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CONTENTS

Articles

Review Essay

Reviews

WITHIN THESE FOUR WALLS: GENRE AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION IN WRITING CLASSROOMS

Jessica Hill

First-year writing courses are, by nature, predicated on the notion of transfer across the boundaries of writing situations. As teachers we operate under the faith that writing is *teachable*, and that the work students do in our classes will prepare them, in positive ways, for critical engagement in the literate lives they lead. As our field has moved through ways of understanding language and writing, the concepts of genre and rhetorical situation have given classroom teachers theories for helping students transfer their classroom experiences to other writing situations. These theories are designed to give students an understanding of the connection between textual forms and the social interactions of the writing situation, which helps them learn the rules, audience, and effects of their writing in order to aid transfer (Bawarshi; Dean; Russell).

Since Carolyn Miller identified genre as typified action—a set of conventions for acting, based on audience and purpose—a variety of studies, theories, and pedagogical approaches have been used to instruct students in the dynamics of writing as situated action ("Genre as Social Action"). These approaches include blogging and service-based writing (Wilcox; Adler-Kassner and Estrem; Mathieu and George), digital and multimodal composition (Herrington, Hodgson, and Moran; Hocks), and personal narratives (Robillard). Many of these approaches are designed in response to pressure on the authenticity and relevance of assigned writing tasks (Beck; Baily; Parsons and Ward). As

curricular implementations in college first-year writing courses, however, genre theory can be simultaneously freeing and constraining. The following case study examines the classroom practices of two teachers who work to implement a situated writing pedagogy that incorporates the notions of contextualized, typified action from genre studies. What their classrooms highlight is the difficulty of engaging in situated writing when the classroom *is* the writing situation.

The writing classroom is economic in nature. According to Anthony Welch, the economic and political reality of classroom learning in general is that "education is seen in terms of its relative capacity to contribute to economic growth . . .; an 'investment' to be weighed against other possible areas of return" (158). Labor, such as paper writing and revision, often only gains value for a student when there is a resulting commodity to be used or exchanged. As many writing teachers witness, and as the below case studies demonstrate, commodity is often sought by first-year students in the form of grades and other signals of success within the classroom.

Viewing first-year writing classes through this lens of labor and commodity, I argue that the role of the classroom unwittingly imposes itself as the primary context for student writing. The students observed in this study do not seem to be able to engage with writing without the constant knowledge that they are doing their work for a class, which will provide them with a grade. Despite the approaches discussed above, the classroom, its hierarchies, and the structure of progress and awards in higher education continually present challenges to the classroom as an authentic, transferrable rhetorical situation.

In this article I build on pertinent findings from a case study of classroom practices resulting from a writing program's pedagogical transition (Hill). By examining two classrooms in a state university's newly implemented situated writing curriculum, I explore how two instructors work with and against the academic context to situate genres and discourses for their first-year writing students. The richness of these instructors' practices and

intentions highlights three major challenges that continue to face a socially situated writing pedagogy: the economics of the classroom as a site of exchange and of institutional identity production, the role of the instructor in defining the success of a piece of writing in the classroom, and the writing future of the student. Through this analysis of classroom practices I call for a deeper treatment of the classroom as a rhetorical situation in ways that empower students to become thoughtful and successful writers. As writing instructors, researchers, and administrators, we need to acknowledge the boundaries and economics of writing in the college classroom in order to help our students develop an empowered stance built on awareness of the social pressures and economics of any writing situation.

Case Study

This study examines the instructor practices and student assignments of two teacher-student dyads in First Year Writing (FYW) courses at a mid-sized state university. Participant data includes classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, classroom documents such as assignment sheets and syllabi, and student documents such as drafts, writing projects, and assignment grades. Other data include program documents such as course descriptions, the program's faculty handbook, and a faculty committee proposal on distinctions between the first and second terms of the program's writing courses. This research is covered by an IRB, makes use of anonymized data, and provides pseudonyms for all participants. No student records are maintained.

I followed the first assignment—roughly the first month of the semester—of two different FYW classes in this writing program in order to consider the constraints and freedoms of their situated writing curriculum. This article makes explicit the question we need to consider when furthering a socially situated writing pedagogy. If first-year writing instructors are to teach writing as a socially situated and contextually-bound task, reliant on the writer's ability to recognize the effects and consequences of his or

her writing choices, then what role do the individual classrooms play in helping students recognize and learn the awareness or adaptation necessary for writing beyond that particular classroom?

The instructors in this study desire to instill an external value on writing by showing students the social actions and situations associated with writing, in two very different ways. The first instructor, Andrea, uses a genre studies foundation which asks students to examine and cross the boundaries of well-known communications genres. The second instructor, Jeanne, attempts to build critical knowledge of writing as argumentation and argumentation as power within academic contexts. But as the following interviews and observations suggest, they both struggle to accomplish this while maintaining student work that only takes places inside the insoluble boundaries of the university system.

Case studies, by nature, can provide a powerful lens into the social aspects of writing instruction by examining the individual perspectives of participants. The contextualized practices of these two writing instructors, for example, demonstrate the messiness of praxis and the need to continue examining the practical implementation of theoretically sound best practices. By examining theory in practice, this study offers insight into classroom practices based on theories of genre and situated writing.

Participants and Research Site

The participants in this study are instructors who teach both first and second sequence first-year writing courses in a state university's FYW program. During my observations and interviews, I examined only one section among their first-sequence FYW courses, and interviewed only one student from each section. These instructors have been given the pseudonyms Andrea and Jeanne, and their students have been given the pseudonyms Meredith and Brian. The FYW program in which these women teach has only recently implemented a pedagogy that focuses on situated writing, genre, and social processes of language and learning. The program itself has been a site of

transition for the last two years, as it has introduced and begun to integrate this socially-focused curriculum while retaining a majority of the faculty who taught in the program's current-traditional and formalized process curriculum in the years prior. Many of the instructors in the program express positive feelings about the change, including Andrea: "for me," she says, "it just seemed like a natural transition; I could buy into it, I believe it." Despite the positive support for this change and the research that backs it up as a best practice in writing pedagogy, little is known about the effects of socially situated writing pedagogies: not only in regards to efficacy, but also in regards to the practical ways they play out in the classroom.

Classrooms like Andrea's and Jeanne's attempt to provide students with opportunities to engage in required material in meaningful ways, by helping them articulate knowledge for themselves and by demonstrating how that knowledge connects to the world beyond their textbooks and classrooms (Fello and Paquette). The FYW courses in this program privilege the process work of the students in several ways. First, the courses require that "students write, revise, edit and reflect on their writing with the support of the teachers and peers" (*Undergraduate Catalog*). This often manifests in writing workshops, development of multiple drafts, and writing conferences where the students meet with their instructors one-on-one or in small groups.

The faculty handbook in this program states that "the current curriculum's approach to literacy and learning encourages [faculty] to approach any act of writing as primarily a social act that might take a variety of different forms, depending on audience and context, rather than as primarily a standard textual form" (*First Year Writing Orientation*). This requires both the contextualization of a writing project, as well as the use of peer-to-peer or public writing, such as workshopping, blogging, or the use of writing groups. This university's FYW program allows instructors to select their own approach, and integrates an emphasis on the student's own writing styles and processes, to create an environment of inquiry and workshop in which the

social forces that influence writing become central to study and practice.

Both Andrea and Jeanne have chosen to use personal literacy as the topic of their first writing assignments. In Andrea's class, students read or view a variety of literacy narratives and then create their own personal narrative about the development of their literacy. Andrea's students are given the option to write their narrative in a traditional format, but they are strongly encouraged to recreate the content in a multimodal project or in the format of a different genre. In Jeanne's class, students read scholarship on literacy and write personal belief statements about their individual development and about the role of literacy in culture. They then use these statements to hold vigorous classroom discussions, fueled by inquiry, debate, and critical thinking.

Andrea's Class: Genre Adaptation

In Andrea's classroom, she asks her students to practice adapting genres, and uses this work to demonstrate the dynamic nature of writing and its relationship to audience and situation. However, the classroom as a site of exchange and identity formation, the role of the instructor's assessment, and her intention of educating for the writing future of the students pose challenges to this theoretically sound stance. Andrea's literacy narrative assignment offers students the option of using multimedia or nontraditional genres to tell a personal story about their literacy development. Andrea's student Meredith chose the multimodal option for her narrative because she felt it would give her more distance from her own story than a traditionally written narrative would. The project she shows me is a PowerPoint presentation, full of text and images and soft colors, narrating an experience she had reading books with her grandfather when she was a child. When I ask Meredith about her instructor's expectations for the project, she replies: "I think that she expects a well written paper that shows insight into the experience instead of just chronicling it and I think that that's what I have done."

Despite the fact that Meredith chose to complete her assignment using PowerPoint as her medium, she keeps referring to it as a "paper." Meredith sets up multiple meetings with her instructor Andrea in order to review the project and discuss directions for revision. "My project doesn't need any editing to fit the guidelines," Meredith proudly reports after one of those meetings, "she just said that if I wanted to I could add a few insights to enrich the story." But tension arises when Meredith receives a grade for her project. Meredith calmly reported to me that she expected to receive a very specific grade for her paper, but when she got the project back she discovered that she did not achieve her goal. While the first grades they receive in college can be startling for first-year students, there is more at work with Meredith's lack of success than a simple misassumption about the rigor of assessment in college.

When I talk with Andrea about Meredith's project, she begins to illuminate the problem with this particular student's genre adaptation. "It was very text heavy for what the genre of PowerPoint, I think, requires," Andrea explains of Meredith's project. The slides of Meredith's presentation contain text from top to bottom with small images placed in the margins. This echoes Meredith's view of the project as "a well written paper." Andrea wanted Meredith to think about how the genre of PowerPoint is often used, and what conventions are considered successful for a PowerPoint presentation. She suggested that Meredith do more with pictures and colors, which she did, but Andrea's suggestions about heeding the conventions of text length were apparently ignored. Andrea tells me that she was uncomfortable as a reader when trying to view such a text-heavy presentation. "I tried to help her think about that," she says, "and I think that she was pretty adamant in her decision to use it." Interestingly, Meredith didn't mention the discussion of genre, or the tension her rhetorical decisions created with Andrea, when she described the conference to me.

This disconnect between Andrea and Meredith is relevant to the struggles of situated writing for several reasons. The

economics of the writing classroom affect not only students' grades, but their institutional identities as *students* rather than as *writers*. First consider Meredith's orientation to the assignment: Meredith reported that she chose the multimodal version of her project for distance. "I think this assignment is unfamiliar in that I have never written about my childhood from a literacy perspective," she tells me, suggesting that it conflicts with two separate identities. Meredith admits: "I don't enjoy writing about myself and that option gave me the ability to narrate my life in third person." Meredith distances herself from the authorial "I", choosing not to claim the agentive stance of telling her own story. The institution has granted Meredith the identity of student, and she is diligently working within her means to embody it, as is evidenced in her continual meetings with Andrea and her hard work towards earning the grades she desires. The institutional identities of students are closely tied to exchange within college classrooms, as their work is traded for institutional rewards that are recognized beyond each individual classroom.

In addition to the problem of student identity, there appears to be a gap between Andrea's advice and Meredith's application of it that demonstrates a complex power dynamic of the FYW classroom. In order to participate successfully in the classroom economy, students must recognize not only modes of writing and of institutional selfhood, but they must also acknowledge the people who act as gatekeepers to their academic success. For Andrea's class, the context of the writing classroom—and education in general—is crucial to her students' participation in the student economy. It also becomes problematic for her genre approach, which requires her students to imagine an audience or situation beyond the instructor and the classroom. Andrea provides her students with opportunities to explore the forms of various genres and to determine the boundaries of their success by encouraging them to recreate assignments in new forms and genres that are untraditional to the writing classroom. Despite Andrea's attempts to articulate this process to her students, Meredith spends her time on the narrative elements of

demonstrating insight, rather than on the visual production or presentation of her project, as she remains focused on producing a text that maintains the values of a traditional classroom genre. Thus, the classroom economy and Andrea's role of power within it maintain the ability to provide Meredith with a grade as a unit of academic value, to affirm her institutional identity as a good student, and to act as gatekeeper to her academic success or failure. By observing typical classroom conventions of writing, Meredith is attempting to be a savvy student and optimize her work within the classroom economy.

As a dedicated instructor, Andrea is concerned less with the economics of grades and more with the development of Meredith as a writer who will have to creatively manage genres outside of an academic environment. For this reason, she values the practice of multiple forms of expression and communication. As Andrea describes student papers and projects to me, she lingers on examples of her students manipulating the relationship between form and content and deciding how to present their information in unexpected ways. These nontraditional expectations focus on composition for an outside audience, rather than on following the rules for classroom success.

Andrea tells of a student who wrote about learning to be an artist in her literacy narrative. This student created a graphic novel to present her story, rather than writing a typical narrative. Another of Andrea's past students recounted the story of dealing with her father's cancer diagnosis and presented it as a how-to guide in a series of steps, much like she would detail the directions for learning a technical skill. In addition to encouraging these experimentations of form, Andrea also focuses on helping her students develop a critical lens for examining their content. She tells of a student from a past semester who started writing a narrative about positive and negative learning experiences in grade school. The student then revised and refined the paper so that her final draft was no longer just a narrative, and instead had become a narrativised critique of the effect of standardized testing on the creative process of writing.

From these descriptions of projects that stand out in Andrea's memory, it becomes clear that the way her students manipulate form to express themselves is important too. When Richard Coe addressed the significance of form during the process movement, he claimed that in the view of "expressionist process writers . . . form grows organically to fit the shape of the subject matter" (16). He contrasted this with a formalist or current-traditional approach, which he felt "ignores content to teach form" (16). Andrea seems to be grappling with the role of form in her writing classroom that has recently transitioned from a current traditional pedagogy. She deals with the issue with some complexity. On the one hand, Andrea distances herself from the program's history with current-traditionalism and its decontextualized emphasis on memorizing forms and the grammatical rules and conventions that accompany them. "You learn grammar, punctuation [and] that kind of stuff the more you read and write and talk," she claims; "but the ideas have to be there." Yet Andrea's approach does not discount the form in favor of student expression. Instead, she values the way her students use various forms to present their ideas in new, creative, or thoughtful ways; something that Meredith doesn't seem to realize.

The students who succeed in Andrea's class are those who have recognized possibilities for form and style in the context of a larger and more public audience. These students are thinking about technical manuals and graphic novels and the kinds of experimentation they have seen from published writers, rather than considering only the kinds of writing they expect to encounter in an English class. But Meredith's project suggests that the focus on genres as textual forms to be thoughtfully manipulated and challenged begins to overshadow the students' conceptualizations of audience and situation. Meredith's project emphasizes this struggle with context and audience and its relation to form, when she considers it a paper for an English class. Andrea's frustration with the amount of text in Meredith's presentation highlights the differences in the way the two are conceiving of the use of genre. Andrea expects Meredith to follow

the conventions of an informational presentation, since that is the primary use of PowerPoint. Yet Meredith is adapting the genre to the way she understands assignments to be created in the writing classroom, and includes large amounts of text. This adaptation of a genre from one situation to another isolates the genre from its context, blurring the function and therefore the specifics of its form. This process of transfer also hinders the student, who cannot understand whether to adhere to the values of the form from its external context or to maintain the values of its new context.

Jeanne's Class: Academic Genre Foundations

In contrast to Andrea's use of genre as a way of exploring form, Jeanne places emphasis on academic genres by fostering critical argumentation skills. Jeanne's class also focuses on personal literacy as an introductory topic, but she favors academic genres rather than cross genre adaptation, and relies heavily on critical thinking and argumentation. Jeanne has a student, Brian, who is earning a B in her course. When I ask him about the focus of the class, he says that he feels that conversations and class discussions are more important than the actual writing that he does for the course. Instead, he characterizes the writing as a test, measuring his retention of knowledge to prove that he participated in class-wide conversations. Jeanne agrees that talk and conversation play a big role in her course, although she feels that the writing is important as well. When I ask Jeanne for an evaluation of Brian, she describes the following: "He's a strong student," she says, "he comes to class each day, he participates, I can tell he's reading the material and thinking and doing that work." But Jeanne wants more than this basic level of participation from Brian. The piece that she feels is missing is his effort to critically argue an idea, like many of the scholars she references do, and to help his classmates critically argue as well. "He'll present new ideas," she says, "but they're not pushing [anyone else's] further." Jeanne believes that critical and complex thinking, which she believes manifests in her students' argumentative

abilities, are foundational to academic genres and classroom writing.

Russell's (1997) follow up to his work with activity theory suggests that classrooms are authentic situations of their own, with purposes, actions, tools, and commodities. Other work on classroom writing (see, for example, Bazerman; Brandt; Haas) also suggests that genres of writing exist within the classroom—research papers, literacy narratives, lab reports, etc. Jeanne's practices suggest an awareness of the classroom as the writing situation, rather than focusing on forms, genres, and situations that are removed from the immediate academic tasks and goals. Like Andrea, Jeanne uses personal literacy as her first writing assignment, but instead of dwelling on personal experiences and then retelling them in genres borrowed from outside of the classroom, Jeanne emphasizes the modes of thought and argumentation that characterize academic scholarship. Her students explore ideas of literacy that are internal or external to the classroom, but they do so by utilizing modes of argumentation that are closely linked to academic genres.

Jeanne's use of literacy as a topic for writing means that she spends less time on the forms or genres of writing and more on the conversations that academic writing embodies and the habits of mind that will help her students understand the situated genres they will engage with in the future. "I can already tell you guys have some cool ideas, just from talking about what you think writing is," she tells her students on the first day of class. "I am smarter when I hear your ideas, and you're smarter when you hear everyone else's ideas," she says, "so the majority of the time, I won't stand up here and talk at you." She introduces the class to academic debates by them having read scholarly articles. She then asks her students to take a stance on the topic, inviting them into those academic conversations.

"There's a debate," she says with authority on this first day of class, "over whether anybody can be a writer, or whether anyone can write, but not everyone can be *called* a *writer*." She asks the class for a show of hands for each side of the argument and then

says "I want to hear from both sides." In class discussions like these, Jeanne expects her students to present new ideas, and then to challenge one another's ideas in order to encourage each other to think more critically.

In her personal literacy assignment, Jeanne asks her students to take a similar argumentative stance and begin asking questions for which they don't have the answers. She tells me that exploring "how they've grown and how they've gotten this literacy" is a way to begin helping her students understand "how they learn the rules for certain literacies in specific communities . . . [and how they] learn to write in those fields." To this end, she asks her students to engage with various perspectives about literacy and discourse communities and to formulate their own beliefs. By asking her students to take a personal stance on an academic topic, and to argue and question their beliefs, Jeanne is fostering the role of inquiry, active discussion and critical conversation.

It becomes clear from observing Jeanne's classroom habits that she is very concerned with her students' abilities to participate in classroom economies and build powerful institutional identities. Because her students will continually face gatekeepers to their academic success, she focuses on helping them develop their academic authority by embodying the genres of academic discourse. This liberatory approach leads to the classroom as a practice space for discussion in future classrooms, while ignoring a host of genres students will have to use in their future writing. While empowering in one sense, this approach potentially hinders students by robbing them of the experience of *writing,* which should be a core of the writing classroom.

Much like Andrea's concern over the future of her writing students, Jeanne works to prepare her students for a variety of academic genres by focusing on what she believes to be the foundational element of those genres. Thus, Jeanne places priority on the ways of thinking that a student engages with over any modes of writing down such thinking. "I want them to think beyond just what they were handed in class," Jeanne tells me; she wants her students to "be able to push against the ideas in class and

help their thinking, whether they are agreeing or disagreeing with it." Despite the local context of the genres, Jeanne's focus is on power and critical theory, not on the economics of situating those things in the writing. This is because she believes in social interaction as a way of engaging with writing and with a student's own process, and because she believes that critical skills are foundational to good writing: "It's there to argue against," she says of a student's stance on a topic, "it's something tangible that you can use or fight with or do whatever you need with." Unlike Andrea's focus on the relationship of form and content, Jeanne focuses almost primarily on the foundational skills of critiquing content, employing a critical pedagogy designed to give her students a voice in the classroom.

Jeanne's admitted concern with power seems focused on the discourse communities she sees surrounding the classroom. Rather than preparing students to write in the business world or other post-education experiences, Jeanne has them engage in the discourses of power that are localized in their own classroom. Her students may not become academics, but they will have had the opportunity to practice their critical skills in a situation that is, in a way that Andrea's was not, more genuine. Jeanne's heavy focus on argumentation and critical thinking suggests that writing in her classroom is less about writing for an audience—note that she does not provide guidance on form at all—and instead is focused on writing to learn. Jeanne's class privileges content and individual ideas, critically engaging students in logic and argumentation. But it also creates a blind spot by ignoring the contextual aspects of the writing.

At first glance, Jeanne's use of situation is less problematic than Andrea's because it keeps the work firmly grounded in the classroom, where students interact with scholarly texts and with one another. But it becomes problematic because it abandons forms, suggesting that form and structure are unimportant aspects of the writing situation. Rather than acknowledging the social practices of writing, Jeanne immerses her students in conversations. Her focus on giving her students power draws their

attention away from an examination of that power and its relation to their actions in the situation.

The Genre Problem

A classroom that fully engages with the values of genre theory (as expressed by Dean, Gee, and Swales) would have to engage in a critical understanding of purpose and audience in a way that Andrea's and Jeanne's classes do not yet. Genres are closely linked to discourse communities: locations or groups of people with shared forms of communication based on a shared value system (Swales). This suggests that the situation and participants of a genre are vital to understanding how that genre functions. Regardless of whether instructors use an approach that explicitly engages in genre theory, the curriculum Andrea and Jeanne follow is based on the idea that writing is situated and contextualized.

As the classroom economies affected the purpose and form of writing, these students began to have trouble recognizing the complexity of situations and contexts. In her book on genre theory, Deborah Dean quotes Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff's claim that "genres—like all language use—are not eligible for study once they are considered to be independent of their contexts of use" (27). Dean presents the work of several critics who take issues with the way genre is incorporated into writing pedagogy. Each of these critiques claims that the study of genres decontextualizes them from their social function and location, turning them into rote forms, lifeless and devoid of purpose (Dean).

Andrea's classroom—which is supposed to be situating writing or showing how writing can adapt across situations—is the context for the writing. Yet she asks her students to borrow tools from other contexts—which only have life outside of the classroom—and bring them into the classroom. Andrea doesn't ask her students to go to the genres and study and embody them as contextualized sites of action, because once the purpose shifts from the situated use to classroom study they cease to be what they once were. Instead, Andrea expects her students to see those

generic forms as sites of possibility. She asks that her students bring those genres into the classroom, engage with them thoughtfully, and adapt them for a new context of use. This emptying and repurposing of genres is something Andrea expects her students to complete on their own, rather than teaching them as forms—the current-traditional model she is pushing back against.

Jeanne's classroom focuses so much on the localized context that students fail to receive experience or practice writing in multiple genres or forms. Instead, the form is considered irrelevant, and its relationship to the context is abandoned in favor of building powerful identities and keys to success in academic economies.

Genre studies and socially situated writing curricula present a paradoxical conflict that we must frankly acknowledge, examine, and consider. The classroom economy, the role of the instructor as gatekeeper, and the writing futures of the students pose powerful and conflicting constraints on the study of writing as an infinite set of dynamic and living responses to social situations. Contemporary genre studies is concerned with these dynamic and living responses, which are socially situated and constructed in response to experienced situations. If the writing classroom is to encourage such a view of writing, then the genres used must be dynamic and living as well. How are students supposed to generate live responses to current social situations—the concern these instructors have over their writing futures—when the economy of education and the role of gatekeepers means that writing happens in a finite space with pre-determined ends?

Conclusion

The academic contexts of their classrooms affect the way these two instructors deal with the role of situation and purpose in this social curriculum. Both instructors make strong use of their understanding of the academic world by asking their students to begin taking part in the work of academics. In Andrea's class, writing stories is not enough. Instead, she wants her students to

experiment with the relationship between form and content, or to use narratives for greater critical, evaluative, or expository purposes. This is much like the academic writing that Andrea herself reads and writes. The scholarly articles in academic journals and the anthologies and books on pedagogy and writing that Andrea consumes are not narratives. Yet some of the academic writing that Andrea values is pushing the boundaries of typical academic formats, sometimes using narrative for critical purposes. "There's nothing wrong with a good story," Andrea explains, but that is not what she believes her students need to practice in her class. Instead, she places priority on the critical use of form over the formless content.

In Jeanne's class, her students read and then emulate the critical claims of researchers and theorists in order to begin taking part in the privileged discourse community of academe. She introduces academic arguments that take place over years of published writing and research, rather than live and in person. These perspectives are presented by decorated individuals: their articles are peer reviewed, they have academic credentials, and they often possess years of experience. These authors show they are well read and familiar with the "conversation," and then they take a stance by critically engaging with other work that has preceded them. Jeanne asks her students to temporarily adopt this identity, without the credentials or experience, as a way of practicing critical skills. She also brings them into a discourse and allows them to experience the writing in its academic situation.

Both instructors use this work to ask their students to cross boundaries. Andrea's students are expected to engage in multiple genres by adapting them for new situated uses. They must consider completing tasks in different situations, therefore considering transfer across contexts, while simultaneously using a single context where they practice these skills. This approach might highlight for the students the ways they have to alter their communication for different situations. Jeanne asks her students to cross the boundary from student to academic, as they practice engaging in a genuine context by taking on authority they do not

possess. For Jeanne's students, the context is real; the readings show them what the field looks like and who the players are. In a sense, Jeanne's students are practicing a single context that embraces the isolated microcosm of a classroom. This use of the classroom means that her students are privy to the way the work they complete is situated in a specific context. In contrast, Andrea's students practice adapting a wider variety of styles to this isolated context. They pull work from multiple contexts and place it into a new contextualized purpose, therefore practicing the adaptation and awareness of genre to situation. This allows Andrea's students to expand beyond the walls of the classroom and the boundaries of the academy.

These perspectives on the academic context offer complications of their own: Andrea's student Meredith doesn't understand where she went wrong in her genre adaptation of her literacy narrative, and Jeanne's student Brian isn't able to see the value of critical argumentation or the adoption of an academic discourse to his writing. The classroom as the unspoken context for writing proves a difficulty when audience, situation, and hierarchies are not considered or discussed. This struggle highlights the way students see the college classroom—often not as a place of construction and experimental learning but as a site of production and evaluation—making the work of a social pedagogy even more difficult. Jeanne's attempts to forefront the classroom and its issues of audience, situation, and social hierarchy results in a separation of the acts of writing from their contexts, and the authenticity of work becomes problematic again. If instructors attempt to engage their students in writing that comes from beyond the classroom, is it still possible to position writing as a social act?

These instructors are grappling in sophisticated ways with the need to let their students actively explore and mediate meaning in a social context, while working within the boundaries of their writing classrooms. The determination of these writing instructors to provide a writing classroom that best serves their students and

the curriculum while maintaining current best practices highlights that the problem lies not with implementation but with theory.

As instructors like Andrea and Jeanne work to integrate a focus on situated writing, awareness of audience, and adaptation of form and content, the role of the classroom needs to remain a site of inquiry. As students struggle to make sense of the simplified tasks of writing for an instructor, while living in a richly literate world where audience and situation are often much more complex than many of our previous theories have accounted for, we need to take a closer look at how we define audience and situation in the composition classroom, and how they derive from, impact and complicate our theories of social and situated writing that is bounded in the classroom.

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BASIC WRITERS AS CRITICAL READERS: THE ART OF ONLINE PEER REVIEW

Cheryl Hogue Smith

Although peer review as an instructional strategy has a long history in the practice of teachers of writing, the effect it has on student performance has been difficult for researchers to gauge (van Zundert et al. 270). Yet most research shows that composition instructors see it as a beneficial classroom exercise, even if many believe it also has drawbacks—drawbacks that include, for example, peers' tendency to mark sentence-level errors that do little to help writers recognize how their ideas are understood (Cho and Schunn 412; McConlogue 3) and thereby fail to help writers revise their own writing for clarity, logic, or the deeper examination of ideas. Revision thus gets reduced to proofreading for surface correctness. This is an especially important issue in basic writing classes where one of the most important goals of instruction is to help students understand writing as primarily an act of thinking, and revision as primarily a process of re-thinking. But, as Mina Shaughnessy asserts, "So absolute is the importance of error in the minds of many [basic] writers that 'good writing' to them means 'correct writing,' nothing more" (8). And since basic writers overly care about "correct writing," any emphasis on surface-level errors tends to perpetuate their stubborn belief that correcting surface errors is what revision is all about. Yet despite the danger that peer review might encourage rather than reduce attention to surface level correctness, many basic writing instructors continue to incorporate peer review into their classes because they see peer review as a "best practice" for knowledgeable professionals and as an exercise that logically "ought to" help students learn to evaluate

other students' writing, while concomitantly learning how to revise their own writing based upon peer comments.

While the logic for most uses of peer review in basic writing classes may be superficial or faulty, peer review may actually have important benefits for students who are basic writers because it is a process that is inevitably less about writing than it is about reading. When peer review is used during the early and constructive revision stage of writing (as opposed to the late editing and proofreading stage), the peer review process can focus on getting students to analyze or try to follow the thinking of a peer review partner, which demands that peer reviewers must give their attention primarily to understanding the text under review. Most peer review research examines the value (or pitfalls) of peer review in relation to instruction in the writing process, yet very few scholars emphasize the role of reading in the peer review process. Virginia Crank is one exception: She discusses the reader-response peer reviews that her basic writing students gave each other on personal narratives. Since these papers were not based on course-assigned readings, peer reviewers were able to devote their attention strictly to the student text in front of them and not to its adequacy as an interpretation or evaluation of a text students were asked to write about. In other words, each peer reviewer could focus only on what the text under review was saying about an experience on which the writer and not the reader was the expert.

Crank's observation about how to keep peer reviewers focused as readers of the authoritative text in front of them—rather than on that text in relation to another, more authoritative text—invites us to think about how we can help students focus as readers of student writing that is usually produced in the service of illuminating or interrogating some prior academic text. That, after all, is the kind of writing that is most characteristically produced or explicitly identified as the eventual goal of writing instruction in a college basic writing class. This is precisely the task I undertook to address in a set of experiments I conducted with my own basic writing students in a class where I happened

also to be experimenting with online peer review.[1] And what I discovered and will elaborate on in this essay is how productive and instructive the peer review process can be for students who are basic writers when peer review is conceived and conducted primarily as an exercise in critical reading, rather than writing, and when it is conducted in an online rather than in a face-to-face environment.

Peer Review as a Reading Event

Before looking at peer review as a reading exercise best conducted online, let me first explore what typically makes basic writers basic readers of college-level texts. For years basic writing scholars have argued that many of the academic problems basic writers face are in large part the result of the difficulty they have in reading and interpreting texts. As early as 1976, Marilyn Sternglass brought to our attention how composition instructors are also reading instructors since so much of what students write about is based on what they are assigned to read in the texts of others (382). More recently, basic writing scholars have argued that the writing of basic writing students is limited by their struggle to read critically the texts they are usually assigned to write about (Goen and Gillotte-Tropp 91). So the first step instructors need to take to help students become college-level writers is to help them become college-level readers (Sullivan 233). And this needs to apply to their own written texts in progress as well as the texts they are asked to write about.

In order for students to read at the college level, they must first develop the behaviors and dispositions that research and theory have identified as the marks of effective and successful readers. First and foremost, students must learn to embrace the confusion that comes with reading difficult texts (Blau 221)—from those rhetorically complex texts instructors assign in their classes to the texts students create on their own. (Granted, the level of difficulty between instructor-assigned and student texts is disparate, but nonetheless equally challenging to emerging scholars.) When students do learn to embrace the confusion that

comes with reading *all* difficult texts, they can learn the value of the reading process—a process that often calls upon students to exercise persistence and the intensive allocation of attentional resources in the interest of producing a coherent and adequate interpretation of a text. If basic writers are to become college-level readers, they will need to understand that the reading of difficult texts will require their own active and engaged participation—something they struggle to do.

As I have argued elsewhere, basic writers typically exhibit counterproductive reading habits that can prevent them from fully engaging in a reading activity. First, they are prone to succumb to their counterproductive belief and attitude that texts can be too difficult for them to understand. Second, and perhaps not unrelated to the first, they tend to defer their interpretations to that of their instructor and/or students whose opinion they feel is most valued by the instructor. In both cases, these students do little more than speedily decode words on a page in the hope and expectation that their instructor or "smarter" students will tell them in class what they should have learned from their reading of the assigned text. These students who defer their interpretations to others often approach any reading task as a superficial exercise, almost certainly ensuring their failure to engage with sufficient intensity or persistence in the difficult task of making meaning of a truly complex and challenging text. A third counterproductive reading habit occurs when students read as miners of existing meanings they think reside *in* texts instead of reading to make meaning *with* texts (Smith). This "mining" of texts can also occur when students read their own work and the work of their peers because they often attempt to find what their teacher is looking for instead of engaging with their or their peers' writing in meaningful and productive ways, leading to a passive rather than an active reading process. Students need to recognize that peer review, like all reading tasks, requires their active participation and willingness to work through difficult texts. As Louise Rosenblatt argues, "Every reading act is an event," whereby the reader and text "are two aspects of a total dynamic situation" in

which both are equally necessary for any meaning-making process to occur (1063). Since peer review qualifies as a "reading event," students need to learn how to become participants rather than sideliners at this reading event.

Compounding the reading behaviors that ineffective readers exhibit is their heightened anxiety in the peer-review process—an anxiety, I might add, that is in addition to the angst they may already feel by virtue of their performance on an English placement exam that "failed" them into their basic writing class in the first place. I've been teaching basic writers for seventeen years now—the past eight at a community college in a large urban area—and in every class, students often resist peer review because, by their own admission, they aren't comfortable with others *judging* their writing—a scary prospect for any writer, not to mention writers who are already convinced of their own inadequacy and fearful of the inevitability of their failure. (See, for example, Shaughnessy, Mike Rose, and Sondra Perl.) So instead of being a productive reading event, peer review can become that meaningless exercise that students *get through* rather than *learn from*, where they do little more than decode text in order to provide answers that they feel their instructors are looking for.

How then do we incorporate peer review into a basic writing class that is, by definition, filled with students who don't yet have the ability to produce serviceable academic writing, largely because they struggle with reading difficult texts? How can struggling readers qualify to participate in a meaningful process of reviewing one another's work? A certain logic presents itself here that if instructors can remove from peer review the counter-productive elements that the exercise can induce, students can learn to sustain and focus their attention on their peers' writing instead of on their own insecurities, turning peer review into an engaging and productive reading event. And I believe the best way to do this is to conduct peer review online.

The Value of Online Peer Review

In general, online learning can be beneficial for students because it "promotes the kinds of high-level learning activities that support active learning and deep, reflective thinking about authentic tasks"; "puts the students in control of the learning environment"; and "levels the playing field for students who may be discriminated against in face-to-face classrooms because of appearance, ethnicity, gender, handicap, and other potential stigmatizing factors" (Stine "Basically" 133). Students who benefit from online learning are usually those students who are aware of themselves as learners and who know how to take control of their own learning. Basic writers, though, often don't experience these online benefits, in part because of academic underpreparedness and counterproductive behaviors towards learning (Stine 133-134). However, if instructors put peer review assignments online, they can turn peer review into an effective reading event. In essence, the online medium of peer review provides students with two essential conditions—the luxury of time and the advantage of anonymity—that "[promote]…active learning," "[put] the student in control of the learning environment," and "[level] the playing field" (Stine 133), all necessary conditions for success with basic writers.

First, the issue of time: In a basic writing class, students must be allowed ample time to review a peer's paper, often more time than a face-to-face class will allow (Adler-Kassner and Reynolds, 174; Crank 148; Stine "Best" 55). As stated above, basic writers need to read slowly and deliberately if they are ever to learn how to read a text closely and actively—including reading and reviewing a peer's paper. Certainly in my own classes, I could devote a large amount of time to face-to-face peer review, but to do so would take away valuable time that I could otherwise devote to critical reading/writing instruction that is crucial for students as they develop the necessary skills to become effective readers and writers of complex course texts. And the truth is that no matter how much time instructors provide for peer review, students read at different speeds, and, as evidenced by my own

students, slower readers often feel self-conscious and, therefore, inadequate in comparison to faster (and, in their eyes, stronger) readers. For course-assigned texts, students are able to read at their own pace at home before class, so they are not subject to the anxiety of a first-read situation in front of their peers. But the conditions of face-to-face peer review almost certainly demand a first reading in class, thereby creating adverse circumstances that often feed basic writers' insecurities. By allowing students to review their peers' papers online, instructors can help students take "control of the learning environment" (Stine "Basically" 133) by taking as much time as they need to read, without having to feel rushed, watched, or judged as slow readers.

The second essential condition—anonymity—adds to the authenticity of the responses, which is beneficial for both the peer reviewer and the peer. When students conduct peer reviews in traditional face-to-face classroom settings, they know whose paper they are reading, and, more importantly, they know who is reading their paper, leading them to accept or reject comments largely based upon what students know about their peers (McConlogue 9-10). Students also tend to be anxious and distracted during the face-to-face peer review process because they often pay more attention to the peer marking their paper than they do to the paper they are supposed to be reviewing, especially if they perceive that peer to be a more effective and successful student. I have often seen students who, after exchanging papers with a peer, have one eye fixed on their own paper as they watch their peer write comments on it. As a result, students disengage from reading their peer's paper, turn to the peer, ask, "What did you just write down?" and then try to explain—and justify—what they had written. Clearly, their anxiety about someone else "evaluating" their paper prevents them from fully engaging in the peer-review task, and their inattention can render the exercise meaningless. This is not to say that in anonymous situations, students won't experience anxiety as they review a peer or receive peer comments, but at least the anxiety isn't magnified as it is in the face-to-face real-time setting where it

can immediately and simultaneously distract from the task at hand. In fact, some scholars have demonstrated that in asynchronous email peer reviews, where students could still see each other's names, the online component gave students the illusion of anonymity, which helped them develop more thoughtful responses to their peers (Adler-Kassner and Reynolds 174; Crank 149). In a truly anonymous online peer review process, that anxiety goes down even further since they really don't know the identity of the writer or the reviewer, allowing them the opportunity to engage actively in the reading of their peer's work while preventing them from making comments based upon their perceived worth of the other student.

When students go through an anonymous online peer-review process, they can also see other interpretations of the academic texts that are the subjects of the very papers they are reviewing, without knowing whose interpretation they are reading. In so doing, students can learn from each other as they revise their interpretations of the texts instructors assign. After all, since they won't know whose paper they are reading and, therefore, how the instructor/other students value that student's thoughts, they won't know who is providing the interpretation in front of them, and they won't know whether they should defer their own interpretation to the one they are reading. Instead, they must learn to evaluate interpretations and the evidence that supports those interpretations strictly on the merit of the argument and the writing, even if, and especially if, some of those interpretations differ from their own. Therefore, if instructors remove the identity of the writer, students can then validate, challenge, and refine their own ideas and interpretations as they engage in active learning that leads to "deep, reflective thinking about authentic tasks" (Stine "Basically" 133), such as recognizing multiple and warranted interpretations of texts, making intertextual connections, finding subtleties in texts, and questioning/validating their own interpretation of texts based upon the interpretations of others. To this end, the anonymity of peer review is crucial so

students can learn to trust their own interpretations as they evaluate the interpretations of others.

Not only is the anonymity of peer review beneficial for students as they are conducting the review, but also when they must evaluate the comments they receive at the end of the peer review process. Just as students often try to justify their writing in face-to-face peer review situations, so too do they try to ask for clarification about comments they receive from their peers. However, by asking for clarification, they abdicate their role as critical readers of their own texts and rely on the thinking of their peer. In anonymous peer review, students must instead learn to evaluate the comments they receive in relation to their own writing and be discerning about how to act upon those comments. That is to say, students must base their decisions for revision on their careful examination of the merit of the comments instead of the perceived merit of the peer making the comment. In some ways, the comments they receive are less important than the process students go through to analyze them.

Peer Review in Practice

To demonstrate one case where peer review acted as a reading event, I offer the experience of my first online peer review assignment, which students used for their second round of revision during the writing process of their second paper. All of my basic writing classes of late have been "linked" in a learning community with an art history class; therefore, all of my writing assignments in some way incorporate an aspect of art or art history.

For the essay they peer review online, my students read Ovid's "The Story of Pygmalion" (the story of a sculptor who creates and falls in love with a statue of his ideal woman, who, thanks to Venus, slowly turns into a human being while Pygmalion is caressing her) before they study Jean-Léon Gérõme's painting *Pygmalion and Galatea* (which depicts the very moment the statue is coming alive). They then read an article titled "Love in 2-D," wherein Lisa Katayama describes the phenomenon of Japanese

men who fall in love with pre-pubescent 2-D animated girls, illustrated in a style known as *manga*, and who carry around body-sized pillows with the image of these 2-D girls. The prompt for this essay essentially asks students to compare the painting with the Katayama essay and explain the feelings and ideas that the essay and the painting evoke.

All of my classes are reading/writing integrated, so I spend a lot of time on how to closely read the texts I assign. For Ovid's "The Story of Pygmalion," students read the poem at home before coming to class and, working in pairs, slowly read the poem out loud line-by-line, making sure they understand all the nuances in each line and discussing how one line influences or is influenced by another. Most importantly, I ask them to pay attention to what confuses them and to write down any questions they have about the poem. (I focus on their questions and confusion because I want students to become comfortable with uncertainty and, therefore, their own abilities as they encounter and confront difficult texts.) As students move through this poem, I sit with each pair and try to push their thinking. After they finish the poem, we discuss it as a class, trying to make sense of what they still don't understand. Next, I introduce the painting and ask them to actively "read" the painting in much the same way they just read the poem, again looking deeply for what they don't understand or have questions about. Finally, students read "Love in 2-D" at home before they come to class, and then they interrogate the text in small groups, where they individually write their responses to open-ended questions about their experience of reading the text before they discuss those responses with their group. During this exercise, students constantly reread and revise their interpretations each time they read, which helps them to discover the value of their own interpretations to the thinking of other readers, value alternative interpretations to their own thinking, and shift the focus to what confuses them instead of focusing on a single answer that they think they're supposed to find. It also shows them that they are capable readers who can support their interpretations of texts with evidence from those texts. (For more on this activity,

see Smith.) I spend two weeks (approximately eight hours) on the readings for this unit, in addition to the two weeks I spend on a difficult art history text students write about for their first paper. Thus, by the time students write their Pygmalion essays, they have had considerable instruction in how to read texts closely and actively.

For the first drafts of this paper, I asked students to read their own papers slowly and deliberately, with the same focused attention as they gave to Ovid, Gérõme, and Katayama. For the second draft, the one they would submit online to be peer reviewed, I asked them to read their peer's papers as closely as they wanted their peer to read theirs. The students submitted their essays (sans their names) to an online peer review program, where only I would know their identities. Once the students submitted their essays, I randomly assigned students to peer review. They had one week to review each other's work, which in the end was ample time.

As I did in my previous face-to-face peer review workshops, in this online peer review "workshop," I provided students with questions that I wanted them to answer, questions to steer their comments away from the editing components of grammar and style. My peer review assignments are always low-stakes; thus, many of the peer review comments were written in basic-writingese. To have students worry about correctness and/or error would have placed their focus back on their own writing errors, which would have only increased their anxiety about writing for this assignment.

The peer review feature in the program I use mirrors the instructor-student feature I had already used to comment on drafts of their first paper. Both the instructor and peer features allow reviewers to make comments directly in the student's paper when they want to address a particular portion of the text. So in addition to requiring students to answer my specific questions, I encourage them to use this feature when peer reviewing. Since students in this class had already received online feedback from me on previous drafts of their first paper, they knew how this

feature worked, and many tried to impersonate me and make the kinds of comments they thought I might make if I were the one commenting on the student's paper. Below are the questions I asked students to answer as they reviewed each other's papers; the questions were based upon discussions we had in class:

1. Did the writer incorporate all "texts" into his/her response to show how they were all related? Explain.
2. Did the writer sufficiently summarize/describe all "texts" for this assignment? Explain.
3. Did the writer answer all that the essay prompt asked? Explain.
4. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), how do you rate this writer's response to the prompt?
5. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), how effectively do you think the writer was able to interweave the texts into his/her response?

Almost all students took the assignment seriously, and to my surprise (and delight), they were much more thorough with their own comments than I ever imagined they would be. Below are examples of peer review comments that came from a class of nineteen students and represent as a whole the degree to which students engaged with this assignment. They essentially completed the assignment in one of two ways: (1) by answering my questions thoroughly and adding a few individual comments directly on the paper or (2) by minimally answering my questions and providing several individual comments within the actual paper.

Metamorphosis of Critical Readers

About two thirds of the class wrote reviews that more thoroughly answered my guiding questions and minimally provided individual comments. Amadou[2] was one of those students. Here are the comments that Amadou made on Vance's paper:

1. Did the writer incorporate all "texts" into his/her response to show how they were all related? Explain.

The writer used the various pieces of some of the texts given, but tended to elaborate more on the painting of "Pygmalion and Galetea" more than the article "love in 2-D". It was a good attempt at incorporating the different texts in his or her response to the prompt. The description of the painting and the things in the painting was well done but the description of the article was not as effectively used. The use of the story of "Pygmalion" by Ovid would have helped more in this situation. The effectiveness of the examples from the texts given in the essay was good but a bit more could have been said about the texts.[3]

2. Did the writer sufficiently summarize/describe all "texts" for this assignment? Explain.

The writer summarized some of the texts for the assignment but not all. The effective summary of the painting "Pygmalion and Galetea" which was a much more comprehensive summary in contrast with the summary of the article "Love in 2-D" which was a more general summary and did not explain very much the way in which the two pieces were related. The use of details in the summary or description of the painting was effective in that specific examples of the image was given but in the summary of the article it was lacking and in the summary of the story of "Pygmalion" was missing.

3. Did the writer answer all that the essay prompt asked? Explain.

The writer answered the essay prompt because the prompt was asking to relate the two pieces and the writer had some ideas even through those ideas may have been lacking in clarity the general theme of the assignment was attained. The essay response to the prompt was not developed despite having some good ideas and

points in the essay did not elaborate on them enough. In terms of compare and contrast there was not much and this was the main part of the essay thus the length. The essay ended too abruptly and caused the reader to ask many questions which the essay should not have instead it should have answered any questions the reader had.

4. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), how do you rate this writer's response to the prompt?

3 of 5

5. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), how effectively do you think the writer was able to interweave the texts into his/her response?

2 of 5

And below are four of the eight specific comments Amadou wrote in Vance's paper. The places in the text that received comments are identified in superscript numerals.

In the painting Pygmalion[1]: and Galatea Pygmalion stands embracing the statue he carve[2] name Galatea the painting also show a cupid aiming a arrow at Pygmalion and his work of art as he embraces it his action made me realize that he is a man who knows what he wants,[3] the work of art he created was so beautiful that he fell in love with it, it is just the ideal woman he wanted in life. The story love in 2-D by Lisa Katayama is about Japanese men that falls[4] in love with video game character no matter the age of the character which is known as 2d love. There's a few similarities between those two as in both the man's falls in love with something that his unable to love them back , but major differences the painting I can understand it as a man that fell in love with his art as for the Japanese man are falling in love with a character someone else made

Comments:

[1] *Shouldn't the name of the painting be in " "*

[2] *What tense sholud this be in? Check throughout writing.*

[3] *how do you know this? explain*

[4] *Men fall not men falls. Check your subject verb agreement throught the essay.*

Amadou's answers to my specific questions demonstrate a thoughtful and close reading of Vance's writing. Amadou was able to explain to Vance that his essay was not developed, in part because Vance did not adequately summarize the texts, nor sufficiently answer the prompt given that he had not made an effective comparison. Only three of Amadou's individual comments (38%) were content-related, but the totality of Amadou's peer review demonstrates that he was critically reading Vance's paper.

The second way students completed the peer review was to quickly move through my questions and devote a significant amount of time on slowly reading the peer's essay and inserting comments throughout. Peter's comments on Casey's paper are an example of the focused thinking some students did as they read through their peer's papers. Here are Peter's answers to my questions:

1. Did the writer incorporate all "texts" into his/her response to show how they were all related? Explain.

yes the writer also included the written material for pygmoalin and galatea

2. Did the writer sufficiently summarize/describe all "texts" for this assignment? Explain.

needs to work on explain one story at a time then later on explain how they fall into place as a conclusion….also neeeds an effevtive thesis

3. Did the writer answer all that the essay prompt asked? Explain.

yes the write included both story how how they connect to each other

4. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), how do you rate this writer's response to the prompt?

3 of 5

5. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), how effectively do you think the writer was able to interweave the texts into his/her response?

3 of 5

And then Peter peppered Casey's two-and-a-half-page paper with twenty-five individual comments. About a third of the students wrote extensive individual comments while only minimally answering my questions, with eleven as the average number for all students' individual comments. Below is an example of the individual comments Peter made in Casey's paper:

> Katayama captures the different extents[9] of obsession with Love in 2-D. She explains different situations with the Japanese men known as 2-D lovers that have fantasies and an imaginations that effects their entire lives.[10] One particular male, 38yr old Nisan who fell in love with the virtual teenage character named Nemutan from a video game now walks around with a stuffed pillow case with her picture on it. Nisan has replacement pillow cases at work in case he

does over time, takes her out to karaoke and even to eat at restaurants. Katayama explains that he treats what he calls "his girlfriend" like a regular human being as if she were 3-D. This man found affection[11] in virtual character and tried to bring her to life by using 3-D materials because of his deep love for it. After being dumped, Nisan moved on to 2-D.[12] "She has really changed my life" is what Nisan says and it really has since he probably isn't considered normal to others expect for fellow 2-D lovers. What so ever makes him happy is what matters.

The composition in the painting "Pygmalion and Galatea" created by Gerome depicts something similar to the article from Katayama especially[13] when it came to trying to humanize something that isn't real. The painting shows the artist Pygmalion holding and kissing the statue he created which is holding and kissing him back. That showed that this statue it something he would want to show him love[14] and affection also if possible. The story passage to the painting from Ovid expresses the love between the Pygmalion and his art work. After living alone, this probably gave Pygmalion the reason for being so eager to find someone to love. An example, Ovid states "Only too often, choose to be alone".[15] He is desperate to maybe one day find someone like his "If you can give all things, O God, I pray my wife may be – One like my ivory girl" which Pygmalion is referring to the statue. He wished that his wife would be exactly[16] like the piece of art. After it actually comes to life, the excitement Ovid expressed that Pygmalion had showed how much he was in love with this non-living object. "Over and over, touches the body with his hand. It is a body!" This finally bought him happiness from something he created.

Comments:

[9] *katayama is falling in love with a 2d girlfriend?*

[10] *how does it effect there lives be sure to use exaples*

[11] *we know a regualr girl is 3d lets be more specific about the message you are sending to your readers*

[12] *this sentence connects to your thesis ,the thesis must explain the rest of the story*

[13] *is katayama the person humanzing , try not to confuse the audience*

[14] *go over pinctiation to seperate fragments of a sentence this way the readers not puzzled*

[15] *need to be specific with quote evalute it*

[16] *exactly read back in the preivious sentence and make sure*

It's important to note that only five of Peter's twenty-five comments (20%) focused on sentence-level errors, a surprisingly small percentage given the number of comments he provided. And the twenty content-related comments, placed directly in the paper where they were relevant, shows the same kind of focused, critical reading that Amadou performed for Vance. As with Amadou's comments to Vance, not all of Peter's comments were accurate or even clearly suggested what he thought Casey should do, but the comments did provide feedback that Casey could analyze to determine how her reader was reading her essay. In that regard, Peter's comments should have made Casey think about what she was trying to say, why Peter made the comment in the first place, and whether or not she should address or reject the advice.

Amadou's and Peter's responses are representative examples of the two types of reviews most students wrote, and their responses should have led their peers towards meaningful revisions. However, not all peer reviews were as useful as Amadou's and Peter's. As stated earlier, peer review can be ineffectual when students receive surface-level feedback or when students accept or reject comments based upon what they know about their peers. Yet there is another kind of ineffective peer review: The review that uncritically praises peers' work so there are no useful suggestions for writers to analyze, throwing them back on their own resources as readers of their own work. Aramis, who wrote

an underdeveloped rough draft, received such a review from Manuel. Like Amadou, Manuel answered my questions in great detail, but offered such faint praise as *"the writer made sure the reader know what he was trying to explain in his writing"* or *"shows how the writer pay attention to the assignment in hand, also the writer summarized all he need to complete this work"* or *"the writer also showed that the prompt got his interest and that he also put his all in the writing."* On the two questions that asked the peer to rate the writer's response to the prompt and the writer's effective use of texts, Manuel gave Aramis 4/5. Manuel also gave Aramis four individual comments, 75% of which were, alas, sentence-level suggestions, with 25% praise:

> . . . Relating to this is "Love in 2-D", where Lisa Katayama reports that men are attracted to fictional characters that are practically not real. Yet, their love for their characters is real, like Pygmalion's.[1] How does her story relate to that of Pygmalion?[2]
>
> Pygmalion, in the beginning, did[3] not like the women of his time, since they were always busy with themselves, having nothing to do with romance or true love. . . .
>
> The only thing that gives love its true form is when a couple solidifies their commitment to each other by expressing to each other in terms of love. How this can be fake to other people- that, I[4] don't understand.
>
> Comments:
>
> [1] *too many comma's in this paragraph just end the sentence and start a new one*
>
> [2] *great paragraph though and cool way to end the paragraph too*
>
> [3] *he*
>
> [4] *erase the I*

Throughout the entire peer review, Manuel didn't specifically suggest anything for Aramis to revise, except for three (incorrect)

editing suggestions. Yet Manuel also did not give Aramis 5/5 on either of the last two questions—most likely because he knew a draft should not be perfect. Surprisingly, when I asked Aramis if he found his peer's comments helpful, he replied, *"Yes, I had found the comments very helpful,"* and when I asked him about peer review in general, Aramis said, *"I think that peer review is practically useful—people have many viewpoints and ideas, so it's a really good thing to let other people see your own work."* Perhaps Manuel's praise built Aramis's confidence and did help Aramis make some revisions, even if those revisions were not as significant as they could and should have been for this draft. Manuel's peer review might suggest that he didn't profit from this peer review assignment, but Manuel's thoroughness in his response—even though it was mostly praise—suggests that he probably *did* benefit from this assignment by reading and responding to another's text—even if that reading was not as close as I would have hoped. I simply don't know how or to what extent Manuel learned from this assignment.

One suggestion to counteract instances of uncritical praise in peer reviews would be to have students peer review more than one paper for each assignment. By doing so, not only are they able to see the different ways their fellow students are interpreting and responding to texts, but they also have more than one peer review on which to base their own revisions, which is especially valuable if one is entirely uncritical. Kwangsu Cho and Christian Schunn add that multiple peer responses can help students develop a better sense of their audience, avoid "blind spots and omissions" from any one review, avoid "the negative impact of incorrect feedback," and make revision decisions when feedback overlaps (418). While I recognize the pedagogical benefit of assigning multiple peer reviews, I also know that if I assigned multiple reviews, my students would probably not devote the kind of focused attention to any one review that I would hope they would. My students typically mirror the very-diverse urban population of Brooklyn and are full-time students, yet often work full-time or at least several hours part-time, traveling between

one-to-two hours one-way by public transportation. As a result, most don't have the time (or probably the inclination) to challenge themselves on multiple peer reviews.

I want to point out that regardless of the effectiveness of the peer reviews, all three of these students whose performance and experience I studied most closely identified themselves in their reviews as *readers*: Amadou clearly identified himself as the "reader" during his review of Vance: *"The essay ended too abruptly and caused the reader to ask many questions which the essay should not have instead it should have answered any questions the reader had."* As did Peter in his review of Casey*: "we know a regular girl is 3d lets be more specific about the message you are sending to your readers."* Even Manuel understood his role as "reader" in his comments to Aramis: *"the writer made sure the reader know what he was trying to explain in his writing."* Although my students were not asked to talk about their roles as readers, all three did so, as did almost all students in the class. Their identity as a "reader" is an important one. Ed Jones demonstrates that basic writers are more successful when they have "self-belief" in their abilities to perform academic tasks (229-230), and part of having confidence in their abilities is to adopt an identity of a skillful student. If, through exercises like online peer review, students can learn to identify as *readers* who have the ability to analyze texts, then they have a strong chance of also identifying as *writers* of proficient prose.

Paving the Academic Way

The students in my class demonstrated that online peer review can be a critical-reading exercise that leads students to read actively and deliberately. Peer review is first a reading exercise before it organically morphs into a reading *and* writing exercise: After students have closely and actively read/analyzed a peer's paper, they can then turn their attention to the revision of their own writing—a stage in the writing process that is fundamentally another reading event. A logical next-step research study is to evaluate the role online peer review has in helping students

transfer the critical reading skills they develop in the review of their peer's paper to their reading and revising of their own work.

Fortunately, I did ask students to reflect upon their revision process for this paper, asking them, "How does what you revised in your paper help you better understand the attention you need to pay to revision so that your thinking comes across as clearly as it possibly can?" Yesenia included peer review in her response and best demonstrates that the online peer review process did, in fact, transfer to the revising of her own work, showing that she needed to closely read and analyze her own writing so that her readers could understand her thinking:

> *What I noticed when [revising my paper], when I got to see the comments [my peer] made and also when I myself even re-read my paper is that I saw many small errors and things that I would have liked to have changed. There was things even that the person whom marked my paper made no suggestions upon but I myself did not feel that I expressed myself how I would have liked to. I not only took note of what was said by the student whom graded my paper…but I also made some changes that I felt would have perhaps bettered my paper.*
>
> *What I feel that when revising my own paper I learned that even by me if I would have perhaps re-read the paper to myself before submitting it, I would have seen many of the small things that I did not noticed before…I now take into mind when writing a paper that I should really pay more attention to small details such as wording, because when things are not worded in a way that the reader can understand they might not get what I the writer was trying to point out. I saw that something's I wrote in my head made sense, but to someone else it most likely wouldn't. So detailing of how I word things really does play a role and I found that error to play a big part in my essay.*

Yesenia received a review that was a combination of the one Amadou gave to Vance and Manuel gave to Aramis, with extended answers to my three questions and nine specific comments in the

actual paper, some of which were praise. However, only two of those nine comments referred to surface-level issues, which means Yesenia was reflecting mostly about content-level changes. After revising her paper for this assignment, Yesenia understood that she needed to read and analyze her own work so that her reader wouldn't need to guess at her thoughts. Her reflection demonstrates that by analyzing her peer's comments about her paper, she was able to identify reading strategies she could then incorporate into future reading/writing assignments.

In the end, I learned that my students were very much like Pygmalion and Galatea: They entered my class believing that "revision" meant "editing," in that they thought they were supposed to "fix" all the surface-level errors instead of analyzing the content, development, and organization of their or their peer's paper. They learned to embrace confusion (Blau) and work through the frustration of analyzing their own work and the work of others. In other words, by the time they left my class, they had transformed into discerning readers and writers who began to value and believe in their abilities to perform complex academic tasks. As the story goes, Galatea never reverted back to a statue, and I believe that online peer review contributed to the transformation these students made in their identities as readers—and as learners. I am in no way implying that online peer review was the only contributor to their metamorphosis, but I am suggesting that there is a certain art to online peer review that helped form their identities as readers in a writing class, and that's a crucial step towards becoming more effective college-level writers.

Notes

[1] All my basic writing students are first-semester students who test directly into a developmental class that is one level below first-year composition. I do not teach L2 students, which is not to say I don't have any, but they don't identify as such.

[2] All student names in this article are pseudonyms, and student work is used with permission.

[3] Student answers have not been edited from the original.

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FINDING SPACE FOR TRANSFER OF WRITING IN COMMON CORE CURRICULAR STANDARDS

Mary Frances Rice

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a major reformative force shaping United States curriculum. According to a government press release, the standards should enable teachers to prepare students to compete nationally and internationally (Abreveya). Since the standards are positioned in educational reform and since reform measures have been largely unsuccessful in the past, the standards are in the midst of considerable scrutiny, particularly from scholars. For instance, Richard Beach has traded arguments in *Educational Researcher* with Andrew Porter and his colleagues as to whether the standards can be used to make reliable assessments. In the quest to measure whether students meet the standards, some scholars such as Vicki Philips and Carina Wong have looked at CCSS alignment with previous standards. Other scholars have been asking broader questions about whether CCSS represent genuinely desirable learning outcomes for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Aimee Papola-Ellis' inquiry into the CCSS directives regarding the appropriateness of the text complexity parts of the standards is an example of such work.

These inquiries into standardization are contextualized by discussion about whether standards are a worthy goal in a social democracy. Nel Noddings, for example, asks whether standards are really productive since new economies are going to favor a labor force with diverse skills, rather than a force where everyone has the same or highly similar skills (7). For writing teachers

specifically, a major concern is whether it is possible to draft standards that provide guidance for writing instruction without prescribing or privileging certain kinds of writing over others. Particularly Patrick Dias, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, and Anthony Paré have depicted university writing as having mainly epistemic goals, where writing is used to demonstrate knowledge to a limited audience, usually a teacher, and the purpose is to achieve a grade (5). The problem with the epistemic orientation, in their view, is that it does not prepare writers to move into professional workplaces where writing shapes and is shaped by nuanced, complex social actions, as Carolyn Miller so famously argued over thirty years ago in her article "Genre as Social Action." Later, genre scholar Amy Devitt went on to suggest in her article in *College Composition and Communication* that one issue that teachers grapple with, then, is what writing knowledge, skills, and dispositions can or even *should* transfer.

Such interest in reform and standardization is an appropriate way to start thinking about the standards since the group that created them, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, specifically indicated that the CCSS were created for the purpose of preparing young Americans for college and career. While the CCSS do not specifically state that the transfer of writing skills between and across assignments and contexts was an aim, it would seem implicit that students should transfer writing skills beyond preK-12 settings. The purpose of this investigation was to describe potential sites of writing transfer that might be embedded in the 6-12 writing in English/Language arts (ELA) and writing in history, science and technical subjects (WHST) standards of the CCSS for the purpose of exploring the ways in which writing standards engage with arguments about what writing in educational contexts should be. The specific research question was "What is the nature and context of the sites for transfer of writing articulated or implied in the CCSS?"

Perspectives on Transfer

A 2013 article by George Bunch in the *Review of Educational Research* highlighting concern over the CCSS standards' legitimacy is the latest development in a longer trajectory of concerns about literacy instruction, assessment, and outcomes in the United States. This concern runs alongside a longer-standing interest in the teaching of writing and learning to write in school across disciplines and in the workplace as outlined by Robert Connors in 1997. In order to meet these challenges, composition scholars have proposed that improving the full spectrum of writing lies within transfer research studies.

The current study drew on evolving theories of transfer, with a particular interest in studying writing-related transfer. Major theories of transfer come from several perspectives: behaviorist, cognitive, dispositional, curricular, and sociocultural. Each of these perspectives has made a contribution to the concept of transfer and the terminology used to describe it in the teaching of writing. The terminology is important to consider because when learning composition skills, students also have to learn to translate the academic jargon embedded in the description of the task in order to determine how to approach it (Nelms and Dively 215). The terms are clues to the worldview of the scholars involved in constructing a given conception of writing.

Behaviorist Views

Transfer as the use of something learned in one context to do a new task grows out of quantitative paradigms, according to Stephen M. Cormier and Joseph D. Hagman's work *Transfer of Learning: Contemporary Research Applications*. The concept of transfer under the behaviorist paradigm was initially popularized in the animal experiments of Edward Thorndike. In behaviorism, transfer is contingent on the degree to which prior and current tasks share identical elements (Lobato). Behaviorism was especially influential in language acquisition research where singular features of language were isolated and studied. Contrastive Analysis was a method developed by researchers and

later used by students of language in order to study grammar features by looking across two or more languages and looking for similarities and differences for individual features (see Ertmer and Newby's work for an example). These contrastive techniques are still popular in language classes today, although this is changing (see Watcharapunyawong and Usaha for an example). Transfer of writing knowledge from a behavioral perspective asks the question: What writing behaviors facilitate transfer? Behaviorist views do not support intermittent or contested space.

Cognitive Views

Building on behaviorist work, David Perkins and Gavriel Salomon authored several articles suggesting a number of conceptualizations of transfer grounded in the cognitive and metacognitive domains. Their terms for transfer include: *near/far*; *high road/low road*; *backward reaching/forward reaching*; and *positive/negative transfer*. These terms were generated to describe transfer in learning in general but have been applied to writing by composition scholars such as Gerald Nelms and Rhonda Dively in their work on transferring knowledge from first-year composition to writing-intensive major courses.

Popular teaching techniques for *near transfer* include hugging, where new tasks resemble past ones. To teach *far transfer*, bridging strategies are used that include explicit linkages between previous tasks and new ones. These strategies clearly illustrate cognitivism's behavioral roots as they focus on behavior to elicit cognition. Transfer can also be conscious or not, according to Perkins and Salomon (16).

Ultimately, transfer research stemming from a cognitive view determined that transfer is infrequent, ephemeral, and unpredictable, which aligned with behaviorist assertions. Perkins and Salomon ("Are Cognitive Skills Context Bound?") attended to this by building a metaphor around learners as sheep. The first idea is that transfer occurs automatically (the Bo Peep theory—"leave them alone and they will come home"); the second is that it does not occur (the lost sheep theory); and the third option is that

transfer requires scaffolds (the good shepherd theory). In these metaphors, the sheep are homogeneous, which might explain the durability of cognitive approaches to writing. The instructor can presume control through scaffolding instead of leaving transfer to chance. However, cognitive views also presume that students can learn to do things like writing by applying fairly interchangeable sets of strategies. While the interest in strategy is a key component of process writing, it stops short of helping students identify initial ideas for their writing and to use idea generation as the driving force behind writing, according to Anis S. Bawarshi in his book *Genre and the Invention of the Writer*. In the end, while cognitivist views have remained anchored to behaviorist paradigms, they ask a slightly different question: What supports transfer of cognitive understandings about writing into new tasks?

Motivation/Dispositional Views

Although they do not address motivation directly, David N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon ("Knowledge to Go") acknowledged motivation as a factor in transfer. The model they described was called *detect-elect-connect*, where transferable skills or aspects of knowledge have to be noticed (detected) and a conscious decision must be made (elected) to use the knowledge or skill in a new context (connected). Election is contingent on a learner's motivation to make a connection. Thus, when opportunities for transfer are not pursued, meaningful connections will not be made. Applying theory to writing instruction means that writers can choose not to transfer, even when they realize they can.

Motivation has been a highly studied operationalized construct and research on transfer views it as a desirable trait with three components: the belief that one can do a task, the level to which the task aligns with other goals, and the emotional reaction to the task, according to the perspective popularized by Paul Pintrich and Elizabeth DeGroot. Motivation to write can lead to a *disposition* to write, which is highly desirable according to Marlene Scardamalia and Carl Bereiter. More recently, Robert Jackson wrote an article on genre process writing and testing, arguing that

good writers are not merely metacognitive; they have developed a disposition to actively engage with writing tasks. Dana Driscoll and Jennifer Wells also propound this notion, saying that the disposition to transfer in first-year writing contexts is supported through the cultivation of goal setting and other habits of self-awareness (11). This means that feedback from instructors on writing assignments should attend more fully not just to motivation to write but to the overall disposition to manage one's own writing. From the disposition to write, an identity as a writer emerges (Park).

Further, the disposition-based researchers, like their motivational counterparts, assert that opportunities to transfer are mostly missed because students are not positioned to bring together cognitive resources with dispositional ones in order to use and reuse knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet new exigencies. What is notable about the research on motivation/disposition in writing transfer is that it demonstrated that transfer was not merely a task-to-task operation but was part of larger forces that individuals grapple with while mediating identities in social contexts. The question for transfer researchers looking at motivation in writing is: What is the role of motivation in transfer and developing a disposition to write?

Curricular Views

Curriculum for writing courses, especially during the first year in higher-education contexts is a major focus of composition studies, according to David Smit and others. The interest in curriculum focuses on classroom assignments and activities. Developing curriculum that promotes transfer requires a teacher to attend carefully, explicitly, and directly to creating contexts where transfer can occur and not just teaching cognitive strategies. Curricular approaches to transfer might take on cognitive characteristics where teaching is very explicit, but they can also take more implicit paths. Transfer studies built around curriculum have a primary focus on learning outcomes that are limited to whether transfer occurred as a test for curriculum quality.

Ann Beaufort's case study work is one example of a curricular orientation. Her work focused on Tim, a university student whose writing at various points in his college career was collected and analyzed for evidence of transfer, along with observations of him in other classes and some interviews with teachers. Her analysis revealed that Tim was unable to transfer skills and knowledge between the history and engineering writing communities because he lacked awareness of the interactions between domain knowledge and genre. Further, he lacked these because the first-year writing curriculum did not foster this awareness.

In addition to arguing for a first-year writing curriculum that attended more directly to preparing students to write across subjects and disciplines, Beaufort recommended that specialists in fields take a more active part in apprenticing novices into the thinking and writing germane to their areas of expertise. Beaufort suggested a focus on overlapping knowledge domains to explain how writing knowledge transfers from the university to the workplace. These knowledge domains are: writing process knowledge, subject matter knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, and discourse community knowledge. These domains were supposed to form the foundation of writing curriculum.

Another researcher focusing on curriculum was Angela Rounsaville, who also argued that transfer needed terms more focused on curricular applications in order for the promises of transfer to illuminate situated theories of learning, rhetorical theory, and activity theory as paradigms for writing instructions. One important term in her argument about strengthening curriculum was *uptake,* a concept from speech-act theory popularized by Ann Freadman. In uptake, writers see their work as social action; what they write contributes to a conversation. When uptake is the goal, according to Rounsaville, *transitions*, where writers incorporate understandings from one genre into another, can take place. The goal of a transfer-oriented curriculum is to move away from writing classes and from their traditional roles as gatekeeping classes and towards a new role as a

ate opening opportunity to engage with ideas within and across disciplines and communities.

Finally, Liane Roberston, Kara Taczak, and Kathleen Blake Yancey offered various descriptions of transfer as processes of *assemblage*, *remixing*, and *critical incidents*. These terms attempt to describe how writers engage with prior knowledge of genres as they work in new or unfamiliar ones. They also suggest that writing is inherently a process of incorporation and critical decision-making, allowing for the dispositions that are so highly prized to be developed. In these curricular conceptions writing knowledge is fluid, ever developing, and shifting, but is a visible part of the writing involved in directed learning activities. The overall question in this orientation is: What writing curriculum supports transfer?

Sociocultural Theories of Activity and Identity

Situated and activity driven notions have gained traction in many areas of learning but are especially popular in transfer of writing knowledge in composition research. Patrick Dias, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, and Anthony Paré were among the earliest to use David Russell's description of activity theory as a way to distinguish between motives to write, actions of writing, and the conditions under which writing occurs. A central premise of this orientation is that writers need to recognize themselves as writers and that this is more important than being able to specifically articulate their writing moves. Sociocultural writing instruction cares about behaviors of students and teachers, but it is not driven by it; it requires strategic thinking, but understands intuition; it acknowledges personal interest and goals but allows those to evolve from moment to moment, and it privileges authentic classroom activities but does not prescribe them. Sociocultural views assert that *generalization* is a better way to describe transfer. In the process of generalization dialogue occurs, where both entities are changed or transformed as the result of a composition project. Richard Beach described the relationship between generalization and transition:

> Transition, then, is the concept we use to understand how knowledge is generalized, or propagated, across social space and time. A transition is consequential when it is consciously reflected on, struggled with, and shifts the individual's sense of self or social position. Thus, consequential transitions link identity with knowledge propagation. (42)

In Beach's view, transfer of writing is problem-solving for the purpose of knowing the self. Other more recent applications of the sociocultural view include Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi's identification of sites of transfer as boundaries that could be either guarded or crossed by students (330). These boundaries are not described as being a single line in time and space, but rather an expansive space for knowledge building and decision-making. Dealing with these boundaries requires students to draw on discursive resources writers bring to a task. These resources are not a specific list, but rather are fluid and varied.

Another application of the sociocultural perspective is Rebecca Nowacek's conceptualization of transfer in writing not as merely an individual effort, but rather as a negotiation of *seeing* and *selling* between writers and their audiences. A writer must recognize that a situation lends itself to transfer (or some concept related to the idea of transfer) and then argue that the transfer is appropriate (25).

It is only in the sociocultural views of activity and identity that transfer or related processes are assumed to be occurring or have the assumed potential to occur on a near constant basis. The question for this line of transfer inquiry is: What experiences encourage acts of participation that lead to writing identities where transfer is enacted?

The multiplicity of views on transfer yields important terminologies that can be used to find spaces for transfer in documents like the CCSS. They can also be used to uncover broad classifications for terms and orientations to writing transfer research. Figure 1 summarizes the essential questions and the

implications the questions have for writing instruction within the various views on transfer.

View of Transfer	Essential Question	Implication for writing instruction
Behaviorist	What writing behaviors facilitate transfer?	Writing can be taught as a series of closely linked tasks that form behaviors over time.
Cognitive	What supports transfer of cognitive understandings about writing into new tasks?	Writing instruction is about helping students think through (and talk about) assignments.
Motivation or dispositional	What is the role of motivation in transfer and developing a disposition to write?	Students are assumed to be more successful with writing tasks they want to do, but a disposition to write will also maintain a writer's effort.
Curricular or situated	What writing curriculum supports transfer?	Writing teachers can strategically construct engaging curriculum (not just tasks) that allow for transfer.
Sociocultural/Identity	What experiences encourage participation that leads to writing identities where transfer is enacted?	Writing teachers can create or facilitate formal writing experiences, but they can also acknowledge informal writing experiences where students use writing to explore their identities in relationship to discourses they imagine they might belong to or want to join.

Figure 1: Summary of Views of Transfer and their Essential Questions

Analytic Approach

The current exploration of transfer embedded in the CCSS drew on content analysis techniques. Specifically, content analysis has various applications depending on the data being analyzed and the research questions being explored (Neuendorf). Content

analysis is supposed to bring an interpretation of content of text data through a systematic classification process of coding or identifying of themes or patterns. Using a qualitative design emphasized "concepts rather than simply words" (Fraenkel & Wallen 389) but also conveyed facts in a manner that was coherent and useful (Sandelowski).

The specific strategies for conducting this content analysis included identifying the 6-12 writing standards. These were chosen because they reflected the intent of the researcher to focus on writing and because they had parallel standards for both ELA content and writing in other subjects, which was important to meeting the goal of describing spaces for transfer.

Natural language processing techniques (Kelley) were applied to determine the frequently occurring words in the standards. The most frequently used words as families and phrases were evaluated against the contexts in which they appeared and against the transfer terminology as it had been defined by transfer researchers to produce themes of theoretical spaces where transfer is suggested.

However, looking at the words alone would not be sufficient. It was also, therefore, necessary to apply strategies to examine the context of the words that appeared most frequently. This was done using Kenneth Burke's cluster criticism techniques as explained by Foss (2004). In cluster criticism, a rhetorical critic identifies key terms and then connects the key terms to associated elements from the text. The key terms and associated elements together form clusters. These clusters are then compared against each other to reveal the argument in the text, with particular attention to clusters that are either mutually supporting or in conflict with one another. Cluster criticism is a practical look at the context of the standards because there is an amount of text that is feasible for such an analysis, and because looking at the CCSS document as a work of rhetoric is valid given that it was intended for audiences of teachers, parents, lawmakers, and potentially others to interpret and apply the way that much rhetoric is also designed to do.

Below is a section from the ELA writing standards for sixth grade that will be used to demonstrate cluster criticism. The key terms were selected with the commonly occurring terms in the whole document in mind. The key terms have been bolded. The associated terms have been underlined.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.8
(1) Gather **relevant information** from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source;
(2) and quote or paraphrase the **data** and **conclusions** of others
(3) while avoiding plagiarism and **providing** basic bibliographic **information** for sources.

This standard has three main clusters, each with its own key terms. The first cluster is about gathering a lot of credible information. The second cluster is about drawing pieces from that credible information to share. The third is about properly citing the sources. The focus in the standard is clearly about locating and sharing information for epistemological purposes since all three clusters map clearly to information in sterile terms that is authoritative and not subject to criticism. A sixth grader, according to the standard, should have enough knowledge and, with teacher support that is undefined in the standards, sufficient skills to make judgments about the inherent worth of knowledge based on objectivity as a standard and then report that information to an undefined audience in an undefined, but non-plagiaristic way. Reading the standard, there is no sense that the credibility of a source shifts according to temporal and spatial contexts. There is no sense that the relevance of quotations and paraphrases might be tied to audiences and purposes that are determined by a variety of factors that might include authorial will or teacher mandate. There is no consideration that what constitutes plagiary or even an appropriate bibliographic reference is also subject to a variety of genre-related factors. From this example, it can be seen how

commonly occurring words, key words, and associative words work together to produce the findings for this analysis.

Findings from the Analysis

Table 1 displays the most commonly used content words in the ELA standards and in the history, science, and technical subjects standards, respectively.

Table 1: Writing Standards Word Frequency Tables

ELA Writing Standards		History, Science, and Technical Subjects Writing Standards	
Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
Use	64	Claim(s)	31
Claim(s)	54	Inform	28
Information	51	Use	26
Writing	46	Information	21
Relevant	40	Writing	21
Topic(s)	36	Topic(s)	15
Evidence	35	Purpose(s)	14
Develop	32	Audience(s)	14
Reason(s)	32	Evidence	12
Support	30	Appropriate	12
Event(s)	30	Develop	11
Purpose(s)	24	Explanation(s)	9
Idea(s)	22	Technical	9
Audience(s)	21	Idea(s)	9
Analysis(analyze)	19	E.g.	8
Appropriate	18	Relevant	8
Provide	18	Relationship(s)	8
Convey	16	Analysis (analyze)	7
Narrative(s)	14	Introduce	6
Range	12	Range	6
Transition(s)	11	Extend	5
Extend	8	Link(s)	5

Since the phrases in the standards were also important for contextualization, Figure 2 contains examples from the standards using several examples of the most frequently used words.

Frequently used word	Sample phrases from ELA standards	Sample phrases from WHIST standards
Use	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence (ELA-Literacy 8.1c).	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. (WHIST 6.1-8.1C).
Claim	Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically (ELA Literacy W 8.1a).	Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence (WHIST 9.1-10.1a).
Inform	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic (ELA Literacy W 8.2d).	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic (WHIST 6-8.2d).
Information	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented ELA Literacy W 8.2f).	Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension (WHIST 9-10.2a).
Topic	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or	Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions,

	other information and examples (ELA Literacy W 8.2d).	concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic (WHIST 11-12.2b).
Evidence	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research (ELA Literacy W.9-10.9).	Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research (WHIST 11-12.9).
Support	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented (ELA Literacy W11-12.1e).	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources (WHIST 6-8.1b).
Audience(s)	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed (ELA Literacy W11-12.1e).	Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic (WHIST 9-10.2b).

Figure 2: Examples of Phrases from the Most Frequently Used Words

The ELA and WHIST standards conceptually overlap. In many cases, the exact phrase exists in both sets, from different grade levels. In addition, many of the most frequently used words appear in multiple standards.

Not all words that would seem to suggest transfer really did so when the context in which they were used was considered. For instance, the words *analyze* and *analysis* are present in the standards as types of writing rather than processes of writing. Words like *extend* were mostly referring to writing a lot or writing, instead of extending ideas, identifying unique contributions, or meeting personal goals for learning. In another example, the word *transition(s)* did not refer to transfer of writing, but rather to types of words used to suggest relationships between ideas. Analytic writing is held up not only as the most important type of writing, but there is a formula for doing it well. Given the stated goal of the CCSS of college and career readiness, analytic writing in a particular way is also propounded as a skill that will be valuable to many, in not all, post-secondary writing.

Views of Transfer Embedded in CCSS Terminology

The terminology in the CCSS that suggests transfer of writing knowledge relies heavily on the cognitive paradigms. These words include *use*, *analyze*, and *link*. They all suggest that knowledge is in discrete pieces that can be directly applied, taken apart (or conversely put back together) and connected to other things. In the text of the standards, the word *link* is an injunction to connect ideas within a writing assignment together rather than to link between assignments. Certainly it is important to learn to write coherent text, but the emphasis on *linking* when viewed in the context of the standards as a whole propounds the idea that there is one way to write well.

The prevalence of words like *claim* and *evidence* also suggest that argument is the dominant type of college and workplace writing and further that writing an argument is an epistemic exercise rather than a practical one. This view is validated in the phrases in which the words are used (see Figure 2) as well as in CCSS explanatory material about the writing standards. This material states: *"An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the*

writer's position, belief, or conclusion is valid" (23). This position is clearly epistemic, which validates the findings of other researchers in the transfer of writing (Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré). Considering this information, one cannot help but question whether the standards are really optimal for preparing students for college and work since few writing tasks outside of schoolwork are epistemic in nature.

Rhetorical Situations and Purposes

Unfortunately, the other views on transfer find far less representation. Motivation as a quantitative construct or disposition as a qualitative is entirely absent from the standards. Curricular and sociocultural activity and identity views are poorly represented as well, with two exceptions that are tied specifically to genre studies: *purpose* and *audience*. This was a curious finding considering the generally epistemic premise dominating the standards. If writers are truly considering purpose and audience, a list of knowledge or an analytic argument will not help them compose messages that resonate in most communities.

Words such as *appropriate* and *develop* further instantiate the exigency of writing as epistemic rather than practical. Specifically, the knowledge display goal appears to be one of synthesis. Bringing together ideas is consistent with the transfer concepts like remixing and assembling. The difference is that in composition research, synthesis is accomplished in service of a variety of specific writing settings, whereas the CCSS say they want students to do a range of writing, but then focus on epistemic writing in the standards. In order to support the synthesis of writing for practical purposes, more attention will need to be given to specific writing purposes rather than vague ones such as "to inform," or even "to debate social policy on homelessness." A specific practical purpose might be "to depict the travel needs of various community members as the city council considers proposals for improvements to public transportation networks."

Discussion

This study used content analysis techniques to examine the CCSS writing standards in the ELA and WHIST subject areas for grades 6-12. The purpose of this examination was to identify space for transfer as a learning goal in the standards. The analysis revealed that the language of the standards, as they are currently articulated, reflects some research on transfer, but in highly limited ways. While there is space for transfer of writing in the CCSS, that space is mostly derived from writing to reorganize facts rather than writing to increase knowledge or contribute to personal, practical or social knowledge domains. Writing in this frame reflects the behavioral (Cormier and Hagman) and cognitive (Perkins and Salomon) orientations but does not address the need to direct student motivation and develop dispositions by writing for self-selected purposes. Recall from earlier discussion that such epistemic writing tasks are problematic since the teacher, who already knows the information, is the primary audience (Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré). Writing in a workplace is about communicating information to people that do not already know the information. In other words, it is not enough to write to prove that one has done required reading. Writing is about doing something.

Although there are injunctions in the standards to write for multiple audiences, no well-developed theory of audience can be discerned from the standards. This must be the case when students are only expected to receive limited support from peers and teachers. Words that suggest collaboration are largely absent in the standards. The tension embodied in the standards is one of writing for the immediate audience of the teacher and the secondary audience of gatekeepers who will rate the writing, rather than authentic audiences of neighbors, community members, colleagues, and friends.

Cognitive views of transfer were better represented in the standards than the other views. Teachers of writing required to use the CCSS standards can leverage the space provided in the standards through returning to the question: What supports

transfer of cognitive understandings about writing to new writing tasks? Asking the students what they expect to transfer at the beginning of the writing assignment and/or asking them what they did transfer are both easy strategies for facilitating transfer of writing knowledge. Attending to the standards between ELA and other content areas is also greatly facilitated cognitively by making writing tasks in ELA and WHIST subjects highly similar or by assigning writing tasks in these classes that build on one another. In these ways, attending to transfer could also help meet other goals, and disposition/motivation may also be a by-product as students are able to use skills such as evidence collecting and argument building in multiple classes.

In other words, there is nothing wrong with engaging with the cognitivist views that dominate the current standards, but teachers could be empowered by realizing that there are other perspectives on writing that will enrich their teaching. It may also be fruitful for teachers to use their professional judgment in interpreting the language of the standards in ways that offer them the most flexibility in their instruction. For example, even though the standards say "avoid plagiarism," a teacher who wanted to have real conversations with students about assemblage and remixing would use writing tasks to interrogate the concept of plagiarism in different communities and contexts (citing its presence in the CCSS standards as justification if necessary) rather than pretending there is universal agreement about what plagiarism is and that everyone considers it wrong.

Writing teachers might also consider the standards' limited attention to purpose and audience. Recent research in transfer suggests that the most promise for writing transfer requires considerations of the genre and/or activity-based social nuances. It is in these views that writers realize that what counts as evidence and what is considered a viable argument varies by the writing task, both between subject areas and within them. This study, then, adds to the growing calls for a revision of the standards. An example of a standard that takes these ideas into account might look like this:

(1) Plan to approach multiple print and digital sources for the purpose of determining whether and how the information will aid the production of an intended text or genre;
(2) Make decisions about how to quote, paraphrase, and interpret the ideas of others
(3) While engaging with issues of representing and repurposing work according to the standards of the intended text or genre

These revisions use language to embrace more fully the author's agency in looking at text production as a series of authorial decisions. These decisions are not made in one moment and then forgotten, but are constantly negotiated in social contexts as social action (Devitt).

Addressing the lack of motivation/disposition in the standards, for instance, might involve more targeted language where planning writing tasks are agentful (there is already language that says students should learn to plan a text) and planning for writing as a habit or way of being in everyday life. To be sure, a disposition requires cognitive skills to keep track of ideas, articles, and citations that might serve future purposes, but it also requires writers to develop long-term interests in topics, ideas, and communities to write to.

Attending to argument as a generic focus will probably require more substantial revisions to the standards that reflect writing as an activity that is more than agonistic or argumentative. There seems to be an assumption that writing that is not epistemic is reflective and/or creative when that is not the case. Professional writing, for example, performs a variety of functions besides convincing or converting someone to the utility of a particular plan or view. In addition, there are multiple genres of argumentative writing, not all of which require a writer to take only one position and stick with it through an entire text. Revisions might also include incorporation of visual text along with linguistic text. But without revision, writing teachers could

help their students by interrogating their position as a primary reader with their students and encouraging them to think about and plan for other readers of their work.

Conclusion

As teachers determine how to implement the writing standards, researchers determine how to study the writing standards, and policy makers determine whether those writing standards meet their original goals, transfer of writing research could be leveraged to help the CCSS meet all of its own goals. If college and career readiness are really the focus of the CCSS, then writing cannot remain an epistemic exercise where the students reproduce stipulated content information or repeat stipulated patterns or genres of writing; it has to transform into recurrent social action (Miller) that can meet a host of contextual exigencies.

In order to improve in writing for non-school purposes, students will have to be oriented to perform workplace writing for workplace purposes using strategies from a range of workplaces for writing. To be sure, the epistemic orientation to writing is a valid one in some instances and a classroom is not a workplace, but a set of standards that aims to prepare students for multiple scenes of writing give teachers more guidance for instructing with a greater variety of forms. In addition, any assessment of the standards should be adaptable to writing beyond the conveyance of information from a few approved academically oriented databases and argument for argument's sake.

It also might be too much to hope for too soon, but such far-reaching standards as the CCSS might eventually consider writing that is neither for school nor for the workplace. The current standards may say that students should do multiple types of writing, but the creators cannot but expect that with such little guidance on "multiple types" and such specific advice on formal, yet generic knowledge sharing with a hint of argumentation, that teachers will mostly take up an epistemic argument in their curriculum. This will be particularly true if an epistemic argument

is the focus of assessment. If students and teachers are going to actively participate as see-ers, sellers (Nowacek), remixers, and assemblers (Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey) who can engage in the work of boundary crossing and guarding (Reiff and Bawarshi) to achieve consequential uptake and transitions (Beach; Rounsaville), the language of the standards will need to reflect a more inclusive view of transfer, rather than relying so heavily on the cognitive aspects. When more complex views of genre are incorporated to flesh out the current attention to audience and purpose, students will finally have the opportunity to be truly prepared for college and career in public school classrooms.

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REVIEW ESSAY

WHAT IS WRITING TUTORING NOW?: PERSPECTIVES ACROSS CONTEXTS, SPACES, AND FIELDS

Katherine DeLuca

Rafoth, Ben. ***Multilingual Writers and Writing Centers*****. Boulder, Colorado: Utah State University Press, 2015. 151 pages. $24.95. ISBN 978-0-87421-963-0. Print; 978-0-87421-964-7. eBook.**

Corbett, Stephen J. ***Beyond Dichotomy: Synergizing Writing Center and Classroom Pedagogies*****. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press, 2015. 159 pages. $24. ISBN 978-1-60235-659-7. Print.; 978-1-60235-632-0. PDF.**

As the student populations, locations, and expectations for writing tutoring shift and change at our institutions, it remains necessary to question and reflect upon our practices and approaches as tutors, administrators, and even instructors. Ben Rafoth's *Multilingual Writers and Writing Centers* and Stephen J. Corbett's *Beyond Dichotomy: Synergizing Writing Center and Classroom Pedagogies* engage with what I think are key questions in writing center studies currently: What have we learned about tutoring writing—both one-to-one and in groups—within both writing center studies and related fields, and how can that knowledge guide, yet also challenge, what we have adapted as best practices for writing tutoring? In short, I see these authors asking, what makes good tutoring *now*? And as a reader, I come to these two

texts with an additional question: What should good writing tutoring *become*, especially in the wake of changing curricular and institutional contexts and student populations that these two scholars showcase? As a writing instructor, as well as a writing center administrator and former tutor, I recognize the particular significance of the questions that Corbett and Rafoth ask in their works, especially as changing contexts in writing tutoring continue to highlight the importance of being both adaptive in our practices and responsive to the needs of our students in our writing centers and beyond. As we enter our classrooms, writing centers, and other spaces that value and support writing and student writers, it is important to engage with these questions as we examine the changing contexts that shape our work with writers, perhaps especially with multilingual and international students (Rafoth's focus) as well as across learning spaces (as Corbett discusses).

Although looking at different contexts—Rafoth's focus is on the changing shape of the writing center tutorial as increased numbers of international, multilingual students enroll in universities while Corbett attends more broadly to issues of course-based tutoring (CBT) and its role in developmental writing classrooms—these texts share questions about how our contemporary concerns are reshaping the idea of writing tutoring and are creating need for adapting the practices and pedagogies that have become commonplace to writing tutorials. Rafoth's work speaks to an increasingly urgent shift in university writing centers: The rapid growth of multilingual and international student writers. Rafoth, a writing center director and graduate professor in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and composition studies, writes that he has composed his book for "writing center directors and tutors who take seriously the preparations needed to work with international multilingual students in the United States, or in any context where English is the dominant language" (1). With this audience in mind, Rafoth's text focuses on providing new insights to directors and tutors for working with multilingual writers who visit writing

centers for assistance. Rafoth suggests, and I agree, that scholarship from the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and TESOL provide valuable concepts, philosophies, and pedagogies that can help writing center tutors and directors go further with their multilingual clients. As Rafoth demonstrates, a wealth of information and research has been conducted in these adjacent fields, and for writing center directors and tutors, becoming familiar with these fields of study is growing continually imperative. Although writing center lore (à la North) might advocate simply flipping the script in multilingual sessions—starting with lower order concerns before moving on to higher order concerns—Rafoth's text provides compelling evidence that there is much more to effectively serving international, multilingual writers than that simple move. Rather, the fields of SLA and TESOL offer richly informed perspectives and concepts that can guide writing centers and their staff as they face changes in student populations.

For some writing centers, the question of how better to prepare for the growing number of conferences with multilingual writers remains a future consideration, but for many tutors and directors, how best to work with and support multilingual writers is an ever-present concern. As Rafoth notes, "In the United States today, most enrollment increases in higher education come not from domestic but from international students" (21). As a result, "multilingualism has begun to define what it means to teach and learn in a writing center," and has changed how tutoring, and teaching, writing happens in writing centers and beyond (23). The rapid increase of international, multilingual student enrollments at universities across the nation and the shifting cultures and expectations of writing centers have created exigencies for engaging with how best to address this change—How can tutors be prepared to work with multilingual students? How can tutor practices be changed and adapted for these writers? As a tutor and writing center administrator, I engaged with these very questions alongside colleagues, and we found, as Rafoth argues, that writing center directors can learn by looking outside of writing center

studies to fields like second language acquisition studies (SLA) and "borrow from SLA to help tutors respond to the needs of multilingual writers" (6). Bringing together the fields of SLA and writing center studies, Rafoth addresses the shift in writing center clients and tutorials by pushing writing center directors to consider "How might tutoring change as our student populations change?" (6). More than simply making do, writing center directors can adapt the pedagogical practices and policies in their centers by looking outwards to gain new perspectives and approaches that respond to the shifting contexts of their centers, and Rafoth offers readers a path towards such responsiveness.

As Rafoth engages with the question of how writing tutoring can address the changes of student populations, merging conversations from SLA studies and writing center studies, Corbett poses a similar question about how course-based writing tutoring approaches can adapt to shifting contexts—from one-to-one tutorials, peer writing groups, and writing tutoring occurring both within and outside of the classroom. In light of the changes in student enrollments that Rafoth highlights, Corbett's questions become particularly relevant as we explore how best to support various writers' needs across spaces and contexts. Corbett, who has held positions as both an assistant writing center director and writing program administrator, unites what he calls the "parent genres" of CBT, writing center tutoring, WAC writing fellows, peer writing groups, and supplemental instruction, in conversation to develop his perspectives and arguments (13). Though all of these areas are often distinct in their missions, purpose, and institutional locations, there is value in bringing these sites of writing tutoring together to push "boundaries between…knowledge communities" and inform CBT as a pedagogical approach that moves across contexts (14). As a writing instructor who values the central tenets and philosophies of writing center studies and, like Corbett, tries to incorporate them into my teaching, I find it especially helpful that his text offers insights into how we can make our classrooms, writing centers, and other writing tutoring spaces unified in purpose while

also diversifying our approaches to writing pedagogy. Corbett writes,

> Rather than practice in the center, or in the classroom, rather than seeing teacher here and tutor there and student over there, CBT asks all participants in the dynamic drama of teaching and learning to realize as fully as possible the myriad possible means of connecting. (12)

Corbett's CBT pedagogical practices, especially through merging "parent genres" and scholarly perspectives, highlight one way instructors, tutors, and administrators can become more adaptive in the face of changing educational landscapes and student populations. Although the focus of Corbett's text differs from Rafoth's, I see the experimentation inherent in Corbett's text, especially as he merges CBT parent genres and employs such approaches across spaces, as embodying an effort to be adaptive and responsive to students' needs by diversifying pedagogical approaches across teaching and tutoring spaces.

And although both Rafoth and Corbett are focused on university-level writing tutoring, their research has relevance to all writing instructors interested in the use of tutoring as part of their pedagogies. Rafoth's insights into merging writing center studies practices with pedagogies from SLA studies can be useful, perhaps especially for educators working in the classroom with students with English proficiencies at various levels, and similarly, Corbett's CBT approaches demonstrate how writing tutoring can find a home in the classroom, pulling from the "parent genres" that shape CBT instruction and can reframe writing instruction within and outside of the classroom.

As Rafoth and Corbett bring together various fields to address issues within writing tutoring, they situate their projects in relation to the conversations that directly influence their inquiries from writing center studies and related fields. Rafoth proclaims his work "offers an informed invitation for writing center directors and their tutors…to make great use of the theory and

research from the field of SLA" (3). From work within writing center studies on multilingual writers (such as Nakamaru's research on lexical issues in writing center tutorials with international, multilingual students and Thonus' examination of tutorials with first- and second-language writers, which bridges the gaps between writing center studies and SLA) as well as SLA concepts and theories (from key concepts of negotiated interaction to linguistic terms like "input, interlanguage, transfer, and fossilization" (73)), Rafoth draws links between these fields to provide writing center directors and tutors with concepts, perspectives, and talking points to help them navigate the new terrain of working with multilingual writers. Overall, Rafoth provides a fairly comprehensive representation of discussions from SLA on working with multilingual writers; helpfully, Rafoth weaves together foundational research from the field with more contemporary texts, providing readers with a full sense of the field as it stands and its potential significance for writing center studies. Drawing upon SLA research and pedagogy, Rafoth makes practical suggestions, aimed at writing center directors and more advanced tutors, for working with multilingual writers in tutoring sessions. These suggestions derive not only from Rafoth's survey of SLA pedagogies and theories but also from his own experiences as a writing center director and, importantly, from interviews with and observations of multilingual tutors and clients in various writing center contexts. With these data, Rafoth provides insights into the real experiences of multilingual writers in the writing center, both as clients and tutors. Importantly, Rafoth uses their experiences and insights as evidence to demonstrate the need to make writing centers as diverse as possible, not only bringing new resources, like adjacent fields of study, but also new people, like multilingual and multicultural tutors who can enrich centers with their ideas and perspectives on language learning and translingual experiences, academic and beyond. These practical suggestions will be useful to advanced tutors who have already mastered the basics of writing tutoring and must learn to adapt their practices to new clients, and they will be helpful to writing center directors

who are struggling to respond to the needs of multilingual and international student writers. From Rafoth's suggestions, I can see the foundations for extensive training programs being developed so that soon not only advanced tutors can learn from such insights about working with these student populations but also new tutors will benefit.

Corbett, in turn, brings together research and approaches on writing center studies, WAC writing fellows, supplemental instruction, and peer writing groups. Central to his research and experimentation with CBT instruction—within and outside of the classroom—is "hybridizing these parent genres that make up CBT," bringing together insights from various fields to explore how writing tutoring can play a central role, in various forms, in the developmental writing classroom (21). Drawing upon research and pedagogies in these parent genre fields, Corbett examines CBT through a centralizing question: How does the directive/nondirective tutoring dichotomy, a foundational approach in writing center pedagogy, influence how we think about writing tutoring and how we do writing tutoring across contexts? In short, Corbett writes, "CBT contexts demand a close reconsideration of our typically nondirective, hands-off approach to tutoring" (48). Corbett's text primarily explores this model of CBT in action, using case studies of one-to-one and peer group tutoring in embedded, classroom tutor contexts. Using a mixed methods approach, Corbett analyzes transcripts from one-to-one tutoring sessions and his own notes from tutor-facilitated peer review writing groups and classroom interactions from two institutional contexts, a "large west-coast R1 (University of Washington, Seattle) and a medium, east-coast master's (Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven)" (9). From his analyses of the case studies, Corbett derives practical suggestions for making CBT work in various spaces, while highlighting the importance of context-dependent adaptability. This flexibility is a hallmark of Corbett's findings, and I think it represents an important take on writing tutoring generally that speaks to current circumstances in significant ways—what works now in

writing tutoring is being adaptive and responsive to the contexts that shape our classrooms, centers, and other pedagogical spaces. Corbett's text further demonstrates that what remains important to writing tutoring and CBT is an ability to respond to change, to adjust practices and pedagogies to meet the needs of students, and to find new ways of building upon what we already do well to find what we can do next.

Accordingly, I think a significant takeaway in both projects is that writing tutoring has to happen on a spectrum, no matter the context and no matter the location. These authors continue to advocate for student-centered approaches, as has long been a pedagogical foundation in writing center studies and related fields. What's different now, as these authors show us in their projects, is what we need to do to achieve the student-centered standard. Whereas writing center practices may have once argued for hands-off, nondirective tutoring only, Rafoth's work shows us how such approaches privilege a native-speaker stereotype just as Corbett's demonstrates that such approaches might fall flat depending on contexts and students' needs.

Synergy, a key concept in Corbett's text, threads through both of these projects, further demonstrating the importance of being adaptive and responsive to the local contexts that shape writing tutoring at different institutions and within various pedagogical spaces. The ideas of synergy and *negotiation*—from negotiating various fields of study, student and tutor perspectives and insights, and multiple approaches to writing tutoring—are answers to a question I think guides these studies: what should writing tutoring be *now*? And I find the concepts of negotiation, synergy, adaptivity, and responsiveness particularly helpful as I try to understand not only what writing tutoring should be now, such as in light of changing student populations as Rafoth showcases, but also how writing tutoring and its attendant concepts and ideas can be usefully applied in a variety of contexts, including the classroom as Corbett demonstrates. As Corbett and Rafoth show us, writing tutoring remains a complex activity, requiring more than reading aloud and asking Rogerian-style questions of a client

and waiting silently for an answer. Both Rafoth and Corbett call for much more interactive give-and-take in writing tutoring, wherever such work happens. This includes being open to the type of work a traditional, nondirective session might avoid—from discussing lexical issues in-depth to taking extensive notes by hand to share with the client.

Negotiated interaction plays an important role in Rafoth's project, and I think the concept is noteworthy especially for its usefulness across writing tutoring and pedagogy. Although Rafoth focuses on working with multilingual writers, I see negotiated interaction as a useful concept for working with writers in various contexts, within and beyond the writing center. Rafoth argues for negotiated interaction to take primacy as tutors work with multilingual writers; he notes that research from SLA shows that negotiated interaction works especially well as "the back and forth of conversation is not merely an opportunity to practice using the language but is itself a source of learning" (48). Conversation, a foundation practice of writing tutoring (see Bruffee, for instance), takes on a new valence as a result: negotiated interaction is especially beneficial because, as Rafoth writes, "it enables the simultaneous focus on form and meaning" (48). Conversation that allows for negotiation and back and forth exchanges between tutors and writers can be extremely productive, as long as tutors are aware of what makes "effective conversational interactions" and the importance of their roles as "authentic listeners" (48, 52). Alongside fostering these interactive engagements, Rafoth also emphasizes the importance of helping tutors to learn nuanced approaches to discussions of academic writing in tutoring sessions, from interpreting assignments and feedback from instructors to helping advanced multilingual writers learn to avoid stylistic traps—passive voice and heavy nominalization, for instance—that may complicate the reading experience of accented writing as well as finding ways to negotiate issues of error correction in consultations, honoring writers' concerns over errors while also developing effective strategies for addressing these issues in tutoring sessions. Again, although Rafoth applies these ideas to

working with multilingual writers, I believe they have much potential for helping writers and writing tutors and instructors across pedagogical contexts. Throughout the text, Rafoth makes practical suggestions for directors and advanced tutors. Importantly, Rafoth avoids prescription, acknowledging that resources one institution may have will not necessarily be replicated at another. But he also notes that being adaptive and open to change in our approaches and pedagogies can mean looking beyond what we know and practice everyday to new areas and fields: "By looking outside the center at scholarship and research, as well as looking inside their own writing centers with a critical eye, directors and tutors can outline the issue facing their writing centers and find ways to deal with them" (135). This ability to look beyond the confines of our own writing centers—or classrooms—is an important skill to foster, especially as we pursue best practices for helping and responding to the needs of the students and writers with whom we work.

Corbett's focus on CBT demonstrates the flexibility and fluidity of writing tutoring across contexts and for multiple purposes, inside and beyond the writing center. Corbett's emphasis on synergy, like Rafoth's interest in negotiation, suggests again the importance of looking beyond our everyday practices and pedagogies to adapt to the needs of the tutors and students with whom we work, in and out of the classroom. From his case studies and research at two universities, Corbett provides practical suggestions for making CBT work in a variety of contexts. Again, emphasizing adaptivity and highlighting that writing tutoring can occur on a spectrum, Corbett's suggestions are given as starting points that can be adjusted as needed for the context in which they are being applied. Corbett argues that instructors and tutors first need to be "made aware of the different models of CBT…. Then they should be allowed to choose …which model they feel might works best for them" (125). This advice seems particularly apt, especially in light of the changing face of writing tutoring described in both Rafoth and Corbett's projects. As the forms and locations of writing tutoring change

and evolve, instructors, tutors, and program directors must be made aware of the many different options and configurations for creating opportunties for writing tutoring. Research like Rafoth's and Corbett's illustrate some of the possibilities for what writing tutoring can be now, and what it might become, and Corbett's emphasis on locating options and developing approaches that suit different contexts and needs again demonstrates the necessity of adaptivity and flexibility. Corbett's pragmatic suggestions to readers include mixing directive and nondirective approaches in sessions, aligning with Rafoth's negotiated interaction approaches, to create space for "negotiating when to be more directive and when to be more facilitative" (Corbett 126). Corbett argues for synergistic approaches to writing tutoring and writing pedagogy that highlight the continuum of writing tutoring across contexts and spaces; I believe the multiplicity of approaches that he advocates can encourage our fields to "stay open and curious…. And when the chance arises…to embrace the multi-perspectives that multi-method research can deliver" (129). I see Corbett's call potentially providing new approaches and pedagogies to address our field's concerns and challenges.

As writing tutors, writing center directors, and other interested parties face changing curricular landscapes and student populations, Corbett and Rafoth's advocacy of adaptive practices is significant. We can, and should, expand writing tutoring to truly engage with the students and contexts that we encounter in our roles as instructors, directors, and tutors, and Rafoth's and Corbett's projects make negotiation and adaptivity an activity that merges multiple parties' concerns, from programs, teachers, and tutors to students. As Rafoth asks, "The question is, what are writing center directors doing to listen to students, tutors, and faculty about what students need and want to take on?" (58). With Rafoth and Corbett's perspectives in mind, I again return to the question I see guiding these texts, and one which I engage with as an instructor invested in writing pedagogy and writing tutoring: what is writing tutoring now? What should writing tutoring become? I take cues from these scholars, beginning to imagine

approaches that emphasize flexibility, adaptability, and negotiation first, as I listen to students to understand their needs and think creatively about the research and insights I can incorporate from writing center studies and beyond.

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Barnard, Ian. *Upsetting Composition Commonplaces*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2014. 181 pages. $26.95. ISBN 978-0-87421-946-3. Print.

Reviewed by Annie S. Mendenhall

In light of contemporary enthusiasm for empirical research on writing, Ian Barnard's *Upsetting Composition Commonplaces* might seem anachronistic in its promise to explore the implications of poststructuralist theory for composition studies. Wouldn't such a text fit more neatly in the same era as Lester Faigley's *Fragments of Rationality* (Barnard's acknowledged influence for the book), and not two decades later? What might teachers of writing *do* with the notoriously tricky poststructuralist theories of subjectivity and epistemology? Barnard has already anticipated such questions, and he makes a compelling case that attending to poststructuralist theory in composition might actually benefit our teaching and our students. His book will appeal to teachers and scholars as a resource for troubling and rethinking the terminology and assumptions underpinning how we teach writing and engage students.

Barnard begins by outlining the contributions of poststructuralist theory to composition's articulation of subjectivity, authorship, and the deconstruction of the high/low binary separating literature and student writing. Composition, he argues, has forgotten (or rather never integrated) these "axioms" of poststructuralism, and as a result the field continues to portray writing according to classical and romantic paradigms of authorship, audience, and identity. The primary task of Barnard's book, then, is to explore how applying these axioms might transform composition pedagogy, particularly in how we frame some of the most commonly used terms in our research and teaching. Each of the six main chapters focuses on a key concept or "commonplace" in composition: clarity, intent, voice, ethnography, audience, and objectivity. The chapters are organized similarly but vary in research methods. Each chapter

explores iterations of the commonplace in contemporary composition, poststructuralist challenges to that commonplace, and the pedagogical possibilities of adopting a new understanding of that commonplace. To support his analysis and explain his pedagogical suggestions, Barnard employs multiple forms of evidence, including analysis of textbooks and scholarship, a survey of writing faculty at his institution, his students' writing, and assignments from his classes.

As a reader I connected most strongly to the chapters exploring the commonplaces ingrained in my own teaching: clarity, intent, and audience. I use these terms frequently as a teacher, but Barnard's analysis reminded me how they are often employed in ways that devalue students' writing and ignore the reception of writing in the world. He makes a strong argument that simplistic definitions of these concepts actually limit and fix students' understandings of writing and meaning instead of making writing easier or more accessible for students.

In the chapter on clarity, Barnard evaluates the advice that writers should write clearly, which almost always is framed in terms of style. To demonstrate the complexity of clarity, Barnard analyzes criticisms of the writing of critical theorists, including the "awards" for bad writing and critiques of theory by Richard Lanham, David Orr, and even Gerald Graff. After showing that such critiques often carry political and cultural agendas, he then turns his analysis to teaching, arguing that composition has reinforced this evaluation of writing style using the clear/unclear binary. In doing so, teachers and scholars often ignore the pleasure of reading complex texts, and perhaps unknowingly encourage students to simplify ideas as well as language. In one of the most compelling passages in the book, Barnard suggests that teachers might value students' supposedly "unclear" writing. He writes,

> Surely inexpert complexity is preferable to expert simplicity if it is indicative of intellectual wrestling and scholarly ambition rather than the complacency of comfort. Sometimes writing that 'doesn't work' is still interesting

> and productive. Why pretend that we aren't sometimes entranced by writing that is mysterious, enigmatic, or illogical—by writing over which the writer/reader does not always have complete control? (36)

This passage epitomizes Barnard's approach in other chapters, all of which ask what might happen for teachers and students if we stopped ignoring the instability of meaning in texts and the constructive role of readers.

The chapters on intent and audience further articulate these ideas, and Barnard argues persuasively that commonplaces in our pedagogy can inhibit students as they attempt to write. After showing how faculty survey responses and composition textbooks privilege the writer's intentions for a text and advise students to address an imaginary, always skeptical audience, each chapter then offers suggestions for engaging students in a discussion of these terms in the classroom. In his chapter on intent, Barnard suggests that teachers might benefit from avoiding framing revision as a realization of the writer's original intentions for a text; instead, he proposes teaching revision as a process of revising intentions as well as writing, while also recognizing that the writer's intent is always up for revision by readers. Similarly, in the chapter on audience Barnard contrasts the common advice that writers should imagine themselves appealing to an audience of rational skeptics. Whether such audiences exist is obviously debatable; however, Barnard further suggests we direct students to the ways some writers flout such advice, presenting themselves as hostile and unconcerned with persuading the audience. Suggesting we might engage students in analyzing the influence and reception of texts that refuse to appeal to an audience, Barnard offers several short assignment prompts in this chapter that ask students to play with this notion. For example, students might compose a research paper to an audience that already agrees with their assumptions about an issue, or students might write an analysis of a text that employs anger or hostile emotional appeals.

Barnard's chapter on voice traces the problematic connection between voice and notions of authenticity, arguing that, "demands for 'authenticity' can also be used to police identity" (69). By acknowledging and analyzing the identity politics inherent in notions of voice and authenticity, students might get a better sense of the strategies involved in choosing to construct a particular voice rather than falling back on limited notions of finding an authentic voice. At the end of this chapter, Barnard describes an activity he gives to students asking them to reflect on a recent debate they entered on social media, to characterize the features that constitute their voice, and to contrast that voice with other voices they adopt in other texts. As this activity shows, Barnard never advocates a total rejection of the commonplaces he discusses; rather, he proposes that the term can become a critical lens through which students and writers might look at writing as less stable and more open to play than is often presented to them.

Barnard's discussions of ethnography and objectivity may be the most controversial of his six commonplaces. The chapter on ethnography brings awareness to the prevalent critiques of ethnography in anthropology, and Barnard argues that given such critiques composition should advocate critical ethnographic methods in teaching and research. His students' multimodal ethnographic projects sounded fascinating, but his final injunction implores instructors to teach ethnography as "its own critique" (107). That advice may leave teachers wondering why they should bother teaching ethnography in the first place if it serves no other purpose than to critique its own methodology. Although I do not conduct ethnographic research, I do know that what counts as "ethnography," especially in disciplines outside of anthropology, varies widely, and that the term itself has been debated and redefined. Barnard does not define ethnography in the chapter, and so I imagine that composition scholars and teachers who do employ ethnographic methods may find some points of contention with this chapter. However, the description of Barnard's pedagogy and his students' projects is worth reading for teachers using ethnography assignments in their writing classrooms who

seek to help students learn to engage critical questions about the role of the ethnographer and the politics of observing and writing about others.

The chapter on objectivity raises important concerns about the methods composition is often forced to use to assess writing classes and programs. Quantitative assessment, testing, and timed essay writing are pervasive in higher education, but most composition scholars and teachers will likely already agree with Barnard's critique, making this chapter unique in that it describes a commonplace outside of composition. Barnard's discussion of objectivity, however, also touches upon advice given to students to take a neutral or objective stance when evaluating and analyzing texts they read. He also points to the distinction drawn between summary and analysis or argument in writing, noting that textbooks often frame summary as an accurate (and by implication, objective) representation of the author's beliefs. I frequently ask students to "withhold judgment" or set aside their personal opinions when they analyze texts, both of which imply that students should seek objectivity as an ideal goal. After pointing out the impossibility of this stance for any reader, Barnard advocates integrating personal narrative and story into composition assignments through hybrid genres that challenge the dominance of supposedly objective research-based argumentative assignments that exclude the personal.

Although Barnard's six chapters cover a range of contemporary pedagogical issues in composition, his introduction also describes other commonplaces he might have explored using his analytical framework. Three short sections discuss how upsetting commonplaces might help us rethink plagiarism, the continued preference for print alphabetic texts, and the dominance of standard US English in composition classrooms. I actually wish he had explored these three commonplaces in full-length chapters, because his short discussion of each made me curious about his own pedagogical approach to these important and current discussions in composition. I hope that Barnard returns to these topics in future work.

The focus of *Upsetting Composition Commonplaces* remains on major ideas in composition theory and pedagogy. As a result, Barnard pays little attention to current institutional and political constraints on the classroom space. I found the absence of any sustained institutional critique odd given the field's widespread concern with labor issues and Barnard's reliance on the scholarship of Susan Miller, Bruce Horner, and Sharon Crowley, all of whom attend to how institutional spaces constrain the work of composition. The question remains, then, about how we might transform commonplaces in the teaching of writing when state and federal governments place many demands on public education to prove its value in quantitative terms and academic labor continues to be devalued and undercompensated. Composition has always had difficulty applying theory because so few of those who teach writing have had previous or continuous exposure to composition scholarship. No doubt Barnard is aware of these issues, but he probably also knows that many of his final conclusions, including the argument that grades should perhaps be dispensed with, will obviously not be realized in the current higher education "market." As he states in his conclusion, contradictions in his argument and pedagogy necessarily exist.

As a teacher I found Barnard's analysis timely and valuable. Before I read Barnard's book, I probably would have said I do a good job teaching students to complicate ideas about clarity, audience, and purpose. But in reading his analysis, I realized that I do not always have a clear idea about the purpose or value of complicating those ideas. *Upsetting Composition Commonplaces* offers a way to convey abstract notions about authorship and subjectivity so that students can learn to play with language and the roles available to them as readers and writers. Barnard does not complicate composition simply to follow some theoretical paradigm. Rather, he does so because he wants students to see how writers, readers, and texts are mediated and interpreted in the world. This perspective is valuable particularly for new teachers and graduate instructors in training, but the analytical framework may also help more experienced teachers and scholars

see ways to connect theory and practice in their work. Barnard is right, I think, that purpose, author, and audience play a large role in contemporary pedagogy, and those terms are often superficial constructs for students, especially when they view writing primarily as a classroom activity. While it may be impossible or even undesirable to abandon the structure of the rhetorical triangle completely, we can all find some value in teaching students, as Barnard puts it, "that writing (noun and verb) contains and creates many different meanings" and offers opportunities for exploring "the promotion of play and the possibilities of language in all its indeterminacy" (154).

Powell, Pegeen Reichert. *Retention and Resistance: Writing Instruction and Students Who Leave*. Logan: Utah State University Press. 2013. 136 pages. $24.95. ISBN 978-0-87421-930-2. Print.

Reviewed by Cristine Busser

In *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition* (1987), Vincent Tinto called on university administrators to examine other reasons a student might drop out beyond his or her personal limitations. Tinto's call sparked a trend in higher education to explore ways universities can better integrate students into the college environment. In response, researchers have been studying students' interactions with peers and faculty (Astin), promoting Freshman Learning Communities (Zhao & Kuh) and Summer Bridge Programs (Ackerman), and encouraging greater collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs departments (Schroeder). Motivated by funding cuts and advised by political leaders, institutions across the nation are testing this research by employing new initiatives that might increase students' chances of staying enrolled.

With it known that most students who drop out of college leave their first year (Tinto), Pegeen Reichert Powell, Director of the Rhetoric & Composition program at Columbia College of Chicago, responds to higher education's most recent hike in encouraging student retention by examining how the retention conversation impacts the university's only required course, first-year composition. Powell's *Retention and Resistance: Writing Instruction and Students Who Leave* is the first scholarly work to provide composition scholars with an in-depth critique of the rhetoric surrounding retention. In particular, Powell takes up the notion that most retention research and on-campus initiatives communicate explicitly and implicitly that students who drop out or take time off of school are unsuccessful. Thus, when first-year composition instructors support their institution's valued chronology for graduation by participating in retention initiatives

and relaying a rhetoric of retention, they risk marginalizing students who, for reasons Powell argues are too complex than higher education researchers suggest, might not return the following semester. Ultimately, Powell tasks writing program administrators and faculty to design a curriculum that meets the needs of all students, even those who leave.

Separated into an introduction and four chapters, *Retention and Resistance* begins by establishing the relevance of higher education's retention research to first-year composition. Powell then analyzes the allure of the retention conversation for university administrators and faculty in chapter two, "The Seduction and Betrayal of the Discourse of Retention." With her argument sufficiently framed, chapter three, "The Possibility of Failure," challenges the culture of increasing student retention by critiquing higher education's pattern of equating student success with persistence. It is within this chapter that Powell most effectively calls on composition scholars to examine how their forward-looking pedagogies might be hindering students' access to education, while challenging the argument that the role of first-year composition is only to prepare students for future classes. Finishing with chapter four, "Beyond Retention," Powell calls on her readers to adopt "a kairotic pedagogy," a widely applicable approach to teaching that frames writing as a tool to achieve writing success in the present rather than the future. Upon completion of *Retention and Resistance*, composition instructors will feel inspired to continue the conversation this book begins, as Powell's text makes clear the need for first-year composition instructors to pay attention to institutional retention initiatives.

Setting the tone for her book, Powell's introduction presses that composition instructors, teaching the university's only universal requirement, are students' first impression of college and a target for higher administration to implement institutional initiatives (7). From there, Powell reviews notable retention scholarship. Initially, she acknowledges the benefits of retention for students, institutions, and society by appealing to leaders in higher education scholarship (Tinto; Siedman). Powell then

complicates their research. Contrary to the assumptions that inform post-secondary retention efforts, many studies identify other factors beyond the reach of the university that impact student persistence. Powell cites studies that support high school as the "most powerful predictor of [a student's] persistence into the sophomore year" (Ishler and Upcraft qtd. in Powell 37). She also offers family-related factors as a determiner in whether a student will graduate. By the end of the first chapter, Powell covers retention research that examines the roles "institutional support," "writing instruction," "bad luck," and "stress, time, and money" play in students' decisions to leave an institution. She argues that these factors cannot be measured, as one could fault an advisor's bad day or a family member's illness for a student's departure. In doing so, Powell directly confronts the trend in higher education to use big-data research for the purposes of encouraging students to stay. Thus, readers, especially those asked to participate in initiatives supported by big data, are provided with multiple reasons to question those initiatives' effectiveness, particularly within the composition classroom.

In her first chapter, Powell presents two lines of thinking for composition scholars to consider: First, she shows how universities have referenced retention studies to justify institutional actions. Second, she compares the research with experiences from one of her students, Helen. The complexity of Helen's narrative, shown alongside Powell's list of immeasurable reasons for student departure, is juxtaposed with higher education's simplistic solutions to decreasing dropout rates. Powell is very up front that Helen's narrative, and those from other students throughout the book, is not meant to be viewed as evidence in support of her argument. Instead, she intends for the narratives to symbolize the unique circumstances of every student who transfers, stops out, or drops out of a university. After making the point that—despite all that we know about the causes of attrition—retention rates have remained unchanged, Powell ends the chapter raising the question, "What should our course goals be…?" (48). Speaking directly to composition instructors

here, she begins her deliberate pattern of placing responsibility on readers to explore the ways that university retention efforts might undermine or contradict classroom pedagogies. Straddling the line between student advocacy and institutional criticism, Powell's decision to repeatedly call on her readers furthers her goal to inspire more research rather than make definitive claims about retention efforts or the purpose of first-year composition.

In her next chapter, Powell provides readers with possible reasons universities continue implementing retention efforts despite evidence of their efficacy. To do this, she employs Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand how attitudes toward retention have evolved in recent years. Before discussing her findings, however, she foregrounds her evidence with an overview of the changing climate of higher education. Powell examines how changes in US policy and economics encouraged a shift within higher education toward corporatization. The Student-Right-to-Know Act and *U.S. News and World Report* rankings place students in the customer role and force schools to compete for the best retention statistics. Furthermore, with tighter budgets, universities, Powell argues, rely on the "chronic discourse of retention…to highlight the need to maintain a flexible labor force and to demand unpaid work from all faculty" (60). While Powell acknowledges the sincerity behind retention efforts, she brings attention to the ulterior motives that have so many composition faculty members participating in what she believes is exclusionary pedagogy.

Powell's reference to the corporatization of higher education prepares readers for the results of her analysis of two self-studies conducted by her institution in 1999 and 2009. She discovers an unexpected difference between the two studies in how the term *retention* is integrated into administrative discourse (68). In the 1999 study, she found the term dynamic, written in various modified forms throughout an 11-page document. The study referenced national literature on retention as well as local faculty and administrative voices. Contrastingly, the 2009 study used the term always as an "isolated," "unmodified" concept (74).

Excluding local voices, the document also appeared "monovocal…consistent with the managerial discourse that dominates other genres circulating at the college" (75). From this observation, Powell notes that the college's portrayal of *retention* shifted from a complex concept open to multiple meanings to a more simplified problem unwelcomed to "contradictory or multiple voices" (71). Also problematic of the 2009 document, Powell highlights, is the lack of attention paid to attrition that the 1999 document included. Rather than acknowledging the role students play in their own paths to degree, the 2009 document leaves out references to attrition and persistence, instead focusing solely on the institution retaining students. Powell concludes from her study that the shifting in discourse "reflect[s] and construct[s] an approach to retention more in line with the corporatization of higher education"—an approach that presents an exclusionary attitude toward students like Cesar, a hard-working student of Powell's who loved college, but ultimately dropped out to help his family after his father lost his job.

Consistent with her introduction and first chapter, Powell ends her second chapter by calling on her audience of composition instructors to act by asking themselves: "What is the value of my course for Cesar if he never graduates? Is there still a way for us to talk about the value of our courses for all students, including those who leave?" (81-82). With these questions, Powell makes relevant to composition instructors the discourse being used among university administrators to encourage retention. Written to display the evolving treatment of retention in higher education, the results of her critical discourse analysis inspire readers to imagine how the patterns of corporatization that they might observe in their own institutions affect who and what is being valued within their composition classrooms.

As in the previous chapters, Powell approaches her third chapter by offering an overview of conversations relevant to the higher education community before drawing specific connections between those conversations and the values of composition studies. She begins by addressing the evolution of the term *failure*,

which she explains historically defined the bankruptcy of a business, but has since become a term used to point out a person's moral failure. Powell writes how embedded in political rhetoric is the "myth" of bootstraps, or the idea that success is gained individually and failure is only the fault of a person rather than a system (86). With its roots in nineteenth century business practices and its prevalence in American culture, *failure* is now being used by university administrators to describe the decisions made by students to drop out, transfer, or stop out of school, as those decisions represent a "failed [financial] investment" (90). This view toward student departure is widely supported by retention research (Tinto), which focuses on "integrat[ing]" students in all aspects of university life, so they are less "at risk *for failure*" (83; 93).

It is in response to the association of attrition to failure that Powell best relates retention to the concerns of composition scholars. She argues that when universities solely direct their efforts toward "integrat[ing] individual students" into university life, they are neglecting to question the ideologies such strategies favor, particularly the "intellectual and social values of the institution" (95). In other words, by investing in retention initiatives, such as freshman learning communities, mentoring programs, or academic coaching, which work to prevent students from dropping out, universities communicate to students that they do not appreciate those who, for circumstances that Powell's claims cannot be measured, are unable to persist (95). Making known this is a clear issue of access, Powell problematizes "*retention efforts*" by borrowing from rhetorician and disability studies scholar, Jay Dolmage. She aligns universities' retention efforts to Dolmage's interpretation of retrofitting, or building an "after-the-fact" solution to meet a particular need—like "the ramp built for students with physical disabilities" (98). Powell suggests that investing in potential solutions to address students' leaving school ignores the larger issue of universities valuing a single chronology for graduation instead of being a space for all students to gain positive educational experiences, regardless of their

timeline. Powell ends her third chapter by calling on faculty and administrators to implement a more inclusive curriculum. Chapter four then is Powell's proposal for how composition instructors can begin answering this call.

Powell's answer to the research she has presented throughout her book is for composition instructors to employ "a kairotic pedagogy" (118). The use of *a* in front of kairotic allows readers to imagine how Powell's ideas might influence their own. The *a* is intentionally inclusive, as Powell's goal has always been to get composition scholars talking about retention. Therefore, her definition of *a kairotic pedagogy* is mainly communicated through abstract descriptions: A kairotic pedagogy "shifts our attention away from chronology and toward opportunities available in a given moment, in a specific place" (117); "confronts the porous nature of higher education" (118); and encourages "*participation, not preparation*" (Fox qtd. in Powell 118). Framing her proposal in this way maintains Powell's position that *a kairotic pedagogy* is a way of thinking about curriculum design rather than a curriculum design in itself (118). In the end, Powell calls on composition instructors to consider what reading and writing demands students are facing during the course of their semester together, rather than those students may face following the course's completion. This way, all students, even those who may not persist, will have gained valuable resources applicable to all areas of their lives and be more likely to view the university as a place they'd like to return to if they have an opportunity to do so.

Although her description of *a kairotic pedagogy* is not supported by a concrete syllabus or assessment measures, items typically included in works for pedagogical change, Powell does offer specific scenarios in which the concept can be applied to existing pedagogies. For example, for instructors who rely on themes, work in a WID program, encourage writing through multiple modes, or prefer appealing to classical rhetoric, Powell draws on scholars (Carter; Horner; Hillard; Howard) to display how *a kairotic pedagogy* could be envisioned among an array of approaches to first-year composition. Thus, Powell continues with her goal of

reaching a wide-range of composition instructors to emphasize the importance of paying attention to an institution's rhetoric of retention.

As one might learn from *Retention and Resistance*, more work remains to be done, but by describing the implications that a rhetoric of retention can have on first-year composition, Powell makes clear that this work must be done. Nonetheless, Powell's book is intentionally fluid. Rather than taking a definitive stance on the purpose of first-year composition or elaborating on a single solution to what she views as exclusionary pedagogy, Powell's insistent questioning of her readers leaves room for other studies to be conducted. This pattern of openness continues throughout her final chapter, where she offers her proposal—a flexible vision of what a *kairotic* classroom might look like—by offering a variety of examples instead of a step-by-step guide. Regardless of where one's teaching philosophy lies on the composition spectrum, *Retention and Resistance* is a productive and inclusive resource for thinking about how the trends in higher education affect our classrooms.

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Reviewed by Joel Bloch

Jay Jordon's *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities*, which was published in 2012 by NCTE, is the first book in their series of approximately 50 books to deal extensively with multilingual writers or "users" as Jordon calls them. NCTE has long been a sponsor of the intermingling of first language composition teachers and teachers of these multilingual students. However, as the dearth of books on multilingual users indicates, this intermingling has often been hesitant. What has changed has been the accelerating increase in international students for a variety of social, political, and economic reasons. Their presence has raised a variety of questions and controversies, particularly for those composition teachers who are used to classes full of so-called native English speakers.

Although many of these issues and controversies may be of interest to teachers of multilingual students, the primary audience are those teachers and administrators who have primarily dealt with first language users but now find their classes filling up with multilingual learners. Jordon does not provide a complete outline of teaching suggestions, but rather attempts to create a framework for integrating these students into their composition classes by addressing some of the key issues that are currently being discussed in the field.

The first part of the book is a long critical review, some of it published elsewhere, that attempts to support the fundamental assumption Jordan is trying to make: Jordan builds a framework that emphasizes the knowledge and perspectives multilingual students bring to the classroom, thus rejecting the traditional deficit model often imposed on these students. Multilingual students should be viewed as contributors to an intercultural

composition course that incorporates rather than stigmatizes language diversity. He draws upon research from both composition and multilingual writing studies—some of which may be familiar to first language teachers and some of it unfamiliar—to create this framework for developing a research and pedagogical agenda for these intercultural classes. The second part of the book provides data that Jordan has collected from his own intercultural composition classes to explicate and support the framework he has created. In the final part, he offers some general suggestions on organizing classes with both first language and multilingual students.

The first issue that Jordan raises is one that has long been hashed out among teachers with no resolution: What to call these students. Naming students has two often contradictory goals: one is to illustrate differences among the students, and the second is to frame how the students see themselves. Traditional terms such as "ESL" or "second language," which still predominate in the field, do not always accurately describe the language background of the students and often seem to stigmatize students as being second class. Finding a term that accomplishes both of these goals has been difficult if not impossible. For example, Generation 1.5 was borrowed from sociology to describe immigrant students who spent at least some time in American high schools. Although sociologists used the term to differentiate among different groups of immigrants (e.g., Cuban vs. Haitian), the term was used to group all such immigrant groups together and has become less frequently used. Even the use of terms such as second language (L2) or English for second languages (ESL) have been challenged since they are not always accurate: English may be the third or fourth language for many of these students.

As the title of the book indicates, Jordan prefers the term "multilingual," although that term itself is problematic since many of us are multilingual regardless of our home language. For Jordon, the principle criterion for choosing a name is the attitude it projects of the students. Jordan's main concern, which he develops throughout the book, is that multilingual students should

be viewed as contributors, not as second-class students, in any type of academic context, whether it be a writing center or a traditional first-year composition course. Moreover, terms like "students" or "learners" raise similar concerns about seeing these students as having deficits; hence, his choice of "multilingual users" as the term that best achieves the goals for naming.

Jordan argues that these changes in terminology are as inevitable as changes in how language is viewed. Multilingual composition teaching has its roots in the development of theoretical linguistics, which Jordan briefly describes. Jordan provides a brief history of the development of second language composition teaching. The teaching of composition to multilingual users has never had the history that Jim Berlin and others have provided for first language teaching. However, as Jordan points out, multilingual composition teaching has its roots in 1950's linguistic theory. The highly controversial Robert Kaplan "doodles" article in which he attempted to identify culturally reified patterns of organization (a position he would later renounce) has often been seen as the official beginning of multilingual composition research. Jordan argues that the influence of sociolinguistics, such as Del Hymes, who situated language use in social interaction, provided a stronger foundation for developing an appropriate framework for teaching and research. Sociolinguistics had proposed a model of multiple language use referred to as code-switching by which successful language users could move between different forms of language when necessary. The concept of code-switching has evolved into what is today called "code-meshing" by which users mix various forms of language into a new form. Code-meshed languages are seen as more transformative and thus value more the uniqueness of the student's own linguistic resources. From Jordan's perspective, these code-meshed forms can be viewed as unique forms of language that users can contribute to this intercultural classroom.

This role of language is central to the view of multilingual users in the composition classroom that Jordan wants to portray. He

draws upon a number of documents familiar to rhet/comp teachers, including NCTE's "Students' Rights to Their Own Language" and the position paper by Horner, et al. (2011). The latter has advanced the term *translingualism*, which unlike the code-switching model, values the mixing of languages into a new form of English that incorporates all the language resources the user may have. Since the publication of Jordan's book, a group of second language teachers and researchers (Atkinson et al., 2015) published their own position paper in *College English* on the relationship between translingualism and composition teaching that critiques how translingualism and L2 composition have been viewed by editors and organizational leaders. The pedagogical question Jordan addresses is how to incorporate not just the transformed language but the concept of translingualism itself into the classroom in a way that allows for the contributions of multilingual students to be more valued in the classroom.

Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities focuses on two spaces where these goals for granting legitimacy to the users and recognizing their peripheral status in their communities meet: Writing centers and the composition classroom. Both are seen as spaces where the meaning of these new forms of discourse can be better negotiated among the teachers and students, a process that can address some of the pedagogical problems that this new emphasis on translingualism raises. As Jordan points out, writing centers have been traditionally seen as marginalized spaces, often found in out-of-the-way and poorly resourced buildings and staffed by the least experienced teachers. They were often viewed by the rest of the university as "fix-it" shops where students were sent to correct their errors before submitting their work. This situation has been changing in recent years as more attention has been paid to the value of tutors in working individually or in small groups with the most at-risk students. For Jordan these spaces are where multilingual language users can best utilize the resources they bring to the writing process in their negotiations with the writing center tutors. Because of the often one-on-one nature of interactions in the writing center, the multilingual user may have

more freedom to draw upon their own linguistic and cultural background in their interactions with their tutors.

The composition classroom is still what requires the major amount of remediation for including multilingual users. Jordan implicitly addresses a controversy that has raged for many years over whether to integrate these students into the mainstream first-year composition courses or to create "sheltered" first-year courses with only multilingual students. Jordan seems to argue that the framework he has created for viewing multilingual users can be best realized in an integrated classroom. He argues that to achieve the goals he has set out, the traditional monolingual composition course has to be reoriented in terms of the types of assignments, the readings of the course, and the interactions among the students. To achieve these goals, he argues that the classes need to mix both old and new pedagogical approaches.

To support his view of the composition classroom, he presents data collected from his own courses. Here Jordan addresses a long-time controversy over whether multilingual students should be isolated in "sheltered" classrooms in their first-year composition courses. One argument for sheltered classrooms is that multilingual students may feel inferior to traditional native English-speaking students and feel more confident in a sheltered class. The interactions among all the students in an intercultural classroom are the main focus of the data. Jordan argues that in an intercultural classroom, interactions give the multilingual students the opportunity to become contributing participants rather than being simply subservient to the traditional first-year composition students. The multilingual students bring their own cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic knowledge that is shown to be valuable to all the students. To take advantage of their backgrounds, Jordan argues that it is important to choose writing topics and readings that can draw upon the backgrounds of all the students. In this way, multilingual students have more chance to become contributors to the discussions and not just passive consumers.

Jordan argues for a more chaotic view of composition teaching than has been traditionally tolerated, a classroom full of

negotiations, misunderstandings, unresolvable arguments, and the creation of new types of learning communities. The so-called native speakers can be exposed to all the different forms of intercultural discourses that universities hope their students will encounter. In universities that often pay lip service to the value of their international students for promoting intercultural awareness, Jordan's approach (while limited to the composition classroom) is an important step in utilizing the resources multilingual students bring to the university.

Central to this argument is the importance Jordan gives to peer review in the composition classroom. Peer review has long been viewed somewhat more skeptically in ESL courses than in first-language composition courses, but it is one pedagogy that can be most affected by the creation of these multilingual classrooms. But as Jordan's data indicate, peer review interactions provide all students with new perspectives on all aspects of the writing process. In the traditional monolingual or sheltered classrooms, there is a greater degree of homogeneity among the students; intercultural classrooms, on the other hand, can draw upon a greater variety of intercultural resources that can aid all the students in their revision processes.

Jordan recognizes that to realize these new forms of intercultural classrooms, new approaches to teacher training need to be developed. Traditional models of training where teachers of first language and multilingual students are trained separately will not work. For these new approaches, teachers need to be introduced to more research on students in these diverse contexts. Even more important is Jordan's call for more cross training of teachers that can break down the walls often erected between the two fields.

Jordan has raised many of the issues that this training needs to address. Much of the discussion of these issues has taken place in the realm of applied linguistics and cultural anthropology. Will readers of these essays from other fields bring a similar framework to an evaluation of these students' writings? How do the students themselves feel towards these approaches? Their voices have often

been left out of the discussion. Applying the students' rights to their own language remains vague, being much easier to discuss than implement in the classroom. Jordan sometimes touches on some of the issues resulting from those aspects of the students' backgrounds that may contradict the values teachers bring to the classroom. In my experience, newly-arrived students from different writing traditions often rely on the often-maligned five paragraph essay regardless of the rhetorical context. In such a rhetorical context, how should the composition teacher respond to these rhetorical forms?

Although comprehensive in its coverage, *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities* does not deal with all of the issues frequently discussed in the context of intercultural pedagogy, my favorite being textual borrowing and plagiarism. While Jordan gives some examples of how websites can be utilized in such intercultural classrooms, he also misses an opportunity to examine some of the possibilities other technologies hold for furthering his goals. His list of writing assignments, for example, could be easily accomplished on a class blog that can be more readily read by all the members of the classroom. Multimodal assignments can better take advantage of the students' rhetorical and linguistic resources, while taking advantage of their sometimes superior technological backgrounds, to create new kinds of texts and new ways of sharing student resources. Even some of the most controversial uses of technologies, such as MOOCs, can provide students even more resources for the kinds of multi-level and multi-background peer review that Jordan envisions in the intercultural classroom. What Jordan's book does accomplish is to sensitize all of us to the possibilities that these new approaches afford.

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Call for Proposals

Graduate Research Network

The **Graduate Research Network (GRN)** invites proposals for its 2016 workshop, May 19, 2016, at the Computers and Writing Conference hosted by St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY. The C&W Graduate Research Network is an all-day pre-conference event, open to all registered conference participants at no charge. Roundtable discussions group those with similar interests and discussion leaders who facilitate discussion and offer suggestions for developing research projects and for finding suitable venues for publication. We encourage anyone interested or involved in graduate education and scholarship—students, professors, mentors, and interested others—to participate in this important event. The GRN welcomes those pursuing work at any stage, from those just beginning to consider ideas to those whose projects are ready to pursue publication. Participants are also invited to apply for travel funding through the CW/GRN Travel Grant Fund. Deadline for submissions is April 19, 2016. For more information or to submit a proposal, visit our Web site at http://www.gradresearchnetwork.org or email Janice Walker at jwalker@georgiasouthern.edu.

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