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The *Journal of Basic Writing* publishes articles of theory, research, and teaching practices related to basic writing. Articles are refereed by members of the Editorial Board (see overleaf) and the Editors.

The *Journal of Basic Writing* is published twice a year, in the spring and fall. We welcome unsolicited manuscripts and ask authors to consult the detailed "Call for Articles" in this issue. Subscriptions for individuals are $15.00 for one year and $28.00 for two years; subscriptions for institutions are $20.00 for one year and $38.00 for two years. Foreign postage is $5.00 extra per year. ADDRESS:

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CALL FOR ARTICLES

We welcome manuscripts of 10-20 pages on topics related to basic writing, broadly interpreted.

Manuscripts will be refereed anonymously. We require five copies of a manuscript and an abstract of about 100 words. To assure impartial review, give author information and a short biographical note for publication on the cover page *only*. Papers which are accepted will eventually have to supply camera-ready copy for all ancillary material (tables, charts, etc.). One copy of each manuscript not accepted for publication will be returned to the author, if we receive sufficient stamps (no meter strips) clipped to a self-addressed envelope. Submissions should follow current MLA guidelines.

All manuscripts must focus clearly on basic writing and must add substantively to the existing literature. We seek manuscripts that are original, stimulating, well-grounded in theory, and clearly related to practice. Work that reiterates what is known or work previously published will not be considered.

We invite authors to write about such matters as classroom practices in relation to basic writing theory; cognitive and rhetorical theories and their relation to basic writing, social, psychological, and cultural implications of literacy; discourse theory, grammar, spelling, and error analysis; linguistics; computers and new technologies in basic writing; English as a second language; assessment and evaluation; writing center practices; teaching logs and the development of new methodologies; and cross-disciplinary studies combining basic writing with psychology, anthropology, journalism, and art. We publish observational studies as well as theoretical discussions on relationships between basic writing and reading, or the study of literature, or speech, or listening. The term "basic writer" is used with wide diversity today, sometimes referring to a student from a highly oral tradition with little experience in writing academic discourse, and sometimes referring to a student whose academic writing is fluent but otherwise deficient. To help readers therefore, authors should describe clearly the student population which they are discussing.

We particularly encourage a *variety* of manuscripts: speculative discussions which venture fresh interpretations; essays which draw heavily on student writing as supportive evidence for new observations; research reports, written in nontechnical language, which offer observations previously unknown or unsubstantiated; and collaborative writings which provocatively debate more than one side of a central controversy.

EDITORS' COLUMN

Starting in mid-April, the Conference on Basic Writing listserv (CBW-L) had one of its recurrent (but always edifying) bouts of defining Basic Writing. The discussion ran for weeks, unfolding the established dynamics of such conversations: registering the difficulty of defining basic writing (especially in light of local definitions and institutional differences), the danger of such definitions (in that they paint a target so many in political and academic circles seem to be shooting at these days), the temptation to devise some other, better term (and the difficulty of that).

We read these posts with interest because they characterize a recurrent concern – maybe *the* recurrent concern – of *JBW*. Scarcely an article (much less an issue) does not raise the matter of definition (with its attendant difficulties and dangers). And we realized that the question of definition unites what may otherwise seem to be the disparate articles in our current issue. We knew, moreover, that this was to some extent our doing, and so something we should address.

The current issue marks two major changes for the *JBW*. Regular readers know that the previous issue saw Trudy Smoke stepping down from her seven-year stint as co-editor. And so this issue is the one in which Bonne August, Chair of the English Department at Kingsborough Community College and a longtime worker in the BW field (with special expertise in assessment), steps up. Much more could be said about Bonne, descriptively and prospectively, but she shares her co-editor's view that editors should seek a kind of invisibility, a cultivated unobtrusiveness (save in brief prefatory remarks).

Bonne had been having conversations with Gay Brookes, editor of *College ESL*, another CUNY-supported journal that may (for reasons best given by Gay in her chosen time and place) be unable to publish worthy submissions. Would *JBW* consider some appropriate for its readership? We have indeed considered and published ESL-focused work in the past (and "English as a second language" is indeed an interest mentioned in our call for articles), but now we found ourselves wanting to highlight and not just acknowledge this interest. Thus the second change: we want to stress our interest in accounts of ESL research and instruction that seem especially relevant to work in BW because of the overlap and interface between the fields, ever less distinct, ever more embroiled with the difficulties of definition and the (often related) vulnerabilities of their special populations.

Above all, of course, the real point of interest is pedagogy – what we can learn about effective teaching from each other. The articles written by ESL instructors in this issue seem especially impressive cases in point, so we'll take them up first, though it means treating our contents in reverse order for a change.

In "What Is Learned in Sustained-Content Writing Classes Along with Writing?" by Marcia Pally, Helen Katznelson, Hadara Perpignan, and Bella Rubin, the fascinating question of the "by-products" of effective instruction is taken up: what, by the students' own accounts, happens in terms of personal growth and increased capacity for interaction when a course combining sustained treatment of specific content and a host of academic skills "takes"? The news is heartening but not without surprises.

The same could be said of "The Power of Academic Learning Commu-

nities," Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk and Marcia Babbitt's account of a program that takes students who, to some, would seem the least likely to succeed and turns them into success stories. The key, as the authors stress, is the way learning communities cultivate the interdependence and collaboration of students who could not be more diverse or at risk—who literally come from different cultures—and so we must be all the more grateful that this account is so clear about its principles and methods.

These "ESL" articles are preceded by an article from a team of authors who, in a sense, blazed the trail for their inclusion. In 1998, Eileen Biser, Linda Rubel, and Rose Marie Toscano published "Mediated Texts: A Heuristic for Academic Writing" in *JBW*; the article looked at using a special method — rough translations as rough drafts — as a learning and writing strategy for a special kind of ESL student: the student whose first language was American Sign Language. Here, in "Be Careful What You Ask For: When Basic Writers Take the Rhetorical Stage," they give a compelling account of what happens when a student writer from their circumscribed instructional setting enters the realm of public discourse and political controversy.

The positioning of students—and the challenges of definition—would seem no less critical in "Ways of Taking Meaning from Texts: Reading in High School and College," by Hugh English and Lydia Nagle, a college and a high school teacher respectively who explore the relatively unmapped territory that is what students make of what they read. They use the testimony of the students themselves to provide us with a taxonomy of motives and methods students bring to bear on their reading. Though high school and college may seem different worlds to students whose ages diverge only by months, we should not be surprised to see that, on both sides of the supposed divide, students' strategies do not differ radically—nor seem as rich as we might hope.

Part of the problem may be a lack of the sort of capital Charlotte Brammer refers to in the title of her article "Linguistic Cultural Capital and Basic Writers." Tapping into one rich vein of definition, a seam mined by Mina Shaughnessy and other pioneers in the field, Brammer sees Basic Writers as branded by the features of their writing, features showing how far they are from learning the ropes and mastering the codes of the academy. This is problem-defining prior to problem-solving, for she also argues that the solution is explicit instruction in these codes, instruction that can be seen both as a return and an advance.

What it also represents, of course, is one form of the special support that defining Basic Writers as such justifies. The irony, as Scott Stevens points out in "Nowhere to Go: Basic Writing and the Scapegoating of Civic Failure," is that BW placement can become the opposite of a strategy of support: it can seem to blame as well as stigmatize the victim, ultimately addressing the problem by removing the students who supposedly incarnate it. What this lead-off article reminds us is the dark side of the success stories that conclude this issue: those little (and not so little) miracles of personal growth and academic achievement were made possible by defining students as special populations with special needs, but such definition can also paint them as targets, marked as unwanted, presumably unable. As ever, we must foster those acts of (good) faith that allow for miracles without disallowing and disappearing those defined as entitled to them.

-- George Otte *and* **Bonne August**

Scott Stevens

NOWHERE TO GO: BASIC WRITING AND THE SCAPEGOATING OF CIVIC FAILURE

ABSTRACT: *Mandates to reduce remediation rates at California State University campuses have been heralded publicly by administrators as a return to standards. This article considers the consequences of expelling students who do not complete remediation within one year. Detailing the local options facing disenrolled students, the article proposes that the lack of educational choices is analogous to the institutionalized absence of alternatives for basic writing programs. It also analyzes the contradictory rhetoric of official policy, linking the elitist return to standards to the defunding of public education in California during the 1970s.*

> *The horizons of our culture...are always disappearing, fading into deeply held but ambivalent convictions about how elitist claims on powerful discourse can coexist with egalitarian education.*
>
> —Susan Miller, *Textual Carnivals*

Not long ago I visited a basic writing class at my university in which the students were examining different forms of cultural myth-making the authors of the class textbook call "the California Dream." Toward the close of a discussion preparing the class to read several arguments about higher education and the reasons it may and may not make good on the promise of a path to a better life, a student responded, "We always hear about how good education used to be and how bad it is now." Then she turned to me as the outside visitor and asked, "What happened?"

I was struck immediately by how rare such a question is, but even more by how personally this student took the rhetoric of crisis that traditionally shadows public schooling. It was not lost on her that, sociological explanations aside, she didn't measure up, wasn't as good as previous generations of students. Her placement in a basic writing class did nothing but confirm what I want to propose is a state-sponsored sense of failure.

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The question, "What happened?" seems not to figure into the ongoing campaign to eliminate basic writing and math courses from California's state university system. What Ed White identifies as a national return to elitism in higher education, such efforts to return to standards transform education in the public mind into "a personal privilege rather than a public good," turning what was once an investment into an unyielding expense (20). The effect of this change in sentiment and its corresponding war of words will be felt most severely in places that combine the effects of urban and rural life, places like Fresno, where I teach. This essay considers a few of the local consequences of legislating a reduction in remediation, of eliminating basic writers in the name of quality. In what follows, I am trying to speak about only one region, so I am mindful of Peter Mortensen's reminder that whatever lessons we might draw from these examples, such things must be seen in local terms. Perhaps it will bear some similarity to where you teach and live. When I began this essay, I was thinking mostly about the educational alternatives available to students who are geographically isolated. But now I'm thinking too about our discipline's own lack of options, the absence of horizons for basic writing itself, a space invented to create horizons where none were visible before. This paper is about those ambivalent convictions, about the institutional ironies that embody them, about the people who pay for our inability to think clearly about them.

California's Remediation War

At the beginning of California's economic freefall in the early 1990s, frantic cost cutting in the CSU made remedial writers visible again. Though the university had done its best to make them invisible in the curriculum by denying the courses they take any meaningful academic credit and by staffing those classes with contingent labor whose own literacy was taken as credential enough, when it came time to comb budgets remedial programs looked like wasted money, rework the high schools should have accomplished. Following a series of public hearings up and down the state in 1996, the CSU Chancellor's Office revised its initial plan for a one-time remediation cure in the form of additional entrance requirements beginning in 2001. In the face of negative response to the method if not the goal of ending remediation, the Chancellor's office altered its timetable but not its objective. Instead, the students and citizens of California were promised "a series of targets and a sophisticated approach to standards development..." The ultimate objective was and continues to be a reduction in the need for remedial coursework to no more than 10% of the incoming class by 2007. In the meantime, California State Universities will give students one year to complete remediation. After that, they

will be "encouraged to seek education elsewhere." Half a dozen years later we're still waiting for the conversation about standards. The "series of targets"? Well, that seems to have been a euphemism for students.

For the moment I want to ignore the obvious link to the meanness of California's political climate. But it would be wrong not to read the threat to college literacy and math programs in light of political campaigns to end affirmative action, end public services for non-citizens, and end bilingual education. For the moment, I just want to think about the space simultaneously opened and fenced by basic writing programs. Basic writing teachers are always challenged to avoid "losing a sense of our names as names" (as Bartholomae puts it): at CSU Fresno, we try to remind ourselves not to believe too much in how the university describes what we're doing, not to believe fully in the distinctions rendered by outdated placement mechanisms that make one group of writers full-fledged entry-level members of the university while consigning the others to the hardest no-credit, total-performance course they'll ever take. Our general inability to tell without a test score reference where our incoming students belong points out that campus placement test cut-offs represent one of the biggest fictions in academic life. Yet it is that fiction that tells the trustees we have "a serious problem."

Think of our situation this way: we are taught in some disciplines to trust the bell curve of a normal distribution. The trustee's dream for reducing remediation to 10% depends on seeing underprepared students confined to that narrow tail to the far left of the curve. But they have no real sense of whether a 10% remediation rate is achievable. In fact, the trustee's own policy statement claims the end result will be "a virtually unprecedented university..." yet it never asks why this might be unprecedented. This untalented tenth suggests an entrenchment of a remedial paradigm built on what Mike Rose debunked some time ago as the myth of transience: a few tear-out worksheets, couple of hours having grammar checked in the writing center, and a happy return to what the trustees call "the primary gateway for social mobility and economic advancement."

Yet with a 53% remediation rate on our campus—a figure typical of many California State University campuses—the placement cut-off dividing supposedly incompetent basic writers from their competent peers bisects the distribution curve at nearly its mid-point. We have achieved the daunting task of dividing the average from the average. There is an unlimited supply of anecdotal testimony from our writing center and first-year comp instructors that they cannot tell who should be in basic writing and who shouldn't based on performance. So imagine half on either side of the cut-off to be nearly interchangeable. Who disappears when we reduce remediation from half to 10%? The lucky?

The good? The Trustees' report records concern that their new policies might intensify social disadvantage, asserting that

> *Our urban and remote schools in particular have struggled with a variety of societal and fiscal challenges that have made it difficult to offer satisfactory education to all students. The trustees, therefore, are determined to not apply solutions that might have a punitive effect.* (Subcommittee on Remedial Education, 1)

The official summary of the CSU Trustee's Committee on Education policy ends with the following assurances, intended, I think, to link these changes with widely held assumptions about the purpose of college in what we insist is a meritocratic society:

> *The proposed policy is intended to help ensure that students come from high school well prepared to make the most of their college opportunity. It is intended to maximize access to a university education guaranteed by the Master Plan, and to promote excellence with diversity within the student body of the CSU. It is intended to reinforce the opportunity for all students to develop their academic abilities. As a public university committed to providing educational access to all citizens, especially those for whom other forms of higher education are financially and logistically out of reach, the CSU is sensitive to keeping the doors of access and opportunity open to qualified students.* (Pesqueira and Hoff, January 1996, 5-6)

The contortions of this rhetoric will sound familiar to most of us. This sort of semantic bait and switch is not just indicative of logic of democratic exclusion but exemplifies the rhetorical shift White has observed. The desire to exploit the power of what Peter Mortensen calls the discourse of "better reading, better writing, better roads, better paycheck, better life" may not be entirely honest, but it works (182). In fact, it works so well the educational-industrial complex is largely responsible for so many students believing that a university education is the key to their futures. That they persist in the face of their considerable unreadiness appears to be what has motivated the California State University system to declare open season on remedial programs using a rhetoric that produces the very crisis conditions it purports to reflect.

Standards, Access, and Needs

Permit me a more generous reading and let me suggest that the rhetorical backflips of the trustees' report mirror our own tortured conversations in the scholarship and administration of basic writing in

Composition. We still have not figured out how to think through basic writing as opposed to thinking with it, facing its negative consequences as openly as we have celebrated its achievements. As David Bartholomae has pointed out in "The Tidy House," the discourse of basic writing was helpful for a while, creating a space for students and necessary research, but now institutionalized it seems incapacitated by the contradictions it could not resolve.

Tom Fox is one of a number of teachers who have sought to clarify those contradictions. Fox argues that often our commitments to access conflict with our sense that empowerment implies meeting standards. Whether done of pragmatism or nostalgia, Fox reasons that teachers are susceptible to the pairing of standards and access because it gives us "a sense of action and power, a sense that we are making a difference in our students lives" (41). Because of this, Fox says we are "terrifyingly close" to conservative cultural critics who draw a direct relationship between increased access to higher education and what they (and any person over thirty) perceive as a decline in the quality of student work. When access is tied unilaterally to some perceived set of objective standards, it ceases to be a very meaningful term. Fox would go further, asserting, "The contingency between access and standards associated with vague notions of academic discourse or an economically valued standard English is a lie" (42).

These are hard words for writing teachers, harder still for program directors who keep this whole mythotragic enterprise in motion. Fox sympathetically admits:

> This belief in the power of language to provide access is a difficult one to give up. It reasserts itself suddenly--in a one-to-one meeting with a student, in answer to an unexpected question in class, in a memo defending the basic writing program to administrators. When we give it up, what do we have left? (43)

Fox suggests that what we might have left is a more sophisticated approach to standards, perhaps like the one promised by the trustees' report on remedial education. Fox suggests that for once standards might be contingent on access too, instead of the relationship being unilaterally drawn the other way. Interestingly, the authors of the trustees' report cite the California Postsecondary Education Commission on Educational Equity and its insistence that we cannot achieve equity until "pluralism and excellence are equal partners in a quality educational environment" (Pesqueira and Hoff, July 1995, 5). Yet seldom do we hear public calls for more pluralism, only renewed excellence.

If the relationship between improved standards and restricted access is a lie, what do we make of the programs we have worked so

hard to build? Perhaps we begin by testing, not simply accepting, Bartholomae's claim that

> basic writers are produced by our desire to be liberal—to enforce commonness among our students by making the differences superficial, surface-level, and by designing a curriculum to both insure and erase them in 14 weeks. (12)

Is this what we do where I work? In Fresno, I inherited a vintage mode-driven basic writing program. Overhauling it meant disassembling a program to rebuild it from the ground up: helping graduate TAs learn the field they worked in but knew little of, beginning a conversation about what might help our students and how to teach it. Trying to make basic writing a college-level course and still help students who need extensive writing practice, we have created a course which trades two bad hours in a placement test for 16 weeks of comprehensive, no-credit performance, complete with complicated and uncertain assessments of writing which try to value the complexity of beginning writers' ideas without disregarding rhetorical control. The student grapevine at my school carries word that if you can make it through English A, English 1 will be easy.

I don't know how we teachers of composition reconcile the stories we tell ourselves about the significance of our teaching in the current and future lives of our students to the possibility that basic writing makes basic writers. There is certainly enough disconcerting research on the historical link between education and social position to question the fundamental progressive myth to which we have subscribed.

Telling the Truth

Peter Mortensen's's analysis of James Traub's nostalgia for the old City College of New York makes much of Traub's claim that City achieved superior moral status as an civic institution because its meritocracy provided an avenue for "poor, talented boys" to enter the middle class. Unintentionally proving Fox's point, Traub's argument relies on the reader's acceptance that access alone is not a moral achievement and that over the years the "erosion of standards...has diminished that moral status."

Mortensen makes a compelling case for locating the truth by locally situating the nostalgic narratives aimed at remediation. Mortensen claims that with the complicated nature of institutional politics over language "it is going to be difficult for any academic figure to cultivate local ground in order to address a local audience on a subject such as the literacy of college students" (194). If I understand what is entailed

here, telling the truth about literacy will mean confronting the various discourses that surround the issue of remediation with ethical representations of literacy: what it is and does and how it is learned and from whom.

For example, anti-remediation momentum in the largest states leads toward a clearly stratified system of senior and junior colleges, with junior colleges still working under the premise of open enrollment. If open enrollment has been a failure (as is the argument for those wishing to reclaim the university's elite status), we have to ask why open enrollment would be any more justified at a community college. Why would it be any more successful at opening up a path to the middle class?

In a recent *CCC* article called "After Wyoming," Jennifer Trainor and Amanda Godley document one answer to this question many of us have heard over and over: "the community colleges are specialists in this sort of thing. It's also their mission." Trainor and Godley analyze the ways recycled arguments about standards and access are mediated by claims to professional specialization and what Sharon Crowley has critiqued as the discourse of student needs. The potential for abusing the discourse of needs is demonstrated through an example showing how administrators justified outsourcing the teaching of basic writing, thereby making BOTH students and teachers disappear. The logic is as simple as it is simple-minded: the university will look as though it has reneged on its commitment to pluralism if it eliminates remedial classes, yet to maintain appearances we must eliminate these curricular threats to excellence. The solution? Send students to community college *for their own good.* In essence, the university declares that the needs of the student warrant their relocation to institutions where the faculty is trained to help them.

I have heard this argument on my campus, too. Never mind that a growing portion of the local community college faculty is comprised of the same people teaching basic writing on our campus. What seems to matter most is how the discourse of needs maintains appearances. As a new conscript into writing program administration, I am surprised how much this issue of appearances matters. As a solution to the problem of low placement test scores, it has been repeatedly proposed that we should allow students to begin taking our placement tests as early as their sophomore year in high school. This way a passing score might be recorded and forever designate those students as not needing remediation. This does not change the state of things: students will continue to arrive at our campus unready to do some of the work we ask them to do. But it does *appear* to have solved the problem.

These interminable somersaults about preparedness and access, paternalism and choice confirm parts of Sharon Crowley's recent broadside against the universal requirement of freshman composition.

Crowley announces "the requirement has nothing to do with what students need and everything to do with the academy's image of itself as a place where special language is in use" (257). Extending her analysis, Crowley makes our situation sound bleak:

> The discourse of needs positions composition teachers as servants of a student need that is spoken, not by students themselves, but by people speaking for powerful institutions. Like the narrative of progress, the discourse of needs interpellates composition teachers as subjects who implement the regulatory desires of the academy and the culture at large. (257)

In fact, where I teach it is worse than this because sometimes the discourse of needs takes on a life of its own, sustaining all forms of blind advocacy, irrespective of what might genuinely benefit individual students most.

Lately a new version of the discourse of needs that created basic writing has emerged. In the CSU system we are now trying every means possible to identify eligible students as ESL to forestall the two-semester time limit. We are trying to keep students in school by renaming them. Another of the ironies on my campus is that ESL courses that act as pre-remedial courses earn graduation credit for the students enrolled in them. When they have completed the coursework in ESL, they must descend into the no-credit pool of English A before reemerging on the other side in English 1. While this path seems clearly to their advantage, there can be a strong disincentive to self-identify as ESL for resident and native born students whose primary language is not English. Such reluctance has less to do with the stigma of being an ESL student (though there is much of that) than it does with students being intelligent enough to become experts on their own education.

Semester after semester we hear students tell stories of failed high school ESL programs: the ESL instructor who passes out Civics textbooks written in English and then disappears into the back of the classroom; the new teacher pressed into ESL courses because he has a Spanish surname, even though he does not speak Spanish. Though it has one of the highest concentrations of limited English proficiency students (the labeling device of the day), California schools are scandalously understaffed in the teaching of ESL and will do whatever it takes to meet state mandates, as long as it doesn't require recruiting and paying qualified teachers. The kinds of reports that one hears from students and teachers alike make these phony courses worse than a temporary sham, they're a long-term trap. Students sometimes know when they are being defrauded, and so they choose the precarious, no-credit path of language acquisition in basic writing, even if it puts them at risk of being asked to leave. By choosing the more difficult route,

students are speaking of their needs. ESL might offer protection, but remediation offers escape.

Crowley and Fox and Elspeth Stuckey suggest the discourse of needs is a trap and a lie. Others have seen in the discourse of needs an avenue of power and advocacy. Literacy historians tell us the experience of people in an industrial age was not commensurate with the emergent rhetoric of advancement, but this fact does not mean that we, living in a far more economically undemocratic time, can simply ignore the possibility that the rhetoric of education and social mobility may have become prophetically more accurate than ever before. Maybe *we*, as advocates for literacy and human potential, have nowhere else to go. Perhaps we have no choice but to use it. Is this a time to propose, as do Trainor and Godley, as does Mary Soliday, as did the writing program at Temple, that the rhetoric of student needs be reconfigured to invalidate the language of exclusion? At CSU Chico, one of our northern campuses, the faculty has ended the quarantine of basic writers, creating a program which does not treat difference as deficiency but instead supports students, whatever their needs, as a supplement to their enrollment in first-year composition (Rodby & Fox).

The assault on basic literacy courses by those desiring a return to the foundations of elitism in education verifies Linda Brodkey's sense that in universities and educational culture, writing is permitted in designated areas only. The rejection of her proposed curriculum in Texas was only a precursor to declaring other sites of writing off limits. If the power of Brodkey's metaphor was its clarification of social. moral, and curricular boundaries, the most frightening aspect of this new exclusivity is the literal relocation of basic writers.

It's hard to imagine that we will ever collectively *recognize* the consequences of this return to elitism as such. The effects will be felt by students and families, be interpreted as individual failure, maybe isolated social injustice, but the society and economy of my region will not collapse. Indeed, the local economy already revolves around an axis of limited opportunity. At a time when our nation's unemployment rate has experienced historic lows, unemployment in Fresno county hovers near 13%. The rate is higher in neighboring counties. As is the case with all such figures, the rates are far higher in some demographic groups than others. Among the highest are the Mexican and Hmong families who send their children (often with considerable reluctance) to the State U in hopes of creating a path out of such a tenuous existence.

Let's leave aside the nagging paradox that students who do succeed in graduating from the university generally must leave the San Joaquin Valley for micro-economies where high-tech and professional jobs are easier to find. That looks too far ahead. What happens when, in the language of the Chancellor's 1997 executive order, students who

cannot overcome poor preparation within one year and are "encouraged to go elsewhere"? What options do they have to act on their material and cultural desires to use education as a path out of economic and social uncertainty?

Our TAs sampled one-fifth of our basic writing classes to find out. Students almost uniformly answered that community college would be their second alternative. One student seemed to summarize the sentiments of many: "If I go to a JC, I can always come back." The fact that so many students have calculated pragmatic alternatives is more a byproduct of simply aiming to reach college from poverty than it is an awareness that they may be relocated. But what will these students find at the community colleges in the Central Valley? You know the answer—but here are the distressingly repetitive particulars: At the start of the just-concluded semester, I fielded phone calls from every local two-year college, begging for available instructors. Qualification was not much of an issue. These novice instructors will get no training at their new workplaces. At the same colleges, enrollment in basic writing classes begins at 31 students per class, climbing all the way to 50 for the lowest course offered at one college. Many instructors last semester reported waiting lists as large as the enrollment limit for the course. With pass rates at less than 60% for the course one level below transferable entry-level writing—the return ticket to the CSU—the likelihood of following an undisrupted path to transfer back to a CSU is slim. Our students know the rhetoric of opportunity and second chances, but they know little of the odds. Going elsewhere will too often result in going nowhere.

Scapegoating Civic Failure

None of this answers very satisfactorily that student's question, "What happened?" California's 1960s-era Master Plan mandates that we accept the top one-third of the graduating class. We have added courses and test scores to hedge on that commitment. Apparently this was not enough. Now we tell low-placing students that despite the ways their educational system has failed them, we will give them two chances not to fail us or themselves. If they cannot prove themselves by then we will foreclose on rights they don't even know they have.

Literacy scholars and Compositionists often review the American fetish with educational failure to show how the rhetoric of crisis remains unresponsive to changing demographics and increasingly sophisticated demands on student literacy. Such a counterpoint against the constant drumbeat of collapse helps anyone who teaches writing or stands as the institutional proxy for underprepared students. But it doesn't account for the very real changes that have taken place.

Within the truth of the rhetoric of failure, there are plenty of cul-

pable parties: schools have failed kids, fake bilingual programs have trapped second-language speakers, students have failed to carry out the responsibilities that accompany free, if compulsory, education; parents have failed teachers, adding to what we must teach. Some targets are easier than others. What students have above all others is a convenient specificity. We can locate them, test them, help and/or punish them. What we rarely recognize is our collective culpability.

Twenty years ago, when politics and populations in California began to move out of phase, the owning class disowned the rising class through the innocuous sounding Proposition 13. In what seemed a sensible response to runaway inflation and capricious property reassessments that saw some older Californian's forced out of their homes because they could not afford the new tax bill, Proposition 13 promised tax relief by freezing the rates by which property taxes could be increased. The backers of Prop 13 made the story about homes, but it was also paying the bills for civil society. In *Paradise Lost*, political journalist Peter Schrag explains that California's golden age during the 1950 and 60s was largely the result of its willingness to invest in public enterprises like education. During that time, voters saw their taxes build parks and freeways and universities that were the envy of the nation. We have been drawing down that investment ever since. California's near collapse during the early 1990s, Schrag argues, came as the result of initiatives like Proposition 13.

Proposition 13 exploited an inherent weakness in the social contract on education. With schools funded through property taxes, it was assumed that property owners had a self-interest in the creation and maintenance of good schools. By 1978, taxpayers were spending more and more to educate those they saw as other people's children. The passage of Proposition 13 gave property owners a few more dollars but it also left the state with a depleted public infrastructure, schools that can't succeed, and a "pinched social ethos" hungry for scapegoats.

Proposition 13 signaled the beginning of a shift in public resources away from the needy to the culturally deserving. It remains the paradigm of redistribution governing education in California. At schools like CSU Chico, cited above for the landmark efforts of Tom Fox, Judith Rodby, and Thia Wolf to improve the status of students classified as remedial, the university's external publication highlights the experience of the General Studies thematic program, an honors program that rewards gifted students with small classes, an integrated curriculum, and plenty of interaction with experienced professors. At my own campus, a large portion of our budget and imagination has been diverted into the creation of an honors college. These are nice, even important programs, but this is not a change mentioned in the rhetoric of crisis. Nor is it mentioned in the trustees' accounting of school and student shortcomings. In the trustees' report, only two short phrases

allude to the effects of the looting of California's education funding. Arguing the need to see the complexity of school failure, the report describes California schools as "strapped for resources" and facing "fiscal challenges." The report goes on to place the blame on poorly trained teachers and inadequately communicated standards of excellence. Once again, access and standards.

The fact that so many California schools look like "trailer parks" [to use the Chancellor's own words] does not seem to be taken into consideration when we decide that students should bear the brunt of their supposed unreadiness for college work.

It could be argued that those who benefited most from California's generous investment are now the ones most responsible for ruining California's education system, the ones mandating its new policies of exclusion. Where were the protective instincts of the trustees when the citizens of California voted to eviscerate their public education system in 1978?

Please don't mistake my concerns about remediation reform for the caricature of softhearted and softheaded teachers who promote self-esteem at the expense of learning. Lots of students who come to college will struggle with the work we put before them. I thought the purpose of a university was to change that.

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Charlotte Brammer

LINGUISTIC CULTURAL CAPITAL AND BASIC WRITERS

ABSTRACT: *Students who generally end up in basic writing classrooms lack the linguistic cultural capital that would allow them to recognize and use the codes necessary for academic success. Whatever words we use to describe and explain or excuse the failures or non-conforming products written by these students, we cannot ignore their problems. While there is some ambiguity as to what constitutes linguistic cultural capital for the academy, Formal Written English (as defined by Wolfram and Schilling-Estes) seems to be an important part of it. In this article, student essays are used to illustrate the linguistic variations that many basic writing students bring to the academy and then offer some insights from second language acquisition and literacy studies that may help writing specialists enhance pedagogical practice to better serve these students.*

> The arbiters of "good" language are less concerned about breakdowns in meaning or comprehensibility than they are about deviations from an imposed form.
>
> —J. K. Chambers

Introduction

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, protagonist Jay Gatsby remains outside the coveted social circle of Nick Carraway and the Buchanans. In fiction, Gatsby epitomizes Pierre Bourdieu's definition of constraints imposed by cultural capital: Gatsby could not break into the social circle because he lacks the essential codes or inherent knowledge and mannerisms that would allow his acceptance. Gatsby overcame economic impoverishment but cannot overcome social impoverishment. He does not speak the same language as the social elite, and thus he is effectively silenced at his own parties. Cultural capital is "embodied" by the individual and "cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights, or even titles of nobility) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange" (Bourdieu 244). Even Gatsby's extensive wealth cannot buy cultural capital because it must be ac-

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quired and "always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition which, through the more or less visible marks they leave (such as the pronunciations characteristic of a class or region), help to determine its distinctive value" (Bourdieu 245). Gatsby can never mimic Daisy's voice, the voice of old money.

For many basic writing students, this fictional scenario is real. These students lack the cultural capital, specifically the linguistic cultural capital, to recognize and to utilize the necessary written codes for academic success. We know that students who are read to and who come from homes where literacy is privileged and encouraged are more likely to succeed in the classroom. Middle-class students from backgrounds that uphold, re-enforce, and privilege literacy, in terms of writing and reading, perform more successfully in college composition classes than do those students from outside that social class.

As tempting as it may be to assume that the only students who have problems with writing for the university are African Americans or Latinos from troubled inner city schools, it is simply untrue. As Marshall writes, "We can no more assume we know the class status or the literacy practices of the White students in our classrooms than we can presume that the African-American students present speak nonstandard English or grew up in the inner city" (232). Many of my students are from white, rural, often working-class families. Some are first generation college students. The differences between their linguistic codes and the ones favored by the university are just as great as they are for the recognized minority students.

Who are linguistic outsiders?

Many basic writing students are, to use Burke's term, not consubstantial with us. They speak and write a language that is different from ours. Aside from this difference, however, a "typical" basic writer is difficult to describe. As Rossen-Knill and Lynch illustrate, basic writers vary, in terms of demographics, from one school to another. Their language variety, particularly as they write, marks them as "basic writers," as "outsiders." Wolfram and Schilling-Estes describe varieties of American English as a continuum, with Formal Edited English (which is largely written) at one end and other dialects ranking from those marked as socially informal to socially stigmatized (such as African American Vernacular [AAVE] and Southern American Vernacular [SAV]). Informal English dialects are spoken by upper and middle socio-economic groups and, as Wolfram and Schilling-Estes point out, are defined by the absence of stigmatized features. These informal dialects vary by regions but are acknowledged as "standard" or "correct" by most native speakers, regardless of dialect. Tellingly, varieties as-

sociated with lower socio-economic classes are marked by stigmatized features like *be*-copula absence.

If we accept the premise that AAVE and Formal English are both dialects, then we can entertain the notion that writing college essays is especially difficult for those students whose oral dialects are more distinct from the formal written dialect. This seems logically sound, and in fact seems to play out accurately within the composition classroom. If we look closely, we can surmise why: Not only is the oral dialect of these students dissimilar to the written one in terms of language, but the rhetorical styles are also dissimilar.

When we compare the rhetorical patterns of a five-paragraph essay to the rhetorical styles of African American or Latino or lower income White groups, we realize that these groups develop arguments along different, although not necessarily less effective or even less correct, lines. Furthermore, students from non-literate backgrounds, or from groups that reject and criticize literacy and academic success, are likely to be at a disadvantage because they have not had the exposure to the rhetorical devices that they are expected to master in college writing. Instead of the rhetorical skills normally used for written discourse, they employ tools useful for spoken discourse, often omitting pertinent details and introductory remarks that are unnecessary in face-to-face verbal communication. As Lisa Delpit writes:

> Literacy communicates a message solely through a text, through the *word*. Orality, by contrast, has available to it other vehicles for communication: not only is the message transmitted through words (the text), but by factors such as the relationship of the individuals talking, where the interaction is taking place, what prior knowledge and/ or understanding the participants bring to the communication encounter, the gestures used, the speaker's ability to adjust the message if the audience doesn't understand, intonation, facial expressions, and so forth—the *con*, (meaning "with") in *context*. (96)

In some ways, these students lack the linguistic cultural capital that would set them up for academic success because they possess the communicative and integrative codes for a culture that is not in power within the academic arena.

Not knowing or being unfamiliar with the codes impedes students in their attempts to communicate through writing. One bright and creative student, whom I will refer to as L. M., spent over an hour writing the following brief diagnostic essay, an assignment typical of many university composition classes:

I chose to come to [this university], because it's a high recommended college, I could get a chance to meet a lot of people, and they gave me the most money.

As I begin narrowing down my college choices, there was this one university that everyone in [my state] dreams of attending. In this state, [this university] is high recommend and well acredited too. My teachers all thought that this would be the best school for me, because I would receive a quality education and get a chance to meet a lot of people.

Since I have been here, I have meet people from different cultural backgrounds ranging from A to Z. This isn't a campus filled with only blacks, like my high school. Just by walking around the campus you see blacks, whites, and chinese, and etc..

I received the highest amount of money from this school so that was really I final deciding factor, but now that chosing a college its over, to me coming to [this university] had to be the best decision.

Many people reading this essay would undoubtedly walk away unimpressed by both the student's writing and any university that would admit him. By traditional standards, the essay lacks development, coherence, and progression, among other things, and is riddled with grammatical errors. From a traditionalist perspective, this student may seem uneducable; his writing does not reflect the linguistic cultural capital deemed "basic" for academic writing.

The student who wrote this essay is a young African American male, verbally articulate in English, although not in the dialect closest to Formal Written English, and he is successful in other disciplines that rely less on written communication. Perhaps even more striking is the fact that this student has had twelve years of formal schooling prior to writing this essay. This essay reflects a bare skeleton of the five-paragraph essay that most students are required to write in high school. Additionally, the first paragraph reads like a three-point thesis statement, albeit a poorly worded one. The student tries to write the essay that he knows the instructor expects, but he cannot successfully deliver.

I do not want to downplay the additional problems that come with race or ethnicity; however, I do want to emphasize that many White students are equally unprepared to assume their roles in written discourse communities. Heath's lengthy ethnographic study of the African American and White communities in the Piedmont region of South Carolina seems to support this assertion. Neither group of children in her study was well prepared for or remarkably successful in school. For the African American residents of Trackton, writing is a

base from which "performances," whether "raising a hymn" or "raising a prayer," can be built. For the Whites from Roadville, however, writing is confining.

According to Heath, writing for Roadville residents is a practical tool: they, usually the women, write grocery lists, letters, and brief reports (usually on forms). "Behind the written word is an authority, and the text is a message which can be taken apart only insofar as its analysis does not extend too far beyond the text and commonly agreed upon experiences" (Heath 234-235). The following essay, written as a first day diagnostic assignment by a first year university student, whom I will call S. S., illustrates my point that lack of academic preparedness is not confined by race or ethnicity:

> There are many reasons from me chosing [this university] for college as the [marching band], a good Pre-med program, and that my family is great fans of [this university]. [This University] is a great academic school to attend, they have a good selection of programs to study. Along with [this university] being academically brilliant, there football team and [marching band] programs roar in success. Being accepted into [this university] was the greatest thing to happen to me. I have always been a [university] fan.
>
> Since the fifth grade I have been in a band program playing the alto saxophone. The in highschool I chose to march and suport the Pride of the Patriots, our football team. So when I was signing up for college noone could beat the [marching band]. Marching band takes a lot of time and practice, but when your out there marching at half time all the hard work is worth it. Choosen to March in [this unversity's] Band was a great glory for me as this is what I've always wanted to do.
>
> Academically choosing [this university] was easy, there Pre-med program is one of the best in the South. The Arts and Science program at [this university] is excellent, they have many different studies to chose from and counslers waiting to help. I already had a cousin and uncle graduate from [this university], showing the excellence in Pre-med. Along with the school being hard and a lot of studying, I'm sure I will do well.
>
> My family since I was very young have all sat around the television cheering on [this university]. They always told me this is where I would go to school, now I can say I was finally accepted. Right now it seems I'm far away from home missing my family and friends. Soon I will be calling this home. Being from [another state] I always thought I would go to [my home state's university], but when I came and visited here, I

knew it was for me.

[This university] is a good school to chose for college. Having many reasons to chose [this university], hopefully I will be a success. The [marching band] is a great honor to be in now my family can cheer not only for the football team, but also for their daughter. I am proud to be going to [this university] and one day looking back seeing my success.

The author of this essay is a White female, for whom English is her first language. She speaks a Southern Vernacular dialect and is the first person from her immediate family to attend college.

Like the first student, S.S. is trying to write a five-paragraph essay with a thesis sentence in the introduction and three body paragraphs to develop that thesis. Like L. M., she is unsuccessful. From a traditional perspective, the essay is redundant, makes very little progression, rambles in focus, displays problems with verb phrases, inappropriate word choice, pronoun confusion, and sentence boundaries, and essentially fails to portray communicative competence. The pedagogical challenge is to help students like L. M. and S. S. develop the linguistic codes that will enable them to communicate effectively within the academic community.

What do current pedagogical practices offer linguistic outsiders?

Error perception is central to current pedagogical practices. Mina Shaughnessy's definition of errors as "unintentional and unprofitable intrusions upon the consciousness of the reader" (12) has almost become a mantra for many compositionists. Working both from Shaughnessy's call to search for the logic of errors and from studies in second language acquisition, researchers from composition, rhetoric, and linguistics have started looking into patterns and influences that create variations or perceived errors in written text. (For discussion in composition studies, see Hairston; Coleman; Bruch and Marback. In rhetoric, see for example Ball and also Brandt. In linguistics, see Heath; Labov; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes.) While much has been learned about how and why learners might produce inappropriate variations in their writing, that knowledge has had varying influences on pedagogy. Wolfram et al (1999) identify three alternatives that are used with linguistic outsiders: annihilation, accommodation, and "somewhere in between" (26).

Annihilation is central to "English Only" movements that have

gained momentum, at least outside the classroom. Classroom practices focus on error correction and devalue the multi-cultural experiences and language varieties of students and teachers. Success is measured by standardized tests. The message is viewed as most important, and any deviation that might hinder communication of that message is judged negatively.

Unlike annihilation, accommodation is motivated by a commitment to value the learner's home language, to acknowledge individual voice and creativity that struggles outside the dominant language ideology. The focus is on the writer, rather than the message. However, those who teach using the accommodation method recognize that students or writers, particularly those who are linguistic outsiders, must know and be able to construct and deconstruct arguments written or spoken in the dominant language form if they are to take active roles within the ongoing discourses. Others have recognized that expressivist forms of writing instruction may not be the most effective methods for teaching the very students they purport to protect. (See Cope and Kalantzis; Ball; Briggs and Pailliotet.)

Instead of trying to either eliminate home language influences or protect learners from language purists, some writing instructors are trying an additive approach to language learning. Drawing on work from contrastive rhetoric, such as Connor and Ball, and in applied linguistics, notably studies by Labov and Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, these teachers try to build on the students' current language skills and knowledge. This approach seems to gain support from studies in second language acquisition and literacy.

What can we learn from second language acquisition?

By suggesting that studies in second language acquisition can offer insight for basic writing instruction, I do not mean to equate native English-speaking basic writing students with English as a second language students. Research indicates significant differences between their composing processes, language use, cultural perspectives, and motivation. (Three studies that provide rich descriptions of these differences are those by Silva and Leki, by Atkinson and Ramanthan, and by Nero.) Recognizing learner differences, however, does not necessarily negate any possible value that pedagogical theories from ESL research may have for basic writing instruction.

Error analysis is one focus of research in second language acquisition that has relevance for basic writing pedagogy. According to Ellis, studies in error analysis reveal that errors are "an inevitable feature of the learning process. Indeed, the very concept of 'error' came to be

challenged on the grounds that learners act systematically in accordance with mental grammars they have constructed and that their utterances are well-formed in terms of these grammars" (71). Viewing "errors" as a reflection of a coherent system of language use opens dialogue on language variety and appropriateness. For example, explicit instruction can be given to make learners aware of the specific language rule, which is called "consciousness-raising" in second language studies, and knowledge of the rule may help learners acquire the language feature sooner rather than later (Ellis, and Rutherford). Some AAVE and SAV speakers systematically omit *-s* on third-person single present-tense verbs. (This feature is also heavily stigmatized.) A consciousness-raising approach encourages instructors to make these speakers aware that while the morphological ending is not used in their specific dialect, it is expected in Formal Written English. This does not mean the learner will always or even immediately use the rule, but by making the learner more aware of this particular rule, the instructor has encouraged the learner to make learning it a goal.

In addition to informing our assessment of errors as learner language variation, second language studies can also help us look at issues of motivation in student learning. Learners will vary in their acceptance, rejection, or negotiation of the dominant culture. For some learners, at least, accepting or adopting the White middle class codes means selling out or losing identification with their family and community. We see this when African-American inner-city adolescents begin to hide their academic accomplishments, even to the point of turning in inferior work rather than being different from their peers, and we see it in the rural White students who drop out of school as soon as they are old enough, presumably because neither they nor their families value formal education. For some of these students, the social cost of assimilation makes it undesirable.

Schumann's Acculturation Model addresses how second language learners do or do not assimilate into the new culture. In this model, Schumann argues that language has three general functions: communicative, integrative, and expressive. Furthermore, he suggests that "restriction in function can be seen as resulting from social and/ or psychological distance between the speaker and the addressee" (267). In sum, factors that create greater social and/ or psychological distance between learners and the target language will impede learning and acculturation. In other words, linguistic outsiders need to be reassured that their dialect is not "wrong." Students need to know that their language and culture are valued and that learning Formal Written English is simply another dialect for specific situations.

Language acquisition is more than learning words; it is learning how to use language as one tool for navigating and negotiating within a particular culture. If the learner feels threatened or distant from a

culture, then the learner may not be motivated to acquire the language and the accompanying linguistic cultural capital. Indeed, the learner may be resistant to acculturation. For those students who enter the university not knowing and not using expected "basic" writing tools, like Formal Written English and some version of the five-paragraph essay, the "correcting tool" of social practice that is supposed to encourage them toward acquiring those tools becomes a "weeding out device." According to Gee, "Each Discourse necessitates that members, at least while they are playing roles within the Discourse, act as if they hold particular beliefs and values about what counts as the 'right sort' of person and the 'right' way to be in the world, and thus too, what counts as the 'wrong' sort and the 'wrong' way" (148). For many basic writing students, this means trying to identify with the dominant classroom culture as "right" and eschewing their own identity as, if not "wrong," at least as "other."

However, exceptions do exist; some learners, as individuals, are able to "violate the modal tendency of [the] group" and achieve success in acquiring the target language (Schumann 267). Several individuals have stepped forward with autobiographic studies that discuss how they learned to write, notably, Lisa Delpit, Keith Gilyard, and Mike Rose. In different ways, these writers acknowledge the influences that teachers and mentors had on them as language learners. They also refer to a sense of alienation from White middle class society and to a struggling or metacognitive building of language(s) as not only influencing, but also enriching their writing.

What can we learn from literacy studies?

Brandt captures this consensus of learning literacy as a "piling up and extending out of literacy" (651). According to Brandt, "transformations in literacy accompany large-scale economic, technological, and cultural changes" (659). She continues through example to show "how much the meaning of education and educated language had begun to change by mid-century— shifting from the cultivated talk of the well-bred to the efficient professional prose of the technocrat— thereby altering the paths of upward mobility" (659). With the burgeoning of twentieth century technology and an increasing recognition of civil rights, those citizens previously disenfranchised from society have capitalized on the vast changes and discovered new paths to economic and cultural success. Thus, "[w]hereas at one time literacy might have been best achieved by attending to traditional knowledge and tight locuses of meaning, literacy in an advanced literate period requires an ability to work the borders between tradition and change, an ability to adapt and improvise and amalgamate" (Brandt

660). Those outsiders who achieve success in this environment of cultural, technical, and economic flux have mastered the skills of adaptability and amalgamation. They have learned to synthesize old and new restraints to formulate new linguistic cultural capital that not only enables their success but that constrains and otherwise restricts the capital of those whose power they wish to usurp and who wish to usurp their newly found power.

As Bourdieu (1996) states, "cultural capital can be acquired, to a varying extent, depending on the period, the society, and the social class, in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously" (245). That is, some periods and social classes will be more accepting of difference and will have more accessible codes than others. Some will be inclusive, inviting newcomers, while others will be exclusive, thwarting the hopes of those who want in.

Students who know how to use language to express themselves and to communicate with others need to learn critical strategies to fulfill the integrative function of language, especially the written language, and not only to push against the borders but to reshape and weaken them. Rose asserts that "Good teaching... is almost defined by its tendency to push on the border of things" (13). As teachers, we need to identify those borders and assist our students in defying them. We cannot do this by teaching writing as if all of our students come to class equally versed in the rhetorical and syntactic skills necessary for producing expected and acceptable written discourse in the academy.

How might we better assist outsiders in acquiring linguistic capital?

Perhaps the question that we as educators must now ask is, given the constant change that permeates the cultural literacy of our current society, how do we train or facilitate our students in their mastery of these specialized, yet seemingly generic, skills of adaptability, particularly in their writing? Julie Foertsch suggests that cognitive psychology may hold the key to answering this question. She carves out a synthesized position somewhere between a "local, highly contextualized knowledge and general, relatively decontextualized knowledge" (362). This position tries to re-direct a current pedagogical split between traditional freshman composition curriculum and writing across the curriculum approaches (363). Foertsch writes:

> It is useful to turn to research in cognitive psychology, which suggests that a teaching approach that uses higher-level abstractions and specific examples *in combination* will be more

> effective in promoting transfer-of-learning than will either method alone. (364, emphasis in original)

Thus, students need to learn higher-level abstractions, like narrative structure, but they also need specific examples of how to organize their own narratives at the paragraph level and overall.

Moreover, novices must have guidelines or other cues that will assist them in effectively transferring relevant data or memories because otherwise they have less chance of successfully solving the assigned problems. Furthermore,

> expert problem solvers are probably helped by two interdependent processes: a strategic process that prompts them to analyze the generic structure of a given problem, and an automatic process that makes them more accurate at abstracting structural properties due to the larger number of problems they have encountered. Novices' lack of familiarity with relevant problems makes them less inclined to analyze the problems in terms of their underlying generic structure .... However, even if novices will always be less accurate than experts at identifying the relations that are relevant, they *can* be explicitly instructed to use the same strategy that experts use. (Foertsch 372)

Foertsch claims that transfer of learning can occur through extensive experience, which is slow, and through explicit instruction, which shortcuts past experience because the learners try to "deliberately and mindfully abstract underlying principles from the problems they encounter" (Foertsch 373). Instruction involves the teaching of metacognitive strategies that help learners shortcut, but not necessarily supplant, experience. In short, both general and specific knowledge must be shared with learners if they are to achieve successful learning results. This is conceptually similar to consciousness-raising in second language acquisition studies.

For the basic composition classroom, this means we may better serve our students not by teaching discipline specific knowledge exclusively, but rather by choosing the best mix of strategies and guidelines that will support our students who wish to shorten their learning curve. In other words, we must assist our students who desire access to the codes that will most enhance their chances of success in securing linguistic cultural capital by teaching specific strategies, such as organization patterns at the essay, paragraph, and sentence levels. From this outward-reaching, social-epistemic vantage, we may find assistance in the suggestions of Doug Brent and James Berlin.

In *Reading as Rhetorical Invention*, Doug Brent categorizes reading as part of a "building of communal knowledge through rhetorical interchange" (72). When people read, they bring to the interpretation of that text all of their prior cultural experiences and textual knowledge. Thus, those who are well-read or who benefit from culturally literate families have a larger "repertoire" of codes from which to form "schemata," that is "preexisting patterns which condition the way meaning is formed out of the individual experience of the reader" (Brent 28). As Brent points out, acceptance of the repertoire or schemata as methods of invention and interpretation should not be taken as a rejection of research based writing until students have achieved some massive store of discipline specific knowledge, but rather "to delay immersing students in research until their repertoire is formed is to deny them access to one of the most important of the processes that form it" (107). Berlin also urges instructors to require students to read critically as a way of discovering rhetorical moves. Just as Foertsch surmises from her forages in cognitive psychology, Brent concludes that novices or students benefit from an exposure to specific knowledge and to decentered, general strategies, like Aristotle's pisteis, because this combination of knowledge better equips those students in forming sound judgments based on reasonable evidence. I suggest that this extension may provide better access for students to what Foertsch calls the shortcut to linguistic cultural capital. For composition pedagogy, it suggests that some students may benefit from specific instruction in traditional modes for organizing essays, including explicit directions on how to shape a comparison essay paragraph by paragraph, for example.

In addition to critical reading and analysis, students may benefit from more explicit instruction in syntactic cohesion, perhaps especially through the Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), and attention to grammatical style. The style of a written text is created by the cumulative effect of its sentences. When writers change perspective mid-sentence or even between sentences, they break the text's cohesion. For example, S.S. disrupts the cohesion of her sentence when she writes: *Along with the school being hard and a lot of studying, I'm sure I will do well.* For some writers, however, who are unaccustomed to looking at their writing from a reader perspective, these breaks are inconsequential. Explicit instruction may help these writers understand why this is a problem and how to make the text more cohesive for the reader. In a study of the writing of business students, Campbell et al found that explicit instruction in style (specifically in terms of conciseness, directness, active/passive usage, word choice, and parallelism) improved the quality ratings of those student writers' written texts.

How would this affect the way we look at students and their writing?

Perhaps the most dramatic impact these insights from second language and literacy studies could have is a new lens for looking at linguistic variations in student writing. Rather than choosing to annihilate or accommodate variations in written language, we can opt to analyze those variations to discover systematic influences so that we can help students become more aware of where the variations are, why the variations are intrusive, and what linguistic options exist. At this point, it may be helpful to look at the student essays again. The following table provides a summary of my linguistic analysis of sample variations from Formal Written English in the two essays.

Example Variations from Formal Written English

	Essay 1 (L. M.)	Essay 2 (S. S.)
Morphological Variations	*-ly* absence on *high* *-ed* absence on *recommend*	*Choosen* in place of *choosing*
Semantic Variations	*highest amount* rather than *largest amount*	*There football team and* [marching band] *roar in success* rather than *are successful*
Syntactic Variations	Omission of final inflection on past participle (*-ed* on *recommend* and *begin)*	Subject-verb disagreement: *My family since I was young have...*
Pragmatic Variations	Shift in perspective: *As I begin narrowing down my college choices, there was this one...*	Tangential, relationship focused syntactic organization. Multiple shifts in perspective.

Table: Comparison of variations from Formal Written English in Student Essays 1 and 2.

First, we will look at L. M.'s essay. In terms of morphology, L. M. omits the *-ly* on *high* twice. The repetition makes this more likely a variation rather than a typo or mistake. The discrepancy between the writer's use of *recommended* and *recommend*, however, is less straightforward. One possibility is the phonetic environment. In the first use, when the *-ed* inflection is present, *recommended* is followed by *college*, but in the second instance, when the inflection is omitted, *recommend* is followed by *and*. A more likely hypothesis is the syntactic structure of the sentences. In the first use, *recommended* is a participial adjective modifying *college*; in the second sentence, *recommend* is a past passive participle of the verb phrase since the omission of final inflections on verbs (especially third person verbs following *be* forms) is common in vernacular dialects, including AAVE (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes; Rickford and Rickford); the *-ed* deletion here may be an uncatalogued AAVE feature.

Aside from the morphological problems, the essay also exhibits semantic variations from Formal Written English. The phrase *the highest amount of money* displays a semantic incongruence between the adjective *highest* and the noun *amount*. In Formal English, we expect *largest* rather than *highest*. As Leech and Svartvik explain, *high* is one of a unique group of words that can function as either adjectives or adverbs but which "are mostly connected with time, position, and direction" (223). We are able to understand what the writer means, but the word choice is awkward and disruptive to a reader accustomed to the Formal form. This variation may be the result of the writer trying to avoid repeating the exact wording of his thesis statement, *the most money*.

While the morphologic and semantic variations are distracting, the most confounding differences, from a pedagogic perspective, may be pragmatic. At several places in the essay, the writer switches perspectives mid-sentence: *As I begin narrowing down my college choices, there was this one university that everyone in* [this university] *dreams of attending*. The first disjuncture occurs between the introductory clause and the main subject. The existential *there was this one* does not relate directly to *I*, nor does it fit with the expected formality of a freshman composition. The writer, it seems, is trying to set up a story about the university, a story with fairy-tale-like qualities where he has the choice of attending the one school that everyone else only dreams of attending. Unfortunately, the message he tries to convey in the academic essay is negated because his usage varies substantially from Formal Written English.

The comment that he selected this particular university because it was *not filled with only blacks, like my high school* is interesting because this student is African American. He seems to indicate that going to an all-black school was problematic, perhaps because it limited his

exposure to other cultures, especially the dominant White culture. Underlying this statement is a perception that his school was somehow less acceptable or maybe even less academically rigorous. If we look at Schumann's Acculturation Model, we might conclude that the student is motivated, for whatever reason, to acquire the language and accompanying cultural codes that he perceives will help him successfully negotiate the academic arena and, furthermore, that he wants to identify, at least to some extent, with that dominant culture.

When asked to write a fictional narrative essay, the same student responded with a narrative dialogue. In the first paragraph, a son complains to his mother:

> Hey moma. Hey moma. "Why do you make me do so much work? I cook, I clean, I wash, I mow the fields, and on top of that, I have to go to school everyday. On each day that I don't complete these chores, you always fuss or put me on punishment. Moma, do you really think it's fair to treat me this way? I feel like a slave, who's been put on this plantation to serve you."

The mother responds for the rest of the essay. Mechanical issues aside, the essay shows an effective use of dialogue, good attention to details that evoke a sense of reality within the dialogue, and a comfort and fluency with the use of dialogue, even writing in a cadence that mimics an oral story. This student needs to learn the preferred linguistic codes, the "how to" of writing, but he already knows the "what."

The resonance of his voice throughout the narrative echoes the privilege given to oral stories within the African American communities, the same privileging of oral richness that Delpit, Gilyard, and Rose describe. To paraphrase Delpit, when we teach other people's children, we must take care not only to acknowledge the differences in dialect but also to include the importance of personal relationships within the communities and cultures (95). Perhaps, as educators, we should try to access this potential competence for expressive language to encourage a stronger metacognitive appreciation for written language within the learners.

S. S.'s essay exhibits fewer morphological variations than L. M.'s does. The main morphological variation is *choosen* instead of *choosing*. This could be influenced by phonology. In speech, perhaps especially in Southern speech, *-en* and *-ing* often sound alike. Confusing these morphemes, however, could cause linguistic insiders to perceive S.S. as careless, lazy, or ignorant. Other problematic variations with this essay involve pragmatics and syntax. For example, in this sentence, *My family since I was very young have all sat around the television cheering on* [this university], the student places a sentence adjectival clause be-

tween the subject head and the verb when in formal writing it is normally placed at the beginning of the sentence. In speech, perhaps particularly in her Southern Vernacular dialect, this construction is acceptable and may even be preferred as a way to enrich the story. This is not the only instance where the student branches out from her main subject-verb context to provide additional detail in an almost tangential way. The following sentence illustrates my point:

> I already had a cousin and uncle graduate from [this university], showing the excellence in Pre-med. Along with the school being hard and a lot of studying, I'm sure I will do well.

In explaining the excellence of the university's pre-med program, the student does not quote statistics or test scores, but rather she tells the reader that she knows two people who have been in the program. She has first-hand knowledge of the program. Much of southern culture esteems personal knowledge above more empirical knowledge, and if a speaker wants to build a strong argument, claiming to know someone who has first-hand knowledge is important. The student draws from her culture to provide additional support for her decision to attend this university. Unfortunately, this support is another deviation from the expected Formal linearly arranged essay: she makes the connection that because the pre-med program will be challenging and because she will study hard, she will do well in medical school. This taps into the traditional belief that she can succeed if she works hard enough. Unfortunately, her academic essay does not send the metacognitive message to the linguistic insider that she either works hard or is competent.

Orally, however, this student is quite competent. She told me, in detail, about watching the university's football games with her father and uncle and about being more interested in the halftime shows than the games. She recalled being impressed by the university marching band's intricate marches that emphasized the music it played. As a budding musician, she yearned for the chance to be out on that football field with the university band. Her enthusiasm and dream fulfillment reflect poorly in the essay she produced. Sadly, S. S. left the university before completing her first semester.

For students like L. M. and S. S. who are unprepared to write using Formal Written English for the academic discourse community, we must teach them the critical strategies that they need to know. By looking at linguistic variation in student writing as simply another way of communicating rather than judging those variations (and, by extensions, those students), we can create an environment that enhances acculturation. My goal in discussing language variation with students is to communicate to the student where and when this language varia-

tion would be more effective and to illustrate linguistic options that are more effective in academic writing. I also emphasize that some features of academic writing would be equally inappropriate for other communicative purposes, such as an email to a best friend. While this approach values students' languages, it also opens a dialogue into which varieties work best for what situations. Students can start thinking about language style as another rhetorical option for communicating a given message, to a particular audience, through a specific medium. Students then see linguistic variation as a tool for facilitating communication within a discourse community.

To help perfect that tool, students need explicit instruction. For example, using functional sentence perspective, students can be taught to track new and given noun phrases as a way to control cohesion between sentences and paragraphs. Students can also be taught to create checklists, based on individual error analyses, for systematic variations. Thus, students who routinely omit past participle inflections can be made more aware of this feature (consciousness-raising) and learn to check their writing for unintentional instances of the variation. Finally, students can learn specific rhetorical strategies, like traditional organization patterns and expected ways of text development (description and example), that are part of written academic discourse but are different from their oral strategies. For example, students may need explicit instruction as to what types of supporting information and arguments are valued in the academy. After three months of focusing on written language in terms of syntax and paragraph and essay structure, L. M., who produced the first essay, also produced the following one.

> Attending and graduating from both high school and college are mile stones in a person's life. Vividly there is a noticeable gap between them, but you can't complete one without the other. High is to college, as an employee is to an supervisor, meaning they're just a step a part. High school differs from college because of the responsibilities, the test formats, and the facilities.
>
> One area in which the two differ, would be in the responsibilities. In high school, you have a family right there to support and make you get up to go to class. For instance, attendence, in high school the attendence policy states, "If a student miss eleven days in a particular class, he or she will fail." For example, last year this senior missed eleven days, and as a result wasn't allowed to march. On the contrary, in college the attendence policy states, "If a student miss more than three days his or her grade will drop a letter." For example, last semester I didn't make the dean's list, because af-

ter reviewing my attendence record, one of my grades dropped. The work ethnic also is very different from high school compared to college. High school classes are more relaxed because you have only one or two assignments a week. For example, when I was in high school the only assignment was to study for the weekly quiz. On the other hand, in college the work ethnic is more complex. A student may have to write a paper, take a test, read a story, and conduct experiments in course of one day. For example, my first day going to class, I had to write a thousand word essay. Another part of responsibility would be maintaining social balance. In high school social balance doesn't really play a big role. Since all the social gatherings for high school students had to be on the weekends, there was no pressure dureing the week. For example, during my senior year we tried to have an after party for one of our Thursday night football games, but the principle did not O.K. it. On the contrary, in college social balance plays a big role. For the simple fact there isn't curfew or any one to tell you what to do. For example, the first day of class there was a party that lasted till the next day.

The essay continues in similar fashion for four more lengthy paragraphs. While the essay can still be improved in terms of syntax and style, it reflects a significant improvement in development over the first essay. Noticeably absent are the morphological errors from the first essay. The student shows an improved understanding of sentence boundaries in Formal Written English (with the exception of one fragment). While he is overusing transition words, possibly because he has not developed other methods of transitioning in writing, the overall organization is more consistent with the expectations of Formal Written English. This essay reflects more variety in types of sentence structures and an increased use of complex sentences. Additionally, while each paragraph in the first essay struggles to average 3-4 sentences and provides little information beyond what is overtly stated in the introductory paragraph, the second paragraph in this essay makes assertions and backs them up with examples to create a structurally sound comparison of responsibilities for high school students versus college students. Over time and with additional instruction on how to write using Formal Written English, on which words, structures, and organization patterns work best for academic purposes, this student will, if he so chooses, be able to use writing as a means to access some of the linguistic cultural capital that will enable him to switch between discourse communities.

Where do we go from here?

While I do not suggest that we need to return completely to a traditional or even a current-traditional approach to teaching, I do believe that we, in academia, must consider what our students needs are, namely to produce written texts that express, communicate, and integrate thoughts in ways that are appropriate for a variety of written discourse communities. While their language may always remain "marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition," they can learn to mimic codes valued by the academy.

We should continue to mine ESL studies for applicable methods and findings, like consciousness-raising and Schumann's Acculturation Model, that have relevance for composition studies. Some ethnographic studies could specifically address how learners from various cultures learn to write successfully. Additionally, research that compares metacognitive skills of students from families who are "hyperliterate" with students from families that rarely read anything might be illuminating. Why do some children from non-print backgrounds become enthralled with reading and writing while others do not? The importance of these issues will increase as our schools, both secondary and eventually colleges and universities, learn to grapple with the growing number of multicultural and multi-lingual students that make up our society.

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Hugh English and Lydia Nagle

WAYS OF TAKING MEANING FROM TEXTS: READING IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

ABSTRACT: *In this piece, a college professor and a high school teacher analyze and interpret responses to detailed questionnaires about reading practices that they administered in high school and college classrooms. The authors name recurring motifs, offering examples and some brief interpretation of six major motifs which emerged as useable analytical categories. Finding fewer differences between high school and college students than they initially assumed, the authors are lead to discuss how students' language about reading differs more from some of the most valued "ways of taking meaning from texts" in academic life. They conclude with some brief suggestions for future research and with a discussion of several ways that teachers might "teach" reading differently in order to open up a more varied repertoire of reading practices. In addition to suggesting that teachers could do more to name and to elaborate reading practices in precise terms and in specific contexts, the authors consider such pedagogical strategies such as readerly practices of "marking a text"; sequencing reading practices; and teaching the academic intertextual practices of citation much earlier in schooling.*

We met and began our friendship and our professional collaboration, across the presumed divide between high school and college teaching, in "Looking Both Ways," a professional development seminar co-sponsored by the City University of New York (CUNY) and the New York City Board of Education. Aiming for a view of literacy that spans students' development over an eight-year period, the Looking Both Ways seminar provides opportunities for high school and college teachers to share, to discuss, and to reflect upon their knowledge and experience in the interests of strengthening literacy education for the students they teach. (See http://www.lookingbothways.cuny.edu)

For us, one of the most powerful assignments in the seminar asked us to visit each other's classrooms. For both of us, it had been many years since we had an opportunity for direct observation of the different contexts for experiences of teaching and learning in high school

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and college classrooms. When we visited each other's classrooms at Flushing High School, a large urban high school in Queens, New York City, and Queens College-CUNY, we were struck by the sometimes different expectations of student reading and the often different practices, routines, and language that articulate and represent reading in high school and in college. Our experiences as teachers suggested that, to some degree, teacher expectations produce student performances and that students are often confused by differences in expectations for reading practices, especially when those differences are not articulated explicitly.

Shirley Brice Heath's ethnographic study of schools and communities leads her to articulate carefully the transitions that young students must make between their home literacies and often different school literacies:

> Children have to learn to select, hold, and retrieve content from books and other written or printed texts in accordance with their community's rules or "ways of taking," and the children's learning follows community paths of language socialization. In each society, certain kinds of childhood participation in literacy events may precede others, as the developmental sequence builds toward the whole complex of home and community behaviors characteristic of the society. The ways of taking employed in the school may in turn build directly on the preschool development, may require substantial adaptation on the part of the children, or may even run directly counter to aspects of the community's pattern. (Heath, 119)

Heath distinguishes between different reading practices in different social contexts, an effort which leads her to invent language to describe what readers do *with* and *to* texts when they read. In the year following our participation in the Looking Both Ways seminar, we had an opportunity to undertake a small research project of our own in which we collected and interpreted some of the language that high school and college students use to represent different "ways of taking" meaning from texts (i.e., different reading practices).

Our research began with the premise that investigation and interpretation of the representations of "ways of taking" meaning from texts through written questionnaires would allow us to consider how student languages represent reading practices in high school and college classrooms. We collected responses to detailed questionnaires about reading practices and understandings of reading practices, questionnaires that called for language in response, rather than merely checking off answers, from 3 classes of high school seniors, at Flushing High School; from 1 class of the second required English course at

Queensborough Community College-CUNY; and from 4 classes of the writing-intensive "English 120: Writing, Literature, Culture" course, at Queens College-CUNY. (See questionnaire in Appendix.) We saw this research as clearly limited in its scope and, consequently, in claims that could be made, but we also saw it as deeply qualitative or interpretive in its close attention to the language and practices that teachers and students—positioned across the high school-college divide and across the teacher-student divide—use to represent "ways of taking" meaning from texts.

This preliminary collection and interpretation of language used to represent reading practices connects with our larger goal of getting better at articulating reading practices in our own classrooms and among our colleagues. We want, for example, to find more effective responses to readers' tendencies to put into a text what isn't there, what students often represent as "reading between the lines." Yet, we also understand that there is a productive, sanctioned "reading between the lines" in interpretive practice (just as there are both sanctioned "misreadings" and "wrong" ones). We had a sense of where we wanted to get to (of goals for our students as readers), but we had little sense—beyond the merely anecdotal—of how students and teachers use language to represent reading practices for themselves and for one another.

Prior to administering this questionnaire, we could only surmise that our students approached reading by using individual patterns that they had essentially learned early, developed over the years, and used to achieve both personal pleasure gained from reading and to fulfill school reading requirements. The data that emerged allowed us to evaluate in an interpretive, rather than a scientific, manner what motifs have evolved for our students when they describe their reading. First, we both read all the responses that we had gathered. Next, we discussed our general reactions and began, in a preliminary way, to identify commonalities. In our re-reading process, we began to notice and to name recurring motifs which allowed us to recognize analytical categories. In our analysis of our data, we found 6 dominant motifs in our students' language which we named: (1) Logistics of Reading; (2) Duty; (3) Utility; (4) Mechanics; (5) Image; and (6) Identification. In the following paragraphs, we offer an example (or examples) and some brief interpretation of each motif.

(1) LOGISTICS OF READING

We asked a very specific question: Where and when do you read for this class? The answers varied widely. It was surprising to learn

that a majority of the students surveyed read while in transit, on the bus or train, or even in the car to and from work or school. Many read in bed late at night before sleeping.

Here is an interesting revelation: "if no one is in the house, then I read out loud and pretend I'm one of the characters." Another student stated: "I read at night . . . only you and the book are alive." Many students read with music playing in the background: "I like to escape to far away places, where only I know where I am."

We had a sense of how difficult it is for most of our students to find time and space that is quiet enough, free enough of distractions for them to engage deeply in their reading, for them to concentrate for extended periods of time. Examples: "When I read, I have to be in a quiet, secluded place where I can concentrate on my reading." and "I usually read for this class very late in the evening before I go to bed because when I'm in a relaxed mood I tend to understand the reading the first time rather than having to go over it again." In general, we had a sense of our students being in search of a quiet space (and time) in their lives, so that they could concentrate on reading.

In general, our students seem to try to fit their reading between other demands, that is, in any time available in their busy lives. Some described the possibility of fitting their required English readings around other demands, in ways that would not be possible with other subjects.

(2) **DUTY**

The dutiful reader. Being a good student. Reading for the goals of schooling. Students' language claims the role of the "proper" reader. Often students responded with a version of reading as a function of being a student, articulating in the process a sense of what is "proper" to school reading, and never mentioning ways of reading that might not seem to belong to their roles as students. For example, perhaps the dutiful reader may at times be pleasantly surprised when a reading experience will inspire curiosity in a topic or a desire to go beyond the assigned text. However, we saw very little evidence of this reaching beyond a very limited sense of what is "proper" to school reading. Here, we note the issue of whose authority defines acts of reading, of interpretation. While we saw little explicit claim of any reader's authority, we noted the implicit assumption of a teacher's authority in defining particular, and, hence, limited goals for reading practices (but, of course, resistance may not be articulated to us).

Example: "I read the entire text from beginning to end slowly enough to understand so that I only have to read it one time." This is

reading as a dutiful function of schooling in which other possible reasons for or uses of reading, such as reading for pleasure or intellectual curiosity, are not considered.

(3) UTILITY

Many students are utilitarian readers, that is, they read "to get" something—a better grade, information or knowledge on how to do something. Overwhelmingly, students responded that they read material on the Internet almost daily. Many seem to focus on an interest that they may have: "I always read about basketball. I'm really interested in it and every time I'm on the Internet, I'm drawn to check the sports section." In interpreting, we often found it almost impossible to separate "utility" from "duty": "I listen to what the teacher says to look for in the passage." It seems that the two work in complementary ways: teachers define, or are understood to be defining, reading practices in terms of narrow senses of use (e.g., read this in preparation for a quiz, or read and focus on something particular or for some specific "information"), and students dutifully follow their distilled sense of a particular reading experience's utility.

An interesting vagueness emerged when students articulated utilitarian notions of needing to understand what one reads. Example: "It is expected for me to understand what I read. And to know how to keep everything I know in my head so if anything is asked to me about the story I would be able to answer it." Notice the almost absolute conflation of understand and know, and also how understanding really seems to come down to being prepared for being asked, being tested. This seems to offer us an opportunity to think about how more expansive notions of "understanding" become victims of schooling. Students seem to read for a specific purpose (e.g., to pass an exam, etc.). We saw no significant evidence of students engaged in a process of collecting and relating ideas from one area with anything else they know. Moreover, we saw no evidence of reading as a practice of integrating knowledge or understanding from varied subjects or courses. Few signs of interdisciplinary or other intellectual connections appeared. Why, for example, do so few of the students we surveyed seem able to think about knowing something the way one knows an answer on a test as different from understanding something the way one engages in interpretive speculation, conversation, and revision about a text's possible meanings? Their experiences with reading in and for school seem not to have suggested such uses for reading practices.

(4) MECHANICS

Reading from beginning to end; reading the ending first; note-taking and underlining; re-reading and reviewing; skipping to middle or end; checking how many pages and/or chapters in assigned reading; using a dictionary; making outlines; reading blurbs, introductions, back covers, and Cliff notes.

Some students are "mechanical readers." They follow a learned or prescribed method which provides them a comfort zone, as long as the text doesn't challenge their familiar methods. Students reveal their inabilities to tolerate not understanding what they have read. They feel obliged to be able to understand, to analyze, and to evaluate critically what they have read. They express a need to learn and to improve vocabulary as they read. (More depend on dictionaries than on context clues.) They reveal a fear of failure, a lack of self-esteem, and a fear of difficulty in understanding required readings.

Many students re-read particular passages over and over in an effort to clarify the meanings to themselves. Some feel, at times, that they are expected to absorb and to retain what they have read. Example: "When you read you can digest the story. Get the nutrition from the story and keep it."

Students seem to be either stuck on understanding each sentence as they proceed or, in contrast, skimming and skipping ahead. That is, there seems to be a general division between the two strategies, and little sense of a dynamic between both strategies in an individual reader. So that, it seems one is either a reader paralyzed by the need to understand sentences, or a reader cavalier about sentences and local details.

Examples: "It's like I read a sentence word for word & at the period I make sure I understand the sentence's whole meaning before I go on to the next sentence. And, with every comprehensible sentence that I pass, my understanding of the context widens."

"An experience is when I read the short story 'The Problem of Cell 13.' The story was interesting but it had parts that made me want to put the book down and stop reading it. So what I did was read the first few pages and some middle pages and the end and I understood the story."

Although we did notice some students combining these strategies, overall we saw reliance on a technique of reading, rather than a repertoire of techniques. Students' dutiful representations of their mechanics of reading show them to be learning or to have learned some reading practices that characterize schooled literacies.

In contrast, for non-required reading, magazines and newspapers stand out as the favorites. The reasons stated were that these allow readers great freedom to flip through pages and to peruse rather than to read whole articles or sections. In our students' busy lifestyles

(work, travel, study, home), the portability of these texts is a great asset.

(5) IMAGE

The visual reader: "I picture"; "I saw the image." Reading to see pictures. A kind of reading that pays attention to one modality of representation. For example, in reading a passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's story, "The Birth-mark," no mention is made of the sound, of hearing the narrator's voice. Here is a slightly more sophisticated articulation of the very frequent references to 'picturing' or making an image of what one reads: "As I was reading this section of "The Birthmark," I was creating a visual picture of the birthmark in my head."

Example: "While reading this passage the author had many descriptions of a woman and I tried to visualize her in my mind. He used vivid descriptions that made me imagine her. But honestly I was bored of listening to him speak about a woman and her birthmark." Notice the effort "to visualize," and the praise for Hawthorne's vivid description, although here we also detect a dutiful response. Compare this interest in seeing what's in the text, with the honest admission of boredom when "listening." This raised some questions for us, such as: What can be read by seeing? What must be heard? What can be seen? What must be heard, listened for?

(6) IDENTIFICATION

The most meaningful reading that students have done in class to fulfill requirements has been the reading of literature that has allowed them to relate the experiences of the characters to their own lives. Many feel that they have established a better understanding of life situations through reading. Some commonalities that emerged were trying to imagine oneself as the main character, undergoing or experiencing the character's thought processes and emotions, and trying to live the part of the character. As one student wrote, "I am Romeo the one who kissed Juliet for the first time."

Example: "I try to read every story as if I was living it. I like to feel as if I were one of the characters in it or the writer himself/herself." There's strength in this strong desire for identification with fictional characters. However, the other side seems to be the large number of students who describe reading what is other to them as beyond identification, as somehow not relevant to their experiences, or even to the "real" world.

Example: "And I try to make the best out of the book by paying

attention to what the writer has to say and seeing if it relates to my own life." Here, we see an effort to make the best of a bad situation and almost the only way to do this is by relating to one's own life—a sort of narcissistic solipsism. This need "to relate" seems to drive students' reading, making it impossible for reading to provide the sort of vicarious experiences, the unexpected relations, that we and our colleagues have come to value as readers.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Despite our expectations, we found fewer differences between these high school readers and these college readers than we had anticipated, and the differences we did find were more between why and how we read and why and how our students read. It's interesting to note that students appear to read primarily to fulfill assignments. When they read for their own reasons, their reading does not appear to be what we consider literary. Overwhelmingly, the differences between the high school students and the college students were minor. Rather, significant differences in ways of articulating reading and in "ways of taking meaning" from texts seem to be more between "our" literate practices and those of many of our students. It's fair to say that we were troubled by a certain lack of a sense of reading as an exciting, self-forming, meaning-taking, meaning-making, life-changing activity, in most but not all cases. Now, we would be interested in asking more bluntly: "Why do you read—both for school and in the rest of your life?"

We did see that students' experiences of reading are almost entirely shaped by their schooling (or perhaps their responses to our surveys are what is shaped by schooling). We have discussed the six major motifs we found in students' articulations of reading. We saw very little articulation of reading as pleasure or of reading as art.

Are we seeing the place of reading in these students' lives? We want to be cautious about assuming that just because we don't find what we value that we don't find anything to value. For example, a few students described their reading pleasure ("I like reading and I do it all the time."); their interpretive freedom ("As a reader, I can interpret a work anyway I wish, as long as I can support it textually."); their ability to bond with others, "even the teacher" ("One class I remember, we were talking about Mr. Vertigo by Paul Auster. A student was reading aloud one of the funniest paragraphs in the text. It was very ingenious in the humor. We all laughed aloud, even the teacher."); and their capacity for surprise ("I don't read the ending first because I try to guess it, and am always pleasantly surprised when I'm wrong.").

We would like to suggest some questions for future investiga-

tion. These include the following: If students retain such emphasis on making pictures of what they read and on identifying with what they read, what happens to thinking about form? Implicit in the above is the larger question of how students from K through 12 are taught to read texts. How are student readers being asked to engage texts? Where is the response that is not merely naive realism or identification? For example, when a student is asked to describe a character, how does this question—whether asking for an oral or a written response—lead to "ways of taking" meaning from the text? Do we know how to invite students into a dynamic move between initial impressions and close reading, between a first sense of what we experience in a text and what happens when we return to specific language? Are we introducing the mysterious alchemy of practices represented too simply and too singularly as "close reading"?

What might teachers do to teach reading differently, or to open up a more varied sense of "ways of taking meaning from texts"? Since, as we suggested at the beginning, teacher expectations tend to produce student performances and students often remain confused by differences in expectations for reading practices in different academic contexts, especially when those differences are not articulated explicitly, our first suggestions have to do with both teachers and students moving toward more explicit articulation of reading, that is, naming and elaborating reading practices in precise terms and in specific contexts. For teachers, this will mean not assuming ourselves and hence naturalizing the ways of reading that we have come to take for granted. Do teachers have precise and elaborated language for describing how they take meaning from texts, or how they use their reading, both in the sense of reading as a varied repertoire of practices and as texts? Our attention to the language of response in our survey—both to what is spoken and to what is not—leaves us even more convinced that a multiple and varied repertoire of practices lurks inside the term (the gerund) *reading*, just as multiple differences lurk inside the gerund *writing*. For example, experienced readers sometimes read quickly for the gist and, at other times, follow different practices for deeper and closer understanding. As we have noted, very few student responses seemed to suggest an awareness of varied and multiple reading practices.

We suggest, then, the value and necessity of having an explicit conversation with students about *how they read* and not just about *what they read.* By "how," we have in mind both the material dimensions of reading (e.g., where and when; with or without a pencil in one's hand) and the conceptual understandings of reading (e.g., for what purposes, in relation to what sense of identity—intellectual, student, information-seeker, pleasure-seeker, etc.). Thus, we encourage a meta-conversation about literacy practices, including writing, often and infor-

mally, about the varied experiences of reading for our classes and also in different disciplines and in non-school reading (e.g., religious uses of texts; following directions in a cookbook; employment related literacies; etc.). Such conversations with their explicit focuses on different literacy practices need to include specific articulation (i.e., naming and elaboration) of reading as an intellectual practice. How do we make meaning when we read? How do we use writing *and* reading to discover ideas? When reading Gertrude Stein's so-called "difficult" texts with college English majors, for example, students were invited to write analytical narratives of their reading experiences, which meant, for most of them, describing an encounter with texts that resisted their usual sense of mastery over meanings and that, hence, required new reading strategies and new conceptualizations of what it means to read. While many narrated their frustration and even anger with texts that wouldn't bend or yield to their interpretive wills, many also began to put into question previous assumptions about what it means to read, in general, and about what it means to read "literary" language, in particular. Writing an analytical narrative of a reading experience meant telling a story of making one's point of view, of developing an interpretive response. It meant working to find a language to account for texts that demand different reading practices, and, in the process, having to find language to describe what had previously been taken for granted about reading literature. An analogous pedagogical practice used in high school classes has students keep literature logs, not using the logs specifically to react to the literature being read, but also to engage in an internal dialogue about *how* one reads a particular text.

One specific *material* practice that we are concerned to emphasize is marking a text, taking a pencil in one's hand with the authority to begin speaking back to an author. As educators, we want to produce occasions for reading to become *literally* a form of writing, the beginning of writing; we explain to our students that writing in the margins and/or elsewhere in response to what one has read is always a part of how one takes meaning from a text in school, or better makes meaning *with* a text. When the one of us who teaches college visited the other's public high school classroom on the day on which new books were being distributed, a stunning and obvious realization became available. Because they don't own their books, students were explicitly told to return the books in exactly the condition in which they received them. Years of urging student readers to interact with their reading *through writing questions and comments in the margins* became newly legible as counter-intuitive for students after many years of being told not to mark their texts. Becoming an anecdote that it has been useful to recount many times to college teachers of reading and writing, this experience complicated the superficial sense that college students don't mark their books simply because they plan to re-sell them.

Years of one kind of literacy practice and its sense of books as needing to remain unchanged and to be returned to the institution unchanged by one's particular experience as a reader go deeper than the immediate desire to get some of one's money back through resale; these assumed relations between reader and text come down to fundamental conceptualizations of what books are, what it means to use them, and who has authority (ownership) over books as objects and as texts. College teachers can certainly address these issues explicitly, rather than merely wondering about their students' resistance to marking texts. Moreover, given the institutional ownership of books and given the effect on readers of years of such a proprietary relationship with books, we can suggest alternative methods of "marking" a text or recording one's response as one reads and thinks (e.g., using post-its to "mark" the text, or note-taking on other paper, or keeping a journal or, as we mention above, a literature log in which one records one's experience as a reader and not merely a summary of the content.) Whatever method of "marking" a text is used, we have found it to be helpful to recur frequently to these records of reading in order, for example, to model how initial responses might lead to new questions, to re-reading of certain parts, and to the composing of a larger interpretive synthesis.

We also want to suggest that, as teachers, themselves, become more precise in articulating reading practices in their own classrooms and among their colleagues, lesson plans and assignments might name different ways of reading, and that we might sequence reading practices as a way of teaching them. In an example taken from the experience of teaching with David Bartholomae's and Anthony Petrosky's *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*, first-year college writing students, having read a section of Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory*, "The Achievement of Desire," were asked *to relate their reading* of Rodriguez *with their experiences* of schooling and *in particular with* Rodriguez's claim that "education requires radical self-reformation" (*Ways* 636). It will surprise few experienced teachers that most students conceived of the intellectual work of relating the text to experience as comparison, and, in many cases, as a rather weak form of comparison that doesn't really foreground the reason for the comparison, or the terms of the comparison. This way of reading deepens, however, when, rather than simply leaving this complex text behind as if they had finished with it, the students were asked to consider in depth *the sorts of reading practices that Rodriguez himself* enacts when he uses his reading of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* to frame his own experience, a framing that Rodriguez accomplishes as much through revision of Hoggart as through mere extension or application of Hoggart. Then, in a sequenced reading and writing assignment, students moved to a consideration of an excerpt from Paulo Freire's *Peda-*

gogy of the Oppressed, "The 'Banking' Concept of Education." At this point, their reading of Freire's text became *a way of re-considering or re-reading* Rodriguez, a process that, for many, meant returning to an essay, which they had mostly considered a story, in order to unpack the ways that it makes an argument about education and literacy that can be seen in relation to Freire's explicit argument for "problem-posing" education (Ways 354). (Many examples of sequencing reading and writing can be found in the assignments provided in Bartholomae's and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading*.) In addition to having students practice varied, albeit connected, ways of taking meaning from texts, such a reading and writing sequence also foregrounds explicitly the conceptualization that there are varied ways of working with texts.

In literature classes, too, we have found that the thing we call "close reading" (or working closely with local examples of language) is more a complex dynamic or set of practices than it is a single practice. Rather than simply naming it "close reading," therefore, we have tried to explore how different modalities of response are engaged when we read closely. For example, what students often represent as "reading between the lines" can be engaged explicitly as an idiomatic figure for the sense that something besides what's literally *in* or *on* the lines enters into our reading. In other words, as we suggested earlier, there is a productive, sanctioned "reading between the lines" in interpretive practice (just as there are both sanctioned "misreadings" and "wrong" ones). When language engages a reader's imagination, she might be tempted to make it mean whatever she imagines it to mean. On the other hand, without such an engagement of imagination, nothing of much value or interest will come from attention to the text, no matter how "close." The complex, interactive dynamic between our imaginative responses and the discipline of learning to attend to what's actually written is as difficult to learn as it is crucial to meaningful interpretation. Only repeated practice can teach a reader both to trust her intuitive imaginative beginnings as starting points and to return to the text with a more skeptical and disciplined attention to the specific language. This repeated practice can be sequenced, so that readers metacognitively know that they are doing different, but related, things in response to a text's possible meanings, that they are enacting a complex dialectic between their readerly imaginations and their abilities to focus on what's on the page.

We also want to suggest the importance of introducing and discussing early in schooling what it means to cite and to quote. By the time that most students arrive in college, this particular use of texts—and the intertextual conversation between and among authors that it represents and allows for—remains foreign territory. Whether in the form that academic writers use of explicitly locating one's observations in relation to what others have said, or in the less-defined ways

that writers allude to what and how others have written, seeing intertextual connections between texts and imagining that texts have this dimension and are not merely discreet units in a lesson plan could become the familiar terrain of reading. Through this representation of the work of connecting texts, student readers and writers might move beyond the sort of written response of offering a string of quotations and toward the more difficult practice of integrating one's own voice as a writer (following on active reading) through connections with and differences from the specific emphases and particular words of quoted material. We need to explore (and to think with our students about) such issues as: why writers cite, why they sometimes don't, which genres require careful citation, which genres invite more subtle acts of borrowing. An early emphasis on citation can also engage the syntactical and grammatical difficulties that emerge for all of us as writers when we quote, difficulties that emerge on the boundaries between our language and the language of quotations. Learning to think about how—at least in certain disciplinary representations of knowledge—our writing enacts a record of our reading practices can help lead to specific considerations of such issues as how much of the writer's language should accompany a quotation, why the quoted language is not self-evident, why academics care so much about citation, how citation is linked to a sense of reading and research as an intellectual and intertextual conversation, what scholarly and non-scholarly sources are, how different media make different uses of evidence and authorship (e.g., the Internet), and why plagiarism is considered such a crime in the academy. Our experience suggests that, without deep and early exploration of the high value we put on citation, our urging of citation and our punishing of plagiarism can appear to be merely arbitrary or idiosyncratic, rather than arising out of particular and strongly held conceptualizations of reading and writing.

Finding fewer differences between high school and college students than might have been assumed is potentially useful for building alliance, empathy, and a sense of common purpose among high school and college teachers. This might also offer some useful examination of the "B" in LBW (Looking Both Ways)—maybe the "both ways" need not always be between high schools and colleges as if across a great divide?

APPENDIX

Reading Questionnaire

We would like you to offer your honest responses to these questions. Every response is important to us. Each question calls for several sentences, rather than merely words and phrases.

1. In your own words, describe the different kinds of things you do when you read for this class? (e.g., Do you look over the entire text? Do you read the ending first?)

2. (a) Tell about an experience of reading for this class.

2. (b) Tell about a recent non-school related reading experience. Remember that reading takes place anywhere and with a wide variety of texts (e.g., magazines, maps, the Internet, etc.).

3. Please read the following selection from Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, "The Birth-mark," and then describe how you read this passage, or, in other words, what you did as you read it:

> . . . it must be mentioned, that, in the centre of Georgiana's left cheek, there was a singular mark, deeply interwoven, as it were, with the texture and substance of her face. In the usual state of her complexion,—a healthy, though delicate bloom,—the mark wore a tint of deeper crimson, which imperfectly defined its shape amid the surrounding rosiness. When she blushed, it gradually became more indistinct, and finally vanished amid the triumphant rush of blood, that bathed the whole cheek with its brilliant glow. But, if any shifting emotion caused her to turn pale, there was the mark again, a crimson stain upon the snow, in what Alymer sometimes deemed an almost fearful distinctness. Its shape bore not a little similarity to the human hand, though of the smallest pigmy size. Georgiana's lovers were wont to say, that some fairy, at her birth-hour, had laid her tiny hand upon the infant's cheek, and left this impress there, in token of the magic endowments that were to give her such sway over all hearts. Many a desperate swain would have risked life for the privilege of pressing his lips to the mysterious hand. It must not be concealed, however, that the impression wrought by this fairy sign-manual varied exceedingly, according to the difference of temperament in the beholders. Some fastidious persons—but they were exclusively of her own sex—affirmed that the Bloody Hand, as they chose to call it, quite destroyed the effect of Georgiana's beauty, and rendered her countenance even hideous. But it would be as

> reasonable to say, that one of those small blue stains, which sometimes occur in the poorest statuary marble, would convert the Eve of Powers to a monster. Masculine observers, if the birth-mark did not heighten their admiration, contented themselves with wishing it away, that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness, without the semblance of a flaw. After his marriage—for he thought little or nothing of the matter before—Alymer discovered that this was the case with himself.

4. Describe how you understand what is expected of you as a reader in this class.
5. Where and when do you read for this class?

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Eileen Biser, Linda Rubel, and Rose Marie Toscano

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR: WHEN BASIC WRITERS TAKE THE RHETORICAL STAGE

ABSTRACT: ***An implicit part of a writing teacher's purpose is to help students find a public voice through writing, encouraging them to become rhetors who take public stances and enact change. Although risk is inherent in any public rhetorical act, when basic writers address those in the mainstream, the risks intensify. These students are challenged not only by the rigors of writing within traditional forms, but also by the burden of persuading from "without." This essay examines the challenges one basic writer, a deaf student at the Rochester Institute of Technology, confronted when she took on the role of public writer. This student's attempt to enact change is analyzed for the sake of uncovering the pedagogical implications that teachers of basic writing must consider when educating students to write for the public sphere.***

As teachers of college students, many of us share the goal of encouraging students to develop their public voice. In disciplines as divergent as engineering, political science, and graphic design, faculty emphasize effective speaking and presentation, as well as writing for external audiences. Within the specific field of composition and rhetoric, one implicit purpose is to help students find their voice through writing, encouraging them to take public stances and enact change. This goal has not always been a primary focus of our pedagogy. A shift over the past twenty years has directed our attention away from the expressivist philosophy of the solitary writer engaged in self-discovery and expression championed by Peter Elbow and Donald

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Murray, to the social constructionist view of writers as agents of change in society, advocated by Patricia Bizzell and Ken Bruffee.

This newer emphasis on social constructionism has allowed students to see that their interpretive and constructive acts are dependent on social, not solely individual, activities and processes. Additionally, they come to understand that each discourse community has its own practices and conventions that must be learned by any newcomer. Problematic within social constructionism is its failure to acknowledge the difficulty all students have in mastering the conventions of the academy and those of its individual disciplines, what John Trimbur describes as "privileged discourse communit[ies]" (117). Paolo Freire , Ira Shor, and other radical compositionists enlarge upon this critique by arguing that some forms of discourse and some discursive communities are more privileged than others, "silencing those (very often, students) who are not members of the dominant discursive community" (Weisser 27). In response, radical pedagogy and composition studies have re-directed the discipline to the importance of public writing as a way for students to overcome this silencing.

This movement toward public writing has led many in the field to advocate for service learning in composition courses as well as emphasizing the importance for students of using their own voice in both initiating and participating in public discussion and reform. In fact, the 2002 Conference on College Composition and Communication promoted the theme of "Connecting the Text and the Street," reinforcing the claim that students should take what they already know and produce new texts that move in the direction of social action.

In being asked to write for the public sphere, however, basic writers are challenged not only by the rigors of writing within the traditional forms of the empowered discourse communities cited by Trimbur, but also by the burden of persuading from "beyond the boundary." Mike Rose uses this phrase to describe the place in the academy often held by students because of gender, color, ethnicity, and/or class. We posit here that his definition should be expanded to include those students marginalized because of the differences in language and culture resulting from deafness. Although risk is inherent in any public rhetorical act, when marginalized students use writing to advocate for reform within the public sphere, these risks intensify.

In this essay we examine the unique set of circumstances that one deaf student at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) confronted when she took on the role of public writer. We analyze this student's attempt to enact change and discuss the pedagogical implications that we as teachers must consider when we educate students to write for the public sphere. Although the focus of our study is on one student who is deaf, the implications of our findings apply to teachers of basic writers working with the increasing number of marginalized students enrolling in colleges and universities.

Background

Marginalized because of differences in language and culture, the 1100 deaf students at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) are, on the one hand, the most visible component of the population. Their use of sign language coupled with their large numbers in mainstream classrooms and in the extracurricular life of the college highlight their presence on campus. However, they are largely invisible in the public conversations of the university where policy and practice are debated. Recently, one deaf student emerged from the margin when she entered the public discourse to raise awareness regarding issues of sign language interpreting in the academic classroom/community.

Since the first deaf students arrived at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at RIT in 1968, sign language interpreting has been their primary means of access to information in mainstream classrooms. Interpreters translate into sign language all spoken communication in the classroom as well as rendering into voice deaf students' signed comments. Interpreting responsibilities range from capturing a lecture, to signing a film, to representing accurately the "voice" of a student presentation. Beyond the classroom, interpreters often accompany students to meetings with faculty, staff, and administrators. Students clearly depend on interpreters in order to survive—and succeed—in this academic community. Faculty also rely on interpreters for their interactions with deaf students. This dependence results in a unique "triangle" of student, instructor, and interpreter. (In fact, the national agency for certifying interpreters—the Registry for Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)—recognizes potential problems of this third-party presence and has formulated its own code of ethical behaviors). Following are three glimpses into the complicated nature of such three-party interactions:

> One faculty member regularly meets with the assigned interpreter after class. She questions him, for example, about deaf students' off-the-point comments and seemingly disruptive behavior. While this may appear to be the conversation of a caring teacher and interpreter trying to understand the dynamics of this class, the organization for interpreters would consider these actions inappropriate. First, the interpreter has met with the teacher without the student—the client—present. Second the interpreter has responded to the teacher's request for an analysis of student intentions without the student there for clarification. Finally, and most important, the client has not given permission for this interaction to occur.

A deaf student has waited until the last minute to prepare his presentation, leaving no time to practice with the interpreter. Nevertheless, he forges ahead. He knows that the syntax is careless, that the transitions are ineffective, and that the diction is simplistic. He also knows that he has previously been able to rely on this interpreter's willingness to edit his text, even though the Interpreter's Code of Ethics stipulates that " faithful" translation from one language to another is required. The presentation receives a high grade. The student in this case has transgressed by taking advantage of the interpreter, and the interpreter has offered an enhanced rendering of the student's skills.

Before class begins, a group of deaf students is engaged in a casual and private conversation, not unlike the whisperings of their hearing peers. The interpreter assigned to this class has decided that her role requires her to voice all signed communication, regardless of its intention. She proceeds to voice this private conversation, making it public. One deaf student, reading the interpreter's lips, realizes what is happening and informs the other members of the group. The conversation comes to a halt. In this case, the interpreter has not differentiated between public and private discourse, over-generalizing her role as a facilitator of communication and causing embarrassment for the deaf students. Nor has she clarified with the students their expectations regarding her voicing of their casual "talk."

These examples would suggest fertile ground for public discussion and problem solving regarding the roles and responsibilities of interpreters, which have been both debated within the deaf community and codified through RID's Code of Ethics. Unfortunately, initiating a campus-wide conversation on this topic would create a firestorm for any deaf student bent on reform. Within this community, interpreters—a scarce and sought-after resource—are highly valued and respected, which makes a discussion of their professional behaviors extremely thorny. It is therefore not surprising that in the thirty years of the significant presence of deaf students on the RIT campus, no public forum has presented this topic for debate.

It was against this background that Katherine, a deaf female communication major, using electronic mail, first exposed to the faculty and administration what she considered the failures of the sign language interpreters in conforming to the explicit standards of their Code. Katherine's decision to use public writing in order to enact change broke

the long-standing silence about this issue on RIT's campus.

Some background information about Katherine is important in understanding why she would take on this controversial issue. Profoundly deaf since birth and raised in a family and a larger community of both deaf and hearing individuals, she successfully negotiated her world without the use of interpreters. Katherine reported to us that, in her experience, using interpreters was rare. Instead, she routinely had one-on-one conversations without the presence of a third-party intermediary, which, she believed, led to more equality, forcing deaf and hearing people to acknowledge and resolve intercultural differences.

Because of her successful interpersonal communication strategies with hearing teachers and peers, Katherine became increasingly sensitive to what she labeled the "interference" of interpreters in academic settings. On the one hand, they provided necessary access to the mainstream experience. On the other, they hindered her sense of control of the communication process; for example, some professors talked and looked at her interpreters rather than at Katherine, leaving her a mere observer to her own conversation. Katherine began her self-advocacy at a community college, where she successfully tackled many interpreting problems and brought awareness of deaf students' needs to a relatively small campus community, inexperienced with deafness. So, when Katherine arrived at RIT, knowing its large deaf population, she was both surprised and shocked by what she considered transgressions by interpreters of their Code of Ethics. Privately confronting interpreter managers, faculty, and deans, she used the appropriate and available mechanisms for presenting her concerns. When these strategies failed to address, let alone solve, the problems Katherine had identified, she decided to go public through writing.

In assuming the stance of public writer, Katherine followed what she believed to be a reasonable approach in raising a controversial issue. She had certainly internalized one of the goals of her writing courses—to use written language to effect change. What she did not anticipate, however, was the curious combination of misunderstanding and anger which resulted. Within the hearing community of the college, the issues she raised were largely ignored, while from the deaf community, she was exiled. Little did she know of the storms that would ensue from her decisions. Little had we as teachers done to prepare her for them.

Methodology

The unexpected community responses prompted us to examine Katherine's rhetorical action more thoroughly. To begin our study, we

examined the e-mail document Katherine sent to all RIT faculty and the chief academic administrators as well as the leaders of the deaf student government group. The text that Katherine distributed consisted of three parts. First, in a cover letter (Appendix A) in which she presented herself as Director of Academic Affairs for the deaf student government group, she urged her readers to become informed about interpreters' roles and the Code of Ethics so "fewer students will feel they are alone when confronting problems with interpreters." The letter also alluded to general concerns of deaf students regarding interpreters at RIT and encouraged everyone to work together to satisfy guidelines from both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Code of Ethics. Second was an attached e-mail message from a lawyer (Appendix B) who had advocated for deaf clients' rights under ADA. The lawyer's excerpted text offered interpretations of the language of ADA as well as examples of what she considered inappropriate interpreter behavior. Third was the complete version of the *Registry of the Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Ethics with Guidelines* (Appendix C).

Our next step was to analyze the e-mail messages from the few RIT faculty and administrators who responded publicly. Another important site for our analysis was the electronic notes conference board where the deaf community conducted an extensive and heated dialogue.

The final phase focused on three one-hour interviews with Katherine. Before the first interview, we presented her with a list of written questions for her consideration regarding her motives, her rhetorical decisions, and her assessment of the community reactions. We decided to conduct the interviews ourselves in sign language, eliminating the third-party presence of an interpreter. This format was deliberately chosen in order to respect Katherine's wish for direct communication and to allow her to be completely candid in her responses. We took notes during the interviews, paraphrasing in written English Katherine's signed answers to our questions. Later, over a period of several weeks, we compared our notes to ensure consistency and accuracy in our interpretation of her signed comments . Katherine's responses informed our analysis by helping us understand not only her experience but also our responsibility, as teachers, to better guide those marginalized students who take the rhetorical stage.

Analysis

Katherine followed all the rules she understood would produce successful persuasive discourse. In her cover letter, she identified herself through her role as a Director of Academic Affairs within the deaf

student organization (NTID Student Congress) as a way of establishing her own authority. Confidently using the first person singular point of view at the beginning of her letter, she later shifted to the plural "we," aligning herself with the larger deaf campus community and thereby asserting that the "ethical issues with sign language interpreting that merit attention" were campus-wide concerns. Katherine adhered to the rhetorical advice that writers should take advantage of the power of the collective voice in identifying a problem. Her strategy failed, however, because she had not fully enlisted the support of the group she claimed to represent.

The leaders, as well as the general membership of the deaf student organization, responded vehemently to Katherine's use of her title and position to promote what many perceived as her own cause. These leaders challenged Katherine's representation of herself as speaking for the entire NTID Student Congress (NSC) by issuing an e-mail letter to all faculty and staff, disassociating themselves from the implication that Katherine spoke on behalf of the organization. By doing so, the student leaders shifted the focus of the conversation away from the interpreting issues Katherine had raised to her inappropriate use of her leadership position.

In addition to attempting to establish her own authority in her cover letter, Katherine also followed the well-established rhetorical strategy of citing legal documents and expert sources, having "learned" that personal experience is often not valued as legitimate support for an argument. She appropriately referred to the guidelines of the ADA and appended the full text of the RID Code of Ethics. Another rhetorical strategy was Katherine's excerpting of passages from a lawyer's e-mail message which described other interpreter "transgressions" that this legal authority had personally observed. Katherine assumed that the attorney's legal work and advocacy for deaf clients and the ADA would confirm that interpreter/client problems were widespread and in need of attention. The fact that she relied on a hearing rather than a deaf attorney was a deliberate political move by Katherine, who assumed her RIT audience would be more receptive to/persuaded by a hearing expert's claims. When asked during her interview why she included this correspondence, Katherine responded that the lawyer was hearing and therefore had more power and credibility.

According to Katherine, the rhetorical decisions she made for reaching her hearing audience were right. What she had not anticipated, however, was that her letter, originally intended for a hearing audience, would quickly reach the deaf community. Their reactions were completely at odds with Katherine's intent. One student wrote about the attorney Katherine quoted, "She's a hearing woman who's taken on the 'cause' of deaf people with all the best intentions, I'm sure, but don't believe everything she writes." Such a comment im-

plied that Katherine was a "turncoat" because she chose to put forward a hearing rather than a deaf expert—one whose motives were questionable within some segments of the deaf community.

For additional support in developing her argument, Katherine selected and appended particular passages from the attorney's longer e-mail message. For example, she eliminated one paragraph in which the lawyer defined a "professional" as one educated at the graduate level, as opposed to "certified" as one trained at the high school or junior college level. This deleted paragraph included the lawyer's definition of an interpreter, which was based on the language and analogies used in the ADA legislation, where interpreters are termed "auxiliary aids." They are listed along with such services as computer-aided transcriptions, telephone handset amplifiers, closed caption decoders, telephones compatible with hearing aids, and so forth. The Interpreter's Code of Ethics reinforces the ADA definition by describing the interpreter's "only function as facilitator of communication. . . [who] shall not counsel, advise, or interject opinions" (par. 3). Readers did not have the full context of the ADA language, which fueled their reaction to the paragraph Katherine did include:

> An interpreter is an assistant and a servant, NOT a "professional." An interpreter is not a "star" or a "professional advisor" or a "representative" or someone with superior knowledge or expertise. An interpreter is simply an "assistive device" for information. Training and education in sign language for an interpreter simply makes the process of information smoother—just as an upgrade to a telephone line makes a telephone call easier. Interpreters are in a vocation, not a "profession."

The reaction from many of the deaf students was fast and fierce. In a student-run notes conference focusing on Katherine's correspondence to the RIT faculty, one student responded sarcastically, "Interpreters aren't allowed to be *human*? What a gross misrepresentation calling them 'assistive devices.' And they cannot become 'professional'? I have seen many that deserve high recognition for their accuracy and obvious dedication and love of their career." In a hallway conversation, one interpreter, an African-American woman, wondered if the Emancipation Proclamation had been repealed; the word "servant" insulted both her job and her race.

Our question to Katherine concerned why she had not predicted the explosive reaction that these rhetorical decisions would provoke. She responded that she found the excerpted passages "clear and straight-forward," matching her own intent to be "informative and neutral." When we questioned her further about the problematic na-

ture of choosing an excerpt with such highly contentious language, such as the word "servant," Katherine defended her decision by saying that the letter was another person's work and she "had no control over that."

We contend that another possible reason for Katherine's attraction to the language of the lawyer's message may lie in the context of reader response theory (Rosenblatt). Katherine did what all readers do: she applied her personal interpretive frame to the text, reading her own world into it. In doing so, Katherine was seduced by the content; she focused on those aspects of the lawyer's e-mail message which matched her experiences and biases while ignoring other linguistic aspects of the text, such as the impact of word choice. For example, consider the lawyer's language in the following paragraph, which Katherine also included in her correspondence:

> There are too many interpreters out there who are asserting to deaf people that the interpreters make the rules, and that deaf people must follow what the interpreter dictates. I have observed interpreters who have refused to move when a deaf person requests it, because they were standing directly in front of a bright light or bright window, with the glare directly into the eyes of a deaf person. I have seen interpreters refuse to move to a different location when a deaf person is required to join work groups in different parts of a room. I have seen too many interpreters assume that they are "professionals" when such is not the case.

The verbs in this paragraph—dictate, assert, refuse, assume—as well as the repetition of "I have seen/observed," conveyed a combative and self-righteous tone. Katherine reported to us, however, that what was most important to her was not the tone of the paragraph but the line, "Interpreters make the rules and deaf people must follow what the interpreter dictates." Her frustration with what she considered "oppression" by the interpreters and her comment to us that "deaf people are often kinder and more lenient with interpreters than they SHOULD be," may explain the temptation of the lawyer's language.

As a final comment on Katherine's correspondence, it is interesting to note the responses she received from her intended audience—the RIT faculty and administration. Out of 750 full-time faculty, six (yes, only six) posted e-mail replies to her message. Every one contained praise for the dedication and value of the interpreters and sidestepped the persistent breaches of professionalism which Katherine raised. None confronted the real possibility that her claims warranted discussion, a necessary first step to begin the conversation that Katherine desired. More painful to Katherine were the scorn and deri-

sion she faced in her academic and social life. Katherine—not the issues she raised—became the target of campus-wide anger. Feelings were so intense that she chose to leave school for several quarters. Katherine's reputation at this Institute continues to rest on her authorship of this e-mail message. On a more positive note, however, this experience was the catalyst for her senior thesis, in which Katherine explored, from an intercultural perspective, the anxiety and uncertainty of deaf students communicating with professors in the presence of sign language interpreters.

Implications for Teaching

How do we use this case study to inform our pedagogy as we encourage our basic writing students to become active agents of change? How do we better prepare them to know the complexities that influence the design and reception of their ideas? And, how do we better prepare them for the risks they might face when they take on the role of public writer? In grappling with these questions, we find useful Marilyn M. Cooper's theoretical construct of "dynamic, interlocking systems that structure the social activity of writing" (7). In her article, "The Ecology of Writing," she describes five systems—of ideas, purposes, interpersonal interactions, cultural norms, and textual forms—as ways in which writers "connect. . . through writing" (8). This ecological model can help us reframe our understanding of what basic writers need in order to succeed in the public sphere.

Cooper first describes the "system of ideas" as a two-part construct: knowledge comes from individual experiences and observation, and from mastery of a topic's complete and "relevant idea system" (8). Katherine did turn her own history into knowledge and attempted to enter the idea system of interpreter/client issues by corresponding with a lawyer and becoming well versed in the Code of Ethics and the ADA. However, like many writers from the margin, Katherine's entry into the discourse, as well as her ability to reach her rhetorical goal, were impeded by her reliance on the most obvious and accessible sources. She did not fully familiarize herself through research with the broader conversations surrounding the interpreter/client issues she was putting forth, causing her argument to lack completeness and complexity.

A second aspect of Cooper's "ecological model" is the "system of purposes," which, like that of ideas, results from the interaction between the individual and a larger group. She contends that, "An individual impulse or need only becomes a purpose when it is recognized as such by others" (8). For Katherine, the need to educate the RIT faculty and administration about the appropriate role of interpreters and the choice to go public with her criticism were not shared by the larger

deaf community on campus. She did not actively work to understand their divergent points of view nor solicit their support, which would have helped her build a political coalition within this group, therefore preventing the unexpected backlash.

A third related category is that of "interpersonal interactions," a system in which writers "regulate their access to one another" (8). This access is accomplished through "intimacy"—writers' similarity to their audience and their degree of power in controlling the actions of others. By virtue of her culture and her disability, Katherine had "kinship" with the group she was representing. But, she did not have the power to determine that group's public agenda. With the hearing audience she had neither intimacy nor power, which further marginalized Katherine and her concerns. Her understanding was that she had to find supporting evidence for her point of view because she was not part of the cultural or academic mainstream.

Cooper's "system of cultural norms," like that of "purposes" and "interpersonal interactions," takes its meaning from the larger group in which the writer claims membership. What differentiates this system from the others is "the notion of what role the writer takes on in a particular piece of writing" (9). Katherine assumed the role of spokesperson for the deaf community on the RIT campus, but as spokesperson she did not represent accurately the full range of attitudes within her community.

The last system is "textual forms," which Cooper defines as "the means by which writers communicate" (9). These means can be conservative and traditional, but also new. Katherine used e-mail as a means of distribution. Her purpose in taking advantage of this medium was to reach a broader audience and to make more convenient their engagement in a discussion about her issue. Katherine did not anticipate that, along with its benefits, using e-mail also made the delivery of this document to an unintended audience inevitable.

What we learned about Katherine's venture into the public sphere, when put in the context of Cooper's model, offers some practical pedagogical considerations for those who teach basic writers. We know, for example, that many of these students struggle with certain aspects of academic literacy. Their limits with critical reading, with the language conventions of academic discourse, and with general world knowledge often undermine their understanding of how to present their views within any topic's "system of ideas." These writers, therefore, often perceive research as so insurmountable and mysterious that they meekly pluck from it the few accessible sources that support their opinion. As teachers, we need to reframe and emphasize the purposes and practices of research when going public. Rather than watching students fall prey to these fears and insecurities, we can inspire them

to view research as the presentation of their ideas within the larger context of existing conversations about a topic, both in support and in opposition. Designing classroom activities and assignments that will give our students the confidence to go beyond their comfort levels and to propel them into thorough research will make them more effective as writers. For basic writers in particular, persistent attention to "taken-for-granted" critical reading strategies (analysis of tone, bias, writer's position and credibility) is crucial. These skills developed in writing classes would, in turn, bolster student success in advocating for the social changes they see as necessary.

In addition, the rhetorical implications of the collective voice must be more thoroughly explored. When the speaker presents herself as "we," she must understand that the individual and the group purpose are united and presented as one. Teachers can prepare students to engage in discussion, debate, and negotiation, necessary first steps for gaining consensus. In helping our students to take on a public voice, we need to provide not only classroom team and group activities but also more instruction in how to make an individual need become a group purpose. With this accomplished, the individual basic writer, backed by a larger number of supporters, may have more success in reaching and affecting the dominant group.

Finally, teachers and students together must develop a more sophisticated understanding of the potential and the limitations of electronic textual forms for public discourse. Spooner and Yancey, in analyzing e-mail, report on its role in creating "an ideology already at work . . . , [that] entails social action" (264). They also discuss the changes in the role and authority of the author and in the relationship between author and audience. If these modifications can actually be brought about by e-mail, then basic writers will have more equitable participation, and even leadership, in public debate, rather than being barred from it, as they often have been from already-established genres.

Our title sounds a warning bell to all teachers who have romanticized the idea of the rhetorical stage being equally accessible to all students, with none being privileged over another. As our study so painfully demonstrates, the reality is far distant from the ideal, especially for students on the boundary. When we actively encourage basic writers to enact change, we are obligated to be honest with them about the perils and inequities of the current public sphere, which is only occasionally egalitarian and democratic. Weisser emphasizes that student writers must be taught "the degree to which their social status and differences from others will affect how their writing is evaluated" (103). In other words, our students need to understand that social, economic, political, cultural and ideological forces affect "what public writing is and how it works or fails to work in specific circumstances" (Weisser

97). We must include activities in our pedagogy that will teach them how to navigate the turbulent waters they are certain to enter. Our idealism about empowering basic writers to change their lives and the lives of others must be tempered by the truth that the personal risks they take may result in disappointment and disillusionment. Let's be careful what we ask for and whom we ask.

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

February 9, ____

Dear Faculty and Staff of RIT:

As a Director of Academic Affairs for NTID Student Congress (NSC), I am contacting you on behalf of NTID community regarding ethical issues with sign language interpreting that merit attention. We feel that as the faculty and staff become more aware of the interpreters' true role, fewer students will feel they are alone when confronting problems with interpreters. Oftentimes, people are unfamiliar with the interpreters' Code of Ethics and we feel it is imperative for the faculty and staff to be educated on this. The reason is that, in addition to deaf students, you, as faculty and staff members, do rely on interpreters.

The concerns surrounding the Department of Interpreting Services and the interpreters at RIT have been ongoing. Enclosed is a selection from a lawyer regarding to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and we are also attaching a copy of Registry Interpreting for the Deaf (RID) Code of Ethics, since it is the right of deaf and hearing people alike to know as consumers of Interpreting Services.

I would like to express my appreciation for your cooperation to make time and read this letter. Thank you for becoming more knowledgeable about this subject so we can work together to ensure that the RID Code of Ethics and ADA are adhered to. If there is any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at _____,

Sincerely,

Katherine _____
Academic Affairs Director of NTID Student Congress

The ADA and the interpreters' role: **Appendix B**

Excerpts from an e-mail message from _____, B.A., M.S., J.D, ABPDC to the Deaf Community. Please note that the examples listed below are ones that _____ encountered.

... the Americans With Disabilities Act, as it is written. ... says that interpreters must be QUALIFIED, not "certified."

A "qualified" interpreter is "qualified" in the mind and opinion of the DEAF individual who is utilizing the service, not in the opinion of some certification group." The entire policy of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) is to stop anyone (including interpreters) from interfering with the free right of a deaf person to make his or her own life choices and decisions. Please read the Introduction to the ADA.

....

An interpreter is an assistant and a servant, NOT a "professional." An interpreter is not a "star" or a "professional advisor" or a "representative" or someone with superor knowledge or expertise. An interpreter is simply an "assistive device" for information. Training and education in sign language for an interpreter simply makes the process of information smoother -- just as an upgrade to a telephone line makes a telephone call clearer. Interpreters are in a vocation, not a "profession."

....

There are too many interpreters out there who are asserting to deaf people that the interpreters make the rules, and that deaf people must follow what the interpreter dictates. I have observed interpreters who have refused to move when a deaf person requests it, because they were standing directly in front of a bright light or bright window, with the glare directly into the eyes of a deaf person. I have seen interpreters refuse to move to a different location when a deaf person is required to join work groups in different parts of a room. I have seen too many interpreters assume that they are "professionals" when such is not the case. I have seen many interpreters accepting high fees for services when they are obviously unable to understand what a hearing person is talking about -- and they even rephrase or skip large portions of the speaker's message in order to hide their incompetence. I have seen interpreters accept jobs in Ph.D.-level classes when they haven't the slightest idea of what the instructor is talking about. I have seen interpreters show up late to interpret for a person who knows sign language, and then demand that the hearing person stop signing, even when that hearing signer is doing much better at conveying their message than he paid interpreter. I have observed interpreters gossiping about their deaf clients and sharing information on whether or not the other interpreters should serve a particular deaf person I have seen so many ethical violations it makes me ill.

No communication channel is always perfect, and interpreters are often placed into difficult situations. Many do very well, and the deaf person does understand the difficulties faced in many situations by an interpreter. I have, however, noted that in the majority of situations, the deaf person is often kinder and more lenient with the interpreter, and the interpreter has an "attitude" of superiority that needs to be adjusted. ....The best intepreter for any deaf individual is one that knows the specific needs of the specific deaf person and then drops their "ego" to completely serve the needs of the deaf individual. This should be the goal of all interpreters -- to discover the actual needs for communication of each individual served, and then attempt to be "of service" and not in control.

(If you would like a full copy of this letter by_____, please send me e-mail at_____and I would be more than happy to send you one.)

Interpreting shall refer to interpreting or transiliterating from sign to speech or from speech to sign.

Interpreters:

1. Shall keep all interpreted and assignment-related information strictly confidential.

a. Interpreters must not reveal information about any interpreting assignment, including the fact that an assignment is being done. Even the most seemingly innocuous information could be damaging in the wrong hands. To avoid this possibility, and the responsibility which goes with it, interpreters must not say anything about any interpreting job.

b. If a problem arises with the deaf person and the interpreter feels a need to discuss it with some outside party, she/he should first discuss it with the deaf person, and, if no agreement is reached, the two of them should decide who can advise them.

c. When training other interpreters by the method of sharing actual experiences, interpreters should not reveal any of the following information: name, sex, age, etc. of the deaf or hearing person(s); day of week, time of day or time of year t he situation took place; the location, including the city, state, or agency; other people involved; unnecessary specifics about the situation. It only takes a minimum amount of information to identify the parties involved.

2. Shall render a faithful interpretation, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker, using language most readily understood by the persons for whom they are interpreting.

a. Interpreters are not editors and must interpret everything which is said in exactly the same way it was intended. This is especially difficult when the interpreter disagrees with what is being said or feels uncomfortable when profanity is being used. Interpreters should remember that they are not at all responsible for what is said, only for conveyuing information accurately. If the interpreterÕs own feelings interfere with rendering a faithful interpretation, she/he should withdraw from the situation.

b. While interpreting into sign, the interpreter must communicate in the manner most easily understood by the deaf person(s), be it ASL, manually

coded English, fingerspelling, mouthing, gestures, drawing or writing, etc. It is important for the interpreter and the deaf person to spend some time adjusting to each other's way of communicating prior to the actual interpreting situation. When interpreting into speech, the interpreter should speak the language spoken by the hearing person, be it English, Spanish, French, etc.

3. Shall not counsel, advice, or interject personal opinions (while functioning in this role).

Just as interpreters may not omit anything which is said (see no.2), they may not add anything to the situation even when they are asked to do so by other parties involved. An interpreter is only present in a given situation because two or more people have difficulty communicating, and thus the interpreterÕs only function is that of facilitator of communication. She/he may not become personally involved because in so doing she/he will take on some responsibility for the outcome, which does not rightly belong to the interpreter.

4. Shall use discretion in accepting assignments with regard to skills, setting, and the persons requesting the service.

a. An interpreter should only accept assignments for which she/he feels ready. However, when an interpreter shortage exists and the only available interpretedr does not possess sufficient skill for a particular assignment, this situation should be explained to the deaf and hearing consumers of the interpreting service. If they agree that a lesser-skilled interpreter is better than no interpreter or that they cannot wait until a better-skilled interpreter becomes available, then the lesser-skilled interpreter will have to use his or her best judgement about accepting or turning down the assignment. All interpreters can benefit from additional training in areas in which they lack skill.

b. Certain situations may prove uncomfortable for some interpreters. For example, a male interpreter may feel uncomfortable interpreting for a deaf female patient in the doctorÕs office. Some interpreters will be uncomfortable in situations where controversial issues are discussed or in religious settings where what is being taught differs from the interpreterÕs beliefs. An interpreter should not interpret in settings which she/he knows will negatively affect being able to render a faithful interpretation.

c. Interpreters should refrain from interpreting in situations where family members or close personal or professional relationships may affect impartiality. Even the most adept interpreters cannot be expected to mask inner feelings when interpreting for others who may affect their lives in some way. Under these circumstances, especially in legal settings, the abilityy to prove oneself unbiased when challenged is greatly lessened. In emergency situations it is realized that the interpreter may have to interpret for family members, friends, or close business associates. However, all parties should be informed that the interpreter may not become personally involved in the proceedings.

5. Shall deal with the matter of compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner (and shall be knowledgeable about the current fee guidelines suggested by the national organization).

a. Interpreters are trained to work in a professional manner and are considered professionals. Therefore, they should be knowledgeable about fees which are appropriate to that profession.

b. Since a sliding scale of hourly and daily rates has been set up for interpreters in many areas, all interpreters should have an idea of their own level of skills and the expected pay within their category. This can be

determined by consideration of several factors, such as: level of certification, length of experience, nature of the assignment, and the local cost of liv ing index ($7.50 an hour may seem high in one geographical area but low in another).

c. There are times when interpreters provide services without charge. This should be done with care and in such a way as to preserve the self-respect of the consumers. In other words, consumers should not feel they are recipients of charity.

Care should be taken when interpreting without charge that other interpreters will be protected. In other words, a free-lance interpreter may depend on this work for a living and cannot make it without charging while other persons have full-time work and can interpret as a favor without feeling it is a loss of income.

6. Shall not personally profit from any information in the course of interpreting.

Interpreters must not take advantage of knowledge acquired while interpreting. For example, if, at an interpreted meeting, it is announced that a staff interpreter in a particular agency is going to be fired, the interpreter at the meeting cannot immediately go and apply for the job or tell others about it.

7. Through the national organization and state chapters, shall seek to uphold the integrity of the profession by encouraging the use of qualified interpreters in order to achieve the highest standards.

Interpreters working as officers and committee members in the national RID and local RID chapters should press for high standards among interpreters. For example, encouraging agencies to hire only certified interpreters and the setting up of a mechanism to achieve compliance with the Code of Ethics are two of the any things which can be done.

8. Shall continue to develop his interpreting skills and keep abreast of developments in the field by participating in professional meetings, by joining with professional colleagues for the purpose of sharing information, and by reading current literature in the field.

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Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk
and **Marcia Babbitt**

THE POWER OF ACADEMIC LEARNING COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT: *Kingsborough Community College's Intensive ESL Program, a collaborative, interdisciplinary program, was designed to help entering ESL students acquire proficiency in academic English while at the same time succeeding in credit-bearing college courses. Corollary to this primary goal, other important objectives of this program are to improve the retention and graduation rates of ESL students and to facilitate their integration into the social and academic life of the college as a whole. We have found that students who become part of an active, student-centered learning community have a greater chance of succeeding in college than those who do not. This article will explore the nature and structure of learning community programs and what makes them so effective in contributing to the success of entering college students, ESL and non-ESL alike.*

Throughout the United States basic readers and writers who wish to attend college are faced with the challenge of grappling with academic course material while striving to improve their reading and writing skills in order to meet college requirements. Many students in this situation have performed poorly in courses or have had to withdraw. Eventually, many have dropped out of college altogether because their level of academic English was not sufficient to see them through their courses successfully. The high attrition rate for such students holds true whether they speak English as a first or second language. Although this article will focus on a program developed specifically for ESL students, similar programs for native speakers of English have also been successful (Tinto, Love, & Russo; Tinto).

The program on which this article is based was conceived in the early 1990s, when administrators at Kingsborough Community Col-

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lege, where we teach, expressed concern over the amount of time it took ESL students to complete their required English courses. Regulations governing New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) were changing, and it was feared that students would use up their financial aid before they had completed their non-credit ESL and English courses. Professor Robert Viscount, who was director of ESL at the time, worked with a faculty committee to develop a content-based program for ESL students in their first semester of college study, which—it was hoped—would accelerate students' progress in English while also enabling them to succeed in credit-bearing courses.

The resulting program, known as the Intensive ESL Program, was begun in the spring of 1995. In this collaborative, interdisciplinary program, students acquire proficiency in "academic English" by taking credit-bearing courses while receiving language support in ESL and speech courses. In each cohort of this full-time program, students attend all classes as a group and earn 8 regular college credits as well as 8 "equated credits" for the required ESL course. (Equated credits enable students to be considered full-time and thus eligible for financial aid but do not count toward graduation.) Based on regular CUNY (City University of New York) assessment measures, entering students are placed in one of three different levels. Students are required to be in class five days a week from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., with an hour off each day for lunch (see Appendix 1 for a typical block schedule). Students in the Intensive Program spend 8 hours per week with the ESL instructor; they also receive 4 hours of tutorial instruction each week from tutors who regularly attend courses in the program, thus serving as valuable liaisons among all the program components. (The tutoring program is administered by Kingsborough's Reading and Writing Center. Tutors, most of whom have a B.A. or M.A. degree, participate in weekly seminars with one of the Center's academic directors as well as in monthly meetings of Intensive ESL Program faculty.)

Depending on the students' ESL level, they take different credit-bearing courses—for example, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Psychology, Popular American Culture (a history course), Speech, and Student Development (courses that are taught by counselors and provide an orientation to college life as well as career counseling). All faculty members, counselors, and tutors in the program attend regular meetings and work closely together to develop an integrated approach to the students' course work in each of the blocks (see Babbitt and Mlynarczyk).

The primary goal of the Intensive Program was to accelerate students' learning of academic English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) so that they could complete the ESL course sequence more quickly than was previously possible. Because of the intensive nature of the program, students have the opportunity to skip one or more

ESL levels. Corollary to the major goal are three other important objectives: to enable students to succeed in credit courses in their first semester in the college; to improve the retention and graduation rates of ESL students; and to facilitate the integration of ESL students into the social and academic life of the college.

During the years of its existence, the Intensive ESL Program has been extremely successful in achieving these goals. Students in this program achieve higher pass rates for ESL courses, with many skipping one or more ESL levels after passing the regular Kingsborough assessments of reading and writing (see Appendix 2 for sample results). Moreover, the students do extremely well in the academic courses that are part of the program. But what has intrigued us even more than the high pass rates and good grades in the academic courses is the special classroom atmosphere in these classes. Students are so much more active and engaged in their learning than are students in regular, unlinked ESL courses. After we and other colleagues teaching in the program had had similar positive experiences semester after semester, we came to the conclusion that there was something about the program itself that created a special classroom chemistry, enabling students to be more active and efficient learners.

In our search for possible explanations for this positive classroom atmosphere, we discovered that recent educational research has confirmed an age-old concept: students are more motivated and more effective learners when they are members of a well-functioning learning community. In the United States, university-based learning communities were developed in the 1920s by Alexander Meiklejohn, who instituted a "great books" program at the University of Wisconsin's Experimental College. In the 1930s John Dewey influenced the pedagogy of learning communities through his work to encourage active student-centered learning (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith). Since then, learning community experiments have been developed at many institutions including the University of California at Berkeley (Tussman) and Evergreen State in Washington (Jones). Most learning community programs fit the following widely accepted definition:

> Learning communities, as we define them, purposefully restructure the curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students. Advocates contend that learning communities can address some of the structural features of the modern university that undermine effective teaching and learning. Built on what is known about effective educational practice, learning communities are also usually associated with

> collaborative and active approaches to learning, some form of team teaching, and interdisciplinary themes. (Gabelnick et al. 5)

One important aspect of this definition is its concern with adapting the structural features of the university. As more and more college students have to juggle work and family responsibilities as well as schoolwork, the fragmentation of the typical college program has become increasingly problematic. Many of today's college students, who take a series of unrelated courses, each with a different group of classmates, perceive their educational experience as lacking in coherence or community. Learning community programs go a long way toward alleviating such problems. Another significant aspect of learning communities emphasized in the above definition is the importance of active student-centered pedagogy. A third aspect is the crossing of departmental lines to encourage faculty collaboration and an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

The building of learning communities has been the subject of recent research. Three learning community programs for native speakers of English have been studied by the Collaborative Learning Project (Tinto, Love, and Russo). The learning communities studied were the Freshman Interest Group (FIG) at the University of Washington; the Learning Community Clusters at LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York; and the Coordinated Studies Program at Seattle Central Community College. The goal of the Collaborative Learning Project was to examine the three learning community programs to see if they enhanced student achievement at their colleges, and if so, in what ways.

The results of both the qualitative and quantitative evaluations of these programs showed significant benefits of the collaborative learning approach. According to Tinto, Love, and Russo, students "reported greater personal involvement in a range of academic and social activities and greater perceived developmental gains" (11). A comparison of students in the collaborative programs with control groups in traditional programs showed a statistically significant higher rate of persistence into the next academic year (66.7 versus 52.0 percent the following fall semester at Seattle Central Community College) as well as superior performance in terms of grade point average (3.14 versus 2.98 percent at the University of Washington) (Tinto, Love, and Russo 10).

The Rationale for ESL Learning Communities

Kingsborough's Intensive ESL Program differs from the three programs studied by Tinto and his colleagues in an important respect: our program was specifically designed to enhance and accelerate the

achievement of our English as a Second Language population. The academic, social, and emotional problems that loom large for non-ESL college students are compounded for ESL students when we consider the new linguistic and cultural environment these students suddenly find themselves in. Culture shock is inevitable, and for many, the period of adjustment to life in the United States is lengthy and difficult. Problems of language learning—sociolinguistic as well as psycholinguistic—abound. Sociolinguistic issues, dealing with the social and cultural aspects of language learning such as language attitudes, and psycholinguistic issues, involving language acquisition (which in turn is influenced by sociolinguistic factors), play an important role in ESL students' achievement not only in ESL classes but in all college classes and in all aspects of college life (Brilliant, Lvovich, and Markson). Kingsborough's Intensive ESL Program seeks to meet students' needs by facilitating their entry into their new academic, social, cultural, and linguistic worlds, accelerating their progress in ESL, granting college credit for college-level work successfully completed, and aiding them in achieving their academic goals more quickly and with greater self-confidence.

Based on our own observations and program evaluations by students and teachers, we believe that the formation of a strong academic learning community is one of the most important reasons for the program's continuing success. The formation of learning communities is directly related to the program's structure. When students spend 25 hours a week attending all the same courses with other entering students, they form very strong bonds and friendships that are based on their academic work together.

The scholarly literature sheds light on how learning communities work and why they are such powerful forces for enhancing student learning. In the rest of this article, we will focus on three strands of this research: (1) the importance of a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to learning; (2) the benefits of active, student-centered pedagogy emphasizing reading and writing to learn; and (3) the possible effects of learning communities on students' perceptions of self-efficacy. Significantly, most of the research on which this discussion is based was done among native speakers of English, and we are convinced that all three areas should be considered in developing more effective programs for basic readers and writers who speak English as a first language.

Collaborative, Interdisciplinary Approach to Learning

A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to learning is woven into the structure of our program. The following connections combine

to make possible the creation of a dynamic learning community: connections among departments; among instructors, tutors, and students; and among students in a cohort. The first community that students become part of takes shape in the small-group settings of each cohort, but the elements that promote the formation of such a community exist at a more basic and general level. The planning that goes into structuring the program blocks lays the groundwork for these student communities. This planning includes: meetings with department chairs to choose faculty for the program; ongoing faculty development workshops for faculty and tutors; integration of course curriculum and materials across disciplinary boundaries; structuring small-group activities and projects; arranging field trips; and dealing expeditiously with problems, both individual and collective.

Departments Working Together and Faculty-Tutor Development

As Brinton, Snow and Wesche note, faculty who participate in collaborative programs for ESL students should be "particularly sensitive to the needs and abilities of second language learners" (21). We look for instructors who are interested in working collaboratively in a block-program format. Departments we currently work with are: Behavioral Sciences (psychology and sociology); History and Political Science (popular American culture); Communication and Theater Arts (speech); and Student Development. Our experience has been that faculty in other departments enjoy working in this program. Students tend to be highly motivated, and superior results in content courses justify the extra work that faculty do.

The faculty development program begins with a 3-hour pre-semester orientation workshop for faculty and tutors in the program. After greetings from the provost, we hand out schedule grids for each program and any newly adopted textbooks to members of each team. Faculty members report on innovations in materials, pedagogy, student-centered activities, and other issues of general interest, and then we break into teams (for each of the program blocks) to develop plans for the semester. The emphasis of these discussions is on inter-relating course curricula, materials, projects, etc.

Throughout the 12-week semester, we schedule three 90-minute faculty development workshops with considerable time set aside for team meetings involving faculty and tutors in each of the program blocks. In addition, instructors in each block maintain close contact during the semester via e-mail, phone calls, lunches, and other short meetings. Ongoing meetings and discussions with team members from other departments reinforce the interdisciplinary nature of the program. "How can we best integrate sociology or history or psychology

with speech and ESL?" "How can we coordinate academic work in all our classrooms?" These are just two of the questions we are continually examining, rethinking, and refocusing.

The sociology-related artifact project is one illustration of how we give vitality to the interdisciplinary aspect of our program. The sociology professor introduces students to the concept of cultural artifacts. In the ESL class, students work in groups to brainstorm and choose an artifact from their culture such as a Russian samovar or a Haitian *ve-ve* statue. Students then talk, read, and write about their artifact in groups and in a whole-class setting. Using a worksheet, students determine the relevance, history, and uses of this artifact to their culture and to them personally. During an ESL computer lab, they research the artifact on the Internet. Students then write a more formal essay about their cultural artifact, to which the ESL professor responds. In speech class, students take notes on their written artifact report and prepare these notes for a speech they will give in that class. They bring in their artifacts to illustrate their speeches.

Sometimes coordination among team members develops in response to college activities. At Kingsborough the events surrounding *The Clothesline Project*, a traveling exhibit designed to "break the silence" of domestic violence, afforded an opportunity for students to connect with and learn about this project and to explore the sociological issue of domestic violence in personal and social as well as academic ways. After reading about this topic in the sociology text, students attended one of the events with the ESL instructor and another with the speech instructor. Students talked and wrote about what they had experienced, and some even chose to design a T-shirt, which was later displayed in the college. Students benefit greatly, as we have stated earlier, from this sort of interdisciplinary approach. In projects such as these, students are able to connect academic concepts with situations in the real world outside of school.

The Instructor-Tutor-Student Connection

Tutors play an important role as liaisons between instructors in a block since they attend class sessions throughout the week. Moreover, tutors develop a unique bond with students through their frequent presence in classes and tutoring sessions. Tutors and students work closely in tutoring sessions and in the ESL classroom during small-group activities, project work, etc. The presence of tutors in the content-area class contributes to students' growing feelings of confidence in mastering challenging academic subjects. For example, students are developing their note-taking abilities and are aware that they need good notes to discuss the academic subject in the ESL class. However, knowing that tutors are with them and taking notes too adds to their

confidence in coping with difficult academic material. A bond of trust forms between students and their tutors, and this bond enhances the other connections that students are forging with each other, with instructors, and with the college as a whole.

Student-to-Student Connections

It is in the student-to-student connections that the true power of the academic learning community resides. The social/academic student-to-student connections that result from the careful structuring and planning of our program enhance the students' chances for success in future semesters (for a statistical analysis of our students' retention and academic success after they leave the Intensive Program, see Fox). Students bring away from their experiences of the first semester an academic base on which to build, an ability to read and write analytically, and a strong network of peer support.

Active, Student-Centered Pedagogy

Students in the Intensive ESL Program don't sit and listen to lectures for 25 hours a week. Instead, they spend a significant amount of their class time working together in an active way. They may be collaborating with a small group of students on a group problem-solving activity. Or they may be working with a student partner to read and respond to each other's essays or journals. This active approach is especially important for ESL students because they acquire academic English much more effectively when they are actually using it many hours a week. Students have often told us that during their weeks in the Intensive Program, they began thinking in English for the first time.

Learning communities encourage students to assimilate new academic material by making personal connections with what they are learning. Students may be asked to use journal writing to relate new concepts from their academic courses to their own life experience. In more formal writing as well, students are often asked to make personal connections with course material. For instance, students who were studying immigration to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for their history course, were asked to do research on various aspects of immigrants' lives during this period and then write an essay on the question: "How would my life have been different if I had immigrated to the U.S. 100 years ago?" According to Gabelnick et al., one of the important intellectual tasks of learning communities is to "contextualize the disciplines and push both students and faculty to develop a personal point of view about the material and issues being studied" (55). This type of contextualization is extremely important for second-language students, who may find the

concepts they are studying in U.S. colleges as well as the teaching methods to be drastically different from those of their previous educational experience. However, both ESL students and English-dominant developmental students benefit greatly from opportunities to process academic concepts in their own language and to make personal connections with the new ideas they are encountering.

Talking to Learn

One of the most important ways in which learning communities encourage students to connect in personal ways with what they are studying is through exploratory talk, or "talking to learn" as it is sometimes called (Britton). In Kingsborough's program, for example, during the 10 hours a week that students spend in the ESL class, approximately half the time is spent in small-group discussions or group problem-solving activities. Students may meet in groups to read and discuss their history journals or to work out the answers to questions on a practice reading test. Even on the first day of the semester, students work in groups to read and understand the course syllabus.

In a study of CUNY open admissions students who spoke English as a first language, Bruffee states that students in collaborative learning situations must develop a relationship of interdependence and trust. He believes that it is important to "reacculturate" new college students to work successfully in an academic environment. Bruffee realizes that open admissions students experience a situation of "local acculturation," or being acculturated to local communities, which enables them to negotiate effectively with those in their neighborhood, their family, or their ethnic group. According to Bruffee, however, one result of local acculturation seems to be that students "could not discover their own buried potential" (19). Reacculturation within an academic environment, although difficult to accomplish, and almost impossible to accomplish when students work individually, can sometimes occur when students work together collaboratively. People seem to be able to "renegotiate" connections to their local communities while gaining membership in other communities, in this case the academic environment of the university (17-20).

One way in which students in our program work through this complex process of reacculturation is by using small-group discussions to make sense of the challenging reading material they are encountering in their academic courses. Lemke emphasizes the importance of helping students learn to construct meaning as they read by making "the text talk in [the students'] own voices, not by reading it, but by elaborating on it themselves, building on it in their own words and making its words their own" (quoted in Davenport 184).

The key concept undergirding the importance of exploratory talk

as a means of learning is the recognition that language is inherently social in the sense that Bakhtin theorizes. Thus, it is not surprising that talk forms the basis of every well-functioning learning community. This talk, however, is very different from the type of "teacher talk" (Cazden) that is the dominant mode of discourse in most whole-class discussions. Because of the limiting nature of typical discourse in the whole-class setting, Barnes feels that it is essential for teachers to provide many opportunities for small-group discussion: "A small group of peers is less threatening than the full class, and the absence of the teacher temporarily releases [students] from the search for right answers that so often distorts their learning strategies" ("Supporting" 30). Although Barnes recommends small-group work as a valuable tool, he does not regard it as a panacea. In any class, the teacher retains a crucial role in creating the kind of supportive environment in which true learning can take place: "Unless students' contributions to the business of the lesson are valued by the teacher not so much by praise as by listening and replying to them, they will not perceive their own role in learning as an active one" ("Supporting" 31).

Most of the teachers and students in Kingsborough's Intensive ESL Program seem to share this belief in the importance of talking to learn. One student explained it this way in the cover letter she wrote for her final writing portfolio: "From my classmates, I learned many different cultures and customs. I enjoyed studying in this small group. Sometimes, I could discuss the questions from textbooks with my classmates. We shared our opinions with each other. It helped me to understand the materials of textbooks from the group discussion. Sharing is a great thing to get along with other people. A lot [of] time, we are so busy to care about ourselves. And, we forget how joyful that sharing is in our life."

Reading to Learn and Writing to Learn

In order to prepare students for the challenging reading and writing assignments of college courses, we include many reading- and writing-to-learn activities in our program (see Babbitt). This approach grows out of the whole-language, Fluency First approach to teaching ESL developed at CUNY's City College (see MacGowan Gilhooly *Achieving Clarity, Achieving Fluency*). Students are required to do extensive reading, approximately 10 pages each day, of full-length books, essays, articles, etc. They also do extensive writing in many genres such as essays and analytical journal writing in response to readings in ESL; journal writing to explore topics in history, psychology, or sociology; rewriting of lecture and discussion notes; and open-ended, experimental forms such as freewriting and point-of-view writing.

Writing is sometimes done in small-group settings, and an im-

portant aspect of student writing that also usually takes place in small groups is peer review and peer discussion of student writing. This collaborative writing discussion often requires written response and revision by the writer of the piece being discussed. One advantage to this approach is that students become more equalized in their contribution to the class: quieter students necessarily take on a more active role. Roles of group members, for example leader or recorder, change as each student's work is discussed. All group members take responsibility for group content-course journal work and other group reading or writing activities.

Student response to this type of work, although not always enthusiastic at first, is usually positive once the process is underway. Through anonymous reflective writing about the effectiveness of reading- and writing-to-learn activities, students analyze what they have gained from these experiences. We have noticed that benefits to students go beyond the content of the work done to include valuable gains in self-efficacy, and that knowledge and confidence gained are factors in student success in the program and in retention beyond the first college semester.

Possible Enhancement of Students' Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, a concept that has been investigated by cognitive researchers, relates to one's self-confidence as a learner. Students with a high degree of self-efficacy believe that they can succeed at school tasks if they try hard and use effective learning strategies. Such learners are more likely to persist at tasks and eventually to accomplish them. Modeling is an important means of increasing self-efficacy: "Individuals who observe others perform a task are apt to believe that they can as well (Bandura), because modeling implicitly conveys to observers that they possess the necessary capabilities to succeed (Schunk)" (quoted in Schunk and Hanson 313).

Schunk and Hanson describe an experiment in which elementary school children who had difficulty with subtraction watched one of three different videotapes. The children who had observed a peer model thinking aloud and eventually solving a set of subtraction problems scored significantly higher both in self-efficacy and in achievement than did those who had observed a teacher explaining and solving the same problems. The children who had not observed either a peer or teacher model scored significantly lower than those in both the peer-model and teacher-model groups. The authors conclude: "Children who observe similar others perform a task are apt to believe that they can succeed as well and thereby experience higher self-efficacy" (319).

The results of this experiment support Vygotsky's concept of the

zone of proximal development, the idea that students are able to solve problems "under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (86) which they would not be able to solve on their own. This type of shared problem solving is useful for the "more capable" as well as the "less capable" peers for as Barnes ("Afterword") explains, the process of explaining new ideas to others is a way of "owning" one's learning: "The struggle to communicate with someone who only half understands can contribute to the clarification of the speaker's own thinking" (344).

Bruffee's research sheds additional light on the power of small-group work in a community of peers. According to Bruffee, two worthwhile aspects of collaborative work for students are that (1) as participants in the same academic class, they speak roughly the same language; and (2) as members of different non-academic communities, they bring to the task or discussion at hand their own perspectives (21-23). If these positive aspects of collaboration exist for non-ESL open admissions students, they are perhaps even more relevant to our ESL population at Kingsborough. Students in our Intensive ESL Program work with and develop interdependent and supportive relationships with students of cultural and language backgrounds quite different from their own. The collaborative work that students do together in their groups helps them to be more open to others' points of view. Students are influenced by peers' ideas, and sometimes readjust their own opinions and feelings to incorporate the thoughts of others. Thus, an advantage of small-group collaborative work is that while students are learning to listen to, respect, and evaluate each other's ideas, they are also learning to respect and evaluate their own ideas. We can see from our Intensive ESL Program students' journal writing, freewriting, oral communication, and end-of-semester evaluation reports how highly they value the contributions of their peers during small-group discussions.

The reacculturation process just described does not cause students to abandon their ethnic identity or their individuality; rather, they appear to draw on their uniqueness and gain strength from it when working in their small groups. Students report that through studying and working in the collaborative setting of the Intensive Program, they have gained confidence in their ability to manipulate English in the areas of listening, speaking, writing, reading comprehension, and study skills. They also report that they have developed expertise in these areas as well.

Students gain confidence from seeing their peers succeed at various learning tasks and from talking with them about how they have achieved this success. The following example illustrates how this process of peer modeling works. Usually, the scores on the first exam in the linked history, psychology, or sociology courses are not as high as

the students had hoped. In the ESL course, the professor helps students to analyze which study and writing strategies were most successful. Sometimes the professor asks permission to type up a successful essay exam answer, which students then discuss in small groups. Outside of class, students often ask to borrow and read the exams of students who got the best grades. Our observations over the past seven years suggest that when students in the Intensive Program get a low test score, they do not lapse into passivity or depression—or even drop the class—as students in unlinked courses often do. Instead, they resolve to do better the next time and develop a realistic plan for doing so.

Another sign of the way in which peer modeling increases self-efficacy is the high retention rate for students in the Intensive Program. Despite the challenging academic nature of the program and the heavy workload, students develop the confidence that they can succeed, and the retention rate for all courses in the program is close to 100 percent. At the end of the semester, when students complete an anonymous program evaluation, they often mention an increase in self-confidence as one of the ways in which they have benefited. One student wrote: "Working and going to classes with the same persons is helpful for me because it gives me confidence. We all know each other." Another student commented: "[In this program] I studied writing, reading, speaking, listening and this improved my self-confidence, and therefore it'll help me in the following semester."

Indeed, a heightened sense of self-efficacy does seem to help students when they enter the college mainstream after completing their first semester in the Intensive Program. Their retention at the college and their grade point averages are significantly above average (Fox).

Conclusion

The question that arises at this point is whether learning community programs for developmental students who are not classified as "ESL" have similar benefits. The existing research strongly indicates that they do (Bruffee; Tinto; Tinto, Love, and Russo). Why do such programs result in greater student learning and better retention rates? We believe—and recent research (Tinto) supports this belief—that the most important factor is the learning community that develops within the classroom. This community is not only social, although social ties are important, especially on a commuter campus where many students are the first in their families to attend college. What seems crucial, however, is that these learning communities are both social and academic. Students form social bonds while discussing academic course material and working together to succeed on course assignments and exams. According to Tinto, this type of integration of the social and

the academic is not typical. Unfortunately, for many entering college students, social life and academic life exist in a kind of competition. Learning community programs, on the other hand, help students to "draw these two worlds together" (610) in positive ways.

At our community college, we often see former students who first met in the Intensive ESL Program together in the library, in the cafeteria, in the halls. They are still maintaining the social-academic ties that they formed at the beginning of their college careers. For example, from one class several semesters ago we see three male students, from China, Haiti, and Morocco—still fast friends. From last semester we see three women, from Japan, Iran, and Yemen—students with different cultural roots but strong common bonds. We see former students who have become an integral part of the life of the college, who do not feel alone in our large urban commuter campus, who know where to go for help when they need it, and who are on their way to achieving their academic and career goals. Some transfer to other institutions. Others graduate and then pursue their careers in the work force or their studies in other colleges or universities. Some go on to graduate school. Our former students, through their struggles, their efforts, and their successes, give living testimony to the power of the academic learning community.

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APPENDIX 1. SAMPLE BLOCK SCHEDULE

Kingsborough Community College
Intensive ESL Program
Schedule of Classes: Spring 2001
ESL 09 (Intermediate ESL)

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday
B (9:10)	ESL 09	ESL 09	Tutors	ESL 09	ESL 09
C (10:20)	ESL 09	ESL 09	Tutors	ESL 09	ESL 09
D (11:30)					
E (12:40)	Speech 28	Tutors	Speech 28	Tutors	Student Development 10
F (1:50)	Sociology 31	Sociology 31	Speech 28	Sociology 31	Student Development
G (3:00)					

APPENDIX 2. RESULTS FOR THE FALL 2000 SEMESTER

ESL PASS RATES: FALL 2000

Note: For the first seven semesters of its existence, the Intensive ESL Program was optional and thus tended to attract students who were academically motivated. Because of the program's impressive results, it was mandated for all entering ESL students beginning in fall 1998. It would seem reasonable that pass rates from fall 1998 onward would be lower than those of previous semesters. This has turned out to be the case, particularly in ESL 07, the lowest ESL level. See table below for results.

	INTENSIVE PROGRAM		REGULAR ESL PROGRAM	
	Percent Passing	Total Number of Students	Percent Passing	Total Number of Students
ESL 07	63%	43	61%	41
ESL 09	80%	45	66%	79
ESL 91	92%	39	65%	87
Pass Rate for All 3 Levels	78% 64%			

Total Number ESL Students Enrolled in All 3 ESL levels: 334

Total Number Intensive Program Students: 127

Total Number Non-Intensive Program Students: 207

ESL SKIP RATES: FALL 2000

Note: Results in all of Kingsborough's ESL and developmental English courses are determined by the students' performance on the end-of-semester reading and writing assessments, which are graded by other instructors who have been carefully normed to insure uniform standards. Before the Intensive ESL Program began, skipping a level for ESL 07 or ESL 09 students was virtually unheard of. Since the program's inception, however, skipping a level has become more commonplace. Skipping has always been an option in ESL 91: at the time of data collection, students who passed both the reading and writing components of the course moved into ENG 93 (the final course in the developmental sequence), and those who passed only one component moved into ENG 92.

	INTENSIVE PROGRAM		REGULAR ESL PROGRAM	
	Percent Skipping	Total Number of Students	Percent Skipping	Total Number of Students
ESL 07	26%	43	0%	41
ESL 09	20%	45	5%	79
ESL 91	56%	39	65%	87
Skip rate for All 3 levels	34%	127	23%	207

Marcia Pally, Helen Katznelson, Hadara Perpignan, and Bella Rubin

WHAT IS LEARNED IN SUSTAINED-CONTENT WRITING CLASSES ALONG WITH WRITING?

ABSTRACT: *What changes occur in students of college writing classes as they learn writing skills? While much research has focused on skills development or on the pedagogical and linguistic factors that promote it, this study looks at changes in personal development and relationships with others. An earlier study of Israeli students in English as a Foreign Language writing courses found significant changes in eight areas of personal development, independent of a variety of teaching methods. The present study, moving to English as a Second Language as well as varying the setting, focuses on one method: Sustained Content-Based Instruction. Once again, there were significant, positive changes in personal growth and relationships, with five areas emerging as common to both studies. These areas pertain to the essential goals of higher education, including learning the meaning of learning and developing critical thinking. The study suggests that Sustained Content-Based instruction may contribute significantly to students' growth. These findings could have vital bearing on the goals and design of academic writing courses, and on the integration of writing courses for non-native speakers into higher education.*

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose

Many university resources, both pedagogical and financial, are invested in enabling non-native English speakers to function productively in English in their academic communities. Thus, much research

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on non-native speakers understandably focuses on improvements in the students' English and academic skills, and how these improvements may be fostered. By contrast, rather than focus on these academic skills, we have looked at changes that occur within the students' personal development and relationships–that is, changes not in the students' writing but rather in their personal growth which occurs as they learn how to write. In this study, we are concerned with *student awareness* of this growth rather than with teacher assessment of their skills (or, for that matter, teacher assessment of personal development). Changes in personal development and relationships may occur without student awareness. Indeed, self-awareness is often a later step in development, and so it indicates a certain maturity of personal growth, which we were looking for in student reports. Awareness contributes to the students' ability to make use of their personal growth in their writing classes, in other disciplines and outside the academic context.

Since proficiency in academic English will allow non-native speakers a place in the mainstream of the student body (where English is the language of instruction) and in the research and publishing worlds, investigations into the writing of non-native speakers have rightfully focused on the writing skills that have been achieved (Belcher & Braine; Cumming 375-397; Norris; Shaw 86-95; Shaw & Ting-Kun Liu, 225-254). Recently, researchers have discussed possible shifts in academic literacy goals that have resulted from changes in current means of communication such as global Internet use (The New London Group, 60-92). However, students' personal development is worth examining as well, since it may eventually lead to better learning. In addition, acknowledgment of such personal changes by faculty and curricula developers may contribute to a broader interpretation of the educational goals of English writing programs as a whole.

The present study continues a previous exploratory investigation of the personal changes emerging in academic writing courses in two Israeli universities where English is taught as a foreign language. In that study, these changes were initially defined as "any outcome of English as a Foreign Language writing courses which may have an impact on aspects of students' lives other than their writing in English." These were termed "by-products" of the writing courses (Katznelson, Perpignan, & Rubin 141-159). In keeping with our focus on student awareness, the researchers reported on learners' perceptions of these "by-products" and explored their nature through an open-ended questionnaire and qualitative analysis of student responses.

The results of the exploratory study, particularly regarding the wealth and range of the "by-products," led us to wonder which factors influence their development. Are they linked to teaching method, to setting, to number of hours of instruction, or to learning or teaching style? Would other "by-products" or factors influencing them emerge

in other settings? It is only when more studies are conducted with different students, teachers and settings that these questions can begin to be answered. It is with the intention of further exploring this still enigmatic phenomenon that the present study was undertaken.

Literature

Our view of learning in writing courses includes emotional and social maturation as well as cognitive development, a perspective that goes back to Hilgard in 1948 and remains an important area of language exploration. Continuing this historical overview to the present day, Lewin noted in 1964 that changes in the cognitive structures of learners can be due to two different types of forces, "one resulting from the structure of the cognitive field itself, and the other from certain valences (needs and motivations)" (83)--the latter stressing personal growth, or the intrapersonal aspect of learning. Other researchers such as Rogers recognized and promoted the interpersonal or social factor in learning. According to Rogers, through the facilitating social conditions of "realness, prizing, and empathy" and through constructive trust among all the participants in the learning situation, "The student is on his way, sometimes excitedly, sometimes reluctantly, to becoming a learning, changing, being" (115).

One way of looking at these changes is through the point of view of the learner. A precedent for this perspective is found in studies by the Goteborg Group (Gibbs, Morgan & Taylor 123-145), specifically one study by Marton, Dall'Alba and Beaty (277-300). These researchers identified six distinct levels within the student's perceptions of learning. Among these, the most complex and most rare was "changing as a person" (283-284), which was defined by the students as "seeing something in a different way" or "[seeing] oneself as a more capable person." These researchers suggest further that "regarding oneself as a more capable person implies a fundamental change from seeing oneself as an object of what is happening ... to seeing oneself as an agent of what is happening " (293). This view is in tandem with the beliefs about learning and agency put forth by Paulo Freire in his work on critical pedagogy, and with Pennycook, in his work on critical pedagogy specifically with second language learners. Pennycook sees it as connecting "the microrelations of TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) — classroom, teaching approaches and interactions — with broader social and political relations" (331). We see the changes in the personal growth and relationships of our learners, developed along with the declared goals of our courses and defined as "by-products," as having possibly far-reaching effects. That is, by becoming agents of change in their own lives, our students may effect changes in

the larger political and social context as well. This as a goal of education has been highlighted in recent research by The New London Group and by Cope & Kalantzis as well as others,

> We need to see the English curriculum not only in its traditional role of preparing students for [the] future, but to see the curriculum, and the people who experience it, as making and shaping that future through their competent and confident action. (Kress 3)

The Exploratory Study

The original investigation was a participant observation study of 72 students' perceptions of "by-products" from their academic writing courses, designed for those studying English as a foreign language. Although the courses followed a variety of teaching approaches, they consistently required the writing of academic papers in English on topics from the students' respective fields of research (such as biology, literature, history, etc.). Learners' perceptions of course "by-products" were elicited through two open-ended questions, which had been previously piloted on an equivalent population.

> *1) What areas of writing in English do you feel you have made progress in?*
> *2) Are you aware of any other outcomes related to your participation in this course (aside from your development in writing in English)? Whatever your response, please explain.*

Though participant observation studies are never free from experimenter bias, the questions here were open-ended in order to reduce it. The researchers were anxious for the students themselves to indicate if there were any "by-products" at all and if so, to generate comments on them. To this end, students were not asked to check items on a list but rather to write freely, generating their own categories of response, or if they chose, not to write at all. The researchers hoped that thus the categories and sub-categories of "by-products" would be derived from fresh learner perceptions as much as possible. Additionally, these responses were coordinated with open-ended interviews with ten learners, reflective journals by the teachers, an evaluation by three raters of pre-and post-course timed essays (White 30-45), and with the measurement of the students' writing apprehension which is considered to possibly affect writing (Daly 43-82; Madigan, Linton & Johnson 295-307; Shaver 375-392). The Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale was used (Daly & Miller 242-249).

The qualitative analysis of responses to the two open-ended questions showed that "by-products" of similar types were perceived by learners, irrespective of teacher factors, learner factors, course content, and number of course hours. Of the 405 responses, content analysis of the answers yielded 125 distinct topics of response, which were interpreted and categorized by consensus into three main categories, Perceived Writing-in-English Outcomes (146 responses), Perceived Writing-in-General Outcomes (132 responses) and Perceived "By-Products" of Writing Courses (127 responses). Only 3 students (N=72) responded that they did not perceive any "by-products." It is interesting to note that the total number of responses corresponding to changes NOT related to Writing-in-English (249) was close to double that of those related to Writing-in-English. This seems to indicate that the phenomenon of perceived "by-products" was indeed widespread.

Only brief mention can be made here of the findings of the earlier study (Appendix A, Figures 1 & 2). The first category of findings, Perceived Outcomes in Writing-in-English, as expected mainly reflected the goals of the course, which had been made explicit throughout the instruction. The second category, Perceived Outcomes in Writing-in-General, confirmed that students perceived transfer of their English writing skills to their writing in their mother tongue (Aykel & Kamisli 69-105). Most central to this study are the "By-Products" perceived by the students, which are presented in Appendix A, Fig. 3. Responses expressed changes along the entire continuum of personal development, from change in knowledge and skills not in course goals (e.g., "improve listening") to "change as a person" (e.g., "increased self-control and patience toward others," "becoming more creative in other areas of my life"). In sum, changes ranged from the practical to the more holistic and "transformative" in that the changes in the learners' growth as a person could lead them to become agents in their own further development, with effects on their communities and environment.

The Present Study

In the earlier study, students reported personal changes in classes with different teachers, learners, course contents and hours, and to some extent differing teaching methodologies. Yet, because the changes found are so central to the broadest goals of education, we wondered whether they (or which among them) would recur in other academic writing contexts. Recurrence might suggest that these changes are not dependent on the circumstances of the previous study and possibly that there is something in the nature of academic writing courses that supports changes of this type. Such a finding would have significant bearing on

the goals and design of academic writing courses, and on the integration of writing courses for non-native speakers into higher education more generally. In the present study, the setting was shifted from two Israeli universities (English as a Foreign Language) to two in New York (English as a Second Language) where a specific teaching approach is used, Sustained Content-Based Instruction. Common to both studies is that courses focused on writing academic English.

Sustained Content-Based Instruction: Definition and Description

Although evolved from content-based teaching, Sustained Content-Based Instruction distinguishes itself from theme-based classes and linked classes. In theme-based classes, an approach commonly taken in composition classes for native and non-native speakers, topics vary frequently, and in linked classes, each English class is paired with a sister content class. By contrast, Sustained Content courses are themselves English classes for non-native speakers in which one discipline is followed over time, as it is in a content class, and language skills are learned and practiced through the authentic academic readings and assignments as support is given by the language teacher (Kasper 309-320; Pally 1-18; Vygotsky). In college settings, Sustained Content classes aim at teaching "transferable" language knowledge (Flowerdew 305-316; Widdowson 27-36)--that is, skills common to academic disciplines and which undergird discipline-specific work (a partial taxonomy of transferable academic skills is found under Academic Skills, Appendix B). As Belcher noted in her analysis of 14 areas of study, "There are differences as well as similarities across disciplines . . . there are also generic commonalities in the explicit critical writing in diverse fields" (139; see also, Bensley & Haynes 41-45). Once students have been exposed to these transferable skills, they are in a position to learn genre- and domain-specific conventions in content classes or in writing classes for students majoring in one discipline (Cope, Kalantzis, Kress & Martin 231-247; Hyon 693-722). In English classes where student majors vary, criteria for content selection are, that the content be part of the core curriculum of the university or that it be familiar generally to college-educated people (Environmental Studies, for instance, but not Laser Techniques of Cell Staining).

Rationale for Sustained CBI

Teachers and researchers have come to Sustained Content teaching in response to a gap between the skills taught in many English classes for non-native speakers and the skills these students need for

university study. These skills range from a grasp of academic argumentation to a lack of rhetorical strategies appropriate for academic/professional work (Kasper 147-157; Smoke). Leki & Carson, for example, found that language classes often asked for personal reaction papers but not for "text responsible" writing where students demonstrate that they have grasped a text's claims, concepts and information (81-101; 39-69). Moreover, for non-native speakers, developing writing in English is a process of *language socialization*–that is, identifying the language, literacy and pragmatic skills of a discourse community and practicing them so that they become both competent and comfortable with them, and perhaps identify as members of that community (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic; Kramsch 133-154; Pierce 9-32). Though students craft their identities from the many communities to which they belong and from the many texts they encounter, in the academic context, the "voices" expressing those identities must be distinctive yet appropriate to the academic community. Thus, Sustained Content teaching seeks to familiarize students with academic modes of expression by simulating academic activities. Working through the texts and activities of academic work, students develop the voice, sense of self and skills that are particular to it. Many of these skills cannot be developed without reading and writing extensively in one area (such as the synthesis of sources or research requirements and conventions)–that is, without developing some *content-area expertise.*

The Sustained Content Courses of the Present Study

This study looks at four advanced, Sustained Content courses taught over three semesters in 2000. Of the 43 international students studied–from the Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia, the Middle East, and Southern and Eastern Europe— all but five were enrolled in university degree programs. As the students were new to the U.S., the classes studied a course titled, "The American Mind: Assumptions, Myths and Contradictions" (see Appendix B for an overview of the curriculum). Course content was divided into units, each content unit paired with an academic skills unit. Each skill was *modeled* (Cumming 375-397) using the first reading in a unit, then *explained* (Carrell 727-752), and then *practiced* by the students as they worked through later readings and writing assignments within the unit. Thus, students advanced through progressively more complex units of content-skill sequences.

Method of the Present Study

The two open-ended questions of the earlier study were compared with student responses in non-structured learner interviews,

teacher journals, evaluations of student work, and measurement of the students' writing apprehension. These questions were here given to students in the Sustained Content classes during the last week of the semester. Questionnaires were anonymous and analyzed as in the earlier study, yielding six achievements in course goals (Appendix C) and 20 that developed as "by-products" (Appendix D). The 20 "by-products" were gathered into six clusters. As in paper-and-pencil studies of this nature, the data here reflect lowest response levels. That is, the actual number of students who experienced a change in their personal development might be the same as recorded in the questionnaires (with no students experiencing a change other than those reporting it) or the actual number may be higher (other students experienced it but did not think of it at the time of the questionnaire).

As in the earlier study, students were asked about how well they achieved course goals. But in keeping with our focus on their awareness of personal changes, record was not made of teacher or department assessment of student writing or other measurements of specific English language skills. We were concerned to hear what the students had to say about themselves, their personal growth and their awareness of it.

FINDINGS

Question #1: Student Perceptions of Achievement of Course Goals

Student comments to the first question suggest that students identified course goals and perceived substantial learning in these areas. Student identification of course goals is important feedback for teachers and curriculum and program developers; it indicates whether students believe they have learned what educators set out to teach. Moreover, noticing new abilities may help students use them. Failure to identify course goals at the time of the questionnaire does not necessarily mean that students did not notice them, as awareness of what one has learned may emerge at various times and phases. But positive identification of course goals suggests their salience to students.

In the present study, course goals were that students be able to analyze university-level texts, write papers using the structures and argumentation appropriate to academic work, and develop the subskills that support these goals, among them a command of grammar appropriate for academic writing, the acquisition of academic rhetorical devices and note-taking/research skills. Students reported significant achievement in these skill areas (Appendix C).

Question #2: Student Perception of "By-Product" Achievements

Student responses to question 2 (Appendix D), suggest findings summarized here briefly and discussed in detail below:

* as in the earlier study, students reported learning that was not explicit in course goals—that is, they reported "by-products"
* of the eight "by-product" clusters in the earlier study, five were found common to both: Learning the Meaning of Learning, the Development of Critical Thinking, Affective Outcomes (increased confidence, enjoyment of learning), Improvement in Skills Not Explicit in Course Goals and Increased Genre/Discipline Knowledge. While some overlap may inevitably exist among clusters, each focuses on a predominantly different area of personal development that students described.
* student responses enhanced our understanding of the role of Sustained Content teaching in personal development. They revealed the unanticipated finding that courses in the previous study had in part also relied on Sustained Content teaching, and that the Sustained Content aspects of the courses may be partly responsible for the personal changes in students.
* student responses suggested that different teaching methodologies also yield different personal development
* student responses suggested that different settings yield differences in personal development
* two categories of responses that appeared in the previous study did not emerge significantly in the present one and require further investigation.

DISCUSSION

The Presence of "By-products" in Both Studies

A central concern of this study was the influence of six pedagogical conditions on personal growth that develops as students work on course goals. Those conditions are: setting (English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language), teaching methodology, the teachers themselves, the learners, course contents and course hours (from 24-84 contact hours per semester). In the previous study, "by-products" developed in English writing classes in spite of differences in four of the conditions: the teachers, students, course contents, and course hours. In the present study, five of the same "by-product" clusters emerged in spite of the additional differences in the settings and teaching methodologies. This finding is especially striking as *all but 3 of the 115* students (the total for both studies) reported these "by-products." This supports the suggestion, potentially rich for academic pro-

gramming and goals, that there may be something in tackling the requirements of English writing classes that bolsters these personal developments in non-native speakers.

"By-products" Common to Both Studies

Five clusters of "by-products" were common to both studies, suggesting an emerging pattern linking these particular "by-products" to academic writing classes for non-native students. The first, *Learning the Meaning of Learning,* is a vital category, nearly half, 43%, of all responses in the present study. This level of response suggests that students, in learning how to grapple with research and writing in English, also learn something about what it means to learn in general. Student comments indicate that they see how to apply this learning to challenges both in and outside the classroom. Student descriptions of Learning the Meaning of Learning include:

* what one learns in one area of life can be helpful in another
* "studying in general," "commitment," "professionalism" and "being rigorous in the use of evidence in life" are "important"
* "avoiding avoidance" and "appreciating" challenge
* attending to comments/feedback (not only to one's grade); using comments to learn from one's mistakes ("I am more aware of figuring out those mistakes which I made the my first draft and have ability to correct those mistakes by myself")
* "speaking out and asking questions"
* assessing the instruction one gets–what is "good teaching" for the individual student, what arouses and stimulates interest, what is beyond one's ability or below it.

Learning the Meaning of Learning also includes such traditional study skills as time management ("The class helped me organized myself and set priorities") or learning the importance of the computer as a research/writing tool.

The Development of Critical Thinking appeared in the present study as a sub-cluster of Learning the Meaning of Learning (20% of responses). Though definitions of critical thinking vary in the pedagogical literature, examples of what students meant by it here include, "I learned the way of thinking in English," "I learned especially to ask questions in the readings," and "Analysis! Analysis! Analysis! This is the most great part that I learned from this semester. It is not only help my reading, grammar and writing but also the thinking" (emphasis original). Some students emphasized the immediate practical aspects of critical

thinking: "It's going to be a lot of help for me to deal with more papers coming in the future," while others had broader growth in mind, "This is the first time in all my years studying school has made think."

Affective Outcomes, or those most associated with student feelings, included increased confidence in studying (14% of students) and discovering that learning can be fun (9% of students), echoing responses in the earlier study (28% of students). Embarking on academic/professional work can be anxiety-provoking for many students and more so for those studying in a second or foreign language (Ferris 315-339). Thus, having the chance to improve academic skills such that confidence increases and learning is even seen as fun may lower anxiety, which in turn may ease learning (Krashen). At least 9% of students extrapolated their experiences in English class to the notion that learning in general can be fun, and some (also 9% of students) reported that their English writing class increased confidence in their ability to "make it" in life, feelings that also may support academic and professional advancement.

Other students reflected on the interaction among confidence, enjoyment of learning and personal growth: "This class gets me fun. It makes me attend every day, which is wonderful for me and for my parents... I used to be actually an introvert. However, the class has made me more introvert. I'm joking. Yes, I'm joking. Now I'm able to say jokes which sometimes makes classmates laugh out loud. It's kind of because of this class. I'm having fun studying."

Improvement in Skills Other than Those Stated Explicitly in Course Goals suggests that the writing classes investigated here imparted a wider range of skills than were evident in course curricula/descriptions, and that skills are learned not only in the courses, class units or sequences designed to teach them. For instance, both studies showed improvement in oral communication in classes that focus on reading and writing. In the present study, nearly half (43%) of the students reported improved speaking skills; nearly a quarter (23%) reported improved grasp of mass media (tv, radio, and pop music) which relies on improved listening comprehension and familiarity with the culture. Both are needed in academic life, to comprehend lectures (including the asides, humor etc.) and to participate in discussion, debate and professional gatherings.

Increased Genre/Discipline Knowledge appeared markedly (42% of students) and not surprisingly in the present study where Sustained Content teaching was the method of instruction. As with student comments on course goals (question 1), this is important feedback for teachers and curricula programmers, indicating that students believe they learned what teachers intended to teach. But this finding is important for another reason as well. Increasing student grasp of one discipline may facilitate their grasp of others in and outside the classroom. That

is, as they learn the "transferable language knowledge" through the study of one discipline, including sophisticated concepts and vocabulary, lines of argumentation, and rhetorical conventions, they may then be in a position to apply them to later study.

In the earlier study, where a number of teaching methodologies were employed, increased genre/discipline knowledge was surprisingly also suggested by 10% of students. This finding led us to look again at student research and writing in that first study, and we noticed that here too, papers relied on the continuity and accretion of content, though these writings classes were not explicitly identified as Sustained Content courses. This changed our understanding of the relationships among content, writing and "by-products," discussed in the next section.

Sustained Content and Personal Development--An Unanticipated Finding

The central premise of Sustained Content teaching is that, by engaging authentic academic tasks in their English writing classes, students will gain academic skills which can then be applied to other academic/professional contexts–in short, that students grasp something about learning and writing overall by learning to write on one academic subject in depth (Nunan Chapter 2; Van Lier Chapter 1). In light of this goal, it is noteworthy that, though student comments are at minimum response levels, more than half of all students in the present study (53%) and nearly half of all their responses (43%) remarked on Learning the Meaning of Learning. Thus, by tackling one academic subject in depth, students reported that they learned not only skills specific to that subject but important ways to approach learning in and out of the classroom. Thirty-five percent reported on the development of critical thinking (35% of students), a skill key to academic/professional work in English. Other significant components of Learning the Meaning of Learning include: increased ability to study other subjects, such traditional study skills as time management, and increased ability to assess "good teaching"—to know when intellectual interest is aroused, when material is at an appropriate level, when the teacher "takes students seriously." These abilities are, again, central to academic/professional success.

Critically, the present study revealed an unanticipated finding regarding the effects of Sustained Content teaching on personal development. The courses in the earlier study, from the points of view of the teachers, were not Sustained Content courses as teachers did not develop Sustained Content curricula, readings, etc. Only one class ap-

proximated a Sustained Content curriculum, made up of English majors who studied a number of literary works together in order to write critical, academic papers for the English Literature department. All the remaining classes in the earlier research had within them students from many departments, each seeking to communicate in English about his or her major field of study. No common content was used in these writing classes. Nevertheless, from the students' point of view, these courses did rely on Sustained Content, as students wrote their papers on their major subjects. That is, to fulfill assignments in their writing classes, each student wrote about his/her area of expertise–*a Sustained Content experience for individual students if not for the teachers.*

It is possible that the personal development common to both studies—such as Learning the Meaning of Learning or Development of Critical Thinking—was supported by the Sustained Content approach used in all classes, even when unwittingly. For the authentic texts and tasks allow students to grapple with actual academic demands–to explore reasoning and study skills through practice and trial-and-error. In other words, a Sustained Content approach, in demanding authentic academic work, may provide challenges of sufficient complexity and reach to allow personal growth to occur. We do not mean to suggest that other approaches do not, only that all meaningful personal growth requires work that extends the self beyond what is known and comfortable into new areas, and that Sustained Content teaching may offer students an opportunity to apply themselves in this way.

"By-products" Resulting from Differences in Teaching Methodology

Though student responses show five "by-product" clusters common to both studies, they also suggest that the differences in teaching methodology influenced two "by-products": Increased Genre/Discipline Knowledge and Broadening Knowledge Base. In the present study where Sustained Content was the teaching method, 42% of students reported gaining genre/discipline knowledge ("The content of every reading material is very helpful for other classes in some way," "I can develop the concept of American society. Before taking this class, I just had illustions or mistake"). In the earlier study, by contrast, most students did not share a common curriculum but rather studied the content for their papers in their content classes. Thus, though they were writing under Sustained Content conditions, they understandably did not often identify their English writing class as the source of "genre or discipline" information (10% of students).

However, in the process of writing their papers, students in the

earlier study discussed their work with classmates so that they learned a bit about each other's majors. Thus, 9% of students reported "broadening their knowledge base" about different disciplines. This finding did not appear in the present study since discussing students' majors was not a feature of the course and so students would not likely mention such discussion as "by-products" of it.

"By-products" Reflecting Differences in Setting

As teaching English in a country where it is the main language (the U.S.) differs in some ways from teaching it where it is not (Israel), differences in "by-products" were expected to emerge. The students in New York (23%)--but not in Israel–reported increased ability to grasp the mass media as a result of their English course, and greater ease socializing with those around them (18% of students). Four percent of the New York group reported greater ease "expressing myself with people coming from different countries" using English as the *lingua franca*. Eighteen percent reported increased ability to grasp the content of other classes, since they were conducted in English, and 14% reported increased confidence in doing so.

Not surprisingly, though the Israeli students reported more ability and confidence in using English, they did not report greater ability or confidence in grasping other classes, as they are given in their native language. However, a considerable number of the Israeli students reported that learning to write in English improved their mother-tongue academic writing, a finding that appears to be linked to their Learning How to Learn and to Develop Critical Thinking. The New York group did not mention mother-tongue academic writing; to our knowledge they were writing academic papers only in English at the time of the study. Whether improved writing in English will influence mother-tongue writing at a later date suggests another area of research.

Responses Requiring Further Investigation

Two categories of responses that appeared in the earlier study did not appear significantly in the present one: Team Work and Listening to Others. As in the earlier research, classes in the present study relied on team work for a range of projects, and students received feedback both from their classmates and from the teacher. It is thus curious that only two students mentioned "working in groups" in their discussion of Learning the Meaning of Learning, and no students mentioned Listening to Others. Reasons why are purely speculative and point to future research to determine if these responses emerge elsewhere, and why or why not.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the perception of "by-products" among non-native English speakers has emerged in two very different settings, both with a focus on academic writing. Although creative writing has long been seen as a tool toward personal growth, especially in mother tongue classes, academic writing has not been considered in this light perhaps because of its traditional focus on skills. Yet in both settings reported on here, a wide range of personal changes were perceived by students. We were naturally led to wonder whether such perceived changes would be reported by students in other English courses for non-native speakers, such as those emphasizing oral/aural skills or reading comprehension? Would these changes be perceived by non-native speakers in content classes or native speakers in their mother-tongue writing classes? It is our view that the point of view of the learner is worthy of continued investigation.

In the present study, exploring the influence of different teaching methodologies on personal changes revealed that one methodology, Sustained Content teaching, might foster important changes in the learners. Though courses in the earlier study were not Sustained Content from the teachers' perspectives, students in both studies wrote their papers on subjects which they had studied in a sustained way. (The papers in the earlier study were based on students' content-area expertise in their majors.) Thus, students in both studies practiced their writing skills as they were working with a sustained system of concepts, becoming more knowledgeable about them as they became more articulate. We wonder if the practice in authentic academic skills made possible by Sustained Content provides the kind and extent of the challenge needed for the emergence and recognition personal growth. This would suggest not that Sustained Content teaching is the one way to achieve personal development but rather that, as growth emerges from grappling with ideas and skills one does not yet have, Sustained Content is one opportunity for this grappling that is beneficial in the academic context.

One could speculate that it is through "by-products" such as "Learning the Meaning of Learning" that bridging the gap between the "two worlds" can take place, the world of English for non-native speakers and the world of other university courses (Leki & Carson 39-69). If this is so, the Sustained Content approach warrants increased exploration and pedagogical emphasis both for its contribution to traditional academic skills and to their "by-products."

In addition, a study of "by-products" may add to the controversial debate on the transferability of language skills (Berman 29-46; Cumming 81-141). Student responses here indicate that several kinds

of skills transfer indeed occur, at least from their points of view. The New York group indicated transfer of language and other academic skills to their content classes in English, and the Israeli students indicated transfer of writing and reading expertise to study in their mother tongue. Student awareness of their academic progress in English writing classes and how they can use it in other classes is an area for future investigation.

These conclusions add to our understanding not only of the role of Sustained Content teaching on personal development but also more generally of the role played by English writing classes for non-native speakers in fulfilling the broader objectives of the university. This role includes developing the whole human being and our readiness,

> to think of the curriculum overtly and directly in relation to likely social, economic, political changes, in relation to likely futures, and in [its] thinking of the English curriculum as a central means of intervention, as a crucial factor in participating in the construction of those futures. (Kress, 15)

If our courses do reveal "by-products" of such significance for the academic and personal development of students, then it is possible that these personal changes could in turn effect changes in the larger sociopolitical environment. Inasmuch as a university plays a transformative role in the society in which it is situated, the repercussions of the "by-products" could be indeed far-reaching.

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APPENDIX A

Perceived outcomes in writing in English

Subcategories (Total: 146)	**Examples taken from Student Responses**
Grammar (morphology and syntax) (48)	***varied and suitable verb tenses***
	improved sentence structure
Academic Writing (41)	***using different tone and hedging***
	awareness of audience style of argumentation
	distinguishing between academic and personal writing
Vocabulary Development (22)	***awareness of the power of each word***
Making Connections (14)	***connecting sentences correctly***
	more varied connections between words

Figure 1

Perceived outcomes in writing in general

Subcategories (Total: 141)	**Examples taken from Student Responses**
Content and Structure (67)	***writing an abstract paragraph construction***
	constructing a thesis/defining an issue
	transfer of knowledge of structure of articles to Hebrew writing
Learning to Write (process) (17)	**Revision:** ***not being satisfied with the first draft***
	Planning: ***self-confidence in controlling own writing using discipline rather than intuition for writing***
	Monitoring: ***using suitable rules critical reading of own writing***

Awareness of Self in the Writing Process (15)	***taking responsibility for what you write***
Expressing Ideas Coherently (16)	***expressing ideas logically***
General Writing Skills (19)	***transfer of writing skills from one assignment to another***
Acquiring a Voice (7)	***positioning self vis-à-vis other writers developing an authoritative personal voice***

Figure 2

Perceived "by-products" of writing courses

Subcategories (Total: 127)	**Examples taken from Student Responses**
Other Skills (57)	***oral presentation techniques***
	analyzing scientific papers' use of a specific on-line internet writing tool
Affective Outcomes (19)	***overcoming fear of speaking***
	starting to like the English language
Teamwork (14)	***increased self-esteem generating ideas through group work***
Learning the Meaning of Learning (10)	***feeling of belonging to academic community***
	feeling committed/dedicated to own work
	paying attention to the writing and not to the grade
Listening to Others (8)	***accepting positive criticism***
Increased Genre/Discipline/Media Knowledge (7)	
	encountering different genres of writing from different disciplines
	comparing language of literature to language of film
Critical Thinking (6)	***achieving a critical perspective***
Broadening of Knowledge Base (6)	***using opportunity to learn about work of other students***

Figure 3

APPENDIX B

Course Outline: ***"The American Mind"***

Content:

Chapter 1: Individualism and its Contradictions

Academic Skills:

reading:

* find the main idea of each paragraph
* find and chart key terms
* find and chart rhetorical conventions (strategies of definition, comparison, contrast, exemplification, etc.)
* developing private dictionaries
* find the main idea of an article or chapter
* identify kinds of main ideas (describe, persuade, etc.)

writing:

* brainstorming
* writing a main idea for paper—introduction to types of main ideas/papers
* writing assignments

Content:

Chapter 2: The Ups & Downs of Pragmatism

Academic Skills:

reading:

* find the introduction, middle and conclusion of a reading
* find main & supporting points of the "middle" of a reading
* find evidence of the "middle" (examples, data, etc.)
* find and chart transition sentences
* develop an outline of a reading—outlines, note-taking

writing:

* developing an outline for your paper/essay
* writing assignments (for papers or essay exam writing)
  —definition/description essay: brainstorm, main idea, outline(claim and support)
  —argument essay: brainstorm, main idea, and outline (claim and support)

Content:

Chapter 3: The American Economy: Wealth & Poverty

Academic Skills:

reading:

* develop your research chart
* variations on the classic outline:
  —different sequences for main points, supporting points and evidence (inductive, deductive, etc.)
  —implied points

writing:

* summary writing: using your outline to write a summary
* paraphrasing

* writing assignments
  — summary writing and paraphrasing
  — argument essay: brainstorm, main idea, and outline (claim & support)
  — persuasive essay: brainstorm, main idea, outline (claim and support)
* citations and bibliographies

Content:
Chapter 4: Immigration in America: Need & Suspicion
Academic Skills:
reading:
* note when readings/sources disagree
* identify rhetorical conventions that show disagreement
* note when you disagree with a reading
* challenging/questioning a reading (the question-outline)
writing:
* writing assignments
  —compare/contrast essay: brainstorm, main idea, outline
  —synthesizing texts (research chart) and summarizing contrasting texts

Content:
Chapter 5: Education: Genius & Illiteracy
Academic Skills:
reading:
* questioning readings & "refute opposing opinion" strategies
writing:
* writing assignments
  — "refute opposing opinion" strategies: brainstorm, main idea and outline
* revision

Content:
Chapter 6: The Arts: The Jewel in the Crown, the Thorn in the Side
Academic Skills:
Consolidation of Skills:
reading:
* key terms
* outlining, note-taking
* questioning/challenging readings
writing:
Assignments for research papers or essay exams:
* brainstorm
* main idea
* outline (claim & support)
* summary/paraphrasing
* synthesizing readings (research chart)
* compare/contrast strategies
* refute opposing opinion strategies
* revision

APPENDIX C

Present Study: Responses to Question #1
Learning Skills Stated in Course Goals

(surface errors retained in student responses)

improvement in academic writing (95% of students) — "I learned how to organize an essay and it worked on my papers for major courses" —"I have become aware of the structure of English. . . . As this structure is very difference from that of Japanese writing, the training I took in this class was/is useful for writing." —"I have become more aware of mistakes in writing."	**improvement in text analysis** (49% of students) —"The most important thing in which I feel I have made progress was . . . to pick up the important parts of articles, which process a hard time for me." —"I never thought I'd be able to read or write in English. I was completely lost and now, after three month, my ability to read improved in a way that I am not thinking in my own language." —"The more writing skills I learn, the more reading I can understand."
improvement in grammar (63% of students) — "I made progress in analyzing and combining complex sentences." — "I think that grammar exercise is more effective for me . . . This was the first time that I've ever divided the sentence. At first, I didn't understand how these kind of study helped me, but I recognized that these kinds of study help me read articles and books easily."	**improvement in academic vocabulary** (34% of students) —gains in "vocabulary in use."
improvement in connections/transitions (25% of students) — "I learned to combine between the sentences," — "I can connect sentences to make them seem union."	**improvement in note-taking and research organization** (20% of students) —"I find it [research chart] useful in any field of writing. I have already started making a research chart when I write an essay in my course work."

APPENDIX D

Present Study: Responses to Question #2
Changes that Develop as "By-products" of Course Goals

Individual gains are measured in percent of students (S) as no student made more than one response within a category. The clusters are measured in percent of total responses (R), as a single student may have remarked on more than one category within the cluster.

Student Perception of "By-products" (Total R = 104)

improvement in speaking 8 S or 18%	confidence in studying at college 6 S or 14%	grasp of professionalism required by university work 2 S or 4%
assessing "good" teaching 8 S or 18%	increased ability to study other subjects 8 S or 18%	understanding of writing 1 S
learning how to "think" 4 S or 9%	learning that learning can be enjoyable 4 S or 9%	confidence in ability to succeed in life 3 S or 7%
learn to ask questions 4 S of 9%	learning how to find answers/study skills 6 S or 14%	increased genre/discipline knowledge 18 S or 42%
increased ability to to interact socially 8 S or 18%	improvement in reading/ viewing/hearing mass media 10 S or 23%	appreciation of a challenging job 4 or 9%
learn from mistakes 4 S or 9%	learn what is beyond one's present ability 3 S or 7%	learn what is below one's present ability 2 S or 4%
interacting with people from different countries 2 S or 4%	skills for NNS in U.S. 1 S	

Clusters:

Learning the Meaning of Learning (43% of R)

study skills=6 S or 14%
learn to think=4 S or 9%
appreciate challenge= 4S or 9%
ask questions = 4S or 9%
good teaching=8 S or18%
learn from mistakes=4S or 9%
beyond ability=3 S or 7%
below ability=2 S or 4%
professionalism=2 S or 4%
increased ability to study other subjects=8 S or 18%

Development of Critical Thinking (20% of R)

ability to ask questions = 4 S or 9%
assessing good teaching = 8 S or18%
learning to think = 4 S or 9%
learning from mistakes = 4 S or 9%

Affective Outcomes(13% of R)

confidence in studying = 6 S or 14%
confidence in life =3 S or 7%
learning is enjoyable= 4 S or 9%

Interpersonal Skills Development(9% of R)

in general = 8 S or18%
with people from other countries = 2 S or 4%

Increased genre/discipline knowledge Explicit (17% of R)

8 S or 18%
8 S or 18%

Improvement in Skills Not in Course Goals (27% of R)

speaking:18 S or 42%
improved grasp of mass media: 10 S or 23%

News and Announcements

Conference Announcement: The Third Symposium on Second Language Writing will be held October 11-12, 2002 at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA. This year's Symposium, entitled "Constructing Knowledge: Approaches to Inquiry in Second Language Writing," will feature sixteen scholars who will explore various ways in which knowledge is constructed, transformed, disseminated and negotiated in the field of second language writing. Presenters will include: Dwight Atkinson, Linda Lonon Blanton, Colleen Brice, Christine Pearson Casanave, Dana Ferris, John Flowerdew, Richard Haswell, Sarah Hudelson, Ken Hyland, Xiaoming Li, Rosa Manchon, Paul Kei Matsuda, Susan Parks, Miyuki Sasaki, Tony Silva and Bob Weissberg. For more information, please visit http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~silvat/symposium/2002/.

Call for Proposals and Conference Announcement: The 26th Annual CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors (CAWS) Conference, to be held on November 1st at New York City Technical College, invites proposals for papers, panels, workshops, and roundtables addressing the theme "Writing to Heal, Writing to Learn." Send an abstract (a couple of paragraphs and a working title) by email/mail to Sue Young <youngsu@lagcc.cuny.edu>, English Dept., LaGuardia Community College/CUNY, 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101. Deadline: July 1, 2002.

Conference Announcement: The 92nd Annual National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Convention will be held November 21-26 in Atlanta, Georgia . The conference theme will be "Celebrating the Languages and Literacies of Our Lives." For more information go to http://www.ncte.org/convention/2002/index.shtml.

Publication Announcement: *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Basic Writing*, by Linda Adler-Kassner and Gregory R. Glau, is available free of charge from Bedford/St. Martin's. It is also available on online at http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/basicbib/.

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