Abstract

The freshman composition course introduces college students to college-level writing. The tools learned in this course will follow them through not only the rest of their college careers, but through their professional work as well. Over half of the students coming into college are underprepared for the challenges of a freshman composition course. Colleges across the country are showing a trend towards the implementation of a writing for social change pedagogy in the freshman composition course. Writing for social change is a feminist pedagogy based on constructivism that includes discussion of student experiences. Instituting the teaching of writing for social change in the freshman composition course will improve student engagement in the writing course. This study will seek to answer this question through an examination of the literature surrounding the writing for social change pedagogy and exploring the perceived effects. The findings of this study are that student engagement in the freshman composition course is improved by teaching writing for social change. The recommendation is made to teach instructors the advantages of writing for social change in order to encourage this pedagogy as a primary mode of instruction throughout the department. This study contributes to social change by helping educators to better understand the student experience in a classroom taught through the writing for social change pedagogy.

Writing for Social Change as an Engaged Pedagogy in College Composition

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to Luna Wilder and Daphne Blue, my two daughters who were born during my studies for this degree and put up with having a distracted father for the first few years of their lives.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Study

**Issue of Concern**

Incoming freshmen are underprepared for the rigors and expectations of college level writing. Meeting student needs can be a challenge for the instructors.  It can be difficult teaching a course to such a broad number of college students who all need writing for different purposes in their college careers and making it engaging to as many students as possible. Teaching freshman composition through a writing for social change pedagogy can improve student engagement in the freshman writing course. In order to engage all students at this level, instructors often seek thematic alternatives to the traditional rhetorical-based teaching paradigm.

The writing for social change pedagogy is being introduced in many colleges and by many writing instructors as a way to add a thematic element to the freshman writing course and engage the students and encourage them to improve their writing (Welch, 2004).  This pedagogy, defined by Sapp (2000) as the teaching of writing "through which power structures can be explored to help society move towards new ways of thinking with a new consciousness" (p. 1), is being used in order to help students to see writing as a useful tool and to introduce students to political and social issues that the world is involved with day to day (Welch 2004).  The purpose of this inquiry is to review research relating to the teaching of a social change pedagogy in the freshman composition course in order to see if the pedagogy has a positive effect on student engagement.

This study is significant in that it will help college writing instructors better frame the student experience in a writing for social change composition class. The effects of this teaching pedagogy on student engagement will be better understood with this inquiry. This study

contributes to social change for college students and educators by informing educators about the benefits of teaching writing for social change and bringing social change issues to the forefront of the classroom. Writing and critical thinking abilities improve not only student performance in writing courses, but in every course. When pedagogies are improved to meet student engagement, both instructor and students benefit. The implementation of an engaged pedagogy helps to progress a college from the instructional paradigm to the learning paradigm of education (Sapp, 2002).

## Research Question

Primary question:

Does the literature show the implementation of a writing for social change pedagogy to have a benefit on student engagement?

Sub-question:

How does the college writing instructor experience the freshman writing class being taught through a writing for social change pedagogy?

Answering these questions will provide a more thorough understanding of the experiences of college students taking freshman composition through a writing for social change pedagogy. Understanding what the literature says about the above questions will help instructors to decide if such a pedagogy would be helpful to their classes.

## Key Definitions

There are several key terms that will be used in this study. These terms help to frame the underlying philosophy of the pedagogy as well as increasing understanding of the pedagogy itself.

*Writing for social change*: is a pedagogy of teaching writing defined by Sapp (2000) as the questioning of power structures to help society evolve into new ways of thinking.

*Constructivism*: a learning theory in which students "construct meaning from personal values, beliefs, and experiences" (Lambert, 2002, p. 14).

*Social Justice*: entails reconceptualizing how community is defined, and challenging the ideologies that emerge from a profit-based and commercialized society (DeLeon, 2008).

*Engaged Pedagogy*: a course that is based in the experiential. Students reflect on their roles in the larger academic setting, letting their experiences drive the course (Browne, 2005).

## Summary

In the first part of this inquiry, the issue of concern has been identified and the rationale for the selection of this issue has been identified. A research question that will guide the literature review has been posed. The significance of this study has been articulated and key terms have been identified through the literature.

In the next part of the inquiry, the literature will be consulted to understand the conceptual framework of the writing for social change pedagogy. Then a literature review will be performed illuminating the answers to the research question. The third section of this paper will provide a critical analysis of that literature review. Recommendations for handling the issue of

concern will come out of the critical review of the literature. Finally, a reflection on the importance of this project will be performed.

Section 2: Literature Review

**Introduction**

Incoming freshman are widely unprepared for the challenges of the first-year writing course.  In order to better engage students in the learning process in writing courses, many colleges and universities are turning to the teaching of a writing for social change paradigm (Welch, 2004). To better understand the effects of teaching writing for social change, a review of the literature will be performed. The conceptual framework of the pedagogy must be better understood. Then the advantages and challenges of teaching writing of social change will be discussed.

**Conceptual Framework**

Writing for social change as a pedagogy for teaching composition is based on ideas set forth by constructivism and serves as an engaged pedagogy to help students better connect with their writing (Sapp, 2002).

**Constructivism**

The constructivist theory of learning supports the teaching of a social change pedagogy in the composition classroom.  Lambert (2002) noted that constructivist learning theory asks co-learners to construct meaning from their own personal experiences and the values that they bring to those individual experiences.  It is critical for this learning theory that the student be able to effectively reflect on his or her experiences and to have an understanding of their personal values (Lambert, 2002).  Sapp (2000) wrote that a social justice pedagogy gives the student a more active role in the course, a practice clearly in harmony with the theory of constructivism.

McCune (2004) spoke to the difficult nature of teaching writing. He affirms that writing essays "requires students to engage actively with material, to examine ideas in depth, to integrate and critically evaluate what they read, and to state their understanding clearly" (p. 257). These beneficial ideals suggest that constructivism is inherent to the teaching of writing as the above passage embodies the elements of constructivism so well.

Fardanesh (2006) compared constructivist theory with the more traditional systematic approach to learning design. Constructivism, Fardanesh said, has "no emphasis on predetermined design steps" (p. 3) but the "emphasis is on some principles" (p. 3). These principles include the perspective on learning that the students achieve and "learning in social experiences" (p. 3). These principles and a lack of emphasis on design steps are clearly in the mode of the writing for social change pedagogy.

The writing for social change pedagogy is based on the assumption that learners will be more capable of constructing knowledge from their social surroundings. Bizzell (1997) noted that writing for social change empowers the student to take an active role in social discourse of the community around them. The traditional, or banking method, of instruction does not value the way in which students view the world, leading to education as an isolating experience (Medina, 2009). Therefore, the hope is not only to improve student performance in writing, but to encourage active citizenship in the community at large; constructivism is brought out of the classroom and into the larger arena.

Nester (1997) told her students that their learning will not be limited to the classroom. The class is told that the subject matter of their course is found in their surrounding community. This frames the students' minds for learning in this nontraditional framework. Sapp (2002)

encouraged students to share past experiences, as well as present ones, in the construction of his writing course. This model of education involves the use of "organically generated critical theory from multiple viewpoints," therefore, it does not limit the course material to standardized texts (O'Brien, 2009, p. 40). The instructor becomes a colearner as well, sharing his or her own experiences to help student see a model of meaning making (Sapp, 2002). When institutions approach pedagogy through means of the banking method, they respond to social change, but are not themselves agents of change (Silver, 2007).

The principles of constructivist learning theory are found in the writing for social change pedagogy. An understanding of both is necessary for the instructor to undertake the teaching of their writing course in this way. An instructor must also understand the unique situation of teaching to adult learners, or andragogy.

**Andragogy**

Andragogy is the term for helping adult students to learn, as opposed to pedagogy in relation to helping children to learn (Malone, 1987). Where pedagogy is focused at the teacher, the term andragogy is aimed at the learner, as they are expected to have control over their learning (Malone, 1987). It is assumed that adult learners are intrinsically motivated (Houde, 2006). College students are considered to be adult learners. Knowles (1980) outlined several tactics for engaging adults in the learning process. Among these, adults have a need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their assignments. They also effectively use experience for the basis of learning activities. While adults can be motivated by external factors, such as job promotion or higher pay, they feel more motivated by internal pressures. However, this is balanced by their need to know why it is that they are learning what they are (Knowles,

Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Adult learners rely on personal responsibility for motivation to learn. They also have a need to have their experience valued in an educational setting (Houde, 2006). Based on this theory, it is recommended that adult students are allowed to discover concepts for themselves and that the instructor provides guidance when mistakes are made. The writing for social change pedagogy reflects these needs by using a constructivist learning paradigm (Sapp, 2002).

Houde (2006) linked the properties of andragogy as laid out by Knowles (1980) to two emergent psychological theories. The theory of self-determination explained the ways in which adult students are motivated to through internal pressures for their own satisfaction to learn. The theory of socieoemotional selectivity explained why this intrinsic motivation is not as likely to be found in children by explaining the need for emotional readiness to incorporate personal responsibility and apply it to educational learning (Houde, 2006). The finding that andragogy is related to recent psychological discoveries maintains the validity of the theory. Andragory is relevant to this study because it seeks to make discoveries about the learning experiences of college students. Many of the principles of effective teaching for adults are embodied in the writing for social change method of teaching freshman composition. The theories of andragogy and constructivism work together as a conceptual framework for the effective qualities of teaching writing for social change, but the method itself must still be examined.

**Writing for Social Change and Related Pedagogies**

Writing for social change is a pedagogy used in writing courses that critically examines the power structures in play in society and uses the experience of the student as a central text for the course (Sapp, 2003). Critical thinking skills are improved for the student writer as the

rationale for using a commercial and profit-based design for society is questioned extensively

(DeLeon, 2008). Instead of extensive lectures about rhetorical design, students help to design

their own writing assignments as a basis for making their own discovery of rhetorical strategies

(Sapp, 2000; Knowles, 1984). Reading materials for the course typically center on the

experiences of diverse minorities of race, gender, and socioeconomic class. Elements of culture

and popular culture are also explored for themes of oppression. Student experience is also

discussed in relation to the issues in class. In this way, students "read the world" as a primary

text for classroom discussion (Freire, 2007). Partnering with local communities and addressing

local issues can result in a more well-rounded education for students opposed to merely studying

texts from a book (Peterson, 2009).

The research shows adaptability of the pedagogy within the existing framework of many

college campuses (Sapp, 2000; Sapp, 2003). Adaptability is essential in a course that involves so

many learners and instructors. With the wide variety of students that attend college, there comes

a wide variety of learning styles (Rochford, 2002). The large number of instructors it takes to

teach this core requirement brings with it a large number of teaching styles and skill levels.

Therefore, it is important that a selected pedagogy be adaptable for both student and faculty.

**Teacher Preparedness**

Sapp (2003) has done extensive research about the challenges of promoting social change

in the classroom at the academic level. The challenges that he lists all are directly related to

teacher preparedness. The challenges listed are: (a) a lack of pedagogical training, (b) a

perceived lack of time needed to individualize instruction; unfounded opposition that the

pedagogy is politically biased; and reluctance of instructors to face administrative scrutiny.

Micciche (2002) also speaks to these obstacles, stating that many instructors do not appreciate the "seemingly constant need to defend the purpose, goals, and outcomes of writing programs" (p. 4) to everyone from faculty across the discipline to administrators. As an academic workhorse, the composition course is often placed under unfair inspection and many educators without a full understanding of the subject often feel they have a duty to add their opinions (Gottschalk, 2002). The writing for social change strategy is often recommended because of the perceived advantaged of teaching through the strategy.

**Perceived Advantages of Teaching through Writing for Social Change**

A central issue in the argument to teach writing for social change in the classroom is the students' relationship to the pedagogy (Sapp, 2000). The literature offers many positive illustrations and successful classrooms. Ochse (1995) gives the account of students who felt stifled and silenced by college writing courses. The students felt that their writing instructors were more concerned with their conforming to rigorous standards rather than what the students wanted to express. This is a common experience among students (Sapp, 2003). Education can be an isolating experience in traditional contexts; however, through social change collaboration, students learn to take ownership of their work while acting as co-learners in a collaborative environment (Villegas, *et al*, 2007).

Students often feel that they are given a voice through writing for social change (Sapp, 2003; Bizzell, 2002). The empowerment of students is one of the central goals of a composition course. Mancina's (2005) students felt tremendously empowered by writing for social change. They went from feeling marginalized to feeling "the impact of being given the respected distinction of having something to say," and they "began thinking in terms of how their voice

can influence change in society" (p. 32).  Students, in fact, cannot properly develop original voices without challenging the social norms around them and evaluating their place within those norms (McArdle and Mansfield, 2007).

Students who are educated in writing for social change tend to connect better with their own writing (Sapp, 2003).  This advantage will follow them through their college lives as well as their future careers. Guajardo (2008) observed that when work originates from self, place, and community, the work is found to be more meaningful. The sense of self that is built in these classes follows students through their adult lives (Guajardo, 2008).

Among many of the arguments in support of writing for social change and related constructivist social justice pedagogies, there is the strong assertion of a moral upper hand present in the literature.  Crabtree and Sapp (2002) pointed out the benefits of social justice pedagogy as they relate to the morality of education.  They say that such pedagogies contribute to the spiritual growth of the student as well as the intellectual growth.  Students are taught to question "cultural assumptions that are supported by oppression" and to analyze the student's place in the world "in terms of racism, sexism, oppression, and dominance" (p. 132).  They also write that while the role of the teacher is often diminished in the classroom, this is to the end of showing students that the class can be "an exciting place, where honest confrontation, dialogue, and reciprocal interaction are valued, and where border crossings take place" (p. 132).

Dubinsky (2001) also made a moral argument, saying that the pedagogy of social justice in the English classroom is the teacher's civic obligation both to the students and to the society where they live.  It is his experience that social justice pedagogies enable and empower students to take a greater part in their community by enacting their civic responsibilities as writers.  But

despite the many advantages felt by instructors, there are significant challenges to teaching writing for social change pedagogy.

**Opposition to Writing for Social Change**

Just as the literature exhibits much support for the ideals of teaching writing for social change, there is also literature that is against it. Gottschalk (2002) felt that the teaching of social change is an unnecessary step in an already busy course. She writes that social change should not be seen as the prevailing model for all classrooms. It is a viewpoint that she defends through her training as a literature instructor and seems founded in the first of Sapp's listed obstacles.

Sapp (2003), however, responded in his work that an instructor of writing for social change need not be weighted down with specific curricula, but need only to thoughtfully examine the lives and circumstances of all of the co-learners involved in the classroom. This examination should show the way the co-learners' lives reverberate in the outside world. Sapp (2003) warned against some of the challenges of promoting writing for social change as the primary mode of instruction for a composition course. The first challenge is the lack of proper preparation of the instructor. While instructors see the benefits of teaching writing for social change, a lack of training and familiarity of the subject may present an issue to the effective implementation of the course (Sapp, 2002). The second challenge is a warning meant for constructivist instruction in the writing course as a whole. There is an increased time commitment in making the course personal to each class. Sapp also said that there are political pressures against the wide implementation of writing for social change as a primary pedagogy. Instructors should expect a certain amount of opposition to the social justice pedagogy from conservative administrations and communities (Sapp 2003).

O'Loughlin (1992) took a stand against constructivist pedagogies as they are based in the ideals of a privileged middle-class and can often serve to reinforce the very social oppressions that they criticize. O'Loughlin (1992) offered no remedies for the situation, nor offers alternatives. If the instructor exhibits too strongly in their teaching a bias, the students can end up feeling isolated and the sense of freedom the pedagogy hopes to instill will be replaced with the kind of disconnect that it tries to subvert. Sapp (2000) also stated that a social change writing assignment need not be interpreted as exclusively liberal or feminist in philosophy. Students should be made aware of their ability to implement any kind of change at any level in their socially constructed world. This also helps to eliminate the risk of alienation of the student, as they are free to explore the content of the course through any way they see fit as a community.

Rosenberg (2002) was highly critical of writing for social change as a valid pedagogy. She presents two distinct views of what college writing should be are contrasted. One school of thought is that college composition should be academic in nature, displaying a certain amount of distance and objectivity to the subject of the writing. A more constructivist viewpoint is that college level writing should be explored through personal relationships of experience and social values. While Rosenberg does not recommend leaving personality out of the equation, she does not support the idea of a single personal story serving the basis of college level writing. While she does not support the idea of writing for social change as the ideal pedagogy for teaching writing, she doesn't necessarily rebuke the idea of social change as a thematic content basis for a more systematic oriented and traditionally taught form of college composition. The employment of thematic content to a writing class is a strategy often used to increase student engagement and is therefore a form of engaged pedagogy.

**Engaged Pedagogy**

Engagement is important to student learning. Students will become bored with a class if they are not offered classroom stimulation or if the class doesn't meet their expectations (Aldridge, 1989). When students are engaged and show more stimulated thinking, evidence of learning is increased (Raymond, 2008). Writing for social change is often described as an engaged pedagogy (Sapp, 2000). Browne (2005) defined an engaged pedagogy as one that does not limit course materials as that which is removed from the personal. Personal experiences are valued in an engaged pedagogy and that which is considered private is considered a legitimate substance of inquiry. In an engaged pedagogy, students are directly asked what their own personal experiences and feelings are and they are treated with as much respect as universal material taught in the course. She concludes that students are much happier when their personal feelings and experiences are brought into the course in a personalized and legitimized manner. Browne (2005) went on to define traditional courses that do not include the personal as it relates to the subject as disempowering.

Kuh (2001a) defined student engagement as the assessment of what a student is "putting into and getting out of school" (p. 4). What a student put into school is a reflection of their motivation. Malone and Lepper (1987) identified challenge, curiosity, control, and fantasy as the four main sources of motivation. These four factors are integrated into the writing assignments in a writing for social change program. Students are challenged to write thematically, attaching meaning to a common rhetorical strategy. Curiosity is engaged as students are asked to explore topics that they express interest. Topics and information challenge their current knowledge.

Students are empowered to understand their role in controlling their social situation. They are also asked to envision an improvement in societal policy through their writing.

Mospens (2008) studied the effect that social class has on student engagement for the college student. The goal was to identify elements of campus culture that enhance or obstruct engagement for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Using archival data, Mospens measures engagement in college students using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). She referred to student engagement as "the study of college experience" (p. 33). Engagement in this study was identified as the frequency of student and faculty interaction and the perceived quality of that interaction. Her findings suggested that the campus under study was helpful in creating an environment for lower economic class students to learn.

It is important in writing for social change classroom that the students feel in partial control of the course (Sapp, 2003). In a typical writing for social change classroom, many of the texts students read and the subjects they cover are selected by the class as a learning community. Casey (2008) wrote that students are more engaged in reading courses when "they have the opportunity to make choices about their reading and their participation while sharing responsibility for learning with their peers" (p. 3). In her qualitative study of student engagement in reading classes, Casey used extensive observation and semi-structured interviews to draw conclusions. In the study, student engagement was improved by having struggling students take more control of their learning environment and become more independent learners. Students are shifted from an instructional paradigm to a learning paradigm through the development of independent learning clubs (Casey, 2008). The learning clubs become co-learners who construct knowledge about reading material and develop their own responses to the

material in the form of projects for assessment.  The conclusion of the study showed that

students were more motivated when they were treated as equals of the instructor, listened to, and

had more control of the class (Casey, 2008).

Section 3: Critical Analysis of Literature Review

Students entering college level writing programs are generally unprepared for the challenges that they will face (McCune, 2004). Teaching writing through writing for social change asks students as co-learners to construct meaning from their own personal experiences and the values that they bring to those individual experiences (Lambert, 2002). Teaching college composition with a writing for social change paradigm will increase student engagement (Sapp, 2000) and that will help them to increase their skills (Raymond, 2008). In a writing for social change classroom, teachers avoid lecturing in favor of student discussion (Knowles, 1984).

An evaluation of the literature on the subject shows strong support for the pedagogy of teaching writing for social change. Ochse (1995) expressed the frustration of many students in writing classes and suggests that the empowerment they feel through writing for social change has a positive effect on their attitudes towards writing. Much of the research presented by Sapp (2000, 2002) deals with the positive effects of teaching writing for social change on student empowerment, as well. Through their empowerment, students gain a better understanding of the power of their own writing (2000).

Other researchers help to support the argument. Bizzell (2002) wrote that students feel they have been given a voice in through writing for social change. Mancina (2005) supported this, writing about students transitioning from feeling marginalized to feeling empowered.

There also appears to be a perceived moral advantage to teaching writing for social change. Crabtree and Sapp (2002) felt that student interactions in a classroom taught through

writing for social change will help the students to better understand their own power in helping to end oppression and other social injustices. This view was supported by Dubinsky (2001) who takes it a step further, stating that it is the civic obligation of the instructor to teach through writing for social change.

There is also some opposition to the institution of writing for social change as the primary mode of a writing classroom. Rosenberg (2002) and Gottschalk (2002) both opposed the pedagogy as a primary means of reaching students. Sapp also writes about the challenges that an instructor faces when instituting a writing for social change pedagogy. These challenges include institutional pressures as well as student attitudes and teacher preparedness (Sapp, 2003). Sapp also suggested that instructors overcome those challenges for the benefit of the students (Sapp, 2003).

## Gaps in the Literature

Within the research there remain several gaps. While there is much support for writing for social change on the basis of student engagement, there are no statistics quantifying student learning. Also, there are no studies that directly interview or survey students to better understand their experiences in a writing for social change classroom. While specific challenges and teacher preparedness is addressed, there is no research discussing the ability of underprepared teachers effectiveness in teaching through this pedagogy.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this review of literature is that the advantages of teaching writing for social change outweigh the opposition. Student engagement is key to student success (Raymond, 2008) and the use of an engaged pedagogy will help students connect with their writing (Sapp, 2000). While the detractors of this teaching pedagogy should be listened to, and teachers must make sure that they are properly prepared, the institution of a writing for social change pedagogy will help students taking a college composition course find success.

Section 4: Recommendations

Many students coming into the college are underprepared for the challenges of college level reading and writing. In order to best reach students in reading and writing classes, an engaging pedagogy is key (Kuh, 2001a). It is the conclusion of the critical analysis of the literature review that the writing for social change pedagogy has a positive effect on student engagement.

Writing for social change as a pedagogy in a first year composition course helps student to better understand the power of their own writing by examining social power structures through the lens of the students' own experience (Sapp, 2003). The recommendation of an implementation of the writing for social change paradigm in teaching composition is being made to improve the learning environment of the college and help the college to achieve their goals. Improved student engagement in the writing process will help students not only in the writing class, but in every class that uses reading and writing as a tool for learning (Raymond, 2008). In order to successfully implement a recommendation for the teaching of writing for social change, a plan of action is needed.

Section 5: Capstone Reflection

The freshman composition course introduces college students to college-level writing. The tools learned in this course will follow them through not only the rest of their college careers, but through their professional work, as well. Over half of the students coming into college are underprepared for the challenges of a freshman composition course. This study gives an overview of the positive effects of writing for social change on student engagement in the freshman writing course. The conclusion of this study is that writing for social change has a positive effect on student engagement when used as a primary pedagogy in college composition courses. A recommendation for a plan of action for the implementation of a writing for social change program was made. This study has a positive effect on social change, advancing the understanding of this engaged pedagogy for instructors and students.

This project shows instructors an effective way to approach the freshman composition course. The major strength of this paper is the dissemination of knowledge about this pedagogy and how to effectively implement it. The limitation of this study is instructor willingness. Instructors must be willing and prepared to teach writing for social change, or the recommendations found within this study have only limited advantages.

I've worked for years on this project. When I came to the subject of writing for social change five years ago, I didn't understand much about the pedagogy, much less the effects of the pedagogy. While many of my colleagues were implementing this pedagogy in their writing courses, I decided that I would undertake a study to see if this pedagogy is believed to have positive effects on student engagement. The idea of researching the latest pedagogies and studies was new to me, and understanding the rhetoric of scholarship in academic journals was the first bridge that I had to cross.

My understanding of scholarship and project development took shape over a long period of time. The compilation and understanding of specific pedagogical theories led to the construction of synthesis papers which eventually led to the application of critical analysis. Developing a project of this magnitude required diligence, focus, and an open mind. I began this study expecting to find mainly negative effects of the writing for social change pedagogy. It seemed to me like a pedagogy enforced by the administration to take care of certain diversity goals and not an effective tool for student learning. When my discoveries began showing me otherwise, I was convinced to implement writing for social change in my own classrooms.

Once I understood the basics of writing for social change through my research, the implementation of writing for social change in my composition classrooms was an easy decision to make. I have noticed since I began teaching writing for social change a great change in the work that my students produce. They produce work that they care about and they approach assignments with creativity and original thought. I encouraged other instructors to explore the pedagogy; from the conceptual framework of Frierian philosophy to the practical application of the pedagogy.

In the community college setting where I work, we are invested in teaching to students from every background and socioeconomic class. Approaching this diverse body of students in an area hit hard by the economic troubles of our time, writing for social change was a natural fit. Students responded positively to the notions of exerting their power through writing to make the community they live in a place worth investing in. They have discovered that writing isn't just a tool used for school, but a natural form of communication that can enhance their expression and change their worlds.

**Suggestions for Future Study**

Future researchers in writing for social change may wish to develop a grounded theory study to see what theories can be developed directly from student experience in the writing for social change classroom. A quantitative study measuring accomplishment of students taught through this pedagogy would also be advantageous to the advancement of knowledge.

The study has helped me to see the importance of instructor leadership within the college. I understand that development of pedagogical strategies and innovations must be led by the ones doing the teaching. I have also learned that professional development should be faculty led in order to be effective in promoting the innovation of student learning. The power to change the world is found in the leadership of instructors forward thinking enough to empower their students with original knowledge and critical thought.

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