CHAPTER 5

ON CLASS, RACE, AND DYNAMICS OF PRIVILEGE: SUPPORTING GENERATION 1.5 WRITERS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand genera-tion 1.5 student perceptions of WAC and writing faculty, their interac-tions with white, native English speaking peers in the classroom, and to hear ideas from them about ways to create more inclusive writing practices and environments across the disciplines. The study found that despite being valued for their diversity of thought and experience, these multilingual students experienced discrimination both inside and out-side the classroom. It is argued in this essay that in order to create and maintain inclusive classrooms, instructors must also take into consid-eration attitudes pertaining to the socioeconomic, racial, and linguistic climate of their institution.

Diversity must be couched within a context of institutional engagement, be driven by transformational leadership, be valued by the faculty community, and be experienced by all students as a core component of their educational experience.

—James A. Anderson, *Driving Change through Diversity and Globalization: Transformative Leadership in the Academy*

Only thirty years ago, it would have been nearly impossible to locate scholarship on multilingual, multicultural students' literacy and learning experiences, yet the field has grown exponentially in the last decade and a half. This surge of academic inquiry acknowledges that we are living in times where technology and global migration patterns are changing the identities of

neighborhoods, universities and workplaces. In higher education, teachers are working to meet the needs of differing student populations in composition and writing-in-the-disciplines classrooms with varying pedagogical approaches and degrees of institutional support. For small colleges whose demographic makeup has been predominantly white, monolingual, and monocultural, these demographic changes present both opportunities and challenges.

Such is the case at my home institution, a small liberal arts college in the northeastern US, where the goals and objectives of an equity program evolved from serving French-speaking Canadian hockey players to identifying, admitting, and supporting talented bilingual students from the greater surrounding community who are facing educational and financial difficulties.

Recognizing the needs of a neighboring immigrant city struggling to provide services for its growing Latino immigrant population, my institution created a pathway for local generation 1.5 students to gain admission and scholarships to the school. The admission of resident, immigrant multilingual, multicultural newcomers resulted in increased need for support services across institutional contexts, as well as highlighted the need for faculty development around writing and teaching. In an effort to help us better understand the writing needs of generation 1.5 students across the curriculum and to better support the faculty who teach them, my research invokes the voices of five multilingual, multicultural students from the Dominican Republic. The perceptions discussed in this study represent the participants' initiation into living, learning, and writing as a minority subculture within a predominantly white, affluent, monolingual campus culture. This IRB-approved, action research study was designed to explore multilingual writing experiences across the disciplines for the purposes of assisting composition and WAC faculty in the context of my institution. Pointedly, the results are not designed to be prescriptive; rather, they are intended to help frame some of the issues that must be addressed in order to achieve well-adapted, inclusive writing environments.

GENERATION 1.5 AT THE INTERSECTION OF CLASS AND RACE

The term generation 1.5 has come to represent a diverse range of multilingual, immigrant learners who were born and educated outside the United States and who enter the US educational system while in the process of learning English. Because generation 1.5 students arrive with vastly different educational, political, social and economic histories, it becomes imperative that researchers and instructors broaden and deepen their understanding of their students'

academic realities (Roberge, 2009). Generation 1.5 learners in higher education may be traditionally-aged students between the ages of 18 and 22 or they may draw from non-traditionally aged demographics. Generation 1.5 students are highly differentiated in socioeconomic as well as documentation status (citizen, resident—documented or undocumented, and refugee). While it is difficult to secure accurate numbers for undocumented immigrant populations, the sending countries have typically been Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala (Louie, 2009). It is worth noting that contemporary immigration populations draw from all socio-economic levels from unskilled to highly skilled labor; however, there is a correlation between socioeconomic status and country of origin, specifically:

> Immigrants from "low SES [socioeconomic status]" tend to be from the sending nations of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Laos, and Cambodia. At the other end of the immigrant spectrum are "high SES groups" from many Asian, African, European, and South American nations. (Louie, 2009, p. 38)

According to a report by the Migration Policy Institute (2004), 82% of the immigrant Dominican population resides in the Northeast where this study was conducted; correspondingly, Dominican generation 1.5 students comprise a majority of enrollment in area colleges' equity programs. The resulting factors of low socioeconomic status such as underfunded schools, poverty, and crime, as well as family and employment responsibilities can affect student success and retention rates; as such, SES becomes an important consideration for WAC educators and researchers trying to reconceptualize writing pedagogies for immigrant learners in higher education

Inquiry into understanding cultural and linguistic minority students' experience with college and the subject of inclusion in higher education, in particular, continues to proliferate across disciplinary boundaries (Hale, 2004; Sheared, Johnson-Bailey, Colin, Peterson, Brookfield & Associates, 2010; ; Sheared & Sissel, 2001; Watson et al., 2002). Watsonet al. (2002) contend that the work of educating multilingual, multicultural minorities while expanding White student and faculty cultural awareness and competence remains a challenging one. However, in the fields of second language writing and WAC, research on class, race, relations of power, and other equity issues remains scant. In a study on the dynamic nature of identity formation among L2 writers in a secondary context, Ortmeier-Hooper (2010) reveals how class and peer dynamics influence the complex and difficult moves multilingual students make

in order to gain acceptance among peers and in group settings. Researching the social class identity of three privileged second language writers whom the author labels as "the new global elite," Vandrick (2010) examines how privilege appears to mediate the effects of the deficit model, an attitude "so commonly applied (consciously or unconsciously) to second language writers" (p. 258). (See Fernandes' argument [this volume] for the need to rethink the curricula of for-profit language schools who serve this population.) Kubota (2003) corroborates the observation that the categories of race, class, and gender are commonly overlooked in the field of second language writing, especially as they apply to issues concerning positionality. In her article, Kubota highlights the need for new, interdisciplinary approaches to race, class, and gender in second language writing that move beyond locating rhetorical and linguistic differences associated with second language writers and toward understanding the politics behind inequality in specific contexts. In this regard, Roberge (2009) recognizes that multilingual, immigrant students who arrive and live in the US with lower socioeconomic status and whose "histories, experiences, and individual needs don't match traditional institutional profiles" (p. 4) may face additional challenges in terms of adaptation, identity formation, and marginalization. This recognition resonates well with this study.

As diversification trends continue to evolve across campuses nationwide, researchers are beginning to openly discuss the politics behind the scholarly and institutional silence on race and diversity that affects multilingual and multicultural writers. Pointedly, Anson (2012) asserts that WAC scholars have remained notably silent on issues concerning racial and ethnic diversity, particularly as they apply to assessment practices. In a comprehensive literature review focused on race and ethnicity, Anson broadens his claim to state that WAC scholars either "skirt issues of race or ignore them entirely" (p. 18). But it is precisely there, in the assumptions, forces, and barriers that underlie the silence surrounding class, race, ethnicity, and linguistic inequality that the conversation must begin. It is my sense that Hall (2009) is speaking to the issue of inequality when he challenges WAC/WID faculty who often self-identify as institutional change agents to work toward developing "differentiated instruction methods so that *both* monolingual, English speakers and multilingual learners simultaneously have a rich and satisfying classroom experience *in the same writing classroom*" (emphasis in the original, p. 42). We must explore local diversification trends, Hall asserts, as we begin to "rethink everything that we do to meet the new realities that we face on our campuses and in our classrooms" (2009, p. 42).

Anson (2012) speaks plainly about the thorniness and unease of the work ahead, as the journey involves addressing issues that commonly induce

discomfort and illustrate our under preparedness, especially in predominantly white, monolingual writing classrooms and campus environments. This study describes the early stages of one faculty member's attempt to answer Hall's call to action. By beginning a dialogue with immigrant multilingual writers on a campus where their demographic status places them as a decided socioeconomic and racial minority, I hope to better understand student perceptions of WAC and writing faculty, their interactions with white, native English speaking peers in the classroom, and to hear ideas from them about ways to create more inclusive writing practices and environments across the disciplines.

My research examines participant responses to a central question: How do generation 1.5 students describe their writing experiences in the context of a predominantly white, monolingual college? During the interview process, which I'll describe shortly, the five Dominican participants were asked to describe their experiences as writers in the Introduction to College Writing (CW) course and writing-intensive (WI) courses, with attention being paid to working with faculty and working with their peers. Other open-ended questions included: With regard to improving your writing skills, what helped or hindered you in your CW and WI courses? What did you find the most rewarding? What did you find the most challenging? Given the lack of faculty development and diversity training at the research institution, I was particularly interested in hearing how these generation 1.5 students were faring.

METHODS

SETTING

The institution where this research occurred is situated on the grounds of two affluent, predominantly white, suburban communities in the Northeast; the institution also borders an urban city that has been the home of immigrants since the twentieth century and continues to be so today with 30.6% of the population being foreign-born and where 28.2% of the population are naturalized citizens.1 Further, the city is the "street" site for the majority of the community projects that the college sponsors. Demographic statistics highlight several marked differences among these neighboring cities. According to recent census data for the immigrant city, the Hispanic or Latino population is 59.7% of its overall population and 34.3% of all households living below the poverty line. Compare these statistics to the college's city census data where the population is 93.7% white and 2.1% of the overall population live below the poverty line. The college comprises mainly self-selected students who resonate

with the mission to "Enlighten minds, Engage Hearts, and Empower Lives." The demographics of the student population also reflect those who can manage the high cost of a small private college. Diversity data from 2010 show the largest percentage of full-time students identified as "white non-Hispanic" (81%); followed by "Race/ethnicity unknown" (12%); "Hispanic" (3%); "Asian/Pacific Islander" (1.7%); "black non-Hispanic" (1.3%), and "American Indian/Alaskan Natives" (.1%). (See Cox [this volume] on the importance of understanding local demographic contexts and student populations when planning WAC faculty development and outreach around second-language writing across the disciplines.)

PARTICIPANTS

Utilizing Roberge's (2009) of generation 1.5 students as those who "immigrate as young children and have life experiences that span two or more countries, cultures, and language" (p. 4), I contacted the Academic Counselor for International and Intercultural Students in order to generate as comprehensive list of candidates as possible for the study. In this project, a homogeneous sampling was chosen in order to describe a particular subgroup of learners and instructors in depth (Patton, 2002). In consultation with the academic counselor, 39 students were identified based on Roberge's definition and subsequently invited to participate in this study. Sixteen students responded with interest; however, only seven met the criteria I'd set for the study, which included enrollment in the equity program, arrival time to the US, and completion of both Introduction to College Writing and a Writing Intensive (WI) course in the disciplines, which all students must take as an institutional requirement. Introduction to College Writing (CW) is typically taken in a student's first or second semester of freshman year; and a writing course in the disciplines with a writing intensive (WI) designation, can be taken at any point prior to graduation.2 The seven students who met these qualifications were invited to participate in the study; five accepted the invitation.

The five participants in this study are traditionally aged, male and female, generation 1.5 students between the ages of 19 and 22 who emigrated from the Dominican Republic to the US between the seventh and eighth grades. In middle school, they were placed in an immersion program that included bilingual classrooms, as well as in ESL courses focused on English language development. It is relevant to note that the institution's equity program partners primarily with one neighboring high school; as such, the participants are drawn from the same secondary institution, which has a predominantly Hispanic, immigrant student population. Specifically, participants attended a public high

school where the student population was 88.2% Hispanic (largely Dominican and Puerto Rican), and resided in a city showing a median household income of $25,983. Their success in high school was recognized by their acceptance to an equity scholarship program at my institution where the city median household income is $116,723. As Hispanics, they would represent 3% of the college's student population. All participants were enrolled as full-time, matriculated students who were taking four, four-credit courses each semester. All five participants worked part-time jobs.

INSTRUMENTS

Using standardized, open-ended questions, I conducted two in-depth, taped and transcribed interviews with each of the participants.
- *Interview One: Focused Life History*. (Centered on the participant's background including immigration history, culture, prior education, family, and language acquisition. Students filled out and submitted their responses to a questionnaire to me ahead of the first interview. See Appendix A.)
- *Interview Two: The Details of Lived Experience*. (Follow-up centered on present experiences in first-year writing and writing across the disciplines.)

During the interviews I noted that the participants seemed to struggle to arrive at specific suggestions for improvements faculty could make in their teaching and classroom management. I suspected that either the participants needed more time to form a response and/or they were reluctant to share with me, a white primarily monolingual faculty member. As a result, I wrote individually to the students via email and revisited the question: "What could writing and writing intensive instructors do to improve your experience as a multilingual writer and student?" Four of the five students responded. I read through the transcriptions and written responses during the first stage of the analysis process to get a holistic sense of the participants' responses. As I moved closely through the data, I noted emerging themes in the margins that related to the central research question and reflected on these in my research journal. For a second analytic, I utilized a general accounting scheme for codes that were not content specific, but instead pointed to categories for which codes could be inductively developed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The remainder of the coding process during data analysis followed Creswell's (2008) six-step process where codes changed, decayed, were eliminated, and reduced. Following that format, two main themes emerged in their responses.

The first theme I discuss in this chapter focuses on participants' perceptions of how they are viewed by faculty at the research institution. The second theme presents participants' perceptions of working with white, native English

speakers (NES) in the writing classroom. Findings for these two themes include participants feeling valued for their diversity of thought and experience in the classroom by their writing and writing intensive instructors; the pedagogical practices that signaled inclusive attitudes from their instructors and which served to better support their writing and learning, and, conversely, discriminatory behaviors and practices from instructors and peers that served to distance them from their writing and campus learning experiences.

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY ATTITUDES

Based on a two-year study of generation 1.5 writing experiences, Goen-Salter, Porter, and vanDommelen (2009) concluded that it is critical for writing instructors to inquire about students' educational backgrounds and literacy and language experiences, as well to provide opportunities for students to comfortably describe them. While their study focused primarily on ESL and first year composition courses, this conclusion is just as relevant to WAC instructors as can be seen in the student responses to my question about how students felt faculty perceived their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. All five participants in my study expressed feeling as though they brought a different perspective to CW and WI courses across the disciplines that was recognized and appreciated by faculty. The students stated that, when choosing topics to research, offering peer feedback, and participating in classroom activities, they brought diverse interests and perspectives to the experience that were valued by the faculty. One participant said, "I think the teacher likes reading my papers because they are different from white students, because most of the time I write about my culture." Another offered, "I feel like my life experiences have been different than the typical [culturally and linguistically dominant] student. I feel like instructors saw the potential in me and my ideas, what I was bringing to the table." She continued with the following example:

> I have been doing research about immigration because that is what I know the most about from my personal experience and from my research on the topic, often times I am able to offer/add an insightful idea about the subject. Continuously, I lead towards topics that interest me and that I am in most interaction with daily. My classmates are not exposed to the things I am exposed to as a bilingual, minority student here; therefore, we do not write about the same things.

(See Hirsch [this volume] for a discussion of designing writing assignments that allow L2 students to draw on cultural knowledge and make connections to daily life, and see Phillips [this volume] for a description of a graduate student who found similar success by drawing on experience and knowledge from his home culture.) Another described her passion for writing, her love of reading, and how hard she is willing to work as real strengths that her teachers recognized. All five participants said that it was their grammar that caused them the most difficulty with writing, not their ideas.

I asked the participants if their CW and WI instructors inquired about their literacy history in class, during their individual conferences, or in a survey; all five responded no, but each of them assumed that their professors knew that they were not native English speakers owing to their accents and/or ethnicity. One participant stated:

> My instructor did not know my literacy history. She might have noticed because of my grammatical errors. I think that she might have noticed that I wasn't black because one of my papers was about the DR and stuff. My writing might be accented. I believe it is. My writing is different from other [student] writings that I have read. I don't know. I have an accent in speaking. I would have to say I write with an accent because I write like I talk.

Another participant said, "If it weren't for my accent, I think I'd be okay." Another smiled before alluding to her WI professor's knowing that she was not a member of the dominant student population: "I mean when I speak I don't sound like a white girl's [speech]. I don't sound like Paris Hilton, for example!" The same student added, "At first I was not comfortable doing presentations because I was self-conscious of my accent." Another participant discussed how an incident that occurred out of the classroom affected her sense of confidence in the classroom:

> I had a bad experience but that started out of class, you know. It was on Facebook and everywhere. They said that I couldn't speak English. It's the accent, you know, [it] makes it hard to be confident in class and to share your words. I was in shock at our first orientation. Everyone was just staring at you when you speak like they understood nothing. The white kids are more confident in class.

While no interview question discussed "writing with an accent" or specified the words "accent," "ethnicity," or "race," three of the five students perceived one or more of the latter as identifying markers of being a linguistic, cultural minority in the WI classroom.

When discussing their writing experiences, all five participants indicated that CW and WI faculty were willing to make accommodations for them, such as giving them opportunities for additional individualized meetings and modifying assignments in order to address their specific writing needs. (In this volume, Zawacki & Habib also share findings that indicate that faculty are often willing to make accommodations for L2 students, and Hirsch demonstrates that the scaffolding inherent in writing-intensive pedagogy can also work to provide similar support.) Pointedly, all participants cited one-to-one contact time with their instructors as critical to their success. Individual conferencing has been established as a core pedagogical approach to meeting the needs of linguistically diverse writers, although it can place considerable demands on the instructor (Reynolds, Bae, & Wilson, 2009). In addition to benefiting the writing process in general, Watson et al. (2002) cite that for minority students on predominantly white campuses, faculty/student relationships remain "one of the most effective predictors of student outcomes" (p. 79). During the interviews, the students reported that both their CW and WI instructors made time or were willing to meet with them individually to discuss their writing, which they valued; all participants agreed that conferencing with faculty helped them to understand the assignments better and to improve their writing. One participant explained that her WI instructor "worked with me one-on-one for every paper I wrote. She worked with me directly, so I got a lot better in that class, and I learned how to write better." Another participant described one way that his (WI) math instructor worked to individualize a reflective writing assignment:

> I had to write two papers for my math class. So bad. She gave us theories. It was abstract math. We had to think of problem solving math, not normal number problems and we would write and it was really long, really extensive and I thought, "I can't do this." So the professor said if you draw me a picture of what the writing was, I'll give you that grade. I drew the picture, and she liked it. She was showing people the picture. It wasn't a research paper; it was a reflective paper, like a page. Writing the paper wasn't that bad. Putting it together was the problem. I gave her what the reading was about in the draw-ing—the main theories. I think she framed it and put it in

the math center. She told me she was going to do that.

While it's unclear whether this accommodation fit into the WI course objectives or the purpose of the writing assignment in particular, the modification did serve to reduce this student's anxiety. During the interview, the participant's response and demeanor demonstrated a felt connection to his learning experience. This connection instilled a sense of confidence that he had not only met the assignment goals, but that his work was valued and respected by his instructor.

In terms of working with faculty, all respondents cited not fully understanding the assessment practices of their instructors, which they felt was an added challenge to them as cultural and linguistic minorities. (See Zawacki & Habib [this volume] for faculty perspectives on evaluating and grading L2 students' writing.) Participants differed in how they described these assessment practices. Despite meeting with their professors and despite expressing feeling that their writing was improving, all participants shared frustration at seldom earning a higher grade than a B on most assignments. One student offered that in her CW course she could "never get an A on a paper. I'd have to rewrite it a lot. I always talked to the instructor about what I could do, and she saw my effort—but never an A." Another participant said that some faculty would help her; however, there was one instructor who "didn't get it." She recalled an incident that occurred in her WI psychology course when, after turning in her paper, she was called to meet with the instructor. The instructor informed her that the writing that she turned in was "too good." The participant interpreted this to mean that the instructor was calling her a cheater, although plagiarism was not specifically mentioned in their meeting. She went on to explain that she had worked extensively on the paper over the course of the semester; in fact, the paper was an extension of a shorter paper that she had started in another course and was a topic that she'd been interested in pursuing in-depth. She explained that this professor had only seen one other piece of her writing at the beginning of the semester—a brief reflection paper. As a result, the participant concluded that she had been judged inappropriately, especially in light of the professor's limited knowledge of her writing.

WORKING WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DOMINANT PEERS

In questioning participants about experiences involving group, collaborative, and peer review writing activities in their CW and WI courses, participants

were asked about their perceptions and levels of comfort in working with linguistically and culturally dominant English L1 peers. In the majority of responses, participants referred to their CW course where peer review occurred regularly throughout the semester. While peer review may or may not be pedagogically central to WI courses, the participant's experiences offer insights for WI faculty who choose to assign collaborative activities or use peer review. Participants regularly measured their language skills in relation to their white, English L1 peers and viewed the classroom as a competitive environment. For example, one participant mentioned competition explicitly:

> I want to compete with the other students in the class. Not so much for the teacher, I mean I know what the teachers like, but I would like to be much better than my classmate than for my teacher to like it. I think it's definitely because of the second language. I mean because I write in a second language it makes me like want to be better. I have to try harder to be better. It has to do with me having to struggle in high school to learn English. I want to do extremely better. It's nice to get a great grade. I need to know that I did well, or as well as the other students. Or better would be good. It's just me trying to prove myself. I didn't have that when I was in high school. It only started when I came here.

Another participant concurred, "You're competing to gain approval. You feel you have to stand out." One participant reported that her lived experience as a bilingual minority directly informed the topics she commonly researched, which placed her "in a position of advantage." She added, "and that reduces my reader's critical point of view when reading my work." (See also Phillips [this volume] for a graduate student's perspective on how writing about knowledge gained from living in multiple nations and cultures gave him an advantage when seeking peers for a group project.)

Two participants expressed feeling comfortable during peer review even when they were the only multilingual writer in the class. One specifically preferred working with dominant students:

> I prefer to work with a native English speaker [during peer review]. I had that class [CW] with my roommate, and he had no grammatical errors ever. Nothing like me. So I don't think he would mind [working with a non-native writer]. I can offer the native students ideas. But that wasn't done at

the time. Only grammar. But we would talk about our papers
all the time in the beginning.

The same participant expressed feeling discouraged, however, when seeing how many grammatical errors were present in his writing in comparison to other students' writing:

> My college writing was really, I mean sometimes I felt kinda weird because my writings had a lot of grammatical errors. Other people writing was like perfect. We had to put an X on sentences that had grammatical errors, and the paper that I got back were full of Xs. Others was almost perfect or with one X. I would definitely know how to fix the X, but it was discouraging.

One participant expressed frustration with working with a white, NES, student whose lack of response to the content of her writing left her feeling confused and distanced:

> I remember one time I was reading this guy's paper, and we were talking about the same thing ... something about an event in your life ... something that changed you. I was writing about my grandmother dying, and how I was watching my mother cry. It was a true story. And he was writing about when his grandfather died and how his father was going through that pain. So we were writing about the same thing, but we read our papers, and there was nothing there, and I got no feedback from him. No reaction, really dry. Maybe we needed more time, but for me it was one of those or maybe it could be something we worked together and feed each other ideas, but no response. I said, Oh, we're basically writing about the same thing, and he didn't say anything. I was taken off guard. I didn't know what to think of it, so I like pulled back.

In their responses, participants recalled tacitly comparing their writing to that of their NES peers during peer review. During one peer review session when a dominant student did not offer any response to one participant's writing, the participant indicated feeling that the dominant student was likely judging her: "[Maybe] he thought my paper wasn't as good. He was thinking, how can this

girl be in this writing course with me? There is no comparison level. I don't know. I couldn't say anything because I don't know what he was thinking."

One participant reported on collaborative experiences with majority students that left him feeling marginalized:

> I had to deal with some students that were afraid that I could bring their grades down or that I would not be able to carry my load during a group presentation or lab projects. Sometimes students will ask me to take the easiest part or give me the least amount of time to present, which I was always against. I believe that every student in the group should have the same amount of responsibility and the same amount of time to present regardless of their abilities. How can you change this?

(Phillips [this volume] reports on a graduate student's similar experiences of being marginalized by English L1 group members when they worked on a collaborative project. See Cox [this volume] for advice for faculty on structuring peer review that avoids some of the problems described by the L2 students here.)

All participants made connections between their classroom experiences with writing and the attitudes of majority students inside and outside the classroom.

> They have told me that the numbers have gone up for diversity. I feel okay being in class as a minority. It's not that bad. I've heard a lot of stories about people treating other people bad because of their ethnicity in the classroom. Not by the teacher, but by other students. Um, I think it's more the attitude of the students. One of my friends was speaking Spanish in my writing class to another person and another person said, "Shut up. Don't talk Spanish in front of me because it's disrespectful." It was before the class started. It wasn't during class time. It was about disrespect to the other student. It's an attitude thing.

The participant shook his head while telling this story. I asked him if the stories of other multilingual students affected him in working with white, NES students. He posited:

> I would say that some of the stories affect me, but I try to not have any feelings like that during classroom. I know they

feel more comfortable with their group. Like if I'm here and there's a white girl here and a white guy here that she would prefer to talk to him in class discussion because they're more comfortable. That happens in the classroom. Everywhere.

One participant offered the following example of an interaction with majority students outside the classroom that affected her sense of self-worth and negatively affected her learning:

> One day last semester I was having lunch with an administrator and other students who were part of a leadership training. One student asked the VP what were they going to do with the academic levels of the incoming students. The student went on saying that when sitting in class some of these classmates asked questions that makes him think, "How can this kid be in class with me?" Apparently, he feels some of his classmates are not smart enough to be in class with him. Certainly me and other multilingual students felt uncomfortable with his comment, and he later apologized. The point is that this comment affected me because I feel uncomfortable when my fellow classmates think less of me for having less knowledge or being less smart than they are. It discourages me to express an opinion, and it could lead to lower self-esteem and self-doubt. The multilingual student knows a lot about other different things that his fellow [dominant] classmates do not know about.

The feelings of continuously being judged by and against the cultural and linguistic majority and needing to perform better than the NES students were not uncommon experiences for the students in this study. One participant stated that she felt WI faculty were also likely comparing their writing to that of their NES peers. She offered the following;

> The professor knew I knew the material, it's just the way I was writing it down didn't sound like the person next to me. Um, so that happened in that class and again this semester in another course where I had to write papers.

All participants emphasized the need for faculty to do more to raise the cultural awareness of the linguistic and cultural majority students on campus

within the context of the classroom. Additionally, and across all interviews, students placed an enormous value on open discussions of one's culture. One participant articulated, "I think informing, educating others about the issues we encounter as minorities through discussion and lectures by experts on the topic would help." One respondent acknowledged that some WI faculty are working to raise student awareness of cultural differences by introducing inter/cross cultural topics into their coursework:

> It depends on the type of professor you have. In (WI) psychology my professor was from the Middle East, and he put in a lot of cultural things. He said that culture has an effect on psychology, and he would bring videos from other cultures and that had a big impact on class and the topics students could consider writing about.

Another participant felt that majority and minority students needed more opportunities to interact with one another on campus. She surmised that increasing interactions would help to engage students more fully in the classroom by reducing apprehension, increasing participation, and would serve to draw upon the strengths of all students:

> I believe that if students were given the opportunity to develop an open mind through interaction with the different ethnic groups on campus, students in general will have a chance of speaking up, of not shying away from all the opportunities presented to them, and of understanding the differences each and every one of us as students bring into a classroom. If students do not learn to accept, listen, and appreciate what the classmate is sharing, chances are that by the end of the day, a student will not learn to appreciate where each of us come from and thus will never understand that a classroom is not only composed of an instructor's teachings, but of the knowledge every individual brings forth in a shared community ... a diversified classroom.

IMPLICATIONS

While the findings from this study reflect a relatively small sample of students, they provide needed insight into the experiences of resident,

multilingual writers who are navigating predominantly White, monolingual, socioeconomically privileged classrooms and campuses. I was surprised yet heartened to hear that the students overwhelmingly felt their instructors valued the diversity of thought and experience they brought in the classroom, especially in light of the fact that the instructors did not formally inquire about their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, the findings also suggest that these multilingual students experience discrimination, particularly in relation to their written accent, from peers and instructors, in relation to peer review and group work, assessment practices, and in the social dynamics of the classroom. Sue (2010) calls these "microaggressions," which he defines as "the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 5). These microaggressions (to which I would add "class") can have damaging consequences. The findings that center on discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in this study are particularly and more holistically troublesome when one considers that the institution partners with the neighboring immigrant city (where the generation 1.5 students draw from) for the dual purposes of providing community service and assistance and transformative learning opportunities for its undergraduate students. Ultimately, the participants in this study reported feeling, at times, alienated and distanced from the majority demographic based on perceived attitudes about difference, attitudes which could potentially affect their writing development considering that participants reported pulling back or being marginalized during peer and group writing activities. And the consequences are not limited to writing development; they also work to deny educational opportunities not only for the immigrant, multilingual writers in the classroom, but also for the white, monolingual majority.

Discovering the best practices for working with multilingual and multicultural writing students in a globalized educational context cannot focus solely on the multilingual students themselves. It must also include increasing the cultural and linguistic awareness of white faculty, students, and administrators and developing inclusive pedagogical practices. The five generation 1.5 student voices in this study support this argument. Sociocultural theorists posit that, increasingly, students "see themselves as the 'portfolio' of their experiences and achievements, gained through experience inside, and more and more importantly, outside of school" (Gee, 2001, p. 120). The student participants' responses support this connection between the campus climate around diversity and their in-class writing experiences. Correspondingly, WAC/WID professionals can benefit from understanding the impact of a hostile

campus climate on multilingual, multicultural students as they work to create and maintain welcoming, inclusive, and safe writing classrooms across the disciplines. The generation 1.5 student responses in this study suggest potential places to begin:

1. Ask about student literacy histories in writing and writing-intensive classrooms.
2. Develop ways to individualize course curricula, assignments, and pedagogical practices based on these histories.
3. Frame peer review practices to include discussions of accented voice (both oral and written), appropriation,[3] and the cultures of silence.[4]
4. Imbed one-to-one conferencing time into the syllabus or semester planning in order to individually talk about current writing experiences.
5. Develop assessment practices that acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity.
6. Commit to understanding the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic climate on campus as well as increasing personal cultural awareness, especially as it applies to one's own institutional context.

At my institution, we are in the beginning stages of designing a series of ongoing faculty workshops and brown-bag lunches for the purpose of addressing these very issues.

According to Watson et al. (2002), existing research on linguistic and cultural minority students' experiences on predominantly white campuses exposes the tenuous nature of the relationships that minority students share with their non-minority faculty and fellow students. The causes of strained interactions and relationships are varied but appear to center on "a lack of critical mass of minority students, harassment based on ethnic [and/or linguistic] identification, curricula that imply assimilation as the only measure of success, low expectations from professors, social events and hangouts that are off limits, and negative attitudes from labeling and placement" (p. 70). Additionally, Louie (2009) points out low SES students may also face dominant majority concerns that "immigration will alter our language (witness the English-only movement) and debates about whether immigrants serve as a benefit to or drain on the nation's economy" (p. 38). The responses provided by the generation 1.5 participants in this study are consistent with many of the concerns articulated in the literature cited above and point to the need for critical, transformative, and emancipatory research that addresses how issues of class and race affect multilingual writers.

Writing is fundamentally a social act, and because we ask students to work collaboratively in our classrooms and to meet our expectations for their writing, it is imperative that we consider the implications of class, race, and language in these requests with a grounded knowledge of the local institutional setting and

the students' experiences. Secondary research such as that I've presented here can also help us understand better our multilingual, multicultural students. Hall posits that the future of WAC "is indissolubly tied to the ways in which higher education will have to, willingly or unwillingly evolve in the wake of globalization in response to the increasing linguistic diversity of our student population" (p. 34). It is my belief that the success of *all* our students will depend on our commitment to addressing issues of equality and fairness in both our classrooms and campus environments.

NOTES

1. References to demographic and institutional data have been reported without citation in order to maintain anonymity for the institution and study participants.
2. My institution does not have a formal WAC program; instead, a well-funded writing center and writing fellows program provide support for faculty and student writers. Once students are admitted to the college, there are no language placement exams; correspondingly, CW is the sole credit-bearing, first-year writing course option—there are no basic, ESL, blended or linked course options offered. All CW and WI courses have enrollment caps of 15.
3. References to demographic and institutional data have been reported without citation in order to maintain anonymity for the institution and study participants.
4. Paulo Freire (1972) referred to cultures of silence as places where voices of oppressed groups were marginalized. He sought pedagogies that served to transform environments where such marginalization persisted.
5. Adapted from pp. 238-240 of Goen-Salter, Porter, and vanDommelen (2009).

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APPENDIX: STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS[5]

Your Student Information
 Name:
 Email:
 Phone Number:
 Class level: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other:
 What is your major?
 How many credit hours are you taking this semester?
 Are you a Massachusetts resident or an out of state student?
 Are you working this semester? If so, how many hours per week?
 Where were you born?
 When did you arrive to the US?
 When did you start school in the US?

Your Family Information
 What language(s) does your father speak? Mother?
 What language(s) does your father write? Mother?
 What is the highest level of education your father received? Mother?
 What langue does your family use at home? At work?
 Do they use more than one language at home? At work?
 Do you have brothers and sisters? What are their ages?
 Where do they live and with whom?
 What languages do you use with your brothers and sisters?
 Do you/your parents or relatives visit your home country? How often?
 How often do you/they call your relatives in your home country?
 How often do your relatives come to visit you in the US?
 How long do they stay here?

Your College Reading and Writing Experiences
 What writing or English courses have you taken at this school?
 Who were your instructors?

What writing or English courses have you taken at other schools over the past few years?

What Writing Intensive course did you take?

Who was your instructor?

Have you worked with a writing fellow before? If so, in what class?

Have you worked with a tutor in the Writing Center?

How often would you say you visit the Writing Center?

Your Language Background

How long have you been speaking English?

How long have you been reading English?

How long have you been writing English?

What language(s) do you speak in addition to English?

Do you read and write in another language? If so, which one(s)?

What language would you consider your "home" language(s)?

What's your strongest language for listening and speaking? (Check one)

English _____ My other language(s)_____Both (all) are strong_____

What's your strongest language for reading and writing? (Check one)

English_____ My other language(s)_____Both (all) are strong_____

Do you read for pleasure? If so, what and in what language(s)? For example, books, magazines, newspapers, other media?

Do you write for pleasure? If so what do you write and in what language(s)? For example, poetry, music, journals, social media (Facebook, MySpace, blogging) short stories, letters etc.