
Just Imagine...

by Sharon Duffy, Elmer Haley, and
Amanda Stevens Milligan

Picture this: Your students are digging into their textbooks and doing research in the library -- with a smile. They are writing interesting, focused papers. They are discovering the joy of learning. This is happening here at Plymouth State College, and we are some of the students who have experienced it.

After spending an entire term in Richard Chisholm's Study of Language class, we have come to understand his methods of using writing to promote learning. Many teachers have begun to use the writing process methods in their classes, and as students, we have become very familiar with journal entries, in-class writings, and other thought-provoking methods. Chisholm adds a new dimension to this process: scenario-based writing.

As Chisholm explains in the 1993 *Journal of Writing Across the Curriculum*, he began using the scenarios to help students "connect subject matter to their immediate environments." Scenario-based assignments have done just that for us and much more; they have created a context. We can write from the "inside" rather than looking blankly at an assignment from the "outside."

Just what are scenarios and how do they bring students inside the writing process? Scenarios are hypothetical situations that determine the audience or the situation for a paper. They can be serious proposals or exaggerated events and/or characters which liberate students to approach an assignment from creative angles. Students bond with characters that grows in their imagi-

nations; they create a personal relationship with the fictitious situation, and, as a result, they write richer papers.

Consider one of Chisholm's humorous scenarios:

What shall we name the baby?

You are a crotchety old person who has just learned of the birth of a new child in the family. You are sure your name would be most suitable for the child. Using your research and the etymological chart of your name, convince your hesitant relatives that there is no name more fitting than your own. Write a persuasive yet informal letter that will assure your name lives on in infamy!

Outrageous scenarios are not merely an opportunity to get giddy. The expectations are clear, aims tangible, and substance of the paper grounded in the concrete research process. Students exercise creativity within the confines of skimming and scanning for information. Rambling statistics and irrelevant ideas tacked on at the end of a paragraph are curbed when students have a constant scenario to keep them focused.

Now consider the serious scenario:

Aunt Matilda

Your Great Aunt Matilda has just been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Integrate the articles in our text into a compassionate, factual account of fictitious Aunt Matilda's language disorder. Imagine that a brother living overseas writes to ask about her condition. In his letter he confuses the symptoms of aphasia with those of schizophrenia. As a family spokesperson, relay infor-

mation to the distant brother explaining the differences, and easing the brother's mind.

Upon reading the scenario, students will get inside the assignment by bonding with the brother. They might ask themselves, "Who is my brother?" "What is he like?" "Do I have anything in common with him?" and "Why is he overseas anyway?" Because the instructor has only fleshed out a scenario rather than filled in all the pieces, the students have the opportunity to develop real people and gear real responses for those people. The possibilities are endless and a myriad of innovative papers are the result.

In another instance, students create the audience to listen to their academic insights. Consider this scenario:

Commingled Recyclables: Outlandish or English?

A friend has commented that "commingled recyclables" is an outlandish mixture of words and not even English. Respond in writing to this person, explaining how these words follow the rules of English phonetics, phonology, and morphology. Your task here is to write up this material as a paper for the English Club. This means that you will have to assimilate the material well enough to write it for a general college audience. But your main task remains the same: you need to explain how these words follow the regular rules of English word formation.

Explaining how English words are formed could prove to be a boring, frustrating activity. The scholarly material students were asked to use in their defense of "commingled recyclables" was extensive. The imag-

ined target audience made the assimilation process manageable.

For example, both Elmer and Sharon wrote their papers as though they were actually speaking to the “English Club” suggested in Chisholm’s assignment. They each pictured a “real” English Club, and then addressed their papers to this group. Each voice was distinct since each developed a sense of camaraderie with the imagined English Club.

Amanda also addressed an English Club, but instead of speaking directly to the club, she kept an image of that club in her head. She then continually retrieved the image, to develop a voice suitable for her intended audience.

As documented in these brief illustrations, scenarios offer us a chance to create an audience, a voice, and to integrate relevant information. Instead of simply reading and regurgitating facts in a paper, we bite off and taste, chew and swallow, and finally digest information. First we read for comprehension, then we seek connections, and finally we create something that illustrates our new understanding. Elmer compares how learning through scenario assignments measures up to learning by way of traditional papers:

So do I learn as much? You bet! In fact I think that I learn more. For one thing, I am not getting tired and frustrated while I maintain a focus. Instead, I use this time to concentrate on my research material. I read carefully and highlight material that I consider relevant for the assignment. This gives me plenty of time to absorb the material, and thus I retain a great deal of information when I am finished researching. Essentially, if you see the material enough times and think about it long enough, it is

bound to sink in and stick with you for some time.

Perhaps the most exciting result of scenario assignments is the confidence it creates in students as writers and learners. Amanda explains how scenario assignments helped her to make the jump from student to active, committed learner:

I really have learned. This has become a study of language, an exploration of theories, and my own thoughts. I was not just reading but thinking and asking questions before I wrote, while I wrote, and even after I wrote. Rather than simply committing the old and new theoretical linguistics to memory, I was asked to apply their views to a situation within my reach. This gave me the confidence to go beyond application, in many cases, and actually begin theories of my own. I began to feel like a scholar rather than a student. Isn't that what learning should be: going beyond; becoming an environment of scholars not memorizers? This class forced me to stop fretting over the details, it forced me to shut off my multiple-choice mentality and look for connections. I found myself learning beyond the syllabus because of the "user-friendliness."

Many students may not see scenario writing assignments as "user-friendly" at first. Many students "froze" at the beginning of the year. They were afraid of the freedom and unfamiliarity of the assignments. Other students, once they understood how to do the assignments, did not like them because it was harder to "fake" a paper; they could no longer hit the periphery of issues and think they were done with the paper. The third dislike students voiced was the time frame of Chisholm's assignments. We were given one week to do

each paper. Many times that did not seem like enough time to do all the interaction that was necessary. These are all concerns associated with scenario writing, but all of them can be dealt with directly.

The most important step in beginning scenario-based assignments is to give lots of clear explanation. Students need to understand how to use the scenario as a focus. If they do not, they may become confused about the goal of the assignment; the risk is that they may focus on the scenario instead of using the scenario to focus on the information. In fact, this did happen in Chisholm's Study of Language Class. A student wrote a beautiful story to fit the scenario, yet totally missed the concept of integrating the material from the homework and research. For this reason, providing a model of a paper would be a good idea, but having plenty of time to ask questions and to understand the new expectations is a must.

The issue of time is debatable. On a paper per week system, the papers remain compact and centered on one idea. On a two-week system, students would have more time to interact with other sources outside of the text and the library. In the first week, they would write a draft based on text and library research. In the second week, they would have time in class to share and discuss with their peers. Then, they would revise their papers to include any new information or understandings. We think this two week system narrows in on what is important in the scenario assignments: real life connections.

Once the students catch the fun of scenario writing, they want to use it more. Sharon has created her own scenarios for papers in other classes to help herself better connect to an assignment. She likes the freedom in scenarios:

My favorite part of the scenario assignments was the

creativity they allowed. They gave my artistic mind a chance to shine. I could add as many “fictionalized” details as I wanted to in order to bring out notes of interest found in the research.

Perhaps the most fun of all was a new assignment of Chisholm’s: He asked us to create our own scenario and outline a possible response to the fictitious situation. This forced us to “use up all the information” in a section of our text. The response was amazing. We excitedly discussed our papers in and out of class. We overheard discussions of many diverse ideas. One student created a scenario that charged Chaucer with criminal misuse of language. Another student brought Chaucer into the Twentieth Century to illustrate language change. These students had come a long way from, “freezing” over the flexibility of the assignments, to taking them up earnestly. Scenario writing finally thawed them.

The following three papers are our examples of how we each dealt with the assignment on commingled recyclables. We feel they represent not only the “fun” of the assignment, but also the scholarship that was developed through our interaction with this assignment.

Commingled Recyclables: Do They Follow the Rules of Language?

by Amanda Stevens Milligan

Our English lexicon is as vast as the sea. Our language is as seductive and changing as the crash of waves on the shores of the English civilization, and all of us are pulled in by its allure; all of us are “amateur connoisseurs of words” (Francis 379). In his exploration of “word-making,” Francis attempts to bring us to an

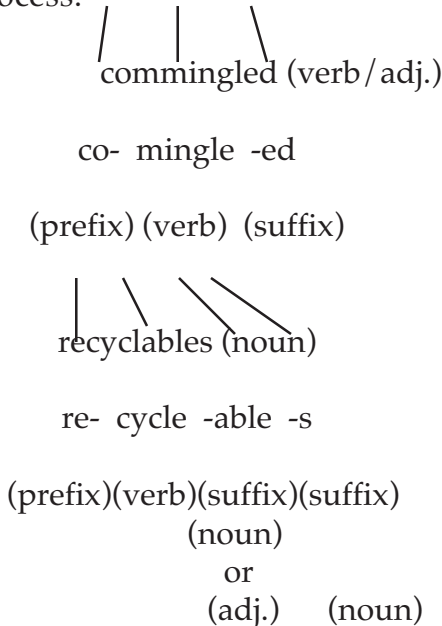
appreciation of our “large, complex, highly diversified in origin, and constantly changing” vocabulary (378). He also tries to bring us an understanding of its power to fashion new words through a variety of predictable processes. Our new words build on the old and originate as derivations, compounds, shifts, back formations, clippings, proper name modifications, imitations, blends, and coinages (368).

The easiest way to understand our vast system of language is to dissect the microparticles to get at the macrocosm we call language. A relatively new word, familiar to any of us who generate trash, is “commingled recyclables.” Is it, however, really a word or merely a “non-word” (Halle 336)? How did our society arrive at such a title for what is simply common, everyday GARBAGE? What does it reveal about the “complexities” (Gleason 365) of our language and our “innate” (Halle 337) human talent for creating words? What rules of the game are illustrated by this new label: “commingled recyclables?”

Both COMMINGLED and RECYCLABLES arrived at the threshold of our changing lexicon through the process of derivation. Derivations are formed by adding affixes to existing words or morphemic structures. In this case, the existing words MINGLE and CYCLE act as the stems and the affixes, (co-, re-, -ed, and -s), attaching themselves to the stems. The result is new words and new meanings. If we look at the stem MINGLE we automatically view it as the verb meaning “to bring or mix together” (Webster’s 726). CYCLE, on the other hand, is surrounded by ambiguity. It can mean an interval of time or the verb to pass through that interval (Webster’s 280). These ambiguities become even more obvious when we venture into the internal hierar-

chical structure of these words (Ohio 352).

The hierarchical “tree” of words help to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses that individual morphemes bring to stem words. Breaking these derivations down, we begin to see the steps followed when creating new words, as well as the innate ambiguities within the process.



With the addition of each “derivational morpheme either the stem’s meaning or its part of speech changes” (348). For instance, *co-* doesn’t change the part of speech of *MINGLE*, but it does alter its meaning. In a very redundant manner it over-emphasizes the “togetherness of *MINGLE*. *Re-* doesn’t change the meaning of *cycle*, but it does clarify its part of speech; it is a verb. However, when we add *-able* to *RECYCLE*, it increases the ambiguity; *RECYCLABLE* could be a noun or an adjective. Not only is *able* derivational, but

it is also considered a “content morpheme,” for its independent, identifiable meaning,” (350) “capable or worthy of” (Webster’s 3), alters the meaning of RECYCLE. The mystery ends when we add “s,” for now there is no doubt; RECYCLABLES can only be a noun.

After diagramming the internal structure of “commingled recyclables,” we might next consider the resulting semantics of this combination of morphemes or small bits of meaning. How many of us think of inanimate objects as being able to “mingle” with each other? Don’t we usually say “oil and water don’t mix,” or “I mixed up my dates,” or “I added eggs to the cake mix?” People, on the other hand, are thought of as either mingling or mixing. We mingle at a party or go to mixers when we are in college.

However, if we look at the word “commingled recyclables” with the *Oxford English Dictionary’s* historical uses of the word, we find that our modern semantics have narrowed the meaning of COMMINGLED. Bacon’s use of the word in 1626 illustrates the mingling of inanimate objects, “Dissolutions of gum tragacanth and oil of sweet almonds do not commingle” (OED). If we are content to accept “commingled recyclables” as part of our vast lexicon, doesn’t that represent our return to the broader, earlier sense of COMMINGLE? It would seem so. Yet, each time I hear the term I can’t help but whimsically wonder, “Are the plastics and aluminums chatting about environmental consciousness?”

RECYCLABLES, however, can not boast the same longevity that commingled can. The first time the OED recorded it in print was in the early 1970s. In 1971, *The New Yorker* used the term when discussing the benefits of using recyclable horns for publishers’ bindings (OED), and shortly thereafter, *The Guardian* discussed “the shape of cars to come” (OED). Yet, as early

as 1926, industrial society was using the term RECYCLE. "To reuse or convert a waste material into a usable form" was popular among petroleum industries, paper manufacturers, organic chemists, and bankers: "bankers find ways to recycle hot money," (OED). It wasn't until 1973 that the OED documented the first printed use of the term "recycler" or "recyclists." Today, we are all recyclers, whether we want to be or not. We sort our recyclables, or we commingle them. We are living in cities, towns, and small communities that are absolving land fills and organizing hazardous waste removal drives. We are advancing. Thus, the odd combination of words is a product of society's advancement. This complicated label, "commingled recyclables," is more than just a sign on a trash barrel; it is a constant reminder of just how intricate and complex our lives have become since the 1970s. It is a reflection of a society that, like the bottles and cans at the bottom of the barrel, mingles in a world of environmental awareness.

The complex semantics of "commingled recyclables" originates not in the morphology of language, but further back in the basics of all word, its phonology. For, as Halle notes, "speech is a noise produced to convey meaning" (334). If we delve into the combination of speech sounds, we discover other inconsistencies in our language system. Our writing system is our attempt to translate sound's meaning to paper. This is the case with all attempts at translation: our phonetic structures lose something, perhaps their crispness, when transferred to letters on paper (Callary 301). This "misfit" between the sounds of our language and the orthography (spelling) is great, and one of the reasons our language poses difficulty to those learning it as a second language (301).

In trying to create a "phonetic transcription" (304)

for “commingled recyclables,” we can become quite frustrated. The root of this frustration lies in the “misfit.” There are three limitations in the system we call spelling: 1) there can be more or fewer sounds in a word than the spelling suggests; 2) one sound may be represented by several spellings; and 3) one spelling can stand for several different sounds (301).

For instance, in the word *COMMINGLED*, there seems to be a G combined with LED yielding the sound /g l/, which sounds nothing like it looks. The /k/ sound at the beginning of the word is represented by a C, thus we have an instance of a sound finding a variety of spellings. In addition, the *ING* spelling is so different from its sound (phone) that the phonetic transcription results in no /g/ sound at all, rather /in/. This highlights the point that there are fewer sounds in the word than the spelling would have us believe. The transcription for *RECYCLABLES* is very distant from its orthography: /risaykl b lz/. The final /z/ of *ABLES*, the beginning *RE*, /ri/, and the ending *BLE*, /b l/ illustrates vividly that one spelling can represent several different sounds. After tackling several transcriptions, we begin to realize the extent of our spelling limitations. It becomes obvious that we first communicated with our tongues, not our pencils. The rules of our language, though erratic, ambiguous, and filled with inconsistencies, have allowed us to interact. Our innate understanding of these often vague rules finds us not only using word but creating new words. “Commingled recyclables” is one such word. It demonstrates the power of our language, a language that succeeds in creating a term that is integral to our changing relationship with our world. Our language rules have exhibited the most crucial trait of all . . . flexibility.

References

- Callary, E. "Phonetics." Clark and others. (1994). *Language: Introductory Readings*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Francis, W. N. "Word-making: Some sources of new words." Clark and others.
- Gleason, Jr. H. A. "Morphology: Three Exercises." Clark and others.
- Halle, M. "The Rules of Language." Clark and others. *Ohio State University Language Files*. "The Minimal Units of Meaning: Morphemes." Clark and others. *Oxford English Dictionary*. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*.

Commingled Recyclables

by Elmer Haley

Dear members of the honorable P.S.C. English Club:

I feel that it is my obligation and duty to address an issue that has recently been brought to my attention by a highly regarded individual of our community. The issue deals with the fact that language is governed by rules, the same rules that people use when they communicate orally. As speakers, we seldom, if at all, acknowledge the existence of these rules, but as linguists we realize that rules do indeed exist and have an impact on the way we speak. However, "linguists do not agree on the specific nature of the rules, nor do they agree on the methods appropriate for studying them" (Chisholm). To illustrate this point, I would like to share with you an example of what I mean. In fact it is because of this very example that I am addressing you today.

After lunch one day, a distinguished individual drew to my attention that we no longer dispose of empty cans and bottles in the "trash" container but

rather in the “Commingled Recyclables” container. My friend commented that “Commingled Recyclables is an outlandish mixture of words and not even English.” His comment kept me from many good nights of sleep while I thought about what he had to say. I finally decided that he was both right and wrong.

I have concluded that my friend was partially correct in assuming that “Commingled Recyclables” is outlandish. In researching the term, I found that “commingle” is a verb meaning “to mingle or mix together, to blend” and was introduced to the English language as early as 1626 A.D. (OED). However, “commingled” is found to be a participial adjective formed on the preceding to mean “mingled together, blended” (OED). The use of this term dates as far back as 1648 A.D. (OED). Is this not outlandish? Would it not make more sense to restrict “commingled” only to be used as the past tense of the verb “commingle?”

And how about the word “Recyclables.” Isn’t that just a dandy word? It appears to stem from the word “cycle.” According to the OED, the oldest use of the word “cycle” dates back to 1387 A.D. when it was defined as a noun to mean “a recurrent period of a definite number of years adopted for the purposes of chronology.” In 1631 A.D. it was defined in astronomical terms to mean “a circle or orbit in the heavens” (OED). By 1881 A.D. the term had been defined in mathematical terms to mean “a closed path in a cyclic or multiply-connected region” (OED). Although defined differently by different areas of study, the word remained as a noun. Apparently during the 19th century, the word “cycle” underwent what W. Nelson Francis refers to as a “functional shift.” Francis defines “functional shift” as a “shift of a word from one part of speech to another without altering its form” (371). As early as 1842 A.D., “cycle” underwent the functional shift and

was defined as a verb meaning “to move or revolve in cycles.”

But we should not forget that we are dealing with the word “recyclables” and not “cycle.” It becomes quite clear that we must add the prefix “re-” and the suffix “-able” to the stem “cycle” in order to create such a word. However, the Ohio State Language Files point out that “words with more than one affix are not formed in one single step with the affixes and stem just strung together” (353). The problem then arises of which affix to add first. Do we add “re-” to the word “cyclables” or do we add “-ables” to the word “recycle?” According to the grammatical laws and OSLF, affixes attach only to verbs (353). Therefore, “re-” cannot attach to “cyclables” which is an adjective. We must in fact add the suffix “ables” to the word “recycle.” By doing so we will satisfy the grammatical rule of affixes. Both “re-” and “-able” will then attach to a verb. However, the word “recyclable” did not form quite that simply. The verb “recycle” was developed first in 1926 and meant “to reuse (a material) in an industrial process; to return to a previous stage of a cyclic process” (OED). It was not until some 45 years later that the adjective “recyclable” was defined as “capable of being recycled” (OED).

In essence then, we have changed the word “cycle” from a noun in 1387 to a verb in 1842 into an adjective which only dates back to 1971 (OED). This in itself seems a bit outlandish, especially when we recognize the changes that the word must go through in order to be used in such a term as “Commingled Recyclables” when we could just use the word “trash.” So indeed, my friend’s opinion was partially correct after all. On the surface of language, however, my friend missed the entire idea behind the term “Commingled Recyclables.” “Commingled” is commonly accepted as mixed. Since

the derivation of the word “recyclables,” we commonly associate it with products “capable of being recycled,” especially bottles and cans. On the surface of the term, we have two words combined: Commingled + Recyclables (mixed + products capable of being recycled). In essence, the container is used for the same purpose as always--to collect trash. The only things that have changed are the ideas of how to treat trash and the wording on the side of the container that supports that idea. We are essentially using our language as it is meant to be used--to communicate thoughts and ideas to others, to create an understanding within a set environment.

As you think about that, I hope that you realize the point behind all of this. Language is governed by rules that we seldom acknowledge the existence of. These rules impact the way we speak and affect the things that we say. Although all rules are not yet known about language, those that are, are not always agreed upon by linguists. However there is nothing we can do about that. Since language is dynamic, it is plagued by controversy, as is anything that is considered dynamic. Chances are that as long as language survives, there will be no one way to understand it. The best we can do is to use language as it is meant to be used and understand that it is dynamic.

Green English: An address to the English Club on Young Words and Trash Management

by Sharon Duffy

Friends of the English Club, thank you for allowing me to share with you today a few thoughts on our most recent word investigation, that of “commingled recyclables.” Some of you have proposed that this word is “outlandish” and an unlikely candidate for

being an English word. I have taken this on as my thesis. I am very excited to show you today, that yes, while there are some difficulties with "commingled recyclables," it is an English word that strays very little from the standard rules of English speech. I have broken my research up into four areas: morphemic rules, phonetic rules, phonemic rules, and syntactical rules.

Allow me, please, to work from the largest context down to the smallest. Syntax, as you are aware, concerns itself with the way in which words are combined or ordered to create meaning. Even though "commingled recyclables" is not a complete sentence, it is a compound word phrase. Our grammar allows us to combine words in the adjective-noun order, and this is what we have in "commingled recyclables." And yet, this is just where some of you have made your objections to the validity of "commingled recyclables" being an English word. You have said that "recyclable" is an adjective; and therefore, it is impossible to pluralize it. It is possible to add affixes to words to create new words or new meanings. This process is called "derivation" and is explained by W. Nelson Francis: "The derivational process (of creating new words) consists of using an existing word" (recyclable in our case) ". . . as a stem to which affixes are attached" (368). We create a new noun because our language allows us to derive new forms from old word roots.

"Commingled" falls into the same derivational category. The root "mingle" is quoted as being in written literature in the *Oxford English Dictionary* since 1626. Only twenty-two years later, the morphemes "ed" and "co" appear in the writing of Herrick: "Of flowers a sweet commingled coronet" as reported again by the OED. Through time, speakers derive new words to adequately express their ideas by manipulating the

words they already know.

Derivation, and other word changes, can exist because language is made up of small parts of meaning. We call the smallest parts of language that have meaning morphemes. There are two types of morphemes, bound and free. Free morphemes are bits that we recognize as words, like “car, spider, and race” (Ohio State 348). Bound morphemes are small bits that have meaning, but “must be attached to other morphemes.” Examples are “un-,-ed, and -s” (Ohio State 348).

We can break commingled recyclables into English morphemes, thus indicating again, that “commingled recyclables” is an English word. It breaks down into the free morphemes “mingle” and “cycle” and the bound morphemes “co,” “ed,” “re,” and “s.” We can further categorize these morphemes into derivational ones which change the meaning of the word and inflectional ones which merely change the form of the word. This gives us “ed” and “s” as inflectional morphemes and “co” and “re” as derivational morphemes. Specifically, “com” (a form of “co” according to OED) was added to “mingle,” and “ed” was added to “commingle” to form an adjective. Likewise, “re” was added to “cycle,” before “able” was added to create an adjective, and lastly, “s” was added to make a noun.

Morphemes are made up from even smaller parts known as phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest bits of sound that create meaning. The larger context of this is phonetics, the study of phonemes. Phoneticians have created phonetic alphabets to symbolize the sounds of language. These phonetic alphabets, regardless of language, “share three characteristics: each symbol consistently represents one and only one language sound,

each sound is consistently represented by one symbol, and the number of sounds is equal to the number of symbols" (Callary 302). These phonetic alphabets form the basis for the pronunciation charts in dictionaries. The OED phonetically writes "commingled recyclable" as k mɪŋ ɪd rɪsaɪkl b l. My own pronunciation would slightly differ phonemically because I speak a Northern New Hampshire dialect of English. My own pronunciation would be closer to kɒmɪŋɪd rɪsaɪkl blz.

A discovery made by phoneticians is that we tend to "assimilate" language in order to make articulation of sound easier. We assimilate sounds by changing them to sound more like "adjacent" sounds (Callary 324). An example in "commingled recyclables" is the way k and l are run together when we say recyclables. We do not push air out of our mouths when we say the k like we would in kite, instead, we pronounce the k more like a g--we glide the tongue off the alveolar ridge (front of the palate) into the l sound. Even so, this k-l combination is awkward. This is why I feel some of you have said that commingled recyclables is a "clumsy" word; it is a clumsy word in the mouth.

There is a word for the different ways one sound can be articulated: allomorphs. Our word phrase has an excellent example of an allomorph. Say "commingled recyclables" out loud with your hand in front of your mouth without changing the way you would say the word normally. Pay attention to the air stream on your hand. Did you feel a difference between how much air blew on your hand for the first c of commingled and the second c of recyclables? Both are phonetically written and pronounced like the c in cat, but the articulation, as evidenced by the airstream, is different.

While I am on the subjects of c's, let me mention this. When members of our club first saw "commingled

recyclables," it was a word written on the side of a trash can; it was not something we heard, and yet we all pronounced it very similarly. Everyone somehow "knew" to pronounce two of the c's as they would be in cat and the other c as it is pronounced in circus. Halle believes "the only reasonable account of how speakers come to know these principles (English word structures) is to attribute them not to external factors but to innate mechanisms involved in memorizing words--that is, to assume that our minds are so constructed that when we memorize words, we automatically also abstract their structural principles" (338).

It is this innate ability to understand and use new words according to rules and structure that becomes the ultimate test for whether a word belongs in the English language. The trash can with the sign "commingled recyclables" is on a campus that consists mostly of English speakers. With the exception of our dear leader and guide, Dr. Chisholm, no one goes around pointing out this sign, explaining it to us. Yet, we all believe this word means that we should put things in the bucket that we would like to have recycled. One look in the bucket shows that this is just what is in the bucket: a mixture of products to be recycled, and since there seem to be no campus memos or other signs explaining that students are putting the wrong products in these buckets, then we must be assuming correctly.

We, English speaking people, read and understand "commingled recyclables" as an English word and act accordingly; we put the right kind of trash in the can. Really, I think that is the best test yet to show that "commingled recyclables" is an English word.

Works Cited

Oxford English Dictionary, second edition.

Callary, Edward. *Phonetics* in Clark, Virginia P. et. al. eds. *Language Intoductory Readings*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Francis, W. Nelson. *Word-Making: Some Sources of New Words*. in Clark.

Halle, Morris. *The Rules of Language*. in Clark. Ohio State University Language Files. *The Minimal Units of Meaning: Morphemes*. in Clark.