

LiCS

Literacy in Composition Studies

2018

Volume 6, Number 1

LITERACY IN COMPOSITION STUDIES

Managing Editor

Brenda Glascott
Portland State University

Senior Editor

Tara Lockhart
San Francisco State University

Submissions Editor

Chris Warnick
College of Charleston

Editor

Holly Middleton
High Point University

Editor

Juli Parrish
University of Denver

EDITORIAL BOARD

Patricia Bizzell
College of the Holy Cross

Eli Goldblatt
Temple University

Allan Luke
Queensland University of Technology

Jean Ferguson Carr
University of Pittsburgh

Harvey J. Graff
Ohio State University

Thomas P. Miller
University of Arizona

Christiane Donahue
Dartmouth College

Bruce Horner
University of Louisville

Steve Parks
Syracuse University

Doug Eyman
George Mason University

Carmen Kynard
*John Jay College of Criminal
Justice/CUNY*

Donna Qualley
Western Washington University

Jenn Fishman
Marquette University

Mariolina Salvatori
University of Pittsburgh

John Scenters-Zapico
University of Texas at El Paso

Kate Vieira
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Cynthia Selfe
Ohio State University

Donna Strickland
University of Missouri

Robert P. Yagelski
State University of New York at Albany

Mary Soliday
San Francisco State University

Jennifer Seibel Trainor
San Francisco State University

Morris Young
University of Wisconsin, Madison

LiCS is published with financial and administrative support from High Point University and California State University, San Bernardino.

Print Layout: Justin Lewis

Web Design: Justin Lewis

Website: www.licsjournal.org

Email: licsjournal@gmail.com

LiCS MISSION STATEMENT

Literacy in Composition Studies is a refereed open access online journal that sponsors scholarly activity at the nexus of Literacy and Composition Studies. We foreground *literacy* and *composition* as our keywords because they do particular kinds of work. We want to retain Composition's complicated history as well as FYC's institutional location and articulation to secondary education. Through literacy, we denote practices that are both deeply context-bound and always ideological. Literacy and Composition are therefore contested terms that often mark where the struggles to define literate subjects and confer literacy's value are enacted. We are committed to publishing scholarship that explores literacy at its intersection with Composition's history, pedagogies, and interdisciplinary methods of inquiry.

Literacy is a fluid and contextual term. It can name a range of activities from fundamental knowledge about how to decode text to interpretive and communicative acts. Literacies are linked to know-how, to insider knowledge, and literacy is often a metaphor for the ability to navigate systems, cultures, and situations. At its heart, literacy is linked to interpretation—to reading the social environment and engaging and remaking that environment through communication. Orienting a Composition Studies journal around literacy prompts us to investigate the ways that writing is interpretive as well as persuasive; to analyze the connections and disconnections between writing and reading; and to examine the ways in which literacy acts on or constitutes the writer even as the writer seeks to act on or with others.

LiCS seeks submissions that interpret literacy at a time of radical transformation in its contexts and circulation. We are open to a wide range of research that takes up these issues, and we are especially interested in work that:

- provides provisional frameworks for theorizing literacy activities
- analyzes how literacy practices construct student, community, and other identities
- investigates the ways in which social, political, economic, and technological transformations produce, eliminate, or mediate literacy opportunities
- analyzes the processes whereby literacies are valued or legitimated
- examines the literacies sponsored through college writing courses and curricula, including the range of literate activities, practices, and pedagogies that shape and inform, enable and constrain writing
- considers the implications of institutional, state, or national policies on literacy learning and teaching, including the articulation of high schools and higher education
- proposes or creates opportunities for new interactions between Literacy and Composition Studies, especially those drawing on transnational and cross-cultural literacy research

Editors' Introduction to Issue 6.1

The Spring 2018 issue of *LiCS* investigates a wide range of student experiences at university. Whether exploring co-curricular initiatives and publications, interviews, journals, or professional guidelines, the articles in this issue paint a broad picture of literate activities across the life spectrum, from students and community members engaging in debate over housing the Nixon Presidential Library at UC Irvine, to older adults navigating the loss of literate practices. This issue's authors consider how writers negotiate both classrooms and resources available outside the classroom, how they think about and hope their writing will reach varied publics and audiences, and how the threshold concepts that shape writing and work with information are guided by such writer/reader exigencies. Woven through the articles in this issue are narratives of belonging and alienation, issues further explored in the three book reviews that end the issue.

As part of this issue, we are pleased to welcome our new Book Review Editor, Iris D. Ruiz, and Assistant Book Review Editor, Jasmine Villa. A Continuing Lecturer at UC Merced, Dr. Ruiz focuses on intersectionality, critical historiography, and pedagogy. She serves as co-chair of the NCTE/CCCC Latinx Caucus and, along with Raul Sanchez, served as co-editor for the recent collection *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Her monograph, *Reclaiming Composition Studies for Chicanos/as and other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy* (Palgrave Macmillan), was also published in 2016 and was recently awarded an honorable mention for the CCCC best new book award for 2018. At the end of this issue, Jasmine Villa reviews the text. Villa holds an MA in Rhetoric and Writing Studies and a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Texas at El Paso. Her academic interests include intercultural rhetoric, community involvement—including work with *Latinitas*, a non-profit aimed to empower Latina youth through multimedia outreach and technology—non-profit management, grant writing, and literacy. Over the next several issues, Ruiz and Villa will take the lead on exploring new formats and modes of presentation for our book review section.

Using archived materials, Jens Lloyd kicks off this issue by detailing the fascinating 1983 debate concerning whether the University of California, Irvine, would host the Nixon Presidential Library as the debate unfolded in the campus newspaper, *The New University*. Lloyd analyzes the literate and rhetorical practices deployed by students, faculty, and residents of Irvine in order to argue for an understanding of college writing that includes co-curricular literacies and critical attention to the spatial constructions that shape our surroundings and context. By tracing the “ideological fault lines” that emerged in the Nixon Library debate, Lloyd demonstrates the ways that campus values and indeed the campus built environment itself are negotiated through writing. “College Writing and Campus Values: The Nixon Library Debate at UC Irvine” concludes with the pedagogical implications of using archival collections “to construct layered, conflicting accounts of campus values” (4).

Tom McNamara's “Diminishing Returns at Corporate U: Chinese Undergraduates and Composition's Activist Legacy” presents a case study of Jingfei, a Chinese international student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Based on interview data, McNamara observes that Jingfei, like other students who participated in the larger study from which his essay draws, believed

her writing class did not teach her the linguistic and cultural knowledge she saw as relevant for her personal and academic goals. In response, Jingfei used her status as a consumer to seek out additional support. McNamara argues that “Jingfei’s efforts to secure campus resources and visibility thus diverge from the rights-based framework composition scholars have relied on to understand the contexts in which multilingual and non-white students make claims to institutional belonging and resources” (24). Situating Jingfei’s experience in relation to the international turn in US higher education and literacy pedagogy, McNamara concludes that Jingfei’s experience suggests composition classrooms might focus more attention on language and language difference while also acknowledging students like Jingfei who “may desire to assimilate to rather than contest oppressive language norms” (31).

Amber Engelson takes up the intersection of audience and global Englishes in “‘To Whom Do We Have Students Write?: Exploring Rhetorical Agency and Translanguaging in an Indonesian Graduate Writing Classroom.” Engelson notes that students writing outside the US must navigate a particularly complex rhetorical situation: wishing to write for local readers but asked to imagine an international audience, thoroughly aware that using English inevitably involves acts of assimilation even as they recognize the power dynamics and cultural hierarchies at play. Using teacher ethnography methods, Engelson draws on her experience as a US Department of State Fellow developing a curriculum for teaching writing to graduate students in Indonesia. She recounts these graduate students’ concern with how their writing would circulate in and through English and whether and how the knowledge they produced would reach Indonesian publics. Finally, she speculates that bringing conversations about “language, culture and power” [to] our linguistically diverse US graduate classrooms” is an important step in acknowledging that “global connection across difference [is] the norm, rather than the exception” (56).

In “Research, Writing, and Writer/Reader Exigence: Literate Practice at the Overlap of Information Literacy and Writing Studies Threshold Concepts,” Jerry Stinnett and Marcia Rapchak propose that “writer/reader exigence” addresses a way to meet the escalating demands of evaluating and using relevant information in college writing. While research and professional guidelines have yielded threshold concepts in writing studies and the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, these concepts have introduced a pedagogical complexity that Stinnett and Rapchak propose to resolve. Rather than teaching any one of the concepts, the authors instead propose that a pedagogy that teaches students awareness of writer/reader exigence implies the other threshold concepts, thereby helping students acquire tacit knowledge of the concepts through situated practice.

In “Holding on to Literacies: Older Adult Narratives of Literacy and Agency,” Suzanne Kesler Rumsey asks, “[h]ow do older adults hold on to literacy practices, and what role does literacy play in aging?” (81). Using a theoretical frame of what she calls “heritage literacies,” Rumsey complicates Deborah Brandt’s conception of literacy practices as accumulating over time, and instead describes a process of loss and alienation from practices older adults once used. Rumsey’s findings are based on semi-structured interviews she conducted with fifteen homebound and/or disabled older adults, four of whom are the focus of this article. The vignettes Rumsey offer push her to explore how older adults understand the loss of literacy practices and how individuals retain their sense of agency. Through this, Rumsey asks us to challenge our “stereotypes of older adults and those with disabilities” in

relation to the “assumptions we make about what literacy looks like and sounds like” and invites us to rethink what “holding on’ to literacy” might mean (99).

The issue concludes with three review essays of timely research on queer pedagogy, the ongoing debate to abolish the composition requirement, and the marginalization of people of color within composition history and pedagogy. Jean Bessette reviews Stacey Waite’s *Teaching Queer: Radical Possibilities for Writing and Knowing* (U of Pittsburgh, 2017), examining how Waite’s book—which moves “between personal narrative about growing up queer, theories of gender and composition, and analysis of the verbal and written work of students” (105)—addresses the question “If queerness challenges norms of both gender identity and writing, what might it mean to teach composition queer?” (ibid.). Meaghan H. Brewer discusses Michael Harker’s *The Lure of Literacy: A Critical Reception of the Compulsory Composition Debate* (SUNY, 2014), which shows how, according to Brewer, “both the abolitionists and reformists rely on literacy myths that construct literacy as more powerful than it is” (109). Brewer responds to the book’s proposal to revise first-year composition as “First-Year Literacy Studies” by agreeing with Harker’s efforts to integrate literacy studies in writing curricula while also arguing that “compositionists who are less familiar with the rich scholarship from literacy studies may view ‘literacy’ as either too broad or too basic a label for FYC” (111). Finally, Jasmine Villa reviews Iris D. Ruiz’s *Reclaiming Composition for Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), which, in addition to critiquing the exclusion of contributions by people of color within mainstream composition histories, traces the history of normal schools in California and Texas that, in Villa’s words, “are not typically included in Composition histories” (114). In addition, Villa discusses the pedagogical implications of Ruiz’s critical historiographical approach, examining how the book “not only makes PoC visible and increases representation of Latinos but is a valuable resource for graduate students and composition instructors” (116).

We hope you enjoy reading our largest regular issue to date.

Brenda Glascott, *Portland State University*

Tara Lockhart, *San Francisco State University*

Holly Middleton, *High Point University*

Juli Parrish, *University of Denver*

Chris Warnick, *College of Charleston*

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- 1 College Writing and Campus Values: The Nixon Library Debate at UC Irvine
Jens Lloyd—University of California, Irvine
- 19 Diminishing Returns at Corporate U: Chinese Undergraduates and Composition's
Activist Legacy
Tom McNamara—California State University, Fresno
- 39 “To Whom Do We Have Students Write?": Exploring Rhetorical Agency and
Translanguaging in an Indonesian Graduate Writing Classroom
Amber Engelson—Massachusetts College for Liberal Arts
- 62 Research, Writing, and Writer/Reader Exigence: Literate Practice as the Overlap
of Information Literacy and Writing Studies Threshold Concepts
Jerry Stinnett—Duquesne University
Marcia Rapchak—Duquesne University
- 81 Holding on to Literacies: Older Adult Narratives of Literacy and Agency
Suzanne Kesler Rumsey—Purdue Fort Wayne

BOOK REVIEW

- 105 *Teaching Queer: Radical Possibilities for Writing and Knowing*,
by Stacey Waite
Jean Bessette—University of Vermont
- 109 *The Lure of Literacy: A Critical Reception of the Compulsory
Composition Debate*, by Michael Harker
Meaghan H. Brewer—Pace University
- 113 *Reclaiming Composition for Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities*,
by Iris D. Ruiz
Jasmine Villa—University of Texas at El Paso

College Writing and Campus Values: The Nixon Library Debate at UC Irvine

Jens Lloyd—University of California, Irvine

KEYWORDS

campus, campus newspaper, cocurricular literacies, built environment,
presidential library

The UC Irvine image of being nothing but a scientist factory could have been erased. But no. Thanks to a small, but vocal, minority in the academic senate, a prized archives of knowledge, history and politics will not be located here.

—Warren Bobrow, “Faculty Goof”

In early 1983, UC Irvine (UCI) was embroiled in a debate over whether to serve as the host site for the Nixon Presidential Library. Richard M. Nixon, the 37th President of the United States, had no direct affiliation with the institution but had been born in Orange County. UCI, a young university seeking to establish a presence in the county, could acquire the presidential library of a native son. The implications were not limited to the campus and the region, as hosting any such landmark would alter UCI’s national and international standing. But Nixon was not just any president. How would the library of this particular president, at the time less than a decade removed from his infamous resignation, affect UCI’s image?

The debate crackled across the pages of the student-run campus newspaper, *The New University (New U)*, for nearly three months, with students, faculty, administrators, staff, and nearby residents weighing in on the benefits and disadvantages of siting the library at UCI. The first *New U* article to appear on the topic, published in early February 1983, reported that a phone survey of “prominent UCI faculty showed mixed initial reaction” (Casey, “UCI” 1). Even at this early stage, members of the campus community were wrangling with the major issues that would sustain the debate, such as concerns about the library’s purpose. “Most people,” Humanities Dean Kendall Bailes explained, “feel that if it is primarily a research library, under the control of the University, it would be a valuable resource” (8). As the debate intensified in late February, opponents voiced concerns about the “stigma” and the “taint” that would accompany the library (Casey, “Key” 9). They speculated that the library would attract tourists, protestors, and other undesirable visitors

whose presence was likely to disturb “academic life on campus” (9). Supporters, however, amplified claims about the library’s intrinsic worth. A *New U* article from early March reported that many in favor of the library believed that its “historical and academic value out-weighed the negative aspects” (“Library” 6). As Vice Chancellor William Lillyman quipped, “If Satan’s archives existed or if Stalin’s archives existed, I would want them. I think the historical importance of [Nixon’s] archives goes without saying” (6). Supporters like Lillyman were sure that the library, which would put UCI on a small list of campuses affiliated with these presidential landmarks, would be *of value* to the campus. Far less clear, opponents countered, was what acquiring the library would mean for UCI’s *values*.

Clearly, the Nixon library debate at UCI is not just about the Nixon library. The debate, which ended with the university rejecting the library, involves inhabitants of the campus and the surrounding area engaging in deliberations about the social and material makeup of UCI, and the record of the debate contained in the *New U* provides a glimpse at the literate activities that constituted these deliberations. As such, this record presents an opportunity to scrutinize the interplay between literacy and geography, between the word and the world. In the introduction to their edited collection, *Spatializing Literacy Research and Practice*, Margaret Sheehy and Kevin M. Leander argue that, when we infuse literacy studies with a critical spatial perspective, “context is brought to the fore as an ongoing process and practice deeply tied up with the word” (3). This requires an understanding of geography as something more than a static backdrop or inert container. As critical geographer Edward W. Soja notes in the preface to *Spatializing Literacy*, a critical spatial perspective ensures that “space and the more concretely defined spatiality of human life are seen not just as built forms or materialized and mappable geographies, but also as active and formative processes developing over time” (ix). We are dynamically intertwined with the geographies we inhabit and so, too, are our literacy practices. “When we use words,” Sheehy and Leander assert succinctly, “we are always situating ourselves” (3). Importantly, this process of using literacy to situate ourselves is not about fitting into ready-made nooks and crannies. It is, rather, about appreciating the co-constitutive relationship we have with our surroundings and, ultimately, about claiming the ability to reaffirm and/or disrupt the social and material makeup of the geographies we inhabit.

This spatially sensitive perception of literacy foregrounds my analysis of the *New U* record of the Nixon library debate, an analysis that, in turn, I use to advance a spatially sensitive definition of college writing. A capacious, imprecise term, *college writing* typically denotes curricular literacy practices carried out by students at the direction of an instructor. But, especially if we choose to define college writing as an array of literacy practices that, in the words of Haivan V. Hoang, “requires engagement with academic disciplines *as well as* the politicized sites of college campuses” (W386), then I think it behooves teacher-scholars of rhetoric, writing, and literacy to study how cocurricular literacies, such as those sponsored by publications like the *New U*, enable engagement with ideologically fraught campus terrain. Though she does not make the connection herself, Hoang’s definition resonates with efforts by Nedra Reynolds, among others, to make geography matter to researching and teaching college writing. In her contribution to *The Locations of Composition*, an edited collection representative of the spatial turn in rhetoric/composition, Reynolds asserts, “Students at every college, no matter what the conditions, must negotiate the ideologies and values of their institution,

a task no easier or harder at Harvard than at Rio Grande College or West Chester University or Northeast Iowa Community College” (259). Inhabiting a campus is an education in negotiating ideologically fraught terrain, which makes literacy practices associated with the terrain similarly fraught. Framing the relationship between campus and inhabitant as a communicative scenario, Reynolds insists, “The values of an institution (not to mention the endowment) are communicated loudly and clearly through the conditions for teaching and learning and through the ways in which space is used or assigned” (260).

In arguing that a campus built environment functions as a legible expression of an institution’s values, Reynolds echoes a theory commonly advanced in literature about campus planning. Campus planner and architect M. Perry Chapman, for instance, conveys the theory in its most imperative form: “The character of the place must say something to its constituents about institutional values and why those constituents are joined in both the personal and the civic pursuit of those values in that place. It matters that the campus clearly expresses the identity of the institution to the community around it and to the world beyond it” (xxxi). Similarly, in the conclusion to his authoritative history of campus planning in the US, architectural historian Paul V. Turner argues, “the campus reveals the power that a physical environment can possess as the embodiment of an institution’s character” (305). This “power” assumes that “an institution’s character” can be distilled into an architectural vocabulary and made manifest in material form, and, furthermore, it assumes that, with relative ease, a campus built environment can be read as a uniform “embodiment” of the institution.

What about the other side of this communicative scenario? How do campus inhabitants and members of the surrounding community talk back to the campus built environment? In line with the definition of college writing outlined above, I am interested in how campus-based literacy practices reaffirm and/or disrupt the supposed ideological coherence of campus built environments. As inhabitants and others talk back to the terrain and, inevitably, talk with each other about the terrain, their literacy practices reveal the extent to which a campus is not a fixed, stable thing but rather an evolving, ongoing construction. Cases like the Nixon library debate at UCI demonstrate that “our human geographies . . . are not immutable or naturally given,” which “means that they can be socially changed, made into something better than they were through collective action” (Soja x). On campuses, college writing can figure prominently in the actions that inhabitants take to try to change their surroundings, a fact that becomes especially apparent when, expanding notions of what counts as college writing, we appraise campus newspapers and other cocurricular publications as equal to, rather than subordinate to, writing produced for curricular purposes.

Such an appraisal recaptures the spirit of Ken Macrorie’s 1963 encomium of campus newspapers, ironically titled “Spitting on the Campus Newspaper,” in which he calls on writing instructors to respect the vital immediacy of these public venues for writing on campuses. “Suppose we hold our venom in the back of our mouths for a while,” he argues, “and consider our dedication to writing. If we look for words alive in the campus paper, we will find them” (28). A campus newspaper is a notable public venue, and perhaps *the* notable public venue, for sponsoring debates about campus values. So, just as much as “words alive,” these publications afford glimpses at campuses alive. In this article, I use my *New U* source material to undermine the theory that a campus built environment

functions as a uniform manifestation of an institution's values. Admittedly, campus values are most commonly encountered as a slate of vacuous, inoffensive slogans on an institutional website or in a promotional brochure. I demonstrate, however, that campus values are anything but uniform,

“[C]ampus values are anything but uniform, vacuous, or inoffensive when, scattered across the pages of the campus newspaper, they are contested by students, faculty, administrators, staff, and nearby residents in debates about campus planning.”

vacuous, or inoffensive when, scattered across the pages of the campus newspaper, they are contested by students, faculty, administrators, staff, and nearby residents in debates about campus planning. More than a supplemental account of campus

values, the *New U* record of the Nixon library debate documents inhabitants and others communicating their interpretations of campus values, simultaneously situating themselves in relation to the campus terrain and revealing its ideological fault lines.

In the next section, aligning my study with a strand of historical research on cocurricular publications (Gold; Jarratt; Shepley), I summarize the record of the Nixon library debate that I have gleaned from the pages of the *New U*. This summary, intended to provide a descriptive overview of the debate, lays the groundwork for my analysis that follows. In the two subsequent sections, I analyze my source material: eleven issues of the *New U* published in the winter and spring of 1983, and particularly three letters to the editor and one opinion column. In the first of these two sections, I delineate three ideological fault lines: the academic value of the library, the regional values reflected in UCI's connection to its surroundings, and the civic values that UCI evinces as a public institution. These fault lines emerge within the deliberative ecology, as participants wrangle over UCI's values. In the second of these two sections, I consider the outcome of the debate, the rejection of the library based on decisions made by a small group of faculty. This outcome, which, as exemplified in the epigraph from Warren Bobrow, frustrated supporters of the library, belies the theory that campus built environments can adequately represent the values of various campus constituencies. I argue that, collectively, all contributions to the *New U* record of the Nixon library debate function to unsettle the supposed ideological coherence of the campus. Cultivating layered, conflicting accounts of campus values via sources like the campus newspaper and using these records for research, pedagogy, and other curricular and cocurricular ends can help to sustain and diversify what it means to research and teach college writing.

Finding the Nixon Library at UCI

The Nixon library does not exist at UCI in the sense that there is not an entry for it in the record of the campus built environment. Presumably, then, it has no part to play in what M. Perry Chapman describes as the “unalloyed account of what the institution is all about” (xxiii). But the campus built environment is only one account of campus values. A more comprehensive exploration rooted in recognizing the social as well as the material dimensions of a campus requires a methodology that can find what goes unaccounted for in the built environment. The Nixon library does exist at UCI in the sense that it can be found in the pages of the campus newspaper. Published weekly during

the school year, the student-run *New U* started publication in 1968, three years after the university opened. Thus, the publication has been poised to capture much of UCI's fifty-year history. The Online Archive of UCI History, maintained by UCI Libraries Special Collections & Archives, contains a digitized collection of *New U* issues published between 1968 and 2003, amounting to an impressive 1292 items. Seeking to read the campus in a manner that appreciates what is not there, I rely on this archive for source material. Specifically, I rely on eleven issues of the *New U* published from February 1983 to May 1983 that include references to the Nixon library.

In accordance with the expanded definition of college writing that I outlined in the introduction, I aim to draw out the rhetorical and spatial effects of my source material. By rhetorical effects, I refer to what Susan C. Jarratt identifies in her study of archival materials from three historically Black colleges and universities as “the viability” of a cocurricular publication to serve “as a contestatory public space” for students and others connected to the institution (141). Similarly, analyzing an archive of a literary magazine from Texas Women's University (TWU), David Gold suggests that what is noteworthy “in TWU student writing is not the individual political positions students hold but the clear assertion of political opinions on controversial topics in a public forum” (275). While cocurricular publications can contain texts that originated in whole or in part as curricular products, the rhetorical significance of these texts shifts as they see publication, reach more readers, serve new purposes, and interact differently with the spaces through which they circulate. By spatial effects, I mean what Nathan Shepley identifies in his study of archival materials as “the writing's spatial work” (74). Considering a range of curricular and cocurricular texts, as well as documents such as course catalogs and publicity materials, from Ohio University and the University of Houston, Shepley argues that the materials show “that shapers of composition practices included savvy instructors, administrators, and students (people usually highlighted in studies of historical student writing), as well as civic clubs, city leaders, physical infrastructure, state politicians, and K-12 and other postsecondary education organizations” (17).

Compelled by the archival methodology of these studies, especially Shepley's impulse “to theorize place through historical studies of college student writing” (14), I use my source material to piece together the layered, conflicting account of campus values that emerged during the Nixon library debate. In the pages of the *New U*, the debate peaked in intensity in late February and early March of 1983. While mostly filled with the voices of UCI undergraduates, the *New U* record does contain other voices, reflecting the broad-based deliberative ecology that the newspaper sustained over the course of the debate. Six news articles, penned by staff writers Jim Casey (“UCI,” “Key,” “Library”) and Tom Davey (“Group,” “News,” “Faculty”), contain information about the proposed library, responses from members of the campus community, and updates on both the negotiations taking place between UCI administrators and Nixon Foundation representatives and the discussions among faculty in the Academic Senate. The *New U* ran three editorials on the Nixon library; all appear early in the debate. In addition, the newspaper published three letters to the editor: one from a resident of Irvine, who ardently opposes the library, and two from UCI undergraduates, who support it. A guest opinion column, written by *New U* staffer Andrew J. Hoffman, appears in the February 8 edition. In this well-crafted reflective essay, Hoffman contemplates how Nixon, a

ghoulish specter of his childhood, has transformed into a fascinating object of study, and, for this reason, he supports the library. There are six other references to the Nixon library, including news bulletins on the status of the negotiations and published minutes from meetings where the student government voted on resolutions related to the library.

New U news articles provided the UCI community with its first glimpses at how the Nixon library would change the makeup of the campus built environment. Evident in these initial descriptions is the effort by administrators to articulate how the library could be a scholarly asset to UCI, a line of argument that supporters would go on to champion. But these *New U* articles also hint at the aspects of the library that would draw the ire of opponents. Based on documents shared by Chancellor Dan Aldrich and UCI's Office of Physical Planning, an article from February 22 explains that “[t]he library building . . . [would] be two stories of steel and concrete with approximately 100,000 square feet of usable space,” and it “would be located on 12 to 13 acres of university property near the corner of Campus and Culver drives” (“Key” 9). Notably, this location is on the northeast corner of campus at the threshold between town and gown, between the city of Irvine and the campus of UCI. Town-and-gown relations would feature prominently in the debate. The February 22 article also describes the proposed complex as both a site for research and teaching and a museum for exhibits and gatherings, noting that the library would contain an archive of “over 4,000 hours of taped White House conversations” and various other materials from Nixon’s time in the Oval Office (9). The library’s purpose and these holdings became key sources of controversy, as opponents, citing Nixon’s predilection for secrecy, expressed their concerns about transparency.

By late March and April, the newspaper’s coverage of the debate shifted largely to tracking a group of faculty members who, on behalf of the Academic Senate, assessed the prospect of hosting the library. There is also an article from April 5 reporting on the media blackout imposed by Chancellor Aldrich in response to reporting from the *Los Angeles Times* that, in his estimation, impeded deliberations (“News”). This reveals that, though I focus on the *New U*, the debate gained traction beyond the campus, circulating in the local and regional media. In mid-April, the Academic Senate voted 72-1 to pursue an agreement with Nixon Foundation officials. However, as reported in the *New U* on April 19, faculty members attached stringent conditions, foremost among them a requirement for Nixon “to relinquish all control over his presidential papers,” that many felt were designed to “kill” the prospect of UCI hosting the library (“Faculty” 1). And that is exactly what happened. The faculty’s proposition was a non-starter, and, in late spring, the Nixon Foundation announced plans to site the library elsewhere in Orange County.¹

“Documenting a contentious moment in the history of the development of the UCI campus, the New U record of the Nixon library debate renders visible the interplay between literacy and geography, and reveals the ideological conflict that stirs just below the concrete-and-asphalt contours of the UCI campus. . .”

Documenting a contentious moment in the history of the development of the UCI campus, the *New U* record of the Nixon library debate renders visible the interplay between literacy and geography, and reveals the ideological conflict that stirs just below the concrete-and-asphalt contours of the UCI campus, just below what Chapman all-too simplistically describes as “an unalloyed account of what

the institution is all about.” As one of those components that was considered but never built, the Nixon library is a key component of UCI’s unbuilt environment that has as much to say about the institution as any other component of the campus. Reading what isn’t there is about scrutinizing the fault lines that run beneath the relatively staid, still landscape projected by the current configuration of the campus built environment. These fault lines are evidence that campus values are, much like the campus itself, an evolving, ongoing construction to which college writing has much to contribute. I analyze some of this writing in the next section.

Writing the Ideological Fault Lines of a Campus

In this section, I delineate three major fault lines that emerge within the deliberative ecology of the Nixon library debate: academic value, regional values, and civic values. I preserve chronological continuity as much as possible in an effort 1) to maximize the clarity of my analysis and 2) to provide a sense of the ebb and flow of the debate as it unfolded in the *New U*. I demonstrate that, although sparked by the Nixon library, this debate is more about the social and material makeup of the UCI campus, and, as such, it offers contributors to the debate an opportunity to engage with each other to express and contest their interpretations of the geography they share. Though I maintain that the debate reveals more about the campus than the library, I refer to literature on presidential libraries as necessary to enhance my analysis. I turn now to some of that literature to contextualize the *New U* record.

Presidential libraries are relatively recent additions to the civic fabric of the US. In *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory*, a critical history of presidential libraries, Benjamin Hufbauer provides the following overview:

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea that a living ex-president would have a huge memorial building featuring a substantial museum, a vast archive with millions of items, and a staff dedicated to perpetuating that president’s memory would have seemed un-American, but since 1941, self-commemoration has become an integral part of the modern presidency. (178)

As a matter of interest for political science, Hufbauer construes this development as an indication of the increasingly powerful role of the executive branch in the US government. The brief history of presidential libraries is also a matter of interest for campus planning. Hufbauer credits John F. Kennedy and those who worked to establish his library with the concept of linking a presidential library with a college campus (71). JFK’s library, affiliated with the University of Massachusetts, Boston, opened in 1979 after many years of planning. During this period, Lyndon B. Johnson’s library opened in 1971 at the University of Texas, and, therefore, it is technically the first presidential library to claim a university affiliation (68). Since then, such an affiliation has been a common feature, with two notable exceptions: the Nixon and Reagan libraries, both of which are located in Southern California. Hufbauer writes that, largely in response to Reagan’s library opening without a university affiliation, “The Office of Presidential Libraries in Washington, D.C. [. . .] now actively encourages the university model” (181).

The history of presidential libraries, brief though it is, is marked by notably acrimonious debates, and the model of associating a library with a campus seems only to intensify the acrimony.² That it entails claiming a prominent role in the civic fabric of the nation makes a debate about siting a presidential library on a campus that much more likely to engender ideological conflict. Yet, for all the potential complications, early in the debate over the Nixon library at UCI, supporters of the library portray the arrangement in advantageously straightforward terms. The *New U* editorial from February 1, which contains a wholehearted endorsement of efforts to acquire the library, explains that there “appear to be no drawbacks to this deal for UCI” because the only thing “required of the University is 13 acres [of land]” (10). Supporters combine this portrayal of the arrangement with claims about the library’s scholarly import. In a guest opinion column published February 8, Andrew J. Hoffman, an undergraduate studying English, muses: “What are the potential drawbacks? A little temporary heat from those who would rather sacrifice the academic value of a collection of presidential papers than have anything to do with Nixon” (13). Supporters of the library rely on appeals like this throughout the debate, sometimes using appeals to academic value to de-Nixonize the debate. For instance, drawing comparisons to the JFK and LBJ libraries, the *New U* editorial from February 1 deems the Nixon library “a priceless scholarly treasure . . . [that] would act as a magnet to distinguished historians and political scientists” looking to study recent US history and politics (“Of Course” 10). Such appeals, like Lillyman’s quip about accepting the archives of Satan or Stalin, shift the focus away from Nixon and towards the benefits of linking UCI with the small, exclusive network of campuses associated with a presidential library.

This is, though, what makes Hoffman’s opinion column a notable early contribution to the debate and, indeed, one of the best illustrations of the first ideological fault line. Rather than ignoring Nixon’s legacy, Hoffman engages with it in order to accentuate the academic value of the library. He opens by reflecting on his experience as a twelve-year-old watching Nixon’s resignation on television. For Hoffman, as for most of the students contributing to the debate, Nixon is not a figure from the distant past. Importantly, this forestalls dismissing these student voices as uninformed. “Nixon [is] associated with Watergate, but also with Vietnam, social and political intolerance and the beginnings of high inflation,” Hoffman concedes. “But it is precisely these associations that make a Nixon Library so intriguing” (13). Hoffman interprets UCI as an institution that is poised to confront the knotty problems of history. Although Hoffman, as a student, might have little involvement with UCI’s future, he takes up the long-range implications when he concludes, “It will be a long time before the secrets of the Nixon administration are completely uncovered. I hope they’re uncovered at UCI” (13). By confronting the legacy of Nixon directly, Hoffman is able to speculate about what this particular library could mean for UCI as an academic institution, in effect suggesting that the UCI campus can incorporate the Nixon library without becoming the Nixon library.

While supporters assume that the Nixon library’s purpose is consonant with UCI’s values as an academic institution, the history of presidential libraries is more ambiguous in this regard. Presidential libraries have a place in the civic fabric, but the purpose of that place is not clearly defined. “A presidential library is a monument,” Hufbauer explains, “but also a history museum and an archive” (1). This malleability is on display in the Nixon library debate at UCI, with supporters

and opponents offering interpretations of the library's purpose that, not surprisingly, accord with their respective stances, stances that ultimately reflect how these contributors to the debate perceive the campus. In the *New U* record, the most common objection raised by opponents is that the library will venerate the former president by acting as "a monument or mausoleum to Nixon personally and a big tourist attraction" (Casey, "UCI" 8). The assumption that the library-as-monument will bring unwanted attention is captured in the following comment from "one prominent and influential faculty member who wished to remain unnamed": "A campus based in Orange County without a broad-based academic reputation already suffers from the image of being too conservative. The placement of the library here [at UCI] would perpetuate that image" (8). This argument introduces the second fault line I explore in this section, regional values. By imagining the institution and the region as two distinct entities locked in divergent orbits, this argument throws UCI and Orange County into sharp contrast. In so doing, this argument plays into longstanding concerns about the divide between town and gown.

A letter to the *New U* published on February 22 develops further this regionally minded opposition to the Nixon library. Titled "Nix Nixon," the letter is signed by Marybeth Webster, a resident of Irvine unaffiliated with the university. Webster's standing as a resident of the town makes her letter a noteworthy addition to the *New U* record of the debate because it serves as a reminder that the inhabitants of a campus are not the only ones concerned with its development. In composing this letter and submitting it for publication, Webster, too, is engaging with the ideologically fraught campus terrain. Webster, too, is engaging in college writing. In her letter, Webster questions the library's academic value by expanding the scope of its impact, writing that the Nixon library "implies an honoring of a master betrayer . . . [And] it advertises to the world an image of UCI, the UC system, and of Orange County quite repugnant to large numbers of residents, faculty, students—and prospective students" (14). Rejecting supporters' claims about the beneficial impact of such a landmark, Webster frames the library as a monument dripping with the duplicity that marred Nixon's presidency.

Webster bolsters her passionate opposition by proposing a conspicuously ideological vision of the region and of UCI's place within it. She writes about recently moving to California and about her desire to be "proud" of her new home. The library would prevent this, she argues, because it would stand as "[a] morally objectionable addition to an area of this state that has already been shamed quite enough by producing Nixon and other unsavory politicians" (14). Webster hopes that, by rejecting the library, UCI can project an image that distinguishes it from its regional surroundings. Douglass Reichert Powell's scholarship on critical regionalism provides insight into a regional appeal like the one composed by Webster. "Regions," he explains, "are not so much places themselves but ways of describing relationships among places" (10). For Powell, regions are fundamentally rhetorical and an appeal to a specific region "is always at some level an attempt to persuade as much as it is to describe" (21). Webster's regional appeal is a subjective characterization of the relationship between UCI and Orange County. According to her, UCI should serve as a countervailing and, if need be, antagonistic force in the region. This is surprising coming from a resident of Irvine. Essentially, in this letter, a member of the town is begging the gown to keep its distance. Granted, Webster is only one resident

of the town. Her views might be an exception, which could explain why she sought to get her letter published in the *New U*. Still, by so fiercely contrasting the campus with the surrounding region, Webster risks promoting the image of UCI as an ivory tower, which is its own kind of monument.

Webster's regionally minded opposition can also be construed as a claim about UCI's civic values. She encourages UCI to define these values through negation, insisting that the institution's rejection of "the Nixon Library would begin the healing of lost faith in American leadership" (14). A letter to the editor penned by an undergraduate suggests that this "healing" can best be achieved by taking the opposite course of action. Published on March 1, Barbara Bunsold's letter summarily dismisses Webster's claims, in the process opening up the third and final ideological fault line that I consider in this section. "While Ms. Webster may still hold fast to her opinion along with many others who share her beliefs," Bunsold writes, "I think she should first understand the context" (12). In effect, Bunsold, a political science student, contends that opponents have jumped to conclusions without doing their homework about presidential libraries. This direct engagement with others underscores "the viability" of a cocurricular publication to serve "as a contestatory public space" (Jarratt 141). Writing for such a publication is not practice for participating in public debates; it *is* participation in public debates.

Augmenting claims by Hoffman and other supporters about the Nixon library's academic value, Bunsold uses her letter to address the thorny issue of presidential library governance. In so doing, she articulates how acquiring the library can strengthen the civic values of UCI as a public institution. Making Bunsold's letter even more compelling is the fact that presidential library governance is anything but straightforward. "Because federal presidential libraries are created and partially supported by private foundations [. . .], but run by the National Archives and Records Administration, there is a tension," Hufbauer explains, "between authenticity and reproduction, between education and entertainment, and between history and 'heritage'" (1).³ Bunsold's courage to tackle the legislative minutiae of presidential libraries makes her letter a significant contribution to the debate. No other piece of writing in the *New U* addresses the topic of governance with the same vigor. Perhaps relying on her training in political science, Bunsold references the congressional legislation that, at that point in 1983, dictated the governance of presidential libraries. After citing a lengthy section from a Joint Resolution of Congress in 1955 that established basic rules for the collection of presidential materials, Bunsold rebukes opponents' claims that the library will venerate Nixon: "The intent [of the legislation] . . . is to make available to anyone interested the papers of any President that can serve to illuminate the surrounding circumstances of the actions taken by previous administrations. It nowhere states that it is to be a monument to the individual" (12).

On top of this, Bunsold argues that those who loathe Nixon should be doing all they can to secure the library and the materials that come along with it. "As a matter of fact," she contends, "it will be those who disagree with him the most who stand to gain the most from the library, using it to research his ignoble conduct and misuse of prerogative power, hopefully even being able to offer solutions to the gaps that still exist allowing for further and future abuses" (12). She concludes her letter by suggesting how the Nixon library could be of immediate civic relevance. Referencing contemporaneous scandals roiling President Reagan's Environmental Protection Agency, Bunsold

argues that researching the uses and abuses of executive power “seems to me to be of critical importance in light of who currently occupies the oval office” (12). From a contentious debate at her institution to a letter from a community member, from congressional legislation to national political scandals, Bunsold’s letter reflects the various “shapers” of college writing (Shepley 17). Importantly, though, more than merely a passive reflection of these influences, Bunsold’s letter responds to them, attempting to (re)shape the influences that bear on the deliberative ecology in which the letter circulates.

Taken together, the letters of Hoffman and Bunsold advance the interpretation that, by acquiring the Nixon library, UCI can be a public institution that promotes civically relevant inquiry into the

“Rather than the negation strategy proposed by Webster, which potentially distances UCI from the spaces and places beyond its borders, Hoffman and Bunsold frame the acquisition of the Nixon library as a way to bring UCI into more meaningful contact with these spaces and places.”

controversial legacies of figures like Nixon.⁴ Both Hoffman and Bunsold are interested in what Chapman describes as “the *civic relationship* that U.S. campuses have with their communities, regions, and states, indeed with the nation and the world.” Chapman goes on to write,

“Despite popular notions (and the insistence of many academics) that the campus should be an intellectual ivory tower, the American version has always been a working part of the world around it. It is in the academy’s self-interest to be integrated with society” (xxxiii). Rather than the negation strategy proposed by Webster, which potentially distances UCI from the spaces and places beyond its borders, Hoffman and Bunsold frame the acquisition of the Nixon library as a way to bring UCI into more meaningful contact with these spaces and places.

Bunsold’s letter is essentially the last substantial contribution to the debate. In general, the trajectory of the debate as reflected in the *New U* record, while by no means a representative sample of opinions, suggests that, over the span of nearly three months, there was growing support for the library. Supporters, especially students, were aware of Nixon’s legacy and they felt that, by acquiring the library, they could scrutinize this legacy and, in the process, affirm UCI’s values as an academically rigorous and civically engaged institution. Supporters of the library, however, did not prevail. In the final weeks of the debate, the broad-based deliberative ecology that had emerged, an ecology that, at its most intense, involved various campus constituencies, narrowed considerably to a small committee in the Academic Senate. This committee quashed the prospect of UCI acquiring the library. Certainly, these details call into question the extent to which the Nixon library debate can be appraised as an open, fair deliberative process. Yet, neither the process nor the outcome entirely negate the engagement of contributors and the effects that stem from their engagement. I consider these effects further in the concluding section and I offer some thoughts about what this archival study of college writing and campus values can mean for teacher-scholars of rhetoric, writing, and literacy.

College Writing and Its Effects

Those who supported the Nixon library via contributions to the *New U* failed to effect the change they wanted to see on their campus. Interestingly, Haivan V. Hoang's article, cited in my introduction, also centers on a failed effort to effect change on a college campus, and, as part of her article, she chooses to deduce why the efforts of the student group she studied failed and "to reimagine a productive conversation" about the topic with which the students were engaged (W387).⁵ I want to mark this as a point of contrast. Rather than offering a corrective for what, if anything, supporters of the Nixon library did wrong, I choose to see the debate as "productive" for supporters and opponents alike. In fact, if cocurricular publications permit "critical exchange about questions of collective concern" (Jarratt 141), then part of the benefit of these publications is surely the fact that they afford contributors opportunities to experience both the successes and the failures of deliberating with others about the ideological fault lines of a shared geography. Pushing beyond a stark, simple understanding of what it means to win a debate, I begin this concluding section by considering the effects of one letter to the editor that, though published after the debate ended, casts a shadow over the entire process, in turn demonstrating the role that college writing can play in unsettling the supposed ideological coherence of a campus built environment.

Published on April 26, Warren Bobrow's letter to the editor contains a harsh condemnation of the planning process surrounding the Nixon library. An undergraduate studying psychology, Bobrow uses his letter, unambiguously titled "Faculty Goof," to express his lingering resentment with those he holds responsible for the outcome of the debate. He laments, "The UC Irvine image of being nothing but a scientist factory could have been erased. But no. Thanks to a small, but vocal, minority in the academic senate, a prized archives of knowledge, history and politics will not be located here" (12). With the time for deliberation having passed, Bobrow's letter is unlike previous contributions to the record. It is epideictic in nature and seeks to blame those responsible for rejecting the Nixon library and, thus, for rejecting the opportunity to redefine UCI as a more multidimensional university. Bobrow's letter reveals how cocurricular literacy practices like those sponsored by the *New U* allow students to negotiate their affiliation with the institution. Though a cocurricular publication can serve as "an enculturating tool" by introducing students to institutional "norms," it can also be used to "maintain a spirit of solidarity against institutional authority" (Gold 272). Bobrow's letter is a reminder that enculturation via college writing need

"More than merely a 250-word chunk of undergraduate venom, Bobrow's rancorous letter casts a shadow over the entire deliberative ecology."

not be conflated with acquiescence to the institution. In his letter, suspecting nefarious intentions, Bobrow insists that the faculty rejected the library in an effort to "get their last two cents in and embarrass the former President more" (12). According to Bobrow, the efforts and arguments of supporters did not fail. Rather, the planning process failed, having been coopted by a group of liberal faculty intent on expressing their displeasure with a conservative ex-president. Bobrow uses his letter to provide a retrospective evaluation of the process, characterizing the debate as a restrictive and restricted affair. More than merely a 250-word chunk of undergraduate venom, Bobrow's rancorous

letter casts a shadow over the entire deliberative ecology.

While some opponents worried that, if acquired, the Nixon library would blemish UCI's image, Bobrow's letter leaves a blemish all the same. It mars the ideological coherence of the campus, ensuring that, if people care to look beyond the record of the superficially uniform built environment, they can find other records where the absence of the Nixon library is acutely conspicuous, an enduring rupture in the social and material makeup of the campus. Towards the end of his letter, Bobrow provides the following summary: "UCI has lost an invaluable educational resource, the potential of drawing some famous scholars in the fields of humanities and political science, [. . .] and a lot of school pride and recognition" (12). In this, there are echoes of the major claims advanced by supporters, who, though they failed to see their interpretations of campus values manifested in the built environment, succeeded by seeing these interpretations manifested in the pages of the campus newspaper. It is not the outcome they hoped for, but it is an outcome that is constructive nonetheless. The UCI campus did indeed change because of the Nixon library debate. The change, though, was wrought in writing and rhetoric rather than in concrete and asphalt.

The deliberative process of campus planning is intended to resolve, or at least alleviate, conflict to the point where practical decisions can be made about how a campus built environment will evolve. But, in instances where, for reasons nefarious and otherwise, campus planning initiates or aggravates conflict and leads some campus constituencies to believe that their views have been neglected, perhaps we would do well to make the fault lines a more visible part of the terrain. One way to do this is to pay more attention to how college writing, as an array of literacy practices associated with the ideologically fraught campus terrain, "has related, and may still relate, to its surroundings" (Shepley 122). In particular, as indicated by my study and by some of the scholarship cited in this article, archival collections can provide unparalleled insights into how campus inhabitants and members of the surrounding community have talked back to the campus built environment. To that end, I want to close by considering two ways that archival collections can be used to construct layered, conflicting accounts of campus values. First, I address recent scholarship on archival pedagogies for rhetoric and writing courses and, then, I reflect on my experience curating an exhibit of student publications at UCI. My hope is that, by opening up my site-specific inquiry in this way, I can suggest how this type of inquiry can be pursued in other ways at other sites.

Given the prominent standing of archival research in rhet/comp and writing studies scholarship, it is not surprising that, recently, some teacher-scholars like Wendy Hayden and Matthew A. Vetter have pushed this methodology into the classroom, asking students to explore archival collections and to read and write about the materials they find. I am drawn to the pedagogies of Hayden and Vetter because both ask students to inquire into the social and material makeup of a campus and its environs. For Hayden, this takes the form of "an archival research project in . . . undergraduate rhetoric courses, where students recover the rhetorical activities of Hunter College women," especially activist figures (402). For Vetter, teaching at Ohio University, this takes the form of students "perform[ing] original research in the university archives and special collections to discover materials regarding a university-related topic and then edit[ing] a corresponding article on Wikipedia" (37-38).

Inevitably, these projects involve students confronting campus values. Though Vetter is careful

to explain how his project served his interests as a writing and rhetoric instructor, he notes that it also garnered strong support from archivists interested in “mainstreaming and raising awareness of library archives and special collections” (49). In this way, the work that Vetter asks of his students has rhetorical and spatial effects in terms of publicizing aspects of the institution’s history. This increases the likelihood for conflicts of interest among students, instructors, and archivists. Might a situation arise where a student’s chosen topic is at odds with what archivists want to publicize about the archival materials? Might instructors encourage scrutiny of archival materials that clashes with how students want to approach the materials? Early on in such a project, I think facilitating a discussion about campus values would be helpful for addressing these and other similar questions. If negotiating conflicts of interest is appreciated as a necessary part of the project, then students, instructors, and archivists can enter into the project more aware of how their participation might expose ideological fault lines and more aware of how it might influence their perception of the campus terrain.

To this point, Hayden focuses on how her project affects the way that her students relate to their institution. Observing their general enthusiasm, Hayden explains that students, when reflecting on their participation, also “cite learning about Hunter [College] as a benefit of the project” (415). “This project,” she goes on to state, “helps them to establish a connection with and pride in their school” (416). There is the strong possibility that reading and writing about the history of one’s institution will result in greater appreciation for it, a fact to which I can attest. However, while I do not dismiss

“Any archival project that involves students researching their own institutions should include moments for students to reflect on and question their motivations for and responses to carrying out the project.”

institutional pride as a possible outcome, I believe that other responses, even ambivalent ones, should be encouraged. Any archival project that involves students researching their own institutions should

include moments for students to reflect on and question their motivations for and responses to carrying out the project. More specifically, if we ask students to explore archival collections of cocurricular publications, we can conduct discussions about how literacy practices have interacted with the campus built environment over time, a task that resonates with the definition of college writing I have been interested in advancing with my analysis of the *New U* record of the Nixon library debate.

As we partner with archivists to design curricular projects, we can also use archival collections to carry out cocurricular projects such as events, workshops, and exhibits. I coordinated just such an exhibit in the spring of 2016. In conjunction with the campus-wide celebration of UCI’s fiftieth anniversary, I spearheaded a partnership between the Office of the Campus Writing Coordinator and UCI Libraries Special Collections & Archives that entailed working with archivists and a group of current and former grad students to comb through a collection of student-generated writing.⁶ Early on, we made two curatorial decisions to give the exhibit, “Speaking Up: Fifty Years of Student Publications at UCI,” a unifying aim: we included only writing that was publicly circulated and we mostly eschewed the campus newspaper in favor of showcasing alternative publications. The latter choice was made in large part because of the digitized *New U* collection in the Online Archive of UCI History. With that collection widely accessible, we wanted to highlight other publications, not all of

which were institutionally sanctioned and many of which dealt with ideologically fraught subject matter.

After a few weeks of reading through the materials and discussing the artifacts that caught our attention, the curatorial team chose a set of artifacts that best represented how a diverse assortment of students and student organizations made their voices heard on matters of social, cultural, and political importance over the course of UCI's history. At the outset, especially upon deciding that the exhibit would feature materials likely to highlight some of the institution's ideological fault lines, I was leery of potential conflicts of interest. I recall discussions about the extent to which we should worry about UCI's public image. The archivists advised us throughout the curation process to go with the most intriguing pieces of writing no matter what the subject matter, and, following their lead, our primary motivation was to showcase the college writing and not necessarily the college.

During the subsequent weeks that the exhibit was on display in the main campus library, I took stock of how my involvement affected my perception of UCI. As we selected materials for display, we found that they could be arranged by geographical scale. One grouping of publications focused on campus matters, another focused on local and regional matters, and another focused on national and international matters. For instance, a memorable artifact from the second grouping was an African-American student group publication from the early 1990s that dedicated an issue to the civil unrest roiling Los Angeles in April and May of 1992. Also, on a national and global scale, the Muslim Student Union publication of the early- and mid-2000s featured various pieces of passionate writing about identifying as a Muslim in post-9/11 America. For me, the curation process and the organization of the exhibit reaffirmed and, in fact, helped me understand better how college writing interacts with the distinct geography of the campus while simultaneously seeping beyond the campus borders to shape and be shaped by regional, national, and international flows.

If we choose to see college writing in this way, then college writing cannot be reduced to a standardized enterprise or, as Nedra Reynolds derisively puts it, "a 'universal' or placeless experience" (259). Instead, we as researchers and teachers need to ensure that these campus-based "acts of writing... [are] as diverse as the places from which they are generated" (260). This involves emphasizing not only *what* and *who* college writing involves but also *where* it takes place and *how* it interacts with that place. And it involves recognizing how college writing contributes to ideological diversity among campuses and also within campuses. Whether via research, pedagogy, or curation, engaging with archival collections of cocurricular publications can go a long way in promoting college writing as something more than the writing that gets produced for curricular purposes. Such engagement might encourage students to seek out and contribute to the "words alive" in campus newspapers and other cocurricular publications (Macrorie 28). It might encourage them to recognize that "[s]pace, as a noun, must be reconceived as an active, relational verb" (Sheehy and Leander 1), and, furthermore, it might encourage them to recognize that their own campus-based literacy practices can affect the terrain, though not always in the most immediate or obvious ways.

NOTES

¹The *New U* for May 3 reports that the Nixon Foundation planned to construct the library in San Clemente, a beach community roughly twenty-five miles south of the UCI campus. After resistance in San Clemente, the library opened in 1990 in Yorba Linda, Nixon's birthplace, a city just over twenty miles north of UCI.

²See Mitchell and Kirk for more on this topic, including a rhetorical analysis of the debates surrounding the failed efforts to site the Nixon library at Duke in the early 1980s and, a couple of years later, the Reagan library at Stanford.

³Governance is a key issue in the debates that Mitchell and Kirk analyze. Regarding the Nixon library debate at Duke, Mitchell and Kirk offer the following summary, which could just as easily apply to the debate at UCI: "Common points of concern included the possibility of limited access to President Nixon's presidential papers and . . . the university's affiliation with a museum that would somehow glorify Nixon's presidency" (217).

⁴I write this in the wake of the 2016 US presidential campaign where one candidate, Donald Trump, embraced aspects of Nixon's legacy (Avlon), while another candidate, Hillary Clinton, embraced the legacy of Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger (Norton). I have no doubt that Nixon's contemporary relevance contributes to my affinity for the arguments advanced by Hoffman and Bunsold.

⁵Hoang's article is based on a case study of a Vietnamese-American student group and their unsuccessful efforts to counteract the defunding of a high school outreach program. She connects her study to the civic mission of rhet/comp, which, as Hoang explains, "continues to resonate for many of us who believe that teaching writing is about preparing students to critically express themselves within public forums, including universities" (W386). Pushing this further, I suggest that if we take seriously the idea that campuses are "public forums," then we should not describe the engagement of students on campuses as preparatory. To describe it as such is to risk diluting it, making it something less than actual public engagement.

⁶I am grateful to Steve MacLeod, Public Services Librarian, and Laura Uglean Jackson, Assistant University Archivist, for their interest and guidance in curating the exhibit. Also, without assistance from Allison Dziuba, Maureen Fitzsimmons, Lance Langdon, and Jasmine Lee, the exhibit would not have been possible. And thanks to Jonathan Alexander for providing support in his role as Campus Writing Coordinator. Let me also take this opportunity to express my gratitude for Jonathan's feedback on the contents of this article and for the feedback I have received from Daniel M. Gross and Susan C. Jarratt. Finally, thanks to Jerry Won Lee and his undergraduate English 105 class for listening to a version of this research in the spring of 2016.

WORKS CITED

- Avlon, John. "Donald Trump Is Running for Richard Nixon's Third Term." *Daily Beast*. Daily Beast, 15 Feb. 2016. Web. 8 Aug. 2016.
- Bobrow, Warren. "Faculty Goof." Letter. *New University* 15.26 (26 Apr. 1983): 12. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Bunsold, Barbara. "Nixon Library." Letter. *New University* 15.20 (1 Mar. 1983): 12. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Casey, Jim. "Key Meetings Held on Nixon Library: Details on Library Proposal Emerge Amid Signs Nixon to Choose Irvine." *New University* 15.19 (22 Feb. 1983): 1, 9. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- . "Library Bid Dropped as Faculty Debates: Nixon Library Proposal Put on Hold While Faculty Group Researches Pros and Cons." *New University* 15.21 (8 Mar. 1983): 1, 6. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- . "UCI Enters Race for Nixon Library." *New University* 15.16 (1 Feb. 1983): 1, 8. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Chapman, M. Perry. *American Places: In Search of the Twenty-First Century Campus*. Westport: Praeger, 2006. Print.
- Davey, Tom. "Faculty Vote 72-6 to Seek Nixon Library: Aldrich Sends Proposal to Regents; Faculty Attach Conditions That May Hamper Bid." *New University* 15.25 (19 Apr. 1983): 1, 7. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- . "Group Extends Deadline for Nixon Library." *New University* 15.22 (29 Mar. 1983): 1, 7. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- . "News Blackout Imposed on Nixon Library Negotiations." *New University* 15.23 (5 Apr. 1983): 1, 5. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Gold, David. "Beyond the Classroom Walls: Student Writing at Texas Woman's University, 1901-1939." *Rhetoric Review* 22.3 (2003): 264-81. Web. 18 July 2016.
- Hayden, Wendy. "'Gifts' of the Archives: A Pedagogy for Undergraduate Research." *College Composition and Communication* 66.3 (2015): 402-26. Web. 3 Oct. 2016.
- "Hmmm. . . ." Editorial. *New University* 15.19 (22 Feb. 1983): 10. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Hoang, Haivan V. "Campus Racial Politics and a 'Rhetoric of Injury.'" *College Composition and Communication* 61.1 (2009): W385-W408. Web. 11 Apr. 2016.
- Hoffman, Andrew J. "Nixon Library: Bidding for More Than Memories." *New University* 15.17 (8 Feb. 1983): 13. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Hufbauer, Benjamin. *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory*. Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 2005. Print.
- Jarratt, Susan C. "Classics and Counterpublics in Nineteenth-Century Historically Black Colleges." *College English* 72.2 (2009): 134-59. Web. 9 May 2013.

- Macrorie, Ken. "Spitting on the Campus Newspaper." *College Composition and Communication*. 14.1 (1963): 28-31. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Mitchell, Gordon R., and Jennifer Kirk. "Between Education and Propaganda: Public Controversy over Presidential Library Design." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 44.4 (2008): 213-30. Print.
- "Nixon Library: Of Course." Editorial. *New University* 15.16 (1 Feb. 1983): 10. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- "Nixon Redux." Editorial. *New University* 15.19 (22 Feb. 1983): 14. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.
- Norton, Ben. "In Debate, Hillary Clinton Boasted That She Is Supported by Henry Kissinger, Accused War Criminal Who Oversaw Policies That Led to Millions of Deaths." *Salon*. Salon, 5 Feb. 2016. Web. 8 Aug. 2016.
- Powell, Douglas Reichert. *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007. Print.
- Reynolds, Nedra. "Cultural Geography and Images of Place." *The Locations of Composition*. Eds. Christopher J. Keller and Christian R. Weisser. Albany: SUNY P, 2007. 251-66. Print.
- Sheehy, Margaret, and Kevin M. Leander. "Introduction." *Spatializing Literacy Research and Practice*. Eds. Margaret Sheehy and Kevin M. Leander. New York: Peter Lang, 2004. 1-14. Print.
- Shepley, Nathan. *Placing the History of College Writing: Stories from the Incomplete Archive*. Anderson: Parlor P, 2016. Print.
- Soja, Edward W. "Preface." *Spatializing Literacy Research and Practice*. Eds. Kevin M. Leander and Margaret Sheehy. New York: Peter Lang, 2004. ix-xvi. Print.
- Turner, Paul V. *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*. New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1987. Print.
- Vetter, Matthew A. "Archive 2.0: What Composition Students and Academic Libraries Can Gain from Digital-Collaborative Pedagogies." *Composition Studies*. 42.1 (2014): 35-53. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.
- Webster, Marybeth. "Nix Nixon." Letter. *New University* 15.19 (22 Feb. 1983): 14. *Online Archive of UCI History*. UC Irvine. Web. 27 July 2015.

Diminishing Returns at Corporate U: Chinese Undergraduates and Composition's Activist Legacy

Tom McNamara—California State University, Fresno

KEYWORDS

Chinese undergraduates, international students, corporatization, race, segregation, advocacy

In an October 2015 *Inside Higher Ed* article, University of Arizona professor Adele Barker shared a litany of concerns about UA's decision to enroll record numbers of Chinese international students. Almost half of the 3,696 international students on campus at that time were from China, and, in Barker's estimation, most were unprepared. For instance, all twenty Chinese students in Barker's recent Russian history course failed, she believed due to language barriers. "They couldn't understand my lectures," she claimed. "They were unable to read or write in English." Yet, despite their assumed academic difficulties, Chinese students continue to enroll at UA, leading Barker to ask, "What are these students doing here in the first place, and are they getting the education they have come here to receive?" In her estimation, Chinese students flock to UA and other universities because of the prestige attached to US higher education in China, where many believe that a US degree is key to success in the globalized economy. As a result, she explained, some go to great lengths to be accepted to US universities, enrolling in costly test preparation courses or hiring professional test-takers for their TOEFL and SAT exams. Moreover, US colleges and universities are eager to capitalize on Chinese demand for US higher education, driven by declining state support and dwindling endowments. The outcome, Barker argued, is a situation in which Chinese students are unprepared to reap the benefits they desire from a US degree—and in which the overall quality of US universities declines.

Barker's essay betrays an anxiety about the demographic transformation occurring at UA and other US universities. Between 2004 and 2016, the number of Chinese international students in the US grew from 61,765 to 328,574, a 432 percent increase ("Fast Facts"). During this time, articles like Barker's became frequent, often describing Chinese international students as intellectually dishonest and unsuited to the liberal values of the US university (Abelmann and Kang 384). For composition scholars, Barker's comments about these students' language preparation likely strike a familiar chord, resembling concerns on many campuses about multilingual international students (see Kang 92; Matsuda, "Let's" 141-2). Barker's characterization of many Chinese students as unsuited for higher education likewise rings familiar, echoing hostilities toward African American, Latino, and Asian American students in similar moments of demographic change (see Hoang, *Writing* 9-15; Horner, "Discoursing" 202). However, more than providing yet another example of persistent linguistic and

racial discrimination on US campuses, articles like Barker's also point to new sources for seemingly familiar linguistic and racial anxieties: the corporate and international turns of US higher education. Barker describes public universities driven to international enrollment in an era of unprecedented state disinvestment, reducing higher education to a consumer transaction in the process. Moreover, in the rush to admit international students, Barker argues that we have yet to address basic questions about who these students are and how we can best support them. What do Chinese undergraduates hope to gain by studying in the US, she asks, where they typically pay tuition far more costly than that of their domestic peers?¹ More importantly, do US universities support or hinder these students' educational goals, and with what effect?

In this article, I respond to pieces like Barker's, which mix curiosity about Chinese undergraduates' academic motives with deficit assessments of their languages and literacies not unlike those historically leveraged against other students of color. To do so, I draw on a qualitative study of Chinese undergraduates at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which in the 2015-16 academic year enrolled more Chinese international students than any other US institution (Tea Leaf).² I focus in particular on these students' experiences in first-year writing courses, where they and other international students have disrupted the myth of linguistic homogeneity (Matsuda, "Myth") long governing college writing instruction (see Lu and Horner 582). More importantly, though, I situate Chinese undergraduates' classroom experiences in the twin forces of corporatization and internationalization that underlie Barker's description of them as academically and linguistically unfit. As higher education scholars have noted, many colleges and universities have turned to international enrollment (Altbach 8)—as well as corporate partnerships and sponsored research (Bok 145-6)—as states nationwide have reduced funding for public higher education. Similarly, private and public universities alike have faced mounting economic hardship since the 2008 financial crisis, which weakened endowments and reduced the availability of government-funded research grants (Howard and Laird; Stripling). It is during this time of fiscal uncertainty that Chinese undergraduates have accessed US higher education in record numbers, often because of revenue-driven international enrollment initiatives (Altbach 54). As a result, I argue, their institutional experiences cannot be fully understood separate from higher education's turn to corporate, revenue-driven logics.

I also locate Chinese international students in this corporate turn because my research participants routinely framed their US educations as precisely the sort of commercial transaction that concerns Barker. During my many conversations with Chinese undergraduates, they described their time at a US university as an expensive investment with diminishing returns, one they partially salvaged by asserting their power as consumers of US higher education. Given that the Chinese undergraduates I interviewed believe that US universities see them as little more than a source of income, such a perspective is not surprising. Moreover, as the case study at the core of this article demonstrates, the admissions process alone forces Chinese undergraduates to become savvy consumers in a global and complex higher education market. These students carefully select which universities to apply to and eventually attend, weighing which will best help them develop professional and cultural capital they can leverage in their future careers. Finally, they routinely evaluate whether the university has returned on their investments—and seek assistance from instructors and staff when they feel their

educational goals are not being met.

I argue throughout that, as they work to secure some yield on their educational investments, my research participants unwittingly challenge narratives in composition about how students of color claim agency and institutional resources on US campuses. Such research tends to frame students' self-advocacy—as well as work in composition that challenges campus discrimination—as part of broader

“I argue throughout that, as they work to secure some yield on their educational investments, my research participants unwittingly challenge narratives in composition about how students of color claim agency and institutional resources on US campuses.”

efforts since the civil rights movement to redress the exclusion of minority groups from higher education (e.g. Bruch and Marback). For instance, Haivan Hoang's study of a Vietnamese campus organization uncovered how student activists continue to draw on civil rights-era rhetorical strategies (“Campus” W402), and others have urged

writing instructors to inform their advocacy with that movement's insights (Horner, “Discoursing” 419-20; Kinloch 88; Wible, “Pedagogies” 469-70). The Chinese undergraduates I interviewed, on the other hand, emphasized their status as valued consumers of US higher education to justify their pursuit of campus inclusion and resources. For instance, in response to ethnic isolation that impeded the linguistic and cultural knowledge they desired—a form of segregation that was compounded in their composition classrooms—my research participants turned to their writing instructors and tutors, feeling entitled to such assistance because of the costly tuition they pay as international students. Through such claims to institutional support, Chinese undergraduates reveal emergent sources for student agency on our corporate and international campuses, even amidst continued segregation. Importantly, as I argue in this essay's conclusion, their narratives suggest a university in which difference is both valued and devalued, one where students who contribute financial resources to their struggling institutions can secure support historically withheld from students of color and linguistic minorities (see Lamos, *Interests* 6-8).

In making these arguments, I participate in ongoing efforts in composition to uncover how writing classrooms demean the cultures and literacies of multilingual writers and students of color (e.g. Horner, “Students”; Horner et. al.; Lamos, *Interests*; Lu, “Redefining”; Lu and Horner; Villanueva). My research participants' stories contribute most, though, to work that has identified the strategies through which these student populations confront marginalization in and beyond the required composition course ubiquitous on US campuses (e.g. Hoang; Kang; Kinloch). Because Chinese undergraduates have transformed the linguistic and racial landscape of many writing classrooms (Fraiberg and Cui 84), it is important for composition scholars and instructors to understand how common writing pedagogies can reinforce these students' segregation. Most significantly, though, I contend that these students' struggles against segregation make visible broader changes in how student agency is made available in our corporate universities, prompting composition scholars to adapt the field's sixty-year tradition of student advocacy (see Smitherman 354; Wible, *Shaping* 9) to our moment of fiscal turmoil and shifting institutional priorities. Consequently, I call composition scholars, writing program administrators, and instructors to exploit the revenue-oriented values of

the corporate university in their efforts to revalue student difference, an argument I outline in the conclusion. First, though, I introduce the larger study on which this article draws, outlining how my research participants' educational trajectories are shaped by the corporate and international turns transforming US campuses. The rest of the essay then examines how one of my research participants, Jingfei, strives to secure returns on her educational investment in face of segregation in and beyond her writing classroom.

Chinese Undergraduates in the Corporate University

The case study at the core of this article draws from a larger study of Chinese first-year writing students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While Illinois in 2015 enrolled more Chinese international students than any other US institution ("Fast Facts"), the university's student body has historically been comprised of in-state students. Moreover, any plan to increase the number of out-of-state or international students on the campus has typically been met with resistance from taxpayers and policymakers, clear in the backlash against a 2006 proposal to raise the number of out-of-state students to fifteen percent of the overall student population (Abelmann, "American"). Yet, like many colleges and universities across the US (see Folbre 45-6), Illinois has experienced a precipitous decline in state support, exacerbated by the 2008 financial crisis. Between 2002 and 2011, state support for the University of Illinois fell from \$804 to \$697 million, and the state is regularly behind in its payments to the university, owing \$500 million to the university by the conclusion of the 2010 fiscal year (*FY 12 Budget Request*). The university's financial situation has further deteriorated under Governor Bruce Rauner, whose calls for fiscal austerity—including a \$387 million reduction for higher education ("Public Universities")—resulted in political gridlock and left the state without a budget for the entire 2015-16 academic year. In April 2016, only the imminent closure of minority-serving Chicago State University compelled policymakers to release emergency higher education funding, but the state again failed to pass a budget by the start of the new fiscal year in July 2016.

Though Illinois has experienced a unique combination of fiscal and political pressures, colleges and universities across the US face similar economic hardships, causing many to turn to international enrollment as a source of income (Altbach 54). At Illinois in particular, the number of international students grew 102 percent between 2005 and 2015, driven by an expanding Chinese undergraduate population. Where only 63 Chinese undergraduates attended the university in 2005, that number had risen to 3,289 in 2016 ("Final"). These students are part of an international population that contributed \$166 million to the Urbana-Champaign campus budget in 2013-14 (Cohen), and, unsurprisingly, the university has intensified its efforts to recruit, enroll, and retain students from abroad: The university opened an office in Shanghai in 2013, hired the first-ever Director of International Student Integration in 2013, began holding orientations in three major Chinese cities in summer 2014, and now conducts a yearly "International Student Barometer Survey" to identify additional areas of student support. Importantly, the internationalization initiatives that have brought Chinese undergraduates to Illinois are not unique to four-year campuses, evident as community colleges are also seeking to capitalize on Chinese demand for US higher education (Zhang and Hagedorn 723).

As Paul Matsuda notes, these demographic shifts have profoundly impacted college writing instruction, with multilingual writers now constituting a majority in many composition classrooms (“Let’s” 142). Faced with such realities at Illinois, in fall 2014 I began a qualitative study of Chinese undergraduates who were enrolled in or had completed the university’s first-year writing requirement.³ Overall, I aimed to study the classroom experiences and literacy backgrounds of these students as they became a sizeable presence at the university. However, I was also interested in understanding how well-documented linguistic and racial discrimination at Illinois (see Abelmann, *The Intimate*; Farnell; Kang; Lamos, *Interests*; Williamson) impacted these students’ classroom and campus experiences, especially given longstanding concerns in composition about how writing classrooms marginalize students of color (see Lamos, *Interests* 11-3). To do so, I conducted twenty-eight literacy life history interviews (Brandt 9-11) with Chinese undergraduates, observed writing groups offered for international students at the campus writing center, and observed two first-year writing classrooms in which at least one-third of the students were from China. Jingfei, whose classroom experiences I turn to in the next section, participated regularly in the writing center’s international student writing groups and was also enrolled in a first-year writing course taught by one of the instructors I observed.

Importantly, I limited my research participants to students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and business fields. Chinese undergraduates tend to be concentrated in such disciplines at US universities, with 69 percent studying in business, engineering, math, computer science, and the life sciences (Desilver). As Vanessa Fong notes, Chinese students often feel better prepared to study in these fields because of their high schools’ emphasis on science and math, worrying that they lack the linguistic fluency to major in the social sciences or humanities (112). Moreover, many Chinese students are attracted to STEM and business disciplines by the cultural cachet attached to them in China, and my research participants in particular believed that a degree from Illinois’s highly-ranked Colleges of Business or Engineering would later give them an advantage on the job market (see also Redden, “At U of Illinois”). By interviewing only students in these disciplines, I aimed to cultivate a participant pool reflective of the Chinese international cohorts enrolling at colleges and universities across the US, enabling my study to speak to the experiences of Chinese undergraduates and their writing instructors at other institutions. With that goal in mind, I also adhered to a case study methodology common in basic writing and second language research (e.g. Spack; Sternglass; Tardy) that affords close attention to students’ situated experiences, doing so also to avoid coding practices that abstract common words and phrases from interview data (see Packer 69). Such an approach was necessary especially because my interview transcripts included long passages when my research participants negotiated between English, Mandarin, and other languages they had studied, including French, German, Japanese, and Korean.

I share Jingfei’s case study in this article because her initial hopes for—and her gradual disillusionment with—US higher education reflect those shared by my research participants and captured in other qualitative studies of Chinese undergraduates. Like most of the Chinese undergraduates I interviewed, Jingfei believed in the superiority of US higher education, expecting also that her time at Illinois would give her access to cultural and linguistic knowledge unavailable in

China (see also Fong 11). Yet, Jingfei very quickly came to see enrolling at Illinois as a faltering investment,⁴ believing that the segregation she experienced would prevent her from expanding her linguistic and cultural horizons. Significantly, as I detail in the next section, Jingfei shared with my other research participants a belief that their writing classrooms were not providing the linguistic and cultural knowledge necessary to participate more fully in campus life, and she often evoked her institutional position as a consumer to justify her pursuit of additional language support. Jingfei's efforts to secure campus resources and

“Yet, Jingfei very quickly came to see enrolling at Illinois as a faltering investment, believing that the segregation she experienced would prevent her from expanding her linguistic and cultural horizons.”

visibility thus diverge from the rights-based framework composition scholars have relied on to understand the contexts in which multilingual and non-white students make claims to institutional belonging and resources (e.g. Kang 89; Kinloch 97; Hoang, “Campus” W402). Of course, such differences are not wholly surprising, given the different institutional and socioeconomic positions of Chinese undergraduates compared to domestic students of color—or even international students from countries like South Korea with a longer history of engagement with the US (e.g. Abelmann, “American”). Yet Chinese international students' experiences are instructive because their educational trajectories are shaped by forces transforming US campus life, an argument I develop in the conclusion. More broadly, Jingfei's emphasis of her consumer relationship to the university invites composition scholars to adapt rights-based frameworks to the rhetorical contexts of our increasingly corporate institutions.

Securing Educational Returns in Contexts of Segregation

Like most of the Chinese undergraduates I interviewed, Jingfei had expected that studying at the University of Illinois would allow her to form friendships with domestic peers, developing valuable linguistic and cultural knowledge in the process. Yet she quickly discovered that Chinese students at Illinois had little contact with students outside of their ethnic cohort, describing an isolation similar to that experienced by other students of color at the university (see Abelmann, *Intimate* 80-1). In response, Jingfei turned to her instructors and university staff as cultural and linguistic informants (see Cogie et. al.; Powers), emphasizing her status as a client of US higher education to claim such support. Jingfei did so because her writing class further convinced her that she lacked the linguistic and cultural knowledge necessary for fuller participation in campus life. Specifically, although Jingfei described kind instructors and tutors—and was relieved that her writing instructor did not penalize her grammar—she worried that she was not expanding her linguistic repertoire or developing knowledge of what vocabulary was appropriate for certain situations. “I want to know how to express, I want to know how you say it,” she said, offering as an example her confusion about different words that can express anger. “We have not only dictionary but vocabulary books to tell you all these words express your anger. So, they are all the same meaning as angry, but to what extent? I want this class to teach me this.” In the rest of this section, I detail how Jingfei leveraged her status

as a client of US higher education to pursue such linguistic and cultural knowledge, unwittingly complicating narratives in composition about how students achieve institutional visibility in contexts of segregation.

“Somewhere can make me grow”

Initially, Jingfei limited our conversation to her professional and academic motives for pursuing a US degree. As her interview continued, though, it became clear that Jingfei was attracted to the US by more than the academic strength of its colleges and universities. Jingfei was a transfer student and had studied for two years at one of China’s most selective universities. Moreover, as a finalist in China’s national physics competition, she had also been exempted from the gaokao, the country’s college entrance exam that has been in recent years blamed for student anxiety and suicides (Roberts). When Jingfei first disclosed that she had bypassed the gaokao, I misunderstood and thought she was the highest-scoring participant in the physics contest nationally. Jingfei laughed and, demonstrating her awareness of the US academic hierarchy, commented, “If I am the first, I would be in MIT. No offense.” Despite attending one of China’s most prestigious institutions, though, Jingfei decided that she wanted to complete her bachelor’s degree in the US, motivated to do so by the academic flexibility of US higher education. In particular, Jingfei had been disappointed that she could not major in physics at her Chinese institution, having been tracked instead into a closely related field. Consequently, she spent her second year at university preparing for the SAT and TOEFL.

Jingfei also emphasized that completing a US undergraduate degree would make her a stronger applicant to US graduate programs, selecting which US university to attend with that goal in mind. During the admissions process, she paid close attention to academic rankings and consulted with her professors in China, who she said were knowledgeable about different US institutions’ strengths and weaknesses. This process began anew when Jingfei started to receive acceptance letters, forcing her to “do all those work again to decide which one.” As Jingfei discussed her goals for studying in the US and her experiences of the application process, the cultural benefits she associated with a US degree began to emerge, albeit slowly. In particular, Jingfei was invested in the US university’s promise of personal and cultural growth (see Abelmann, *Intimate* 6). “This country is the superpower,” she said. “I don’t want to go somewhere that’s really quiet, it’s comfortable. I want somewhere can make me grow. It can move really fast so I can run there, but not a place so quiet everyone’s enjoying their life but not moving forward.” Moreover, Jingfei sought the exposure to cultural difference that a US university offered, believing that coming to the US as an undergraduate would allow her to forge connections with domestic classmates and become involved on campus. In contrast, the Chinese graduate students she knew “spend a lot of time in the research, but they didn’t get a lot of connection to the US society,” and Jingfei wished to “try to experience the American culture.” Importantly, this desire for personal, cultural, and intellectual growth shaped her expectations for the first-year writing class she enrolled in during her first semester at Illinois.

“As long as I ask, people like you just come to help me”

Early during her time on campus, Jingfei encountered a number of roadblocks to the professional

and cultural growth she desired, which she attributed largely to her campus's segregation. In response, Jingfei sought out resources that could mitigate her ethnic isolation, often marshaling her position as a consumer to do so. Her ability to access campus services and even informal support reveals emergent forms of institutional agency not yet accounted for in composition studies. In particular, Jingfei's experiences suggest a university in which financially powerful students are provided services to maintain their consumer satisfaction (see also Tuchman 149; Wellen 25), even as full participation in campus life remains out of reach. It is important to note, though, that Jingfei described a writing classroom that was in many ways open to her linguistic and cultural differences: She felt that her instructor and peers did not stigmatize her accented English, even as she believed that her classroom compounded her segregation by not preparing her to traverse perceived linguistic and cultural barriers. Jingfei thus navigated an altered racial landscape at Illinois, one where her differences were seemingly accommodated and where she could secure additional support when she felt her educational goals were not being met.

Jingfei was especially surprised by her instructor's attitudes toward language difference, which conflicted with the expectations she had formed in China about English classrooms. Her college English course there, taught by a visiting scholar from the US, led her to expect that writing instruction at Illinois would focus on grammatical and other lower-order concerns, reflecting the global influence of mass-produced textbooks (Canagarajah, *Resisting* 83; Lu, "An Essay" 20) and the tendency in China for English to be taught as "a neutral, objective technology governed by static, mechanical rules" (You 136). To Jingfei's surprise and relief, though, her writing course at Illinois focused little on such issues. Instead, her instructor persuaded her that, "It's not how I speak or how I put the language, put the words together matters, but how I think matters more." Later, Jingfei added that she learned in her writing class, "I can use child English to write my essay, but I have to express my meaning clearly . . . I think that the idea matters more than the language." While Jingfei welcomed this de-emphasis of language, she still wanted to increase her vocabulary, seeking language instruction through her visits to the writing center and her instructor's office hours. Outside the writing classroom, Jingfei similarly reported little concern about her language differences, finding that her domestic peers and instructors were willing to struggle over meaning with her. As she discussed her experiences communicating with native-English speakers, she laughed, saying, "It's fine, I just. When I don't understand, I just go, 'What?' again and again. 'Pardon me?' again and again."

Although Jingfei was relieved that her writing instructor did not assess grammar and vocabulary, she still desired that kind of instruction, saying, "I thanked her a lot by not grading on my grammars. But I want to improve my grammar and vocabulary, so that's what I do when I meet with her or with the [writing center]. I would require her or the [writing center] to help me correct the grammar and tell me the vocabulary is wrong." Such control over her language learning was also evident as Jingfei evaluated the writing center services she had utilized. Jingfei first became aware of the writing center at one of the many orientations she attended during her first semester, even though she said her Chinese peers often saw orientations as a "waste of time." When Jingfei first learned about the writing center, she thought, "The [writing center] is exactly what I need." By the middle of her first

semester, Jingfei had used the center's tutorial services and had participated in its writing groups for international students, which were developed to accommodate the university's growing multilingual student population. Jingfei's writing group, which met over four weeks, began each session with a presentation on topics ranging from organization and thesis statements to brevity. After the presentation, the participants were urged to work in pairs while the group leader circulated and answered questions, though they often ignored the leader's instructions to collaborate and instead worked alone. To Jingfei, the group provided a useful introduction to US academic writing, but she disliked that they had to compete for the leader's attention in the second half of each session. "I personally prefer the presentation, because that's why I come to the group instead of the one-to-one individual meeting. Every time we work on our own, I just think, 'Why don't I just have a one-to-one appointment? I want to learn something.'" Importantly, such pursuit of additional support was not limited to official campus services, which was clear as Jingfei repeatedly referenced her comfort asking even passersby on the street for assistance: "I sometimes just randomly pick someone on the street and say, 'Sorry, I don't know about something. Can you help me?' 'Yes, I would love to!'"

As Jingfei narrates her use of the various resources available to her—chronicling her desire to take advantage of each orientation, her belief that writing instructors and tutors should help facilitate personal language goals, and her willingness to ask strangers for assistance—she describes a university in which she can marshal institutional support for her language-learning and other needs. More importantly, though, Jingfei claims institutional resources and visibility that have historically been out of reach for multilingual and non-white students, drawing on the agency available to her as a consumer of US higher education to do so. For Jingfei, the university is receptive to her pursuit of educational resources and assistance, coloring her overall evaluation of the campus: "That's the best part I love here," she said, "because everyone's just trying to be helpful. And as long as I ask, people like you just come to help me." Jingfei's use of and attitudes toward campus resources reveal a shift in how students' racial and language differences determine institutional belonging, clear in the support she claims amidst familiar forms of segregation. Importantly, her story invites composition scholars to reconsider the narratives of marginalization they have typically forged about linguistically and racially different students—and how they imagine that students can contest such marginalization. She describes not a hostile university but one that at least somewhat meets the educational goals of students on the linguistic and racial margins.

Yet, despite the agency Jingfei exerted, she still experienced institutional exclusion similar to that of other East Asian international students (see Abelmann, "American;" Kang 86) and even domestic students of color. These student groups navigate campuses where their languages and cultures are

routinely denigrated, and, as composition scholars have documented, writing classrooms and programs have been historically complicit in such denigration (see Lamos, *Interests*). Even amidst such segregation, though, Jingfei's story points to how our students' institutional

"Even amidst such segregation, though, Jingfei's story points to how our students' institutional experiences are being reshaped in our increasingly corporate universities, which welcome student difference even as they continue to protect white interests (see Prendergast and Abelmann 39)."

experiences are being reshaped in our increasingly corporate universities, which welcome student difference even as they continue to protect white interests (see Prendergast and Abelmann 39). Importantly, because Jingfei is studying at a large research university—the type of institution that sets trends followed by universities and colleges of all tiers (see Bok 14; Lamos, “Toward” 363-4; Tuchman 54-6)—and because she is part of a student population increasingly recruited to US universities of all types, her experiences reveal shifting attitudes toward difference that are likely to become more common as institutions enroll larger numbers of students from outside the US. In the next section, I detail how Jingfei’s writing classroom supported this uneven distribution of campus resources and belonging, suppressing opportunities to confront notions of cultural difference that naturalize student segregation.

“I want this kind of class to teach me what should I say when I meet people”

Despite her satisfaction with the academic opportunities and institutional support available to her, Jingfei was uncertain about her place in the wider university community, and her experiences learning and using English reinforced the distance she felt from her domestic classmates. As Jingfei described her marginalization on campus—and how her writing instruction withheld linguistic and cultural knowledge that she felt could help her engage with domestic peers—the conflicted position she occupied on campus came more squarely into view: Jingfei subscribed to a liberal imaginary of the university in which higher education provides the keys to financial, intellectual, and social success. Jingfei also found that the university was generally accommodating of that pursuit, encountering levels of institutional support historically not available to multilingual writers and students of color. Yet, Jingfei still experienced marginalization, discovering that certain dimensions of campus life were out of reach despite the support and institutional visibility she enjoyed. Jingfei’s perceived inability to participate in campus life makes clear that the agency and institutional recognition she can claim is partial. Moreover, her reflections reveal how writing instruction can withhold the cultural and linguistic knowledge necessary to critique and make visible such conditions.

Jingfei initially worked to restrict our conversation to her academic motives for studying in the US, refusing to disclose information about her hometown, her Beijing high school, her parents’ feelings about her decision to leave China, and the cultural benefits she believed she could accrue by studying in the US. Despite her initial guardedness, Jingfei eventually began to share more about her desire to participate in campus life, which she admitted was a source of disappointment. Jingfei did attempt to become involved on campus, joining a student organization through which she met domestic, Korean, and other Chinese students. “I’m representing this school,” she said as she discussed the group’s volunteer work with local elementary and high school students. “And that makes me feel proud.” She also tried to socialize with domestic classmates outside of her academic and extracurricular activities. Despite these efforts to, as she put it, “feel like I’m part of the school,” Jingfei still felt distant from her domestic peers, believing that her language and cultural differences were at the core of her difficulty connecting with students from the US.

Importantly, Jingfei believed that her writing classroom did little to help her confront the linguistic barriers she encountered on campus. Again, Jingfei was grateful that her instructor

focused only slightly on grammar and other language issues, believing that attention to such issues would adversely impact her grade. Moreover, Jingfei valued her instructor's focus on the rhetorical conventions of scholarly writing, which helped her to become more familiar with US academic culture. "I'm not only learning how to write," she shared. "I'm learning the culture." Yet, she also believed that, by not attending closely to language outside of a few brief lessons on style, her class withheld important knowledge about the cultural connotations of specific usages. For Jingfei, her unfamiliarity with such subtle connotations of English vocabulary was at the core of her halted and awkward interactions with domestic peers, a reality she felt her writing classroom left her unprepared to change. In other words, even as Jingfei was relieved to not focus on language in her composition course—and though she valued that her course helped her to become more familiar with US academic culture—she still desired the opportunity to closely study language. "Language is a tool to express the mind," she claimed, and without greater familiarity with English, she believed herself unable to fully forge any connection with her US peers.

Jingfei's comments reveal how language continues to mediate institutional belonging for students of color even as universities cultivate images of themselves as diverse and international (see Prendergast and Abelmann 50-1)—and even as she praised her writing instructor. In everyday interactions and in her writing, she said, her instructors and peers minimized attention to her language differences, concerned more with her ideas than her language. Yet, Jingfei's narrative shows that, despite the accessibility of institutional resources and the apparent openness of peers and instructors to her language differences, the writing instruction she received withheld linguistic and cultural resources that she hoped would enable her to forge relationships across difference. In other words, Jingfei's story reveals an instructional void, suggesting that writing classrooms can reinforce students' marginalization when they do not provide spaces for productive struggle over language and cultural differences. For Jingfei, this void became especially clear through her research in first-year writing. Her instructor drew on a tradition of first-year writing instruction at Illinois that encourages students to critically examine the university and engage in semester-long research of student organizations, curricula, and institutional history (see Prendergast, "Reinventing"). During her research of Chinese undergraduates' transitions to US universities, Jingfei explained, "I always think what I want, what I need to help me be involved in this campus, to help me feel better." Much of what she needed, she believed, revolved around language. "I want this kind of class to teach me what should I say when I meet people. What's happening is 'What's up?' 'Nothing much' and 'thank you,' 'how's it going?'"

Jingfei's reflections suggest that, although composition scholars have rightly critiqued language pedagogies for excluding linguistic and racial minorities from fuller participation in academic life (Lu, "Professing" 446), we can remove opportunities to productively grapple with cultural difference when we do not attend to language in our courses. Additionally, even as Jingfei marshals her consumer positionality to claim additional support, she still feels ill-equipped to contest her exclusion from campus life and pursue the institutional belonging she desires. More significant is that her marginalization is compounded even as she describes a classroom that reflects common approaches to language difference in composition studies, evident as she described instructors

and tutors who emphasized rhetorical knowledge over linguistic conventions. Such an approach reflects the emphasis on rhetoric and argumentation in documents like the CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers (“CCCC Statement” 12) and the WPA Outcomes Statement, which remain influential even amidst calls for critical and fine-grained attention to dialect and language difference (e.g. Horner et. al.; Lu and Horner). As Jingfei describes a classroom that both acknowledges and suppresses difference, she reminds us that language is a site of cultural transmission and that examining language can provide opportunities for students to struggle productively with difference. As I conclude this essay in the next section, I consider how attention to language and cultural difference can help students attain their educational goals while also becoming critical of how our institutions protect white educational interests. Perhaps most importantly, I also consider the implications of experiences like Jingfei’s for other student groups who likewise experience campus segregation.

Conclusion: Student Advocacy in the Corporate University

A few weeks prior to my interview with Jingfei, she attended an orientation program for international students, and one of the sessions focused on common US idioms. When Jingfei left the session, she felt no more prepared to communicate in English than she had before. “We have learned some basic proverbs like, ‘It’s raining cats and dogs.’ But it’s not useful.” She continued, “Who say that? No one is saying that. If I say that, it’s much more embarrassing than if I don’t say it.” Jingfei’s comments reflect her desire for language instruction that would allow her to communicate across cultural differences, confronting the campus segregation that obstructed her educational goals. Yet, as her narrative suggests, her writing classroom and the other forms of institutional support she sought did little to support her language needs—and sometimes even reinforced the segregation that defined her campus life. More troubling was that such marginalization occurred in a classroom that Jingfei described in terms familiar to many writing instructors. Jingfei’s course, for instance, culminated in a researched argument, an assignment ubiquitous in writing programs nationally (Hood). She also described an instructor concerned less with language than argument and critical thinking, reflecting the field’s general movement from language instruction since the 1970s (Connors 96-7; Myers 611-2; Peck MacDonald 85-7).

Importantly, even as Jingfei demonstrates how some of our most common pedagogies can inadvertently marginalize, her story likewise reveals how writing instructors might mitigate the segregation she and her Chinese conationals experience. In particular, the support Jingfei pursues from her writing instructor and tutors suggests that we might direct classroom attention to an area often deemphasized since composition’s repudiation of current-traditional pedagogies: language (see Peck MacDonald 599-600). In making such a claim, I am in no way advocating the return of classrooms focused narrowly on correctness and convention. Instead, Jingfei’s experiences add urgency to calls for students and instructors alike to grapple with language difference and the plurality of dialects present in all communication. For scholars like Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu, Suresh Canagarajah, and Ana Maria Wetzl, such pedagogy can expose oppressive communicative norms and empower students to contest them, beginning the long task of dislodging language ideologies

that reify standard English and devalue speakers of other dialects. Moreover, as Canagarajah notes, such an approach “demands more, not less, from minority students” (“Place” 598), enabling a student like Jingfei to both gain the linguistic knowledge she desires and resist the marginal position offered her within the university.

However, Jingfei’s story also demonstrates the challenges posed to such approaches—and to composition’s activist legacy more generally—by corporatization and the consumer attitudes it promotes. For instance, Jingfei’s goals for engaging with language difference are markedly different from those of composition scholars: She desires not to combat her campus’s devaluation of difference but instead wants to become part of the campus mainstream, even as she believed she had been excluded from that mainstream by virtue of her linguistic and cultural differences. Experiences like Jingfei’s thus caution us that the language work envisioned by Canagarajah and others must be persuasive, since students may desire to assimilate to rather than contest oppressive language norms. One way that instructors might create space for such persuasion is by opening up students’ campus experiences to critique, encouraging student research and classroom discussion that analyze linguistic and racial discrimination on campus. Importantly, this approach has implications beyond the Chinese undergraduates who feature in my study: When our classrooms make visible how different student groups are granted or denied institutional belonging—and how language mediates such belonging—we can create rhetorical borderlands (Mao 3) or contact zones (Lu, “Conflict” 888) from which students expose and challenge linguistic and cultural norms that place some on the fringes of campus life. Also important, such attention to language difference can challenge students to become ethical and effective communicators in communities, workplaces, and academic disciplines where taken-for-granted linguistic conventions are being transformed by the ubiquity of “Global Englishes” (see Canagarajah, “Place” 590; Rozycki and Johnson).

Beyond such pedagogical shifts, though, experiences like Jingfei’s also invite composition scholars and instructors to reconsider how they theorize racial and linguistic difference more generally. Jingfei’s status as an international student obviously affords her greater institutional recognition and support than domestic students of color, who continue to face hostility on predominantly-white campuses (see Kynard, “Teaching” 3; Mangelsdorf 120-1). Yet, Jingfei’s and her Chinese conationals’ experiences still offer insight to the broader experiences of students of color in our moment of shifting institutional priorities. As Asian American Studies scholars Claire Jean Kim and Yen Le Espiritu remind us, Asians of different nationalities, whether citizens or not, are often viewed as a homogenous racial group in the US and subjected to similar forms of discrimination (Espiritu 6; Kim 35). For Chinese students like Jingfei, this means that they are likely seen on our campuses as part of a unified Asian racial group, a reality Nancy Abelmann captures in interviews with Illinois domestic students and in online forums: Chinese international students are simultaneously praised and scorned by their white counterparts, subjected to familiar model minority stereotypes historically leveraged at Asian Americans (“American”). Despite their particularities, then, these students are racialized as part of a unitary Asian group, one whose ambiguous position in the US racial hierarchy has been said to reveal broader shifts in post-civil rights racial politics (Koshy 159). Because these students are part of a population whose experiences reveal much about the reconfiguration of racial power

more generally (Koshy 155)— and because their educational trajectories are facilitated by higher education’s corporate turn—their experiences draw attention to broader shifts in how marginalized groups access higher education and institutional resources in our moment of fiscal turmoil and institutional flux.

Jingfei and her Chinese conationals thus reveal the extent that race continues to shape the institutional experiences of students of color and linguistic minorities, albeit along shifting lines. Of course, my intent here is not to detract attention from how some student groups are more vulnerable to racial discrimination on our campuses than others. Instead, I want to suggest that, even as our campuses are undoubtedly shaped by US histories of racism, our students are also subjected to an altered racial logic in which their cultural and linguistic differences are valued relative to their financial power. Experiences like Jingfei’s thus suggest that racial privileges are distributed on our campuses in ways similar to that on the global stage. As anthropologist Aihwa Ong argues, we live in a moment when

mobile individuals who possess human capital or expertise are highly valued and can exercise citizenship-like claims in diverse locations. Meanwhile, citizens who are judged not to have such tradable competence or potential become devalued and thus vulnerable to exclusionary practices. (6-7, see also Melamed 42)

On US campuses, such shifts are visible in the differences between stories like Jingfei’s and the experiences of domestic students of color. While Jingfei is part of a much sought-after student demographic—and while she secures institutional resources amidst familiar segregation—the number of African American students attending Illinois has stagnated at levels below civil rights-era benchmarks (Des Garennes). Such demographic realities are the result of policy trends nationally that have favored merit-based over need-based financial aid, alleviating college costs for the middle class rather than increasing access for low-income students (see Long and Riley). On flagship campuses like Illinois, this means that fewer low-income and minority students enroll—and that those who do are often from the middle class themselves (Jaquette et. al. 29-30).

Such changes in who can access higher education—and in how students access institutional resources and campus belonging once they are enrolled—suggests that composition scholars must rethink advocacy work that has traditionally relied on a language of rights, placing that tradition in tension with our students’ altered institutional experiences. In particular, we might borrow some of the consumer language that Jingfei marshaled to justify her pursuit of additional resources and support, even as such language has been rightly criticized for reducing teaching and learning to a market transaction (e.g. Saunders 63-4). Such language can help us advocate for our students in a moment when administrators are preoccupied with programmatic survival and contracting budgets. The language of the market, for instance, can enable us to make a case that seemingly costly measures to support our students and foster inclusivity can make long-term financial sense, perhaps improving time-to-degree and retention or paying off in alumni donations down the line (see Lamos, “Toward” 373-4). We might stress in particular the importance of expanding access to domestic students of color given the premium placed on diversity by our campuses’ corporate backers (Prendergast and Abelman 37)—and given that diversity like that sought by Jingfei is impossible to achieve without

the physical presence of students from multiple backgrounds on our campuses (Park). Writing Program Administrators are already well versed in making such arguments and have been criticized for relying on such logics to secure support for their programs (Bousquet 495-6). Yet, such strategies may provide the rhetorical tools to advocate for students as our institutions seem increasingly immune to some of the more radical aims of composition pedagogies.

“Advocating for students in our moment of corporatization and internationalization thus requires that we be constantly aware of the changing undergraduate experience, paying close attention to students’ educational goals and how they are sometimes prevented from attaining those goals along familiar but shifting racial lines.”

Advocating for students in our moment of corporatization and internationalization thus requires that we be constantly aware of the changing undergraduate experience, paying close attention to students’ educational goals and how they are sometimes prevented from attaining those goals along familiar

but shifting racial lines . Luckily, many common composition assignments and classroom practices position us well for such work. For instance, we can reshape the literacy narrative assignment common in many first-year writing courses so that students probe their educational and language learning goals, inviting them to examine the origins of those goals and what they gain and lose in their pursuit. Or, we can transform literacy narratives into literacy profiles, requiring students to interview and write about their classmates’ literacy backgrounds. Doing so can allow domestic and international students alike to begin exploring how their English education and expectations for the writing classroom have been impacted by standardization, given the ubiquity of China’s emerging English-language industry and the increasing presence of high-stakes testing in US classrooms. Moreover, research essays can be reenvisioned as ethnographies of language difference on our campuses, and we can also shape peer review so that students focus less on what their peers can do better and more on how classmates’ linguistic choices productively support their rhetorical goals (see Lu, “Professing”). Importantly, such approaches require that we as instructors become ethnographers of our own classrooms, working to understand our students’ experiences in institutions far different from those that have historically shaped our work.⁵⁻

NOTES

¹ International students attending US universities pay higher tuition than their domestic counterparts, especially at public institutions. At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for example, international students' tuition can range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$17,000 more than tuition for an in-state student, not including additional international student fees (2015-2016 Academic Year).

² The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is part of the University of Illinois system, which includes campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield. Per university branding recommendations, I use "Illinois" throughout this article to refer to the Urbana-Champaign campus (Writing Style Guide).

³ My study focused on students who had completed the first-year writing requirement in the English department's Undergraduate Rhetoric Program. Students at Illinois can complete the first-year writing requirement in the English, Linguistics, or Communication Departments. During my work at the campus writing center, Chinese undergraduates often shared their concerns that linguistics courses, in which only "ESL students" could enroll, were too segregated—and that the only students who enroll in such courses do so because of low SAT or TOEFL scores. On the other hand, these same students often believed that rhetoric courses offered opportunities to interact in English with domestic peers. Such conversations shaped my initial interest in the role of writing instruction in Chinese students' US transitions, especially given composition research and pedagogy cognizant of the cultural demands literacy instruction places on students.

⁴ Other qualitative and ethnographic researchers have similarly captured Chinese international students and their families describing themselves as potential objects of financial exploitation by US universities. In Fraiberg and Cui's study of Chinese undergraduates' social network communities, for instance, their research participants saw required remedial coursework as a way for the university to extract further profit from their transactional relationship (96). Such anxieties have also been documented extensively in the Chinese and US presses (see Abelmann, "American"; Abelmann and Kang 8).

⁵ First and foremost, I am indebted to Jingfei and her peers at the University of Illinois for their eagerness to share their stories with me. I am grateful to Catherine Prendergast for her constant support during each stage of this project. Additionally, encouragement and insight from the late Nancy Abelmann was invaluable as I designed this study and wrote my earliest drafts. I want also to express my gratitude to the many other readers and reviewers of this article: Kelly Ritter, Susan Koshy, Soo Ah Kwon, Yu-Kyung Kang, Eileen Lagman, Pamela Saunders, Kaia Simon, Laura Stengrim, and the blind reviewers and editorial team at *Literacy in Composition Studies*.

WORKS CITED

- “2015-2016 Academic Year Undergrad Base Tuition Rates.” *Office of the Registrar*. U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, n.d. Web. 19 May 2016.
- Abelmann, Nancy. “The American University Meets the Pacific Century: Notes from the University of Illinois.” U of Hawai’i at Mānoa College of Social Sciences. Honolulu, Hawai’i. 13 Feb. 2013. Invited presentation.
- . *The Intimate University*. Durham: Duke UP, 2009. Print.
- Abelmann, Nancy, and Jiyeon Kang. “A Fraught Exchange? U.S. Media on Chinese International Undergraduates and the American University.” *Journal of Studies in International Education* 18.4 (2014): 382-97. Print.
- Altbach, Philip G. *The International Imperative in Higher Education*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2013. Print.
- Barker, Adele. “A Professor’s Experience with Unprepared Chinese Students.” *Inside Higher Ed*. Inside Higher Ed, 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 2 Nov. 2015.
- Bok, Derek. *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003. Print.
- Bousquet, Marc. “Composition as Management Science: Toward a University without a WPA.” *JAC* 22.3 (2002): 493-526. Print.
- Brandt, Deborah. *Literacy in American Lives*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.
- Bruch, Patrick, and Richard Marback. “Race, Literacy, and the Value of Rights Rhetoric in Composition Studies.” *College Composition and Communication* 53.4 (2002): 651-74. Print.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. “The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued.” *College Composition and Communication*, 57.4 (2006): 586–619. Print.
- . *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- “CCCC Statement on Second-Language Writing and Writers (2009 Update).” *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook*. Eds. Paul Kei Matsuda, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011. 10-19. Print.
- Cogie, Jane, Kim Strain, and Sharon Lorinskas. “Avoiding the Proofreading Trap: The Value of the Error Correction Process.” *The Writing Center Journal* 19.2 (1999): 7-32. Print.
- Cohen, Jodi S. “U. of I. Reaches Out to 600 Freshmen from China.” *Chicago Tribune*. Tribune Publishing, 1 Aug. 2014. Web. 9 Sept. 2015.
- Connors, Robert J. “The Erasure of the Sentence.” *College Composition and Communication* 52.1 (2000): 96-128. Print.
- Des Garennes, Christine. “Prescription for Disaster.” *The News-Gazette*. Marajen Stevick Foundation, 12 Oct. 2014. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.
- Desilver, Drew. “Growth from Asia Drives Surge in US Foreign Students.” *Pew Research Center*. Pew Research Center, 18 June 2015. Web. 18 May 2016.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992. Print.
- Farnell, Brenda. “The Fancy Dance of Racializing Discourse.” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 28.1 (2004): 30-55. Print.
- “Fast Facts.” *Open Doors Data*. Institute of International Education. Web. 30 July 2015.
- “Final Statistical Abstract.” *Division of Management Information*. U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, n.d. Web. 19 May 2016.

- Folbre, Nancy. *Saving State U: Why We Must Fix Public Higher Education*. New York: The New P, 2010. Print.
- Fong, Vanessa. *Paradise Redefined: Transnational Chinese Students and the Quest for Flexible Citizenship in the Developed World*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2011. Print.
- Fraiberg, Steven, and Xiaowei Cui. "Weaving Relationship Webs: Tracing how IMing Practices Mediate the Trajectories of Chinese International Students." *Computers and Composition* 39 (2016): 83-103. Print.
- FY 2012 Budget Request for Operating and Capital Funds: Prepared for the Board of Trustees*. Urbana: U of Illinois, 23 Sept. 2010. Web. 5 Aug. 2014.
- Hoang, Haivan V. "Campus Racial Politics and a 'Rhetoric of Injury.'" *College Composition and Communication* 61.1 (2009): W385-408. Print.
- . *Writing Against Racial Injury: The Politics of Asian American Student Rhetoric*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2015. Print.
- Hood, Carra Leah. "Ways of Research: The Status of the Traditional Research Paper Assignment in First-Year Writing/Composition Courses." *Composition Forum* 22 (2010): N.p. Web. 20 July 2015.
- Horner, Bruce. "Discoursing Basic Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 47.2 (1996): 199-222. Print.
- . "'Students' Right,' English Only, and Re-imagining the Politics of Language." *College English* 63.6 (2001): 741-58. Print.
- Horner, Bruce, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur. "Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach." *College English* 73.3 (2011): 303-21. Print.
- Howard, Daniel J., and Frank N. Laird. "The New Normal in Funding University Science." *Issues in Science and Technology* 30.1 (2013): 71-76. Print.
- Jaquette, Ozan, Bradley R. Curs, and Julie R. Posselt. "Tuition Rich, Mission Poor: Nonresident Enrollment Growth and the Socioeconomic and Racial Composition of Public Research Universities." *The Journal of Higher Education* 87 (2016): 635-73. Print.
- Kang, Yu-Kyung. "Tensions of Local and Global: South Korean Students Navigating and Maximizing US College Life." *Literacy in Composition Studies* 3.3 (2015): 86-109. Print.
- Kim, Claire Jean. *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2003. Print.
- Kinloch, Valerie Felita. "Revisiting the Promise of 'Students' Right to Their Own Language': Pedagogical Strategies." *College Composition and Communication* 57.1 (2005): 83-113. Print.
- Koshy, Susan. "Morphing Race into Ethnicity: Asian Americans and Critical Transformations of Whiteness." *boundary 2* 28.1 (2001): 153-94. Print.
- Kynard, Carmen. "Teaching While Black: Witnessing and Countering Disciplinary Whiteness, Racial Violence, and University Race-Management." *Literacy in Composition Studies* 3.1 (2015): 1-20. Print.
- Lamos, Steve. *Interests and Opportunities: Race, Racism, and University Writing Instruction in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2011. Print.
- . "Toward Job Security for Teaching-Track Composition Faculty: Recognizing and Rewarding Affective-Labor-in-Space." *College English* 78.4 (2016): 362-86. Print.
- Long, Bridget Terry, and Erin Riley. "Financial Aid: A Broken Bridge to College Access?" *Harvard Educational Review* 77.1 (2007): 39-63. Print.
- Lu, Min-Zhan. "An Essay on the Work of Composition: Composing English against the Order of Fast Capitalism." *College Composition and Communication* 56.1 (2004): 16-50. Print.
- . "Conflict and Struggle: The Enemies or Preconditions of Basic Writing?" *College English* 54.8

- (1992): 887-913. Print.
- . "Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone." *College Composition and Communication* 45.4 (1994): 442-58. Print.
- . "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence." *Journal of Basic Writing* 10.1 (1991): 26-40. Print.
- Lu, Min-Zhan, and Bruce Horner. "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency." *College English* 75.6 (2013): 582-607. Print.
- Mao, LuMing. *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2006. Print.
- Mangelsdorf, Kate. "Spanglish as Alternative Discourse: Working against Language Demarcation." *Cross-Language Relations in Composition*. Eds. Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, and Paul Kei Matsuda. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2010. 113-26. Print.
- Matsuda, Paul Kei. "Let's Face It: Language Issues and the Writing Program Administrator." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 36.1 (2012): 141-63. Print.
- . "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition." *College English* 68.6 (2006): 637-51. Print.
- Melamed, Jodi. *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2011. Print.
- Myers, Sharon A. "ReMembering the Sentence." *College Composition and Communication* 54.4 (2003): 610-28. Print.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham: Duke UP, 2006. Print.
- Packer, Martin. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print.
- Park, Julie J. *When Diversity Drops: Race, Religion, and Affirmative Action in Higher Education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2013. Print.
- Peck MacDonald, Susan. "The Erasure of Language." *College Composition and Communication* 58.4 (2007): 585-625. Print.
- Powers, Judith K. "Rethinking Writing Center Conferencing Strategies for the ESL Writer." *The Writing Center Journal* 13.2 (1993): 39-47. Print.
- Prendergast, Catherine. "Reinventing the University: EUI as Writing Initiative." *Learning and Teaching* 6.3 (2013): 79-88. Print.
- Prendergast, Catherine, and Nancy Abelmann. "Alma Mater: College, Kinship, and the Pursuit of Diversity." *Social Text* 24.1 (2006): 37-53. Print.
- "Public Universities Advocate for State Funding Support: Campuses Are Engines of Progress, Officials Tell Legislative Leaders." *University of Illinois University Relations*. U of Illinois, 27 May 2015. Web. 30 July 2015.
- Redden, Elizabeth. "At U. of Illinois, Growth in the Number of Chinese Students Has Been Dramatic." *Inside Higher Ed*. Inside Higher Ed, 7 Jan. 2015. Web. 12 Jan. 2016.
- Roberts, Dexter. "China Exam System Drives Student Suicides." *Bloomberg Business*. Bloomberg, N.p., 15 May 2014. Web. 26 May 2015.
- Rozycki, William, and Neil H. Johnson. "Non-Canonical Grammar in Best Paper Award Winners in Engineering." *English for Specific Purposes* 32 (2013): 157-69. Print.
- Saunders, Daniel B. "Neoliberal Ideology and Public Higher Education in the United States." *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 8.1 (2010): 41-77. Print.
- Smitherman, Geneva. "CCCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights." *College Composition and Communication* 50.3 (1999): 349-76. Print.
- Spack, Ruth. "The Acquisition of Academic Literacy in a Second Language: A Longitudinal Case

- Study." *Written Communication* 14.1 (1997): 3-62. Print.
- Sternglass, Marilyn. *Time to Know Them: A Longitudinal Study of Writing and Learning at the College Level*. Mahwah: Erlbaum, 1997. Print.
- Stripling, Jack. "Fortunes Falling." *Inside Higher Ed*. Inside Higher Ed, 27 Jan. 2009. Web. 12 May 2016.
- Tardy, Christine M. *Building Genre Knowledge*. West Lafayette: Parlor Press, 2009. Print.
- Tea Leaf Nation Staff. "The Most Chinese Schools in America." *Foreign Policy*. Foreign Policy, 4 Jan. 2016. Web. 17 May 2016.
- Tuchman, Gaye. *Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009. Print.
- Villanueva, Jr., Victor. *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. Urbana: NCTE, 1993. Print.
- Wellen, Richard. "The University Student in a Reflexive Society: Consequence of Consumerism and Competition." *Higher Education Perspectives* 1.2 (2005): 25-38. Print.
- Wetzel, Ana Maria. "World Englishes in the Mainstream Composition Course: Undergraduate Students Respond to WE Writing." *Research in the Teaching of English* 48.2 (2013): 204-27. Print.
- Wible, Scott. "Pedagogies of the 'Students' Right' Era: The Language Curriculum Research Group's Project for Linguistic Diversity." *College Composition and Communication* 57.3 (2006): 442-78. Print.
- . *Shaping Language Policy in the U.S.: The Role of Composition Studies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2013. Print.
- Williamson, Joy Ann. *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-75*. Urbana: The U of Illinois P, 2003. Print.
- "Writing Style Guide." *Illinois Identity Standards*. U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, n.d. Web. 19 May 2016.
- You, Xiaoye. *Writing in the Devil's Tongue: A History of English Composition in China*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2010. Print.
- Zhang, Yi (Leaf), and Linda Serra Hagedorn. "Chinese Education Agent Views of American Community Colleges." *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 38.8 (2014): 721-32. Print.

“To Whom Do We Have Students Write?”: Exploring Rhetorical Agency and Translanguaging in an Indonesian Graduate Writing Classroom

Amber Engelson—Massachusetts College for Liberal Arts

KEYWORDS

translanguaging, translanguaging agency, graduate student literacy, critical pedagogy, teacher ethnography, Indonesia

“To whom do we have students write?” This deceptively simple question has served as the bedrock of Writing Studies scholarship over the years, and rightfully so, as audience plays a formative role in the composing processes and reception of texts within academia and beyond (see Lunsford and Ede; Halasek). Reflecting upon and complicating the question of audience, I contend, becomes especially vital as English solidifies itself as the lingua franca of global academic communication. As English and the knowledge spread with it circulates globally with the movement of people and texts across traditional “native-speaking” borders, it becomes increasingly important to understand audience and rhetorical agency from a translanguaging perspective when creating graduate-level English writing pedagogies—whether these pedagogies take place in periphery¹ contexts like the Indonesian one highlighted in this article *or* in national contexts traditionally assumed to be “native” English-using.

Negotiating audience(s) can be an especially fraught process for scholars working in periphery contexts like Indonesia. As Canagarajah argues in his *Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, and as Lillis and Curry have more recently shown, to be considered “credible” academics, scholars working from periphery locales are increasingly required to publish in their local languages *and* in English, a testament to English’s long ties to Western power and knowledge production—what Phillipson has dubbed “linguistic imperialism.” Reaching these “relatively distinct communities” (681), Lillis and Curry show, is a complicated process where, on the one hand, scholars must reach local audiences with their knowledge, and on the other, contend with unequal material access to English-based resources and the possibility that native-speaking “literacy brokers” misinterpret their ideas when editing for “Standard English” (87). Understanding audience negotiation from a global perspective necessarily involves acknowledging power and the tensions involved when writers take agency to move between multiple languages and discourses.

Although it is important to acknowledge tensions particular to scholars working in periphery contexts, writers within US universities are also dealing with increasingly complex rhetorical situations. According to the Open Door Institute’s 2015-2016 report, the international student population in the US has increased 7.1% from the 2014-2015 academic year, to 1,043,839 (documented) students, 383,935 of whom are graduate students (a 6% increase from the year prior)

("Open"). These numbers suggest that US universities are actively recruiting international students and that rhetorical situations within US classrooms are becoming increasingly more complex. The linguistic diversity these international students bring with them interacts, in turn, with the linguistic diversity already present in US classrooms. As Min-Zhan Lu asserts in "Metaphors Matter," although the majority of students in US classrooms consider themselves "native born," and thus "monolingual," that does not mean their identities are always in alignment with dominant English norms: "[they] regularly participate in and bring expertise from relations and activities outside of college classrooms involving languages, discourses, versions of English, modalities other than, and thus othered by standardized written English uses" (291). Though differing in degree and scope, *all* global language users, regardless of linguistic affiliation or national origin, negotiate between competing discourses as they write. To learn to engage productively with this increasing rhetorical complexity, US-based writing instructors might begin by looking at the ways students negotiate language, identity, and power in educational contexts outside US borders. To that end, I draw from a year's worth of ethnographic teacher research at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) to reflect critically on how the question of audience mediated both the pedagogy I developed for the program *and* my graduate students' composing processes as they navigated between Western genre conventions and their Indonesian rhetorical purposes.

"Overall, the data I present highlights the importance of re-conceptualizing rhetorical agency as a translingual endeavor: as linked both to the textual moves writers make at the contact zone between competing discourses in a particular rhetorical situation and to the ways they move between languages to circulate knowledge from one rhetorical situation to the next."

Overall, the data I present highlights the importance of re-conceptualizing rhetorical agency as a translingual endeavor: as linked both to the textual moves writers make at the contact zone between competing discourses in a particular rhetorical situation *and* to the ways they move between languages to circulate knowledge from one rhetorical

situation to the next. Though Indonesia seems worlds away from the US, encouraging *all* graduate students to understand advanced academic literacy as a process linked to ideology and power—yet also a space for translingual negotiation—might help challenge the monolingualist assumptions that currently drive global academic conversations.

Translingual Perspectives on Genre, Audience and Rhetorical Agency

What, then, might such a translingual orientation towards knowledge production look like? In "Language Difference in Writing: Towards a Translingual Approach," Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur argue against the notion that there is one "standard" to which writers must aspire and that writers must check any non-conforming discourses at the door to be rhetorically successful—a unidirectional, subtractive understanding of literacy they refer to as a monolingualist approach. Monolingualist approaches, they argue, have been used "not to improve communication and assist language learners, but to exclude voices and perspectives at odds with those in power" (305). In contrast, a translingual approach positions all languages in a writer's repertoire as "resources,"

capable of co-existing simultaneously within any given rhetorical situation. They argue that we must acknowledge in our research and teaching writers' abilities to draw from all of their "language resources" to strategically appropriate, or challenge, dominant norms (305).

Such translanguaging involves both writerly agency *and* audience negotiation. In *Translingual Practice*, Canagarajah places historical research on South Asian language practices in conversation with teacher ethnography to show that code-meshing—or the deliberate mixing of languages within a single utterance—has long been the norm in a translingual world where communication across difference between writer and audience, rather than linguistic "correctness," is paramount. In Canagarajah's words, "texts are co-constructed in time and space—with parity for readers and writers in shaping the meaning and form" (127). Indeed, Canagarajah suggests elsewhere that an author's readership might also prompt him or her to completely de-link English from Western genre norms ("Toward"). "Language," he argues, "doesn't determine the greatest difference in the texts of multilingual authors, but rather context or audience" (601). He supports this claim by analyzing three introductions written by a Sri Lankan scholar, Sivتامby: one written to a Sri Lankan audience in the Tamil; one to a Sri Lankan audience in English; and one to an international audience in English. Canagarajah finds more similarities between the texts written to the local Tamil audience, even though they were written in English and Tamil, than between the two texts written in the same language, English, to differing audiences. Overall, Canagarajah's research suggests that to understand global writing processes fully, scholars must take into consideration how audience mediates textual production—and that teachers and scholars alike should allow for the possibility that writers might take agency either to code-mesh or to de-link English entirely from the dominant Western genre norms typically associated with it (see also Young, "Other"; Canagarajah, "Code-meshing").

Opening up space in our classrooms for such code-meshing is important if we consider genre as a site of identity negotiation and friction. In Ivanić's *Writing and Identity*, she posits that when confronted with new academic genres, students must negotiate between their "autobiographical selves," or the socially-constructed identities they bring with them, and dominant genre features that often encourage them to convey textually a particular type of "discoursal self" that reflects dominant beliefs circulating in their particular "sociocultural and institutional context" (25). Genres, in other words, reflect dominant ideology that can cause identity friction, particularly when students' "autobiographical selves" don't mesh with the "discoursal selves" they're expected to portray in their writing. Such mismatch in turn affects "self as author," or the authorial stance of the writer as authority in the text. Furthermore, as scholars of intercultural rhetoric have argued, such friction may be particularly acute for non-Western students, especially when expected to write in English-using Western genres and thus to adopt Western textual identities that value more agonistic stances in relation to past literature (see Connor; McCool; Li). Opening up space for students to code-mesh in relation to audience and context may help alleviate the friction involved as writers seek to translate their autobiographical selves into their written texts.

That said, scholars and teachers seeking to understand translingual agency should avoid seeing agency as linked solely to *textual* moves; although code-meshing and genre-bending can be outward signs of translingual agency, texts that appear to assimilate to dominant genre norms can also be

translingual in orientation. In their "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency," Horner and Lu argue that "agency is manifested not only in those acts of writing we are disposed to recognize as different from the norm, but also in those acts of writing that are ordinarily recognized as producing simply 'more of the same': conventional, original, ordinary, conformist" (585). Citing Pennycook's *Language as Local Practice*, they argue that even if writers choose to assimilate to dominant norms, "we can never step into the same river twice." What writers "do is both the same and different, just as the river is and is not the same, and just as we ourselves are and are not the same when we step, seemingly again, into the river" (589). If we think about language choice from a "temporal-spatial framework," even if texts do submit to "convention," they still take on new meanings with each new performance across space and time (590). Therefore, the question writers should ask is "not...whether to be different, given the inevitability of difference, but what kind of difference to attempt, how, and why" (590). In a world where writers are constantly being asked to draw from their translingual repertoire to make linguistic choices, labeling one type of textual choice as more agentive than another is counter-productive.

Anis Bawarshi further expands on this notion of temporal-spatial agency in "Beyond the Genre Fixation: a Translingual Perspective on Genre," where he argues that when considering genre from a translingual perspective, we should both acknowledge "asymmetrical relations of power" (246) and avoid a "hierarchical understanding of agency in which difference, transgression, and creativity are associated with more agency, cognitive ability, and language fluency, while norm and convention are associated with less agency, cognitive ability, and language fluency" (245). We must, in his words, "shift the locus of agency from the genres themselves...to their users, who are constantly having to negotiate genre uptakes across boundaries" (248) to reach different audiences in our translingual world. Translingual agency happens both textually *and* extra-textually, in text *and* in process, as writers negotiate language, identity, and power in relation to their particular historical moments. By shifting the locus of agency from the genre itself to the ways writers negotiate extra-textually with language, identity, and power in relation to genre, both the choice to assimilate *and* the choice to directly challenge dominant genre norms through code-meshing or genre-bending can be considered agentive acts.

The pedagogical negotiations I outline below show the limitations of locating rhetorical agency solely in the *textual* moves students might make; though it is important to acknowledge that genre conventions can be sites of identity friction as writers negotiate new rhetorical traditions and audiences, my students' *extra-textual* negotiations across a period of time indicate that a more expansive understanding of rhetorical agency is necessary in a translingual world. Despite the limitations of the pedagogy I reflect upon below, the orientation my Indonesian students took when approaching genre, audience, and linguistic choice was undoubtedly *already* translingual. As Canagarajah suggests in his *Translingual Practice*, translingualism has long been the global norm; we've only just now begun to acknowledge it in Western academic circles when considering global literacy practices.

Context Matters: Developing Curriculum for an Indonesian, International PhD Program

The question with which this article begins, “To whom do we have students write?,” is not just a theoretical question: it was asked by an Indonesian professor while discussing the PhD-level English writing pedagogy I was developing for the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), a self-styled “Indonesian, International, Interreligious PhD program” in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. That audience is a complicated matter at this program is clear when one looks at the first line of program’s mission statement: “To provide a setting for PhD research on religions that is rooted in Indonesian culture and religious beliefs, but in dialogue with the international academic community” (“Introducing”). ICRS positions itself as being by, about, and for Indonesia, but also in contact with international audiences.

Because of this desire for global connection, ICRS chose English as the program’s official language, a move that the program’s Language Policy describes as “painful to decide since we are aware of the imperialism of English” (13). The Language Policy alludes to English’s historical ties to the West—a linkage that, as Phillipson and others suggest, has long spread Western power and monolingualist notions of language use to periphery contexts. However, the language policy then asserts that using English is also a way to “participate in international discourse, including discourse with other Asian, African and Latin American scholars (“Language Policy” 13). As the Language Policy implies, echoing research done elsewhere by Xiaoye You and Pennycook, English can no longer be tied solely to Western interests, and just as importantly, to Western *audiences*.

Given the multiple audiences the program wished to reach and the faculty’s critical view of English’s imperialist legacy, the curriculum I developed for ICRS wed a rhetorical genre-based approach with critical contrastive rhetoric. That explicit teaching of genre helps students access dominant discourses has long been established by scholars working in rhetorical genre studies (see Bazerman; Devitt; Bawarshi), and, when it comes to multilingual writing, in the field of English for Specific Purposes (see Cope, Kalantsis; Hyland; Swales).² In ESP circles, Swales has been instrumental in forwarding a genre-based pedagogical approach to teaching multilingual writers (in fact, the pedagogy I outline below draws in part from Swales’ work). He positions genres as tools at work within discourse communities, or “sociorhetorical networks that form in order to work towards a set of common goals” (9). His theorization of discourse community, and his notion that to obtain insider status, community members must master the genres at work there (27) has been taken up by many who wish to help both multilingual *and* monolingual students gain access to disciplinary knowledge and thus become “insiders” within academia.

Although explicit genre instruction works to enculturate students into academic discourse communities, others have argued that when taught in a rote, static way, genre knowledge can also limit possibility, and with that, students’ rhetorical agency (see Coe; Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff; Pennycook; Benesch). Prescriptively teaching dominant genres without discussing language, identity, and power can forward assimilation as the end goal, at the expense of non-dominant identities and rhetorical practices—forwarding, in turn, what translingual theorists dub a monolingualist approach.

To negotiate the pragmatic need to introduce students to dominant genres *and* the need to acknowledge the identity friction involved, scholars of global Englishes have called for a critical re-framing of explicit genre instruction (see Pennycook, "Vulgar"; Kubota, "Critical"). Kubota, for example, argues that traditional contrastive rhetoric's focus on the teaching of explicit and clear-cut genre differences between multilingual students' "original" culture and English often creates a falsely monolithic and essentialist perception of rhetorical situations and the actors that work within them. And with this explicitness comes the idea that students must understand these broad rhetorical differences not so they can question power, but so they can *assimilate* to Western audiences (14). She argues instead for a "critical contrastive rhetoric" that makes distinctions between rhetorical traditions explicit so students can critique their ideological underpinnings, and then make the choice to assimilate or not as they compose. Such a pedagogy, she argues, would give students the tools to "both resist assimilation and appropriate the rhetoric of power to enable oppositional voices" (20). A critical contrastive rhetoric, she argues, "call[s] into question traditionally assumed rhetorical norms [to] explore rhetorical possibilities" (20).

The PhD-level writing pedagogy I developed for ICRS was responsive to this research on genre conventions and identity friction. As the sections below explore, I made space for explicit discussions of genre norms in relation to culture, power, and ideology, while also openly addressing the possibility that students might challenge dominant textual norms to reach the audiences of their choice. I assumed this critical pedagogy would encourage students to alleviate identity friction through the genre moves they made; however, the way students actually chose to take agency and negotiate among language, genre, and audience was more complicated than that. Agency manifested itself both textually *and* extra-textually, as the writers with whom I worked sought to circulate the knowledge they produced from one moment in time to the next— across different languages, genres, and audiences.

Methodology Matters: On the Affordances of Teacher Ethnography

The research approach I chose for my project played a central role in helping me locate this spatial-temporal rhetorical agency. The data in this article was drawn from a larger research project I conducted while serving at ICRS as a US Department of State English Language Fellow during the 2009-2010 academic year.³ My research approach combined teacher research (Stringer; Nunan) and ethnography, or the moving "back-and-forth among historical, comparative, and current fieldwork sources" (Heath and Street 33)— what I term teacher ethnography (See also Canagarajah).

Given ICRS's complex local-yet-global identity, my larger project sought to answer these research questions:

- How has the English language been positioned as both local and global in a specific Indonesian literacy context?
- How, in turn, do writers, as they use English, negotiate the point of contact between local and global?

Answering these questions involved putting research on Indonesia's sociolinguistic context, past and present, into conversation with semi-structured faculty interviews and program-related documents in order to better understand ICRS as a literacy site; and, after the two-semester course outlined below was finished, conducting semi-structured interviews with students, which I then put in conversation with text-based analyses of their final written portfolios. Given this article's focus on pedagogy and process, the data presented here is drawn primarily from a reflective teacher's journal and informal reflective texts my students wrote prior to creating their final texts.⁴

Central to the data addressed here is the reflective teacher's journal I kept throughout the two-semester course, which helped me capture in-class discussions and thus the way students negotiated extra-textually with my English-medium pedagogy. Though recording each class with a digital device was an option, I chose to take hand-written notes given Indonesia's geopolitical position as a country recovering from two successive dictators, Sukarno and Suharto. During these dictatorships, university folk rightfully feared that the beliefs they shared within university settings might be used against them by the government; because of this beleaguered past, I wanted to establish trust before moving to collecting digital data, which, because of its nature, might be construed as more easily disseminated than hand-written notes.⁵ To ensure as much objectivity as possible in these notes, I kept a triple-entry notebook, divided into "Discussion Notes," "Observations," and "Analysis" columns. I took hand-written notes on our class discussions as they happened in real time in the "Discussion Notes" column. Directly after class, I fleshed these out using thick description (Geertz) in the "Observations" column. I then used the "Analysis" column to put these observations into conversation with other fieldwork notes, secondary literature pertaining to Indonesia's geopolitical context, and research in the teaching of English. Following this process, I typed these notes into a master Microsoft Word document, which allowed me to code more easily across multiple entries and data sets when the time came to do so.

Though filtered through my own subjectivity and the limitations of memory, this process helped me gather data on extra-textual identity negotiation over a period of time and to reflect on some of my West-based assumptions concerning audience and genre during the course itself; as a "native speaker" of English who was trained and had worked most of her career in Western academic institutions, such reflection was important as I sought to develop a pedagogy responsive to the needs of my students.

This reflective teacher's journal also worked recursively with the in-class reflective writing activities I highlight below. I drew from my reflections about in-class discussions to create informal writing activities that deepened and complicated students' initial beliefs about language, identity and power, which in turn fed into subsequent in-class discussions. As the data below will attest, by open coding (Strauss and Corbin) my teacher's journal in relation to students' reflective texts, I was able to highlight general trends in students' *in-process* beliefs about audience and textual negotiation—a key way to locate temporal-spatial agency as it occurs prior to final textual production.

Overall, teacher ethnography helped me to make pedagogical revisions as the course progressed *and* to reflect on the course after it was concluded, a process that led to the insights concerning translingual agency this article addresses. In keeping with a translingual approach to knowledge

production, teacher ethnography helped me “move beyond product to process” to better understand the “production, reception, and circulation” of student texts both within and beyond ICRS (Canagarajah, *Translingual* 12).

Pedagogical Reflections

On a critical activity framed monolingually

Although the majority of the two-semester course I developed focused on genres commonly expected of PhD students in Religious Studies,⁶ students began by writing a critical literacy narrative. I wanted, in Kubota’s words, to have them “write about how they perceive[d] the ways in which they [wrote]...in their first languages and critically bring their perceptions to bear on the work of composing texts” in my course (21). To help them draft their texts, and to avoid promoting essentialist understandings of language and culture, I developed activities that helped students critically reflect on the multiple and co-existent “cultures” and identities they might move between as they composed their English texts. However, because these activities weren’t accompanied by overt discussions of audience and rhetorical choice, students maintained a monolingualist orientation—an orientation I wouldn’t have questioned had the faculty member discussed above not asked me, “But to whom do we have students write?,” and had I not taken the time to reflect in my teaching journal on the connections between this discussion and my curriculum.

To begin, I asked students to read Shen’s “The Classroom and the Wider Culture,” in which he contrasts the ideologies influencing Western genres with those of Chinese genres to reflect upon his difficulties acculturating to American composition practices. He explains that the personal experience and voice valued in Western writing—the “I” that “promotes individuality (and private property)” — was, in Communist China, “always subordinated to ‘We’—be it the working class, the Party, the country, or some other collective body” (460). This Chinese ideology, he argues, was reflected in Chinese genres which encouraged him to suppress the “I,” making his transition to US-based “individualist” writing practices difficult. Ultimately, he argues that writing in English meant “creating and defining a new identity and balancing it with the old identity” (466). As dated as Shen’s 1989 text is, it opened up conversations about “culture” and “identity” in class discussion, where many of my students linked practices in their Indonesian genre repertoires to the “we-centered” Chinese practices Shen outlines (5 September 2009).

However, because Shen compares only China’s and the United States’ *national* cultures, he creates a monolithic and essentialist model for students; as Ivancic and others argue, students bring multiple identities and “cultures” to their writing practices. To challenge this one-culture-equals-one-identity binary, we then discussed Swales’ definition of “discourse community,” a concept students grasped easily as the majority of students were fluent in at least three languages,⁷ as well as in the languages of their professions and academic disciplines.

Once they were comfortable with the concept, I asked students to brainstorm multiple discourse communities in which they participated and, for each, to answer the following questions:

- How do the language practices in these discourse communities interact with each other?
- And how might they interact with your writing identities in English?

This reflective writing activity spurred a lively discussion on the ways students' already-existent discourses might affect their discursal selves as they wrote in English.

As recorded in my teaching journal, when we reconvened, one student explained that he had connected his Javanese discourse community⁸ and his professional discourse community as a licensed therapist; he linked the hierarchical respect of authority in Javanese culture to what he described as a “culture of listening” in his therapist community to argue that both encouraged a more indirect notion of critique than might be expected in an “I”-centered culture. Another student put in conversation his identities as a feminist activist and Muslim imam to discuss how moving between these discourse communities might help him navigate a new, more “I-centered” English identity. Yet another contrasted her experiences studying abroad in Hawaii and her experiences with English at ICRS and the ways West-based assumptions about language mediated the texts she produced in these different countries (7 September 2009).⁹

Given these vibrant discussions, I initially deemed this assignment sequence a successful one in my teacher's journal; it highlighted for students the notion that language *is* culture while simultaneously making Western genre norms explicit, and it also encouraged students to think about discourses as co-existent—a step towards helping students build bridges between their existing discourse practices and the ones I planned to introduce in the class.

It wasn't until the next day, after the meeting where my Indonesian colleague asked me “But to whom do we have students write?” that I realized this sequence might be construed as very West-oriented and monolingualist in nature because we didn't explicitly discuss which English-using audience students might reach with their knowledge, and with that, the possibility that they might negotiate with textual form depending on the rhetorical situations they imagined. Shen's focus is very “East writing to West” and unidirectional, probably because he writes as a US immigrant; though he urges teachers to make the connections between composition practices and ideology explicit, his overall argument is that this might better help students create an English identity that can assimilate to Western practices. Similarly, because we didn't explicitly discuss audience in the discourse community activity, I realized it might have been interpreted as an activity meant to locate and “fix” students' non-Western textual moves when they bled into their English texts—to make it easier to adopt the Western identity Shen embraces.

This activity sequence, upon reflection, took a monolingualist approach to genre and audience. As evidenced by my colleague's question, such a unidirectional, East converting to West approach to English writing is challenged by ICRS's positionality as an Indonesian yet international site. It is problematic to link one language to one discourse—in this case, English to the West—without considering audience and the fact that English is capable of appropriation and re-articulation by non-Western writers. My research approach helped me to reflect on these particular West-based assumptions, which, as the next section will explore, led me to more explicitly incorporate discussions of audience and textual negotiation into the course.

On Western academic genre conventions and rhetorical agency

For the remainder of the course, I developed activities that allowed for the possibility that students' Indonesian audiences might dictate the way they negotiated Western genre conventions in English. Given expectations that I would teach students genres necessary to English-using Religious Studies scholars, many of these activities involved pairing short critical reflective writing activities with explicit genre instruction and discussions about textual negotiation. These activities both elicited vibrant class discussions *and* highlighted the limitations of locating rhetorical agency solely in the genre moves students chose to make.

An activity sequence I developed for a research article unit illustrates this claim. Given my initial West-centered framing, openly discussing the question of audience with the graduate students in my class seemed imperative. Therefore, to begin this unit, I asked students to do a reflective writing activity in response to these questions:

- Who do you imagine as your English-using audience for this paper?
- And what country or countries does this audience come from?

Students' answers to these questions point to the important role Indonesian audiences played in their composing processes: four of the five students¹⁰ taking part in the activity reported that they imagined Indonesian audiences, with only one imagining a Western audience because, he explained, "English is a Western language."

One student, for example, imagined a local ICRS audience for his paper, and explained his reasoning as follows:

The academic audience whom I imagine as I write my paper are my teacher and my classmates here at ICRS... I don't have any imagination to talk to American people or Australian people over there...I feel difficult to write when I imagine Western people because I don't know their context. That's why it's better for me to imagine my people, my friends, imagine my intimate audience here...

His desire for an intimate audience was echoed by two other peers, who both imagined Indonesian graduate students as their audiences. In the words of one, "In my paper, I would like to address it to university students at any level...Since I am from Indonesia, my audience is from Indonesia, too."

Besides the student who imagined a Western audience, only one student imagined an audience that was significantly wider than ICRS, though this audience was still Indonesian. He wrote:

This paper is intended to the audience who comes from all parts of Indonesia whose English is very good... They belong to intellectual groups of people who come from... outstanding universities in Indonesia and they are the audiences who are accustomed to do religious dialogues.

He imagines a broader Indonesian academic audience as he composes, but notably one with "good English" rather than the more Western audience suggested by English's origins.

That the majority of students chose to imagine an embodied audience of real Indonesian people they knew—as opposed to imagining advanced academic literacy as an interaction with significant *texts* in the field—could be symptomatic of students' identities as novice academics seeking to enter a conversation where they felt less than authoritative (see Irene Clark). To return to Ivanić's terms, because they were uncomfortable with the "discoursal selves" expected of them when writing in

English—whether because of cross-cultural differences or being new to the field—it could have felt more comfortable imagining an intimate, embodied audience as they sought to construct “self as author,” at least for the time being. However, that they were writing as Indonesians in an Indonesian context also could have influenced these target audiences. As I’ll discuss in more detail below, many of these students were engaging in advanced academic literacy not just to engage *textually* in larger academic conversations, but to use their *knowledge*, regardless of genre or language, to foster concrete social change for real people in their Indonesian communities.

Given that the majority of students imagined Indonesians as their target audiences in this class activity further reinforced the importance of considering audience and textual negotiation when framing this research article assignment. Therefore, the next activity sequence I introduced paired explicit genre instruction with a discussion of critical negotiation.

I first introduced students to John Swales’ CARS (Create a Research Space) Model, which outlines common moves in Western academic introductions (Swales and Feak, “Academic”). We then went over a list of common Western academic genre features compiled by Swales and Feak in their *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, which aligned—albeit with more specificity—with Shen’s article in the prior unit.

In addition, to avoid the monolingualist approach the literacy narrative unit took, we also discussed the following excerpt from Canagarajah’s *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students*: “It is possible in critical writing for multilingual students to tap the resources of English and use it judiciously to represent the interests of their communities. An uncritical use of the language, on the other hand, poses the threat of making the individual and community prone to linguistic domination” (17). This excerpt fostered a discussion that drew from the identity work students had done in their literacy narrative unit and highlighted their complicated beliefs about assimilating to Western norms as Indonesian writers.

An excerpt from my teaching journal reads as follows:

One woman talked about power and the English language and how it eradicated other ways of thinking. They must learn English and its ways of being, she explained, because they wanted to do well in school. I asked if assimilation was the only option and students had mixed reactions—one student argued they should just be aware of audience, and that he could keep two identities, like Shen, and switch in between them. Other students said it was complicated because sometimes the languages mixed with each other—English bled into Indonesian writing practices and vice versa, showing they had mixed identities. Another student then brought up linguistic standardization and that Standard English rules were often enforced by instructors unaware of the “cultural aspect” of language. Yet another student thought that they should be able to write in an Indonesian way to Indonesian people (16 November 2009).

This excerpt highlights that when given designated space within the classroom to do so, students were ready to discuss ways they might negotiate audience and textual identity when engaging with English genres. That students were so ready to engage in this discussion indicates their already existent translanguaging orientations towards knowledge and the importance of making space for such

extra-textual conversations in the classroom.

Given the vibrancy of this discussion, it seemed important to move toward ways students might take agency in the actual texts they wrote. Since students were getting their degrees in Religious Studies, I assigned for homework Mahboob's "English as an Islamic Language: A Case Study of Pakistani English," where he shows how English language textbooks written in Pakistan incorporate Islamic sayings—in their original Arabic—despite being written primarily in English, what translingual scholars would term "code-meshing."

To help frame discussion of the rhetorical moves Mahboob highlights, in class we discussed another excerpt from Canagarajah's *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students* in which he outlines ways multilingual writers might negotiate dominant English language forms:

- *Accommodation*: following the rules and assimilating to dominant language forms, even if at the expense of one's own beliefs or linguistic traditions.
- *Opposition*: ignoring the rules by refusing to adopt any dominant practices because they are against one's own beliefs or linguistic traditions.
- *Appropriation*: bending the rules and negotiating between one's own linguistic traditions and dominant language forms; in Canagarajah's words, "Although [writers using this technique] establish a discourse counter to that of the dominant conventions, they still establish a point of connection with the established genre conventions" (Critical 116).

Taken together, these texts spurred a lively discussion about the risks and rewards linked to accommodation, opposition, or, in the case of code-meshed texts like the ones Mahboob explores, appropriation of dominant norms.

Here is an excerpt from that day's teaching journal:

One student asked [in relation to Canagarajah's heuristic], "Which do you think is the easiest to do?" I threw the question back at the class and another student replied that accommodation is the easiest because you "don't have to think." Another student said that emotionally, though, accommodation was more difficult, even if writing in this way was easier, because of cultural differences. Another student countered and said that opposition might be easiest because you can do whatever you want without taking into consideration genre requirements. The student who asked which was the easiest ended the discussion with, "sometimes it is very hard to do when you are new to writing" (18 November 2009).

From this extra-textual interaction, it is clear that students were working through the relationship between genre and textual identity negotiation—and that they had different views concerning the feasibility of code-meshing and genre-bending.

Furthermore, as the final student suggests, critical appropriation—at least at the textual level—might take time for people "new to writing" in English, an argument for considering agency from a spatial-temporal framework. That seemed to be the case as we moved to our next activity, which was meant to bridge this discussion with choices they might make in their own texts to reach specific audiences.

To link back up to the first reflective assignment in the unit—and to catch up those students who had missed the opening activity—we once again brainstormed as a class multiple English-using

audiences that might benefit from their research projects. Students came up with the following list: Amber as instructor; Indonesian instructors at ICRS; Indonesian English-users; Western Academic Audience; and Southeast Asian Academic Audience.¹¹

Though their monolithic conceptions of audience might be considered problematic given the complexity of our global academic conversations, I did want students to take agency and define their own rhetorical situations for this assignment. Therefore, I asked students to choose one of these audiences and to reflect on the following questions in relation to that audience:

- Why might you share your research with this audience?
- What info can you assume they know? What info do they need to know?
- What kind of textual identity will you convey?
- How might you begin your text? What writing moves might you use?

Similar to their work in the first activity, most students (nine out of ten this time) chose to write about and address their texts to Indonesian audiences.

Notably—at least in hindsight—the discussion this activity spurred indicated that students were more interested in the first two content-based questions than the final two genre-based questions. Students were particularly interested in the way that they might transmit Indonesian Religious Studies content from local to global audiences and vice-versa. One student, for example, shared how her research on Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) might be important to share with Western audiences, but it would be “old news” to Indonesian audiences. Another student also drew from our previous discussion of the CARS model to postulate that putting Indonesian voices into conversation with Western ones might be a way to add new information to global conversations (22 November 2009). Knowledge itself, rather than form, took primacy in this discussion.

Though I viewed this discussion as productive, I still wanted to help students link their genre choices to the audiences they were imagining before they began crafting their texts. Therefore, I asked them to do one more reflective writing activity, where I asked:

- Do you think it’s OK to deviate from the CARS model? Why or why not?
- And for what reasons might you do so?

This reflective activity highlighted that although most students believed it was appropriate to deviate from the CARS model, they thought that assimilation to Western norms was their best choice—for the time being.

One student, for example, wrote:

I think it is fine to deviate from the CARS model as long as we have supportive knowledge to do it. However, I will not deviate *at this time* since I think this model is easy to understand as a new English writer and also fluid if I want to later on. We can follow the model but we can still be creative in doing it. The reasons for wanting to deviate, I think, are the different nature of academic culture, audience and purposes (my emphasis).

This student signals her belief that it is acceptable to deviate when considering different cultures and audiences, but because she is so new to academic writing in English, she won’t deviate yet. Another student pointed to the model’s newness as his reason for assimilating: “I think CARS model is really new for me and it can enrich me how to create a research space.” These students see the CARS model

as a “fluid” heuristic, and as a way to “enrich” their existent rhetorical repertoires. In keeping with a translingual orientation, rather than viewing this Western model in an either/or relationship with their existing linguistic traditions, these students view it as another part of their toolkit that they might draw from again—or challenge—in the future. For now, though, these students chose to assimilate, regardless of the audience they imagined.

Other students, however, pointed to power and to English’s ties to the West as their reason for assimilating. One student wrote, “It is hard to deviate from CARS because it is such a ‘universal guide’ in Western research writing. I do not want to deviate. I just want to follow this model. Maybe in a perfectly new territory, it can be deviated.” Though signaling the possibility for new rhetorical situations to expand textual possibilities, he has no desire to deviate because of the CARS model’s “universalized” acceptance in English conversations long linked to the West. Another student echoed this belief that deviation from dominant norms can be difficult: “The risks for deviating from the CARS is our research is likely to be considered as non-academic.” Power matters, particularly to these novice academics.

Thus, although aware of English’s ties to Western ideology, and that they might negotiate with Western norms to reach their imagined Indonesian audiences, students were willing—for now—to assimilate: a testament, it could be argued, to the West’s power to define “good English;” to their own identities as new graduate students wanting to try out a new genre prior to challenging it; and to a translingual orientation towards language use that positions new genres as additive, rather than subtractive. That we began the course with a unit that assumed a de-facto Western audience and that they were being evaluated by a “native speaker” might also have spurred their decisions, despite my efforts to revise the course in a way that encouraged critical negotiation with audience and genre conventions.

Were these critical genre activities, then, a waste of time? No. These conversations about textual form and audience weren’t meant to forward a particular, “correct” way to negotiate English genres; rather, they were meant to encourage students to make conscious rhetorical choices as they wrote their “discoursal selves” into English. And my students *chose* to assimilate in their research articles, regardless of their intended Indonesian audiences, at least for the time being. As Bawarshi suggests, in a translingual world, agency is located not in the final product, but in the writer’s choices as she negotiates “memory, emotion, [her] sense of self, available discursive and linguistic resources, embodied dispositions, [and] histories of engagement” (Bawarshi 247) in her particular historical moment. Assimilation *can* be a critical choice. In addition, as some students indicated, “assimilating for now” does not preclude writers from making different choices in the future as the translingual “river” (Pennycook, *Language* 35) shifts around them.

Furthermore, in hindsight I realize that students’ preference for discussing the ways their

“These conversations about textual form and audience weren’t meant to forward a particular, “correct” way to negotiate English genres; rather, they were meant to encourage students to make conscious rhetorical choices as they wrote their “discoursal selves” into English. And my students chose to assimilate in their research articles, regardless of their intended Indonesian audiences, at least for the time being.”

Indonesian *knowledge* might contribute to global conversations points to the limitations of a pedagogy that links agency solely to negotiations with textual form. From a translingual perspective, populating a conventional English-medium literature review with Indonesian knowledge—or vice versa— could also be considered a form of code-meshing. Though I didn't cue into it at the time, students' vibrant discussion about the role that Indonesian knowledge might play in expanding global conversations about religion points to the importance of moving past a focus on academic product and towards an understanding of the ways that knowledge itself circulates across languages, audiences, and genres."

On academic product versus translingual circulation

Indeed, students were concerned with more than what their *academic* texts looked like in the translingual spaces at ICRS; they were just as concerned with how the *knowledge* they accessed through English might reach the Indonesian public, whether in English or Indonesian. As Ringer and DePalma argue in their "Theory of Adaptive Transfer," when considering multilingual writing practices it is important to look past textual production to the ways students "reuse and reshape prior writing knowledge to fit new contexts" (135). To understand knowledge production in a translingual world, we must look past textual form to the "circulation" of ideas across languages and rhetorical situations (Canagarajah, *Translingual* 16).

Prior to enrolling at ICRS, most of my students were activists in their local communities, working with various Indonesian NGOs to forward such issues as religious tolerance, women's rights, and community literacy. As my pedagogy developed, I began to reflect in my teacher's journal on the way students' work on the ground fed into their academic scholarship, making me question my initial assumption that the only genres they would need to write would be academic in nature, scope, and audience. This assumption forwarded a one-way, extractive relationship, where students' community activism fed into their scholarly work, but not vice-versa. This realization, and mid-year evaluations requesting more "public" texts, spurred me to incorporate non-academic genres into my pedagogy. One of the most popular of these assignments (according to final evaluations) was the opinion piece, in which I asked students to revise the research article they produced in the unit described above to reach a public audience of their choice.

Given that the course was English-medium and that most students preferred to write to Indonesian audiences, it's not surprising that all nine students taking part in my study chose to write opinion pieces for the English-medium *Jakarta Post*. To help students critically reflect on their rhetorical choices as they moved between academic and public audiences, I asked them submit a cover letter with their final texts that addressed the following questions:

- What public audience do you wish to reach with your research? Point to a specific publishing forum.

- Why do you think it's important that this audience read your work?
- What decisions did you make to target this audience?
- Overall, these cover letters indicated that when writing in English for a *public* Indonesian audience, students were more likely to code-mesh.

For example, one student chose to write about the lack of pre-natal care in Indonesia. She pointed in her cover letter to her choice to include the Islamic phrase “Innalillahi wa Innalillahi rojiun” in its original Arabic: “I include this phrase in my JP opinion piece because usually if we Indonesians have sad tragedies, we always say it. It means that everything is from God and everything goes back to God. I don’t include it in my research article because of some in my academic audience not being aware of Muslim sayings.” This choice to code-mesh in her piece shows a translingual rhetorical awareness and her willingness to code-mesh Arabic into her English pieces, particularly when writing in English to the Indonesian public. She could also have been taking a cue from our previous discussion of code-meshing in Pakistani textbooks (Mahboob).

Moreover, several students also chose to translate their opinion pieces, which were essentially already “translations” of the work they’d done in their research articles, from English to Indonesian—on their own time. Students’ choice to revise their knowledge across genre and language multiple times—for class activities and to serve extra-curricular purposes— indicates that rather than focusing solely on academic form as a site of identity negotiation and critical agency, we should also take into consideration the ways writers negotiate *knowledge* procured through English to serve non-English audiences, and vice-versa.

The student whose code-meshing I just highlighted was one of these writers. She explained her choice to revise and re-signify her knowledge in this way:

My opinion piece is not only academic information, but also personal experience. I also want to share this academic information to reach many Indonesian women who can read my article, and the personal makes it more interesting. That’s why I rewrote it in Bahasa Indonesia and put on Facebook.¹²

As this student indicates, for many of my students, it wasn’t just what their academic texts looked like, but what their knowledge *did* in the community that mattered most. Rhetorical agency happens not just *within* students’ academic texts, but as they appropriate and circulate knowledge to the multiple and diverse audiences in their lives, across multiple genres and languages—and as time unfolds. Broadening the lens to account for such negotiation, as scholars espousing a translingual approach to agency argue, is quite important when considering the ways that knowledge garnered through English is actually being *used* on a global scale.

And the pedagogical choices instructors make should account for such negotiation. Though the pedagogy outlined above initially began in a “monolingualist” way, my revisions in the research article unit and students’ real-time interactions with these revisions indicate that the course *did* encourage students to think critically about genre, audience, and the possibility they might take agency to challenge Western genre conventions. That said, as I step back and reflect on the course as a whole, I do think that the research article unit I developed positioned rhetorical agency as over-tyed to the *textual* moves students might make to challenge Western genre norms; in hindsight, I

should have paid just as much attention to students' interest in negotiating Western and Indonesian *knowledge* as they constructed their literature reviews. We might have discussed at more length, for

“Regardless, given classroom politics, we as instructors should help students feel invited to make conscious choices to assimilate—or not—to the genre conventions we introduce them to. In addition, though, we must broaden the lens to address other ways students might take agency in our translingual world: critical agency might manifest itself in oral communication but not in students’ final texts as the discussion excerpts from my teaching journal indicate, and it might manifest itself in the ways students choose to populate what seem to be “normative” texts with knowledge they draw from their local language communities.”

example, whose voices are most often seen in English-medium literature reviews and why—and ways they might put knowledge written in Indonesian in conversation with overly-represented Western voices to reach and teach different audiences with their English texts. Rather than focusing solely on academic form as a site of identity negotiation, scholars should consider the ways writers negotiate *knowledge* procured through English to serve non-English audiences, and vice-versa.

That said, given my experiences teaching in Indonesia, I *do* still think we should invite conversations about code-

meshing and genre bending into our classrooms. The fact that the student above (and others) chose to code-mesh in her opinion piece could be linked to the discussions we had in prior units, or to an already existent translingual orientation—or to both. Regardless, given classroom politics, we as instructors should help students feel invited to make conscious choices to assimilate—or not—to the genre conventions we introduce them to. In addition, though, we must broaden the lens to address other ways students might take agency in our translingual world: critical agency might manifest itself in oral communication but not in students' final texts as the discussion excerpts from my teaching journal indicate, and it might manifest itself in the ways students choose to populate what seem to be “normative” texts with knowledge they draw from their local language communities.

Possible Implications for US Graduate Writing Pedagogies

Though the data highlighted above is specific to one Indonesian literacy site, I hope this small glimpse into my students' linguistic negotiations might encourage teacher scholars working in the US to develop graduate pedagogies that more openly address the translingual world our students navigate. Though further research needs to be done on the efficacy of such pedagogies in U.S. contexts, to me, challenging West-centered, monolingualist assumptions regarding knowledge production in graduate classrooms seems vitally important in US universities where graduate populations are increasingly comprised of domestic *and* international, monolingual *and* multilingual writers. To that end, I'll conclude with some ways my Indonesian research *might* inform US-based pedagogies.

Taking a translingual approach in US graduate writing pedagogies (where they exist)¹³ might involve first asking students to whom they wish to write, and in what languages they wish to reach these audiences, rather than just assuming a monolithic Western academic audience as default, as I

initially did at ICRS. Even if students do end up choosing to write to a Western academic audience in English, starting with these questions might expand students' understanding of the rhetorical situations they might engage with in the future—whether academic or public— while also de-centering English as the only language of academic knowledge circulation (see Horner, NeCamp, and Donahue).

Furthermore, engaging graduate students in activities where they explore the multiple linguistic communities and genres they *already* navigate, whether in English or not, and then asking them to critically reflect on ways these language communities intersect with advanced academic literacy might create a future cadre of global scholars who, rather than assuming a de-facto Western academic audience when writing in English, instead make conscious choices to tailor their texts to fit audience, context, and the identity they wish to portray. Such activities would position these burgeoning academics as agentive co-constructors of knowledge, rather than mere emulators of it.

Encouraging students to view their non-academic language communities as intersecting with, rather than separate from, their academic contexts might also help them connect their academic lives to advancing the “public good.” As Richard Ohmann has argued, teaching graduate students to write effectively should involve more than inculcating them into narrow, discipline-specific communities; enculturating graduate students should involve cultivating the “concern about social problems” (248) that spurred many to apply to graduate school in the first place. One way to do that could be to help students re-imagine knowledge production as a translingual process, where they might strategically move knowledge drawn from their local communities into their academic texts, and vice-versa. Students should feel invited to move between different genres, audiences, and languages as they negotiate and produce knowledge—whether this knowledge is drawn from community work that engages in different “Englishes” or whether it’s drawn from entirely different language communities, as in the case of my Indonesian students. And we must learn to recognize this translanguaging as agentive, regardless of the final form students’ texts take.

To conclude, though the bridge I’ve constructed between my Indonesian research site and U.S. graduate writing classrooms is purely hypothetical at this point, I do believe creating space for conversations about language, culture, and power in our linguistically diverse US graduate classrooms might help students negotiate the tensions involved with (re)writing their identities as burgeoning “academics.” And just as importantly, such a pedagogy might help them take agency to re-write the global academic conversation in a way that assumes global connection across difference as the norm, rather than the exception.

Notes

¹A note on terms: I use the term “periphery” to indicate global literacy contexts that exist at the periphery of geopolitical power (see Canagarajah’s *Geopolitics*). That said, when referring to what might be termed “center” contexts, I instead use the term “Western” because that was the term most often used by my research participants; for the same reason, I use the term “native-speaking” to indicate dominant Western language practices.

²English for Specific Purposes is an umbrella term for genre-based ways of teaching non-native speakers of English. Some examples: English for Academic Purposes (EAP); English for Occupational Purposes (EOP); and English for Medical Purposes (EMP).

³ Although I conducted this research project simultaneous to the duties outlined in my ELF contract, which stipulated curriculum development and teaching responsibilities, my research was separate from those duties and in no way sponsored by the US Department of State.

⁴ All nine students in my English Writing class agreed to participate in my research, in addition to several faculty members, one of whom I’ve discussed already. Given the power differentials inherent in teacher research—for instance, the possibility that students’ grades would be affected by their (non)participation in my research—obtaining informed consent to gather data was a several-step process. Obtaining permission to record research notes in a teacher’s journal involved the office manager at ICRS distributing informed consent forms and keeping them locked away until final grades were submitted to ensure I was unaware of who had agreed to participate. Although still allowed to take notes in my teaching journal, only information from those students who chose to participate could be included in my research. Obtaining consent for student writing activities was similar to that for the teacher journal. Although I could read student texts *as a teacher* throughout the course, *as a researcher* I had to wait until the course was done before analyzing students’ complete portfolios.

⁵ It was only after a year of hand-written data collection and after final grades were submitted that I chose to use a digital recording device for the semi-structured interviews I did with students.

⁶ Genres I taught included texts they would be asked to write as graduate students, such as the response paper, the literature review, and the research proposal; genres that would allow them to spread their knowledge to a wider academic audience, such as the research article and conference paper; and, given students’ interest in social justice, genres that would help them reach the Indonesian public, such as the opinion piece.

⁷ There are 418 distinct languages within the country, and most Indonesians speak Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, in addition to at least one local language, making the majority of the population multilingual (Lowenberg, 1992).

⁸ As the most-populated and powerful of Indonesia’s 17,000 or so islands, Java was perceived by most students as having a culture distinct from the broader, more diverse national “culture” implied by Indonesia as a nation-state.

⁹ Given its focus on extra-textual and in-process negotiation, this article mainly discusses the processes prior to students’ final textual products; for a more thorough text-based analysis of students’ literacy narratives, please see my article, “The Hands of God at Work: Negotiating Between Western and Religious Sponsorship in Indonesia.”

¹⁰ My teacher’s journal notes that it was an Islamic holiday that day, which accounted for the fact that four students were absent.

¹¹ This student-generated list, as we can see, ignores the fact that audience might be comprised of a mixed group of people, something the initial reflective writing activity in this unit tried to address by asking them "Which country *or countries* [might your audience] come from?" Students' rather monolithic understanding of audience could be indicative of their positionalities as novice academics exploring the concept of audience for the first time; since few had taken courses explicitly devoted to writing and rhetoric—either in English or in their home languages— it was probably easier for them to imagine a monolithic audience for the time being.

¹² Postcolonial leaders adopted Bahasa Indonesia, a version of Malay, as Indonesia's official language in their efforts to unify the nation after the Dutch colonizers were forced out; they viewed it as a neutral and fair choice because it was a non-native language for everyone in the linguistically diverse archipelago. Though Bahasa Indonesia is the only official language, provisions were also made in the Constitution to preserve the islands' rich linguistic diversity. In many regions, children are taught in their home languages for several years before Bahasa Indonesia is introduced, and, during the rest of their education, classes in local languages are offered. Governmental mandates for the preservation of local languages as well as the national language, Lowenberg argues, encouraged the language's success, while also assuring that the majority of Indonesians are multilingual (71).

¹³ As Micciche and Carr argue, there certainly are not enough programs that explicitly teach graduate-level writing practices.

Works Cited

- Bawarshi, Anis. "Beyond the Genre Fixation: A Translingual Perspective on Genre." *College English* 78.3 (2016): 243-49. Print.
- . *Genre and the Invention of the Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2003. Print.
- Bazerman, Charles. "Genre and Cognitive Development: Beyond Writing to Learn." *Genre in a Changing World*. Eds. Charles Bazerman, Adair Bonini, and Débora Figueiredo. Fort Collins: WAC Clearinghouse, 2010. Print.
- Benesch, Sarah. *Critical English for Academic Purposes: Theory, Politics, and Practice*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001. Print.
- Canagarajah, Suresh. "Codemeshing in Academic Writing: Identifying Teachable Strategies of Translanguaging." *The Modern Language Journal* 95.3 (2011): 401-17. Web. 10 Feb. 2016.
- . *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*. Pennsylvania: U of Pittsburgh P, 2002. Print.
- . *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002. Print.
- . "Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Languages: Learning from Multilingual Writers." *College English* 68.6 (2006): 589-604. Print.
- . *Translingual Practices: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. London: Taylor and Francis, 2012. Print.
- Connor, Ulla. "Mapping Multidimensional Aspects of Research." *Contrastive Rhetoric: Reaching to Intercultural Rhetoric*. Eds. Ulla Connor, Ed Nagelhout, William V. Rozycki. New York: John Benjamin's Publishing, 2008. Print.
- Clark, Irene. *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009. Print.
- Coe, Richard. "The New Rhetoric of Genre: Writing Political Beliefs." *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*. Ed. Ann M. Johns. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002. 197-210. Print.
- Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. *The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Literacy*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1993. Print.
- Devitt, Amy. "Teaching Critical Genre Awareness." *Genre in a Changing World*. Eds. Charles Bazerman, Adair Bonini, and Débora Figueiredo. Fort Collins: WAC Clearinghouse, 2010. Print.
- Devitt, Amy, Anis Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff. *Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres*. London: Longman, 2004. Print.
- Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy." *CCC* 35.2 (1984): 155-71. Web. 10 Feb. 2016.
- Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1983. Print.
- Halasek, Kay. *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1999.
- Heath, Shirley B., and Brian V. Street. *On Ethnography: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research*. New York: Teachers College P, 2008. Print.
- Horner, Bruce, Samantha NeCamp, and Christiane Donahue. "Toward a Multilingual Composition Scholarship: From English Only to a Translingual Norm." *CCC* 63.2 (2011): 269-300. Print.
- Horner, Bruce, and Min-Zhan Lu. "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency" *College English* 75.6 (2013): 582-607. Print.
- Horner, Bruce, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur. "Language Difference in Writing: Towards a Translingual Approach." *College English* 73.3 (2011): 303-21. Print.
- Hyland, Ken. "Genre Pedagogy: Language, Literacy, and L2 Writing Instruction." *Journal of Second*

- Language Writing* 16 (2007): 148–64. Web. 10 Feb. 2017.
- Institute of International Education. "Open Doors 2016: Report on International Educational Exchange." National Press Club, Washington, DC. Web. 5 March 2017.
- Introducing ICRS-Yogya: A Portrait of an International Graduate Program in Inter-religious Studies*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, 2009. Print.
- Ivanic, Roz. *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*. New York: John Benjamin's Publishing, 1998. Print.
- Kubota, Ryuko. "Toward Critical Contrastive Rhetoric." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13 (2004). 7-27. Print.
- Language Policy. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, 2009. Print.
- Li, Xiaoming. "Learning to Write a Thesis with an Argumentative Edge." *Learning the Literacy Practices of Graduate School: Insiders' Reflections on Academic Enculturation*. Ed. Christine Pearson Casanave. MI: U of Michigan P, 2008. Print.
- Lillis, Teresa M., and Mary Jane Curry. *Academic Writing in a Global Context: The Politics and Practices of Publishing in English*. London: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- Lowenberg, Peter H. "Language Policy and Language Identity in Indonesia." *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* 3.1 (1992): 59-77. Print.
- Lu, Min-Zhan. "Metaphors Matter: Transcultural Literacy." *JAC* 29.1-2 (2009): 285-94. Print.
- . "Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone." *CCC* 45.4 (1994): 442-58. Print.
- Mahboob, Ahmar. "English as an Islamic Language: A Case Study of Pakistani English." *World Englishes* 28.2 (2009): 175-89. Web. 15 Mar. 2016.
- McCool, Matthew. *Writing Around the World: A Guide to Writing Across Cultures*. London: Continuum, 2009. Print.
- Micchiche, Laura, and Allison D. Carr. "Toward Graduate-Level Writing Instruction." *CCC* 62.3 (2011): 477-501. Print.
- Nunan, David. "Action Research in the Language Classroom." *Second Language Teacher Education*. Eds. Jack C. Richards and David Nunan. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- Ohmann, Richard. "Graduate Students, Professionals, Intellectuals." *College English* 52.3 (1990): 247-57. Print.
- Pennycook, Alistair. *Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. London and NY: Longman, 1994. Print.
- . *Language as a Local Practice*. London: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- . "Vulgar Pragmatism, Critical Pragmatism, and EAP." *English for Specific Purposes* 16 (1997): 253-69. Web. 10 Feb. 2016.
- Phillipson, Robert. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. Print.
- Ringer, Jeffrey M., and Michael-John DePalma. "Toward a Theory of Adaptive Transfer: Expanding Disciplinary Discussions of 'Transfer' in Second-language Writing and Composition Studies." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 20.2 (2011): 134–47. Web. 10 Feb. 2016.
- Shen, Fan. "The Classroom and the Wider Culture: Identity as a Key to Learning English Composition." *CCC* 40.4 (1989): 459-66. Web. 10 Feb. 2016.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research*. Vol. 15. Newbury Park: SAGE, 1990. Print.
- Stringer, Ernest T. *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1996. Print.
- Swales, John. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- Swales, John, and Christine Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2009. Print.

You, Xiaoye. *Cosmopolitan English and Transliteracy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2016.

---. *Writing in the Devil's Tongue: A History of English Composition in China*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2010. Print.

Young, Vershawn, Rusty Barret, Y'Shanda Young-Rivera, and Kim Brian. *Other People's English: Code-Meshing, Code-Switching, and African American Literacy*. New York: Teachers College P, 2013. Print.

Research, Writing, and Writer/Reader Exigence: Literate Practice as the Overlap of Information Literacy and Writing Studies Threshold Concepts

Jerry Stinnett—Duquesne University
Marcia Rapchak—Duquesne University

KEYWORDS

information literacy, transfer, threshold concepts, exigence, metacognition

Information literacy and the skills learned in first-year composition classes have been traditionally linked both conceptually and as a matter of pedagogical design. This pairing springs not only from the fact that many of the conventions of academic writing involve the acquisition and literate manipulation of information but also from the fact that both writing and research have traditionally been figured as universal, remedial skills that function discretely and can be taught apart from the context of their use. Librarians and faculty who teach writing have collaborated in a number of ways to teach students information literacy skills relevant to researched writing. Perhaps the most common are one-time sessions, termed “one-shots” in the library literature (see Houlson; Radom and Gammons; Rinto and Cogbill-Seiders; Swoger; Watson). Online modules that faculty integrate into their courses paired with face-to-face instruction provide another method of integrating information literacy instruction into writing courses (see Kraemer, Lombardo, and Lepkowski; Shields). More developed collaboration models include librarians and writing instructors collaboratively creating learning goals and lesson plans and then team-teaching toward these goals (see Brady, Singh-Corcoran, Dadisman, and Diamond; Bowles-Terry, Davis, and Holiday; Deitering and Jameson; Patterson and McDade), as well as linking writing courses with for-credit research courses (see Alfino, Pajer, Pierce, and Jenks; Burgoyne and Chuppa-Cornell; Rapchak and Cipri). In some cases, librarians teach information literacy concepts to writing instructors, who then integrate these concepts into their own class instruction (see Sult and Mills; White-Farnham and Gardner). The most common collaborative arrangement, though, separates information literacy taught by a librarian from writing skills taught by a composition instructor. The librarian-led content, regardless of the collaboration method, is typically skills-based research strategies of identifying appropriate library resources, constructing searches, evaluating sources based on an established checklist, and citing sources correctly.¹

The notion that writing and research are simple skills or even represent a single set of practices has long been challenged by many of those who study and teach writing and information literacy. Writing practices and the pursuit, selection, and use of information have been recognized as highly rhetorical activities that depend for their form and content on the specificities of the situation in which they occur. As a result, those who teach writing and those who teach information literacy have

increasingly turned from teaching students isolated skills and have attempted instead to identify and teach those knowledges and practices that transfer across multiple contexts. In many instances, this necessarily means teaching students about writing and information literacy and how they function in context. Taking such a perspective on research and writing implicitly challenges traditional methods since “[a] fifty minute face-to-face session can focus on information retrieval but not on the more broad and complex concepts of seeking background information, identifying key terms and the exploration needed to complement the writing process in a recursive manner” (Mery, Newby, and Peng 369). Regardless, skills-based instruction, where both composition instructors and librarians discuss sources based on their attributes rather than their content, and in which students must find a certain type (generally scholarly) and often a certain number of sources, limits the ability of students to engage with the content of those sources (Bowles-Terry, Davis, and Holliday 226; Holliday and Rogers 267-68). This instruction often does not reflect the actual practice of researched writing.

Threshold concepts in writing studies and information literacy have seemed particularly promising in supporting students’ development of more sophisticated, transferable views of research and writing as these concepts typically represent what is true about writing and information literacy across all contexts. Teaching students the threshold concepts of writing studies supports learning transfer in first-year writing courses in large part because learning about composing from a disciplinary perspective represents knowledge about the rhetorical character of writing. Instead of learning a few narrowly-applicable skills or conventions, students learn disciplinary concepts and research methods that function as a form of metacognitive generalization about writing that allows student to engage in the “self-reflection, explicit abstraction of principles and alertness to one’s context” (Downs and Wardle 576) that makes transfer of learning from FYC courses possible. Since “the study of writing involves consistent analysis of relationships between contexts, purposes, audiences, genres, and conventions,” when students “learn to conduct that analysis, they are both participating in the epistemological practices of the discipline and [are] likely . . . to be more adaptable writers” (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, & Koshnick para. 3). This approach has taken various forms in writing studies pedagogical scholarship but has been advocated in some shape by a number of prominent scholars and teachers including Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, Rebecca Nowacek, Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak among others.

The disciplinary expectations for information literacy appear in the Association of College and Research Library’s (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*, which proposes six frames that allow students to shift from novice to expert researchers. This framework was inspired by the work of Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson on metaliteracy, as well as the Delphi study on information literacy threshold concepts identified by Lori Townsend, Amy Hofer, Silvia Lu, and Korey Brunetti, and encompasses the set of information literacy competencies that students of higher education should perform. The frames used to organize these competencies are:

- Authority is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value

- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

Like writing studies' threshold concepts, the frames necessitate an instructional approach that engages higher-order thinking. No longer adequate is the one-shot session where librarians cover as much information as possible about database searching, using the catalog, and identifying search terms. The IL threshold concepts preclude traditional IL instruction. Librarians must collaborate with teaching faculty on revised IL instruction that emphasizes deep engagement with information sources in a discipline. And yet, given a variety of barriers, many librarians may find that providing instruction integrated throughout the curriculum, or even instruction that reaches every student through workshops and one-shots, is impossible (Sult and Mills 370).

Such circumstances point to the need to identify overlaps between the threshold concepts of writing studies and the ACRL Framework in order to develop pedagogies that most effectively can help students acquire the higher order conceptualizations of research and composing that these new approaches support. While in their article "Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy," Townsend, Brunetti, and Hofer argue that threshold concepts demonstrate that information literacy represents distinct content knowledge (858), recent scholarship suggests that the threshold concepts of the

"We argue that coordinating writer and reader exigence functions as a practice that folds together multiple threshold concepts of both writing studies and information literacy and thereby exploits their overlaps but simultaneously reduces their acquisition to a single idea, making learning more manageable for students to learn and employ in contexts beyond the initial learning space."

ACRL Framework are inextricable from many of the threshold concepts of writing studies. The overlapping threshold concepts of IL and CS are explored in the monograph *The Future Scholar: Researching and Teaching the Frameworks for Writing and Information Literacy*, edited by Randall McClure and James P. Purdy. One chapter describes how a rhetoric and writing

instructor and a teaching and learning librarian worked together at the University of Colorado Boulder to develop learning goals in their first-year writing curriculum that integrated both the ACRL Framework and the WPA Framework, creating a program focused on inquiry and rhetorical choice (see Albert and Sinkinson). Johnson and McCracken trace the way that the frames integrate and, in fact, "ground" the threshold concepts of writing studies (182) and then briefly consider the implications of these for writing instruction. But more work on how one might approach teaching these intersecting threshold concepts must be done. As Rolf Norgaard states,

If libraries continue to evoke, for writing teachers and their students, images of the quick field trip, the scavenger hunt, the generic stand-alone tutorial, or the dreary research paper, the fault remains, in large part, rhetoric and composition's failure to adequately theorize the role of libraries and information literacy in its own rhetorical self-understanding and pedagogical practice. (124)

In this article, we argue that this work can best be accomplished by teaching students about coordinating writer and reader exigence. We argue that coordinating writer and reader exigence

functions as a practice that folds together multiple threshold concepts of both writing studies and information literacy and thereby exploits their overlaps but simultaneously reduces their acquisition to a single idea, making learning more manageable for students to learn and employ in contexts beyond the initial learning space. To demonstrate this, we begin by discussing threshold concepts generally and then identifying overlaps between the threshold concepts of writing studies and information literacy. Drawing from the work of Lloyd Bitzer, Keith Grant-Davie, and others, we then define coordinating writer and reader exigence as those aspects of a text's form, content, materiality, and circulation that signal to potential readers that a particular text is most likely to address their reasons for seeking discourse in specific situations. Helping students learn to attend to reader exigence in the collection and distribution of information as well as in the design of the texts that deliver information helps students understand a number of the threshold concepts of writing studies and information literacy by linking the concepts that guide literate consumption and production (Johnson and McCracken 191) as part of the same practice.

The Need for Expert Definitions of a Literate Practice

The focus on teaching threshold concepts in writing studies and information literacy classrooms reflects an effort to improve students' ability to write and conduct research by helping students develop a rhetorically sophisticated view of these practices. Indeed, Downs and Robertson note that one of the two primary goals of a course teaching the threshold concepts of writing studies is to challenge students' misconceptions about writing (105).² In writing studies, this takes the form of teaching students concepts *about* writing and *how* it works as a rhetorical phenomenon derived from the researched knowledge of the discipline. Downs and Wardle describe teaching concepts of writing studies as a move from "acting as if writing is a basic, universal skill to acting as if writing studies is a discipline with content knowledge to which students should be introduced, thereby changing their understandings about writing and thus changing the ways they write" (553). In a similar way, the ACRL Framework supports such a change of perspectives by reframing concepts found in the now-defunct ACRL standards like "credibility" and "finding sources" in more socially contextualized and rhetorically complex ways (i.e., "Authority is contextual and constructed" and "Research as inquiry"). By taking on the expert view represented by threshold concepts, students can excise misconceptions about research and writing that limit their understanding of and effectiveness using these practices.

Teaching threshold concepts is particularly useful for accomplishing the work of reframing student perceptions because threshold concepts represent the key or pivotal conceptualizations that define and thus represent acquisition of expertise in a given disciplinary community of practice. David Perkins describes threshold concepts as reflecting perspectives that "appear counter-intuitive, alien (emanating from another culture or discourse), or seemingly incoherent" (Perkins, "Faces" 9). As part of the particular, expert perspectives of a disciplinary community of practice, threshold concepts often challenge "commonsense" or popular ways of understanding a particular subject or practice. Rather than belonging to a discrete set of particular skills, a threshold concept is "the way in which such concepts are related, the deep-level structure of the subject which gives it coherence

and creates a shared way of perceiving that can be left unspoken” (Davies 71). Threshold concepts thus represent “gateways” through which new learners may gain specialized expert knowledge (Perkins, “Constructivism” 43), meaning that, “[a]s a consequence of comprehending a threshold concept there may thus be a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even worldview” (Meyer and Land, “Introduction” 3). By gaining this “transformative” knowledge, learners do not simply grasp a few new random concepts but experience a shift of perspective that alters their worldview in relation to a number of contexts and phenomena.

Equipped with the more expert views on writing and research represented by the perspectives of scholars of writing and information literacy, the thinking goes that students are better able to take up writing as a rhetorical act and adapt more effectively to the multiple and various writing and research situations they face in the university, the workplace, or in social and political life. But if acquiring the concepts leads to a change in practice, this means that, taken together, the concepts imply a distinct practice we would like students to embrace. We might even say, then, these concepts define researching and composing scholarly texts in very specific ways. A scholar with a complete understanding of “scholarship as [a] conversation” (ACRL Frame #5) may take up a range of approaches to research: reading scholarly sources as interconnected and responding to one another; reading academic articles with an eye for how they situate themselves within a given scholarly exchange; reading sources to determine gaps in existing scholarly exchanges on a given subject so that she might identify opportunities to make meaningful interventions in the existing discourse; or all of these. The understanding of this particular concept carries implicit suggestions about effective practice of research and writing. In other words, acquisition of threshold concepts of writing studies and acquisition of the ACRL Framework implicitly define the rhetorical practice of composing and the rhetorical practice of information literacy respectively.

This dynamic carries important implications for threshold concept pedagogies and for constructing pedagogies that make the most of the overlaps between the concepts of writing studies and information literacy. Insofar as we teach concepts to alter practice, then, students are likely to alter their practice only to the extent that they understand and can apply the concepts we are trying to help them acquire. But the character of literate practice means that a limited understanding of those concepts does not simply translate into a less polished rhetorical practice; the rhetorical deployment of information in composing is not something one can partially acquire and still practice effectively across contexts. Similarly, a student cannot recognize that information has value without understanding how the process of creating information contributes to its value, how inquiry determines the information creation process, and how this all contributes to the construction of a contextualized authority. The development of literacy is a more holistic process as Anne Beaufort has observed:

“Insofar as we teach concepts to alter practice, then, students are likely to alter their practice only to the extent that they understand and can apply the concepts we are trying to help them acquire.”

Even beginning writers must wrestle with writing process, with rhetorical/social contexts, and with genre demands, vocabulary, sentence structure, etc. These data reinforce the need

to take into account all of the knowledge components embedded within literate acts, no matter what level or social context of writing development is being examined. (24-25)

The demands that writing situations put on writers, even new writers, means that a given student's inability to acquire fully an expert perspective does not result simply in a slightly less effective but still fully rhetorical approach to writing and research. Rather, a failure to acquire a full understanding of such concepts invites a failure to approach writing and research from the rhetorically complex perspective necessary for effective composing.³

The problem is that threshold concepts are difficult to learn. As counterintuitive, alien perspectives, threshold concepts represent what Meyer and Land, drawing on the work of Perkins, refer to as "troublesome knowledge" ("Introduction" 4). The very transformative nature of threshold concepts means that, more often than not, their acquisition requires a sweeping alteration of perspective on the part of new learning involving not simply cognitive shifts, but shifts of ontological perspective that require changes to existing relationships with phenomena and even persons and involve significant cognitive and affective strain (Cousins 4). Acquiring threshold concepts involves potentially extended periods of liminality during which students cross conceptual thresholds, revert back to previous understandings, and cross over again (Meyer and Land, "Epistemological" 377). Students acquiring threshold concepts must have time not only to take up the challenging cognitive and affective work of comprehending troublesome knowledge but must have the time to pass through the extended liminality of such acquisition. As a result, it is not possible to teach all or even most of the threshold concepts of writing studies (Adler-Kassner and Wardle 8) and likely difficult even to teach students to fully grasp the 7 frames of the ACRL Framework in the short amount of time typically available for explicit literacy instruction in higher education.

Threshold concept pedagogies possess the potential to radically change students' perspectives on, and thus practices of, research and composing but also carry a high risk of not accomplishing the work for which they are intended.⁴ Even if we do this work, students must still identify and articulate the practice implied by these concepts, itself a challenge that requires more than simple mastery of the concepts themselves but an ability to deploy them to create new knowledge. So students must transform themselves *and* identify the practice implied by this transformation. That we hope to help students learn the relevant threshold concepts of writing studies and the ACRL Framework (and they are all relevant) and then work them together to improve their development and practice of disciplinary-specific writing seems like a very tall order, even for the most innovative institutional or pedagogical approach to this issue. The cognitive and affective strain of acquiring threshold concepts suggests that students will leave the course with significant limitations on their perspectives of research and composing which, because of the very nature of writing's complexity, suggests limitations for how much they are able to continue to develop those perspectives once they complete their introductory composition and/or information literacy courses.

To support student learning and transfer most effectively, then, we need to identify a means of providing students with a perspective on research and composing practice that represents a fully expert understanding but which they can acquire sufficiently during the time available to allow them to continue developing that perspective as they research and write after their introductory courses.

Fortunately, such a means is suggested by the dynamics of threshold concept approaches themselves. If teaching threshold concepts carries the potential to change students' practices of research and writing, and if a thorough acquisition of all of the threshold concepts of writing studies and the ACRL Framework would result in a genuinely rhetorical understanding of information literacy and composing in their full complexity, then an expert definition of a fully rhetorical practice of research and composing would represent the threshold concepts of writing studies and information literacy respectively. In other words, it might be possible to teach the expert perspectives necessary to ensure a fully adaptable, transferable approach to rhetorical research and writing by more explicitly teaching the outcomes that we want threshold concepts to achieve—that is, an expert definition of the literate practices of research and writing.

Such a description of the practice would need to be one that emerges from and can account for what the ACRL Framework and the threshold concepts of writing studies tell us is true about the effective practice of research and composing. Like the threshold concepts themselves, such an expert definition would need to be applicable to any and all research or writing situations. More importantly for our purposes here, such an insight suggests that we may connect the teaching of writing studies threshold concepts and the ACRL Framework by identifying and expertly defining a single literate practice implied by both. Inasmuch as the perspectives represented by the threshold concepts of writing studies and the ACRL Framework relate to an alteration of student practice, they amount to emphases on different aspects of the same literate practice. Consumption and production of discourse are not discrete acts that must be woven together artificially but are, in fact, inseparable when conceptualized rhetorically. So instructors can teach the overlap by identifying the practice that the threshold concepts of writing studies and the ACRL Framework together imply, one that attends to the conceptualization of an effective practice of research and writing that these concepts represent. We identify that practice as constructing the resolution of writer exigence through the construction of reader exigence. We will turn now to explaining what we mean by this definition and how it connects composing and research.

The Literate Practice of Constructing Exigence

While it is not only beyond the scope of this essay but also unnecessary to address each individual concept in turn when drawing out an expert definition of the practice implied by the ACRL Framework and the threshold concepts of writing studies, it can be helpful to provide an initial example to suggest the origins of the choice of expert definition affirmed here.⁵ For our purposes, the first concept of information literacy of the ACRL Framework, “Authority is Constructed and Contextual” will serve. To identify the practice implied, we can ask why it is important for a writer to establish his authority in the first place. The answer, from a rhetorical perspective, is that effectively constructing one's authority as an author in a highly contextualized way amounts to demonstrating to a particular reader that the author is someone the reader should listen to on a particular subject, someone able to address whatever caused the reader to take up the text in the first place. And, of course, the reason an author would want the reader to perceive him as an authority to be listened

to—to meet the reader’s “expectations of authority on the topic under discussion” (Johnson and McCracken 189)—is to ensure that the author will be able to achieve his purpose in writing. To couch this in more technical rhetorical terms, constructing authority is the literate practice of establishing the exigent character of a text and its author for a particular reader in order to move that reader to address or resolve the writer’s exigence for creating that text. To address how the other concepts imply this same practice, it is first necessary to define the rhetorical concept of “exigence” more explicitly. While readers may be quite familiar with the concept of exigence, we take up the concept in some detail below to emphasize those aspects of the concept that are most important for the approach we forward here.

Broadly speaking, exigence is the reason or motivation for producing and consuming discourse. Lloyd Bitzer influentially defines exigence as “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (6).⁶ In rhetorical situations, this obstacle, problem, issue that demands attention can only be addressed through the production of discourse. Rhetorical exigence in writing situations is thus defined as an issue for the writer that demands the help of the audience of readers in some fashion for its resolution or mitigation. A protest sign is likely not produced simply as an expression of the protester’s views but is typically created to convey a message to those in power or other members of the populace because these other rhetorical actors are necessary for effecting the change the protester desires. The exigence leading to the production of discourse is a policy or political event the protester wants to be addressed or altered but that requires the action of others to be involved.⁷ This example gestures to the importance of the temporal character of exigence, explained by Keith Grant-Davie when he defines exigence as answering the questions of “what has prompted the discourse, and why *now* is the right time for it to be delivered” (268, original emphasis). Exigence is the demand for the production of discourse in the present moment.

The exigence identified by the writer does not simply move the writer to produce discourse, but is, in fact, constitutive of the entire rhetorical situation that results (Vatz 157; Consigny 177). The very perception of the exigence by the writer is itself a means of defining the rhetorical situation to be addressed. Agents do not so much encounter rhetorical situations as they construct them from perceptions of particular exigencies. Grant-Davie suggests as much, describing exigence in broad terms as involving what the discourse is about, why it is needed, and what it is trying to accomplish (266-69). *How* one perceives the problem or issue needing to be addressed identifies *who* it is that is able to help address or resolve that problem or issue. For instance, if we wish to do something about people ignoring the ban on smoking within 25 feet of building entrances on campus, how we frame that problem will determine the rhetorical action to follow. Contacting the central administration to do more to enforce the ban reflects a perception of the issue that naturalizes the behavior of those ignoring the ban as inevitable, meaning that rules and enforcement are the only way to address the situation. If, however, we do not frame this behavior as inevitable, we can address those who smoke directly, suggesting incentives or appealing to their sense of fairness that the majority who does not smoke should not have to pass through it on the way to class. Exigence, then, is not simply something that exists externally to the writer but results from the writer’s interpretation.⁸ This interpretive

character places exigence “at the core of [the] situation” (Miller 157).

But while much of the scholarship on exigence focuses on the rhetor’s experience, the rhetorical character of writing situations involves audiences as well who, as readers, play a role in every part of those situations. As Grant-Davie notes in his discussion of teaching writing as a rhetorical act, “reading and writing may be seen as parallel activities involving negotiation of meaning between readers and writers. If reading is a rhetorical activity too, then it has its own rhetorical situations” (272) and these “may have their own exigences, roles, and constraints” (272). Readers, then, also have exigencies for attending to discourse, which are likewise based on perception and on external circumstances producing the need to consume discourse. These may very well be different from the perceived exigence motivating the rhetor, even when the discourse is successful. But if exigence as it pertains to the rhetor is the perception that discourse is needed and needed now—i.e. that the production of discourse will meet some need of the rhetor’s—it reflects this same character for audiences, that consuming the discourse will meet some need the audience has (required information, emotional excitement, show of respect or formality, entertainment, etc.). Written texts that accomplish the rhetor’s intentions—insofar as they require the reader’s action to accomplish those intentions—have framed the writer’s exigence for writing in terms of one or more of the reader’s exigencies for reading.⁹ But if we understand writing as a radically situated phenomenon, exigence for reading becomes far more specific than a perceived need for discourse on the part of the audience. Exigence for reading is as highly specified as it is for writing. Exigent texts meet the reader’s need for *this* text, produced by a writer having *these* qualities, addressing *this* subject, appearing in *this* form. We can go further noting that audiences are likely to look for discourses addressing a specific need in particular places meaning that even *this* path of circulation and *this* mode of delivery might be important exigencies for a given audience.

Texts, of course, signal this kind of information in a host of ways including style, formatting, the use of specific lexis, the emphasis on particular content, design elements, location, and even material composition among other things. For example, while waiting for a dental appointment, a patient reaches for a magazine to alleviate her boredom of waiting. Being a Pittsburgh Penguins fan, she reaches for the *Sports Illustrated* because she knows that its content is more likely to include information capable of alleviating her boredom than the *Better Homes and Gardens* lying next to it on the table. But she also sifts through the three different issues of *Sports Illustrated* to find the most recent one, as she has been following the Penguins and knows she is more likely to find something she does not know about their current run for a sixth Stanley Cup—something of real interest to her—in the most recent issue. Because the author’s work appears in the latest edition of *Sports Illustrated*, the reader is willing to, at least initially, allow that the author is capable of resolving her exigence (i.e., alleviating her boredom by providing relevant, reliable information about the current NHL hockey season to which she might not otherwise have access).¹⁰ The text the reader is most likely to consume in that particular reading situation is the one that most likely meets her exigence for reading in that situation.¹¹

It is important to note, however, that while the circulation and delivery have done some of the initial work of framing the author’s identity and the text as capable of addressing her exigence

for reading, the text itself must continually establish and re-establish this exigence throughout. As the *SI* article enacts the conventions of the sports column, it indicates to the reader that the author and the text are capable of addressing her exigence—that the text is exigent to the reader. Those conventions include, of course, terminology, style, formatting, and other features including subject matter and content knowledge (Beaufort 18). The fact that content is one of the features that indicates exigence suggests that other features not commonly recognized as part of establishing exigence—like arrangement and logical and stylistic transitions—are important considerations as well. Each point made by the author must indicate its connection to the exigence(s) that have drawn the reader to consume the text (or which the author has demonstrated are exigent to the reader through the text) or risk the reader dismissing the points or turning away completely. Suddenly taking up the subject of global warming in an article on the NHL playoffs will be likely not to seem exigent to the reader unless the author makes evident the connection between global warming and the NHL playoffs or the reader also finds this topic exigent.¹²

Defining the practice of research and composing as addressing writer/reader exigence thus accounts for the concepts of the ACRL Framework and those identified in *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. As writers go through the process of constructing exigence for the reader, they pass through a number of practices that tacitly affirm the concepts of the ACRL Framework. Defining research as part of the practice of resolving writer/reader exigence necessarily figures “research as strategic exploration” (Frame #6), since within this description of literate practice, research is taken up to define the exigence for writing and identify the audience’s likely exigence for reading. In academic contexts, framing the subject matter in terms that are exigent for the reader requires identifying the topics relevant to a particular community which means identifying the most relevant ways in which those topics have been discussed (Frame #5, “Scholarship as conversation”). Intervening in a way exigent to a particular disciplinary audience requires developing sufficient knowledge not only to conduct such interventions but to claim the authority to do so (Frame #1, “Authority is constructed and contextual”). Since this process demands attending to the knowledge and ways of framing that knowledge that are exigent for a particular community—i.e., recognizing that (Frame #3) “information has value”—such work requires learning about not only the knowledge itself and the sources that matter in its distribution, but also the intended audience, their values, concerns, and history. Such an approach figures research not only as an effort to support one’s own position but also necessarily frames the practice of (Frame #2) “information creation as a process” and the practice of (Frame #4) “research as inquiry.”

Writers who take up the effort to address their exigence by using a text that they have made exigent for a particular reader understand without having to explicitly articulate that:

- writing is a social and rhetorical act (Roozen 17);
- writing addresses, invokes, and/or creates audiences (Lunsford 20);
- writing expresses and shares meaning to be reconstructed by the reader (Bazerman 21);
- writing mediates activity (Russell 26);
- writing represents the world, events, ideas, and feelings (Bazerman 37);
- writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies (Scott 48);

- writing is linked to identity (Roozen 50);
- writing provides a representation of ideologies and identities (Villaneuva 57);
- text is an object outside of oneself that can be improved and developed (Bazerman and Tinberg 61);
- and reflection is critical to a writer's development (Taczak 78).

This list names only the most immediately apparent concepts in the definition offered here. Approaching research and composing as the process of constructing reader exigence to address writer exigence not only teaches students *that* writing works a particular way, but also *how* and *why*. The questions “what is my exigence for writing?”; “who can help me resolve that exigence?”; “how can I construct a text that is exigent to that audience?” guide student researcher/composers to consider continually what matters to the writer, who is the audience who will care about and can address that matter, what kind of person and text does that audience recognize as capable of addressing their exigence for reading, etc. Though student writers may not articulate these concepts explicitly, they must take them up conceptually because of the ways in which defining composing in the terms we advocate here reframe the practices of research and composing themselves as metacognitively reflective acts.

Integrating IL in FYC Through Writer Exigence Constructing Reader Exigence

This integration of the ACRL Framework and the threshold concepts of writing studies through the emphasis on exigence provides not only a method of covering multiple, difficult threshold concepts in a first-year writing course but also solves some pedagogical issues with information literacy instruction as well. Rather than separating IL from WS as its own course, which divorces the threshold concepts from the practice, or providing a superficial overview of research in a composition course, which means that students cannot grasp all the information literacy threshold concepts, teaching the practice allows for a deeper understanding of how the threshold concepts of both IL and WS are inextricable. Creating such an overlap through this kind of definition of literate practice seems likely to improve student understanding as suggested by Davies who writes that “understanding of a threshold concept might be assisted by helping students to recognise (sic) the way in which

“Teaching this practice moves first-year writing and information literacy into a course that is pedagogically feasible but also transformative..”

subject thinking about two quite different contexts (e.g. ‘gains from trade’ and ‘investment appraisal’ [in economics]) is based on a common foundation” (81). Students, when focusing on the commonalities between writing and researching

through the practice, can more readily comprehend the threshold concepts of each discipline because the two now represent different emphases on the same practice—constructing reader exigence to resolve writer exigence.

By teaching to the practice rather than the concepts, the desired change in students’ approach to composition and research for writing is explicit rather than implicit. This focus lessens the work

of teaching difficult and troublesome threshold concepts that can only be understood in practice. Asking students to adopt this practice and then asking them to metacognitively reflect on the choices they made as a writer constructing reader exigence reduces cognitive load. Students who learn the practice of constructing reader exigence may make sophisticated rhetorical choices in both how they research and how they compose. When we start with the definition of composing practice as we have described it here, genre is encountered as a malleable concept because it has been framed as serving the purpose of constructing exigence. Thus, whatever best serves to construct reader exigence in a way that addresses writer exigence is what the writer must do. Genres necessarily represent stable-for-now constructs inasmuch as such a concept matters for practice. Teaching this practice moves first-year writing and information literacy into a course that is pedagogically feasible but also transformative. While not required to become compositionists or librarians, students adopt an understanding of writing and research for writing as a process of creating the reader's exigence for reading, which can apply to different disciplines and different situations. This approach is neither remedial nor too ambitious, but instead students grasp threshold concepts through deduction rather than induction. Students learn concepts as part of the practice, allowing them to recognize how scholarship is a conversation, writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies, and other overlapping concepts from writing studies and information literacy. The practice is apprehensible, and the information literacy and writing studies threshold concepts that follow are necessary, integrative, and comprehensive.

Teaching writing as constructing reader exigence requires expertise in both writing studies and information literacy. Information literacy threshold concepts do not encompass all that is required to be an expert in librarianship (for example, they do not include information related to the organization and categorization of information, program and project management, assessment, or the development of technologies), so instructors do not need to be librarian-compositionists; instead, because of the interrelationship between producing and consuming texts, compositionists' expertise allows them to be fluent in both threshold concepts. While instructors may require librarian-led professional development in order to teach the practice in a way that draws out information literacy and writing studies threshold concepts, the praxis of a compositionist requires fluency in both.¹³ If we rely on non-experts to teach first-year writing, they may tend to focus on writing and research for a particular discipline. For example, those experts in literary studies may focus their courses on academic essay writing and researching, even when the topics do not lend themselves to the genre or research strategies. A compositionist understands how teaching the practice requires writers to reflect on the context-specific nature of writing and researching, and that literacy itself, including information literacy, is situational.

While we argue that information literacy should be and is an essential element of teaching first-year writing, given institutional realities, librarians and compositionists must work together to prepare instructors to teach the practice of writer exigence constructing reader exigence. Auten and Thomas argue that creating "metaliterate instructors" who can assist students in developing their writer-researcher identity should be the goal of professional development for first-year writing instructors (Auten and Thomas, 139). In a study of first-year writing instructors who were teaching

an information literacy course, Stinnett and Rapchak (forthcoming) found that those instructors felt that their experience with research was not adequate preparation for teaching information literacy. Asking instructors to reflect on their practice increases their metacognitive awareness of the ways in which their researched writing lives out the overlapping threshold concepts. From this perspective, they can begin to introduce students to the practice of writer exigence constructing reader exigence. Along with engaging in professional development of first-year writing instructors, librarians can play a role in crafting learning outcomes, developing curriculum, providing materials, and conducting assessment that reflect the overlapping threshold concepts.

Teaching the practice acknowledges the disciplinary knowledge needed to be a compositionist without requiring that first-year students become compositionists themselves. In integrating the IL and CS threshold concepts, teaching the practice elevates first-year writing education and information literacy instruction to focus on transferable knowledge. While a first-year writing course cannot create students who are experts, we may be able to better ensure that students will be equipped to continue developing ever more sophisticated views of writing and research by teaching them an expert definition of composing and of information literacy that accounts for the ACRL Framework and the threshold concepts of writing studies.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for providing insightful and constructive feedback that improved this article significantly as well as the editors and editorial staff for their suggestions, direction, and input in this process.

Notes

¹See Reid's annotated bibliography, "Updating the FYC-Library Partnership: Recent Work on Information Literacy and Writing Classrooms" for more resources on these collaborations.

²The other primary goal of teaching threshold concepts, related to the first, is to support the transfer of new knowledge across diverse contexts (Downs and Robertson 105).

³This is not to suggest that such acquisition is a simple, discrete act accomplished once and for all. The acquisition and application of threshold concepts is strongly characterized by liminality (Cousins 4), meaning that neophytes cross back and forth over the threshold of understanding of such concepts potentially for an extended period of time before acquisition can be said to be complete. Thus, FYC pedagogies supporting concept acquisition will likely never appear complete. But there is a difference between students' liminal acquisition of a fully sophisticated concept and a truncated understanding of such concepts that limits the sophistication of practice even in a post-liminal state of acquisition. Indeed, successfully teaching truncated concepts seems likely to extend the duration of liminality because of the slippage between the resulting limitations in the sophistication of student understanding and the complexity of actual writing situations.

⁴It is not our intention here to deny that existing research indicating that teaching students threshold concepts supports learning and learning transfer better than more traditional methods of writing. While such research suggests that teaching a form of disciplinary expertise is useful, our contention here is that exceeding what can be accomplished in a traditional writing course does not in itself indicate that teaching threshold concepts is the most effective method for teaching rhetorical perspectives on writing or supporting learning transfer.

⁵Johnson and McCracken provide a thorough exposition of the intersections of the ACRL Framework and *Naming What We Know*, along with what these intersections convey about expectations for student practice.

⁶Richard Vatz and Scott Consigny have both noted the way in which Bitzer's definition of exigency oversimplifies the concepts by presupposing the objective existence of rhetorical situations. While we generally agree with this critique (as we detail below), Bitzer's definition of exigence itself is a useful starting point for how we understand the concept as initiating discourse.

⁷This example of political rhetoric provides a fairly straightforward case of the connection between exigence and the production of discourse, though even this example is more complex than can be addressed here. But more subtle exigences work on the same dynamic—even a text that is, say, intended only to inform readers of something requires the action of readers to accomplish its task. One cannot inform readers without readers' participation.

⁸This interpretive quality of exigence goes further even than we indicate here. The very perception of having to pass through second-hand smoke as something to be avoided reflects deeply-held, culturally-specific values.

⁹Of course, writers cannot always know what exigencies draw readers to a particular text nor are those exigencies necessarily set or immutable even if they can be generally understood. The point here is not that writers must already have this knowledge to write. Rather, writers make best guesses about what is exigent for their intended audience in the face of the radical indeterminacy of writing situations. But successful texts are those in which the alignment of exigences occurs as a result of this guesswork, design, and even chance.

¹⁰Like the writer, the reader may—indeed likely has—numerous exigencies for reading, some of which drive the initial act of engaging a text and others that develop while consuming the text. In the example discussed here, the dental patient's primary exigence may be to alleviate boredom, but once the *Sports Illustrated* is spotted, additional exigencies like arming herself for the next friendly sports

argument with a friend may come into play. As these exigencies emerge, they guide what texts the reader likely will and will not spend time consuming.

¹¹ The common emphasis on “audience” in composition pedagogy is useful for helping students take a rhetorical perspective on writing, but the circumstances described here demonstrate the need to focus on “exigence” instead. As part of the writing/reading situation, audiences do not objectively exist prior to the perception of a situation that is initiated through a perception of exigence. The perception of a text as exigent creates the role of audience that the reader may then fill.

¹² But even if the new topic is one that is exigent to the reader, the author, genre, path of circulation, etc., may now no longer work to indicate that the writer is capable of addressing that particular exigence. In other words, even a reader concerned about global warming may not find a column in *Sports Illustrated* on the subject worth reading (i.e., capable of addressing the reader’s exigence in relation to that subject). The features and situation of the text may undermine the reader’s sense that the text is exigent despite its exigent subject matter.

¹³ This is not to suggest that collaboration between librarians and writing instructors is unnecessary or undesirable. Certainly librarians and writing studies experts can do much to support each other’s work. Rather, the point we hope to drive home here is that an emphasis on exigence in writing instruction requires expertise in writing studies and thus still supports the ways in which teaching disciplinary perspectives to students affirms the academic legitimacy of writing instruction labor and the compensation and institutional standing associated with such legitimacy. For more on the relationship between labor, legitimacy, and disciplinary content, see Downs and Wardle (2007) and Scott (2016).

Works Cited

- Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Elizabeth Wardle, eds. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2015. Print.
- Adler-Kassner, Linda, John Majewski, and Damian Koshnick. "The Value of Troublesome Knowledge: Transfer and Threshold Concepts in Writing and History." Special Issue: Writing and Transfer, Guest Editor: Elizabeth Wardle. *Composition Forum* 26 (2012). Web. 14 Nov. 2016.
- Albert, Michelle, and Caroline Sinkinson. "Composing Information Literacy through Pedagogical Partnerships." *The Future Scholar: Researching and Teaching the Frameworks for Writing and Information Literacy*. Eds. Randall McClure and James P. Purdy. Medford: ASIS&T, 2016. 111-27. Print.
- Alfino, Mark, et al. "Advancing Critical Thinking and Information Literacy Skills in First Year College Students." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 15.1-2 (2008): 81-98. Web. *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts with Full Text*. 16 June 2016.
- Association of College and Research Libraries. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." *American Libraries Association*, 2015. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.
- Auten, Janet G., and Alison B. Thomas. "We Are All Writer-Researchers: Connecting the Frameworks to Reimagine Teacher and Student Identities." *The Future Scholar: Researching and Teaching the Frameworks for Writing and Information Literacy*. Eds. Randall McClure and James P. Purdy. Medford: ASIS&T, 2016. 131-154. Print.
- Bazerman, Charles. "Writing Expresses and Shares Meaning to Be Reconstructed by the Reader." Adler-Kassner and Wardle 21-2.
- . "Writing Represents the World, Events, Ideas, and Feelings." Adler-Kassner and Wardle 37-8.
- Bazerman, Charles, and Howard Tinberg. "Text Is an Object Outside of Oneself that Can Be Improved and Developed." Adler-Kassner and Wardle 61-2.
- Beaufort, Anne. *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2007. Print.
- Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14. Print.
- Bowles-Terry, Melissa, et al. "'Writing Information Literacy' Revisited: Application of Theory to Practice in the Classroom." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 49. 3 (2010): 225-230. Web. 6 March 2018.
- Brady, Laura, et al. "A Collaborative Approach to Information Literacy: First-year Composition, Writing Center, and Library Partnerships at West Virginia University." *Composition Forum* 19 (2009). Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Burgoyne, Mary Beth, and Kim Chuppa-Cornell. "Beyond Embedded: Creating an Online-Learning Community Integrating Information Literacy and Composition Courses." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 41.4 (2015): 416-21. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Consigny, Scott. "Rhetoric and Its Situations." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 7.3 (1974): 175-86. Print.
- Cousins, Glynis. "An Introduction to Threshold Concepts." *Planet* 17.1 (2015): 4-5. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Davies, Peter. "Threshold Concepts: How Can We Recognise Them?" *Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge*. Eds. Jan Meyer and Ray Land. New York: Routledge, 2012. 70-84. Print.
- Deitering, Anne-Marie, and Sara Jameson. "Step by Step through the Scholarly Conversation: A Collaborative Library/Writing Faculty Project to Embed Information Literacy and Promote Critical Thinking in First Year Composition at Oregon State University." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 15.1-2 (2008): 57-79. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Downs, Doug, and Liane Robertson. "Threshold Concepts in First-Year Composition." Adler-

- Kassner and Wardle 105-21.
- Downs, Douglas, and Elizabeth Wardle. "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re) Envisioning 'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies.'" *College Composition and Communication* 58.4 (2007): 552-84. Print.
- Holliday, Wendy, and Rogers, Jim. "Talking About Information Literacy: The Mediating Role of Discourse in a College Writing Classroom." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 13.3 (2013): 257-71. Web. 16 June 2016.
- Houlson, Van. "Getting Results from One-Shot Instruction: A Workshop for First-Year Students." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 14.1 (2007): 89-108. Web. 16 June 2016.
- Grant-Davie, Keith. "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents." *Rhetoric Review* 15.2 (1997): 264-79. Print.
- Johnson, Brittney, and I. Moriah McCracken. "Reading for Integration, Identifying Complementary Threshold Concepts: The ACRL Framework in Conversation with Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies." *Communications in Information Literacy* 10.2 (2016): 178-98. Web. 7 June 2017.
- Kraemer, Elizabeth W., Shawn V. Lombardo, and Frank J. Lepkowski. "The Librarian, the Machine, or a Little of Both: A Comparative Study of Three Information Literacy Pedagogies at Oakland University." *College & Research Libraries* 68.4 (2007): 330-42. Web. 16 June 2016.
- Lunsford, Andrea A. "Writing Addresses, Invokes, and/or Creates Audiences." Adler-Kassner and Wardle 20-1.
- Mackey, Thomas P., and Trudi E. Jacobson. "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy." *College & Research Libraries* 72.1: (2010): 62-78. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Mery, Yvonne, Jill Newby, and Ke Peng. "Why One-Shot Information Literacy Sessions Are Not the Future of Instruction: A Case for Online Credit Courses." *College & Research Libraries* 73.4 (2011): 366-77. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Meyer, J. H. F., and Ray Land. "Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge: An Introduction." *Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge*. Eds. Jan Meyer and Ray Land. New York: Routledge, 2012. 3-18. Print.
- . "Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge (2): Epistemological Considerations and a Conceptual Framework for Teaching and Learning." *Higher Education* 49.3 (2005): 373-88. Print.
- Miller, Carolyn. "Genre as Social Action." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70.2 (1984): 151-67. Print.
- Norgaard, Rolf. "Writing Information Literacy: Contributions to a Concept" *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 43.2 (2003): 124-30. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Perkins, David. "Constructivism and Troublesome Knowledge." *Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge*. Eds. Jan Meyer and Ray Land. New York: Routledge (2012): 33-47. Print.
- . "The Many Faces of Constructivism." *Educational Leadership* 57.3 (1999): 6-11. Print.
- Rapchak, Marcia, and Ava Cipri. "Standing Alone No More: Linking Research to a Writing Course in a Learning Community." *portal: Libraries & The Academy* 15.4 (2015): 661-75. Print.
- Reid, Gwendolynne. "Updating the FYC-Library Partnership: Recent Work on Information Literacy and Writing Classrooms." *WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies*, 25 (2014): 1-15. Web. 7 June 2017.
- Reiff, Mary Jo, and Anis Bawarshi. "Tracing Discursive Resources: How Students Use Prior Genre Knowledge to Negotiate New Writing Contexts in First-Year Composition," *Written Communication* 28.3 (2011): 312-37. Print.
- Rinto, Erin E., and Elisa I. Cogbill-Seiders. "Library Instruction and Themed Composition Courses:

- An Investigation of Factors that Impact Student Learning.” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 41.1 (2015): 14-20. Web. 16 June 2016.
- Roozen, Kevin. “Writing Is a Social and Rhetorical Activity.” Adler-Kassner and Wardle 17-8.
---. “Writing is Linked to Identity.” Adler-Kassner and Wardle 50-2.
- Russell, David. “Writing Mediates Activity.” Adler-Kassner and Wardle 26-7.
- Scott, Tony. “Subverting Crisis in the Political Economy of Composition.” *CCC* 68.1 (2016): 10-37.
Print.
---. “Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies.” Adler-Kassner and Wardle 48-9.
- Shields, Kathy. “Research Partners, Teaching Partners: A Collaboration between FYC Faculty and Librarians to Study Students’ Research and Writing Habits.” *Internet Reference Services Quarterly* 19 (2014): 207-18. Web. 16 June 2016.
- Sult, Leslie, and Vicki Mills. “A Blended Method for Integrating Information Literacy Instruction into English Composition Classes.” *Reference Services Review* 34.3 (2006): 368-88. Web. 16 June 2016.
- Swoger, Bonnie J.M. “Closing the Assessment Loop Using Pre- and Post-Assessment.” *Reference Services Review* 39.2 (2011): 244-59. Web. 17 June 2016.
- Taczak, Kara. “Reflection Is Critical for Writers’ Development.” Adler-Kassner and Wardle 78-9.
- Townsend, Lori, Korey Brunetti, and Amy R. Hofer. “Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy.” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11.3 (2011): 853-69. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.
- Vatz, Richard E. “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 6.3 (1973): 154-61.
Print.
- Villanueva, Victor. “Writing Provides a Representation of Ideologies and Identities.” Adler-Kassner and Wardle 57-8.
- Watson, Alex P. “Still a Mixed Bag: A Study of First-Year Composition Students’ Internet Citations at the University of Mississippi.” *Reference Services Review* 40.1 (2012): 125-37. Web. 16 June 2016.

Holding on to Literacies: Older Adult Narratives of Literacy and Agency

Suzanne Kesler Rumsey—Purdue University Fort Wayne

KEYWORDS

older adult literacy, aging, age, alienation, heritage literacy, aging well

In her 1995 seminal work discussing the accumulation of literacy, Deborah Brandt says that we might visualize the effects of literacy “as developing in two directions—*vertically (a piling up) and horizontally (a spreading out)*” (651-52, emphasis added). She goes on to explain, Literacy ‘piles up’ . . . in the rising levels of formal schooling that begin to accumulate (albeit inequitably) in families. It is useful to consider the impact of rising levels of schooling on the way that *new generations of learners encounter and interpret literacy*.

Literacy also ‘piles up’ in . . . a residual sense, as materials and practices from earlier times often linger at the scenes of contemporary literacy learning. . . . In addition to this vertical accumulation, literacy has literally spread out across the century, reorganizing an array of economic, legal, political, and domestic activities. The increased powers accorded to print have sharpened the need for reading and, increasingly, writing to navigate life. (651-52, emphasis added)

The idea that literacies accumulate is particularly important to studies of literacy acquisition and provides a foundation for studying literacies across generations. The impact of Brandt’s work in the field of literacy studies cannot be overstated. Yet Brandt’s concept of accumulating literacies focuses primarily on a sense of development or building of *more*, piling up *more* and spreading out *more*. Its emphasis seems to be first on the shifting standards or “levels” of schooling and literacy, and second on the forward movement and the developmental aspects of literacy within shifting cultural and economic factors. Certainly, over time the “piles” of literacies grow or accumulate for all people as they age, and those piles and spreads of literacy alter with age. But what happens toward the end of a life course when literacies might no longer be gathering or building but, instead, simply maintaining or even dispersing? What happens if a person’s physical health or slowed mental acuity limits employing those accumulated literacy practices or limits additional piling or spreading of literacies? How might our understanding of literacy change when we see acceptance of those limitations? How do older adults *hold on* to literacy practices, and what role does literacy play in aging?

Brandt’s foundational work heavily influenced my own previous autoethnographic work among the Amish and five generations of my own family, in which I explore a concept I call heritage literacy and suggest that it is a means of understanding “how literacies and technology uses are accumulated across generations through a decision-making process. As literacy for an individual, community, or group accumulates, contexts, objects, tools, and needs change; in turn, community members adapt to the changes, adopt the changes, or alienate themselves from the changes” (Rumsey, “Heritage Literacy” 575-76). Further, “heritage literacy emphasizes not just the ‘piling up and spreading out’

of accumulation, but also the ways that literacy practices pass back and forth between generations; the old inform the new, the new impact the old. Heritage literacy pays careful attention to the choices that individuals and communities make about their literacy development” (Rumsey, “Heritage Literacy” 577).

“What happens if a person’s physical health or slowed mental acuity limits employing those accumulated literacy practices or limits additional piling or spreading of literacies? How might our understanding of literacy change when we see acceptance of those limitations? How do older adults hold on to literacy practices, and what role does literacy play in aging?”

Yet the shortfall of my previous explanations of heritage literacy is similar to my critique of Brandt’s concept of accumulating literacies: I focused primarily on a “forward trajectory” of literacy practice. While heritage literacy posits a continuum in which individuals make choices over time to adopt, adapt, or alienate, most of my examples of the principle are focused on how new generations will adopt or adapt older generations’ tools and literacies. For example, in “Heritage Literacy,” I offer the practice of quilting in my family as it has developed from our Amish heritage, and over time, with developments in technologies: from hand stitching plain swatches of fabric to sewing machines, cartoon-themed fabric, and even to digital movies that “stitch” visual and textual elements together. This example illustrates adoption and adaptation, a forward trajectory of literacy development, from old methods of meaning making to new methods. But few examples of heritage literacy enacted in lives illustrate the concept of *alienation*, and those that do still focus on younger participants’ choices of whether to join the Amish church (Rumsey, “Coming of Age”), which still has a sense of forward movement.¹

I believe that my concept of heritage literacies and the decision-making processes whether to adopt, adapt, or alienate offers an apt approach to understanding older adults’ literacy practices. Adoption, adaptation, and alienation—in the way I originally theorized them—illustrate how older adults employ the same agentive decision-making process that we all do in order to use literacy, or choose not to use literacy, as they continue to negotiate the changing social, financial, political, and legal aspects of life and age. Older adults have agency in deciding when and if and how to use the tools at their disposal. They have agency in deciding to accept the loss of those tools. And when theorized more completely, the concept of alienation offers the obverse perspective: a means by which we might investigate the impact of aging on literacy practice itself.

Explanation of the Study

Working independently and with a local nonprofit organization that serves homebound older and disabled adults, I interviewed a total of fifteen individuals over the age of sixty-three during the winter of 2011.² I set out, initially, hoping to address an apparent lack in the field by investigating the literacies of older adults in particular, much like any sociocultural literacy study that examines a given population, such as Shirley Brice Heath’s research in the South Carolina Piedmont, Beverly Moss’s work in African-American churches, and Marcia Farr’s research with Chicago Mexicanos. I perceived a dearth of information in literacy studies regarding the specific and unique literacy

practices of older people themselves (as opposed to the practices of individuals who were older and part of other studied populations), but I did not feel I had enough information to construct a rich and nuanced study of their lives without first asking some very basic questions. In addition to adding to the field of literacy studies, I hoped to be able to offer perspectives of this facet of older adults' lives to more traditional gerontological studies.

These basic questions framed my semi-structured interview process: What do older adults read and write every day? What genres are most important to them? Why? How much do they read and write? What do they think is most important about those genres? Interviews were between thirty and sixty minutes. My fifteen participants ranged in age from sixty-three to ninety-two. (I had asked for volunteers over the age of sixty-five, but found when I interviewed that one participant was younger than the requested age-range. I chose to include her in the study because as a disabled, homebound older adult, she still shared commonalities with others in the study.) Participants resided in four different counties in a Midwestern state. They lived in seven different communities ranging in population from a mid-sized city of 300,000 to a rural township of fewer than 450 residents. Education levels ranged from one participant who had not finished the sixth grade to another who is a retired medical doctor, with the majority of participants having at least a high school diploma. Ten participants were Caucasian, and five were African American; thirteen were female, and two were male.

I initially coded the data simply by grouping responses to each of my research questions. Such coding gave me a limited perspective on their daily habits, which I assumed was the main contribution this article could make. However, that means of coding offered few implications for either the field of literacy studies or the various fields of gerontology, and it offered only detached descriptions of the participants themselves. Upon recoding the data to look for larger themes, based on a more holistic approach that looked first at the person's story, not just at her or his responses to a particular question, I found larger and more important aspects of their interview data that told a richer story.³

All but three of the participants were almost entirely homebound, meaning that they spent most of their days in their homes and only left when they must for a doctor's appointment or other important event. Many of them noted that a family member or friend would drive them to such appointments. I have limited my findings in this article to those with such limited mobility, because I believe their living situations and interview responses most pertinently illustrate two important aspects of literacy practices throughout the life course: that of holding on to literacies as a vital part of staying engaged and independent as they age, and that of a more nuanced understanding of the heritage literacy practice of alienation. Further, by highlighting only four participants' stories, I hope to offer a richer and more contextualized perspective of their lives and literacies.

Review of Literature: Casting a Wide Net

Broadly, the field of literacy studies seeks to examine the reading and writing habits performed by groups of people. Sociocultural literacy studies have examined pluralized understandings of

“literacies” and cultures for more than three decades by scholars such as James Gee, Brian Street, and Shirley Brice Heath. Yet, in spite of decades of research providing ample evidence that literacy must be understood as a contextualized constellation of learned and tacit methods of understanding, popular discourse on literacy still circles around the belief that literacy is a universal skill set. To be literate, in its simplest definition, is “the ability to read and write” (“Literate”). Such a definition is not wrong, but it is limited—particularly in light of the myriad cultural contexts in which literate acts occur—and allows for a host of assumptions, prejudices, and stereotypes that affect how people act and react toward others. Assumptions about literacy subsequently lead to one of the grand narrative claims about the “literacy crisis” in America, which generally is aimed at public schools with regard to “why Johnny can’t read” (Flesch).⁴ Such claims now extend toward older adults’ literacies as well: claims might now seek to account for “why John *still* can’t read,” “why Martha can’t use a computer,” or “why Fred can’t understand his Medicare documents.”

In reality, even though “the ability to read and write” is *not* simply a universal skillset that everyone ages sixteen to 116 uses the same way in every situation and community, educational standards, public policy, and even the medical community still treat it as such; this results in continuing reductive, skills-based assessments of literacy, which ultimately illustrate only the inadequacies of participants and do little to benefit or honor those being assessed. Studies specifically of older adults’ literacies have often followed this skills-based, reductive model. One of the most-cited studies of older adult literacies is the 1992 National Adult Literacy Study (NALS) conducted by the US Department of Education. A 1996 report by Helen Brown, Robert Prisuta, Bella Jacobs, and Anne Campbell offers the results from NALS participants 65 and older and states that they performed at “the lowest two levels of prose literacy defined in the survey” (Brown et al., xii). The types of literacy defined in the study were prose, document, and quantitative. The results also indicate that older adults “appear to have difficulty finding and processing quantitative information in printed materials” and that “four of every five older adults demonstrated limited document literacy skills” (Brown et al. xii; xii-iii). These results of the 1992 NALS have had a long-ranging impact on perceptions of older adults’ literacies.

Though the US Department of Education repeated the NALS a decade later in 2003, articles as recent as 2009 (McCormack et al.) still reference that 1996 report rather than any data from the 2003 NALS. Further, the 1992 NALS study as a whole has been cited as recently as 2013 in an article called “Health Literacy Challenges in the Aging Population” (Mullen) and in 2014 in an article on the evaluation of printed health education materials, which included elements regarding those sixty-five and older (L. Ryan et al.). Clearly, the 1992 NALS results have had a strong impact on researchers concerned with older adult literacies. The results of the NALS prompted several more recent studies of older adults’ literacy abilities, most of which still rely on reductivist, skills-based understandings

of literacy. In particular, there is a growing body of work concerned with older adults' abilities to read and understand increasingly complicated medical information. Indeed, even a cursory Google search with the generic phrase "older adult literacy" offers immediate returns from www.health.gov, the Centers for Disease Control, the Online Journal of Issues in Nursing, and the National Institutes of Health.⁵ In response to concerns about the limited medical literacy of older adults, a plethora of recent studies has been done in the fields of nursing, medicine, social psychology, and geriatrics to assess older adults' "level" of literacy according to various quantitative scales;⁶ the readability of medical documentation designed for elderly patients;⁷ what measures medical caregivers should take in caring for those with limited health literacy;⁸ the ramifications of limited health literacy for elderly patients;⁹ and the long-term effects of limited medical literacy on the field of healthcare and on society a whole.¹⁰

Studies in the fields of medicine and geriatrics have also been conducted involving computer technologies, faith, and autobiographical and creative writing. Tim Broady, Amy Chan, and Peter Caputi offer an extensive literature review exploring the attitudes toward computer literacies by both young and old participants. Thomas Arcury, Sara Quandt, Juliana McDonald, and Ronny Bell investigate how rural, older adults "use faith and religion to help them manage their health" (56); reading scriptures and other religious literate acts are an integral part of their lives. Rita Rosenthal's 2008 study examines the ways that computer-literate older women are motivated to continue learning, as well as the obstacles to their success. Similarly, Karin Slegers, Martin van Boxtel, and Jelle Jolles investigate computer literacy among older adults and how older adults use "everyday technologies" (92). Nancy Richeson and James Thorson explore the uses of autobiographical writing and its benefits to older adults, and Joan Barry's article "Autobiographical Writing: An Effective Tool for Practice with the Oldest Old" depicts how social workers employ autobiography as a means to assist adults over the age of eighty-five.

More pertinent to my discussion here, sociocultural literacy studies have examined cross-generational literacies. Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives* traces the history of literacy development by offering literacy narratives of more than forty people, several of whom are older adults. Similarly, Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe's *Literate Lives in the Information Age* offers the perspective of several older adults throughout the text, and my own work explores the passage of heritage literacy practices across five generations of my family and the surrounding Amish community (Rumsey, "Heritage Literacy"). Ruth Ray's work, *Beyond Nostalgia*, offers an account of her participation in six senior center writing groups and the development of the late life writers through narrative. Technological literacies are addressed by Heidi McKee and Kristine Blair's 2007 article "Older Adults and Community-Based Technological Literacy Programs," which describes their experiences teaching in technology literacy programs for seniors in two different areas of the country, and by Lauren Bowen's 2011 article, "Resisting Age Bias in Digital Literacy," which argues—based on the literacy narrative of an eighty-one-year-old woman—that literacy researchers should pay greater attention to older adult readers, writers, and learners. Here Bowen challenges us to rethink and continue to negotiate our perceptions of digital literacy; in a 2012 piece, Bowen explores how literacy plays a central role in a "curriculum of aging," or "in cultural perspectives of aging" by analyzing

AARP publications (“Beyond Repair” 483). Finally, Suzanne Rumsey, Lauren Bowen, Ruth Ray, and Donora Howard’s 2012 collaborative book chapter examines the merits of collaborative and community-based learning with older adults.

The field of Disability Studies¹¹ has also weighed in concerning the literate lives of older adults. In particular, Jay Timothy Dolmage calls us to reconsider “imperfect, extraordinary, nonnormative bodies as the origin and epistemological homes of all meaning making” (19). In other words, disability is not an impairment to be overcome, but the very means for producing meaning; by repositioning it, disability becomes a veritable fountainhead of rhetorical possibilities. The hope is to see disabled bodies, and I might add “disabled” literacies, as more than “stigma and disqualification” (63).

Together the studies discussed above paint a picture of older adult literacies being a topic of concern to teachers, researchers, and those in the medical field. And yet, such studies have only scratched the surface of the contextualized ways that older adults might employ literacy as they maneuver being homebound or disabled, ceasing or reducing regular employment, or engaging with the evolving technological landscape. McKee and Blair have noted that, particularly in technological literacy use, “[o]ur society . . . certainly fetishizes young people” (25), and Bowen has articulated an “ageist ideology of literacy” (“Resisting” 587). Unfortunately, literacy is still largely seen as a pedagogical concern, rather than an anagogical one; many sociocultural literacy scholars focus on youth or school-based, K-16 literacy acquisition.¹² An emphasis on youth culture and K-16 literacy practices is certainly practical for those of us in academia, as these categories comprise the majority of our students and address their needs, but this emphasis does little to interrupt the pervasive public norms of progress, success, and upward mobility associated with literacy. Such an emphasis continues to degrade the literacies that older adults possess. Consider the story of older adult Dwayne Lowery in Brandt’s seminal work, “Sponsors of Literacy”:

What Dwayne Lowery was up against as a working adult in the second half of the 20th century was more than just living through a rising standard in literacy expectations or a generalized growth in professionalization, specialization, or documentary power—although certainly all of those things are, generically, true. Rather, these developments should be seen more specifically as outcomes of ongoing transformations in the history of literacy as it has been wielded as part of economic and political conflict. These transformations become the arenas in which new standards of literacy develop. And for Dwayne Lowery—as well as many like him over the last 25 years—these are the arenas in which *the worth of existing literate skills become degraded*. (176, emphasis added)

Dwayne’s story of shifting standards is mirrored in the stories of my participants. In the context of a youth-centric understanding of literacy, Dwayne and other older adults face standards that are not relevant to their literacy history, literacies with which they are unfamiliar, and a minimization of the literacies that they do possess.

As the grand literacy narratives have shifted to “include” older adults, a strong emphasis on medical literacies and a privileging of youth culture have together led to increased stigmatization of elders and their literacy practices. In fact, prescriptive definitions of “being literate” emerged as well as notions of “successful” aging; both causing extensive debate. “Successful aging” is defined

by Rowe and Kahn as “including three main components: low probability of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity, and active engagement with life” (433). The original intent of this term was to “counteract the longstanding tendency of gerontology to emphasize only the distinction between the pathologic and nonpathologic, that is, between older people with diseases or disabilities and those suffering from neither” (433), because such an inherently ageist binary fostered ideologies that position older people as a burden on society. Several medical and gerontological studies have addressed general well-being, “active aging,” or “successful aging” as it applies to physical, emotional, and mental health.¹³ Pertinent to the parallel between literacy and aging, Kim Boudiny’s discussion of active aging notes that there are qualitative studies that show how “‘ordinary’ activities such as reading, solving crossword puzzles and gardening” are a “more important indicator of [older adults’] involvement with life than highly social or physical ‘youthful activities’” (1088).¹⁴ Successful aging as a concept has done much to break down several negative tendencies regarding older adults. The concept is a means by which the medical community began to account for the “whole person” and not just their diseases. And the concept made it feasible for more quantitative studies to be done to illustrate additional indicators of a life well lived.

Yet in the context of this article, it must be noted that the idea of “successful” aging is fraught with controversy. On the one hand, it is intended to combat ageist ideologies, but on the other hand, it creates a hierarchy and set of standards or expectations that older adults are then expected to meet. Stephen Katz and Toni Calasanti offer an overview of this debate, and they note that the “most contentious critiques of the successful aging paradigm target those whom it excludes” (29). Further, if older adults do not meet the expectations of “successful aging,” they are further stigmatized—much as skills-based evaluations of literacy are reductive. When the idea of successful aging is positioned vis-à-vis literacy standards, it seems that older adults face a double sentence of condemnation.

Taken together, the youth-centric, upward mobility norms of literacy and “successful aging” cast older adult literacies in a negative, limiting, and downward spiral. Further, as Jay Dolmage notes, myths about disabilities abound, and older adults are always already assumed to be lacking. The myriad studies from medicine, geriatrics, social work, and nursing offer few alternative narratives, and the field of literacy studies has only begun to address older adults. But as Lauren Bowen writes,

By paying closer attention to the work of older adults, whose literacies are undervalued by default, we begin to make transparent the ageist ideologies that infuse our professional and public discourse on literacy, learning, and technology, and to move beyond such youth-centered understandings. Through continued attention to elder’s literacies . . . we might see literacy less in terms of measuring up to the most recent technological innovations and more in terms of how individuals regularly innovate in order to make meaning in their everyday lives. (“Resisting” 602-03)

My hope is that the descriptive narratives, analysis of heritage literacy, and consideration of literacy vis-à-vis concepts of aging offered in the next sections help to foster and continue ongoing negotiations of our perceptions of literacy across the entire life course and our perceptions of loss as well. For “[o]nly when the age continuum is recognized in full can we sufficiently appreciate the active and changing nature of literate lives” (Bowen, “Resisting” 603).

Literacy and Aging Well

Acknowledging that the idea of “successful aging” is a controversial one, the remainder of this article will use the term “aging well,” because it is more in line with the work of humanistic gerontologists like Ricca Edmondson and Hans Joachim von Kondratowitz¹⁵. I see aging well as those elements that my participants named as being important to their feeling satisfied, affirmed, optimistic, constructive, and accepting of change as they age. Much as disability studies repositions disability as the locus of rhetorical agency, Maureen Tam notes that while there are numerous definitions of what has been called “successful aging,” there are two main perspectives: “one that looks at successful aging as a state of being, a condition that can be objectively measured at any time; and one that views aging as a subjective experience where *opportunities should be provided for elders to tell what they mean by successful aging and the underlying factors that they regard as important*” (Tam 882, emphasis added). I opt not to use the term “successful aging” because the idea of success is culturally constructed and troubled in its overlapping meanings and use. Yet I find the above quote, particularly the emphasized portion, to be an apt way in which to describe factors that my participants voiced as mattering to them and their lives: physical and mental health, relationships, cognitive function, a sense of well-being, independence, “active participation, learning, development, [and] contribution to society” (882-83). Individuals in diverse contexts will value each of those factors differently.

“When interviewed, participants wanted to convey what they found most important, helpful, positive, or useful to them and their ongoing literacies. Interview data collected from my participants coalesced into five basic “factors” that they identify as crucial for aging in later life: physical health, mental health and acuity, social connection, spiritual health, and maintaining independence.”

My emphasis on aging well is a reflection of the data I collected. When interviewed, participants wanted to convey what they found most important, helpful, positive, or useful to them and their ongoing literacies. Interview data collected from my participants coalesced into five basic “factors” that they identify as crucial for aging in later life: physical health, mental health and acuity, social connection, spiritual health, and maintaining independence. These factors are not independent of one another, nor are they hierarchical. They are a constellation of interconnected elements that together illustrate the literate lives of older adults. Participants all show signs of decline as a result of physical and mental limitations, which in turn limits their literate activities, and yet they also showed signs of acceptance and purpose. Participants also show signs of holding on to social connection, to faith, and to independence, all portrayed through their daily literacies as well.

I have opted to organize this section by first describing the factors themselves; I will then move into descriptive vignettes of four of my participants. Organizing the document this way enables continuity in the story and description of each person. It also demonstrates the ways that the five factors play out together within a single person’s literate life.

The factor of physical health is concerned primarily with the physical bodies of the participants.

As they have aged, their bodies have changed—often declined—in ability and mobility. Sarah’s declining eyesight and health prohibits the literacy activities she once enjoyed; Barbara’s declining health has determined that the bulk of her reading be about her ailments; and several other participants have adopted iPads, magnifying glasses, large print books, phones with larger buttons, and computer technologies to assist their changing physical abilities.

Mental health and acuity as a factor of aging well is not so much about particular mental diseases such as Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s that degenerate the mind of an aging person. Instead, mental health and acuity in my participants’ data are concerned more with cognitive and psychological well-being. Participants are concerned with “staying sharp,” keeping mentally active, and stimulating their minds. As Arleen said, “I feel if people my age are able to read and able to write, they need to do it. It keeps things working. It’s the same as if you don’t walk, after a while you’re not able to walk.” Examples of such mental activity can be seen in how Arleen explains that keeping her mind active helps her to not focus so much on her physical limitations and in how Camille has written her life story as part of her stroke rehabilitation process.

Spiritual health is a factor similar to mental health. Participant data indicates that maintaining their faith practices is a key component to their success. By “practicing” or engaging their spirits through literate acts, they are able to hold on to what is most important in their lives. This is illustrated most aptly by Sarah, whose health has deteriorated so much that she can no longer read biblical scripture. Instead, because engaging her spirit is so vital to aging well, Sarah listens to scripture using CDs her family purchased for her. Similarly, Barbara’s daily reading of scripture helps keep her grounded in the face of myriad physical ailments.

Social connection is a factor that illustrates the agentic actions of older adults to hold on to both literacy and to the wider community, such as in the case of Sarah, who reads the obituaries when she is able in order to see which of her friends has passed away. Similarly, maintaining independence is a factor of aging well and an illustration of holding on to literacies and holding on to agency. This factor is evident in how Sarah puts great importance on being able to simply sign her own name and in the ways that Camille advocates for her own health by journaling.

Finally, before shifting into the vignettes themselves, it is important to note that these five factors, as embodied in the stories of these participants, illustrate the decision-making processes of heritage literacy as individuals agentially—if sometimes tacitly—let go of some literacies, or hold on to or adapt others. A more thorough explanation of heritage literacy practices is developed in the next section, but the concept of heritage literacy bears mentioning here, as well, as we move into the individual descriptive vignettes.

Sarah

Sarah’s interview occurred on a snowy day in the early months of 2011. I traveled barely-plowed roads about an hour and half to an extended care nursing facility several counties away to meet with her. Sarah’s interview vignette most aptly demonstrates all five of the factors that constitute aging well working collectively, and her interview illustrates both standardized perceptions of literacy as well as heritage literacy practices in the tacit ways she engages with meaning making.

Sarah was eighty-three at the time of the interview. She explained that she went through the 9th grade and “then I got married and had seven kids. My education grew considerable – [laughing] – just through life. When my kids got growed up, they never quit their wisecracking. One of them’s got a shirt that says “Went to the University of Smith Development” or something like that... just to be silly [her last name is Smith¹⁶]. We learned everything at home.” Sarah doesn’t devalue her school-based learning, but clearly she highly values the learning she had done at home with her family.

In fact, like many of the older adults I interviewed, the school-based learning seemed tertiary to the real meaning making she did throughout life. Of her formal education, Sarah said, “They did not teach you to learn to read and write before you went to school. ABCs was hard. We was supposed to memorize the ABCs. They was hard for me. It was hard to learn, and even now when I want to know where a certain letter is I have to say it by heart to find it. I don’t spell good and I don’t do arithmetic very good. As my kids left home I had no one to ask, so I use the dictionary.” Sarah is at once humbled by her perceived lack of literacy skills and proud of the ways that she creates work-arounds to do what she needs to do at any given time. She has adopted the conventional ABCs of literacy, but she has adapted them to her own purposes. And she values “the school of hard knocks” much more.

The adaptations of literacy are also clearly seen in how she uses available tools today. Sarah can no longer read or write very much in the traditional sense. She said, “Because of my eyes I couldn’t read. But my kids got me a whole Bible on disc. And so I have got little disc player, and I read a whole Bible, well I can; I haven’t yet ‘cause I just got it at Christmas and I go sleep before I hear [all of the Psalms]. So [my daughter will] tell me how to get back to where I was. But I brought it up here and I play – I think it was part of Job. And then it starts the Psalms. I never have heard all the Psalms on there.” When I asked Sarah how much she values the disc player, she said, “Oh my. I was so tickled and so surprised I think I may have soiled myself. [laughing] But I was just so surprised. They told me later that it was a little more than they normally spend for Christmas but they saw what I needed. When you can’t read the bible, it’s bad.”

And yet, like most older adults who were taught only conventional, ABC literacy, Sarah does not consider the disc player to be a literate activity. Though she values it highly, she said, “Well, that’s the bible, but that’s not reading. If I could I would read a whole passage every morning. If you could see my bibles they’re marked up so much it looks like they’ve been misused. But they’re not. That’s the way they’re supposed to be. If you use them, they show it. [It’s important] because it’s God’s word. It’s my roadmap to heaven. It helps me. It makes me feel better. It renews my strength.”

Clearly Sarah places a high value on physically reading biblical scripture. And clearly, based upon conventional literacy standards, she does not consider listening to her disc player to be reading. She is saddened at the alienation from such an important aspect of her faith. Yet there is a tension in her statements that is revealed a little later when she describes her bible reading in more detail. She said, “At home I have the bible on [cassette] tapes, and my tape player broke. That’s why they got me this [disc player]. I would listen to the tapes and read the bible at the same time. And that made it more clear to me. I got more out of it, and I didn’t have to pronounce those nasty names in the old testament [laughter]. I liked to do that and I will do that with this [disc player].” It turns out that Sarah has been adapting her pen and paper literacy for years with the use of audio technology.

Her use of the disc player now shows continuing, agentic decision-making that she hardly seems aware of.

In spite of her declining eyesight and health, Sarah is able to read the newspaper a bit if she's feeling well. "I get a [newspaper] through the mail on Tuesdays, and if I'm not ill I read it a little bit. I don't read the advertisements in it. But I'll read the obituary . . . to see who, which one of my friends has passed away this week. You never know. My bedmate, they just took her to the hospital last night, and I've known her for thirty years. They just took her to the hospital last night; she's not doing very well. They got her on a ventilator. It's just not right. . . . so that's why I read it. Not because I'm afraid I'm gonna die; I don't care when I die. I'm ready to die; I know the Lord. And I'm ready to die. I could die tonight and it wouldn't bother me. If I thought I was dying, I'd say Yay!" I asked if she was tired of not feeling good and not being able to care for herself. She replied, "Yes. Exactly. Exactly."

A year ago, Sarah was able to write letters and cards, but now she can only sign her name on checks or documents like the consent form. "I'd send out cards to people who were missing church or were sick. I can't do it no more." She also wrote in a journal before her health prohibited it. "I don't actually know when exactly I quit writing in a journal. I just told my daughter where they were. For when I'm gone." When I asked Sarah what the most valuable kind of writing is, she replied, "Being able to sign your name. Because if you couldn't sign your name somebody else would have to be responsible for . . . checks and legal documents. I just think that would be bad if I couldn't do that. If someone has to sign your papers for you like this or like my checks, it breaks my heart my son has to sign my checks, but they couldn't hardly read my writing anymore. If they didn't know me at the bank they probably wouldn't cash them . . ."

Sarah shows both the tenacious holding on of literacies at the same time as she's showing the agentic decision to alienate and let go of literacies. She reads obituaries to keep track of and mourn the loss of her friends, but she is calm and matter of fact about the thought of her own death. She grieves the loss of her ability to handle her own bills, but she is thankful and accepting of the help offered by her son. There is both grief and acceptance of the loss or adaptations of her literacy practices.

What isn't as clear about Sarah's interview vignette is that she shows both grief and acceptance of the decline in her own health and the ways that that impacts her literacy practices. Sarah interviewed with me from a hospital bed where doctors were treating her for double pneumonia, a kidney ailment, and other health issues. During our brief conversation, we had difficulties positioning the microphone so that I could hear her weakened voice over the sounds of the machines in the room. We were interrupted by a healthcare worker who, in order to care for Sarah, needed me to move. Sarah had many coughing fits, and she asked me to help her take drinks of water. We were also interrupted by another nurse asking if she wanted or needed anything (including ice cream from an ice cream social down the hall). Sarah's situation realistically enacts literacy activities of older people, particularly those with declining health.

Sarah's interview also clearly illustrates all five of the factors of aging well. Her physical health is declining such that she has adapted her reading of scripture to listening to it via disc player. Sarah's interview shows the value she places on reading a holy book for her spiritual well-being. It is the one

book she and her family have ensured that she can continue to “consume,” though she can no longer really read it with her eyes. The reading that she does do on occasion is the newspaper obituaries; for Sarah, the newspaper offers a specific kind of connection to her community, as it tells her which of her friends has passed away. This connection is also poignant, in that she herself isn’t afraid of death. In this way, the reading of obituaries also seems indicative of her mental health: she chooses to focus on others and on what is real rather than allowing her ailments to overtake her entire life. Sarah shows continued efforts to connect with her family. She values leaving a legacy of literacy for future generations. She can no longer journal, but has told her daughters where to find her journals “for when I’m gone.”

Though she isn’t aware of her decisions to adopt, adapt, or alienate, Sarah’s heritage literacy practices show she maintains her agency in the process. She both tenaciously holds on and has come to accept the loss of a variety of literacies and technologies. Even as she values conventional, linear understandings of literacy, she challenges those notions by her behavior and decision to include audio in her study of the bible.

Camille

Camille’s interview took place in her apartment in the same metropolitan area where I live. I only had to navigate to downtown to find her. Upon entering the senior apartment center, I noticed that it looked and sounded much like the facility in which my great grandmother lived at the time. Also, it smelled like someone was baking pie. Camille, originally from Tennessee, maintained a small twang to her speech that she laughingly explained never changes no matter how long it has been since she’s been back home.

At age sixty-seven, Camille has been homebound, in a wheelchair, and on disability since surviving a major stroke at the age of forty-three. Speaking of her stroke, Camille said, “It makes you change your life. I’ve been on disability. They don’t hire you if you only got one arm, you can’t do nothing or go nowhere. . . . People don’t realize just how fast it can happen. . . . I woke up and I couldn’t move my arm, couldn’t move my leg, couldn’t talk . . . I had three surgeries in six months . . . I thought I wasn’t going to get out of that place, that I was going to be a lifetime resident.”

But get out she did. As part of her vocational rehab, and with the use of only one hand, Camille wrote her “life story” using a computer. Clearly this one artifact has had a profound impact on Camille’s perceptions of her literacy development. It shaped how she has come to perceive her standardized literacy practice and her level of education. When asked about her level of formal education she said, “I graduated from HS but that’s about it though. [long pause] When I had my stroke they did vocational rehab. They had me learn how to write a story on a computer. I chased that thing all over the place, my story. You know how you don’t know what you’re doing on a computer and you lose it, I lost it so many times on there. Had to go dig it out again. I found it. I’d be writing it and I’d hit a wrong thing and it’d be gone. It just vanished on me, lousy thing.”

Camille associates her level of schooling specifically to her learning after the stroke, the writing of this document, and the challenges she faced with learning to use the technology. In essence, she has embraced the “fundamental embodiment” (Dolmage) and her disability is now not an impairment to

overcome but instead the very means of producing meaning.

Of her life story, Camille had much to say. When I asked what kind of writing she does, Camille said, “well come on I’ll show it to you. It took me a while. I had to do this for a thing for school [rehab]. That is small print, but there’s a reason it’s small. I didn’t know how to make it bigger. It’s the story of my life. Vocational rehab, that was one of my assignment. . . . See how it’s together like that so you turn the page like a book. I don’t even know how I done it. But I did it. It’s been about 10 or 15 years ago, but I keep it. It’s on the internet somewhere but I don’t know where. My son, he said he found it on the internet. My kids won’t read it. They say it’s too sad. But it had to come out because I was holding all that in. It was the best thing I ever done was write a story about myself. It worked. It made me feel a lot better.”

Later in the interview Camille said, “That is something that everyone should have to do if they’ve been sick. It would help them . . . This here is a valuable thing . . . I called it ‘Changes’ because it was one change after, you know. . . . it ruined my whole life this thing did. It was something that was completely . . . [here she is unable to speak from emotion]. This is a healing process, is what it is. It really heals. Everybody should have to do this. It will help them.”

Unmistakably, she highly values the story itself, and she values it for what it meant for her emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical healing. But I see, too, that the story acted as a pivot point for how she viewed her own literacy and education. When I had asked about when she learned to read and write, Camille responded, “When I was in kindergarten, no I didn’t go to kindergarten cause I didn’t make it. First grade. I think I was too dumb to learn at home. I was never right. I mean, I could never learn like my brother. My brother was smarter than me. He was more luckier than I was too. . . . But I could paint and he couldn’t. I could do things he couldn’t do. I painted all these [indicates art in her home]. That’s what I do . . . You know I thought at one time that if anything ever happened I could always make something look pretty. I could. I had that talent and I could do that.

Further, because of her stroke, Camille is no longer able to use one of her arms. When I asked if she reads the newspaper (a common response from other participants), she replied, “No because I tell you what it’s hard to for me to do cause I gotta turn the pages with one hand and it gets all wadded up and I get mad and I just have a fit and throw it on the floor or something. I get on CSPAN or something like that.” Further, she is unable to balance her checkbook. “I don’t use that side of my brain. I use the side, the artist part. I don’t use the numbers side ‘cause that one is mostly blank. I have my sister-in-law for that. She does my checkbook for me.”

Finally, Camille uses literacy as a means of advocating for her health: “I like [to read] medical stuff. I had Cushing’s Disease is what I had and I figured out what I had, what was wrong with me. The doctor couldn’t do it so I found it. I got hurt at work one time and I had to go to the hospital, and [another doctor] says, ‘you look like you got Cushings.’ I didn’t know what Cushings was . . . I looked in my medical books and that is exactly what I had. So I went back to my doctor and said ‘I want to be checked for this.’ That’s what I had was Cushings. And it’s rare, it’s really rare. It’s one of those things like you’d see on House, on TV, you know like one of his diseases, a rare one.” She also said, “I do look up medical stuff ‘cause I want to see . . . ‘cause I’m sick all the time. I’ve got every ailment. I mean, I got thyroid trouble and uh . . . I read on there the other day that with thyroid trouble you

could have fifty-nine different ailments, and I've had fifty-eight of them. I know I have. I am always searching for something. I had one doctor tell me I was a hypochondriac, so I changed doctors. I was on birth control pills sometime when I was younger, you know, and I was allergic to those things and they didn't make me feel right. I had all these different ailments. He goes, 'They got names for people like you.' He called me a hypochondriac, so I never went back again. If he'd have just paid attention he'd have realized I was allergic to the pills I was taking. They don't pay no attention."

So, even though her stroke prevents her from many standard literacy activities, and even though she grew up believing herself to be "dumb," Camille is now able to say with pride that she is an artist. She has a talent that conveys meaning beautifully. I believe that the act of writing her life story acted as a catalyst for her to see herself as agentic and able. She adapted to her perceived intellect and adapted to the physical limitations brought on by her stroke. She is both firm in her resolve to continue her life and literacy and accepting of the losses she has sustained. Alienation from something like a newspaper she takes in stride with a sense of humor. She uses her resolve and adaptability to advocate for her own health, stay connected with the world, outside her apartment, and maintain a cheerful and purposeful life.

Barbara

Barbara was the first participant I visited for this study. She lived in a small tidy house near one of the universities in my metropolitan area, but in an area of lower income and older homes. The house was clearly newer and was nestled between several that looked exactly the same. By all appearances, older buildings had been cleared away, and these newer small homes had been built for older adults. A church across the street had purchased the land to build these homes for older adults in their congregation. Barbara greeted me with the kindest smile and a handshake that felt like a tiny bird in my hand.

Born in 1937, Barbara was seventy-three at the time of the interview, and she was already a great-great grandmother with six living generations. Her mother was still alive, living in Chicago, but had Alzheimer's. Barbara's level of formal education was tied heavily to the continuation of those six generations. "I graduated 8th grade. I went into the 9th and completed half of the semester and then that is when I got pregnant. And my son was born at 16. I moved into my own apartment after that. He and I and the baby. After that it was like one, one, one, one, one, one, one . . . I had 7 of them. I had 53, 54, 55, 56, and then 57 I skipped, and then I had one in 58, 59, skipped 60, and had the last one in 61."

Barbara remembered learning standard literacy activities in kindergarten. "They used to give us these little sheets of paper, where they got the letters on there and you would have to draw where you could connect them and make like a C or an A." She did not learn to read and write at home. She said of her parents reading and writing, "My mom didn't. She wasn't educated. She had to drop out of school at 8 years old to work and help the family. So she didn't have any education. She could not write her name or she couldn't read. But my step father taught her how to read and how to write her name and other things that she would need."

Undoubtedly, according to standard, linear perceptions of literacy level, Barbara's is very low.

With little formal education, a mother who was not literate at all, and a life that by all appearances was low in terms of socioeconomic advantage, Barbara appears to fit the stereotypes projected by the NALS. And yet, the further into the interview we got, the more rich, developed, and nuanced the story of Barbara's literacy became.

It turns out that in spite of what stereotypes would put her at the lowest level of literacy, Barbara loved to read. One of the aspects of her adapting to the changes of aging is simply in the limitations it puts on her reading. "I don't do as much reading now like I used to. I used to love books. I worked in a card and gift shop, and we sold books in there too. I would be hid in the back when we didn't have customers, reading the books. I used to love to read. But my eyes tend to water and they tend to bother me more now, so I don't read as much as I used to."

The reading that she does do is still much more than many find time for. She regularly reads her bible. "With me it just sometimes a scripture come to my mind and I'll open up to it and I'll read. Maybe a particular verse that came that I'll end up reading the whole chapter and it carries on to the next chapter and I'll go right on down the line." She also reads a lot of information that comes in from her church: "Here I have one to give you an example. This is from my church which is right here. [I like to] just get involved and read what we're talking about [at church]. Sometimes they have interesting stuff like this."

Barbara values reading her bible above all other reading. When I asked why, she replied, "Sometimes you maybe read something and you read right over and you don't get it. You can go back and read it again and all of the sudden you say Wow, I didn't pay attention to that before. So you . . . it's really educational. It stimulates your brain if you do it often [whispering] like I should. But that's what I get out of it. I will read . . . even my bible, I'll read it and then all of the sudden I'll go back the next week and read the same chapter and actually missed a whole verse or chapter that didn't make sense to me then and all of the sudden it just unfolds in my mind . . . oh, that's what that means! With other things too Sometimes you read and you are reading too fast or you're in a hurry. It's different when you just take time and relax and you know just read for a while. You can get more out of it than you can when you say oh I'm going to take a quick few minutes and maybe read a book."

I love how connected Barbara is to her literacy, though she would never see it that way. Instead of seeing her low level of formal education as a hindrance that forces her to read slowly and reread, she values the act of rereading because it gives her fresh perspective. And while her health and age prohibit her from leaving her home with any regularity, she still said of her daily reading habits, "I read everything. Mostly a lot of health books because I have many health problems and I try to find ways to deal with them in the natural state so that I don't have to be taking a lot of drugs . . . a lot of health books I glance through 'cause I have about twenty-some different things going on in my body at the same time. So I try to stay up on it. They diagnosed me with Hepatitis C. I had surgery in '97. I found out that beets and [indistinguishable food] was good [for Hepatitis C]." She uses her literacy to advocate on her own behalf with doctors, "I don't have to be put on 'this drug' because everything is a trial. You ain't tried this and this doesn't work, then they say so well we'll try this. They don't know what to give you and they just give you [more drugs]. And you don't have any idea what you are putting in your body."

In spite of reading so much, Barbara could no longer use her hands very effectively because of tendonitis and carpal tunnel, so writing is minimal. She writes “as little as possible. I hate writing . . . ‘cause it’s bothersome now so it really makes me hate it . . . I only write what I have to.” Barbara likes to send greeting cards because it is easier for her; cards convey a message without her having physically to write it. But the loss of her ability to write is not an easy one. “One thing for a while this hand here, I could sign two checks then I had to wait till the feelings come back in it. One month I had to get my neighbor to come over and write my checks out just so I could sign them.” In her continued efforts to write those things that she has to, Barbara says “I like the [pens] with the bulky rubber around there because it kind of gives me a little cushion.”

Barbara’s literacy narrative demonstrates a person with a limited formal education who hardly acknowledges this fact. Instead she focuses on reading for enjoyment, reading for spiritual health, reading to maintain her physical health, reading to advocate for herself and to maintain her independence. She has adapted her so-called limited literacy ability to live a productive and satisfying life filled with many books and many people. She showed frustration that she has to have help with writing checks, but she also shows acceptance of the changes in her life. Instead of wallowing or lamenting the loss of her hands, she finds ways to work around that limitation.

Arleen

I had another long drive to visit Arleen, as she lived several counties north of mine. Her home was a condo in a small senior living community. The walks had been cleared of snow, but the parking lot was still inches deep. Perhaps the community’s caretaker assumed no one would be leaving, given the weather. As I entered the home, Arleen asked that I wash my hands and leave my shoes by the door. I admit that I assumed these requests were just the idiosyncrasies of an older person. I was, however, wrong.

Arleen was sixty-six at the time of the interview and had been on disability for more than twelve years. She has a number of severe ailments that keep her entirely homebound. Her family must call ahead before visiting, wash their hands, and be extra careful not to bring sickness into the home. This explains her seemingly odd requests of me. But in spite of this physical limitation, Arleen has adapted. She said, “I’m involved with my family. I have children, I have grandchildren, I have great grandchildren. I try to fill my life with people. When they come to the door ‘are you sick? Do you think you are getting sick?’ They know the drill.”

In 10th grade, Arleen dropped out of school to have a baby and get married. But when asked about her formal education she replied, “I have awards, certificates. I never finished high school, I never went to college, but I went out for things I could get on my own. I took classes.” What kind of classes did you take, I asked. “Well different jobs I had, like, nursing, ok. I took CPR classes for state, non-violent intervention, and I drove van for council on aging. You had to take CPR and first aid. Driving classes. You had to take school bus training even though I didn’t drive a school bus. Working with the handicapped, disabled, and elderly.” Arleen joked, “I used to drive the van. Now I ride the van.”

Before leaving school, Arleen said she was a good student. Her parents taught her to read before

going to school. “They read to me. Helped me with my homework. I was a good student, but I was not a good attendee. You have to go to school to get a good grade.”

Unlike other participants, Arleen’s main literacy activity is writing. In order to advocate for her health, Arleen’s daily literacy practices include keeping a health journal: “I chart my health . . . my temperature, the blood glucose level, respiratory, pulse . . . weight. . . I keep a log every day as to what I do as I do it. When I take my medication, I write it down. I have a pill minder. Before I got that pill minder about six years ago, I just had the bottles sitting around and I’d worry “did I take it or not?” I’d think I took it, or I’d overdose. So now it’s the pill minder and I write it down.”

She has found that her efforts do help her doctors with her care: “I try to keep up on it. But I’m way ahead of them. They think I should just be curled up somewhere in a fetal position. Well, I don’t feel that. I guess I’m too spiritual. If God wanted me in a fetal position, I’d be there. There’s no reason I should even be alive, but I guess there’s things out there for me to do yet. And I realize I’m very ill, and I can handle that. That’s how I am. Other people, ‘Oh you poor thing.’ Well, get rid of that, I don’t need people like that. I can handle it. A lot of people can’t. Why give up? I’d rather . . . I try to keep busy. Mind, body, and soul. I’d rather die doing something than die doing nothing.”

Arleen also writes lists as part of her daily activity. “I have always wrote lists. When the kids were young there would be lists on the refrigerator and they’d make fun of me. Now they’re doing it And I do a “to do” list. It’s that long, but I don’t try to do that. As I do something, I check it off . . . then you know you’ve done something. I used to tell [my case worker], you must think just sit here and pick my nose all day long. She laughed and said, ‘No.’ But she thought I would be a good candidate [for this study], because I don’t just do nothing. I’m not able to go out and work, which I’d love to.”

Instead of working, Arleen uses journaling to help her family. “It keeps us connected. Our thoughts and feelings.” She said of her journals, “I think that is my way of writing a book. Maybe it’s like a biography. Because I’ve done this ever since I can remember I have these notebooks, and I have box after box. I’ve shredded some of them. My one son said, ‘oh mom don’t shred that stuff.’ But who’s gonna go through it? Who wants that? After sixty-six years there’s probably a book there somewhere. And we’re doing genealogy.”

Arleen’s story shows us aspects of physical and mental health as factors of aging well. She tries to keep busy “body, mind, and soul” and would rather “die doing something rather than nothing.” Her attitude is one of perseverance and focus. She both accepts her physical limitations and daily challenges those limitations. Clearly there are things she has had to alienate from because of her health, but part of her perception of success is that she doesn’t let declining health be the sole focus of her life. She acknowledges and seems to accept how big a factor it is, but she tries to “fill her life with people,” maintain a daily health journal in order to both assist and challenge her doctors, and keep a positive attitude that acknowledges but doesn’t bemoan her physical limitations. In these ways, she also stays mentally active and as engaged as she can be with her family and friends. Her health continues to decline, but she perseveres in part because she maintains the mental challenge of reading and writing and of managing her own health as much as she can. Her final words for other seniors bore out this theme of staying mentally active: “I feel if people my age are able to read and able to write, they need to do it. It keeps things working. It’s the same as if you don’t walk, after a

while you're not able to walk.”

Conclusion: Holding On, Letting Go

The stories told by these older adults illustrate the decision-making process that I originally theorized as heritage literacy. To restate Maureen Tam: “Opportunities should be provided for elders to tell what they mean . . . and [to identify] the underlying factors that they regard as important” (882). My original explanation of heritage literacy highlighted stories that showcase the decision-making process that occurs “across generations. . . . As literacy for an individual, community, or group accumulates, contexts, objects, tools, and needs change; in turn, community members adapt to the changes, adopt the changes, or alienate themselves from the changes” (Rumsey, “Heritage Literacy” 575-76). Certainly, the stories above include many instances that illustrate this. Arleen has actively decided to adapt her literacies and technologies in order to work around her serious health limitations: “I try to keep busy, mind body, and soul. I’d rather die doing something than die doing nothing.” And Barbara’s story shows alienation, as she has reduced the amount of writing she does to almost none. She dislikes writing because “it is bothersome” for her hands.

For Camille, heritage literacy is both an active decision-making process and a reaction to the limitations her health has put upon her. After her stroke, in order to write her life story and heal both emotionally and physically, she learned to use a computer and adopted it as the primary means by which she both reads and writes. When she continued to have pain and illness, she adapted her reading habits to focus almost exclusively on reading medical books and websites. And her physical limitations forced her to alienate from certain literacy practices--specifically, reading a printed newspaper, because it is too difficult to do with only one hand, and balancing her own checkbook, because she can no longer use the “numbers side” of her brain.

The interactions my participants had bely the reductivist, skills-based understandings of literacy, particularly as it pertains to medical documentation. Each of them focused some of their reading and writing on consuming medical information in order to be an activist for their own health. They each felt a great sense of agency and authority about their research and knowledge, showing that they were able to read and use medical information both because of and in spite of efforts being made to make medical documentation more accessible, though it is beyond the scope of this study to ascertain the extent to which the efforts in the medical field are truly fruitful.

Through these stories of older adults living literate lives, I’ve come to understand richer and more compelling aspects of alienation than I theorized in prior work: sometimes it is the passing of time or the decline of physical bodies that dictates how and whether people can adopt or adapt existing literacy practices. Sometimes it is not their minds or will that make decisions about literacies; instead their bodies “decide” whether they must alienate a particular practice. Often their minds are of another opinion entirely about this process. (How many of us have aging parents who resist help, who resist moving into a new home without stairs or into a retirement community because they view that as a loss of independence and perhaps an acknowledgement of their aging bodies?)

What I’m trying to point out is that, in some cases, alienation from a literacy practice does not

seem to be an active decision-making process, per se. Clearly it is not an accumulation—a piling up and spreading out—of literacy. Each of these modes of understanding literacy practices seems to have an emphasis on the progressive building up of literacies. When applied to a situation for an older adult who is now homebound, has increasingly limited mobility, has increasingly limited eyesight, or has limited understanding of various advancements in technologies that might aid in their reading and writing (e.g. computers, hand-held devices, etc.), the adaptations of literacy practices are also limited.

“Literacy practices are no longer accumulating but dissipating. Instead, adoptions, adaptations, and alienations from literacies and technologies are tacit, instinctive, and in many cases a reaction to those outside forces that alter abilities. This is not to say that individuals are powerless in the face of aging and declining health. Quite the contrary is true, in fact. Every person in this study showed factors of what I call aging well and of holding on to literacies.”

In these situations, literacy is not tied to an incline but to a decline. Literacy practices are no longer accumulating but dissipating. Instead, adoptions, adaptations, and alienations from literacies and technologies are tacit, instinctive, and in many cases a reaction to those outside forces that alter abilities. This is not to say that individuals are powerless in the face of aging and declining health. Quite the contrary is true, in fact. Every person in this study showed factors of what I call aging well and of holding on to literacies.

It must be acknowledged that the decline in their physical abilities is still a time of agency, purpose, and personal development. The older adults in my study showed a remarkable, deep acceptance of their circumstances. They illustrate, perhaps, one of the deepest forms of agency—that is in letting go, in acknowledging, coming to terms, and accepting the losses of various literacy practices. Such acceptance forces us to rethink agency and literacy. It forces us to ask and answer difficult questions about implicit ageism in standardized literacy testing, stereotypes of older adults and those with disabilities, and assumptions we make about what literacy looks like and sounds like. It changes our notions, even, of what “holding on” to literacy might be.

Literacy as an abstract concept stands as a microcosm of the pervasive ideology of progress and upward mobility through hard work and education. But literacy for the individuals featured in this article isn’t really about progress or upward mobility any longer. It isn’t about getting ahead, acquiring a new literacy or technology in order to do more and do faster. It’s about *holding on* to dignity, independence, and agency. This is more than just a “maintaining” of literacies, for maintenance implies mere upkeep with the least amount of effort. Instead, *holding on* to literacy is active, engaged, and agentive. This act of *holding on* might well be instinctive, but it points to a foundational aspect of who we are as people and the place that literacy holds in our lives. And *holding on* might well be the agentive act of accepting loss, letting go, and acknowledging the loss of literacy.

I began this article by asking a series of questions about what literacies look like at the end of a life course and how older adults *hold on* to literacy practices. The individuals presented in this study are but a glimpse into answers to those questions. They have shown us a path, more than a set of answers. They’ve demonstrated that what the field of literacy studies has done up to this point is powerful and important, but that we need to consider literacies across the entire life course with

more attention to people's own understandings of what aging and literacy looks like.

My interviews and the data I have provided in this article are limited in what they can tell us about how literacies change over time. But they have opened a door to continued study of the other end of the continuum of literate lives. Clearly, more work needs to be done in exploring the ways our physical bodies are tied to literacy. We need richer and more nuanced studies of older adults' literacies and lives to offer the kind of textured understanding sociocultural literacy studies has developed over the last thirty years. Further, we need studies that showcase "failures" in literacy usage, studies that move away from being bound to notions of achievement and toward new understandings of "success" as determined by people and not ideologies. The reality is that we all age. Whereas other sociocultural studies of literacy highlight various communities' and individuals' unique literacy practices, studies of older adults' literacies show, in some sense, a more universal aspect of literate lives across cultural boundaries. The act of *holding on* to literacy illustrates a path we all might follow.

Notes

¹ My prior work in literacy studies centers on an autoethnographic study I did among five generations of my own family and the surrounding Amish community. (My matriarchal family's heritage is Amish, so in order to extend the longitudinal aspects of literacy and technology as they are passed between generations, I extended my questions into the local Amish community.) Based on interviews with key (family) and community (Amish) participants, I coded four types of heritage literacy practice: *faith*, *work*, *coming of age*, and *gathering and communing*. These four types were then used in several articles exploring the concept of how this family and community adopts, adapts, or alienates from various practices. The first article, "Heritage Literacy," develops the concept itself and uses examples from *gathering and communing*, focusing on the creation of quilts and how that practice has changed and remained the same over generations. The second article, "Cooking," focuses on the practice of *work* and uses cooking and food examples to show how work ethic is heavily tied to being able to read and write and to cook. The third article, "Faith," explores the heritage literacy practice of *faith* by examining how literacy, *faith*, and action are synchronized, particularly in the Christian Anabaptist tradition of adult baptism. Finally, I develop the concept of *coming of age* in a book chapter ("Coming of Age") about *Rumspringa*, the Amish practice of giving young people almost absolute freedom as they decide whether to join the Amish church. References for each of these articles are available in the works-cited list.

² I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the fifteen participants for welcoming me into their homes and lives and sharing with me their stories.

³ I offer sincere and profuse thanks to the anonymous reviewers of this article. Your critiques and insights were vital in improving the quality and impact of this document.

⁴ Rudolf Flesch is also the creator of the Flesch Reading Ease test and the co-creator of the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test. These two tests are the basis of many large-scale studies such as the NALS discussed in this article.

⁵ It is noteworthy that in every search I did for current research on older adult literacies, whether the search was via *Google* for a "public discourse" perspective or via scholarly journal database resources such as *EBSCOhost* or *ProQuest*, the vast majority of the hits were regarding health.

⁶ See, for example, Friedman and Hoffman-Goetz; Cohen, White and Cohen; Nygaard, Echt, and Shuchard.

⁷ See, for example, Liu, Kemper, and Bovaird; L. Ryan et al.; Friedman and Hoffman-Goetz.

⁸ See, for example, Ryan, Anas, Beamer, and Bajorek; Beckley et al.

⁹ See, for example, Baker et al.

¹⁰ See, for example, McCormack et al.; Roman; Gilleard and Higgs.

¹¹ See also Naidoo, Putnam and Spindel's "Key Focal Areas for Bridging the Fields of Aging and Disability."

¹² See, for example, Heath; Hicks; Compton-Lily, *Reading Families, Reading Time* and *Reading Families: Four Years Later*.

¹³ See, for example, Boudiny; Holroyd; Spoel, Harris, and Henwood.

¹⁴ Boudiny cites Clarke and Warren as well as Pettigrew and Roberts as references for this assertion.

¹⁵ See, for example, Ricca Edmondson and Hans Joachim von Kondratowitz.

¹⁶ This name, and all names of participants, is a pseudonym.

Works Cited

- Arcury, Thomas A., Sara A. Quandt, Juliana McDonald, and Ronny A. Bell. "Faith and Health Self-Management of Rural Older Adults." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 15.1 (2000): 55–74. Web. 15 Feb. 2012.
- Baker, David. W., et al. "Functional Health Literacy and the Risk of Hospital Admission Among Medicare Managed Care Enrollees." *American Journal of Public Health* 13.8 (2002): 1278–83. Web. 24 Feb. 2012.
- Barry, Joan. "Autobiographical Writing: An Effective Tool for Practice with the Oldest Old." *Social Work* 33.5 (1988): 449–51. Web. 15 Feb. 2012.
- Beckley, Margaret Newsham, et al. "Low Vision: Developing Services for Older Adults." *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal* 54.4 (2007): 310–12. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
- Boudiny, Kim. "Acting Ageing': From Empty Rhetoric to Effective Policy Tool." *Ageing and Society* 33.6 (2013): 1077–98. Web. 26 Jan. 2015.
- Bowen, Lauren Marshall. "Beyond Repair: Literacy, Technology, and a Curriculum of Aging." *College English* 74.5 (2012): 437–57. Web. 2 Apr. 2012.
- . "Resisting Age Bias in Digital Literacy Research." *College Composition and Communication* 62.4 (2011): 586–607. Web. 14 Jan. 2012.
- Brandt, Deborah. "Accumulating Literacy: Writing and Learning to Write in the Twentieth Century." *College English* 57.6 (1995): 649–68. Print.
- . *Literacy in American Lives*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.
- . "Sponsors of Literacy." *College Composition and Communication* 49.2 (1998): 165–85. Print.
- Broady, Tim, Amy Chan, and Peter Caputi. "Comparison of Older and Younger Adults' Attitudes Toward and Abilities with Computers: Implications for Training and Learning." *British Journal of Education Technology* 41.3 (2010): 473–85. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.
- Brown, Helen, et al. *Literacy of Older Adults in America: Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey*, Washington, DC. 1996. National Center for Education Statistics 97-576. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
- Clarke, Amanda, and Lorna Warren, "Hopes, Fears and Expectations about the Future: What Do Other People's Stories Tell Us about Active Ageing?" *Ageing and Society* 27.4 (2007): 465–88. Web. 26 Jan. 2015.
- Cohen, Dale J., Sheida White, and Steffaney B. Cohen, "A Time Use Diary Study of Adult Everyday Writing Behavior." *Written Communication* 28.1 (2011): 3–33. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
- Compton-Lilly, Catherine. *Reading Families: The Literate Lives of Urban Children*. New York: Teachers College P, 2003. Print.
- . *Reading Time: The Literate Lives of Urban Secondary Students and Their Families*. New York: Teachers College P, 2012. Print.
- . *Re-Reading Families: The Literate Lives of Urban Children Four Years Later*. New York: Teachers College P, 2007. Print.
- Dolmage, Jay Timothy. *Disability Rhetoric*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2014. Print.
- Edmondson, Ricca, and Hans-Joachim von Kondratowitz. *Valuing Older People: A Humanistic Approach to Ageing*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2009. Print.
- Farr, Marcia. "En Los Dos Idiomas: Literacy Practices Among Chicago Mexicanos." *Literacy Across Communities*. Ed. Beverly J. Moss. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 1994. 9–47. Print.
- Flesch, Rudolf. *Why Johnny Can't Read—And What You Can Do About It*. New York: Harper, 1955. Print.
- Friedman, Daniela B., and Laurie Hoffman-Goetz. "An Exploratory Study of Older Adults'

- Comprehension of Printed Cancer Information: Is Readability a Key Factor?" *Journal of Health Communication* 12.5 (2007): 423–37. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
- Gilleard, Chris, and Paul Higgs. "Old People as Users and Consumers of Healthcare: A Third Age Rhetoric for a Fourth Age Reality?" *Ageing and Society* 18.2 (1998): 233–48. Print.
- Hawisher, Gail, and Cynthia Selfe, eds. *Literate Live in the Information Age: Narratives of Literacy from the United States*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004. Print.
- Heath, Shirley Brice. *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983. Print.
- Hicks, Deborah. *Reading Lives: Working Class Children and Literacy Learning*. New York: Teachers College P, 2002. Print.
- Holroyd, Eleanor. "Health-Seeking Behaviors and Social Change: The Experience of the Hong Kong Chinese Elderly." *Qualitative Health Research* 12.6 (2002): 731–50. Web. 27 Jan. 2015.
- Katz, Stephen, and Toni Calasanti. "Critical Perspectives on Successful Aging: Does It 'Appeal More Than It Illuminates'?" *The Gerontologist* 55.1 (2015): 26–33. Web. 18 Sept. 2015.
- "Lettered." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam Webster, 2014. Web. 8 July 2014.
- "Literate." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam Webster, 2014. Web. 8 July 2014.
- Liu, Chiung-ju, Susan Kemper, and James A. Bovaird. "Comprehension of Health-Related Written Materials by Older Adults." *Educational Gerontology* 35.7 (2009): 653–68. Web. 15 Feb. 2012.
- McCormack, Lauren, et al. "Health Insurance Literacy of Older Adults." *The Journal of Consumer Affairs* 43.2 (2009): 223–48. Web. 14 Feb. 2012.
- McKee, Heidi, and Kristine Blair. "Older Adults and Community-Based Technological Literacy Programs: Barriers and Benefits to Learning." *Community Literacy Journal* 1.2 (2007): 13–39. Web. 5 May 2015.
- Moss, Beverly J. "Creating a Community: Literacy Events in African-American Churches." *Literacy Across Communities*. Ed. Beverly J. Moss. Cresskill: Hampton, 1994. 147–78. Print.
- Mullen, Ellen. "Health Literacy Challenges in the Aging Population." *Nursing Forum* 48.4 (2013): 248–55. Web. 19 Jan. 2015.
- Naidoo, Vishaya, Michelle Putnam, and Andria Spindel. "Key Focal Areas for Bridging the Fields of Aging and Disability: Findings from the Growing Older with a Disability Conference." *International Journal of Integrated Care* 12 (2012): 1 – 8. Print.
- Nygaard, Rolf W., Katharina V. Echt, and Ronald A. Shuchard. "Models of Reading Performance in Older Adults with Normal Age-Related Vision." *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development* 45.6 (2008): 901–10. Print.
- Pettigrew, Simone, and Michele Roberts. "Addressing Loneliness in Later Life." *Ageing and Mental Health* 12.3 (2008): 302–09. Print.
- Ray, Ruth E. *Beyond Nostalgia: Aging and Life-Story Writing*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2000. Print.
- . *Endnotes: An Intimate Look at the End of Life*. New York: Columbia UP, 2008. Print.
- Richeson, Nancy, and James A. Thorson. "The Effect of Autobiographical Writing on the Subjective Well-Being of Older Adults." *North American Journal of Psychology* 4.3 (2002): 395–404. Print.
- Roman, Sarah Poff. "Illiteracy and Older Adults: Individual and Societal Implications." *Educational Gerontology* 30.2 (2004): 79–93. Web. 14 Feb. 2012.
- Rosenthal, Rita L. "Older Computer-Literate Women: Their Motivations, Obstacles, and Paths to Success." *Educational Gerontology* 34.7 (2008): 610–26. Web. 14 Feb. 2012.
- Rowe, John W., and Robert L. Kahn. "Successful Aging." *The Gerontologist* 37.4 (1997): 433–440.

Web. Accessed 29 Apr. 2015.

- Rumsey, Suzanne Kesler. "Coming of Age: Amish Heritage Literacy Practices of Rumspringa, Adult Baptism, and Shunning." *Navigating Languages Literacies and Identities: Religion in Young Lives*. Eds. Vally Lytra, Dinah Volk, and Eve Gregory. London: Routledge. 2016. Print.
- . "Cooking, Recipes, and Work Ethic: Passage of a Heritage Literacy Practice." *Journal of Literacy and Technology* 10.1 (2009): 69–95. Web. 5 May 2009.
- . "Faith in Action: Heritage Literacy as a Synchronization of Belief, Word, and Deed." *Literacy* 44.3 (2010): 137–43. Web. 15 Dec. 2010.
- . "Heritage Literacy: Adoption, Adaptation, and Alienation of Multimodal Literacy Tools." *College Composition and Communication* 60.3 (2009): 573–86. Print.
- Rumsey, Suzanne Kesler, Lauren Marshall Bowen, Ruth E. Ray, and Donora Howard. "The 'New Discourse City' of Older Writers: Aging and Disability as Assets to Collaborative Learning." *Service-Learning and Writing: Paving the Way for Literacy(ies) Through Community Engagement*. Ed. Isabel Baca. Boston: Brill, 2012. 219–40. Print.
- Ryan, Ellen Bouchard, Ann P. Anas, Miranda Beamer, and Selina Bajorek. "Coping with Age-Related Vision Loss in Everyday Reading Activities." *Educational Gerontology* 29.1 (2003): 37–54. Web. 4 Feb. 2015.
- Ryan, Lesa, et al. "Evaluation of Printed Health Education Materials for Use by Low-Education Families." *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 46.4 (2014): 218–28. Print.
- Slegers, Karin, Martin P. J. van Boxtel, and Jelle Jolles. "The Effects of Computer Training and Internet Usage on the Use of Everyday Technology by Older Adults: A Randomized Controlled Study." *Educational Gerontology* 33.2 (2007): 91–110. Web. 4 Feb. 2015.
- Spoel, Philippa, Roma Harris, and Flis Henwood. "Rhetorics of Health Citizenship: Exploring Vernacular Critiques of Government's Role in Supporting Healthy Living." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 35.2 (2014): 131–47. Print.
- Street, Brian V. *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. Print.
- Tam, Maureen. "Understanding and Theorizing the Role of Culture in the Conceptualizations of Successful Aging and Lifelong Learning." *Educational Gerontology* 40.12 (2014) 881–93. Web. 4 Feb. 2015.

Book Review—*Teaching Queer: Radical Possibilities for Writing and Knowing*, by Stacey Waite

Jean Bessette—University of Vermont

Since the mid-1990s, scholars of queer pedagogy have tended to focus on LGBTQ subjects, topics, and texts. Early work examined and confronted the intricacies of coming out in the classroom; homophobia and heteronormativity in teachers, students, and institutions; and “how to manage potentially uncomfortable discussions about sex, sexuality, and queerness” (Alexander and Wallace 310). More recently, the field has shifted from a focus on the inclusivity of LGBTQ identities to a focus on identity’s production and dissolution, drawing on queer theory to denaturalize notions of stable, cohesive identity and to investigate how normativity produces and polices teachers and students. In tandem with queer pedagogy’s challenge to identity and normativity, queer compositionists have suggested that composition *as such* is destabilized by queerness; as Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes argue, queerness may “challenge the very subject of composition, of what it means to compose, of what it means to *be composed*” (182). Stacey Waite’s new book, *Teaching Queer*, emerges in the intersection of queer pedagogy and composition, taking up the implications of Alexander and Rhodes’ assertion for the teaching of writing. If queerness challenges norms of both gender identity and writing, what might it mean to teach composition queer?

For Waite, inquiry into this question must begin and end with the body, the body that lives, writes, teaches, and learns—and writes, teaches, and learns to live. *Teaching Queer*’s title positions “teaching” as both a *verb* (the iterative, reflexive interrogation of norms that structure writing and gender) and as an *adjective* (a description of Waite herself, a queer who teaches) (10). This reciprocal relation between queer pedagogy and embodied queerness is integral to Waite’s method. As she explains, “I do not believe the story of my scholarship is separate from the story of my life or the body I live” (15). Consequently, each chapter is structured as a network of fragments, flowing between personal narrative about growing up queer, theories of gender and composition, and analysis of the verbal and written work of students. Frequently and without warning, readers learn about the diving habits of loons, the role of muscles in motion, and the way a dolphin whistles. The result is an exceedingly readable and compelling argument for teaching writing with an emphasis on contradiction, movement, and the relations among bodies and texts.

The body is the focus of the first core chapter, as Waite invites teachers to “confront the fear, defensiveness, and erasure that constitute what it means to *be* a teaching body” (23). This chapter presents one of the book’s greatest gifts—and risks: the profound vulnerability Waite encounters and probes when she enters the classroom and asks her students to write. For Waite, writing itself is about self-revision, self-question, even self-annihilation, and she performs this vulnerability in her writing as much as she asks it of her students. Waite admits the fears that many teachers have and won’t acknowledge; she admits, for example, that she teaches about queerness in order to survive, in order to make this world livable for her androgynous body. She suggests that we teachers are all trying to

survive, that we ask students to read and think in certain ways so that they might help to make the world more open to the kind of people we are. But admitting to “selfishness” does not prevent Waite from questioning her own responses as students react to the queer texts she assigns and the body from which she teaches. In an illustrative passage, she writes:

And the truth is, as I read this student’s writing, I understood the various ways he might be terrorized by me (by my course, by this book I had chosen for him to read); I also understood the ways I, too, felt terrorized by him—he’s *not going to feel bad for them*. It’s the “them” that’s terrifying. It’s seeing myself as this student’s “them.” (39)

Here and throughout the book, Waite exhibits deep empathy for her students and herself with consonant awareness of her, and their, power to harm and unsettle.

Using student writing and class discussion transcripts as primary sources, Waite treats students as writers and as *theorists*, as collaborators in the process of generating knowledge about gender and writing. For instance, when a student named Johnnie writes in a reflection that the class has overturned his sense of certainty and made his “thinking fee[l] all watery,” Waite takes up his liquid imagery to forward an “alternative epistemology, a way of thinking and writing” where acts of literacy become fluid and supple (9). Indeed, Johnnie’s generation of theory becomes the inspiration for a chapter entitled “Becoming Liquid,” in which Waite investigates how we might teach interpretative acts that dissolve the sturdiest of convictions to create room for new possibilities.

While the book is a work in queer composition pedagogy, it has much to offer literacy and composition teachers of any stripe. For instance, in the chapter “Courting Failure,” Waite builds on Jack Halberstam’s concept of the “queer art of failure.” Extending Halberstam’s assertion that queer failures can productively disrupt dominant norms, Waite argues that failure can upset norms of writing. Examples from the classroom invigorate this contention as Waite and her students debate how the language we use to workshop writing often fails us, how words like “thesis” and “flow” constrain what can be said in and about writing. In the wake of these words’ limitations, Waite’s students generate new language for naming the shape and movement writing can make. In a similar class discussion in the chapter “Queer (Re)Visions of Composition,” Waite’s students escape the constraints of language entirely, drawing diagrams of the ways different pieces of writing oscillate, amble, loop, and roil. Teachers need not identify as queer nor situate themselves in queer composition studies to become inspired by Waite’s inventive and reflective approach to classroom activities and writing assignments.

Perhaps because Waite’s focus is on embodied experience, how queerness challenges norms of identity and writing—and how “teaching queer” can break through to new ground, new language, and new possibilities for living—she does not emphasize that her approach may have roots in a curricular tradition. Readers familiar with the first-year writing program at the University of Pittsburgh (where both Waite and I were trained) may find some of her values as familiar as they are compelling, particularly the productive potential of uncertainty and contradiction, the interrogation of experience, and the centrality of student writing as texts in the classroom. These values are embedded in the program’s goals for the first-year seminar and in *Ways of Reading*, an influential composition reader long edited by Pittsburgh professors David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky

and now co-edited by Waite. Yet forwarding and reinvigorating these values does not make Waite's book any less innovative; if anything, it provokes yet another productive contradiction: the notion of a queer tradition, the notion that a composition program might resist composure. One of Waite's many contributions is to demonstrate the stakes and risks of such a pedagogy for living.

In each chapter, Waite performs the method she advocates: she connects her reading of student writing and speech with her lived experience in her queer body; she questions and probes that initial reading to find the layers, contradictions, and failures that lie beneath it; she applies the same iterative, empathetic, yet critical lens to students whose own readings in their writing are informed by embodied experience. In this way, the book is very much about literacy *in* composition, about writing as reading as writing. As Waite puts it, "I take the work of composition to be the work of fluid, nuanced, embodied, and conscious readings and interpretations" (127). Her queer approach calls attention to the literacy practices embedded and naturalized within and outside schooling: to how some ways of reading make some ways of being livable and legible, and how others participate in their erasure. Waite's goal in teaching queer is to teach literacy that opens up possibilities for living, that makes what was fixed "liquid" so that we might all become more capable of movement.

Works Cited

- Alexander, Jonathan, and Jacqueline Rhodes. "Queer: An Impossible Subject for Composition." *JAC* 31.1 (2011): 177-206. Web. 16 Dec 2017.
- Alexander, Jonathan, and David Wallace. "The Queer Turn in Composition Studies: Reviewing and Assessing an Emerging Scholarship." *CCC* 61.1 (2009): 300-320. Web. 15 Jan 2018.
- Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke UP, 2011. Print.

Book Review—*The Lure of Literacy: A Critical Reception of the Compulsory Composition Debate*, by Michael Harker

Meaghan H. Brewer—Pace University

When Deborah Brandt accepted her Exemplar Award at the 2017 Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), I was reminded of why I continue to ground my work in literacy theory. In her speech, Brandt describes how literacy sponsors, including her father and his fellow journalists, her mentors in graduate school, and the students she would go on to mentor, shaped her conception of literacy, which she saw not in terms of some universal essence but rather in the social and material practices surrounding her. One takeaway from Brandt's talk is that because conceptions of (and myths about) literacy undergird understandings of what writing and literacy are and should be, identifying and naming conceptions of literacy is imperative.

Brandt's work on sponsorship, as well as the insights of New Literacy Studies (NLS) theorists Brian V. Street and James Paul Gee, have been foundational to the field of composition. However, some literacy theorists have pointed to NLS's marginalization in recent debates about the content of the first-year course (FYC). For example, in a session titled "Naming What WE Know" at CCCC 2017, speakers Jason Alexander, Eli Goldblatt, Angela Haas, Paula Mathieu, and Jacqueline Rhodes argued that the collection by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle for whom the session was named had narrowed the focus of composition from literacy (which also encompasses reading, community and non-school based literacies, and other ways of knowing) to a more narrowly academic "writing studies."

Michael Harker's impressive new book bridges this gap between literacy and composition studies by synthesizing the views of literacy theorists like Street, Harvey J. Graff, Mike Rose, Ruth Finnegan, and David Barton to create a framework for interpreting proposals for composition's abolition and reform. Harker's central argument is that "ambiguous and hasty characterizations of literacy" that assume "exaggerated expectations of literacy's powers" are endemic to proposals *both* to abolish composition and to reform it (16, 23). To put it another way, both the abolitionists and the reformists rely on literacy myths that construct literacy as more powerful than it is.

Harker supports his surprising revelation of the similarities between abolitionists and reformists by "enlarging the historical context of" the abolition debate, which often oversimplifies abolitionists' views (4). His examination begins with two proposals to abolish composition from early in the twentieth century: Thomas Lounsbury's 1911 "Compulsory Composition in the Colleges" and Oscar James Campbell's 1939 "The Failure of Freshman English." Although most examinations of these treatises have dismissed them as "merely elitist," Harker argues instead that they are "asking too much of literacy" (17, 13). Specifically, Harker shows how both Lounsbury's proposal and those disagreeing with it fall victim to "an abiding belief in the power of literacy to bring about profound cognitive and spiritual transformations" (22-23). Campbell's proposal, meanwhile, demonstrates what Finnegan calls the "Great Divide" conception of literacy, which positions those who possess

literacy in a position of dominance over those who do not (28). According to Harker, Campbell views students as “primitive creatures” who can escape mediocrity and provincialism only by acquainting themselves with “the books of ages” (28). As this last statement reveals, Campbell and Lounsbury’s views still come off as elitist, but Harker’s more textured account, which examines statements left out by other scholars, situates them within myths of literacy that continue to this day.

In Chapter 2, Harker moves to arguments for composition’s abolition by E.A. Thurber (in 1915), Frederick Manchester (1917 and 1948), and Paulus Lange (1938), which have been ignored in other scholarship. Overall, these positions are characterized both by a “vague sense of crisis” (the literacy crisis being another myth which holds that “the past was better or the future will be”) (57; Rose qtd. in Harker 31). These proposals also blame the shortcomings of first-year students on something else other than the required composition course. As Harker puts it, “each propose a solution . . . that . . . shifts the consequences of confiding in literacy away from composition – the course that seems the most invested in the myth itself” (61). The fact that the ones bearing the brunt of these solutions in the historical proposals are recognizable as such to us today, including high school teachers, the rest of the university (other than composition), and the students themselves, demonstrates the relevance of Harker’s project (61).

In his third chapter, Harker turns to the reformists—a key move for establishing the surprising continuity of literacy views between them and abolitionists. Using passages from essays by reformists Alice V. Brower (1942) and Warner G. Rice (1940), he shows how both preserve a view of literacy that translates “into an easily teachable and efficient pedagogy” (65). In essence, Brower and Rice’s arguments, like the abolitionists’, depend on what Street calls the autonomous model of literacy, which conceptualizes it as an individual, neutral skill that can be easily picked up and applied against a variety of contexts. Readers may find, as I did, that the excerpts from Brower appeared to resonate with different literacy value systems than in previous chapters. As an example of progressive era education, Brower’s views seemed characteristic of what Peter M. Goggin and C.H. Knoblauch call “literacy for personal growth,” a view that sees literacy as expressing “the power of the individual imagination” (Knoblauch 78). Yet Brower too partakes in the literacy myth, referring to literacy as a “mystic power” that will “transform the chaos of today into a livable world for tomorrow!” (qtd. in Harker 71). Again, Harker deftly shows a rhetoric that exaggerates literacy’s potential.

Harker’s turn to Crowley’s *Composition in the University* in Chapter 4 marks a shift in his methodology, which up to this point has been to use the NLS framework to examine statements for composition’s abolition and reform in order to uncover evidence of unrealistic expectations for literacy. In what was my favorite chapter of the book, Harker announces that he doesn’t intend to investigate Crowley’s book, which has often functioned as the quintessential statement on abolition, for evidence of the literacy myth because Crowley’s work recognizes “that popular conceptions of the powers of literacy and the pedagogical capabilities of composition are exaggerated” (87). In other words, Crowley, unlike the other abolitionists, comes to her position fully aware of literacy myths. Harker looks instead at how other scholars have cited Crowley to show that even though *Composition in the University* has been cited “424 times between 1999 and 2014,” the rhetorical effect of these citations has often been to silence her (88). In other words, these works “construct her position

as a master narrative within the abolition debate,” shutting down the potential for examining how literacy myths have informed other abolitionists’ accounts (102).

The Lure of Literacy acts as a corrective to what Harker sees as composition’s movement away from literacy, warning compositionists not to make literacy something they “engage with [only] anecdotally” (118). To that end, the fifth and final chapter offers Harker’s own proposal, which is to recreate FYC as “First-Year Literacy Studies” (117). This movement is similar to Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle’s refiguring of the first-year course to make writing studies the content, as Harker acknowledges. However, Harker’s proposed curriculum is more intent on making literacy myths the subject of students’ inquiry, creating opportunities for them to explore their own literacy experiences in the context of current and historical assumptions about literacy. Although the five “student lessons” Harker offers are sketched out broadly, I could imagine myself incorporating them into my own curriculum. In particular, Harker’s anecdote about the Time Warner literacy campaign offers a lesson in how literacy sponsors can forward their own interests more than those they supposedly work to liberate.

Nevertheless, I also wonder about the feasibility of replacing FYC with FYLS. Given that composition has increasingly been rebranding itself as “writing studies” and identifying itself as a mature discipline in its own right, compositionists who are less familiar with the rich scholarship from literacy studies may view “literacy” as either too broad or too basic a label for FYC. As Brenda Glascott argues, the term “literacy” is absent from the composition/rhetoric “dyad”; whereas composition serves as rhetoric’s “degraded other,” literacy has been so degraded as to be erased (21). Of course, it is this particular tension that Harker’s book picks at, and I hope his proposal leads to more integration of literacy studies into the curricula not only for composition but for writing and English majors as well.

Ultimately, readers of *LiCS* will find a strong argument for how understandings of literacy are fundamental to the work that compositionists do, making this book useful not only to those doing similar work but also to be shared with colleagues who have less familiarity with literacy studies. *The Lure of Literacy* presents a model of how theories of literacy can be applied to the debates that beset compositionists again and again, offering a way out of their unproductive cycles.

Works Cited

- Alexander, Jonathan, Eli Goldblatt, Angela M. Haas, Paula Mathieu, and Jacqueline Rhodes. "Naming What WE Know: A Roundtable on Knowledge Production in Composition." Conference on College Composition and Communication, 17 Mar. 2017, Oregon Convention Center, Portland, OR.
- Brandt, Deborah. "Conference on College Composition and Communication Exemplar Award Speech." Conference on College Composition and Communication, 16 Mar. 2017, Oregon Convention Center, Portland, OR.
- Glascott, Brenda. "Constricting Keywords: Rhetoric and Literacy in our History Writing." *Literacy in Composition Studies* 1.1 (2013): 18-25. Print.
- Goggin, Peter. *Professing Literacy in Composition Studies*. New York: Hampton P, 2008. Print.
- Knoblauch, C.H. "Literacy and the Politics of Education." *The Right to Literacy*. Ed. Andrea Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin. New York: MLA, 1990. 74-80. Print.

Book Review—*Reclaiming Composition for Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy*,
by Iris D. Ruiz

Jasmine Villa—University of Texas at El Paso

Where are PoC in the theoretical realm, the realm of the unmarginalized, the realm of the serious, structural conversations, such as research methodology and Composition Studies history that ultimately influences the way Composition gets taught and talked about?

*PoC influence the ways the field changes, evolves, grows, and gets reconceived. Where are PoC in Composition's History? Are they there implicitly?
No. They are invisible.*

—Iris D. Ruiz

In *Reclaiming Composition for Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy*, Iris Ruiz critiques the lack of representation, inclusion, and contributions of people of color (PoC) as students and scholars in the late 19th century. This marginalization has created gaps within the field's history, and improvement towards providing platforms and support for minority scholarship continues to be minimal. In her introduction, Ruiz shares a compelling personal narrative of what it means to be a Latina Compositionist as a graduate student, scholar, and instructor. The lack of representation and limited number of Latinas and Latino Compositionists meant constantly being on the search for people who looked like her (i.e. mentors, publishers, authors, academics), and for the theoretical contributions of PoC to the growing scholarship of Composition Studies whose focus was not on “linguistic diversity issues such as English as a Second Language (ESL), translanguaging, [and] Generation 1.5” (3). Her narrative sets the tone for the need to critique and address the visibility and contributions of underrepresented groups in Composition history; it also underlies her advocacy for a critical historiographic pedagogy to be implemented within the composition classroom. A critical historiographic pedagogy encourages and challenges students to analyze the process of social inclusion and exclusion, power structures, and representation within mainstream historical narratives. To further this point, Ruiz frames her argument on the lack of representation and inclusion within Composition Studies scholarship as an ongoing problem, in part because of the color blindness and post-racism ideologies that often follow students of color. Ruiz acknowledges prominent scholars of color, but her call for occupying academic spaces requires more than recruitment from underrepresented groups. There is a call for diversity within the field, yet there is still a disconnect between the outcomes of the call and the number of scholars of color that lead the helm and/or are prominently visible.

In chapters one through four, Ruiz combines a post-structural understanding with critical post-positivist theory and critical race theory to complete a historical comparative analysis of the

pedagogical changes that occurred within Composition Studies during the late 19th century. Ruiz synthesizes mainstream historiographies of Composition by John Brereton, James Berlin, Albert Kitzhaber, and Richard Ohmann, among others, to outline a persistent representation of the “egalitarian” (96) university. Kitzhaber’s historical study of the field of composition and rhetoric portrays the second half of the 19th century as “transitional” (47). This is significant because Ruiz supplements Kitzhaber’s historical study with the narratives of Brereton, Berlin, and Ohmann to introduce the shift from classical rhetorical training to the German model, focused on scientific research, that led to the development of the first-year composition course and current-traditional rhetoric.

Through Berlin and Ohmann’s accounts, Ruiz traces the influence of current-traditional, expressivist, and social constructionist theories on the reevaluation of the practice of rhetoric, pedagogy, development of a writing curriculum, and students’ agency. In the 1980s, Berlin’s revival of rhetoric led to a shift from the current-traditional model towards an epistemic position, which opened up conversations on discourses being “ideological and entangled in power relations” (30). Ruiz frames the multidisciplinary critiques of Susan Miller, Sharon Crowley, and Lynn Bloom as being primarily focused on the development of the middle-class, arguing that both Crowley and Bloom note that “[c]omposition’s continuity of purpose is and always has been to create and maintain a hegemonic middle class” (53). This version of Composition history poses a problem because it continues to marginalize the voices and contributions of PoCs and depicts a “racial and culturally blind version of Composition pedagogy” (55). Ruiz reinforces this sentiment throughout the book, but Chapter Three is the catalyst for “who benefits from this type of rhetoric and, at the same time, who is excluded” (52). In chapters five through seven, Ruiz concentrates on the challenges new students brought with them to the writing classroom and how this led to reevaluating traditional writing models. The emphasis on race enables a better understanding of “the absence of African Americans in educational institutions and, thus, represents the difficulty of finding a textual presence in written histories of Composition. Such a viewpoint is consistent with the aims of critical race theory” (81). Critical race theory structures Ruiz’s counter-narratives by providing a more contested version of history.

The focus on the African-American and Mexican-American contributions during the civil rights era connects Composition’s past to the educational reforms of the Reconstructive era. Ruiz shifts her focus to the Midwest, South, and the Southwest, with particular attention to California and Texas, to find the histories of more inclusive educational opportunities that typically are not included in Composition histories. She points to educational history and the formation of a normal school (i.e. response to a unified educational institution and students’ learning process vs textbooks) as an alternative location and population for Composition Studies history. According to Ruiz, “being an oppositional critic is conceptualized as beginning after the educational field’s response to the Civil Rights Movement, which undoubtedly affected the practice and theory of Composition” (85). In particular, she focuses on the death of MLK, the Black Movement, and the Chicano Studies Movement and how they influenced students’ cultural pride and the development of multicultural curriculums. Ruiz uses Chicano Studies and Black Studies programs during the civil rights era as

turning points and examples that reflect the outcomes of including “new histories” in institutions of higher education (149). The emergence of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) in the 1990s sparked debate on traditional multicultural pedagogies and how effective they were when accommodating students of color. Ruiz uses the civil rights movements and rise of HSIs to critique the pedagogical approaches of multicultural theories and offers a meaningful intervention in the field by promoting a pedagogy centered on critical historiography.

In chapters eight through ten, Ruiz delves more into the implications of using a critical historiography approach when teaching writing. For Ruiz, a critical historiography pedagogy does not “solely concentrate upon differences between populations of people, as is common with many multicultural writing curricula which center on identity politics” (162). Rather, a critical historiography pedagogy uses memoria to encourage and produce a “universal learning experience that does not solely concentrate on the victimized status of minorities” (163). A pedagogy centered on critical historiography is a universalist multicultural pedagogy; it challenges multicultural curricula by being more inclusive and more critical of the methods used to teach multicultural content. For example, a critical reading of histories (i.e. questioning the purpose and writing process of history) furthers and enriches students’ development of rhetorical skills when discussing the social conditions that shaped the construction of historical narratives (167). An instructor assigns a diverse set of readings to analyze the process of social inclusion and exclusion, power structures, and sense of representation and belonging within contested histories. For minorities, this is an opportunity to see how and what alternative versions of history and rhetorics influence their overall writing process. An example of this can be found in Chapter 9, where Ruiz discusses her use of Guatemala as a site for critical historiography to critique the deficit and homogenous narrative of Latinos. According to Ruiz,

While the content is important, the way the content is presented, taught, and negotiated is even more important. This is because the goal of a universalist multicultural pedagogy is for all students to benefit from critically analyzing both multicultural and minority texts which concentrate on their experiences. Those experiences are always seen as socially and historically located. Thus, looking at minority experiences from a critical historical standpoint is one way to critically analyze the current status of minority populations in the U.S.A. (171)

In her ten-week course, Ruiz includes a diverse list of readings, such as the letters of Hernán Cortés, texts on manifest destiny, and several others for students to reflect on. Ruiz is transparent when she discusses the obstacles when implementing a pedagogy centered on critical historiography.

While Ruiz cannot disassociate from her *Latinidad*, she acknowledges the affordances and constraints of her positionality as a woman of color, explaining how she maintains her credibility as an instructor by establishing boundaries, remaining objective, and reducing political bias by not revealing her political associations. Yet she notes that conflict is inevitable because students are challenged to move past their comfort zones, and her “pedagogical focus” has at times been “overlooked because of [her] colored body and association to the class material” (177). She shares a moment when a disgruntled student contested a grade, alleging that it was motivated by personal

and political bias. The issue was resolved with Ruiz providing documentation that disproved personal and political bias against the student, and she asserts that students have responded favorably to her approach to using a critical historiography within the classroom. Ruiz concludes her argument by commenting on how a “historiographic method can provide students with the critical analytical tools needed to analyze current social problems of inequality as well as to combat feelings of inadequacy or alienation from mainstream academic culture” (196). Ultimately, Ruiz is an advocate and renders the invisible visible through a critical historiographic pedagogy.

Ruiz has written a refreshing and much needed contribution to the history of Composition Studies, filling in some of the historical gaps of PoC contributions that have been omitted by the field. The book not only makes PoC visible and increases representation of Latinos but is a valuable resource for graduate students and composition instructors. Ruiz unfolds a critical historiographic pedagogy where students engage in self-discovery of what is included and excluded in history as it relates to writing. This student-centered approach encourages discussion on the power and linguistic structures that influence the publication of a historical narrative. This self-discovery benefits students, and it is also a vehicle for positive cultural recovery and healing for PoC scholars and writing practitioners.

But as many other “colored” Compositionists have admitted, academics of color struggle against assumptions about our qualifications, confront others who feel we have no right to be in the academy, and are consistently caught up in a battle to prove ourselves worthy, to show our loyalty, never letting our guard down for a second. This experience provides another reason why adhering to universalist justifications for multicultural pedagogy is important. The benefits have to accrue for all students, not just a select few.

—Iris D. Ruiz

Works Cited

Ruiz, Iris. *Reclaiming Composition for Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Print.

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES

Linda Adler-Kassner
University of California, Santa Barbara

Kara Poe Alexander
Baylor University

Damián Baca
University of Arizona

Kirk Branch
Montana State University

Kevin Browne
Syracuse University

Rebekah Buchanan
Western Illinois University

Gerald Campano
University of Pennsylvania

Michelle Navarre Cleary
DePaul University

Marilyn Cooper
Michigan Tech University

Mary Jane Curry
University of Rochester

Daphne Desser
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

Dylan Dryer
University of Maine

Donna Dunbar-Odom
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Janet Eldred
University of Kentucky

Jenn Fishman
Marquette University

Tom Fox
California State University, Chico

Alanna Frost
University of Alabama—Huntsville

Chris Gallagher
Northeastern University

Susan Garza
Texas A&M - Corpus Christi

Guillaume Gentil
Carleton University

Diana George
Virginia Tech

Mary Goldschmidt
University of Scranton

Juan C. Guerra
University of Washington

Michael Harker
Georgia State University

Asao B. Inoue
University of Washington, Tacoma

Kim Jaxon
California State University, Chico

Zandra Jordan
Spelman College

Rochelle Kapp
University of Cape Town

Tim Laquintano
Lafayette College

Rhea Estelle Lathan
Florida State University

Katie Malcolm
University of Washington

Moriah McCracken
St. Edward's University

Vivette Milson-Whyte
The University of the West Indies

Michael Pennell
University of Kentucky

Rob Petrone
Montana State University

Catherine Prendergast
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Jessica Restaino
Montclair State University

Rebecca Richards
St. Olaf College

Suzanne Kesler Rumsey
Purdue Fort Wayne

Jennifer Sano-Franchini
Virginia Tech

Donna Scheidt
High Point University

Mary Scott
University of London

Tony Scott
Syracuse University

Mira Shimabukuro
Highline Community College

Christian Smith
Coastal Carolina University

Heather Thomson-Bunn
Pepperdine University

Karin Tusting
Lancaster University

Annette Vee
University of Pittsburgh

Amy Wan
Queens College, University of New York

Anne Elrod Whitney
Pennsylvania State University

Scott Wible
University of Maryland

Bronwyn T. Williams
University of Louisville