Researching the Local/Writing the International:
Developing Culturally Inclusive WAC Programs and Practices

In *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines*, Chris Thaiss and I investigated how students learn to write in their disciplines and made recommendations for teaching and program building based on our findings. Now, in my current research on the experiences of second language students as they write across the curriculum, I'm using similar methods as I work towards understanding how we might best support these writers in our instructional and programmatic practices. Understanding is crucial given the linguistic diversity of our student populations and the globalizing ambitions of our institutions, which, at Mason, include developing relationships abroad and recruiting ever larger numbers of international students to our programs at home.

SLIDE 2:
"The University will develop more fully its leading role as a global university …[it will] expand the number of international students by at least 20% while improving the integration of international and domestic students in extracurricular as well as academic activities."
– from George Mason's 2014 Strategic Plan, goal 5
"Even though we say we're a globalized university, we're not. We're a very American university to which people come from a lot of different places." *– Anthropology professor in interview*

I've framed my talk today, then, with the metaphor of a journey, a well-worn, or should I say well-trod, metaphor but one that is particularly apt both figuratively and literally. This journey, as I'll recount it here, involves three different scholarly destinations— research at home, research abroad, and then a return home to investigate the local and particular concerns of the second language writers and the faculty who teach them at my own institution. Along the way, you'll hear the voices of the students, faculty, and WAC and L2 writing scholars, whose work is informing the steps I take towards developing a culturally inclusive WAC program.

I.   **Home**

To begin, I'll travel back in time to my earlier work on marginalized voices and alternative discourses in order to chart the path I've been following since the early nineties, albeit with digressions and detours, starting with "Re/composing as a Woman— An Essay in Different Voices," which I revisited almost ten years later in "Telling Stories: The Subject Is Never Just Me." In that later essay, I argued that the stories students tell about their diverse identities as writers can be used to interrupt the dominant discourses around writing in the academy. My belief in the power of the personal for voicing marginalized identities also led me to follow with great interest the critiques of WAC for its endorsement of the exclusionary practices of disciplinary discourses. As a result of many shared conversations with Chris, we posed the question, "How resistant are disciplines to alternative discourses?"

My writing center co-researchers and I are still pursuing alternative discourses, although this time through interviews with *multilingual* writers across the disciplines and the faculty who teach them. For me, the personal stories are still at the center—what are these students' experiences with academic writing in the U.S. academy? What do they say about how they learned to interpret teachers' expectations and write in the expected genres and voices? What conflicts and/or cultural disconnections have they experienced as they learned to adapt to what was expected, a "bittersweet experience," as Kanishka, a graduate student from Sri Lanka, lamented, because of what he has had to leave by the wayside. How aware are faculty of what students are leaving by the wayside and how sympathetic are they to students' efforts to adapt their writing to the demands of disciplines, courses, and individual teachers?

While the methods I'm using are familiar to me from my past work, the most daunting aspect of my current project involves the scholarly borders I must cross in order to have a grounding and a context for the qualitative research I'm pursuing. (You'll see some of the work I've been reading listed on the separate bibliography handout.)

When I read the last chapter of Christine Casanave's book *Writing Games* on L2 students' academic literacy practices*,* I felt a little more at home. She concludes with a "different voice" feminist story much like my own—about her journey towards learning to write with confidence as a woman academic and the tensions she felt between "adhering to and bending the perceived rules of academic writing games." It is time now, she writes, for there to be more visibility for the people who write and **for those who are written about.**

In a presentation at the 2010 4Cs convention, Lu Ming Mao urged us to consider how the **self** shapes our choice of study and how our own inquiries might reshape others' practices. He urged us to use the "other" for a transformative agenda, to develop a localized narrative that engages with the global. This is the action research I have set out to do—with the help of the colleagues who travel with me.

II. TRAVELING ABROAD

Let me start the next part of this journey with what I learned from my colleagues internationally—and how they helped me realize that the work I wanted to do was right at my campus doorstep.

At the 2006 WAC conference at Clemson, Magnus Gustafson from Sweden and Neil Thew from the UK suggested that WAC's goals to internationalize must include questions about what American WAC can learn from these other contexts. I began my interviews with international writing program directors with that aim, starting with Magnus and his colleagues at the Chalmers Institute of Technology in Goteborg, Sweden, and, over time, I interviewed directors from seven countries. I contributed these interviews to the international mapping project Chris was undertaking.

Here, I want to describe some of the most important take-aways from the writing centre interviews I conducted at Chalmers and at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm related to the Bologna Agreement and its directive that at least some of the students' coursework must be delivered in English.

According to the directors of these centers, there is more demand for tutoring and faculty development in writing and teaching with writing in English than in Swedish, in part because of pressure from the Bologna Agreement, which requires that many third-year undergrad courses and most grad courses in technical programs be taught in English and that grades be standardized across institutions and across countries.

In both Swedish writing centres, as many as half of the students being served are international students, who have come to Sweden not to learn Swedish but to learn to write in English, as Philip Shaw, from Stockholm, explained to me based on his study with a Danish colleague of the reasons students from other non-English speaking countries are enrolling in Scandanavian universities. When I asked about "standard" features of writing in English for these multilingual students, Shaw said that, because of the diversity of English-language speakers, including faculty themselves, students and faculty have developed a high tolerance for the variety of Englishes people use to work and write together. There is little reason in these contexts, he pointed out, for them to conform to standard-English speaker norms.

The same is not true, however, at English-medium institutions, as I learned from talking with colleagues in the U.K. and at the University of Limerick where ever larger numbers of second-language writers are being recruited and admitted to their programs, in part because of immigration patterns and in part because of the Bologna Agreement, which allows students from any EU country to enroll in an EU higher ed institution at no extra cost. At these increasingly internationalized institutions, concerns are being raised about how to address the diverse needs of L2 and immigrant students and prepare them to write in the standardized forms of English expected by their teachers.

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Their concerns, much like the ones at my own institution, return me to questions about what's "good enough" English, for whom, and in what contexts. These questions became particularly pressing for me when I traveled twice to the campus Mason had opened in Ras al Khaimah (RAK) in the United Arab Emirates, the first time to do faculty development around teaching with writing and the second time to lead faculty through the writing assessment processes we've been using at Mason. In opening our campus there, Mason joined the numbers of other U.S. universities who were setting up operations in the Gulf, where "studying the American way" was an educational goal many Arab countries had set out to attain and one which happened to match U.S. goals for globalizing our institutions and students' educational experiences.

[SLIDE 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN STYLE EDUCATION]
Arab parents and students are eager to seek out an American-style education so that doors will open to a "successful, productive, and prosperous future." But often in these American-style universities, there's a lack of focus on students, faculty empowerment, and quality control for educational programs. More importantly, it's often not recognized that "students in the Arab world are traditionally not taught to develop their knowledge through critical thought, hands on experience, and the use of their senses in the way that Americans have been taught to do from childhood." Thus American-style institutions need to exert "twice the effort as their Western counterparts to make a significant difference."
– *"Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries,"* Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 2007*

One characteristic of an American style education, according to a brief prepared by the Washington Institute on Near East Policy, is that courses would be taught in English by

English-speaking faculty educated in the U.S. and/or affiliated with American, British, Australian, and Canadian institutions. While Mason's RAK faculty demographic fit this characteristic on paper with all having completed some education in the U.S., Canada, or the U.K., the faculty were the most diverse I have ever encountered in one institutional setting. Only one was American, and he was first-generation Chinese-American; the others were from India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Egypt, Korea, and more. All were multilingual speakers and writers, with some being more fluent in English than others depending upon whether they had had an English-medium education in their home country.

In their 1995 article "Importing Composition," Mary Muchiri and her co-authors, three of whom were returning to their African countries to teach, asked us to "look for places where composition is difficult to transplant" (195). In the UAE Mason classroom where I was working with faculty, I could see first hand how difficult U.S. style composition was going to be to transplant. A Pakistani professor teaching a writing-intensive Economics course patiently explained to me that his students certainly did not expect him to teach with writing in the way I'd described with feedback and opportunities to revise. And I'm sure he was right. Several of the Arab faculty told me that, because they were from the same cultural background as the students, they would lose respect if they taught in an American way rather than keeping an appropriate distance by lecturing and giving tests.

In the writing assessment workshop I led, I asked the faculty to write some of the challenges they themselves had faced writing in English and what helped them improve. What they wrote will sound familiar to you: Challenges: "When vocabulary that was specific to one's own culture and accepted as correct "English" was not considered so in another linguistic environment." "Writing-intensive courses are very hard, as it required students to work overtime." What helped: "specific and instant feedback from professors" "repetitive writing and passage of time," "guidelines for how to be precise and crisp," and "peers who corrected wrong English."

The RAK composition courses were taught by two professors from India, both "native" speakers of several languages, including impeccable British English. One had received her PhD in literature from the University of Wisconsin. Yet, as she told me, she would not be hired at an Emirate institution because she is not considered a native speaker of English. When I asked the instructors in the English Language Institute there about Aisha's perceptions of who is and is not a native speaker, they agreed that the definition of a native English speaker is quite precise when it comes to ELI employment abroad—meaning English, British, Canadian, Irish, Australian, or New Zealander.

Faced with the enormity of understanding the complex historical and cultural issues around world Englishes, the idea of the native English speaker, and what's "good enough" writing for whom and in what contexts, I resolved to return home in my research to my own campus where I knew many of the same issues and attitudes prevailed. Here I could begin to develop a local narrative for a culturally inclusive WAC program that engaged with the global, to echo Lu Ming Mao's advice, and also with the globalizing ambitions of my own institution.

"…to further promote academic literacy and to prepare students for disciplinary discourse within and beyond the academy… the literacy support of second language writers needs to extend beyond the composition requirement as well. **…[WAC programs] should include information about second language writing development, …about second language populations at the institutions, approaches for designing writing assignments that are culturally inclusive, and approaches for assessing writing that are ethical in relation to second language writing**"

– from CCCC Position Statement on Second Language Writing

Part III: Coming Home: Researching the Local

In "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition," Paul Matsuda shows that enrolling large numbers of international students from non-English speaking countries has not led institutions to develop multi-lingual approaches. Instead, separate language instruction courses perpetuate a "policy of containment" that allows us to imagine the writing classroom—and here I'll extend Paul's point to include the writing-intensive classroom—as a monolingual space rather than a multilingual space where language difference is assumed and teaching-with-writing practices are developed with that assumption in mind.

What does this contained-multilingual, monolingual classroom space look like?

The 4Cs Position Statement on Second Language Writers identifies multilingual learners as "international visa students, refugees, and permanent residents as well as naturalized and native-born citizens of the U.S. and Canada." The abbreviation L2 to designate these multilingual students is useful shorthand in our writing and conversations with faculty; however, L2, and the accompanying abbreviation L1.5, for immigrant students who have had some K-12 schooling in the U.S., can't begin to capture the diversity within these labels, nor do the generic terms ESL or non-native speakers.

SLIDE 7:
"A student from Vietnam came to my office to rework something in her paper, and she burst into tears and said another teacher had written on a paper that she was linguistically deficient. And I said 'How many languages do you speak?' and she said 'Vietnamese and French.' And I said, 'And you've only been here six months and you already know so much English!' **You are just the opposite of linguistically deficient**." – Sociology professor

That the generic labels and categories hide the diversity among these students is my segue to the need for the kind of ethnographic—personal, situated, local—research I and my writing center research team conducted on the academic writing experiences of 24 multilingual students, both undergraduate and graduate, whose voices you'll hear today. My research team was equally diverse—Anna Habib, Eiman Hajabassi, Alokparna Das, and an L1 undergraduate student in anthropology, Alex Antram.

http://writtenaccents.gmu.edu

They tell their stories, along with the student informants we talked to, in *Valuing Written Accents,* a Mason publication sponsored by the Diversity Research Group and the University Life office. The publication has proven to be very popular, at Mason and elsewhere, prompting the English Language Institute to pay for a second printing of 500 more copies. We've also created a website for the project. (Our research was inspired by the highly regarded *Writing Across Borders*, a DVD produced through a collaboration of the Oregon State Writing in the Curriculum Program and the writing center.)

Anna, Eiman, and I were joined by undergraduate government major Shamama Moosvi in follow-up interviews with faculty across the disciplines to understand their attitudes towards the writing of their multilingual students. To date, we've interviewed 17 faculty, some because we knew them to be attentive to the concerns of student writers but most because they represent the majors international students are entering in the greatest numbers. Anna and I have written about our preliminary findings with students and faculty in an article for the **NCTE collection** *Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing*, edited by Michelle Cox and three colleagues.

In the remainder of my talk, I'll describe what we've learned thus far from our (IRB-approved) research with faculty and L2 students. I've just begun this journey, so what I'll describe is very preliminary and, in the interest of time, only partial, that is, partial to some themes, voices, and understandings of L2 writing experiences across the curriculum.

Both WAC and L2 writing professionals have compared the process of learning to write in a discipline to learning to write a second language, with native and non-native writers facing similar challenges when they encounter the "strange" languages of disciplinary discourse. They are, as Lucille McCarthy puts it, "strangers in strange lands." While that metaphor has been useful for getting L2 and WAC specialists to draw on one another's

work, it also masks the complexities of second-language learning and risks further marginalization of L2 writers in our courses and L2 issues in our WAC programs, as Matsuda and Jablonski argue. Instead of "borrowing" from ESL studies, they urge specialists in both fields to collaboratively identify shared goals and participate together in building programs that will prepare and support L2 students.

"In America, when I write totally different style of paper, the professor say, 'Where are you from? How did you get into this college? Your writing is behind the line, so you can't really catch up to the class.' **So, I don't know how to figure that out.**" — Yoon, student from S. Korea

"For many of these students, the primary issue is not just grammatical but it's having the vocabulary, the ability, [to convey] the level of ideas they are trying to express. And sometimes I question whether or not they're really understanding or just memorizing. While I'm sympathetic to the pressures they face here, **I don't have a clue about how to help them think independently and produce material in their own words.**" — Sociology professor

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But what do we WAC administrators need to know about multilingual learners to help faculty teach more effectively? The voices of Yoon, a student from South Korea, and a faculty member from sociology that you see on the screen capture the frustrations expressed by student and faculty interviewees alike about writing and teaching with writing at Mason, one of the most linguistically diverse institutions in the U.S. There is indeed much to figure out.

As a guide for beginning to figure it out, I'll turn to the conclusions David Russell drew from his 2001 review of WAC/WID naturalistic studies. (I'll note also that a good number of WAC/WID-related studies are reviewed by Leki, Cummings, and Silva in their 2008 *Synthesis of Research on Second Language Writing in English*.)

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According to David Russell, to "become involved" in writing in disciplines, students need:
- substantive motivation
- understanding of how writers construct identities and voices
- a range of tools: genre, explicit instruction, models, practice
- time for process

"Where Do the Naturalistic Studies of WAC/WID Point? A Research Review" in *WAC for the New Millennium.*

Based on his review, Russell suggests that to become involved as writers in the activity systems of their disciplines, students need four things:
- substantive motivation beyond grades, including personal and public motives;
- an understanding of how writers construct identities and voices, deeply related to gender, age, class, and ethnicity;
- a range of tools, with genre being the most crucial along with explicit instruction, models, practice, and more; and
- time for processes that mirror the activities of the discipline (283-90).

Russell's conclusions closely parallel those Chris and I came to in our research and also echo Casanave's in *Writing Games*, in which she explains that, just as with L1 students, the key to L2 students' survival in academic settings is not just the acquisition of academic writing skills but also the strategic social and interpretive skills that will help them figure out the communities of practice they are entering. (52-53)

While these are critical survival skills for all students, I want to show next, through the voices of faculty and L2 students, the additional challenges that multilingual writers may face.

As Chris and I found in our research, teachers' expectations for originality and writing with "voice" are among the most fraught aspects for students learning to write in their disciplines. When my research team and I interviewed second language writers, they too expressed confusion about these textual qualities, particularly when they were also struggling with English syntax and semantics.

While L2 students may not have a sure enough command of English to write in an appropriate voice and style, the students we interviewed seemed to have acquired a relatively nuanced understanding of why the voices they had been taught to use were <u>not</u> acceptable.

Kanishka, a graduate student in public policy, for example, said that when he first came to the U.S. to study teachers told him "over and over again, you have to cut down, clean up your paragraphs. I was offended at first," he said, "because I came with a lot of confidence behind me and suddenly I find that it's totally different." He realized quickly, however, that "any nice language I use is wasted. No one is going to look at it that way."

Nigerian student Karimatu said that what was good about her writing in Hausa is that "I could write ideas as they flowed into my head," but, she added, "if the reader has an English background, she might say this is not organized, but if it is a Hausa reader, then this is what is expected. Here a teacher can read somebody's paper and can figure out a bad writer right then and there," as she'd learned from experience in her nursing major.

Diana, a senior psychology major, had been rewarded by her teachers in Columbia for creativity in language and thought--lots of examples and metaphors--"but that kind of thing," she said, "isn't working here." Here she'd learned to be "very, very precise, very very organized." But "too much structure," she complained, "doesn't allow students to

think because everything is on the assignment and you have to follow it and sometimes I feel like, stop it, I want to do something else but I can't because it's off the rubric."

A psychology professor we interviewed would agree with Diana. "There's the manual for how to write-- the rules, procedures, and style—and that's [intended to] **take the person out of the writing**." L2 writers, she said, tend to do very well once they learn the structure and conventions. A geology professor, herself an L2 English speaker, said this is also the case for her L2 students when they write template-driven reports.

But, depending upon their majors, students may also have to learn to put the "I" back into their writing, as explained by an art professor whose words you see on the screen. All faculty we talked to noted the presence of "unconventional word choices" and phrasing as L2 students struggled to use English and the language of the discipline appropriately.

"[Students] get this idea that authority in writing is gained by having no "I," so **I really have to help them understand**, **especially the ESL students, that they are allowed to be in the writing**, not in a casual style, like 'I had my breakfast and then I went to the museum,' but **in a way that asks them to be fully present in their learning and in their writing**. And this is exceedingly difficult for non-native writers because they're still struggling with the basics of academic style and language."

– Art & Visual Technology professor

All of the students we talked to recognized that writing in English would become easier for them once they'd acquired more facility with the vocabulary and structures of English and the conventions expected in their fields. Haifeng, a graduate student in public policy, for example, explained his conclusion that English is better for academic writing than Chinese:

> "In English, you can have different kind of ways to express very logic things in one big sentence. In Chinese, if you want to express the same meaning, you have to use many sentences. One reason is because there is no clause. Now that I've been here about two years, I think it is easier for me to write an academic paper in English than Chinese."

Genre, Modeling, and Imitation

Along with sentence structure, Haifeng also explained how he had learned to acquire an appropriate voice and syntax.

> "My professor just circle and say this is awkward; there is a word choice problem. So I go to some other senior students here to find an alternative for that word because I don't know what is a bad word or a good word to express the idea. I also do some reading and, if I think this piece is impressive, I am going to write it down or remember it and I will try to use it when I write the next time."

As we know from theory and research on writing in the disciplines, student writers acquire fluency by mimicking what they're reading in the process of internalizing the target discourse. (As Christine Tardy shows in her comparison of studies on L1 and L2 genre learning, however, only L2 students copy out expressions and phrasing to use in their papers.) When L2 students told us about writing papers in their majors, it was clear that they had, with experience, learned some of the expected conventions, if not the disciplinary nuances, of academic writing.

Malak said, for example, that "In Arabic, it's better to be a little bit complicated…it gives value to your writing. But in English it's better to have a simple structure." That "simple structure" was often described by students in formulaic ways, as Ignacio, a government major from Spain, explained. He had trouble with structure, he said, until he learned

> "You have to say in the introduction what you are going to say, then you have to sort of link the introduction with the development with a final sentence, and you have to start development with a sentence, and you develop your thesis with an example, then finish introducing the other statement, and then wrap it all up with the conclusion. Tell me what you are going to tell me, tell me, and then tell me what you told me. I found that pretty restricting at first, but now I'm more at ease with it."

These are the kinds of general heuristic strategies that novices in a field typically rely on at first, as do many of their teachers when they give advice about the kind of writing they expect. Yet, as I've learned in assessment workshops, faculty sometimes fault L2 writers in particular for using the heuristics so formulaically, especially when other errors are present.

As writers gain experience and expertise, they are able to rely more and more on the local knowledge and genre practices of the field, as Michael Carter and many other WID theorists and researchers have shown. L2 writers may also transfer some knowledge of genre features from their first language, as Tardy, James, Canagarajah, and others suggest in their comparisons of students writing the same genres in their L1 and in English.

For example, Kanishka, who came to the U.S. for graduate school, indicated that while he was used to "demonstrating the beauty of the language" and struggled to acquire a "more functional, practical" voice, he already understood that "conveying a quick message is the status quo in the professional arena. What is your point—that's the thing. The time restrictions, the deadlines, and the bottom lines."

But undergraduates can also be successful, as I learned from reading the timed essay written by a Russian international student to accompany the portfolio he'd submitted to gain proficiency credit for Mason's upper-division discipline-focused composition course. At first, he wrote,

> Business writing was challenging for me because by no means does it need to be interesting or engaging. …At first all these rules made me feel frustrated because,

for me, writing had always been primarily an aesthetical experience. As I went through my college career, however, business writing, its purposes and its beauty became clear for me.

Part IV: Steps towards Developing Culturally Sensitive WAC Programs

In a presentation at the Tempe Symposium on Second Language Writing, Michelle Cox described representations of WAC among some second language writing professionals as a series of closed doors. We in WAC have the opportunity to open those doors, she said, by advocating for L2 writers through faculty development. As I suggested when I began my talk and as I've tried to show here today, our choice of study and the shape of our inquiries can be a kind of advocacy if we draw on the insights we've gained when we talk with faculty across the curriculum about effective and culturally sensitive teaching-with-writing practices.

In this last section, I'll recommend some of the key practices I've identified in my research and reading. These are loosely categorized by the four elements Russell suggests need to be present if students are to engage successfully with the genres and activities of their disciplines. Most of these practices, not surprisingly, will be familiar to you from the English L1 WAC/WID literature, including those Chris and I recommend in *Engaged Writers*. I've contextualized some with advice from the 4Cs position statement on WAC and L2 writers.

<mark>SLIDE 13</mark>:
Categories of recommended practices
- Motivating students
- Understanding L2 students' identities and language backgrounds
- Providing information about tools, genres, methods, and giving time for process
- Understanding processes, including collaboration and reflection on learning

(Based on Russell's necessary elements in his review of naturalistic WAC/WID studies)
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1) Motivating students

- Encourage faculty to share with students what engages them as researchers and writers and to recognize that students might be similarly engaged and have something to contribute to scholarly conversations, even as novices and even as L2 writers struggling with the language to express what they know.

- Work with faculty to be explicit about the goals of assigned writing tasks and what texts and features of texts connect to the writing students will do in subsequent courses and in the field.

- Assist faculty in the disciplines in developing clear learning outcomes for the writing they assign. Mike Carter and John Bean provide wonderful examples of how we might do this, as does Ilona Leki in her book *Undergraduates in a Second Language.*

- Bring departmental faculty together to read, talk about, and assess student writing. These conversations can lead to the development of nuanced WID rubrics, as they do at Mason, which can be given to students, along with models of successful responses to the assignments. But more than that, the conversations provide an opportunity for faculty to explain their expectations to each other and, when they read papers from L2 writers, to consider how how close to the standard they must come to be considered competent. Opinions will vary along disciplinary lines and how strictly departments interpret the demands of the professional work places they're preparing students to enter and the accrediting bodies they may be reporting to, as well as from course to course and teacher to teacher.

- Ask faculty how they might accommodate multiple learning and language proficiencies by presenting lecture material in written and oral forms. As Jonathon Hall points out, discussion-based classrooms can present additional challenges to students still acquiring English language skills.

2) Understanding L2 students' identities and language backgrounds

- For the purposes of my research, the Office of International Programs was very helpful in providing a breakdown of the majors international students are entering—predominantly business and economics for the undergraduates and engineering and computer science for graduate students. Institutional Research and Reporting can also provide valuable demographic information.

  Departments are likely to have this information already, but you can also provide it when you do departmental workshops.

  Writing centers generally keep records of the majors and language backgrounds of the student writers they see. Writing center session reports can reveal areas in which they are struggling and this information can be shared with faculty.

- Publications like *Valuing Written Accents* are helpful for faculty. Many want to learn more about their students' perspectives and experiences and they want to hear student voices. You can develop similar publications at your institution.

3) Providing information about tools—genres, models, methods

- Help faculty understand the ways in which L2 students rely on models, especially ready-made expressions and phrasing they might find in texts they read or in feedback from teachers. We can make sure that faculty understand how and why students are using these models and imitative practices.

- We can also help faculty to articulate definitions for familiar concepts like "voice" and "originality," work I've been able to do in the departmental writing assessment workshops I described.

"Since journalism major is very connected to politics, issues deal with cultural and historical backgrounds. **So if I don't know how African American people get freedom or how women's movement or gay and lesbian movement developed, that is the hard thing.** In Woman and Media class, the teacher gave us list of women to pick from for presentation. And I don't know any of the names on the paper, so I look up the internet and search different women, and found one people I think is interesting, but even then that is very hard thing." – Yoon, student from South Korea

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- Ask faculty about the audiences and contexts for the assignments they typically give and how they are trying to expand these to include international contexts.

  - My interviews with faculty have given me the opportunity to learn about the writing problems L2 students encounter when they don't understand the U.S. context assumed in the assignment. Business faculty, for example, talked about seeing the struggles in their L2 students' writing when they are asked to develop a marketing plan or analyze a management issue related to a U.S. company. As their majors attract more and more international students, however, they are trying to expand the contexts and audiences for their assignments to the multinational companies students may be more familiar with.

  - One of the most culturally sensitive teachers I know—a social work professor—said that all students have to acquire cultural competence in the ethics and practices of U.S. social work. This can be difficult for L2 students, she said, but necessary for them to function effectively in required internships and clinical practice. The written assignments students are given ask them to respond critically to specific local situations, requiring both cultural knowledge and good interpretive skills. As an example, she described how different cultural perspectives can affect their response to an assignment focused on the concept of abuse

when child disciplining practices that are acceptable in their countries might be considered unsafe in the U.S. To help **both** L1 and L2 students become more aware of these differing perspectives, she and her colleagues have been developing assignments asking for cultural comparisons of social work concepts and topics.

- While faculty in the School of Management have taken an almost zero tolerance towards writing and usage errors, the teachers I talked to from the gateway courses in management and marketing said that they allow students to ask what generic words mean when they give essay tests--the word "harness," for example, was a problem for a couple of the L2 writers on a recent test. They keep the lists of the words students ask about and circulate them to instructors so that that the troublesome terms can be screened for tests and assignment directions.

While the L2 students did not seem to be afraid to ask about confusing words, according to the teachers I talked to, they still weren't coming to office hours to get extra help with their writing. Their failure to do so was interpreted by these teachers as not caring enough about their writing or wanting to fly below the radar. But other interpretations might be more likely.

- When faculty complain that L2 students do not come for extra help, explain that for students who come from "high-distance" cultures, i.e. cultures where teachers are not approachable or accessible to students, it would be beneficial to give students explicit information about when it is appropriate to consult with a professor and how they might request a meeting.

4) Understanding processes that contribute to learning to write in a discipline, including collaborative processes and the role of reflection on learning

- Give faculty advice on how to manage collaborative projects so that all writers are included. In his review of WAC/WID studies, Russell describes "talking together" as an important tool for acquiring genre knowledge. Here I want to think about it as a process, specifically related to the collaborative work typically required in engineering and the sciences.

    o Because assignments requiring collaboration are prevalent in engineering, I asked the three engineering faculty I interviewed about the roles L2 students play as writers in team projects. Two explained that they had not really paid attention to who was writing what or how much, as the most important goal of the project was to work together as a team. Since the design document they produce has to be read and understood by all as a

blueprint for what they will build, the professors felt that even those students who didn't contribute to the writing had a real stake in the project and were learning by observing the writing process from beginning to end.

- o Whether observation rather than direct participation in the writing of a team project is effective for L2 students is a matter of debate in the research, as Ilona Leki and others have argued. While the benefits seem evident, she says, for the same reasons the engineering faculty described to me, non-native English students are often required to "to take subordinate roles when they felt entitled to full, not peripheral, participation," feelings that were often hidden in positive evaluations of the final group project. Still, Leki says, there are potential benefits for all students in learning how to work together in a culturally diverse society, which also echoes what some faculty told me about collaborative work. We need to make these benefits visible and articulate them explicitly to students.

- The role of reflection

  - o There's a significant body of research on the benefits of reflection for both L1 and L2 writers, including "self-monitoring" practices that help them gain meta-cognitive awareness of their composing processes, self reflections on their growth as writers, and reflections on writing tasks.

  - o According to a number of the faculty we interviewed, assignments requiring reflection on writing tasks and processes seemed to be the easiest for L2 students to write and on which they experienced the most success, perhaps because, as the management professor said, "the reins are so much looser."

  For one assignment she gives--a "Personal conundrum Leadership" paper—students have to figure out how they would handle the problem they select from a list of topics. She gives few guidelines other than to tell them it is meant to be reflective and personal as they think through the problem, identify resources, incorporate management concepts, and develop a project action plan.

  Perhaps because they have small deliverables along the way and also because the assignment is "inherently meaningful to them in their future," all of the students do very well, she said, including L2 writers. The sequenced steps allow them time to work on the process with teacher and peer feedback; plus

they may write in "their own voices," even if accented, and incorporate reflection throughout.

All of these processes, of course-- the deliverables that are due along the way, frequent and timely teacher feedback, peer group support, and reflection on what they've learned in the process—fit with best practices advice we in WAC have been giving for a long time and which are typically built into requirements for writing-intensive courses. Good WAC pedagogy can be good L2 pedagogy if faculty are sensitized to the additional challenges English language learners face.

In his book *Educating Global Citizens in Colleges and Universities: Challenges and Opportunities,* George Mason's provost Peter Stearns recognizes that the movement to internationalize our campuses is both inward and outward. Outward as we forge relationships abroad and inward because all of our students will benefit from learning to function in an "increasingly intense global environment."

The challenge we have as WAC faculty and program leaders, as we learn to function in this increasingly intense global environment, is to create classrooms and develop programs that are inclusive of the diverse written identities all of our students bring to our institutions. For now, it is our second language writers who are learning to adapt to what is required here--for some, like Kanishka, a bittersweet experience because of what is being left by the wayside, but also, for many, like Ayesha, a source of satisfaction as they acquire the tools for writing in English in their disciplines.

"You are given a topic, and the more you read and the more research you do, the more it broadens your vision. And I really enjoy that everything is new to me. And it feels so light when I have done my research properly and I write it down. I just feel so good." – Ayesha, student from Pakistan

In comparison to our L2 students, we faculty have quite some distance to travel as we negotiate our expectations for the writing they do in our disciplines. In our negotiations—with student writers, with faculty, and with stakeholders inside and outside of our institutions—the question we need to ask is **not** "What is **good-enough** writing?" but rather "What is **good** writing as it mirrors the professional goals of our students, the work places they want to enter, and the variety of Englishes people are using there. In the process, we may learn to hear and value the written accents our L2 students bring to our classrooms.

"I don't see second language mistakes as flaws. I think those mistakes are part of what makes the world so interesting."   – *Psychology professor*

"When you ultimately succeed in writing is when you have your own accent, I call it. When you speak to me and hear my accent, it reflects where I come from. Well, I want my writing to be reflected in that way too."   – *Tonka, student from Bulgaria*

But we can't be effective negotiators if we're not also informed about second language scholarship and practices, which takes me back to where I started in this journey—border crossing can be a daunting prospect, as I noted and as our L2 students are teaching us. To develop culturally inclusive practices and programs, these are the travels we must be prepared to take.