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The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

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Opening Editorial

Jonathan Bush and Erinn Bentley, Co-Editors

When we first came up with the idea of having a journal dedicated to writing teacher education, we were worried about the number of submissions we might receive. We knew that we were dedicated to the these topics, aand we knew that there was a vibrant community of writers, teachers, and scholars in both the Conference on English Education and in the Conference on College Composition and Communication, but we didn't know how that would translate into the productivity of a journal. As part of these communities, we knew that people would read the journal (and they have, with nearly 5,000 indepedent downloads for the journal since the launch of our inaugural issue in Winter/Spring 2012), but we weren't as sure that this would translate into submissions for consideration.

We tentatively planned on publishing *Teaching/Writing* annually – publishing somewhere between 5-7 articles each year. We figured that even in a worst-case scenario in which we didn't get enough solid submissions, we would be able to prevail on our professional connections to provide additional pieces to ensure full issues. Happily, our concerns proved to be unfounded. In the past 18 months, since we first solicited peer-reviewed articles, we have been the recipients of a large number of excellent submissions – most in areas we consider to be the realm of writing teacher education So, we had a problem on our hands – a good problem. And our solution was to publish a second issue of *Teaching/Writing* for this year.

In this issue, we are pleased to present such as strong and varied set of articles on writing, teaching, and teacher development that range from elementary school pedagogical practices through university-level, both in composition studies and beyond.

The issue begins with "The Knowing/Doing Gap: The Challenges of Effective Writing Instruction in High School." In this piece, Sylvia Read and Melanie Landon-Hays provide a cogent and well-developed study and discussion with practical and theoretical implications not only for teachers and secondary school teaching, but also for teacher education programs and providers of professional development. The second piece, Heather Camp's "Exploring Identity-based Challenges to English Teachers' Professional Growth" provides an engaging and focused exploration of writing teacher development and the importance of identity in their growth and development as teachers and thinkers. In the third article, "Listening Across the Curriculum: What Disciplinary TAs Can Teach Us About TA Professional Development in the Teaching of Writing," Tanya Rodrigue gives insight into the commonalities and complexities of writing teacher development across the curriculum at the university-level. Jennifer Good and Kevin Osborne continue the issue and extend the conversation into program assessment and writing program administration work in "Making the Most of Existing Resources: An Online Rubric Database in University-Wide Program Assessment."

We then present our first article from an international venue. In "Student Teachers' Comments' Type on Children's Writing: Practices and Perceptions of Their Role as Writing Facilitators," Esther Sayag-Cohen, Merav Asaf, and Nurit Nathan, all from the Kaye College of Education (Israel), explore writing teacher development in relation to ways young teachers learn to respond to student writing. Our final article is "Embracing a Productive Rhetorical Pragmatism: Teaching Writing as Democratic Deliberation" by Jennifer Clifton. Clifton enhances our understanding of rhetoric as is applies to all teaching.

We look forward to publishing our next issue in Winter/Spring 2014. We continue to encourage submissions that enhance the discussion, scholarship, and instructional practices within the community of writing teacher education at all levels.

T/W

The Knowing/Doing Gap: Challenges of Effective Writing Instruction in High School

Sylvia Read, Utah State University
Melanie Landon-Hays, Western Oregon University

In high school classrooms, across content areas, students are required to write, often as an assessment of a student's comprehension of subject matter, to gain insight into a student's thinking, or as a way for students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. Many writing initiatives, such as process writing, traits-based writing, and writing across the curriculum have been advocated as a way to improve student writing. Despite this emphasis on the teaching of writing in secondary education, many reports claim that high school writing is in need of improvement. In 2003, Persky et al. rated 70% of students in grades 4-12 as low-achieving writers and other studies argue that nearly one third of high school graduates are not ready for college-level composition courses, with numbers being higher from certain groups (Graham & Perin, 2007). Additionally, several reports have drawn attention to this adolescent literacy crisis (e.g., American Diploma Project 2004; Biancarosa, & Snow 2004; Kamil, 2003).

The proliferation of large-scale writing assessments as an indicator of grade level literacy proficiency signals the importance of writing in the school curriculum. Writing is important not only as a skill for future success, but also as a measure of student learning as a requirement for school advancement. Graham and Perin (2007) state, "Most contexts of life (school, the workplace, and the community) call for some level of writing skill, and each context makes overlapping, but not identical demands" (9). However, though writing is an outgrowth of communication processes, its productive demands make it a difficult skill for students to grasp (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Hidi & Buscolo, 2006). Similarly, writing is difficult for teachers to teach and assess (Huot, 2002). Therefore, it is important that students have access to instruction and assessment that better prepares them to be writers (Graham & Perin, 2007; McCarthey, 2008). Despite emphasis on the importance of teaching and assessing writing, Kiuhara, Graham and Hawken (2009) found that secondary teachers across content areas often feel that they are poorly prepared to teach and assess writing.

Review of the Literature

The literature provides a wealth of information concerning writing instruction and assessment. The bulk of studies discussing writing assessment have evolved from two primary historical orientations: educational psychology and composition studies (Coker & Lewis, 2008). Studies stemming from educational psychology are rooted in psychometrics and have an emphasis in positivist epistemologies and research that use writing assessment as a means of identifying human intelligence (Huot, 2002). Because high stakes writing assessment is largely disconnected from the actual process of writing, some researchers argue that these types of assessment provide faulty measures of proficiency and inaccurate gate keeping (Huot, 2002; McCarthey, 2008). Additionally, the studies in educational psychology focus on essay exams that occur in a timed setting in an isolated context. As a result, teachers and researchers of composition/writing in the classroom setting have advocated a different approach to assessment (Coker & Lewis, 2008; McCarthey, 2008; Murphy & Yancey, 2008; Newell, 2006).

Composition research, on the other hand, describes the disconnect between high-stakes summative writing assessments and the teaching of writing (Beck & Jeffery, 2007, McCarthey, 2008; Scott, 2008; Hillocks, 2008; Murphy & Yancey, 2008). Composition researchers argue that the isolated nature of high-stakes

summative writing assessment does not mirror the way that writers write. They agree that writing is a deeply contextual act that requires numerous and varied skills applied to differing situations and considerations of audience (Graham & Perin, 2007; McCarthey, 2008; Newell, 2006; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006; Shanahan, 2006; Tolchinsky, 2006). Studies in this field advocate formative assessment that more closely mirrors the writing process.

Due to the conflicting foundations of both fields, the discrepancy between what is tested and what is taught has grown. This fact, coupled with the research suggesting that teachers feel ill prepared to teach writing, has fueled a movement to provide writing assessment that more closely resembles the writing process (Beck & Jeffery, 2007; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Kiuhara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009; McCarthey, 2008; Nagin, 2003). Studies argue that high-stakes summative assessments of writing are not sensitive to learner needs and punish them for skills students may not be acquiring because the assessment context does not match the context in which students usually write (Huot, 2002; McCarthey, 2008; Scott, 2008). Concurrently, research in assessment and its effects on student learning advocates the use of formative assessment over summative assessment to improve student skill acquisition and learning (Black & William, 1998; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Marzano, 2006).

Notwithstanding the research advocating formative assessments and its connection to the writing process, most writing assessment remains summative. Studies have found that students are not regularly given opportunities to write and be assessed in the context of classroom instruction (Beck & Jeffery, 2007; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Graham & Perin, 2007). Research agrees that secondary school students need many differing exposures to a variety of forms of writing (Graham & Perin, 2007; Hillocks, 2008). Students also need numerous opportunities to write and receive feedback on their writing in order to improve (Acker & Halasek, 2008; Hillocks, 2008). Given many teachers' uneasiness about their preparation to teach and assess writing, it is not surprising that students tend to receive fewer opportunities to improve their writing through frequent practice and assessment (Kiuhara, Graham, and Hawken, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Situated cognition theory (Wilson, 2002; Greeno, 1998; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) is useful in describing how writing instruction and assessment that is sensitive to the differing demands of the act of writing can be beneficial in improving student ability to write. Situated cognition takes into consideration the cultural background, societal context, and individual situations that permeate learning (D'Andrade, 1981). This theory is grounded in the belief that learning is recursive, situated in authentic learning environments that are as dynamic and evolving as the act of learning itself (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

This theory acknowledges the dynamic nature of learning and points toward a view of learning in which "cognitive activity is distributed across individuals and situations" (Robbins & Aydede, 2009). Situated cognition theory provides a framework for considering writing instruction that is sensitive to the time, purposes, and needs of individual learners. It also recognizes that learners and teachers will have a different relationship than a traditional, transmission of knowledge-centered classroom. In this context, teachers are not dispensers of knowledge but are facilitators. This notion is pedagogically useful in that it describes the contextual nature of writing and promotes the idea that writing is a skill that cannot just be "acquired" but is in need of instruction that emphasizes the side-by-side learning, repeated practice, modeling and scaffolding in instruction that looks more like apprenticing (Lave, 1997; Rogoff, 1991).

Traditional instructional theories enacted in the classroom produce narrow writing tasks that do not consider the context, purpose, or intended audience of the writing and will ultimately limit a student's ability to assess and improve their writing. Wolsey (2010) argues, "If students are to become proficient writers about and across many content areas, they must attend to multiple jobs, often simultaneously, and give priority to some jobs depending on the variables of the task throughout the process" (195). Because of these conditions,

writing cannot be taught once at the beginning of an assignment and assessed once at the end. Rather, both the teaching and assessing of writing must take into account the context in which students are writing. Theorizing effective writing instruction and assessment through the lens of situated cognition theory is valuable because it is not possible to teach writers as apprentices in a classroom dominated by traditional models of teaching and assessment.

Anchoring the literature discussed above in the theoretical framework of situated cognition, the goal of this study is to explore the perceptions of five new high school English teachers regarding their own experiences learning to write as students, their preparation to become teachers of writing, and how they teach and assess writing in their classrooms.

Study Setting

Valley High School is situated in a moderately sized University town in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States that until recently has had a fairly homogenous population. This population has been characteristically White, subscribing to one religion, and with very little poverty. Valley High School (VHS) is the single high school in a small school district and is making changes from a traditional, departmentally governed mini-college mentality to a collaborative culture focusing on literacy and on meeting student needs. One of the main areas of focus in VHS's attempts at improving literacy is to focus on giving more opportunities to students in writing and to align assessments of writing with state assessments. In the past, these state assessments of writing have been given at the end of the year. They are timed and generally focus on persuasive writing skills. The primary preparation for these tests has been in the form of five-paragraph essays written to past prompts. At the time of data collection, the tests were graded by human graders at the state office in the summer and the scores were made available to teachers the next year. Teachers often complained that assessment data was available to them too late and, as a result, had no effect on their instruction because their students had moved on. Because these teachers were still forming their ideas about writing instruction and assessment, we believed their "newness" could be beneficial because this research study would provide ample opportunities to learn how these teachers perceived their own learning of writing, their preparation to teach writing, and the ways in which they taught and assessed writing in their classrooms.

In order to more fully understand English teachers' views of writing instruction, we interviewed five high school English teachers using semi-structured interviewing techniques (Glesne, 2010). These teachers signed informed consent letters and expressed the desire to volunteer for the study because it would give them an opportunity to reflect on their instruction. We did not choose the teachers based on gender or age, though all were within the beginning years of their teaching careers. In addition, we conducted classroom observations of each teacher's class. Specifically, Melanie attended each class on a day requested by the teacher to observe their writing instruction. During these observations, Melanie recorded details of the classroom environment, including but not limited to the following: teacher interactions with students, teacher lesson preparation, student reception of teaching, and specific references to writing instruction and assessment. We coded the transcripts of the interviews and classroom observations looking for indicators of what teachers know about writing instruction, what kind of writing instruction occurs in their classrooms, and environmental issues in their 'situations' that contribute to their knowledge and practice of writing instruction. Initial coding centered around statements of 1) knowledge about writing instruction, 2) writing instructional practices, and 3) situational factors at work during writing instruction. The second level of coding was inductive, producing sub codes to categorize themes that we present in the findings section (Glesne, 2010).

The findings are organized into two strands: teacher beliefs about their own formative opportunities with writing, both as students and in preparation to become teachers, and teacher reflections on best practices in writing instruction and assessment and how they often contradict the reality of writing instruction in a high school classroom.

Teacher Perspectives

Much of the research literature suggests that writing instruction in the past has not prepared secondary students for the rigors of college writing because it is not "informed by what is known about the factors that foster writing development and proven methods for promoting such development" (MacArthur, Graham & Fitzgerald, 2006). The teachers in this study did not feel that their own K-12 education provided good writing instruction.

Teachers have not had good models in writing instruction. In all five interviews, it was apparent that the teachers felt that in their own high school education, writing was evaluated in a highly subjective manner by their teachers, was assigned rather than taught, and was not aligned with what they had since learned about best practices in writing instruction. All teachers mentioned feeling "unschooled" in writing and getting by in their classes because they had some "natural" ability. From Cade's words that, "if you could figure out what the teacher wanted, you'd be fine" to Phillip's, "I don't remember too much writing instruction in high school," interviewees confirmed this idea. No teacher remembered feeling that they had received instruction that treated them like someone who was learning to write. They reported that much of what they did was guess how to fulfill the writing assignment; later, they received a summative evaluation that offered no opportunity for revision.

This type of teaching is in line with the traditional transmission model of teaching. Further comments from the interviews indicated that this kind of teaching was the norm in the high school writing instruction that the interviewees received. Martin stated, "I think it was generic...I don't remember revising or peer editing at all. I don't remember learning the writing process…it was kind of like we'll go through this once and then we'll move on…." Nadia summarized that the writing instruction and assessment she received "depended on the teacher…I would say that it was completely subjective." There was no side-by-side learning, modeling, or scaffolding (Rogoff, 1991).

Methods for teaching writing in teacher preparations programs. The remembered experience of these teachers is additional evidence that the preparation of high school English teachers for the task of teaching and assessing writing is lacking (Coker & Lewis, 2008). Much research on effective writing instruction and assessment advocates the use of good modeling, both of processes and expectations (Graham & Perin, 2007; Kiuhara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009). In addition to feeling as though they had not experienced good writing instruction when they were in high school, all five teachers interviewed claimed that their teacher preparation programs had a low emphasis on writing instruction and assessment. Martin recalled, "I don't remember in college a class that was specific to learning how to teach writing, I mean we got little bits and pieces." Phillip remembered learning solid writing theory in his classes, but found "it's hard to look at the theory and put it into practice because I hadn't seen any of the 'effective teaching' when I was a student."

These teachers also agreed that what they learned worked for the context of the college methods course, but they found it hard to put this into place in their own classrooms because the context was so different. Nadia took her teaching writing class during her second year of college and would not have an opportunity to be in the classroom for two more years. The students were expected to complete writing assignments, and according to Nadia, "Even now as a teacher I look back to the portfolio I created in the class and it was kind of ridiculous and it didn't have any real application in the classroom." Similarly, Cade found, "as far as writing, we would usually have one or two lesson plans that were the culmination of our class and we would write up some sort of an assessment for each lesson and it always ended up being really contrived"—clearly not the authentic learning environment that might foster a sensitivity to the differing demands of writing tasks.

Reflections on the reality of classroom writing instruction. Writing is a complex phenomenon that requires carrying out procedures to generate text, but also requires developing schemata for understanding the context of writing, tapping background knowledge, creating emotional dispositions and attitudes toward writing, along with micro-level skills and macro-level understandings (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). Writing is a complex act that varies according to situation, audience, and purpose. For this reason, writing is different across disciplines, both in its learning and its assessment. It is perhaps no wonder that teachers do not often assign activities that involve writing multiple paragraphs (Kiuhara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009).

The time it takes to teach and assess writing effectively. Effective writing instruction and assessment that improves student ability to write takes time to model through teacher demonstration and example papers, provision of detailed and relevant feedback, and chances for multiple revisions that are specific to individual writers (Graham & Perin, 2007). Nadia stated:

> My philosophy is that writing is a process and that students don't understand that. They think it's a pull it out in one night and it's done and it's great. Whereas, I'm really trying to help them understand that writing is a process and you should never be done completely.

This "process writing" philosophy requires that students write with a consciousness that writing should be revised based on feedback from teachers and peers. It is difficult to support students as writers using a whole class traditional model where teachers give an assignment, provide limited feedback and instruct using whole class fix-ups. All teachers concurred when asked what they felt effective writing instruction would be like in a classroom. Cade said, "Ideally, it would be taking the time with each individual student to go over what they are doing and what is working."

Typical workloads for high school English teachers include teaching multiple class periods each day with no less than 32 students per class and sometimes as many as 42. Teachers teach five classes a day, instructing more than 150 students each day, even though the recommended load of secondary English teachers is no more than 100 students per day (NCTE ¶1). When asked to quantify the time they spent grading papers, all five teachers gave responses that fit within a five to ten hour per week range. This was time spent in addition to their regular teaching load and is outside of paid contract time. All teachers felt that these time constraints were prohibitive to the effective teaching and assessment of writing, especially when teachers desire to teach using an apprenticeship model. Phillip commented:

> As you can imagine, to read one paper and give it the type of attention that you would need, it would probably take 20 minutes… and you multiply that by 60 students, and it's increasing next year to 30-40 students per class and count that as 80 students for two classes. It's going to be 20 to 30 hours of work outside of your real contract time because all you have is 6 hours a week during your contract time…if you were going to spend the amount of time that each paper needed for your students to make drastic improvements in writing it is just unconscionable, it is infeasible, it is impossible to do this and lead a life and be happy.

Nadia concurred with the difficulty of the time requirements to enact effective writing instruction and assessment. It was obvious during the interviews that the teachers were frustrated with the time constraints that their teaching contract imposed on their time to grade and provide effective instruction and assessment in writing. Additionally, they felt that by the time they did get feedback to students, the students had forgotten the assignment and the feedback didn't help them to improve anyway. Unfortunately, observations of these teachers during the time when they took their students to the writing lab revealed that they did not make use of the time they *did* have with students to give one-on-one attention and feedback. Several classes can work in the writing lab simultaneously, and rather than confer with students while they wrote, the teachers tended to talk to each other.

The teachers also felt constrained by time when assigning writing. All teachers felt that they were unable to teach and assign writing assignments as often as they liked. Phillip recounts, "In my experience I've become a better writer through writing more." However, he felt like the more writing he assigns, the more he has to grade and he doesn't have the time to do that. He continues, "If I know I have to grade those stacks of papers, I think why assign it if I have to grade it? I hate it. It's my least favorite part of the job, that toiling over each paper." Similarly, Martin expressed his dissatisfaction with the time it takes to assign and assess writing. He states, "If I'm behind on their current writing assignment that they've turned in and I still need to get to that I'll prolong or postpone the next one a couple of days." These teachers found that they were not able to provide their students with enough time or opportunities to write because of the burden of responding to so many students.

Above we asserted that it takes time to model through teacher demonstration and example papers. Our observations revealed that Nadia and Phillip were able to incorporate these elements. Specifically, Nadia read aloud her own personal essay and asked the students to talk about her writing in terms of what made it a well-written essay. The students responded with answers such as "you had a lot of details," "you were descriptive about the decorations, your costume," "you shared a funny story about how you and your sister fought over the smiley face Halloween pumpkin candy bucket," and "your voice when you read got really excited." She then asked the students to discuss the topics they were considering for their own personal essays, which capitalized on the social nature of writing. Phillip used teacher demonstration. He prepared his students to write an analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by first leading a discussion of its themes. He then defined the task for them by saying, "To write an essay, you need to take one of those themes and figure out ways that the book supports it with details from the text." Finally, he had the students work in small groups to discuss one of the themes that a student identified in preparation for working on their own essays in the writing lab during subsequent days.

When we observed Cade, it was clear that he understood the value of pre-writing. He gave students a handout that structured a pre-writing exercise designed to help prepare them to write a persuasive essay. He also structured small group discussions in which they could generate reasons for their opinions prior to writing. These instructional procedures represent a move away from the transmission model but do not quite approach the apprenticeship model that the teachers seemed to believe would be most effective.

Other contextual factors required for effective writing instruction. Throughout our interviews, it seemed that even though teachers felt that their pre-service teaching courses did not prepare them to teach and assess writing, they had a sense of what effective writing instruction should be. All five recounted that writing is a process that is contextual and not easily mastered. Each mentioned that effective writing instruction requires modeling good writing, showing students good examples, offering multiple opportunities for revision, and providing timely and authentic feedback. Nadia stated, "Effective writing instruction is individualized, progressive and dynamic. It changes with the student and helps them to grow in skill and confidence." Phillip concurred, "Ideally, good writing instruction focuses on the process of becoming a writer and realizes that writing is different from genre to genre and discipline to discipline." Cade had similar ideas: "Though feedback may be considered subjective, I'd call it individualized. Good assessment and instruction focuses on each unique writing task in its own context."

Arnold recounted adjusting his writing instruction and assessment recently. He had previously followed a traditional *assign, grade, return* model of instruction and assessment and had not felt his students were able to improve their writing. He decided to change this instruction to be more individual and implemented conferencing that focuses on individual students. However, Arnold conceded that this has been taxing and something he has only been able to do with two of his senior level classes that have fewer than twenty students in each section. The other teachers recounted similar beliefs and frustrations about effective writing instruction. For the most part, the teachers were unable to enact effective instruction and assessment in a satisfying way in their classes because of their workload and time constraints.

The curriculum for tenth grade English at this school is highly circumscribed and focuses heavily on teaching literature, for example, *Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Julius Caesar*. A substantial amount of time is spent reading aloud the texts in class followed by lecture and discussion. Most writing assignments are tied to the literature mandated by the English department for tenth grade English. These assignments include personal narrative, reading reflections, and thematic literary analysis about the assigned reading. All assignments are between two and five pages, and are completed in class, specifically in the English writing lab. Though writing prompts for personal narratives and reading reflections vary, the common required writing assignment for both fall and spring semesters is a thematic literary analysis paper, which students write in class throughout the readings of both *Lord of the Flies* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* in preparation for an essay question on the end of reading test. Other writing includes chapter summaries and reading reflections in an effort to teach the reading comprehension skills of summarization and connection, both of which appear on the tenth grade English common formative assessment. In addition to this skills-based curriculum of reading comprehension, grammar is taught in isolation at the beginning of the class through direct teacher instruction and student revision of teacher given sentences that are written on the board and which students complete in a grammar notebook. Students progress through grammar instruction by beginning to learn parts of speech, parts of sentences, and then paragraph analysis, labeling these items in the example sentences given them by their teachers.

We can see that the curriculum that the teachers must use and the class sizes they contend with are both barriers to the goals of effective writing instruction and improved writing achievement. Clearly, until the macrostructures of schooling, including curriculum, budgets, and scheduling can be changed, teachers will continue to struggle to provide effective writing instruction and students will continue to struggle as writers.

Significance of Findings

Throughout the writing instruction and assessment literature, much attention has been focused on the need for improving student writing by giving students more opportunities to write, providing them with individualized and specific feedback, and offering instruction that focuses on the writing process rather than the writing product. Although this research is well intended, much of it fails to take into account the context of the high school curriculum, or the complexity of writing instruction in relation to the time constraints of high school English teachers. The findings in the current study add to the limited body of literature investigating the difficulties faced by teachers trying to establish best practices in writing instruction and assessment in a traditional classroom teaching environment—one that lends itself better to the dispensing and retrieving of information, rather than apprenticing writers who can write for a variety of situations, audiences and tasks. Specifically, by observing and interviewing a group of new high school English teachers, we found that they feel that the writing instruction they received as students in their own K-12 education did not prepare them to be effective writers, nor did they perceive their preservice preparation as helpful. In spite of this perception, they seem to have absorbed principles of effective writing instruction, most likely ones they encountered in their preservice methods courses. In any case, they do face difficulties as they try to enact better writing instruction and assessment in a teaching environment that overloads their time such that they can teach writing only minimally and with very little actual feedback and assessment on student writing.

Implications

In this study, although the teachers claimed to have experienced poor modeling in their own formative writing instruction, assessment, and training, this was not what hindered their ability to provide better instruction for their own students. These teachers indicated knowledge of effective writing instruction, and, rather than replicate the instruction and assessment they had received themselves, they sincerely wished to implement research-based practices in their own classrooms. Still, Huot (2002) asserts that it is all too easy for even well-informed teachers to respond to student writing only in terms of its correctness rather than addressing its meaning. However, it is apparent from interviews with these teachers that they do understand that writing is a contextual and complex process that is situated differently for each genre and discipline. The interviewees espoused knowledge of effective writing instruction methods, but they are frustrated when it comes to using these methods. The interviewees identified high school schedules and class sizes as among the factors that make it difficult for teachers to enact what they know.

Efforts for training teachers of writing should be focused on helping them to bridge the divide between theory and practice and on assisting them to create environments for effective writing instruction and assessment that work within the constraints of a typical high school English curriculum, schedule, and class size. Advice on how to reduce the paper load for teachers is abundant. Williams (2005) offers time-efficient methods such as structured peer review and checklists while Berg (2005) recommends that some writing assignments involve students collaborating in pairs. Morrison (2005) provides concrete suggestions for incorporating ungraded writing assignments into a typical secondary school curriculum arguing that the quality of students' writing increases when they have more low-stakes opportunities to write. The teachers in this study sense a gap between knowing and doing what is best for their students' writing development. Whether moving toward more effective (and frequent) writing instruction requires a paradigm shift in their concept of teaching, only some tweaks to their instructional habits, or a fundamental change in the instructional conditions of high school in the United States, remains unknown.

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T/W

Exploring Identity-based Challenges to English Teachers' Professional Growth

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Introduction

Teacher Development and Identity Construction

Research on pre-service teacher education indicates that identity construction is an important facet of becoming a teacher. To establish oneself as a teaching professional, a person must craft a teacher identity out of the personal and professional discourses that surround him/her. This idea is consistent with contemporary theories of identity construction, which posit that the self is discursively constructed, made and remade by the various discourses that encompass the person. Such discourses--"pattern[s] of thinking, speaking, behaving, and interacting that [are] socially, culturally, and historically constructed and sanctioned by a specific group or groups of people" (Miller Marsh 456)--are constantly intermingling, wrangling for ideological power and dynamically shaping one another. To construct an identity, an individual must integrate these diverse discourses, weaving them together to form a dynamic but cohesive sense of self. On one hand, this twining process has the potential to promote psychological development, leading to the attainment of "an expanded, integrated self, more diverse and richer in the possibilities for action that these multiple identities afford" (Brown 676). Yet, it also may produce identity destabilization and fragmentation, leading to uncertainty, distress and stymied psychological growth (Brown).

New teachers are confronted with the task of adopting new discourses, and of forging relationships between old and new strands of their identities. Succeeding at this process facilitates the development of a secure and satisfying professional sense-of-self: research indicates that the attainment of an integrated identity helps teachers transition into and find satisfaction within the teaching profession (Alsup; Schempp et al.), teach effectively (Danielewicz), and nurture students' self-development (Borich; Boy and Pine). Further, it suggests that attaining a cohesive identity better prepares teachers to champion educational reform (Alsup).

Yet, research also suggests that accessing this array of rewards can be difficult (Alsup; Brown). As teachers seek to integrate their teacherly roles with other discourses that contribute to their sense of self, they may encounter identity conflicts that work against a sense of identity cohesiveness. Encountering such conflicts can lead to emotional turmoil and stunted professional growth, even leading some student teachers (and practicing teachers) to leave the teaching profession altogether (Alsup; Hong).

Growing awareness of the importance of professional identity construction and the psychological labor it demands has led to an upsurge in scholarship on pre-service teacher identity formation (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop). Scholars have explored the significance (Malderez et al.) and difficulty (Brown) of constructing a coherent identity through teacher education courses and student teaching experiences; examined the role of reflection in professional identity formation (Sutherland, Howard, and Markauskaite); studied the identity work of non-native English speaking teachers (Lim); called on teacher educators to foreground identity work in teacher preparation (Lipka and Brinthaupt; Miller); and proposed pedagogical principles and practices to this end (Alsup; Danielewicz; Hasinoff and Mandzuk; Timostsuk and Ugaste; Walkington). This scholarship has drawn attention to the complexity of identity construction for pre-service teachers and offered educators insights into how they might support these students through this important work.

Less attention has been paid to the continued identity work of teachers, the ways teachers' identities evolve beyond teacher education courses and student teaching experiences. The supposition that identities are always "unfinished and in process" (Holland et al. vii) presents the need for researchers to study other junctures in which teachers' identities develop, particularly professional development experiences, which have the potential to—may even be designed to--shape teacher identity.

One such professional development experience is the Master's Degree. Master's programs often introduce teachers to broader disciplinary conversations that have bearing on their work. Master's coursework may familiarize teachers with a range of concerns and projects that compose a discipline and introduce them to new ways of theorizing about and researching classroom practices and broader education-related issues. Additionally, course and degree writing requirements (including the Master's thesis) may demand that they try out unfamiliar knowledge-making practices, participating in disciplinary conversations and activities as knowledgeable and authoritative scholar-teachers. To do so, they must appropriate new discourses, experimenting with disciplinary language and genres and the subject positions they afford. A key desired outcome of this process is the augmentation of teachers' identities: through the reading and writing they do, teachers ideally will come to see themselves and their work differently, recognizing their kinship to a larger disciplinary community and feeling empowered and knowledgeable enough to apply its perspectives.

This article explores identity-based challenges that may hinder English teachers enrolled in Master's programs from achieving this goal. It presents a case study of a secondary teacher enrolled in a graduate-level composition theory course situated in a content-area Master's program. The article details this teacher's efforts to integrate new discourses with established discourses, particularly through his work on the two major writing projects assigned in the course. Based on the analysis of his experiences, this article suggests that identity conflicts can impede teachers from integrating a disciplinary identity into their sense-of-self, thereby limiting the benefits afforded by the Master's degree. In particular, it suggests that dissonance between discourse norms and values, concerns about community allegiances, and assumptions about language, difficulty, and power can hinder teachers from appropriating disciplinary discourse and combining it with more familiar discourses that circulate in their schools. It concludes with recommendations for supporting the identity work of teachers enrolled in Master's programs in order to facilitate teachers' professional growth.

Identity Development and Academic Writing

Throughout the article, particular attention is given to the role that academic writing plays in teachers' identity development. Studies of college writers on both the undergraduate and graduate level have shown that academic writing is an identity-shaping activity; students make important decisions about self-representation and identification when they write for college, and such choices contribute to their ongoing efforts to compose a cohesive sense of self (Casanave; Herrington and Curtis; Ivanic; LeCourt; Prior). Likewise, when teachers write for their graduate courses, they begin to work out their relationship to a discipline's discourse, determining if it has a home among the repertoire of discourses that construct their identities. The writing that they do allows them to experiment in this regard; through this work, they may make strides toward an "expanded, integrated self, more diverse and richer in . . . possibilities for action" (Brown 676). Alternatively, they may retreat from identity change, thereby missing out on key opportunities for professional growth.

In scholarship on identity and writing, the former potentiality, represented by the term *identity hybridization*, often emerges as a key aspiration for college writers. Leaning on poststructuralist beliefs about identity fluidity and multiplicity, writing scholars assert that teachers should help students retain and utilize their diverse backgrounds, even as they acquire new ways of thinking, speaking, and being within the academy. The potential benefits of hybridization for English teachers enrolled in Master's degree programs are compelling: as they pair their developing facility with disciplinary discourse with the more familiar discourses circulating in their schools, they open up opportunities for new understandings, increased empowerment, collaborative knowledge-making, incisive critique and institutional change.

Yet, research findings on students' ability to achieve identity hybridization (and, by extension, teachers'

ability to do so in graduate school) call into question these possibilities. For example, Ashley's research provides examples of working-class undergraduate students using "*literate arts*, *manipulations*, *games,* and *tricks*" to participate in academic writing without abandoning other allegiances (516). While she claims that such moves might be construed as moments of empowerment (given the self-awareness displayed by students as they execute these strategies), the examples she provides—conformity, mimicry, depersonalization, misrepresentation—are a far cry from more healthy forms of identity hybridization most teachers would hope for their students. Ivanic and Casanave report that the adult students who participated in their studies of writing and identity felt ambivalent, alienated, and compromised as they struggled to make academic/disciplinary discourse their own. Indeed, Casanave suggests that lack of identity reconciliation played a central role in her case study student's decision to abandon her graduate program after her first year of study.

These troubling findings call for more research on the extent to which academic writing aids or impedes identity development, as well as explorations of how it might be adapted to better serve this end. To meet the needs of English teacher educators, studies focusing on the role of writing in secondary teachers' professional development and identity formation would be particularly useful. Notably, current research on teacher development provides limited insight into the relationship between academic writing and identity formation. Occasionally, discussions of writing emerge—journals, online discussion boards, statements of teaching philosophy, and capstone writing projects have all surfaced—yet writing rarely takes center stage. This study takes academic writing as its focus, considering how graduate writing assignments factor into the expansion of teachers' identities.

Theoretical Framework

Learning and Identity

A central assumption informing this research is that language, learning, and identity are inseparably connected. Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory, focused on "legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice," explores this tripartite relationship, foregrounding the connection between learning and identity. According to Lave and Wenger, learning occurs as individuals participate more and more fully in the practices of a community. Individuals entering a community begin by engaging in peripheral forms of involvement; with time and effort, however, they may eventually advance to "full participation" in its many forms. Through this process, individuals develop new relationships, commitments, and competencies, changes that elicit learning and, more broadly, lead to a transformation of the self. "[C]hanging knowledge, skill, and discourse are part of a developing identity," they write, underscoring the interconnectedness of learning and identity (122).

Wenger elaborates on the process of identity construction through learning, stating that identity is formed through "negotiating the meanings of . . . experience of membership in social communities" (145). He suggests that the experiences an individual has within a community, and the negotiation that such experience demands, depend, in part, on the individual's "trajectory" in relation to the community. Wenger describes five types of trajectories on which an individual might embark, each of which has implications for identity development:

- "Peripheral" trajectories, movement that is confined to the margins of a community;
- "Inbound" and "Outbound" trajectories, entrance into and advancement within or movement out of a community;
- "Insider" trajectories, full participants' movement within a community as the community itself changes; and
- "Boundary" trajectories, movement that bridges multiple communities. (154-155)

Wenger's work suggests that the last type of trajectory—movement across community boundaries—may place particular demands on individual identity construction. Indeed, he posits that identity construction may be "one of the most delicate challenges" that boundary crossers face (154). To maintain a sense of cohesiveness across boundaries, Wenger posits, individuals must construct their identities as a "nexus of multimembership"— that is, they must build an intricate network that holds together the multiple ways of thinking and acting engendered by their participation in various communities (159). Wenger states that to build such a nexus, individuals must engage in "reconciliation," a process of forming maintainable connections between distinct and sometimes conflicting forms of membership (160). The connections created through this reconciliatory process may be harmonious or dissonant, easily maintained or demanding considerable effort; whatever the case, such connections must allow individuals to sustain a sense of self across boundaries and thereby continue on their trajectories of practice, of learning, within multiple communities.

Engestrom, Engestrom, and Karkkainen add to Wenger's ideas on traversing boundaries and multimembership by elaborating on boundary work's effect on intellectual growth. They explore this area in their research on expert cognition and learning. They foreground the cognitive demands of working across boundaries, proposing a *horizontal* model of expertise that, they say, is needed to complement the more common vertical models. They offer the following rationale for their project:

In their work, experts operate in and move between multiple parallel activity contexts. These multiple contexts demand and afford different, complementary but also conflicting cognitive tools, rules, and patterns of social interaction. The criteria of expert knowledge and skill are different in the various contexts. Experts face the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid solutions. The vertical master-novice relationship, and with it, in some cases, the professional monopoly on expertise, is problematized as demands for dialogical problem solving increase. (319)

To recognize expertise developed along the horizontal plane, Engestrom et al. coin a new set of terms--among them, "polycontextuality," the ability to manage tasks simultaneously in different communities of practice, and "boundary crossing," the ability to apply modes and tools for thinking valued in one community to other contexts. (Wenger characterizes the latter work as "brokering" and underscores the intellectual and identity-based challenges inherent in such work [109].) "Experts" are characterized as those who have developed skills in polycontextuality and are able to cross boundaries to shape their communities' shared practices and thought processes.

Together, Lave and Wenger's and Engestrom et al.'s ideas provide insight into the intersecting processes of learning and identity negotiation, particularly as they occur at community boundaries. Their account conceptualizes boundary work both as a rigorous intellectual activity, requiring expert discernment and skill, and a demanding identity-building enterprise, requiring coordination of diverse and, at times, conflicting dimensions of individuals' socially-constructed identities.

Language and Identity

The ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin further enrich this representation of identity negotiation and learning. Bakhtin brings *language* to the fore, suggesting that the internalization and interplay of social discourses is the mechanism behind identity development.

Bakhtin posits that identity is composed of social languages. He contends that the self is made out of the "heteroglossia" of the social sphere--the dynamic interaction of discourses in the world. He envisions discourses *contending* for acceptance and prominence, and he suggests that through this ideological battle, individual identity takes form. He uses the term "ideological becoming" to describe this identity-making process.

Bakhtin's explanation of ideological becoming is governed by two central concepts: "authoritative discourse" and "internally persuasive discourse." *Authoritative discourse* is discourse that is enshrined and untouchable. Bakhtin describes it as "religious, political, moral; the word of a father, of adults and of teachers" (342). It is discourse whose "authority was already *acknowledged* in the past," he writes, "It is a *prior*

discourse" (342). Authoritative discourse has not been submitted to critical deconstruction or creative remix. Instead, it enjoys distanced and unwavering veneration and allegiance.

In contrast, *internally persuasive discourse* is authoritative discourse that has been explored, questioned, and made one's own. It is a hybrid discourse, consisting of language that is "half-ours and half-someone else's" (Bakhtin 345). For authoritative discourse to become internally persuasive, an individual must "[populate] it with his own intention, his own accent. . .adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (293). *Ideological becoming*—the making of a self--unfolds through the transformation of "authoritative discourse" into "internally persuasive discourse." It is through "the process of selectively assimilating" that the individual integrates new social languages into the complex of languages that comprise his/her "own" identity (341). The outcome is a "*boundary* phenomenon" (Emerson 1983), a mosaic constructed from pieces of various social languages (249).

Bakhtin's ideas extend the view of learning and identity development derived from Lave and Wenger's and Engestrom et al.'s work by highlighting the central role of discourse in self-development. His ideas suggest that discourse is the raw material out of which identities are made, and that discursive conflict, likely to occur at community boundaries, spurs identity (re)construction. Analyzing the interplay of discourses, then, can shed light on the work of nexus-building, of integrating disparate strands of an individual's identity into a cohesive whole. This interplay will be the focus of the case study discussed below.

Method

This study was carried out in an English department at State University, a research one land-grant university in the Midwest enrolling approximately 20,000 students. At the time of the study, about 80% of the student population was composed of in-state residents, with 4,700 of the students making up the graduate and law schools. MA and PhD program enrollment hovered around 150 students.

The MA and PhD tracks in English at State University resemble many other institutions in that the MA emphasizes breadth while the PhD emphasizes depth. The course requirements for the MA are flexible, allowing students to sample a range of courses within the field. In contrast, the PhD fosters specialization: PhD students are encouraged to select a field of study early and assemble a supervisory committee that can support their academic interests by the end of their first year. While the MA and PhD are tailored for different purposes, graduate students select from the same course options. Thus, graduate courses can contain MA and PhD students from different sub-disciplines in English who are at varying stages in their programs.

The research data was derived from a year-long IRB-approved study of graduate student writing and identity development. The study tracked two samples of students over the course of one academic year, from their initial enrollment in one of two graduate courses in English, *Approaches to Composition and Rhetorical Theory* or *Composition Theory and Practice,* through their next semester of graduate study. The study sample consisted of five males and six females: ten were pursuing PhDs in English (Composition and Rhetoric, 5; Literature, 2; Creative Writing, 1; Literature/Film, 1); one was pursuing an MA in English with a concentration in the teaching of English; and one was pursuing a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with an interdisciplinary emphasis in writing. Participation was voluntary and the researcher did not have any ties (as teacher, intern, or student) to the courses from which research subjects were recruited.

Data collection for this project consisted of conducting interviews and collecting and studying the academic writing of research subjects for one academic year. Research subjects were interviewed five times over the course of the study: three times during the first semester (beginning/middle/end) and two times during the second semester (beginning/end). Interviews were held in the interviewer's office on campus, except when the research subject had his/her own office and preferred to be interviewed there. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, with questions adapted to the point in the semester in which the interview was taking place. Research subjects were asked about their writing histories and academic trajectories, current

writing challenges and successes, purposes for course writing assignments, factors that advanced and impeded their writing development, experiences with course-specific writing venues (e.g. online discussion boards, peer response groups), and future writing goals. On select occasions, interviews were supplemented with an e-mail exchange or digitally-recorded follow-up conversation between interviewer and interviewee.

In addition to being interviewed, research subjects submitted course-related writing assignments and professionalization projects as data for the study. The materials analyzed in this article were drawn from one of the courses from which research subjects were recruited, *Approaches to Composition and Rhetorical Theory.* This course acts as an introduction to composition and rhetorical theory and draws in a range of students from the English department. At the time of the study, students enrolled in the course differed in the fields with which they identified, in length of time in the graduate program, and in experience with the subject matter.

The coursework for Composition and Rhetorical Theory included reading eight texts, submitting weekly writing (either by posting to the course's online discussion space or by submitting a hard-copy two to three page reading response) and completing two larger writing projects, the Journal Project and the Final Project. The Journal Project required students to select and study a five-year period of a composition journal (or a journal closely related to the field), noting common themes and analyzing the journal as a rhetorical context. The Final Project, the "culminating project for the course," was supposed to be "15-20 pages of sustained inquiry, equivalent to a traditional seminar paper though they need not take that form" (Syllabus).

Key questions guiding the coding of interview transcripts and writing artifacts were as follows:
- What does *writing development* mean for the research subject?
- How do components of the individual's identity factor into his/her writing development?
- What hinders this individual's writing development?
- What helps this individual's writing development?

Based on this analysis, the researcher developed five case studies illuminating the role that identity plays in graduate writing development. Each of these case studies illustrated well a theme that emerged across the data: graduate students' efforts to combine more familiar discourses that comprised their identities with new discourses to which they were being introduced. Moreover, all of the case studies shed light on the role of dissonance in identity development and the need to resolve this tension in order to progress.

For this article, only one case study was selected to explore the relationship between identity negotiation and English teachers' professional growth. This case study was chosen because, in contrast to the other cases included in the larger study, it looked closely at the experiences of a secondary school teacher pursuing an advanced degree alongside his English teaching career. Other study participants were following "inbound" trajectories, pursuing advanced degrees generally on a full-time basis, as a means to beginning a profession in academia. In contrast, the teacher profiled here was pursuing a "boundary" trajectory, actively participating in both secondary teaching and graduate school contexts.

Focusing on a single case study offers some advantages as a research methodology. It allows for a close analysis of the aids and impediments that may impact a teacher's ongoing professional development. It allows for the examination of details that would likely have to be glossed in an article exploring convergences between multiple students' experiences. Furthermore, the case study approach facilitates reflection on the unique experiences of a particular type of student, in a particular context, at a particular developmental juncture. The rich perspective provided from this analysis is a key benefit of this research methodology.

At the same time, this analytical approach misses the insights that a more comprehensive and panoramic view of teachers' professional identity development might provide. Tracking more teachers' experiences through Master's programs would help determine whether the experiences documented here are unique or characteristic. Furthermore, zooming out from the case study—following the teacher through the duration of his program, for instance--would better capture how the experiences documented here fit among a broader constellation of experiences that contributed to the teacher's professional growth.

Other strengths and weaknesses of the study are evident in the data collection methods. Pairing interviewing with artifact analysis provides a fuller account of the way that identity manifests itself in students' graduate work and reflection on that work. Yet, the study is limited in that it omits other perspectives on students' growth, most notably, the teacher's. This perspective may have complicated the narrative of stymied development presented here. Additionally, the researcher did not attend the class in which the student was enrolled, and thus lacked access to the student-student and teacher-student interactions that might have informed the case study data analysis.

In spite of these limitations, the findings reported here are valuable in a number of respects. They square with those mined from the other case studies emerging from this study while illuminating professional identity development as it relates to a secondary context. Thus, the case study captures the complex and challenging process of discursive identity negotiation evident across case studies while illustrating what this process might look like for secondary teachers. Additionally, by moving beyond the pre-service teacher years to study the professional identity development of an experienced teacher, this case study opens up a new and important avenue of research in teacher education.

Analysis
Discourse Tensions

Jeff was a high school teacher who enrolled part-time in a Master's program in English with an emphasis in the teaching of English after seven years of teaching on the high school level. He was working on this degree part-time while teaching English, Speech, and Drama in the small town where he lived. He characterized *Approaches to Composition and Rhetorical Theory* as his "first real composition [theory] class."

Jeff brought a strong "teacher" identity to the class that often served as the filter through which he responded to course content. He frequently related online discussion board topics to his high school classes and, on discussion board and in interviews, used phrases like "as a teacher" or "because I'm a teacher" to articulate his point-of-view. Furthermore, both of his major course projects were oriented toward the high school.

Jeff also brought a well-established "intellectual identity" into the course. He saw himself as a thinker, someone interested in and good at learning. Schooling in general and writing in particular were areas in which Jeff felt he excelled and were competencies for which he sought affirmation. He acknowledges in a reading response, "With all my writing, I crave praise. I want people to say 'Good job Jeff,' and it's through this feedback that I feel empowered." To a large extent, Jeff's educational experience had provided him with this empowerment. He reports that he "could always write more and better than most people in [his] peer groups," that as an undergraduate, he "never had a problem writing and feeling uncomfortable writing," and that his graduate work had been "received with adulation." These positive educational experiences had led him to feel confident as a thinker and a writer. Thus, in his first interview, he could exude a positive and nonchalant attitude toward writing, proclaiming, "Put a pen to the paper and start writing. I mean it has always been easy for me to write. Give me a moment's notice and tell me what you want to write and I'll write something, no problem."

Early in the course, Jeff's "teacher" and "thinker" identities were challenged when he encountered disciplinary discourse and its underlying "pattern[s] of thinking, speaking, behaving, and interacting." He noticed differences between the discourse that circulated in high school and the disciplinary discourse that was represented in class discussions and course texts. One difference Jeff noticed was that theory received greater attention and admiration in the course than was common in his high school. In course readings, theory was prominent. Scholars displayed enthusiasm toward and dexterity with theoretical musing. This treatment of theory did not resonate with Jeff's values and experiences. Jeff stated that he was "coming from a different place than most of the other people [in the class]," continuing, "[In high school,] you are on the front lines of education, whereas in college you are kind of back away from the front lines. . . . It's a different atmosphere.

. . . And it is hard to--I feel like I am so grounded in, I don't know, the real world, the practical world." Jeff's comments suggest that his high school teaching experience had led him to appreciate discussions of teaching *practices* and to value concrete applications of theory.

Thus, a central question for Jeff was often "How can I apply [the reading] to what I'm doing?" This focus seemed lost in the heed paid to theory in course texts. Thus, he relayed that he felt disoriented by and distanced from disciplinary discourse. "It's almost [like I'm] drowning in the comp theory," he admitted, continuing, "It just feels so separated from my everyday teaching experience."

Jeff also observed a disjunction between the professional vocabulary he used in the high school and the specialized terminology and references used by scholars in the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Jeff aligned himself with the former and felt ambivalent about the latter, as his following interview comment suggests:

> [Disciplinary terms are] like a badge you wear. If you use these words then you become one of these people in this field. And if you don't use these words, you know, then you're kind of outside. That's how I felt, starting out, you know very outside the loop because I don't use those words. And no one I know in education uses those words. You know very rarely do you come across in a high school "pedagogy"; we just don't use "pedagogy," we use "education," we use "schools." Those are our words.

At times, Jeff's ambivalence toward disciplinary discourse manifest itself as annoyance with "jargon." He reported that he had repeatedly made fun of the word "pedagogy" when he first heard it and that, more recently, had e-mailed a friend a list of "all the buzzwords in pedagogy and composition," a list that contained "all the words that are on my list of words I hate." He characterized use of jargon as "almost a joke within the system" that required individuals to "play along" in order to participate in the field. Despite the frustration he showed toward disciplinary discourse, Jeff said that he was learning from course texts and admitted that he hoped to acquire some fluency in disciplinary discourse.

Part of Jeff's ambivalence toward disciplinary discourse seemed to relate to internal conflicts that emerged through acquiring its perspectives and vocabulary. His comments suggest that familiarity with composition theory impacted his perception of his associations with colleagues and provoked feelings of alienation and powerlessness. In interview comments on an assigned reading, he remarks,

> If I went to my principal and if I went to my superintendent and said, "Look at what this person says about assessment and assessing standards," they wouldn't get it, they wouldn't understand it, they wouldn't care, they'd kind of dismiss it. I feel kind of isolated for that reason as a teacher. . . . No one else is taking these classes, no one else has read these books, no one else has done the [National] Writing Project, no one else has done these things. . . . I'm totally isolated from these other people. I talk to them about these things and [they say], "That sounds neat," but they have no frame of reference that I have [sic]. It is frustrating in that sense.

Interaction with disciplinary discourse, then, introduced Jeff to ideas that he felt were neither understood nor valued by his high school colleagues. The effect of this experience was to make him feel distanced from his peers at times, even leading him to question his professional identity and place of belonging, as suggested by subsequent comments. Elaborating on his feelings of dislocation, Jeff observes, "You know, I feel like I'm in-between--I'm no longer just a high school teacher teaching in my happy little classroom Englishly, but I'm not quite at the graduate student, to the level of some of these people who've done this for a while are either. And so I'm torn."

Discourse and Power

Debilitating assumptions about the power differential between high school and college contexts characterized Jeff's discursive interactions in the course, both as a reader and as a writer. Traces of these assumptions surfaced in our first interview, in comments he made on the difficulty he was having with assigned readings. Discussing his discomfort with course texts, Jeff stated, "I guess it takes a while to get used to the

whole graduate voice these people [use.] These are PhD dissertations, these people are specialists in their fields, and they have a certain way of communicating, which is a little bit different than high school. It's like night and day from what I'm used to reading." Jeff's comments align him with the high school and place him in a distant, and subordinate, position to the "specialists in their fields." His comments denote a disparity in power between the two contexts, with the "specialists" having the upper hand.

Because Jeff saw the "graduate voice" and scholars' "certain way of communicating" as markers of expert status, he associated the ability to understand and use the specialized language of the discipline with intellect and scholarly legitimacy. As a result, when reading and writing disciplinary discourse proved difficult for him, his identity as a smart thinker and able writer was called into question. Comments made during his mid-semester interview reveal these feelings of self-doubt and identity instability:

> I get lost [in the reading] and I have to go back and read again and I don't know if it's just me. I feel embarrassed admitting that. . . I've always felt very grounded and secure that I am smart and that I am intelligent. I've always felt that way and I've always had people tell me that. And so to me, it's always been part of my identity . . . . So if I'm running into problems with this text, and I'm in this classroom with twenty other people, and none of them are having problems with the text, then it's my problem. I'm not intelligent enough to get it. I don't understand it. It's about me. And I can't admit that to myself, that that's true.

Rather than recognize difficulty as a symptom of being a newcomer to a discourse, here Jeff interprets struggle as a sign of intellectual deficit.

Writing Difficulty--The Journal Project

Jeff's inexperience with disciplinary discourse, paired with his assumptions about language, power, and difficulty, set him up for trouble with course writing. In both of the major course projects, his perception of disciplinary discourse impacted his assessment of assignment expectations and shaped his attempts to meet/avert those expectations.

The journal project was the first major assignment of the course. For this assignment, students were required to compose an oral and written report on a five-year period in a journal related to composition and rhetorical theory. Their task was to "characterize the journal in terms of what it offer[ed] people who are interested in the field" through addressing a series of questions provided by the instructor. The project seemed aimed to expand students' knowledge of research activities in the field, acquainting them, in particular, with the range of purposes and subjects addressed in a single professional venue. Additionally, it worked to furnish them with a rhetorical lens for reading composition scholarship that would enable further disciplinary participation. A logical audience for the assignment would be the professor, class members, and the writer him/herself.

Jeff struggled through the journal project, noting that he attempted to begin the piece multiple times, without success, before forcing the piece out in a single sitting to meet the project deadline. Jeff's difficulty originated, in part, from his perception of the assignment's requirements: he saw it as a call for students to approximate disciplinary writing, to write like the "specialists in the field." He explains,

> You know, normally writing is so easy for me, and I can just write. Anything comes out, and I like what I write. And then I was writing that journal thing, and I was going, I don't know how to approach this. I don't know how to write like this, how to write this intellectual academia style, and fit into that genre. It was frustrating because . . . I thought, these people write like this, they write with these complex sentence structures and all these allusions and quotations and references. And I don't write like that, so am I missing something?

Jeff's assumptions about the assignment requirements seemed cued by his other interactions with disciplinary discourse in the course, e.g. experiences with assigned readings and class discussions; additionally, he stated that the research component of the assignment shaped his perception of the project demands.

Jeff questioned his ability to mirror the writing of the scholars he was reading; he was keenly aware of the differences between his writing norms and their own, and these differences discouraged him from working on the Journal Project.

Jeff's difficulty with the assignment also stemmed from concerns about his ties to the high school. His comments suggest that he associated rhetorical decisions with larger choices about self-identification and community allegiance, that the content and style of his piece communicated something about his relationship to the high school and the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Jeff stated that if he altered his discourse to produce the "intellectual academia style" called for by the assignment, he would be choosing to distance himself from the high school and composing, instead, for what he characterized as a "tight," "elevated" audience who wrote in "a hidden, sub-genre of our culture, this whole composition theory."

Jeff indicated that he had reservations about writing for this audience. He disapproved of their insularity. He felt that their penchant for jargon made their work inaccessible to most people, including high school teachers, and that they used writing to "reach the people who already agree[d] with [them]." He argued that the inaccessibility of their work limited its ability to effect change in the school system, and he was frustrated by this disconnect.

Despite these concerns, the power differential between the high school and the university, partnered with the power of the teacher-as-evaluator, prevented him from dismissing disciplinary discourse and writing freely in his "own" voice and style. He saw the conventions of disciplinary discourse as markers of intelligence, and he wanted to maintain (or rescue) his identity as an intelligent person. Writing provided the means through which to do so. Jeff's efforts on the assignment seemed to move him toward a compromise: he ultimately wrote a piece that satisfied himself and, he felt, the assignment expectations. "My voice and style was there," he observed, characterizing the piece as "a little more accessible than what we've read." At the same time, he pointed to his more formal introduction and conclusion, in which he drew a story from Greek mythology, as evidence of his attempt to meet disciplinary discourse standards, and he acknowledged that he tried to incorporate some of the "the lingo, the language" from class into his analysis. Jeff's comments suggest, then, that in spite of his ambivalence and insecurities, the piece allowed him to experiment with integrating discourses and to try out a new, hybrid identity within it.

Writing Difficulty—The Final Project

The "culminating project for the course" was the Final Course Project. The assignment description conveyed that the projects would vary, reflecting students' "different places in [their] intellectual and teaching lives" and their unique academic goals and interests. The teacher offered sample approaches to the project, suggesting that students might explore "a critical concept," "a set of focused questions about a moment in the history of composition," or "a particular moment in our lives as teachers, students or writers"; however, students were encouraged to design the project in a way that would suit their own purposes. Regardless of their take on the assignment, students were told that their projects should "showcase [their] careful thinking and voice even as they bring other voices to bear on the ideas at the center of the project" (Syllabus).

Jeff used the Final Course Project to explore the anti-intellectual sentiment in his high school. An assigned course reading provided the impetus for this exploration: one scholar's analysis of anti-intellectualism in the college classroom resonated with his experience in the high school classroom and motivated him to explore the topic on that level. To do so, Jeff collected a range of materials from research subjects (high school students enrolled in one of his English courses): an "all-class writing" on intellectualism, a "day-in-the-life" survey, a survey exploring anti-intellectualism in the high school, and interviews with select research subjects. To supplement this information, Jeff surveyed high school teachers about the anti-intellectual sentiment in his high school.

If the Journal Project was perceived by Jeff as a high stakes moment, the Final Course Project was even

more so. He stated that the project was "much more stressful academically, thinking [about] how to approach it and how to write in such a way that is going to be considered academic and intellectual." The assignment description and its treatment in the course might have contributed to Jeff's anxiety: the guidelines stated that the piece should represent a student's "best work as a thinker and writer," and the scaffolding leading to the final draft—including a 30-45 minute "research share" and time set aside in class for a draft workshop—raised the bar for the project. Moreover, the page length set it apart from other course projects, and the requirement to bring in other scholars' voices suggested a kinship to assigned readings. These features worked to crystallize Jeff's assumption that the project was intellectual proving ground, a test of Jeff's competence as a scholar.

That Jeff was reading the assignment in this way is suggested in his comments on the stress he was feeling around the Final Project. Exploring the source of this stress, he states:

> The stress [of the Final Course Project] comes from me because I want to perform at a level that I think I need to perform at. That level has not been defined by [the teacher,] it hasn't been defined by the class, but it has been defined by me reacting to what I've read in the class and what other people are talking about in the class. I want to be on that level. I don't want to feel like I'm not there. So I put this pressure on myself.

Here and elsewhere, Jeff's remarks about the Final Course Project blur the boundaries between language use and being. While initially expressing concerns about writing performance ("I want to perform"), his final comments center on identity ("I want to be"). From his perspective, the Final Course Project would not only assess his writing ability but would also determine whether *he* was an intellectual equal to disciplinary "insiders."

Jeff certainly didn't feel like an intellectual equal going into the project. Comparing himself to the authors of course texts and to his classmates had led him to view himself in a way that impeded his advancement on the assignment. He questioned his right to assume a scholarly identity in his writing and to make assertions about his research topic. "Having the authority [to be] able to say, 'I'm an authority on this issue,' that's also been a struggle," he related about the Final Project, continuing, "Who am I to, who is giving me the authority to be able to write something and say this? . . . Because we read these books and, like I said before, they're way up here, and I'm kind of a fledgling underneath."

Jeff's research topic exacerbated these concerns. Researching anti-intellectualism provided him ample opportunity to ruminate on his location on the intellectual—anti-intellectual continuum. His comments suggest discomfort with identifying as an intellectual and highlight the role writing played in this determination:

> I'm writing about anti-intellectualism, but I feel like I'm also an anti-intellectual at times. I struggle with myself as a teacher, wondering if I'm fitting the bill for being an intellectual. When I'm writing, am I doing enough research? Am I approaching this in an intellectual way? Am I doing this for the sake of academics or am I doing this just because it is a grade in the class?

Here, questions about intellectual identity quickly evolve into questions about writing. To be an intellectual, Jeff's comments suggest, his writing must meet a lofty standard that even encompasses his motivation for writing (done "for the sake of academics").

Jeff's view of himself as a "fledgling underneath" contributed to the other major trouble he had with the Final Course Project. He struggled to integrate other scholars' voices into his writing. He said that he worried about his ability to use scholars' ideas in a way that would meet their approval. Imagining them as his readers, he stated that he wanted to "[do] them justice" but was concerned that they might feel "misquoted or out of context." He attributed this problem to a problem with authority, stating: "[I]t's that authority thing. Do I have the authority to use these voices?"

The final form of Jeff's project provides a telling answer to this question. Partway through the research process, Jeff decided to use his research materials to compose a video documentary rather than a seminar paper. Jeff had never produced a documentary before, but he was experienced at making videos and was technologically literate in other ways as well. He ran a side movie-making business for weddings and other occasions, was active in a National Writing Project technology consortium, and, in general, could state that "[he'd] always done stuff with technology." His comfort with technology made a documentary an attractive option, particularly in light of the vulnerability he was feeling around disciplinary discourse.

Jeff pointed to issues of representation as one factor that motivated him to make a documentary— he liked the idea of his audience "actually seeing [students] and hearing them and being able to judge for [themselves] where [the words are] coming from." At the same time, he acknowledged that discomfort with disciplinary writing also played a role in his decision: "I did a documentary instead of a standard seminar paper because I feel much more adept at making movies than I do at writing formal academic papers. I can write and write well and write forever if I'm comfortable with the setting, but I just couldn't feel confident as I started writing this paper," he explained. His comments indicate that greater fluency in an alternative discourse guided him toward the video project. Making a documentary was a compelling alternative to wrestling with unfamiliar discourse conventions, particularly when doing so had important implications for self-understanding.

Discussion

Jeff's experiences suggest that like pre-service teachers, practicing teachers may encounter challenges with identity construction, specifically as they grapple with new discourses introduced in their Master's programs. Interaction with disciplinary discourse in a Master's program may trigger identity work, launching teachers into an unanticipated cycle of *ideological becoming*, as established and emerging discourses compete for status and approval. Teachers who experience discursive tension through this process may be uncertain how to proceed. Some may *want* to experiment with disciplinary discourse practices but see them as "authoritative," erudite and impenetrable, extending beyond their package of knowledge and skills. Others may feel able but disinclined to do so, viewing disciplinary discourse as pompous and unnecessary, or, alternatively, unrepresentative of their concerns and commitments. Still others may feel that disciplinary discourse alters their sense of purpose and belonging within their secondary school context, even undermining their sense of professional self-efficacy. The case study presented here suggests that teachers may experience some or all of these emotions at different points within their graduate programs, or even within a single semester.

These responses may inhibit teachers from turning authoritative discourse into internally persuasive discourse. Teachers may shy away from trying out new "pattern[s] of thinking, speaking, behaving, and interacting," relying, instead, on more comfortable discourse practices. Such seemed to be the case with Jeff, when he reverted to a more familiar communicative medium for the final project. While this move enabled him to complete the final assignment, it also served as a way to side-step difficult discursive work, including the task of claiming the authority to participate in a disciplinary conversation and situating one's voice among other scholars' voices. In instances like these, disciplinary practices remain distant and foreign to the teacher, rather than becoming recognizable, malleable, and useful, appropriated for his/her own purposes. As a result, professional development is impeded; secondary teachers may leave a course or program without the benefit a new vantage point, informed by the interplay between old and new discourses.

At the same time, Jeff's experiences suggest that even when conflict and tension exist, teachers can operate within this tension and begin to establish a nexus of multimembership that brings together multiple discourses. Jeff undertook this work in the shorter, informal writing assignments he completed for the course when he drew connections between course readings and his teaching experiences. Even in the formal writing assignments, while struggling with added pressure and uncertainty, Jeff was able to pursue research areas that were personally meaningful and professional relevant, thereby continuing his nexus building.

What factors aided him in this process? Particularly with the Journal Project, Jeff's advancement

toward multimembership was supported by the texts he chose to study. Jeff attributed his success at integrating his "voice and style" into the journal project to the accessibility of the publication he chose to review. *The Quarterly*, a publication of the National Writing Project, modeled discourse norms (including values, interests, genres, linguistic choices, identities) that more closely resembled his own. These norms suggested options for his own work, helping him experiment with tone, structure and vocabulary while working within a writing style that aligned with his sense-of-self. Jeff's experiences with the Journal Project suggest that assigned texts play a key role in identity hybridization. Texts offer individuals points-of-entry into new discourses; they model different ways of being within a discourse and help newcomers envision how certain discourses might fit within the suite of discourses that comprise their sense-of-selves. When texts resonate with an individual, the individual may be more confident and willing to experiment with new discourse practices.

More evident in this study were the factors that impeded Jeff's identity development. Assumptions about language and difficulty hindered Jeff's ability to appropriate disciplinary discourse. He interpreted his difficulty as a sign of intellectual inferiority rather than a function of initiation into a new community of practice. This interpretation diminished his confidence and hampered his willingness to take risks as a writer that may have fostered the integration of his identities.

An absence of peers and mentors with whom he could relate also seemed to contribute to Jeff's identity struggles. He commented that he felt distanced from fellow high school teachers, who had not participated in similar professional development experiences; separate from others in the course, whom he felt were on a different "level" in their facility with composition theory; and detached from the writers whose work he was reading for the course, whose discursive norms he did not share. His comments suggest that he felt alone in his struggles with disciplinary discourse, a situation that may have intensified his sense of dislocation and discouragement.

Conclusion

Jeff's struggles suggest that disciplinary discourse can be difficult for secondary teachers to integrate into their identities, and that faculty should assist teachers through this process. Graduate faculty who work with practicing teachers should develop teaching practices that facilitate nexus-building, polycontextuality, boundary crossing, and identity hybridization. To this end, as they select course readings, graduate faculty might consider how students will respond to a piece's content and form. Questions like the following may prove helpful: "What image of the author will students compose as they work through this reading? How might students relate to that individual? What discourse practices is the author modeling? How familiar will students be with these practices? What audience is the author invoking? How will students see themselves in relation to this audience?" In grappling with these questions, the goal should not be to eliminate all texts that don't align well with students' discursive norms; rather, the goal should be to 1) adopt a range of texts, showcasing the diverse means of full engagement within a discipline, 2) supply ways of interacting with difficult texts (guided questions, background information, analytical methods) that will help teachers be able and critical decoders of disciplinary discourse, and to 3) anticipate when assumptions and disjunctions might get in the way of teachers' exploration and appropriation of disciplinary discourse. The diversity of students within a single classroom certainly makes it difficult to select texts that would help every student forge a connection with disciplinary discourse; nevertheless, seeking a range of text types, and choosing texts based on one's knowledge of the student population, should still be a goal.

Faculty can also strive to provide adequate structure and clarity in the writing assignments they design, thereby abating some of the writing uncertainty that students may experience. Wisely, Jeff's teacher ordered the major assignments from less to more difficult, with students writing first to personal, proximate audiences and then to more public audiences. Yet, the assignment prompts could have been more specific in describing the audiences for whom the students were writing and the purposes for which the writing was serving. The

final assignment was deliberately open-ended, leaving graduate students the freedom to chart their own course; yet, this freedom seemed generally unhelpful to Jeff. He may have benefitted from more concrete guidelines and genre examples to guide the development of his project. Faculty have the challenge of extending graduate students enough freedom to get them personally invested in their projects while also offering the structure to promote their writing success.

Even when these preconditions are met, faculty should anticipate that difficulty with reading and writing will occur and, thus, should choose reading and writing assignments and discussion topics that help students work through moments of difficulty. Faculty should 1) help teachers see disciplinary writing as a community-bound activity, defined by epistemological and methodological assumptions, genre expectations, and stylistic norms and 2) share research and facilitate discussions that explore the challenges and rewards of participating in this community.

Faculty can also work to normalize difficulty through the assignments they give. With its emphasis on thinking about difficulty differently, Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori's "difficulty paper" seems especially suited to this purpose. Salvatori's impetus for creating this assignment was her desire to push students "to learn to see that their difficulties were not a sign of inadequacy but markers of a particular kind of understanding" (85). To this end, in the undergraduate and graduate courses she teaches, Salvatori "assigns a difficulty paper for each new reading. Students are supposed to hand in a one-or-two-page typed account of a particular difficulty or moment of disorientation . . . they have encountered reading a particular poem, or essay, or short story, or theoretical text" (85-86).

Using Salvatori's assignment as a point of departure, teachers might be asked to write one or more "difficulty papers" in a given semester, using them to account for the frustration or discomfort that they experience while working through an assigned reading or writing assignment. This assignment may be particularly effective if the faculty member also participates, openly discussing one of his/her own moments of difficulty with a text. Such a move may help teachers recognize that disciplinary participation does not have to mean absolute assent or understanding, thereby increasing the likelihood that teachers will see such participation as an option for themselves.

Identity modeling is another key to helping teachers effectively reformulate their identities in response to new discourses. Notably, Jeff was one of only two secondary teachers in *Approaches to Composition Theory*; he would have benefitted from exposure to more models of hybridized identity construction in this course, including faculty and peer mentors. Given that identity is always comprised of multiple threads, the task of the teacher is not to seek out and showcase individuals who have multiple dimensions to their identities but to make the process of identity negotiation, engaged by all, more visible in the classroom.

This study suggests that identity negotiation may impact the efficacy of secondary teachers' experiences in Master's programs. It offers a glimpse into one teacher's struggles to appropriate disciplinary discourse in his academic writing. Notably, a broader view of Jeff's graduate work reveals that he continued to make progress in his Master's program, pursuing points of connection between old and new discourses in other ways. Taking this view into account, the research findings in this study appear both hopeful and sobering. Jeff, and other teachers like him, move forward in their coursework, in spite of the identity conflicts they experience. Yet, they do so at considerable emotional costs. By attending to identity matters in teachers' Master's programs, faculty members can help enrich teachers' professional identities and alert them to the benefits of taking part in multiple communities of practice.

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*Listening Across the Curriculum:
What Disciplinary TAs Can Teach Us
About TA Professional Development In The Teaching of Writing*

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Over the past couple of decades, several compositionists have argued that disciplinary TAs are in fact
teachers of writing and should be involved in writing across the curriculum (WAC) efforts and conversations.
In "Writing Across the Curriculum at Research Universities," Ellen Strenski (1988) claims that TAs'
responsibilities—"interactive learning, coaching in the higher thinking skills, and providing a communication
channel to integrate the course," are all related to writing instruction and advocates support for TA writing
pedagogy (49). In 2004, Beth Hedengren published *A TA's Guide To Teaching Writing In All Disciplines*, clearly
positioning TAs as writing instructors and providing them with pedagogical guidance. I (2012) extend Strenski
and Hedengren's claims in "The (In)Visible World of Teaching Assistants in the Disciplines: Preparing TAs to
Teach Writing," claiming disciplinary TAs, both those who assist a professor or autonomously teach a course,
are in fact de facto WAC faculty because of the multitude of ways they work with student writers.[1] Due to
an increase in WAC programs and graduate student instructors, I argue TAs will have more responsibility in
teaching writing and a stronger presence in WAC efforts in the future, and thus discussion and development of
WAC TA professional development is essential at this moment in time.

Compositionists easily translate disciplinary TAs' responsibilities as those of a writing instructor and
confidently assign TAs with the pedagogical identity of a writing teacher regardless of whether or not they are
involved in a WAC program. Yet an important question remains: do TAs in the disciplines perceive themselves
in the same manner? There is no existing scholarship that provides insight into how disciplinary TAs perceive
and define their pedagogical responsibilities and identities, and the factors involved in these perceptions and
definitions. The qualitative research I present in this essay seeks to fill this gap in scholarship. It provides an
opportunity for us to listen to and learn from disciplinary TAs. Such knowledge is important when considering
TAs' role in local and national WAC efforts and the development of WAC TA training or other professional
development programs that address writing pedagogy.

My research, which is comprised of interviews, offers a glimpse into the minds and pedagogical lives of
a dozen disciplinary TAs from a Northeastern doctoral-granting university that expresses a strong commitment
to training graduate instructors for their teaching responsibilities (yet does not offer WAC TA professional
development). The interviews reveal a strong connection between embracing or rejecting the pedagogical
identity of writing instructor, and pedagogical training and experience in the teaching of writing. More
specifically, my findings suggest that TAs' perceptions about their responsibilities related to writing instruction
are dependent on the amount of training they have received as well as their teaching experience. None of the
TAs in this study have had formal training in writing instruction at the university level, but many have received
training prior to graduate school. Those who have had professional development and ample teaching experience
are more inclined to perceive themselves as writing instructors and feel responsible for teaching writing than
those who have not. The interviews also reveal that disciplinary TAs—both those who perceive themselves as
teachers of writing and those who do not, and by extension, undergraduate students, are negatively affected

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[1]   TAs assess writing, explain writing assignments, give students feedback during the writing process, hold peer review sessions, and/or brain-
storm with students. Other responsibilities such as leading discussions, holding recitations, supervising laboratories and running slide presentations play
an indirect role in guiding student writers.

by the absence of formal training in writing instruction at the university level. The consequences include inadequate assessment practices and insufficient instruction in research-based writing, all resulting in ineffective teaching.

The TA research participants in this case study are not representative of TAs at all institutions, yet the knowledge gained from them provides helpful insight for higher education. The research findings reveal the importance of providing disciplinary TAs with professional development for writing instruction in either WAC TA professional development programs or other TA training programs. Professional development is needed to help TAs develop their pedagogical identity as teachers of writing and more fully understand the responsibilities that writing instruction in the disciplines demands, which is important for institutions with or without a WAC program. Further, this research strengthens the claim that WAC TA professional development is both essential and important for working toward achieving WAC goals in the future, and most importantly, for helping undergraduate students develop strong writing habits and practices.

Current Study

The research I present here is a small portion of a large research project that was driven by four major questions: (1) how are disciplinary TAs trained in the teaching of writing? (2) what pedagogical practices do they use while working with student writers and student writing? (3) how do disciplinary TAs conceptualize writing and writing instruction? and (4) what kind of support or training might they want or need to more effectively work with student writers? I sought to explore these questions in three ways: two case studies, the first consisting of interviews with eleven TAs and the second consisting of interviews with nine faculty from various disciplines at the same institution of higher education, and observations from all-university TA orientation at said university. Due to space constraints, this article will only draw on the TA case study.

The university technically has a WAC or a writing in the disciplines (WID) program, yet it does not declare it as such. The program manifests in requirements of a writing-intensive[2] (WI) course[3] and two writing-designated courses. Some TAs—including one in the TA case study—work with instructors in a WI course or independently teach a WI class. This university does not offer WAC instructor professional development workshops or seminars, nor does it employ a WAC administrator. Neither the university's writing program or the English department is affiliated with the WI courses or instructors (both faculty and TAs) who teach them.

Research Methods

The TA case study can be more specifically described as a single instrumental case study, one that is concerned with a small group of people and is bound by a particular place and/or time (Creswell 73). The case study is comprised of individuals who teach at the same location. Although these interviews occurred during a specific period of time, the case study is not time-bound because TA research participants agreed to answer questions after interviews.[4]

I recruited TAs across the disciplines by circulating a call on the university graduate student listserv for volunteer participants. I scheduled individual interviews with eleven graduate instructors, with the exception of three TAs in Chemistry that requested I interview them together. I interviewed TAs over a period of four months, January 2008-April 2008. The TA participants are eight doctoral students and three master's students. They study and teach in various disciplines including Philosophy, Religion, Communication, Chemistry,

Biology, Education, History, Art History and Sociology. In this article, I will refer to each participant by the name of his or her discipline *plus* TA. For example, I refer to the TA from History as History TA.

The interviews were transcribed, categorized, and holistically analyzed and interpreted (Yin 109-138). The interview questions served as broad categories. Interview responses were first categorized according to the corresponding interview question category. After the responses were grouped in these broad categories, they were further organized into two tiers of subcategories. The first tier of subcategories was "yes" and "no" categories, as most interview questions initially called for a "yes" or "no" response. Subcategories of the "yes" and "no" categories emerged based on elaborations of the initial "yes" or "no" response or follow-up question(s). One interview question—"how would you define successful and unsuccessful writing?" did not warrant a "yes" or "no" response. The responses to the question were broadly categorized under "conceptualizations of writing," a category that yielded two subcategories: writing as grammatically correct and writing as meaning making. A cross-analysis of categories, subcategories and individual participant biographies yielded patterns and themes. These patterns and themes were then analyzed and interpreted.

Research Findings and Implications

My research yields several important findings about disciplinary TAs and their perceived responsibilities and pedagogical identities. First, all of the TAs' primary responsibility is to work with student writers, yet none of them said they received formal training in writing instruction at the university level.[5] The extent to which these TAs teach writing and feel like it is their responsibility to do so is dependent on several interrelated factors: (1) teaching experience; (2) perceptions of themselves as teachers and teachers of writing; and (3) training in and/or experience with writing instruction.

The exploration of how these disciplinary TAs approach the teaching of writing reveals that those with pedagogical training and extensive experience working with student writers—some of which were in classes they autonomously taught—are more likely to actively teach writing, feel a sense of responsibility to do so, and have a broader understanding of the various purposes and functions on the writing spectrum. In fact, some of these TAs are already working to achieve some of the goals of the WAC movement—positioning writing as a vehicle of critical thinking and meaning making, redefining good writing as grammatically correct, and discussing disciplinary writing through the lens of genre.

Education TA and Philosophy TA are good examples of TAs who actively teach writing and are already working to achieve WAC goals. Education TA is a former elementary school teacher. She had pedagogical training in her undergraduate Education program and in professional development programs at the elementary school where she taught. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate who specializes in literacy studies, and thus is well informed about the teaching of writing and reading. When she began her doctoral program, she worked as a TA with a professor. Now, Education TA autonomously teaches a course to undergraduate students studying to be secondary education teachers. She says she tries to "unteach" the idea that writing only involves "grammar and spelling," and extend students' understanding of the writing spectrum (Interview). She states, "I try to get them to see writing as a process of knowing and a process of learning because that's also how I'd like them to use it in their classes. I explain that writing can help you transform what you know so you know it better, you know it deeper, you know it thicker" (Interview). As an instructor teaching future teachers, Education TA says it is her responsibility to future generations of teachers and students to help them understand what good writing is, and to stop the perpetuation of the idea that good writing is simply grammatically correct writing (Interview).

2   According to a multitude of sources, the most popular kind of WAC program takes the shape of writing-intensive courses in the disciplines.

3   The requirements for a WI course at this university include the use of writing as a means to learn, a focus on multiple aspects of writing such as organization and usage, various writing-oriented assignments such as collaborative projects or reading responses, and a minimum of four writing assignments that total at least 4,000 words (the word requirement for each assignment is 1,000). In a WI course, instructors must return at least three writing assignments with comments and corrections within two weeks. The course is limited to 25 students.

4   I did not ask any participants follow-up questions after the initial interviews.

5   Many research participants had pedagogical training in writing instruction prior to graduate school. Several previously taught elementary or secondary education, or in the case of Sociology TA, taught leadership workshops. Several disciplinary TAs had specific training in the teaching of writing. For example, Chemistry TA3 says she was trained to teach writing while working as a high school Science teacher prior to graduate school, and Religion TA2 and Communication TA were trained as peer writing tutors at their undergraduate institutions and worked in their respective writing centers (Interview).

Similarly, Philosophy TA is a fourth year doctoral student, has completed coursework, and is beginning to write his dissertation proposal. Although he has not had formal training in the teaching of writing, he has ample teaching experience at the university level and has spent a significant amount of his pedagogical life working closely with student writers and student writing. He was a teaching assistant with a professor in a WI course for five semesters and has autonomously taught a freshman-level WI course for three semesters. Like Education TA, Philosophy TA teaches writing as a means to learn. He says, "I think one of the main things we do in the humanities is to get students to think clear and have clear ideas, and one of the ways in which we develop our ideas is to write them down" (Interview).

Both Philosophy TA and Education TA recognize disciplinary-specific genres and work to help their students understand writing in this way. Philosophy TA says, "(Students) need guidance especially if (the teacher) expects something different from (their) students than say an English teacher does or a history teacher does" (Interview). Education TA, unlike Philosophy TA, identifies disciplinary-specific writing as *genres* and assigns her students a genre analysis essay. She says, "Good writing is situation-specific. We launch into the idea that there isn't generic good writing. What I try to help them see, which is really hard, is that good writing in science is different than what counts as good writing in English and in all the disciplines" (Interview). The acknowledgement of disciplinary-specific genres, Education TA claims, is essential for elementary school teachers because they "have to teach everything" (Interview).

In opposition, TAs with little to no pedagogical training and who have never been autonomous instructors are resistant to the teaching of writing and do not feel it is their responsibility for doing so. The responsibility, they claim, is that of writing teachers or writing center tutors. Yet these disciplinary TAs— who expressed much frustration about writing instructors and writing center tutors— "teach writing" or "talk about writing" to some extent because those who they think are responsible have failed to fulfill their obligations. These TAs position the teaching of writing as the teaching of grammar, perpetuating the dominant understanding of good writing as "grammatically correct"—the very definition WAC scholars have sought to dismantle since the beginning of the movement.

My interviews with History TA and Art History TA help illustrate the idea that a lack of pedagogical training and experience working with student writers is related to the attitude that disciplinary instructors should not be responsible for the teaching of writing and that successful writing is grammatically correct. History TA has been a graduate instructor with a professor for several semesters and has not autonomously taught a course. As an undergraduate, she did not have to take the required writing course at her college, and hence, has never taken a writing course at the university level. She says "mechanical issues" and "grammar" are the biggest problem with student writing in her history classes (Interview). Although she states that she does not have the time to teach grammar, she does give her students a "writing talk" during her recitation class, blaming previous instructors as the reason for their deficiency (Interview). History TA explains,

> I give them a writing talk after they hand in their first papers…I put the words, *there*, *their*, and *they're* on the board, and ask, what's the difference between these. I know this is really simple, and I don't blame you, I blame your third grade teachers or your high school teachers for not teaching you to write a tripartite thesis. That's where it really gets frustrating is the mechanics…if you can't get past that first step, if you cannot express yourself clearly in writing, even on a basic level, then you can't be expected to construct sophisticated arguments. (Interview)

She continues to place blame on those trained in writing and writing instruction for not helping her students become good writers.

> We collectively gripe about (the writing center) as TAs. We want to be able to send them to the writing center to fix the grammatical, mechanical stuff because we've gotten papers back and we're like 'what the heck is this?' We say, 'forget what they told you at the writing center, this is how you you're supposed to structure your essay'. I don't know if the writing center is going on different methodology

or they're much more of a literary bent or they're just morons. (Interview)

Similarly, Art History, a master's student with no pedagogical training or experience as an autonomous writing instructor, expresses a similar sentiment, listing the numerous "writing skills" students do *not* have. Interestingly, she uses the same example as History TA. She maintains, "(They lack) basic grammar. Spelling is terrible, and they have spell-check. I would say, 'do you know you have spell check?' Another thing, spell check, they'd have "there", and they'd have the wrong "their". I'd say to them, 'yes, you have spell check but you have to be smarter than spell check'" (Interview). Like History, she places blame on writing center tutors. Art History TA explains, "They cannot get this help. We send them to the writing center, and they say the writing center doesn't help with that, which leads to us having to teach them basic grammar (in recitation classes or during office hours) and that's really not what our goal in the class is" (Interview).

Interestingly, these interviews reveal that some TAs tacitly understand the teaching of writing in a much broader sense and actually teach writing in a way that extends beyond grammar, yet do not have the language to describe writing and the teaching of writing in these terms. Such findings demonstrate that TA training in writing pedagogy has the potential to help TAs develop language needed to discuss writing and writing instruction in a more complex way, and in turn, change their attitudes about writing instruction. I will continue discussing my interview with History TA, as she was instrumental in helping me recognize this connection.

In her interview, History TA seemingly only understands writing via the lens of grammar, but actually knows much more about the nature of genres and the teaching of disciplinary-specific writing. In fact, she both introduces students to history-specific genres and teaches them the tools, tasks and habits of mind related to writing in history. In her discussion about the writing center, she suggests she has knowledge about historical writing in terms of genre when she says, "'forget what they told you at the writing center, is how you're supposed to *structure* your essay'" (emphasis added, Interview). History TA suggests there are differences in writing in the disciplines by acknowledging that historical essays have a particular structure, a structure that tutors in the writing center might not be familiar with. In expressing that she is unfamiliar with how writing center tutors think about writing—"I don't know if the writing center is going on a different methodology or they're much more of a literary bent (Interview)"—she might recognize that writing center tutors are trained to help student writers in a particular way, and might not have the specialized history knowledge needed to guide them directly in writing in a history-specific genre.

History TA also acknowledges that there are particular methods, methodologies and kinds of arguments involved in the writing of historical essays, and interestingly enough, privileges them over good grammar. When discussing how she grades student papers, she says, "When I start line editing your paper, it means your ideas are good and your arguments are solid…and you have all of your methodological ducks in a row" (Interview). This description of her assessment process suggests she understands that good writing calls for more than just correct grammar.

Perhaps more importantly, History TA teaches writing and reading skills needed for effective historical writing and recognizes the teaching of these skills as "goals" in history. History TA teaches both close reading and analysis in a disciplinary-specific way. She describes historical readings, specifically primary or what she deems as "strange" or unfamiliar sources, as being very difficult to comprehend, and says the ability to read these sources is a "skill" in her discipline (Interview). In an effort to teach her students how to comprehensively understand sources, she models the analytical work needed to do so. She says, "I ask them the same kinds of questions they should be asking themselves when they're working with documents. I get them to think about reading a document from a different angle" (Interview). History TA helps guide students in using concepts, situations or events as a lens to read previous situations or events in medieval times.

John Williams, a history professor at another university, affirms these goals as being central to the discipline and defines writing as the means to carry out these goals. In "Writing History: Informed or Not by

Genre Theory," Williams (2005) writes,

> Certainly, in history, the real work of the discipline is reading and interpreting texts in writing…and genre expectations in history—comparing textual sources, interpreting the contexts for those documents, creating reasonable interpretive arguments based on textual evidence—in fact describe the very work at the heart of the discipline. (64)

He continues, "…teaching history writing is in fact teaching history" (64). Thus, History TA teaches writing in a more complex way than it might seem in her interview, as she teaches students some of the tools they need to think, read and ultimately write in the discipline. Yet in order for her and other TAs like her to recognize this fact, she needs to learn language that will help her identify and articulate her tacit knowledge.

The Consequences of Underprepared Disciplinary TA Writing Instructors

While the research suggests that TAs like History TA and Art History TA would strongly benefit from professional development, it also reveals that those TAs who identify themselves as teachers of writing would as well. None of the TAs interviewed had a thorough understanding of the responsibilities that writing instruction demands. This lack of understanding may emerge from the absence of discussion about writing instruction and ineffective TA professional development at the university level. The findings reveal several consequences that occur when TAs do not have proper training in the teaching of writing: (1) insufficient guidance in helping undergraduates work with sources in research-based writing; and (2) ineffective assessment practices.

None of the TAs interviewed formally teach students how to research, use or document sources citing one or more of three reasons: (1) lack of time; (2) lack of resources; and (3) not part of his/her teaching responsibilities. Biology TA claims she does not have time in class or during office hours to teach students about research. She notes that many students "overused sources" in their most recent paper—"half of the paper was citations" (Interview). Biology TA takes partial blame for her students' heavy source use: "I didn't talk about citations beforehand, so part of it is probably my fault" (Interview). The disciplinary TAs who claim it is not their responsibility to teach students how to handle sources point to English courses or the writing center as spaces where students should learn about research-based writing.

Although many say they do not teach research and source use, several TAs claim they "informally" do so to various extents." The Chemistry TAs make suggestions as to where students can find appropriate sources and define plagiarism early in the semester. Chemistry TA2 states, "In the beginning, I stress the importance of never plagiarizing. Their ideas should be their own ideas that reflect the thoughts that are going on in their head, not anybody else's" (Interview). Art History TA said she expected the freshman in her survey course to know how to evaluate sources, research and use sources for research-based writing, yet once she discovered that they did not know how to do so, she reluctantly had to teach them. She describes her pedagogical practices: "I would explain to them how to go online and show them how to use the library website. I told them to go to the librarian or go to the information desk." Despite her efforts to "teach" students how to research, Art History TA reveals: "They wouldn't do it. As a result, I had a lot of plagiarism. It was very frustrating" (Interview).

Despite their inability to distinguish between "talking" and "teaching," these TAs seemingly understand that teaching students at least something about source use is important, despite the extent to which that is possible and the reasons why. Yet other disciplinary TAs, notably and surprisingly those who perceive themselves as teachers of writing and are writing instruction advocates, avoid teaching source use altogether by not assigning research-based writing. The stated reasons are the assumptions that: (1) students don't know how to handle sources; (2) students don't know what a "good" or a "bad" source is; and (3) students plagiarize.

Philosophy TA explains his reason for not assigning research-based writing: "The worry is that a lot of students go to the web, and it's easy to plagiarize once you start going to the web. They don't know bad sources from good sources" (Interview). Education TA also has concerns about plagiarism. She assigns "alternative"

forms of the research paper such as multi-genre reports and I-search papers rather than "traditional" research papers because she claims students are unable to accurately summarize sources without plagiarizing. Education TA explains: "I don't do traditional papers because if I do, they'll be crap. I'll get a bunch of crappy papers" (Interview). She further discusses how her tutoring work with university students from across the disciplines affirms her statement.

> Sometimes (students) ask me to edit their papers or help them with their papers and I'm just appalled… (The papers) don't make sense. Students struggle to read something, internalize it and put it back together in their own way, in a coherent way. It's like you're reading these words that are strung together that you know came from some journal article, and the way that (the student) has strung it together kind of makes sense, but not really. (Interview)

Although Education TA defines these issues as directly related to research, she suggests students also have difficulty with other writing-related activities such as reading, synthesis, summary and argumentation. Education TA likely knows that explicitly teaching writing-related activities can help students work ethically with sources yet she opts not to do so seemingly due to her concerns about plagiarism. The disciplinary TAs in this case study suggest that a fear of plagiarism leads to pedagogical abandonment or causes pedagogical paralysis. Addressing this fear in a TA professional development program would not only help TAs understand that teaching source use is a critical part of teaching disciplinary writing, but it would also alleviate the fear and anxiety related to plagiarism.

The absence of the teaching of research-based writing and its related activities in disciplinary courses, regardless of the reason, has severe consequences. First, undergraduate students are not learning how to work ethically and responsibility with sources, leading them to seek out instruction on their own or plagiarize. Student plagiarism fuels what contemporary culture has identified as the "plagiarism epidemic," a problem largely described in terms of cheating, ethics and morality (Howard et al. 178). In turn, the role of pedagogy in plagiarism prevention continues to be obscured. Second, the differences in disciplinary researched writing genres and the conceptualization of writing as a situated act are ignored. Third, English/writing teachers become the scapegoats for students' difficulty with writing effective and successful college essays.

The last research finding I will discuss is related to assessment. My research reveals that TAs use questionable and unreliable assessment practices as a result of the absence of training or guidance. None of the disciplinary TAs interviewed said they were trained in the grading of writing at the university level. Several disciplinary TAs claim faculty mentors did not discuss the grading of writing because they "trusted" them—a statement I heard from TAs (but not faculty) time and time again during the interviews. Philosophy TA states, "The experience I've had—the attitude is 'I do my work and you do yours.' No professor looked over my shoulder and said let's make sure we're on the same page as far as grading is concerned. It's always been "we trust your judgment" or its "I just don't care" (Interview). Religion TA2 echoes Communication TA, as she says she occasionally speaks with her mentor professor about her assessment practices, but most of the time, her professor declares, "I trust you" (Interview).

Without guidance, TAs construct their own assessment practices. Although a couple of research participants use rubrics, the majority use recollection and intuition as assessment tools. Sociology TA explains "(Because we're not trained on how to grade), "one of the things I do is use the process that I went through. I became a better writer working with people who were English teachers. The feedback I get from them is the feedback I try to give my students" (Interview). Religion TA2 uses the same strategy. She says,

> …90 percent of my skill of grading papers comes from personal reflection on the ways my teachers graded my papers. A huge percentage goes back to about four different professors or even high school teachers. (I say to myself), 'How did they grade my papers and what did I like about how they did that?' Then I try to implement that. (Interview)

History TA and Religion TA1 also grade writing based on their intuition, or rather what they "know" is a "good" argument, "strong" evidence or a solid thesis statement.

There are numerous consequences of using recollection as a method of grading student papers. First, the TAs' understanding of the relationship between writing and grades is viewed only through the lens of their own work, that work being written mostly in *English* courses *in English-specific* genres—not in disciplinary courses or disciplinary-specific genres—and for many, more than fifteen years ago. The idea that previous instructors are models rests on the assumption that their assessment practices are the "right" way to grade all genres of writing—a suggestion that masks the many different forms and functions of disciplinary writing. Also, the disciplinary TAs neglect to account for unstable memory, the circumstances that shape the work they produced and the teacher's grading criteria. In addition, recollection as a method prevents grading consistency across courses and disciplines.

Conclusion

Disciplinary TA professional development in writing pedagogy at the institutional level is essential for preparing TAs for their responsibilities and ensuring undergraduates receive a quality education. The research participants demonstrate TA training in higher education will clearly benefit disciplinary TAs and more importantly, undergraduate students. My study reveals possible objectives for WAC TA training or TA professional development programs that attend to writing instruction: to help disciplinary TAs (1) recognize themselves as teachers of writing; (2) understand what writing instruction in the disciplines entails and demands; (3) learn about the various functions and purposes on the writing spectrum; (4) understand writing as disciplinary-specific; and (5) develop the language needed to articulate their tacit knowledge about disciplinary writing and writing instruction.

As several TA research participants did not distinguish between "teaching" and "talking" about writing, another objective may be to help TAs understand the difference between pedagogical practices that are informed by theory, philosophy and research, and pedagogical practices that are informed by what Paulo Friere would call the banking of knowledge. TAs need help in developing a writing pedagogy that is informed by composition-rhetoric theory and practice as well as their disciplinary histories, traditions, theories, philosophies and writing genres. Thus, a TA training program comprised of disciplinary faculty, disciplinary TAs and compositionists would be most conducive for disciplinary TAs' pedagogical development.

Perhaps most importantly, the empirical data reveals the many consequences that arise when disciplinary TAs do not have formal training in the teaching of writing at the university level. Without direct guidance, TAs have a nebulous understanding of their responsibilities as instructors, are ill-prepared to work with student writers, and use unreliable pedagogical practices. On a larger scale, a consequence of ineffective training is that pedagogy, pedagogical development and writing is not valued in higher education and thus not identified as a way to address institutional problems such as plagiarism. Further, inadequate training leads to the perpetuation of ideologies that the WAC movement has sought to deconstruct since its inception, namely the notion that English teachers are solely responsible for the teaching of writing and that good writing equates to grammatically correct prose. Finally, the most significant consequence of them all: undergraduate students are not learning how to communicate effectively and successfully, a severe detriment in college and in the workplace, and a failure of higher education. Disciplinary TA professional development in writing instruction is essential for the success of both higher education and the WAC movement, and more explorations of TAs and their important role in teaching writing is needed at the institutional level.

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T/W

Making the Most of Existing Resources:
An Online Rubric Database in
University-wide Writing Program Assessment

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"Our ideas about writing and writing assessment are shifting constantly and never enjoy complete consensus" (Gallagher 34). This statement is particularly true for me as director of a writing across a curriculum (WAC) program at a university where I'm responsible for assessing our entire writing program for our institution while also teaching a writing-intensive class that makes me sympathetic to the classroom-based assessment needs of faculty. At the classroom level, writing assessment should provide a road map for improved instruction and student growth; at the institutional or school level, assessment should inform programmatic change and improvement. Nonetheless, these simple purposes seem in conflict with the inherent complexities of writing assessment. As a former secondary teacher, I realize this complexity is not unique to higher education; secondary school personnel feel this struggle as well. Secondary teachers and administrators seek ways to make their classroom writing assessment blend with high-stakes national testing on the writing achievement of their students.

To classroom teachers and university administrators alike, writing assessment is all of the following: "politics and pedagogy, burden and opportunity, threat and promise, weapon and tool" (Gallagher 30). Recognizing the challenges of writing assessment, I was determined to balance the intricacies of user-friendly and accessible writing assessment for our faculty at the classroom level with complex outcomes, analysis, and statistical reporting for senior staff at the institution. Because of my experience in the secondary schools, I recognize that this WAC program assessment, built upon writing assignments coming from multiple classes with ratings entered into affordable and ubiquitous software programs, could translate into most any educational setting, whether K-12 or university.

Although writing educators stress the importance of embedding evaluation of students' authentic writing samples—and a variety of samples—into overall assessment plans, often district and university administrators yield to easy, less expensive, and less intensive methods of evaluating writing. At my university, I am frequently asked by administrators to provide writing data that is quantitative and capable of comparing students at our institution with students at comparator institutions; this is a limiting perspective on writing assessment, particularly if I collect quantitative data that fails to align with assessments used by faculty teaching writing-intensive courses. Ochsner and Fowler believe that many universities do not evaluate program effectiveness based on the effectiveness of student writing, choosing instead to assess programs by frequency of writing and assignment length and type because of the ease of counting and tallying such measures. Condon contends that administrators often choose to evaluate writing programs through standardized testing only--without ever exploring growth through writing samples produced during instruction.

With the influx of accountability demands placed upon K-12 schools, the problem is exacerbated in that particular setting when compared to higher education. Creating a writing assessment system that will support both classroom instructors and administrators, whether in a K-12 setting or university, is a daunting task. I wanted to develop an assessment system that uses authentic student writing samples produced in writing-intensive classes, giving ownership of the classroom assessment to instructors, while also providing comparative data for the university administration, and I wanted to be sure that the internal and external data

supported and informed the system's ongoing development and reform, particularly in the area of validity. The complexity of skills necessary to produce good writing, combined with writing's developmental nature, make it difficult to create an assessment system that measures all nuances of growth (e.g., Yancey and Huot).

Recognizing that rubrics often have the potential to balance standardization with authentic performance assessment in the classroom, I decided to develop a rubric to support our assessment efforts for our entire university. Because rubrics "capture the essence of performance at various levels" (Spandel 19), they provide an assessment that informs instruction and individual writing growth within the classroom; simultaneously, they also can be analyzed numerically in aggregate to provide insight at the institutional or school level— across student grade or university classification, program area or subject, or course level. Rubrics offer a means of standardization that provides quantification of the success of achieving large-scale instructional writing objectives by using written samples produced by students in the classroom.

In spite of their benefits, however, assessment experts warn against the lack of technical merit that is yielded with this measurement tool. Wiggins argues that rubrics often ignore rhetorical purpose or audience in the evaluation of written products; instead, due to broad generalizations about definitions of good writing, he argued that rubrics limit the multi-contexts of authentic writing, suggesting that the validity of rubrics may be lacking. Similarly, McLeod, Brown, McDaniels, and Sledge caution that analytic rubrics used to evaluate writing should have the flexibility to accurately assess varying rhetorical modes, noting that definitions and criteria of effective writing may change depending on the purpose, focus, and context of the work. Realizing these weaknesses, I was determined to demonstrate that our rubric had sound psychometric properties, particularly validity, or the rubric's ability to measure accurately the writing skill or dimension of performance it claims to measure. In order to do that, I realized I needed multiple forms of assessment that could help validate our rubric.

In addition to questions about validity of rubrics, the actual data collection methods for collecting and evaluating writing can be cumbersome. Electronic portfolios can be used to support course content management in online environments, but more powerfully they "radically transform portfolios from a 'thing' to a process or processes" (Fitch et al. 38). E-portfolios are often touted as the best method for collecting numerous writing samples, assessable through the use of rubrics, yet even the advocates of e-portfolios recognize the abundance of obstacles that make their adoption difficult at the school or institutional level (e.g., Schaffhauser; Sicar et al.). Students and faculty note communication issues, training needs, and technology and interfacing mishaps with e-portfolios, while administrators feel the weight of system cost and training at the institutional level. Even the advertised purpose of e-portfolios varies. Unfortunately, based on the review of systems we completed at our institution, a "one size fits all" e-portfolio system doesn't exist. When considering this in tandem with the notion presented in a position paper on writing assessment presented by a special committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) emphasizing the importance of human raters, we realized that we needed to create an electronic method to collect quantitative data derived from our writing rubric, which allows for course-level faculty as the human raters who are aware of the writing assignments' purposes and the individual students' learning to enter ratings for later and deeper analysis.

Over two decades ago, Wansor supported the use of multiple measures in writing assessment. Currently, writing experts continue to emphasize the importance of rich assessment options; in a statement regarding best practices in writing evaluation, administrators from NCTE note that "assessment must include multiple measures and must be manageable." Our assessment system includes two unique types of measures: (a) final rubric ratings collected per each individual student, based on a semester of essays rated by course instructors and collected, akin to a portfolio, throughout instruction in the writing-intensive course; and (b) standardized tests, which provide data to rank our students against national norms for reporting at the institutional level, but more importantly, provide additional writing achievement data to help validate our rubric. Like universities, school systems are also often required to complete standardized testing. In our particular state, our secondary

students are required by our State Department of Education to complete ACT testing, which includes multiple choice writing skills and writing samples subtests. Although the rubric is the heart of our assessment system, the external standardized tests can be used to strengthen and validate the rubric. Making assessment manageable for classroom instructors and teachers while simultaneously providing university or system-wide administrators the information they require for accountability reporting remains complicated. Our model, which draws upon standardized and internal measures of writing achievement and collects the internal rubric data through common and existing technology that is affordable for schools and universities alike, is offered as a viable option for consideration.

Developing the WAC Rubric

Prior to the launching of our WAC program, I worked with the director of composition to make sure that any university-wide assessment measure of writing was in alignment with assessment tools used among her composition faculty. The director of composition had already developed a 5-point writing checklist for use in the first two courses of the composition series. Her checklist requires instructors to rate each individual piece of student writing per separate writing components of Focus, Content, Organization, Style, Conventions, and Writing Process on a scale of 1 (*Needs Work*) to 5 (*Far Exceed Expectations*). To begin exploring reliability of her checklist after a semester of using it in the composition program, she did the following: (a) gathered a group of faculty from various disciplines and academic programs; (b) selected a sample of student portfolios from both courses in the two-part composition series; (c) removed student identification from the samples; (d) mixed samples by student and semester of instruction and coded accordingly; and (e) asked faculty to rate using the composition checklist. Following this exercise, she asked faculty to respond to a survey that asked about clarity and ease of using the checklist.

Alignment of measurement tools is important. Thus, based on her findings (Woodworth et al.), I expanded her checklist into an analytic rubric for use in our content-area writing-intensive courses (See Appendix). While developing the rubric, I also pulled research and rubric samples from various books, authors, venues, and agencies, including but not limited to the following: (a) the Written Communication Value Rubric, developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU); the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Rubric (Education Northwest), used in many K-12 schools throughout the country; and (c) a variety of rubric samples provided by John Bean. The resulting product was an analytic rubric (aligning with the skills defined in our composition program's checklist) that has cell-based descriptors and indicators per each analytic dimension of writing, similar to AACU's rubric or the 6 + 1 Traits rubric. Unlike the AACU rubric, which uses a 4-point scale, or the 6 + 1 Traits rubric, which most often uses a 6-point scale, I decided to remain consistent with the 5-point scale that had been developed within our composition program. In addition, members of our WAC committee reviewed the rubric from a discipline-specific objective to assess the rubric's overall content validity, or their perspectives of how accurately the rubric reflected and measured all of our learning goals articulated in our writing program.

As we considered each analytic dimension of writing that would measure our program's goals and objectives, we recognized that writing assessments should provide the flexibility to be revised locally in order to align with specific purposes of the writing assignment (CCCC). For this reason, unlike the composition checklist, the specific indicators that define the first four writing dimensions (Focus, Content, Organization, and Syle), shaded in gray on the WAC rubric presented in the Appendix, have the flexibility to vary per discipline based on the nature of the written assignments. Although indicators may vary within cells, the five writing components being measured by our analytic rubric remain consistent across all of our writing and writing-intensive courses.

I encourage all writing and writing-intensive content instructors to use the WAC rubric to assess individual student writing samples during the semester of writing-intensive instruction. At the end of the semester, the instructors are able to consider all of the students' rubric scores from each writing sample in order to determine and evaluate a *writer's* overall writing skills and ability. These data are entered online at the end of each academic semester of instruction per each writing dimension on the analytic rubric for every individual student in their courses. We did not adopt an e-Portfolio system within our assessment plan. Instead, if faculty from a given program or school choose to use an e-Portfolio platform that has already been selected or required by their administration, they can continue to use the system without having to duplicate work. Ultimately, with this model, individual writing is assessed by human raters, or course instructors, with final summative ratings per student per course entered quickly and easily into an online database.

To provide a means to explore the technical merit often lacking in rubrics as well as large-scale assessment while also satisfying the administration's need for quantitative data for benchmarking purposes for comparisons of writing skills of the students in this program against other students across the nation, we selected two writing subtests of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), published by American College Testing (ACT). The Writing Skills subtest, given at the completion of the two-course composition series, is a 72-item multiple-choice test measuring students' understanding of the conventions of standard written English. Subscores are provided for Usage/Mechanics and Rhetorical Skills. The CAAP Writing Skills subtest can be used to address criterion-related validity of our WAC rubric. The CAAP Writing Essay subtest, given at the completion of upper level content-area courses, is designed to demonstrate a student's level of proficiency in the writing dimensions commonly taught in college-level writing courses and required in upper-division college work. This particular standardized measure asks students to create two actual written products, as opposed to responding to multiple-choice questions regarding mechanics, usage, and rhetoric. External scorers contracted by ACT use a 6-point rubric to evaluate the writing samples. We recently gave the writing essay subtest to our students, and in an effort to consider the validity of our rubric on some of the higher order dimensions of writing (Focus, Content, and Organization), we are now at the beginning stages of an analysis that compares ACT's 6-point ratings with our 5-point ratings generated by using our WAC rubric. Using CAAP writing skills or writing sample subtests, the rubric ratings per student are validated bi-annually, and concurrent validity, or our rubric's ability to measure writing dimensions against another test taken at the same time, is established.

Capitalizing on Technology: Providing Flexibility Online

As noted earlier, many e-portfolio systems are often costly to either the students or the university or school when determining a large-scale data collection method. Two of the academic schools at our university, Education and Business, already used different online assessment portfolio systems. As WAC director, I didn't want to alienate one dean or school faculty by selecting one e-portfolio system over another; however, I knew that, in order to collect the data for analysis, we would need a home-grown system that was easy to use across the university and inexpensive. I also sought a system that would track all of our students over time and maintain all rubric data in a database for regular short-term analysis, such as annual reports presented to our department heads and senior staff, as well as more intensive longitudinal analysis and comparisons to other writing measures, presented to accrediting and state agencies when requested. For this reason, I teamed up with Kevin Osborne in the university's Office of Institutional Research (OIR), turning to him for his expertise in technology. Specifically, I asked him if data could be captured electronically and provided for all students taking writing-intensive courses, both composition and content-area, each semester, and based on the technology, if all data entered on a particular student could continue to build a student record of writing-intensive instruction and achievement over time, with the course and semester of the instruction designated per set of ratings. Kevin created an online database for data collection, using Microsoft products, which are used on most K-12 and university campuses, to collect ratings at the end of each course.

Kevin was highly aware of my need to manage the assessment data while also allowing faculty to easily access the system. For this reason, he began his creation of the technology to support our data collection with

a dynamic website using an ASP.NET web application framework. The .NET web pages were created using Microsoft Visual Studio, and the data are captured regularly within a Microsoft Access database. At this point in our program, the database has generated over 3300 rows of student data, enabling us to track course-to-course growth on hundreds of students through at least three of the 5-course series in the WAC program, and the Access software provided by MicroSoft has been robust enough to maintain all rubric data collected.

Each semester the database is updated using an Access Macro. The Access Macro runs two queries that populate the database for the current semester. The first query retrieves all writing-intensive courses, appropriate instructors teaching the courses, and student enrollment rosters from Banner, which is the student and course database system used by the university; these data are inserted into a *Courses* table. The writing-intensive courses are selected through the query by looking in Banner, our student database system, for all English 1010 and 1020 courses and all courses with a WI in the course section field. Using the *Courses* table, a user list is created for the current semester. This user list table is used to authorize which faculty members have access to the online rubric database during a specific term. Although the technology seems overwhelming from my standpoint and areas of expertise, Kevin assured me that the software programs he used are common technology that any member of an information technology (IT) office, whether at the university or K-12 system level, would be able to understand and recreate. Since first designing this online data collection system, he has been asked by other 2- and 4-year college writing program administrators to talk to their IT offices to discuss programming and compatibility.

Each semester, I run a user list from the Access database that Kevin created to email all faculty members who are teaching composition or writing-intensive courses for the semester. In the email, sent approximately one month before the end of the semester, I provide a specific log-in and password and ask writing-intensive instructors to complete an assessment for each student on their course roster. As noted earlier, the assessment is based on the student's overall skills, with individual written products and evaluations collected throughout the semester used as support of the final overall assessment, much like final grades for a portfolio. Once logged in, the web page displays a list of the current writing-intensive course the instructor is teaching. The faculty member selects a course, and a list of the enrolled students is displayed. A hyperlink, which reads *Assess*, is placed beside each student's name. The faculty member clicks the hyperlink, which redirects the instructor to a new webpage. On the new page, the instructor completes the rubric for each student on the roster. The rubric rating on the website provides the writing element and each of the single-word ratings (*Inadequate* to *Excellent*). I asked Kevin to not include the detailed descriptors per each cell of the rubric, as they are often modified to meet the discipline's needs or writing assignment purpose; however, a link to the WAC rubric template (displayed in the Appendix) is provided to allow the instructors access to the detailed definitions per writing element with one click of the mouse.

Once the rubric rating is completed, the instructor hits a *Submit* button, and the data are inserted into the *Data* table, the second table in the system. The system then queries the *Data* table to determine if a record already exists for the student. Although the WAC program is comprised of five total courses, each student has six available course section fields of data allocated in the database, on the chance that a student simply takes additional writing-intensive courses out of academic interest. If a student record already exists, then the newly-submitted data go into the next available fields. If not, then a new record is created for the student who has not had any prior data entries in the database. When writing this particular element of the query, a simple "If Then" statement was used.

Although I go into the database each semester to update the *Course* table changes, based on the query that is run, the *Data* table continues to grow from semester to semester. At any given time, I can pull up the existing database and check by name and student ID which writing-intensive courses have been completed by a student. In addition, this database allows me to analyze data by term, by instructor, by course sequence, by student major, and by the department that houses the course. Like an online course grading system, both the courses that qualify as writing-intensive as well as the rosters of students within each course are automatically provided to the instructor, making it a simple method for instructors to navigate that requires little training on actual methods for data entry. In fact, the brief training necessary is provided in text through email. Other than an occasional moment of confusion about user id, no issues have been noted by faculty with the online system.

By using this web-based application and queries that are interfacing with the university's student database system, I am able to provide an analysis of internal data collected through courses for our writing initiative's assessment. By disaggregating data, which can also be done at the school level at the university or grade level in secondary schools, I have now started providing annual reports with tables of student achievement data to some of our schools for their own discipline-based accreditation requirements regularly. After an adequate number of years of program implementation, I can provide a longitudinal analysis that specifically tracks an individual student's progress through the entire WAC program course sequence can occur, and a group comparison of means, matched at the student level. The data belongs to our institution. We did not outsource this system to an external data collection or e-portfolio system. Rather, we maintained ownership of the system and data, allowing us to determine and select what data we want to analyze with this ever-growing database of rich information.

Validity: The First Semester of Data Collected Online

At the end of a spring semester of instruction, based upon multiple rubric ratings collected per each student during the semester and generated through individual writing sample evaluation, each writing and writing-intensive instructor entered a 1 (*Inadequate*) to 5 (*Excellent*) into the online database, rating each of the five writing components per student to assess the *student's overall ability* as a writer. The ratings of each of the five writing components were analyzed at the course sequence level, anticipating that students in the first course will yield lower mean ratings than their counterparts completing second, third, or fourth courses in the sequence. Although this isn't an exact measure of predictive validity, which truly pairs students' current performance with the same students' future performance, this provided a good indication that the rubric was sensitive to developmental growth. In other words, we would expect freshman in early classes to earn lower mean ratings in their first introductory composition course when compared to their counterparts completing the second course in the series. The data we collected and analyzed yielded exactly the expected results. Table 1 provides mean ratings per each of the writing components on the rubric for students in both the first and second course of the composition series as well as *F* values and significance levels, yielded when comparing means at the course sequence level per writing component. Students in the first of the two composition courses, English 1010, earned significantly lower mean ratings overall in every component of the WAC Rubric relative to the students in the second of the courses, English 1020.

Table 1: *Spring 2010 English 1010 and 1020 Writing Component Means*

Course	Focus	Content	Organization	Style	Language Conventions
ENGL 1010 (*n*=197)	3.13	3.16	3.23	3.12	3.12
ENGL 1020 (*n*=449)	3.55	3.53	3.55	3.49	3.53
F	15.17	11.96	9.13	11.84	13.85
p	.000	.001	.003	.001	.000

In order to consider concurrent validity, we expected that a correlation should exist between the Language Conventions component of the WAC rubric and the CAAP Writing Skills subtest, which measures writing skills in usage and mechanics as well as rhetoric; in other words, we were looking to see if a relationship existed between the same students' scores on the rubric and their CAAP scores, as an external benchmark test, during the same time period of instruction. The CAAP Writing Skills subtest was given to students in English 1020 toward the end of the semester of instruction--at approximately the same time the instructors were entering data into the WAC rubric online system. Because we claim to measure grammar, mechanics, and punctuation (language conventions) on the rubric and ACT also claims to measure the exact same elements on their CAAP writing skills subtest, we wouldn't expect to see a significant correlation for areas of focus, content, or organization. Five separate Pearson product-moment correlations were run between each of the writing components of the rubric and the composite scaled CAAP writing skills scores. Table 2 provides the correlations and the significance levels for these five bivariate Pearson correlations.

Table 2: *Correlations and Significance Levels for CAAP Writing Skills Subtests by Rubric Writing Component*

	Focus	Content	Organization	Style	Conventions
R	.105	.069	.103	.110	.139
P	.051	.202	.055	.041	.009

As noted in Table 2, the CAAP Writing Skills subtest scores correlated positively with all five of the components of the writing rubric; however, only the Language Conventions component correlated significantly with the CAAP Writing Skills subtest at the .01 alpha level, and the Style component correlated significantly with the CAAP Writing Skills subtest at the .05 alpha level. The correlation between the CAAP Writing Skills subtest scores and the WAC rubric scores for language conventions supports the concurrent validity of the WAC rubric on those specific analytic dimensions of style and conventions, yet at first glance the correlation with the style component is somewhat surprising. When considering, however, that the CAAP Writing Skills subtest measures not only mechanics but also usage and rhetoric, it would be understandable that a relationship between the style component and the CAAP Writing Skills subtest exists. In English 1020 students learn writing elements that are considered important to achieving effective style, such as an awareness of style guidelines as noted in MLA, use of active voice, and sentence combining strategies. These skills would be measured through both the style component of the WAC rubric as well as the Rhetoric subscore of the CAAP Writing Skills subtest. When considering that growth of skills should occur in students in their second semester of instruction and the skills measured by an external test correlate with those measured in the rubric, the WAC rubric scores generated during the first semester of data collection appear to be valid.

Future Considerations

We were determined to use technology to collect data generated through the use of our internal rubric per each writing or writing-intensive course that was easy and accessible to faculty while also meaningful and manageable for analysis. Creating an overall assessment system, drawing form standardized and internal rubric data, that tracks students' academic achievement in writing and considers multiple pieces of authentic writing within the appropriate context, while also meeting external accountability demands and remaining sound in terms of measurement theory, is difficult. Only through ongoing data collection can we truly consider the longitudinal impact of the data on enhancing writing skills and instruction. This program model, which makes the most of existing and available technology, attempts to meet these needs.

Writing is complex, as is writing assessment. Taking the technical complexities out of the assessment by providing a user-friendly system through environments with which instructors have already interacted becomes imperative. If the data were not so easily available, the follow-up studies of concurrent validity, based on students' ACT CAAP scores, could not happen. The database of internal scores allows me to easily merge writing data with the external standardized test scores, providing opportunities for sophisticated analysis and tests of psychometric properties.

As noted, the online WAC rubric will continue to develop. For instance, as discipline-based writing-intensive instructors revise the specific definitions of the writing components of the WAC rubric (shaded in gray), the content-specific rubrics will be published to assist students and faculty in elevating their understanding of writing in their field. Each of these unique rubrics will need to be tested for bias, validity, and reliability over time. In addition, as the database grows each semester—potentially, at exponential rates during WAC program implementation and roll out—more comprehensive analysis can occur, offering authentic opportunities to engage in the cycle of continuous improvement at the student level, the course level, the program level and the institutional or school level. Considering these cyclical challenges presented by writing assessment theory has opened opportunities for further exploration and research. Making the methods of collecting the data to inform this research flexible, feasible, and affordable for a university community or school system has made this exploration a reality.

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Student-Teachers' Comments' Type on Children's Writing: Practices and Perceptions of their Role as Writing Facilitators

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Introduction

Literacy programs in teacher education play a dual role: improving students' academic literacy level, and preparing them for their role as writing facilitators. Several courses and activities aim at improving the level of academic writing (language courses, academic writing courses and reading and writing assignments). However, little is done to prepare the student-teachers in non-language programs for their role as future writing facilitators (Dempsey, PytlikZillig & Bruning, 2009; Hill, Bronwen, Gilmore & Smith, 2010). Although, students continuously engage in writing activities, most do not engage in comprehensive processes of teaching writing with children (Moore, 2000). Consequently, Bainbridge & Macy (2008) find that many student-teachers are deeply concerned about their ability to assess literacy learning, even though they were exposed to several assessment tools throughout their studies. In addition, many teacher educators do not provide a positive role model for writing teachers since they are busy struggling balancing time and content limitations with the demands of providing effective and ongoing feedback to multiple students (Dempsey, PytlikZillig & Bruning, 2009). We are therefore interested in examining how student-teachers write and perceive the provision of feedback on school-students compositions in the final stages of their learning.

Writing Feedback

Writing Feedback on school-students compositions is the main activity use by non- language teachers to improve writing. This activity is based on student-teachers' experiences as writers and their perceptions about their role and about writing processes (Lee, 2009). Writing feedback relates to different aspects of the composition: syntax, lexical variety, register, text structure and ideas. It is commonly provided in the form of comments differed in their rhetorical style: pose questions, request clarifications, correct or suggest corrections (Auten, 1991; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener, & Knoch, 2009). Comments can be local (relating to the specific words, sentences, and suggesting specific corrections), or conclusive, serving as summative or global comments. The purpose of feedback is to improve writing but even more so, its aim is to motivate writers to express their ideas through extended writing processes (Lam & Law 2007). Teachers' feedback on their students' written products reflect their perception regarding the writing process (Auten, 1991; Connors & Lunsford, 1993) and their choice of feedback type tunes their students' writing process and their motivation towards writing (Biggs, 1988; Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Hounsell, 1997).

Three major types of teachers' feedback practices are reported in the literature: editing (direct–corrective), formative (indirect-corrective) and dialogical which characterized by different comment types but moreover are a manifestation of the teachers' perspectives of the writing processes:

Editing Direct-Corrective Feedback. This feedback is characterized by taking control of the text and revising various aspects, correcting spelling mistakes, rephrasing sentences, adding informational details or ideas, etc. Teachers frequently adopt this technique by using imperative sentences (Sugita, 2006), presenting critical attitudes towards lexical decisions, syntax, structure and ideas (Kasanga, 2004). Direct comments imply that teachers perceive writing as a short-term activity, which seeks to correct a specific text rather than develop writing strategies (Lee, 2003). Nevertheless, studies find that college students prefer this directive, explicit

feedback approach which clearly guide them how to rewrite the text (Bitchener 2008; Straub, 1997; Sugita, 2006). Moreover, Sugita (2006) found that direct imperative comments were more influential on writers' revision than comments in a question form. Yet research which examined the effect of feedback pointed to a gap between students' positive statements on feedback and the minor corrections they actually performed on their compositions (Ferris, 1995; Straub, 2000; Wiltse, 2002; Sugita, 2006). Researchers conclude that findings on the efficiency of direct-corrective feedback are contradictory, and although it seems that students prefer this kind of feedback, which "takes control" of their composition, this feedback is not correlated with an improvement of writing skills (e.g. Gue´nette, 2007; Kasanga, 2004).

Indirect-Formative Feedback. Formative assessment seeks to help writers improve writing in the long term. It does not focus on improving a specific text but on writing processes assuming that raising awareness to problems rather than their correction can lead to long-term learning (Ellis, 2009). This feedback helps writers, especially novice writers, to cope with the ambiguity of the writing process (Shute, 2008). Error codes (as circles, lines, arrows, etc.), which draw attention to linguistic issues tends to increase meta-linguistic awareness to the writing process. Yet, data on formative feedback and its effect on writers are opaque (Yin, Shavelson, Ayala, Ruiz-Primo, Brandon, Furtak, Tomita, & Young, 2008). Formative feedback was not found to be more effective than the editing feedback (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009). Similarly, Vardi (2009) found that general feedback had less influence on student revisions than text-specific feedback and that both local and global feedback addressing organization in general were poorly related to change.

Dialogical Feedback. Theories referring to writing as a continuous and dialogical process between writers and their addressees (based on Bakhtin theory in Lillis, 2003) suggest that teachers will act as addressee and respond in a manner which directs the writer to perceive writing as a dialogue (Lillis, 2003). Hence, teachers are encouraged to engage in oral and written discourse with the writers. The objective of dialogue is to increase motivation, to develop a concept of writing as a prolonged process, and to promote self assessment. Straub's (2000) study shows that the success of the dialogue is influenced by the teacher and students' perception of what writing is and by teaching style.

It is noteworthy that these three types of feedback are not mutually exclusive and teachers may engage in different types of feedback simultaneously based on the learning situation, on students' writing capabilities, on the writing tasks, and on their expectations from students.

The Context of the Study. The population of this study consists of student-teachers attending various education programs in one Teacher College in Israel. This college certifies teachers in two main programs – a four year B.Ed program and a two year teacher accreditation program for students who have previously obtained an academic degree. Students study in six departments (kindergarten, special education, elementary school, junior high school, art education and physical education). Studies include three major domains: pedagogy, (psychology and education) disciplinary studies (literature, mathematics, sciences, etc.) and field practice with methodology courses. During their final year, students take part in the internship program of 8 hours a week of practicum and 8 hours a week of education courses. Throughout the program, students take 2-3 language courses (depending on the grade they achieved in a language admission examination) dealing with academic writing, grammar and oral proficiency.

The population of this college is unique and challenging. While half of the students are Jewish Hebrew speakers, the other half consists of Arabic-speaking Bedouins. These students studied in Arabic-speaking elementary and secondary schools in villages located in the college's vicinity. They need to acquire a high level of fluency in Hebrew in order to assimilate socially, professionally and academically. Their admission requirements are different from those of the Jewish candidates in order to increase their prospects for admission. Some of the students study in special programs for Bedouins and others in multicultural programs and courses of the college, according to their interests and competencies. The majority of these Arabic-speaking student-teachers will teach Hebrew as a second language to Bedouin children, and therefore they are expected to achieve a satisfactory level in Hebrew writing and in teaching Hebrew writing.

Little is known on how prospective teachers perceive the writing process (Lee, 2009) their role as writing facilitators and how they respond to children's writing (Dempsey, PytlikZillig, & Bruning, 2009). The research questions of this study aimed to portray student-teachers perceptions and practices about writing feedback: (1) How do student-teachers, in the last year of teacher preparation program, perceive their role as writing facilitators? (2) What are the main characteristics of their writing feedback to different genre? (3) Do non-native speakers of Hebrew write feedback differently than native speakers of Hebrew?

Method: The aim of this study is to draw a picture of student-teachers' feedback practices, attitude and perceptions. In order to compare perceptions and practices, four research tools were- composition writing, feedback on children's writing, a questionnaire and an interview. The data distinguishes between native speakers of Hebrew and non-native speakers of Hebrew, (mainly Arabic speakers) in order to see if their level of Hebrew writing affects their feedback writing and perception regarding the teacher role and feedback writing.

Participants. A cluster which consisted of all students in their final year at the college was sampled: students attending the college's B.Ed program (N=111) and the teacher accreditation program (N=62). This cluster was chosen since the students in these groups were in the final stages of their studies, took several writing and didactic courses, and were about to start teaching their internship year. Background Data were collected on the students' first language and writing level. This was done in order to control for the level of language mastery (FL or SL Hebrew speakers), due to our college demographics.

Instruments. Four instruments were used in this study: (1) **Composition writing.** In order to assess the writing level, student-teachers were asked to write an argumentative composition relating to television commercials. The students were given a short written opening which describes two opposed standpoints towards television commercials and were asked to continue this introduction and relate to the different standpoints. The time allocated for the task was 30 minutes, yet students, especially non-native speakers of Hebrew, who needed more time for the completion of the task received up to 10 minutes more. The purpose of this phase was to assess the student-teachers' writing level and see if it correlates with their feedback practices.

(2) **Writing feedback on children compositions**. Two compositions, written by two 6th grade-students, were used in this phase. The first composition was an argumentative essay supporting and opposing TV content restriction as a means for reducing violence among youngsters. The second one was a narrative about a relationship with a pet. The student-teachers were asked to refer to the text as a first draft and write feedback to the writers who wrote the compositions as if they were their teachers and wanted to improve their writing.

(3) **A questionnaire**. The questionnaire included two questions about the teachers' role as writing facilitators, and three questions about writing feedback. The first two questions were as follows: Do you think your role as a teacher is to facilitate students' writing? Do you think you are qualified to facilitate student' writing? The other three questions related to the role and types of comments were: Do you think children benefit from comments on their writing? The fourth question introduced 18 types of comments on writing from which the students were asked to choose six most preferred (appendix A). The fifth question presented 11 descriptions of teachers' roles from which they were asked to choose the three most important ones (appendix B).

(4) **Interviews**. The purpose of the interview was to better understand the students' position when writing comments and their attitude towards their feedback. The interviews started with writing feedback on children's composition, followed by five questions: What needs improving in the composition? How can your feedback help the students in improving their writing? What do you know about the teaching of writing? What can teachers do

to promote the writing processes of their students? How can comments promote / demote writing abilities?

Procedure. Data gathering was conducted in the following order: composition writing, feedback writing on compositions and answering the questionnaires. This order was chosen because the questionnaire included a list of types of comments on compositions and teachers' roles in writing which could have affected the feedback on the composition. After giving their consent, 77 students wrote compositions, 66 answered a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of teaching of writing and teachers' role and 49 students wrote feedback on children's compositions as well. Ten additional students, who were not included in the former sample, agreed to be interviewed about their perceptions and feedback on writing. The interview included all the research tools and was accompanied by open-ended questions.

Data Analysis. The compositions of student-teachers were assessed by the researchers as having one of the three levels (low, medium or high) in four aspects: ideas, structure, vocabulary and grammar/usage. The compositions assessment was initially conducted by the three researchers together with the help of detailed rubrics describing each level. Thereafter, ten compositions were assessed separately to ensure reliability achieving high level of reliability (r=0.92) and afterwards the compositions were divided among the researchers for individual assessment. Data analysis addressed for each group separately in order to see if there are differences due to language level. Crosstabs of 77 compositions were analyzed on a three-level scale. Mean scores ranged from 1.87 to 2.22 with Hebrew-speaking students achieving significantly higher scores than students of HSL, on three factors:
- (1) structure (χ^2 =9.86, df=4, P< 0.05);
- (2) vocabulary (χ^2 =29.17, df=4, P< 0.01);
- (3) grammar and syntax (χ^2 =17.38, df = 4, P< 0.01);
- (4) and for the Holistic assessment (χ^2 =11.17, df=4, P< 0.05).

Analysis of Feedback Writing. Comments were divided into local and summative or global remarks: summative remarks are usually written at the end of the composition and are related to the text as a whole. Local remarks are written throughout the text relating to specific problems of the composition. Student-teachers' comments on the compositions were classified into 18 types according to the ones in the questionnaire (appendix A). The classification of comments was initially done by the three researchers together, thereafter, ten feedbacks on ten compositions were assessed by each researcher to ensure reliability of the classification, achieving a relatively high level of reliability (89% agreement), and only then were the student-teachers' feedback divided between the researchers.

Limitations of the Study. We are aware of two major limitations: (a) the use of only one text from two genres (an argumentative essay and a narrative) is a weakness of this study since it is possible that the characteristics of the particular text yielded specific comments and therefore does not enable making any inferences relating to genre. (b) In the feedback task, the student-teachers were not acquainted with the children who wrote the compositions. This may have reduced empathy to the writers' and affect their feedback. This limitation was reported in other studies examining preservice teachers' writing comments of anonymous school students (e.g. Furneaux, Paran, & Fairfax, 2007).

Results. The data analysis sought to examine student-teachers' perceptions of their role in writing and feedback writing and their comment type in two frequently-used genres;

Perceptions regarding the teaching of writing. In the questionnaire, with regards to the teacher's role- 3% responded that writing improvement is the role of language teachers only, and 97% responded that they perceive writing improvement as their role in all lessons where texts are written. When asked about the knowledge about writing- 55% responded they have some knowledge about the topic, 11% responded that they do not know how to do it, and 34% responded that they feel prepared for this role. A similar picture arouse in the interviews - seven out of ten interviewees reported that no course they studied dealt with feedback writing and that they do not know much about it, emphasizing their obligation as teachers: *"We are all educators; we need to teach students how to write an answer". "We need to know the difference between oral and written language and how to promote these capabilities in our school students ";* OR *"I am not a language teacher, but I need to know how to relate to the structure of written answers on every subject matter".* These explanations illustrate that they perceive their roles as writing facilitators although they are not language teachers.

Declared teachers' roles. Two teachers' roles were identified in the questionnaire as being most important: developing the students' confidence in their writing ability (62%;), and encouraging further rereading and rewriting of drafts (53%), both aimed at raising motivation for writing. Secondary roles included promoting the love of writing (35%), raising awareness to genre (33%) and improving language awareness (30%). The least-cited role was developing self-assessment by introducing criteria for good writing (26%).

Preferred feedback types. The most preferred feedback types were suggestions on text structure (65%), praising (55%), rephrasing wording problems (47%), posing questions about the purpose of writing (46%) and adding connecting sentences (44%). All other types of comments were chosen by less than 39% of student-teachers including spelling, suggestion of new ideas, request for clarifications and corrections of grammar.

Perceptions about the benefit of feedback. 13% think that students develop a negative attitude toward writing due to teachers feedback, 23% think that students ignore the feedback, 47% think that students use feedback to improve the specific text and 17% think that feedback can improve writing in general. Five (of 10) students said in the interviews that feedback may upset some students, especially weaker writers who gain less from the feedback and who might be discouraged to continue writing because of negative comments, saying: *"Now that I am looking at my comments again I think they do not encourage writing".* When criticizing their comments, the student-teachers said that they mainly lack specific examples, like: *"I wrote some praises but I am not sure that the comments are good; I should have demonstrated them";* OR *"I see that my comments will not help him. I should accompany my feedback with an example of a good composition".* When asked to reevaluate their feedback in the interview, students were critical on their feedback, questioning their impact on the writer. Five other students presented a positive attitude to their feedback, they described their feedback as useful since it was specific and included examples: *"I highlighted the place where the writer should begin a new paragraph, so she will have a mark to follow ";* OR *"I advised him to use a different word and gave him the correct one;* OR *"From my comments he would know how to rearrange his arguments".*
No significant difference was found between first and second language Hebrew speakers in their perceptions on feedback and on their role as prospective teachers.

Comment types frequently used by students. When writing feedback on children's writing, the student-teachers wrote more local comments than global, concluding comments. In this task, 577 comments were written by all students – 70% were local comments mostly on spelling and 30% were global-concluding comments mainly on text structure;
Table one shows that most used comments were on spelling and suggestions for improving text structure. Relatively, few comments were praising the writers (13%) and fewer related to content- general

requests to clarify information (4%) and questions about content (11%).

Table 1: Comment Types Used by the Student-Teachers

Local Remarks (402)		Global Remarks (175)	
(%)	Type of remarks used	(%)	Type of remarks used
37	Correcting spelling mistakes	37	Suggestions for improving text structure
12	Marking places in need of correction	15	Commenting on style
12	Rephrasing wording problems		
11	Questions about content	13	Praising the writing
8	Correcting grammar and syntax errors	10	Commenting on spelling mistakes
7	Commenting on style	6	Questions about content
4	Suggestions for improving text structure	4	Marking places (and commenting on them)
4	Requesting clarifications regarding information		
5	Other types of remarks	15	Other types of remarks

Hebrew-speaking students wrote significantly more comments (N=19, an average of 16.21 comments per student) than students for whom Hebrew is second language (Arabic-speaking students - N=20, $\overline{X}$ =8.75; others - N=7, $\overline{X}$ =11.57) (F=4.39, df =2, P< 0.05). Yet, regarding comment type, the use of comments was characteristic of both first and second language Hebrew speakers, with no correlation found to the students' level of writing.

Comments as related to Genre. Four phenomena regarding the genre of the feedbacks on compositions were found: (a) feedback on the argumentative essay related mainly to the text structure (37%) e.g.: "*You have to rearrange your ideas into a structure*" or "*You have to add some examples to your statements*"; (b) comments on the prominence of the writer's opinion were written mainly on the argumentative essay (40%): "*Do not state your opinion at the beginning of the essay*" or "*You were not asked to express your opinion*"; (c) feedback on the narrative focused extensively on style (12%) e.g.: "*try using formal language, not colloquial language*" or "*Do not use slang in your writing*"; (d) 15% of the student-teachers criticized the writer's expression of emotions in their feedback on the narrative: "*you are focusing too much on your feelings*" or "*try to focus on the plot and leave your emotions aside*".

Summary of results. Most of the student-teachers believe that promoting student writing is their role, they are prepared for the job, and that feedback is beneficial for development of writing. The majority of students claimed that their roles as writing teachers is to promote rewriting and self-confidence and chose praising as a preferred type of feedback, but in practice, corrections of the text itself (correcting spelling, wording or syntax and grammar errors) were the most common types of comments on the drafts with only a few praises used. On the other hand, while students chose suggestions regarding structure as a preferred comment type, they did write mostly comments on text structure. Also suggestions of new ideas, and request for clarifications which was less preferred type of comments matched their few comments on the content in their feedback.

Recurring comments tended to emotionally detach the writers from their text. In the argumentative essays students asked the writer to minimize the place of opinion or to avoid stating it altogether; in the narrative, the students asked the writer to "play down" the emotional expression. Finally, the interviews led us to believe that students are aware of how feedback may discourage writers, but that they do not have a solid understanding or comprehensive knowledge about how to write feedback so as to keep the writer motivated. These findings were found in both native and non-native speakers of Hebrew, and were not associated with the level of writing except for the number of comments which was related to language competency, a result which should be reexamined in further research.

Discussion

The most prominent finding of this study is a discrepancy between several stances involved in the act of writing feedback: There is a clear mismatch between how the student-teachers state their role as writing facilitators and rank the types of feedback by importance and the way they write comments on the compositions. We think our students see writing as a functional technical process rather than an expressive practice. Our students claim that teachers should develop students' self-confidence in their writing ability. Yet in practice, they mainly assume an editor's stance: they correct text structure and linguistic errors, do not tend to relate to the content of the essays, and are critical of expressive features in the texts, which can achieve the opposite of self-confidence in writing ability. These results matched Furneaux, Paran, & Fairfax, 2007 of EFL teachers from five different countries. The authors explain that "most teachers reacted as language teachers, rather than as readers of communication." Although the participants in this study were not language teachers, they were focused on direct-corrective feedback.

The inconsistency between perceptions and practices was reported in Lee (2009) pointing at ten recurring mismatches between expressed perceptions and feedback practices, three of which are prominent in our study: (1) "Teachers pay most attention to language form but they believe there's more to good writing than accuracy"(pg. 15); (2) "Teachers tend to correct and locate errors for students but believe that through teacher feedback students should learn to correct and locate their own errors" (pg. 16); (3)"Teachers respond mainly to weaknesses in student writing although they know that feedback should cover both strengths and weaknesses" (pg.17). Similarly, our student-teachers in this study perceive their role as to promote rewriting, but their feedbacks were mostly a corrective feedback, focusing on structure and linguistic weaknesses. These mismatches may have surfaced due to a perception of "the ideal text" which Ferris, (2007) pointed at one of the sources for the inconsistency between teachers' perceptions and practices. The notion that writers need to achieve an "ideal text" causes teachers to point at all the corrections they think they should work on and thus leave behind teachers' intentions to let writers find their own corrections, to motivate writers and to develop love of writing. This notion of "ideal text" can contradict the perception of writing as a prolonged developmental process and cause teachers to act as if every text of his/her students is an ending point of writing. In this case, it seemed that the task of writing comments was an ending point to the student-teachers and so adopting the "ideal text" stance was stronger.

This study taught us that writing feedback can act as self-assessment in two aspects:

a. The process of examining others' writing can reflect on one's own writing. Student-teachers did reflect on their own writing when they were asked to perform the tasks of this study. For example, repeated responses in the interview were: *"I too make similar mistakes","" I am not a good writer, how can I write feedback?"* We think that writing feedback on compositions written by children can strengthen a self-assessment process and may contribute to writing competency. Since feedback writing requires a level of awareness, cognitive and reflective thinking that enable examination and corrections while writing (Torrance & Galbraith, 2006), we expect writing feedback to strengthen the process of self-reflection on one's own writing and thus improve writing products. Nevertheless, this should be examined in a longitudinal intervention in teacher education.

b. Writing feedback can shape student-teachers perceptions of the writing process. If writing process is influenced from perceptions on the writing process as reported in the introduction, it might has the potential of starting a profound self-assessment process, which is highly recommended for higher education programs (Hill, Bronwen, Gilmore & Smith, 2010; Pounder, 2000; Straub, 2000;). In this study, half of the student-teachers confronted with their comments in the interviews, examined their assessment from a critical point of view. However, others avoided a critical stance, adopted a defensive stance in order to support their assessment. Our results showed an equal distribution of the two reactions, but this needs validation and regulation. But if one interview can cause student-teachers to reflect and criticize their feedbacks then this talk about feedback has a potential of a real dialogue which can reach and change their perceptions on writing feedback and writing process.

Since our student-teachers engage mainly in editing, we think that reflection on feedback can help teacher trainers to widen student-teachers' feedback to a formative and dialogic orientation. This reflection will expose the students to practices and perceptions they are unaware of and which they rarely experienced in school as children. The personal example set by their trainers, along with reflection on feedback, could help students develop a more expressive and process-oriented approach towards writing. The focus of writing in teacher education is usually on expository writing, while writing narratives is rarely done in teacher education, and introduction to children's expressive writing is also very limited. Since teachers' main role is to motivate writing in all types of genres, it is crucial they experience writing and writing assessment of various genres and writing levels. We therefore suggest, writing feedback to authentic stories and argumentative texts written by children in different ages as part of their field experience program. Analysis of these feedbacks can be used as a didactic and diagnostic tool in various stages of the teaching process and as a basis for dialogue with the student-teachers. Dialogue on their feedback on compositions with their educators, may help student-teachers develop a more expressive and process-oriented approach towards writing. This dialogue accompanied by real opportunities to interact with school-students' writing and to see the impact of their own feedbacks on writers, is probably the way to prepare student-teachers to their role as writing facilitators.

By the time we write this article a long-term intervention in the college's writing courses focused on writing feedback is conducted in order to learn more on student-teachers writing feedback practices and perceptions and to find ways to widen their feedback writing.

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Appendix A: Eighteen Types of comments (the fourth question in the questionnaire)
Choose six most important comments.
1. Questions about the objectives of writing;
2. Suggestion of new ideas;
3. Correction spelling mistakes;
4. Suggestions regarding text structure;
5. Request for clarifications on information (e.g. relevance of ideas or accuracy of definitions);
6. Marking places in need of correction
7. Rephrasing wording problems
8. Underlining or writing question marks next to spelling, syntax, or wording errors;
9. Commenting on style
10. Criticizing the writers' ideas or standpoints;
11. Grading or giving an evaluative comment;
12. Asking questions on content;
13. General global comments (on ideas, structure, language and style, etc.);
14. Correction of grammar and syntax errors;
15. Asking questions regarding the connection between ideas;
16. Adding connecting sentences between sentences and paragraphs;
17. Praising the writing;
18. Asking questions regarding text structure.

Appendix B: Roles of writing teachers (the fifth question in the questionnaire)
Choose three most important roles.
1. Encourage further rereading and rewriting of drafts;
2. Develop students' confidence in their writing ability;
3. Correct and improve the students' texts;
4. Increase attention to genre;
5. Raise awareness to the addressee of the text;
6. Encourage students to evaluate their writing from different points of view;
7. Promote the love of writing;
8. Develop self-assessment by introducing criteria for good writing;
9. Develop understanding of the expected level of writing;
10. Develop language awareness;
11. Serve as a model of writing to their students.

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T/W

Embracing a Productive Rhetorical Pragmatism: Teaching Writing as Democratic Deliberation

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"Put simply, joining youth literacy in common purpose means confronting political issues through reading and writing as these issues confront our communities." -- Django Paris

"[N]o pathology can be confronted if it remains in the shadows, if we don't find a way to make it visible" -- Tim Wise

Democratic Deliberation and the Problem of De-valuing Difference

Our current points of stasis in American politics make clear: we are facing a deep crisis of imagination in public life. Our (in)ability to imagine the interests and experiences of others limits not only how we understand domestic and global citizenship but also how we enact that citizenship with others. In talk and in practice, the inability to take seriously the interests and experiences of others leads Americans – in English Language Arts classrooms and in public life – to cast those who disagree as deeply flawed in character – unpatriotic, ungodly, lazy, irresponsible, or criminal. As we've seen on the Senate floor, casting disagreement as morally wrong brings democratic deliberation to a screeching halt. More disturbing, the suicides of gay youth across the nation, (Erdely) remind us that casting disagreement as immoral is a kind of annihilation that makes difference – and anyone who embodies difference – an enemy to be squashed.

I contend that many of the logics underlying this version of public life are perpetuated – among other places – in our writing pedagogy and praxis. When our writing pedagogies prize rhetoric as a critical/interpretive activity rather than a practical/productive activity (Gaonkar 340), we enact a skeptical[1] view of rhetoric and writing – one that is also skeptical of difference, conflict, and uncertainty. The hidden curriculum, thus, becomes one in which we aim at bracketing difference (Fraser; Flower) or villain-izing it; avoiding conflict or "bearing clubs" (Fish); preferring in-action in the face of uncertainty (Crick and Gabriel) or pretending to a certainty we cannot really predict (Flyvbjerg).

Here, my primary aim isn't to critique the current ways we've leveraged rhetoric within the humanities; rather, my goal is to instantiate a productive rhetoric – and thus, a productive writing praxis -- that doesn't relegate knowledge-building to disciplines that have enjoyed greater status, in part because of their stances toward uncertainty and difference[2]. More importantly, there is a real human need for us to teach writing "as a practical, intellectual activity aimed at clarifying problems, risks, and possibilities we face as humans and societies, and at contributing to social and political praxis" (Flyvjberg 4). After all, rhetoricians Nathan Crick and Joseph Gabriel remind us "it is within the actual lives of citizens that 'new problem situations can be perceived more sensitively'" (212). And these problems come when situational contexts change in such a way that "habitual behavior is disrupted and needs and desires are thwarted" (Crick and Gabriel 209), causing individuals to experience doubt in beliefs and "behavioral rules" (Habermas *Knowledge* 120). These disruptions are not, however, often so immediately and irrevocably catastrophic that they preclude all action or response or hope of remediation. Rather, Crick and Gabriel comfort us with the observation that, as in the case of climate change, disruptions are often slow and cumulative, "providing time necessary for public engagement" (Crick and Gabriel 212) even while requiring us to act and respond with partial knowledge "under constraints we cannot control and outcomes we cannot predict" (Clifton). This observation is also good news for the English Language Arts (ELA) writing classroom as these disruptions to a world that is "first and foremost a world we care about" (McGuire and Tuchanska 26) of necessity put us in a space of invention where our "doubt motivates efforts to find new beliefs that will re-stabilize the disturbed behavior" (Habermas *Knowledge* 120). If our writing classrooms are to again prioritize the work of rhetoric as a practical and productive art that matters in our lives, then context and judgment – both central to understanding and taking human action – must also be central to our writing pedagogy. More specifically, embracing uncertainty, difference, and conflict as inevitable and valuable components of context and judgment must be part of our pedagogical work to foster invention for real-world writing that aims at getting something done. This is a shift equally concerned with outcomes and with justice.[3]

In part, this shift questions how we represent and teach rhetoric and writing. Rhetorician Linda Flower notes that "[t]he most fundamental question to ask about one's composition paradigm is, what is it actually teaching students to do?" (78). Most K-12 writing pedagogy[4] and training for writing teachers have primarily followed one of two paradigms: 1) an expressivist paradigm, recognizing students as writers who need "the safe houses and the tools with which to *speak up* – to discover and express themselves, their personal and cultural identities" (78) or 2) a paradigm derived from literary and cultural studies, tooling students with literate practices of deconstruction and ideological critique that "allowed them to *speak against something*" (78). Thus, much of our writing pedagogy positions us and our students to be more aware of, more attuned to, difference and to the "others" of our societies by preparing students to speak up in isolation or critique. They do not learn – and we do not teach – the ways writing might support *speaking for* something and *speaking with* others (Flower).

American pragmatists, public spheres theorists, rhetoricians, and community literacy scholars would have us fashion the writing classroom as one that thrives on difference and one that celebrates the context-dependent work of interrogating and constructing local values as well as actions that stem from those values. This piece asks, *What features of writing pedagogy would structure viable alternatives to rhetorical skepticism*? In response, I will describe practices and tools I drew on to cast writing and rhetoric as practical, productive arts first in a course, Hip Hop and the Teaching of English, and later in composition classes. Before we turn our attention to features of a productive writing pedagogy, it is important for us to consider what is at stake with skeptical views of rhetoric that disrupt public life and limit the public work of writing.

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1   I am drawing on Robert Danisch's understanding of "skeptical" as a cynicism toward others that erodes confidence in a positive democratic project. Sometimes skepticism can be masked as neoliberal "niceness" or as "civility," bracketing or colonizing difference and reifying doer/done-to relations. For more about this, see Long, Fye, and Jarvis "Gambian-American College Writers Flip the Script on Aid-to-Africa Discourse." See also Long, et al.'s "Charting Intercultural Inquiry: Cartography for Local Public Transformation" about how the trope of "service" perpetuates a skeptical rhetoric in the university-community partnerships.
2   Readers interested in disciplinary status of humanities and social sciences in the age of science wars can see Bent Flyvberg's work *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again* and Dorothy Nelkin's article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "What Are the Science Wars Really About?"

3   As we increasingly grow to see "the interconnectedness of the human environment" through natural calamities, "it becomes less and less persuasive to advocate for policies that help one's home at the expense of one's neighbor" (Crick and Gabriel 220). A shift, then, toward seeking the common good in the face of inevitable conflict and uncertainty must develop at least out of necessity, if not out of a sense of justice (Crick and Gabriel 220).
4   Despite theoretical shifts including sociocultural approaches to literacies, multimodal composing, and multilingual composing, much classroom pedagogy still centers on pedagogies of the 50s, 60s, and 70s including themed writing, five-paragraph essays, current traditional arguments, and expressivist writing.

Rhetoric as a Practical, Productive Art

Deliberation[5] invites participants to see themselves as securers of their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of the community as they work together to construct community action and community standards (Danisch 409). Within this context where citizens are concerned both with material outcomes and with each other's well-being, rhetorical education trains citizens 1) to make public claims, 2) to dialogue together with others who are also making (possibly conflicting) public claims, and 3) to make wise decisions under difficult circumstances with knowledge that is always limited. In these contexts, rhetoric-as-critique (speaking against) and rhetoric-as-expression[6] (speaking up) are not enough either to motivate engagement in difficult dialogues or to tool citizens in ways that enable them to invent alternative futures together (Atwill). However, "a productive rhetorical pragmatism would show a student […] both how to engage in positive political projects *and* why it is a virtue to do so" (Danisch 412). Further, productive rhetorical pragmatism aims to equip *all citizens* with rhetorical abilities to make public claims, deliberate across difference, and determine wise courses of action in difficult times (Danisch 412). This version of rhetoric is centered on discovery and change and has in view both internal and external aims for all participants. As Flower reminds us:

> Discovery starts with the articulation of difference. It leads to deliberation (unlike agonistic debate) that enjoins all its participants to act as partners in inquiry, to take on the difficult role of collaborative problem-solvers. That is, to be responsible for understanding the images of others in order to build a new negotiated meaning, workable options, and a resolution marked by justice. (40)

Our secondary ELA writing pedagogy needs to embrace uncertainty, conflict, and difference as essential and valuable resources for teaching writing as democratic deliberation concerned with discovering and enacting "workable options" and more just ways of relating.

A Skeptical View of Rhetoric

Rhetoric-as-critique and rhetoric-as-justification most often take up work that is excessively skeptical because they see deconstruction or self-interested expression as ends in themselves. Conflating the means with the ends positions rhetors in isolation and without any kind of positive political project (Danisch 412). However, these stances *can* be performed in ways that have in mind a productive rhetorical pragmatism. For example, Linda Holmes struck that stance in her article "Lance Armstrong and the Cheapening of Indignation" in which she critiques "the incredulity, the almost weaponized indignation that [Armstrong] mustered in insisting he was being falsely accused." However, her critique is not merely a deconstruction of Armstrong's indignation. Her primary concern is that by falsely and emphatically "co-opting the language of innocence" Armstrong has tainted a discursive tool we need for dialogue across difference (Holmes). She notes that in our deliberation together, "we *need* indignation. We need people to be able to say something isn't true when it isn't true, and we need *something* they are entitled to employ in their defense." Holmes implies that there is some productive work we're up to together that often engages conflict and that needs tools for engaging difference and conflict productively. Further, she implies that our work together is dependent on stranger-sociability that is, to some degree, trustworthy and reliable.

Where productive rhetorical pragmatism positions a rhetor as someone in dialogue *with others* and as someone who must venture some course of action, some positive endeavor to take up, rhetoric-as-critique positions a rhetor *as critic,* as a skeptic whose role and status and engagement is always *against* and rhetoric-as-justification positions the rhetor as someone resistant to dialogue, in part, because the rhetor is resistant to having his/her own mind changed. Both views invoke a stance for the rhetor that is aggressive or indifferent toward others and sedimented in his/her own beliefs. These skeptical views make the work of rhetoric about uncovering, deconstructing, critiquing, or shoring up but not about discovering, deliberating, deciding, listening, constructing, rivaling, inquiring, producing, or transforming. Both of these skeptical views of rhetoric are, thus, deeply dismissive of the logics, goals, training, and tools underlying a rhetorical education. The very nature of this version of "dialogue" shuts down inquiry as rhetors enacting these perspectives are seeking to justify what was previously stable or previously normative or seeking to destabilize and queer the normative but without ever venturing to re-stabilize. Neither stance moves toward invention in the midst of uncertainty, which is at the heart of rhetorical pragmatism (Flower; Long; Clifton; Flyvjberg).

By implication, these skeptical views of rhetoric, so prevalent in representations of public life, infuse our writing pedagogy and render writing-as-engagement anemic when our writing curriculum is not attuned to inquiry, justice, and deliberation. Considering the ways our ELA writing pedagogy scaffolds self-other relations and the public work of writing can help us recognize skeptical rhetoric and suggest what makes this terrain such a complex geography to navigate. We can know we're in the midst of a writing curriculum infused with skeptical rhetoric when it is…:

… bent on critique and deconstruction. The classic debate, an instructional mainstay in the English classroom, has *potential* to generate dialogue and aid participants in arriving at new understandings, but typically serves to further isolate participants from those taking an alternative stance. Literacy scholar Bob Fecho reminds us:

> […] a debate is mostly about destruction. Debaters listen to the other team, not necessarily to learn from them, but, instead, to dispute, refute, and ultimately defeat their argument. Instead of ideas comingling and transacting, a debate proclaims a winner and a loser. But, as Bakhtin suggests, vanquishing the opponent also vanquishes the dialogue. (17)

The issue debate is often part of a larger unit related to teaching argumentative writing. The underlying goal is for students to learn to create an airtight argument that is impervious to the ideas of others. Rather than teaching argumentative writing that puts perspectives *in dialogue* with one another, this pedagogical practice often underscores a skepticism toward others' ideas, seeing them as targets to be shot down.[7]

… focuses on generalizable ends[8]. Deliberation that remains hypothetical or philosophical fosters "a version of skepticism that remains distant from the goals of rhetorical pragmatism, which considers "how particular cases, not general issues, can be dealt with effectively" (Danisch 413). We deliberate not simply because we disagree but rather because some experience has disrupted our sense of stability to such a degree that we are compelled into inquiry and action (Crick and Gabriel 209). Deliberation is not about all possible scenarios but about *this* particular one that we are facing *now*, and we need the grounded details of lived

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5   Protagoras's claim that "man is the measure of all things" (Danisch 409) underpins a) a perspective on democracy: every citizen shares in respect and justice; "otherwise the state could not exist" (Protagoras 323a) and b) a perspective on deliberation: the process of deliberating over ideas and values held within a community enables a community both to determine and understand what is good or bad, right or wrong and also to develop respect and bonds between and among citizens.

6   Speaking up often takes the form of expressivism, in which we teach poetry or memoir, or it takes the form of justification in which we teach critical-rational argument and advocacy. The first version leans towards naïvete, the second towards cynicism. Both foster a kind of isolation, and neither require engagement with others.

7   Activities like the issue debate and tasks like isolated argumentative writing have profound implications for self-other norms in our classrooms and in other public spheres. Taking up Flower's question of what our compositions are actually teaching students to do, we might consider the deep consequences of our language curriculum if in ELA classes, where students are perhaps most explicitly taught our academic and democratic ways with words (Heath), we teach young people that they must choose one of only two possible sides, that those "sides" already exist and cannot be shaped (especially by those who disagree), and that they will lose if they consider or give any credence to someone else's ideas or experiences. Struggling over issues often becomes mere academic exercise for students, a discursive task to defend one perspective and undercut another. Since students are often assigned a "side" to argue, they learn that truth is so relative that it does not matter which side you take and this version of deliberation requires students to be far more committed to a discursive task than to their own ethics.

8   This is part of a larger difficulty with the colonization of social sciences by natural sciences. For more about re-claiming the social sciences, see Flyvjberg *Making Social Science Matter* and *Applied Phronesis*. For more about misunderstandings and oversimplifications about the nature of the case study, see Flyvjberg "Case Study." Here I aim only to put this practice of valuing general theoretical knowledge or tenets in conversation with rhetorical pragmatism that aims to show "how particular cases, not general issues, can be dealt with effectively" (Danisch 413).

experiences "if we are going to deliberate with the fullest range of facts available to us" (Lauritzen 24).[9] Concrete cases are valuable precisely because "it is within the actual lives of citizens that 'new problem situations can be perceived more sensitively'" (Habermas *Between* 307-308); because they "make others participate" as Primo Levi puts it, in the life-world disturbances of distant others; and because it is among the constraints and affordances of these problem situations that we navigate our lived lives.[10]

… invokes an isolated or self-referential view of self-other relations. Where our writing pedagogy engages contentious issues, we often teach a skeptical rhetoric "of self-interest advocacy (in which I don't need to listen to you)" or "of expressive argument (in which you cannot challenge me because this is "my opinion")" (Flower 35). Each of these approaches maintains what Martin Buber calls "I/It" relations between people and are skeptical of rhetoric or writing to construct "I/Thou" relations or to do any real democratic or deliberative work in the face of difference. Even where our ELA pedagogy attempts to construct an ethic of care by making space for the expression of concrete cases or life narratives, our best efforts often invoke a privileged empathy that reifies doer/done-to relations (Flower) characteristic of one-directional encounters (Long). But as Flower reminds us, "coming with goodwill and a friendly smile and a desire for personal relationship" (Flower 54) does not guarantee genuine dialogue or transformed understanding in the face of social, cultural, racial, and economic difference. And, perhaps more to the point, communicative democracy does not aim to erase painful and contested histories and roles nor to achieve "mutual identification [in which people] have transcended what differentiates and divides them and now have the same meaning or beliefs or principles" (Young 127).

… is skeptical of difference. A skeptical view of rhetoric treats difference – and by extension, conflict – as an obstacle to be overcome or avoided. Even more just efforts that enjoin others to find "common ground" or "look at it from someone else's perspective" or "walk in someone else's shoes"[11] are problematic when a one-off "rough and ready appeal" becomes systemized into a pattern of thinking about difference and conflict (Young 38). These approaches assume that the "perspectives of the self and other are reversible" (Young 38) and that we can (and should) somehow collapse differences, experiences, and the particularities of our lives. Drawing on Iris Marion Young's communicative theory of moral respect, a productive rhetoric would "distinguish between taking the perspective of other people into account, on the one hand, and imaginatively taking their positions, on the other hand. Through dialogue people can sometimes understand each other across difference *without* reversing perspectives or identifying with each other" (Young 39, emphasis added).

… is skeptical of conflict. Writing pedagogies that are skeptical of conflict are often uncomfortable with tension and doubtful that conflict can achieve anything productive. In ELA classrooms, teachers sometimes speak of avoiding topics that are "inappropriate" or "too emotional" or "too controversial" and of trying to create "safe" and "nonthreatening" classroom environments. These values are often associated with upholding a more democratic ideal in the classroom. And yet, a productive rhetoric that fosters democratic deliberation

across difference accepts discursive conflict among ideas and is willing to engage "areas of deep, irreconcilable disagreement" (Flower 34). Paulo Freire notes that educators should never confuse the dialogue necessary for critical intercultural inquiry with one that creates "a vacuous feel-good comfort zone" (Flower 34). Rather than avoiding conflict over uncomfortable differences that might scrutinize the status quo, threaten self-denial[12] (Fecho 74), or expose patterned treatment of oppressed people (Leonardo 42), deliberative democracy puts interpretations and uncomfortable differences on the table and up for discussion. Difference and conflict are seen as valuable and productive parts of intercultural inquiry that aims for resolutions but resists unquestioned consensus and easy assent. A productive rhetoric recognizes that "genuinely diverse points of view are essential to understanding a problem, even though the price of difference is tension and substantive conflict" (Flower 34).

… is skeptical of uncertainty. Writing pedagogy that is skeptical of uncertainty often either leans prematurely toward a false stability or backs away from taking action altogether, or at least "until we know more." A skeptical rhetoric sees action as a last resort or considers that a course of action will be self-evident *if* any action should be taken. But a productive rhetoric re-casts action as something that *must* be done despite uncertainty over what should be done[13]. A productive rhetorical pragmatism recognizes "that in the face of shared 'imperfection marked by urgency,' something must be done" (Crick and Gabriel 202). Rhetors venture into deliberation and action knowing that final determinations are impossible because our knowledge is always partial and perspectival, our choices imperfect, and outcomes elusive[14]. Rhetorical pragmatism aims to cultivate "practical wisdom" in the face of uncertainty by teaching students how to draw on available, imperfect knowledge to venture wise action for the betterment of the community. But this is never a done deal. Rhetorical pragmatism also keeps us responsive in real time to the test of outcomes (Flower 90), a posture that thrusts us back into uncertainty and, thus, back into deliberation, theory-building, and action (Clifton 228).

… offers a limited view of what rhetoric and writing are good for in public life. A skeptical view of rhetoric is skeptical of rhetoric's capacity to change minds. In part, this is because a skepticism of rhetoric is closely linked to the other skepticisms I've outlined. "At least two dynamics thwart genuine public deliberation and seriously impede subordinated groups' attempts to argue persuasively about issues that concern them" (Higgins and Brush 694): Despite democracy's claim of widespread public participation, 1) subordinated groups are often not perceived as "expert" enough to contribute anything valuable to public dialogue[15], and 2) expert discourses often dismiss subordinated groups as incapable rhetors (694). Productive rhetorical pragmatism sees this intersection where private lives and public agendas merge as precisely where we ought to locate the work of writing and rhetorical education in the public realm (Higgins, Flower, Long).

Instantiating a Productive Writing Pedagogy: Designing Dialogue Across Difference

In the fall of 2010 when anti-immigration legislation in Arizona was making national headlines, I was teaching an upper-level special topics course I had recently designed and pitched to my department, Hip Hop and the Teaching of English[16]. Twenty-five pre-service English teachers and I sought to ground our conversations around curricula to concerns raised by local issues circulating in the news. In our talk together,

9   Ethicist Martha Nussbaum argued for greater attention to fictional narrative in public policy decisions. Paul Lauritzen observes that her point also holds with regard to "experiential narratives that foster emotional engagement with distant others" (22). It is the specific cases of experiential narratives – the details of lived experience – that have the ability to "implicate" readers and draw them out of the "narcissistic enclosure of the ego," something propositions and critical-rational arguments often fail to do (Kearny 43).

10   For more on rhetorical problem-solving as a stochastic art, see Clifton "Mastery, Failure, and Community Outreach as a Stochastic Art: Lessons Learned With the Sudanese Diaspora in Phoenix." For more on the inadequacies of focusing writing and rhetoric on generalizable ends, see Flyvbjerg's *Making Social Science Matter*, where he describes the fallacious logics of a critical-rational perspective. Flyvbjerg explains that general principles and platitudes are inadequate both for comprehending the total spectrum of human activities and for becoming expert rhetors and virtuoso social actors (Flyvjberg 22). Further, he observes that "the rationalist perspective focuses on those properties of human activity by which humans most resemble machines or Weberian bureaucrats: rule-based deliberation based on formal logic" (22). While logic and analysis are important, this model *exaggerates* the importance of rationality and analysis, "allowing them to dominate our view of human activity: so much so that other equally important modes of human understanding and behavior are made invisible" (23). To transcend the "insufficient rational perspective", we also need "context, judgment, practice, trial and error, experience, common sense, intuition, and bodily sensation" (23). These only come to us through experience with concrete cases. Generalizable rules are inadequate in the face of contingency and uncertainty, the very domains in which rhetorical pragmatism – and the events of our lives – demand we take intelligent action. Specific case knowledge is, thus, crucial "to control and order the decision-making process so that contingency, uncertainty, and probability did not prevent action" (Crick and Gabriel).

11   Readers interested in the limitations of these common tropes can turn to Iris Marion Young's work on asymmetrical reciprocity.

12   For more on "threat" see Fecho "Why are You Doing This" in *Is this English?* Readers might also be interested in related concepts of "wobble" and "water-pistol transactions" in his book *Teaching for the Students: Habits of Heart, Mind, and Practice in the Engaged Classroom.* Fecho argues for the importance of shifting paradigms about learning: rather than focusing on "safety from…" some pending danger, we might consider how to foster a sense of "safety to…" venture into spaces of uncertainty.

13   Uncertainty is not a trump card to preclude action or deliberation. Crick and Gabriel recount an interaction between climatologists in which one scientist observes, "To do nothing when the situation is changing very rapidly is not a conservative thing to do" (201).

14   For more on venturing wise action in spaces of uncertainty, see Linda Flower's work about working theories; Janet Atwill's work about invention; Elenore Long's work about techne; and Jennifer Clifton's work about rhetoric as a stochastic art.

15   Readers interested in thinking about versions of public dialogue might consult Linda Flower's book *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement* and Elenore Long's book *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics.*

16   Thanks to David Kirkland, whose syllabus fueled my thinking about the design of the special topics course, Hip Hop and the Teaching of English.

the limitations of our current models of writing and of deliberation – models infused with a skeptical rhetoric -- were, in many ways, sticking points that were as perplexing as the contested issues we discussed in class. However, my purpose in this piece isn't to narrate the particular ways any of us engaged in a skeptical rhetoric; rather, here I'll turn our attention to inventive practices for instantiating a productive rhetoric in secondary English classrooms (Danisch). After all, productive rhetorical pragmatism would have us understand limitations as places of invention where we re-make borders and construct action-possibilities for alternative paths with alternative futures (Atwill). Thus, here I return to the central question of this article: *What features of writing pedagogy would structure viable alternatives to rhetorical skepticism*?

The next section outlines features of a writing pedagogy grounded in productive rhetoric and describes practices and tools teachers might draw on to design writing classrooms as spaces for productive and pragmatic dialogue across difference:

1. Framing a Problem Space Around Life-World Disturbances

2. Listening for Life-World Disturbances

3. Mapping Situated Accounts: Unpacking Self-Other Relations

4. Generating and Testing Grounded Possibilities

Framing a Problem Space Around Life-World Disturbances. Because even issues gaining national headlines can remain in the shadows locally[17] and because controversies arise from "life-world disturbances," (Habermas *Between* 160), a productive rhetoric attuned to disturbances that might warrant more public attention would fashion writing as a "contex[t] of discovery[18]" (Crick and Gabriel 212) where young people might identify and dramatize new problem situations that arise in their everyday lives. However, framing a problem space as a "context of discovery" is not merely a matter of centering curriculum on conceptual themes. Instead, we need to frame a problem space that young people will find relevant, important, and compelling: our problem-posing needs teeth[19].

In the Hip Hop class, I designed our early conversations to address the deep and painful ironies that Hip Hop culture turns on. Bakari Kitwana frames it this way: "hip-hoppers are disillusioned, in part, because of persisting segregation in an America that preaches democracy and inclusion" (13). I sought to move our talk from sweeping generalities about race relations to situated accounts "of violated interests and threatened identities… first experienced as pressing problems" (Habermas *Between* 351).

In September 2010, the Drug Enforcement Agency in Atlanta put out an ad seeking "Ebonics" translators (Bluestein). Our class viewed a news segment featuring linguist H. Samy Alim who explained the ways insider language among drug dealers and gangs might or might not correspond with the grammar of Black English. Alim also talked about the racism inherent in a government that would not name Black English a language in order to educate Black youth but would name it a language in order to incarcerate them. After hearing the news segment and the interview with Alim, students – even White[20] male students – were outraged at the hypocrisy of

the DEA officials, finding points of empathy with African Americans and also claiming moral high-ground over government officials they presumed to be much older. Next, we read a blog post co-authored by Alim and Imani Perry in which they were more explicit and direct about the racist ideas underneath the DEA's recent decision, and we talked more about the Oakland "Ebonics" controversy.

Drawing on bell hooks' argument that hip hop can construct "empathy-ties" and "shared sensibilities" (28) that cross boundaries of race, class, and gender, I asked students to connect concerns over Black English in public life to Arizona's legislation regarding local languages and cultures. I projected the following paragraph on the screen:

> In April 2010, the Arizona Legislature passed SB1070, which makes it a state crime to be undocumented and requires police to check for documents if they have "reasonable suspicion" a person is in Arizona without such documents. Weeks later, HB2281 was signed into law, banning ethnic studies in K-12 schools. A law is currently being written that would deny U.S. citizenship to children born in Arizona of undocumented parents. In addition, the State Department of Education has introduced the English Fluency Initiative, banning teachers with "heavily accented" English from working with English Language Learners. English Only classes have been mandated for English as a Second Language learners. (excerpt from Django Paris' AERA 2011 proposal)

Another White young woman said, "Okay, maybe that happens here [in Arizona] but not at ASU." An African American young woman responded with her own experience at ASU:

> Everywhere here is segregated. You can see it in the cafeteria. All the Black people sit together; there's nowhere else for us to sit. Even the professors here know it. Before school starts in the fall, the African American faculty pull all the Black students together and warn us that we're more visible here. We stick out and teachers will notice us more. [They tell us to] sit in the front of the classroom, be on time, dress conservatively, speak up in class. Other [White] students can get by without doing those things 'cause they blend in. Not us.

The same White young woman replied definitively as if to end the conversation, "No, there's no segregation." And the class grew quiet. Her response worked in that moment to silence the local knowledge and experience of the African American young woman who had just spoken. I asked other students what that they thought about what had just been said by these two young women. No one spoke. I turned on the moment and asked students, "So, what do we do in spaces where one person's local knowledge is laid side-by-side with someone else's?" Then I asked students to write down their responses and reactions.

In dialogue around life-world disturbances, where divergent experiences come into contact with each other, we often enact familiar but unproductive stances. Certainly performing dominance that silences others is one unproductive stance, but so are stances where we "agree to disagree," invoke "common ground" (Young), or focus on "personalistic concerns over how [we] are perceived as individuals" (Leonardo 40)[21]. Rather than closing down these conflicted moments or competing narratives of life-world disturbances, a productive writing pedagogy would have us instead open up these controversies as spaces of intercultural inquiry.

Listening for Life-World Disturbances. To scaffold deliberation capable of more just self-other relations as well as material outcomes, in the Hip Hop class I began to call on and design tools and practices that could help us engage with each other across difference without dismissing experiences and perspectives that rival our

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17   Despite Arizona's anti-immigration legislation garnering national attention and heated criticism and despite the National Council of Teachers of English pulling out of its contract to hold its annual convention in the city of Phoenix, white pre-service teachers in my Hip Hop course claimed, "That [discrimination, racism] doesn't happen anymore. Maybe in the South but not here."

18   For more about public listening for life-world disturbances, see Clifton, Long, and Roen "Accessing Private Knowledge for Public Conversations: Attending to Shared, Yet-to-be-Public Concerns in the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing DALN Interviews." *Stories That Speak to Us: Exhibits from the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives.* Ed. H. Lewis Ulman, Scott Lloyd DeWitt, & Cynthia L. Selfe. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital Press, 2012. Web.

19   A productive rhetorical pragmatism calls us as writing teachers to create some context in which student-writers might begin to do the real work of constructing a positive democratic project – one in which they are *speaking for* something and *speaking with* others. In part, our work as writing teachers becomes about bringing young people into conversation with issues that confront our local communities. But that is not as easy or simple as it might sound. We can, however, build some terrain to explore.

20   Throughout this piece I capitalize "White" to make visible an identity construct that is often rendered invisible. Here, I draw attention to

the construct as a way of calling its normalizing effect into question and as a way of putting Whiteness-as-difference into conversation with other markers and performances of difference.

21   For more about unproductive stances, see Clifton's work on *dismissive moves* – rhetorical performances that dismiss others' situated expertise and shut down dialogue.

own. One practice I introduced was listening for the *critical incident* (Flanagan).[22] Higgins, Long, and Flower describe the critical incident as a resource for subsequent joint inquiry among people who otherwise have few occasions to listen and to learn from one another.[23]

In listening for narratives of life-world disturbances, we attempted to hear where the private, localized knowledge of an individual or group might be reflective of or indicative of a more public issue of shared concern. Part of the test of a critical incident is its ability to elicit resonance with a listener, to evoke meaningful response, stir a relevant memory, or connect to another's prior knowledge, experience, or understanding in some way. Thus, when we listened for critical incidents, we listened for the places where someone else's story gained traction or raised tensions with our own or with someone else's story we've heard. In the Hip Hop class, I began by modeling ways of listening for and then using writing to construct critical incidents[24] within and across texts.

For example, we read "Gonna Work It Out: Peace and Rebellion in Los Angeles" a chapter in the iconic Hip Hop text *Can't Stop, Won't Stop* in which Jeff Chang offers a journalistic account of the days leading up to and including the Rodney King trial and subsequent L.A. riots of 1992. From Chang's text, I pieced together an excerpt:

"Daude Sherrills added a Unified Black Community Code, a code of conduct for gang members. It began, 'I accept the duty to honor, uphold and defend the spirit of the red, blue and purple, to teach the black family its legacy and protracted struggle for freedom and justice.' It warned against alcohol and drug abuse and use of the 'N-word and B-word,' and even laid down rules of etiquette for flagging and sign-throwing. It called for literacy, school attendance, voter registration programs for community investment…

"Against all odds, they had built an infrastructure of communication for peace. But for peace to last, it would take more than talk. There would need to be jobs, services, and support. So on April 28, as the party went down at Nickerson Gardens, the peacemakers marched with 250 Crips and Bloods from seven different neighborhoods to City Hall to announce the truce at a Los Angeles City Council meeting.

"'We made a presentation to the City Council, telling them that we was coming together to bring an end to all the violence in the 'hood,' says Aqeela. 'We told them we would like to have access to funding.'

"But Council members didn't exactly jump out of their chairs. One suggested applying for a $500 grant, Aqeela recalls, 'And they were like, 'Thank you very much,' and ushered us out of there as quickly as they possibly could.'" (Chang 366-68)

Students and I later wrote critical incidents based on our own experiences, and we drew on these as case studies for in-class deliberation where we could together unpack self-other relations and consider alternative options and outcomes for a given situation.

Mapping Situated Accounts: Unpacking Self-Other Relations. To scaffold in-class deliberation capable of moving beyond our scripted ways of relating and thinking, I asked students to do a kind of discursive mapping of critical incidents so they could come to see the ways different people were positioning themselves and others. I asked students to name the different stakeholders involved, to name what each might be protecting, to consider what each might be gaining or losing in a given situation, to critique the stance each took, to imagine alternative ways of being in a given moment, and to rival possible alternative options and outcomes. For example, after reading "Gangs and Their Walls" from Ralph Cintron's *Angel's Town*, we looked more carefully at interactions (involving Christians, Mothers Against Gangs, a local resident whose screen door was destroyed, the editor of the local newspaper, the police, and the mayor) related to a gang's funeral ceremony making headlines and prompting readers to write letters to the editor. In groups, students discussed and created text around the following prompts:

Prompt #1
Discuss the newspaper's coverage of the gang's funeral ceremony and the letters that followed in response. Then create a visual that represents the different perspectives represented and what you imagine their story-behind-the-story to be….

Cintron 187: What are your thoughts about the gang funeral ceremony being featured in the newspaper and the ways different groups responded? What is at stake in each of these responses – what are people protecting? What are they trying to gain or afraid of losing (or have already lost)? Where is the emotion in their language coming from? For Christians? For Mothers Against Gangs? For writer whose screen door was destroyed? For the newspaper? For gang members? For the police? For the mayor?

Prompt #2
What are some possible critiques of the conventional views in the letters in the newspapers (Cintron)? ***Create a list of possible critiques of* and *alternative responses to the letters by Mothers Against Gangs, Christians, the writer whose screen door was destroyed, the police, the newspaper.***

Generating and Testing Grounded Possibilities. With more robust understandings of a complex situation, we could then deliberate to consider action-able options. For example, later we returned to the critical incident involving L.A. gangs and city council members. I asked students to work in groups to imagine alternative responses for both groups:

How might Council members have experienced this scene? How might gang members have experienced this? What alternative options for the Council members can you imagine? What alternative options for the gang members can you imagine? **Create several *What if… then…* statements for Council members' possible responses and several for gang members' possible responses.**

Despite explicit directions to consider alternative options for council members and to generate a list of options and outcomes in the form of *If… Then…*[25] statements, groups only named alternative options and *If… Then* statements for gang members. They laid all the responsibility on the gangs: "They shouldn't have worn colors. They shouldn't have marched down there. They shouldn't have come in such numbers. They scared the Council." The groups seemed unaware that they had put all the responsibility on the gangs until I pointed out that they had not assigned any responsibility to the Council. The conversation stalled. I asked, "The Council has

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22   For more on listening for three kinds of critical incidents, see Clifton, Long, and Roen "Accessing Private Knowledge for Public Conver-sations: Attending to Shared, Yet-to-be-Public Concerns in the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing DALN Interviews." *Stories That Speak to Us: Exhibits from the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives.* Ed. H. Lewis Ulman, Scott Lloyd DeWitt, & Cynthia L. Selfe. Logan, UT: Computers and Composi-tion Digital Press, 2012. Web.

23   Narratives that elaborate on stakeholders' reasoning, social positioning, and life contexts generate new information and propel discus-sion that can move people beyond personal expression to public problem solving. When narrative is elaborated in this way and focused around the causes of and responses to problems, it can be used for case analysis. […] In the context of community-based deliberative inquiry, critical incidents elicit carefully contextualized accounts of how people actually experience problems involving, for instance, landlord-tenant relations, gang violence, school suspension policies, or welfare reform. (Higgins, Long, and Flower 21)

24   For other examples, readers can email me at cliftonj@missouri.edu

no responsibility in this? Apply for a grant? That was their only and best course of action in this moment?"[26] I asked students to keep working in their groups. Students could then do the work of imagining alternatives but still largely voiced that the responsibility lay with the gang members. I offer these as examples of the kind of work that was typical of how we spent part of each class learning to have critical deliberative conversations and to imagine alternatives to scripted ways of being.

Threaded throughout these four practices is a perspective that values difference and sees uncertainty and conflict as necessary and potentially generative. A productive writing pedagogy would have us see limitations – in our ways of relating, in the practices and policies of our institutions, in our understandings of complex issues – as fulcrums on which to launch inquiry and invention. Rather than avoiding spaces of difficulty in the name of "safety," a writing pedagogy grounded in productive rhetoric would have us construct intersections that allow us – through deliberation – to step into the limitations we experience in, out, and among institutions. For example, we might consider readings and tensions related to capitalism, creativity, and the commons; or authority, futures, and care; or movement, capitalism, and kinship. In these intersections, where we experience violated interests and hope deferred, we can leverage writing to do significant work in the life of local publics where we perform "actually existing democracy" (Fraser). In the face of shared felt difficulties, a productive writing pedagogy in ELA classrooms would use writing in the service of productive pragmatism to…

   … *re-see a situation or a rhetor*

   … *make the personal, shared*

   … *construct shared concerns*

   … *construct more complex understandings of localized issues*

   … *engage others' ideas and experiences*

   … *network arguments*[27] *in, out, and among institutions*

   … *create public forums*

   … *listen across difference*

   … *analyze, evaluate, imagine/invent alternatives*

   … *generate public dialogue*

   … *construct intercultural inquiry*

   … *engage in productive problem-solving*

   … *construct wise action in uncertain circumstances*

For example, in a subsequent class more directly focused on teaching writing at the intersection of capitalism, creativity, and the commons, one student used his writing to *construct wise action in uncertain circumstances* by articulating and testing a personal business ethic with a high-level outreach coordinator for an international outdoor clothing company. Another student drew on writing to *construct intercultural inquiry* in her workplace that would open up job-site conversations about workplace policies related to social media and employees' private lives. Another student called on writing to *listen across difference* and to *construct more complex understandings of localized issues* related to unjust treatment of low-wage workers at job sites that frequently hire students and immigrants. The productive writing projects students pursued emerged from our in-class deliberation and often lead students to invite people they knew in their lives outside of class into inquiry and dialogue concerned with more just relations and material outcomes.

A Productive Writing Pedagogy: *"So, What Do We Do?"*

Productive rhetorical pragmatism would have us engage in democratic deliberation when we feel the weight of the problems we pose – when we feel real angst over the way things are and recognize that our simple answers and scripted sound bites don't do justice to the complexity of the issue and don't offer viable options for moving forward. If our writing pedagogy is to call students into dialogue across difference, calling attention to situations where we experience doubt must be part of the work and discourse of the classroom. Engaging life-world disturbances requires listening for, documenting, and putting up for dialogue "situational conditions [where] habitual behavior is disrupted and needs and desires are thwarted" (Crick and Gabriel 209). We can know we're on to a rich problem space when young people are beating us to the punch and asking, "*So, what do we do?!*" Such urgency signals a problem space rich enough and compelling enough to invite collaborative, intercultural, interdisciplinary inquiry around public or yet-to-be-public issues of shared concern where our responses (our actions or in-actions) have consequence.

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27   For more on networking arguments, readers might consult Rebecca Dingo's *Networking Arguments: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism, and Public Policy Writing*; Adele Clarke's *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*, especially her work on discursive mapping; and Elenore Long's current work in data visualization at Arizona State University.

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Jennifer Clifton, a professor at the University of Missouri and director of the Missouri Writing Project, works with youth in school and community contexts to develop and leverage their multiple literacies to support intercultural inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and transformative action in public life. Her work theorized public rhetorica and conditions under which policy decision-makers and those most affected by those policies can be productive public dialogue.

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