High Risk, High Yield:
Embodied Facilitation for Racial Justice in Writing Workshops Across the Disciplines

Beth Godbee and Jasmine Kar Tang

"Once we start talking in the classroom about the body and about how we live in our bodies, we're automatically challenging the way power has orchestrated itself in that particular institutionalized space."

-- hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (136)

"[D]ivorcing WAC from ideology in effect divorces it from the most lively issues of composition theory."   -- Mahala, "Writing Utopias" (787)

Welcome and Introductions

- Show of Hands

- Activity #1: Embodied Name Game

- Why did you come to this workshop?

Agenda

- Brief Presentations and Group Discussions:
  - Facilitation and Race
  - Facilitation and Self-reflexivity

- Putting It Together:

  Facilitation + Race + Self-reflexivity

- Feedback Forms

Critique Against and Critique for

- complementary stances of problem-naming (*critique against*) and potential-realizing (*critique for*)
- "We cannot talk about justice in the absence of talk about injustice. Likewise, we cannot talk about freedom or peace without talking about the dynamics of domination and oppression."

  -- Diab (unpublished manuscript; see Diab, Ferrel, Godbee, and Simpkins's "Making Commitments to Racial Justice Actionable")

Critique Against

- "Given the precarious interdepartmental position of WAC programs, it seems inevitable that transgressive 'cutting-edge' practices are the least likely to be selected."

  -- Mahala, "Writing Utopias: Writing Across the Curriculum and the Promise of Reform" (780)

- "WAC theory has circumvented conflict, but also mitigated its potency as an agency for change."

  -- Mahala (786)

Critique Against

7. **Collaborate with other groups in the institution**. These collaborations, which integrate WAC into the fabric of the institution, may focus on faculty development, institutional research, and program assessment, among other initiatives. Programs that are natural allies of WAC include:

- Writing Center
- Academic disciplines
- Deans for undergraduate education
- Faculty affairs
- First-year Writing Program
- General education
- Graduate education
- Preparing future faculty program
- Library
- National Writing Project

- Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
- English as a Second Language program
- Undergraduate Research office
- Student affairs
- Teaching and Learning office
- Teaching and Technology office
- Speaking across the curriculum initiative
- Quantitative reasoning across the curriculum initiative
- Departmental TA training programs

-- "Statement of WAC Principles and Practices"

Critique for

- Use embodied facilitation to recognize race and intersecting identities.

- Facilitation, race, and self-reflexivity are inextricable.

- Proposal: "high risk / high yield model"

-- Geller et al., *The Everyday Writing Center*

Activity #2: Recording Cases

Critique Against

1. assignment design consultation about stress inventory in psychology

2. _____

3. _____

Critique for

1. consultation on designing writing workshops for graduate students of color

2. _____

3. _____

Race + Facilitation

- <u>Race is socially constructed.</u>

  racial formation:
  "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories
  are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed"

  -- Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (55)

"We think we see 'race' when we encounter certain physical differences among people such as skin color, eye shape, and hair texture. What we actually 'see' (or more accurately 'perceive') are the social meanings that have been linked to those physical features by the ideology of race and the historical legacy it has left us."

-- Smedley, *Race in North America* (xii)

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Race and Language

"The minstrel construction of Chinese racial difference around cultural excess focused on three such natural symbolic systems, each closely related to boundary crises: **language**, food, and hair."   -- Lee, *Orientals* (36)

from *The Wasp,* a newspaper in San Francisco (17 April 1886)
--Choy, Dong, and Hom (*The Coming Man* 152)

Race and Language

- <u>Language is racialized:</u>

  What has become "standard" American English is "the dialect of those Americans of economic and political power, namely the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant middle and upper classes."

  -- Smitherman, *Talkin and Testifyin* (194)

Race and Language

- <u>Language privilege exists:</u>

  "In a specific setting, because of historical and other factors, certain dialects may be endowed with more prestige than others. [...] These designations of prestige are not inherent in the dialect itself, but are *externally imposed*, and the prestige of a dialect shifts as the power relationships of the speaker shift."

  -- CCCC, "Students Right to Their Own Language" (SRTOL) (7)

Race and Language

- <u>Language prejudice exists:</u>

  Because Black English has been stigmatized as "poor English" (172), "upward mobility for Black Americans has come to mean the eradication of black language (and black culture) and the adoption of the linguistic norms of the white middle class" (173).

  -- Smitherman, *Talkin and Testifyin*

Race and Language

- <u>Language prejudice (often explicit) stands in for racism (often covert):</u>
  "In a now familiar gesture, language and race become proxies for each other" -- Trimbur, "Linguistic Memory and the Uneasy Settlement of U.S. English" (34)

  "The new racism embeds racism within a set of other categories--language, religion, culture, civilizations pluralized and writ large, a set of master tropes."
  -- Villanueva, "Blind" (16)

Activity #3: Circular Response

- 1st person speaks up to 1 minute on response to the topic or question.
- 2nd person (to left of 1st) speaks for up to 1 minute -- responding to, building on, questioning, countering, engaging the 1st speaker's comments.
- This process continues around circle (with each subsequent speaker continuing to build on earlier responses) and then moves into open conversation for final 1 minute.

  -- Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking* (184)

Of what we've discussed thus far, what resonates with you?

Where do you see these ideas showing up in your WAC practice?
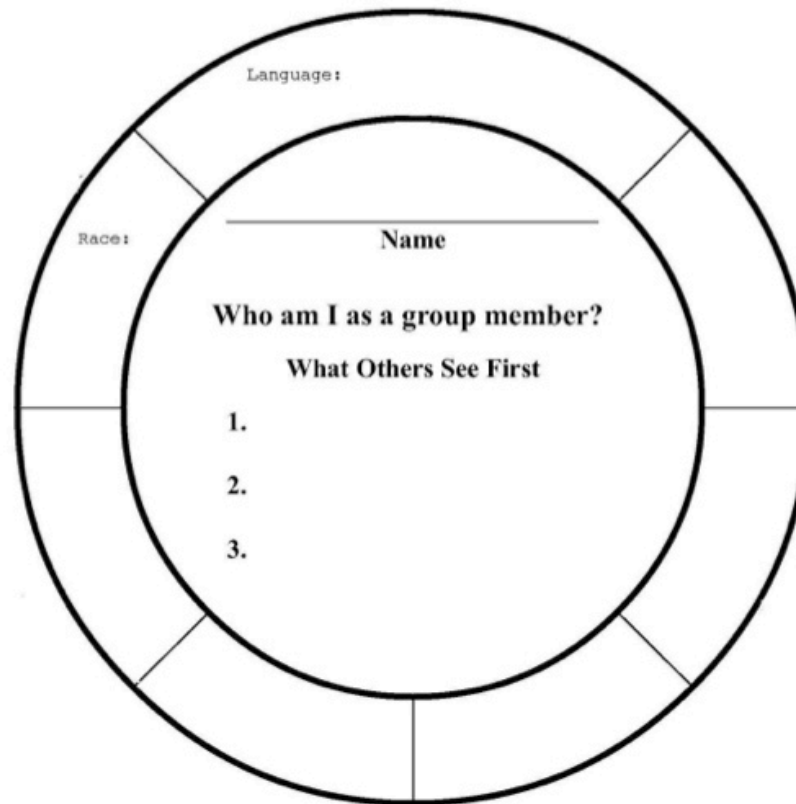
Facilitation + Self-Reflexivity

- "[F]eminists suggest making the researcher visible in any product of research. This call for visibility involves viewing the self, in Susan Krieger's (1991) terms, as resource rather than contaminant."

  -- DeVault, *Liberating Method* (41)
  (citing Krieger, *Social Science and the Self*)

- "gesture of disclosure": attests to "the feminist idea that knowing a speaker will deepen one's understanding of her speech."   -- DeVault (3)

Activity #4: Social Identity Wheel

Language:

Race:

Name

Who am I as a group member?

What Others See First

1.

2.

3.

Activity #5: Freewriting & Discussion

How might recognizing the convergence of facilitation, race, and self-reflexivity <u>influence</u> and potentially <u>change</u> your everyday WAC practice and workshop facilitation?

3 minutes. Small group discussion to follow.

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Beth Godbee | bethgodbee@gmail.com
Jasmine Kar Tang | jkt@umn.edu

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