Jordan, Jay. *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities.* **Urbana, IL: NCTE. Studies in Writing and Rhetoric. 164 pages. $34 (member price). ISBN 978-0-8141-3966-0. Print.**

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Jay Jordon's *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities*, which was published in 2012 by NCTE, is the first book in their series of approximately 50 books to deal extensively with multilingual writers or "users" as Jordon calls them. NCTE has long been a sponsor of the intermingling of first language composition teachers and teachers of these multilingual students. However, as the dearth of books on multilingual users indicates, this intermingling has often been hesitant. What has changed has been the accelerating increase in international students for a variety of social, political, and economic reasons. Their presence has raised a variety of questions and controversies, particularly for those composition teachers who are used to classes full of so-called native English speakers.

Although many of these issues and controversies may be of interest to teachers of multilingual students, the primary audience are those teachers and administrators who have primarily dealt with first language users but now find their classes filling up with multilingual learners. Jordon does not provide a complete outline of teaching suggestions, but rather attempts to create a framework for integrating these students into their composition classes by addressing some of the key issues that are currently being discussed in the field.

The first part of the book is a long critical review, some of it published elsewhere, that attempts to support the fundamental assumption Jordan is trying to make: Jordan builds a framework that emphasizes the knowledge and perspectives multilingual students bring to the classroom, thus rejecting the traditional deficit model often imposed on these students. Multilingual students should be viewed as contributors to an intercultural

composition course that incorporates rather than stigmatizes language diversity. He draws upon research from both composition and multilingual writing studies—some of which may be familiar to first language teachers and some of it unfamiliar—to create this framework for developing a research and pedagogical agenda for these intercultural classes. The second part of the book provides data that Jordan has collected from his own intercultural composition classes to explicate and support the framework he has created. In the final part, he offers some general suggestions on organizing classes with both first language and multilingual students.

The first issue that Jordan raises is one that has long been hashed out among teachers with no resolution: What to call these students. Naming students has two often contradictory goals: one is to illustrate differences among the students, and the second is to frame how the students see themselves. Traditional terms such as "ESL" or "second language," which still predominate in the field, do not always accurately describe the language background of the students and often seem to stigmatize students as being second class. Finding a term that accomplishes both of these goals has been difficult if not impossible. For example, Generation 1.5 was borrowed from sociology to describe immigrant students who spent at least some time in American high schools. Although sociologists used the term to differentiate among different groups of immigrants (e.g., Cuban vs. Haitian), the term was used to group all such immigrant groups together and has become less frequently used. Even the use of terms such as second language (L2) or English for second languages (ESL) have been challenged since they are not always accurate: English may be the third or fourth language for many of these students.

As the title of the book indicates, Jordan prefers the term "multilingual," although that term itself is problematic since many of us are multilingual regardless of our home language. For Jordon, the principle criterion for choosing a name is the attitude it projects of the students. Jordan's main concern, which he develops throughout the book, is that multilingual students should

be viewed as contributors, not as second-class students, in any type of academic context, whether it be a writing center or a traditional first-year composition course. Moreover, terms like "students" or "learners" raise similar concerns about seeing these students as having deficits; hence, his choice of "multilingual users" as the term that best achieves the goals for naming.

Jordan argues that these changes in terminology are as inevitable as changes in how language is viewed. Multilingual composition teaching has its roots in the development of theoretical linguistics, which Jordan briefly describes. Jordan provides a brief history of the development of second language composition teaching. The teaching of composition to multilingual users has never had the history that Jim Berlin and others have provided for first language teaching. However, as Jordan points out, multilingual composition teaching has its roots in 1950's linguistic theory. The highly controversial Robert Kaplan "doodles" article in which he attempted to identify culturally reified patterns of organization (a position he would later renounce) has often been seen as the official beginning of multilingual composition research. Jordan argues that the influence of sociolinguistics, such as Del Hymes, who situated language use in social interaction, provided a stronger foundation for developing an appropriate framework for teaching and research. Sociolinguistics had proposed a model of multiple language use referred to as code-switching by which successful language users could move between different forms of language when necessary. The concept of code-switching has evolved into what is today called "code-meshing" by which users mix various forms of language into a new form. Code-meshed languages are seen as more transformative and thus value more the uniqueness of the student's own linguistic resources. From Jordan's perspective, these code-meshed forms can be viewed as unique forms of language that users can contribute to this intercultural classroom.

This role of language is central to the view of multilingual users in the composition classroom that Jordan wants to portray. He

draws upon a number of documents familiar to rhet/comp teachers, including NCTE's "Students' Rights to Their Own Language" and the position paper by Horner, et al. (2011). The latter has advanced the term *translingualism*, which unlike the code-switching model, values the mixing of languages into a new form of English that incorporates all the language resources the user may have. Since the publication of Jordan's book, a group of second language teachers and researchers (Atkinson et al., 2015) published their own position paper in *College English* on the relationship between translingualism and composition teaching that critiques how translingualism and L2 composition have been viewed by editors and organizational leaders. The pedagogical question Jordan addresses is how to incorporate not just the transformed language but the concept of translingualism itself into the classroom in a way that allows for the contributions of multilingual students to be more valued in the classroom.

Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities focuses on two spaces where these goals for granting legitimacy to the users and recognizing their peripheral status in their communities meet: Writing centers and the composition classroom. Both are seen as spaces where the meaning of these new forms of discourse can be better negotiated among the teachers and students, a process that can address some of the pedagogical problems that this new emphasis on translingualism raises. As Jordan points out, writing centers have been traditionally seen as marginalized spaces, often found in out-of-the-way and poorly resourced buildings and staffed by the least experienced teachers. They were often viewed by the rest of the university as "fix-it" shops where students were sent to correct their errors before submitting their work. This situation has been changing in recent years as more attention has been paid to the value of tutors in working individually or in small groups with the most at-risk students. For Jordan these spaces are where multilingual language users can best utilize the resources they bring to the writing process in their negotiations with the writing center tutors. Because of the often one-on-one nature of interactions in the writing center, the multilingual user may have

more freedom to draw upon their own linguistic and cultural background in their interactions with their tutors.

The composition classroom is still what requires the major amount of remediation for including multilingual users. Jordan implicitly addresses a controversy that has raged for many years over whether to integrate these students into the mainstream first-year composition courses or to create "sheltered" first-year courses with only multilingual students. Jordan seems to argue that the framework he has created for viewing multilingual users can be best realized in an integrated classroom. He argues that to achieve the goals he has set out, the traditional monolingual composition course has to be reoriented in terms of the types of assignments, the readings of the course, and the interactions among the students. To achieve these goals, he argues that the classes need to mix both old and new pedagogical approaches.

To support his view of the composition classroom, he presents data collected from his own courses. Here Jordan addresses a long-time controversy over whether multilingual students should be isolated in "sheltered" classrooms in their first-year composition courses. One argument for sheltered classrooms is that multilingual students may feel inferior to traditional native English-speaking students and feel more confident in a sheltered class. The interactions among all the students in an intercultural classroom are the main focus of the data. Jordan argues that in an intercultural classroom, interactions give the multilingual students the opportunity to become contributing participants rather than being simply subservient to the traditional first-year composition students. The multilingual students bring their own cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic knowledge that is shown to be valuable to all the students. To take advantage of their backgrounds, Jordan argues that it is important to choose writing topics and readings that can draw upon the backgrounds of all the students. In this way, multilingual students have more chance to become contributors to the discussions and not just passive consumers.

Jordan argues for a more chaotic view of composition teaching than has been traditionally tolerated, a classroom full of

negotiations, misunderstandings, unresolvable arguments, and the creation of new types of learning communities. The so-called native speakers can be exposed to all the different forms of intercultural discourses that universities hope their students will encounter. In universities that often pay lip service to the value of their international students for promoting intercultural awareness, Jordan's approach (while limited to the composition classroom) is an important step in utilizing the resources multilingual students bring to the university.

Central to this argument is the importance Jordan gives to peer review in the composition classroom. Peer review has long been viewed somewhat more skeptically in ESL courses than in first-language composition courses, but it is one pedagogy that can be most affected by the creation of these multilingual classrooms. But as Jordan's data indicate, peer review interactions provide all students with new perspectives on all aspects of the writing process. In the traditional monolingual or sheltered classrooms, there is a greater degree of homogeneity among the students; intercultural classrooms, on the other hand, can draw upon a greater variety of intercultural resources that can aid all the students in their revision processes.

Jordan recognizes that to realize these new forms of intercultural classrooms, new approaches to teacher training need to be developed. Traditional models of training where teachers of first language and multilingual students are trained separately will not work. For these new approaches, teachers need to be introduced to more research on students in these diverse contexts. Even more important is Jordan's call for more cross training of teachers that can break down the walls often erected between the two fields.

Jordan has raised many of the issues that this training needs to address. Much of the discussion of these issues has taken place in the realm of applied linguistics and cultural anthropology. Will readers of these essays from other fields bring a similar framework to an evaluation of these students' writings? How do the students themselves feel towards these approaches? Their voices have often

been left out of the discussion. Applying the students' rights to their own language remains vague, being much easier to discuss than implement in the classroom. Jordan sometimes touches on some of the issues resulting from those aspects of the students' backgrounds that may contradict the values teachers bring to the classroom. In my experience, newly-arrived students from different writing traditions often rely on the often-maligned five paragraph essay regardless of the rhetorical context. In such a rhetorical context, how should the composition teacher respond to these rhetorical forms?

Although comprehensive in its coverage, *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities* does not deal with all of the issues frequently discussed in the context of intercultural pedagogy, my favorite being textual borrowing and plagiarism. While Jordan gives some examples of how websites can be utilized in such intercultural classrooms, he also misses an opportunity to examine some of the possibilities other technologies hold for furthering his goals. His list of writing assignments, for example, could be easily accomplished on a class blog that can be more readily read by all the members of the classroom. Multimodal assignments can better take advantage of the students' rhetorical and linguistic resources, while taking advantage of their sometimes superior technological backgrounds, to create new kinds of texts and new ways of sharing student resources. Even some of the most controversial uses of technologies, such as MOOCs, can provide students even more resources for the kinds of multi-level and multi-background peer review that Jordan envisions in the intercultural classroom. What Jordan's book does accomplish is to sensitize all of us to the possibilities that these new approaches afford.

Works Cited

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