* 14 Dec 2007, updated 21 Mar. 2019. www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2007/12/first_president_of_college_of.html.

Pearson v. Murray, 182 A. 590, 169 Md. 478 (1936).

Pounds, Haskin R. "A Case in Higher Education: Development and Implementation of Policies for Assessing Basic Skills in Higher Education." *Minimum Competency Achievement Testing: Motives, Models, Measures, and Consequences,* edited by Richard M. Jaeger and Carol K. Tittle. McCutchan, 1980, pp. 324-30.

Reed, Conor T. "Treasures That Prevail: Adrienne Rich, the SEEK Program, and Social Movements at the City College of New York, 1968-1972." *What We Are Part Of / Teaching at CUNY: 1968-1974 Adrienne Rich Part II* (pp. 37-65), edited by Iemanjá Brown, Stefania Heim, erica kaufman, Kristin Moriah, Conor Tomás Reed, Talia Shalev, Wendy Tronrud, and Ammiel Alcalay. New York: City University, 2013.

Rich, Adrienne. [Book List for English 1.8G]. [1969, February]. (Adrienne Rich Box 388). Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA.

Ridenour, Susan E. "Impacts of Proficiency Testing on Higher Education." *Minimum Competency Achievement Testing: Motives, Models, Measures, and Consequences,* edited by Richard M. Jaeger and Carol K. Tittle, McCutchan, 1980, pp. 331-37.

Ritter, Kelly. "Making (Collective) Memory Public: WPA Histories in Dialogue. *Writing Program Administration,* vol. 41, no. 2, 2018, pp 35–64. http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/asset_manager/get_file/381914?ver=7.

SEEK English Instructors. "SEEK Faculty Question Dr. Gallagher's Answers." *Tech News*, 23 April 1969, p. 2. CCNY Archives.

Seifman, Dave. "Third World Studies Head Warns Against Budget Cuts." *The Campus*, 12 March, 1969, p.1. CCNY Archives. http://digital-archives.ccny.cuny.edu/thecampus/1969/MARCH_124_7/00000101.PDF.

Shaughnessy, Mina. "Basic Writing and Open Admissions," 10 Dec. 1970. [Memo to Gross]. (Adrienne Rich Box 389). Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA.

—-. "Introduction." *Journal of Basic Writing,* vol. 1, no. 1, 1975, pp. 1-3. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.1975.1.1.01.

—-. [Letter to Volpe,] 30 Nov. 1969. (Maiz/Maher Box 4) CCNY Archives.

—-. *Errors & Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*, NY: Oxford UP, 1977.

—-. "Progress Report on O.A. English Program," 3 Sep. 1970. (Shaughnessy Box One). CCNY Archives.

—-. [Note to Murphy]. December 5, 1976. (Maiz/Maher, Box 1). CCNY Archives.

—-. [Memo to Healy] October 27, 1975 (Maiz/Maher, Box 4). CCNY Archives.

—-. [Memo to McGrath] April 5, 1976. Files of the Instructional Resource Center, CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, New York, NY.

—-. "Pre-baccalaureate Program Report on the Summer Seminar, July 1, 1968 – August 30, 1968." Fall 1968. (Adrienne Rich Box 385). Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA.

Shor, Ira. "Our Apartheid: Writing Instruction and Inequality." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1997, pp. 91-104. doi.org/10.37514/JBW-J.1997.16.1.08.

Simms, Paul, and Denise Adams Simms. "Paul and Denise Adams Simms: An Oral History." *The WPU Writing Center. YouTube.* 22 Aug 2021. [Video Oral History taken from 2013 and 2021 interviews with Conor Tómas Reed and Sean Molloy.] https://youtu.be/bq5qdE1vd4c.

Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents, per curiam, 332 U.S. 631 (1948).

Skerdal, Anette."Tutor to Tutor: Anette Skerdal Interview." *The WPU Writing Center*. [Video Oral History co-produced and edited by Alexis Bennett and Sean Molloy] 27 Mar 2021. https://youtu.be/7c1xG4IAej8.

Skurnick, Blanche. "Basic Writing Report: 1975—1976." (Shaughnessy Box Two). Jan. 1977. CCNY Archives.

—-. (1973). "Report on the Basic Writing Program (1972-73)." (Shaughnessy Box Two). CCNY Archives.

Soliday, Mary. *The Politics of Remediation: Institutional and Student Needs in Higher Education*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2002.

Sweatt v. Painter, 339 U.S. 629 (1950).

University of Wisconsin—Stout. *Stout State College Undergraduate Bulletin Regular Sessions 1964-1966.* Internet Archive. Identifier-ark:/13960/t9w11sh28 [1964.] Uploaded 16 July 2014.

—-. *Catalog of Courses 1968-1970 Stout State University.* Internet Archive. Identifier-ark:/13960/t88h1bh97 [1968.] Uploaded 16 July 2014.

—-. *Stout Undergraduate Bulletin 1976-1977.* Internet Archive. Identifier-ark:/13960/t7kq0qn9s [1976.] Uploaded 16 July 2014.

Villamanga, Nicolas. "Tutor to Tutor: Interviews with 1970s Brooklyn College Peer Writing Tutors (Nicolas Villamanga)." *The WPU Writing Center*..

[Video Oral History co-produced and edited, by Alexis Bennett and Sean Molloy] 20 May 2021. https://youtu.be/Q9fmKZxVjmo.

Volpe, Edmund. (1968, May) "An Open Letter Concerning the Future of the English Department." [May 1968] (English Department Box 3). CCNY Archives.

—-. "The Confessions of a Fallen Man: Ascent to the D. A." *College English,* vol. 33, no. 7, 1972, pp. 765-79.

—-. [Letter to Shaughnessy,] (Shaughnessy Box One). 25 Nov. 1969. CCNY Archives.

Wagner, Geoffrey. *The End of Education: The Experience of the City University of New York with Open Enrollment and the Threat to Higher Education in America*. A. S. Barnes and Co, 1976.

Warren, Constancia. *Open Admissions at City College: The Implementation of an Egalitarian Reform in a Meritocratic Institution*. [Doctoral dissertation.] Columbia University: New York. (1984). CCNY Archives.

White, Marvina. (2015, January 27). "Marvina White: An Oral History of the CCNY 1960's SEEK Program." *YouTube.* 27 Jan. 2015. https://youtu.be/tmGtJUGbL5U . Transcript at Molloy, "Myopia," pp. 418-28.

Wiltshire, Eugenia. (2015, November 20). "Eugenia Wiltshire: An Oral History of the CCNY 1960's SEEK Program." *YouTube.* 20 Nov. 2015. https://youtu.be/Q7rtnY79oAc .Transcript at Molloy, "Myopia," pp. 443-52.

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. "Introduction: Are You Part of the Conversation?" *Other People's English: Code-Meshing, Code Switching, and African American Literacy*, edited by Vershawn Ashanti Young, Rusty Barret, Y'Shandra Young-Rivera, and Kim Brian Lovejoy. Parlor P, 2018, pp. 1-11.

—-. "'Nah, We Straight': An Argument Against Code Switching." *JAC*, vol. 29, no. 1/2, 2009, pp. 49-76.

Zanderer, Leo. "Leo Zanderer: Oral History of Fifty Years of Teaching Writing at Brooklyn College and the 1970s Brooklyn College Writing Center." *WPSphere.* [Interview by Sean Molloy.] 30 Aug 2021. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12164/3082.

Zamudio-Suarez, Fernanda. "Race on Campus: Is Remedial Ed Holding Students of Color Back?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 22 July 2022. www.chronicle.com/newletter/raceoncampu/2022-04-12.