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The *Journal of Teaching Writing* publishes articles of interest to teachers at all grade levels, from preschool through university, that address the practices and theories which bear on our knowledge of how people learn and communicate through writing. Whether the focus of such articles is on language development, the composing process, discourse theory, or writing pedagogy, the content should clearly reflect the spirit of inquiry which characterizes the revelation we sometimes experience when we reflect on our teaching; the stimulating conversation we have had with colleagues; the insight we have gained through an effective presentation at a professional conference; or the proposition we have entertained from a professional journal or book. In short, it should enable the reader to make a connection between what happens or could happen in class and what he or she has heard, read, or wondered about in the profession. We especially welcome articles written by classroom teachers, whether they are first-time writers or well-established authors. In any case, we encourage peer review of manuscripts before they are submitted to confirm for the writer that the content is not repetitive of knowledge that is already well-known or dated, but is sufficiently fresh to be considered.

Articles may range in length from short descriptions (10-15 pages) of principles or practices that offer helpful insights to longer pieces (16-20 pages) that explore topics in greater detail. All articles should have a clear philosophical or theoretical basis.

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USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO COLLECT AND STUDY STUDENT WRITING

André C. Buchenot

Despite its widely cited utility for professional and program development,[1] instructors rarely research students' writing outside of the context of a particular course. Put differently, we are keen scholars of student writing during the semester—we investigate composing processes across multiple drafts; we observe collaboration in classroom activities; we reflect on student learning through our written comments—but we seldom continue our study after assigning a final grade and committing the remaining papers to a filing cabinet or recycling bin.

The limited presence of extracurricular research on student writing can be attributed in no small part to the material demands of working with student documents. In their 1988 study of the frequency of written "errors," Robert Connors and Andrea Lunsford collected over 21,500 documents from over 300 instructors and ended up with an "imposing mass" occupying "approximately 30 feet of hastily-installed shelving" (398). Twenty years later, Andrea Lunsford repeated the study with Karen Lunsford and collected only 1,826 documents, attributing the lower participation to the "tedious, the time-consuming, the mindnumbing task of filling out dozens upon dozens of (Institutional Review Board) forms" (787-88). Taking a longitudinal approach, Nancy Sommers and Laura Saltz collected "more than 600 pounds of student writing, 520 hours of transcribed interviews, and countless megabytes of survey data" over the course of four years (126).

Fortunately, developments in academic technologies and composing practices offer possibilities for shifting the labor of

studying student writing away from imposing masses of paper and toward curated collections of files. In terms of academic technologies, the key development is the widespread adoption of *networked computing* at secondary and post-secondary institutions. Teachers engage with networked computing when they check school email, share files, and use learning management systems (LMS) such as Blackboard or Canvas. For composing practices, the key development is the near ubiquity of *digital writing* or writing that "exists as pixels and bits on a computer at some point in the composing process" (McKee and DeVoss np). Unlike its chirographic antecedent, the material character of digital writing allows it to be collected, organized, tagged, and indexed through electronic means. If teacher-researchers are able to marshal networked computing and digital writing in this way, it is possible to create a powerful tool for research.

I created such a system using readily available digital technologies (our campus LMS, a laptop, office software) and some minimal assistance from colleagues (roughly ten minutes, once a semester). The result was a digital archive of over 2,000 student documents that have been used to conduct assessments, design teaching interventions, and establish a clearer sense of student learning. In this article, I outline methods that helped me create this system focusing on those principles that might transfer to other institutional settings. I begin by discussing the labor of using student writing in composition pedagogy and scholarship. Then, I review key developments in academic technologies and composing practices that enabled the creation of this digital archive and that might be used to create similar resources at other institutions. The remainder of the article discusses efforts to use my campus' LMS as an entry point for collecting, storing, organizing, and analyzing a substantial corpus of student writing. Through this discussion, I present concrete details for using digital technologies to support research that can then be used to improve teaching. Overall, I contend that changes in networked computing and digital writing have opened up engaging possibilities that make systematic research on student writing distinctly possible.

At first blush, instructors might be hesitant to take on additional work, but it is worth the modest investment of time and effort to study student writing with a precision that is unavailable in the anecdotal and ad hoc studies that characterize much of the research in the field. When we draw on systematic studies of student writing, we move away from what Steve E. Graham and Karen R. Harris call "teaching lore"—informally collected knowledge about teaching—and toward actionable and persuasive evidence (92). Such evidence is useful for the practical work of advocating for our students and programs. Rather than arguing passionately for the value of revision, instructors might use data gleaned from a digital archive of student writing to show the ways student writing improves when it develops over multiple drafts. In addition to contributing to evidence-based practices, this kind of data can contribute much needed systematic research to the larger field of composition and rhetoric.

The Labor of Using Student Writing in Composition Pedagogy and Research

Placing student writing at the center of instruction is a defining move of composition pedagogy. This centrality of student writing defines the everyday activities of our teaching: We photocopy drafts for class discussions; we write feedback to encourage revision; we plan activities for peer review; we read closely for evidence of learning. In sum, we expend significant energy attending to the concrete labor of treating students' writing as "real" writing—that is, writing that deserves sustained and careful attention. Decades of scholarship support these choices including Donald Murray's assertion, "the text of the writing course is the student's own writing" (5) and Bruce Horner's argument that "much that has been accomplished in composition has come from the practice of paying close attention to student writing" (523). Placing student writing at the center of research is also a defining move of composition research. This centrality is seen in research publications drawing on large collections of student writing such

as Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations,* Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives,* or Lee Ann Carroll's *Rehearsing New Roles* as well as more theoretical pieces employing a close reading of smaller sets of student writing such as Min-Zhan Lu's "Professing Multiculturalism," Richard Miller's "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone," and Lad Tobin's *Reading Student Writing: Confessions, Meditations, and Rants.*[2] Joseph Harris articulates an ideal relationship among student writing, pedagogy, and scholarship arguing that:

> Taking students seriously as writers defines the intellectual work of composition. And thinking in public about the work students have done in your courses helps you become a more reflective and self-critical teacher. I thus think we need not only to allow but also to encourage teachers to cite and use student writings much as they might draw on critical essays or novels or poems—that is, as part of the repertoire of texts they've read and that have informed their thinking. (23-24)

When teacher-researchers "think in public" about research on student writing, they often include an accounting of the concrete labor involved in collecting and studying these texts. That is, they describe their research process in terms of feet and pounds of student documents. I return to these material demands to explore the differences in valuation between the labor of teaching with student writing and the labor of researching student writing. With regards to teaching, the myriad tasks required to teach writing using student texts tend to be invisible because they have very little academic exchange value. Promotions are not awarded because instructors stay up late responding to papers; they are awarded for positive evaluations, high test scores, and, at universities, publications. In contrast, the myriad tasks completed to *research* student writing are highlighted because they do have academic exchange value as evidence of rigorous research methodology. Detailing a research project's methods suggests the

teacher-researcher has done her or his due diligence and offers crucial details for other academics who might seek to replicate/validate/extend the study being described.[3]

Given this disparity in visibility and value, it is easy to understand why instructors are hesitant to take on the additional labor: We have more than enough to do now. Why take on more work that might not be valued? In response to the (quite reasonable) hesitation, I argue that by taking on even a small amount of research labor, it might be possible to 1) enjoy the benefits associated with the academic exchange value of research, 2) draw attention to the labor of teaching in order to "re-value" it, and 3) contribute to the field of composition and rhetoric. Put differently, when it is connected to research on student writing, it is possible to associate everyday teaching activities with the academic exchange value usually reserved for overtly scholarly activities. I am not suggesting that the everyday labor of teaching student writing does not have educational or other forms of value, nor am I suggesting that academic exchange value is somehow superior to the use value of teaching. I am suggesting that putting the labor of teaching in dialogue with the labor of research presents some promising possibilities for rethinking the meaning of our work.

Developments in Academic Technology and Composing Practices

Contributing to this promising dialogue are recent developments in academic technology and composing practices that allow teacher-researchers to blend research practices in with their teaching. In terms of academic technology, the key development is the wide adoption of *networked computing*. Broadly, networked computing includes all the technologies used to share information across computers including tools ranging from servers and modems to electrical wiring. These technologies have been a fixture of university campuses for some time, but networked computing is not a college-only phenomenon; the National Center

for Education Statistics estimates that 93% of public school classrooms with computers have access to the Internet and a majority have access to email and file sharing (Gray et al. 3). As digital files in a network, digital information can move smoothly between computers along paths created by networked computing.

These paths created by networked computers are only useful for research because of the shift in student composing practices from ink-and-paper writing to *digital writing*.[4] The Writing in Digital Environments (WIDE)[5] research collective defines digital writing as:

> the art and practice of preparing documents primarily by computer and often for online delivery. Digital writing often requires attention to the theories and practices of designing, planning, constructing, and maintaining dynamic and interactive texts—texts that may wind up fragmented and published within and across databases. Texts that may, and often do, include multiple media elements, such as images, video, and audio. (np)

This definition usefully highlights how the processes and products of digital writing are materially different than earlier forms of writing. As the WIDE collective points out, the process of digital writing takes place (primarily) on a computer, smartphone, tablet, or other device connected to the Internet. Because of this connectivity, a digital writer never composes alone. She or he can consult colleagues, review published texts, look up usage guidelines, and access a host of other resources. This radical connectivity benefits research on student writing because working within networks has become a routinized process for students. Asking them to share their digital writing over networks for the purpose of collecting data is a major departure from their existing, digital writing processes.

The WIDE collective's definition describes the products of digital writing as "dynamic and interactive" and often including "multiple media elements." These characteristics are easy to see in

multimodal, web-based texts like a Tumblr blog that includes images, quizzes, and animations alongside prose, but they are also present in seemingly straightforward texts like Microsoft Word documents. In both modally-rich blogs and word-processed documents, the substance is made possible by encoded instructions that exist "beneath" what is readily seen when we compose or read on computers. Douglas Eyman and Cheryl E. Ball describe code as "the underlying structure that has to function properly in order for a digital text to achieve its design goals and support the rhetorical functions of usability and accessibility" (116). Regardless of a writer's awareness, code is present when she or he composes on a computer. Put differently, when we write on paper, we write with ink or graphite or some other mark-making medium. When we write on screen we write with code, even if that code is hidden from us by a user-friendly interface. This begs the question, if it supports digital writing regardless of our awareness of it, why is considering the role of code in writing important to writing instructors? There are several answers to this question (see Kristin Arola's "The Design of Web 2.0," Lisa Dush's "When Writing Becomes Content," and Annette Vee's "Is Coding the New Literacy Everyone Should Learn?") but for the purposes of this article, code is important because it is the feature that makes digital writing amenable to electronic collection and organization. In other words, code is important because it makes it possible to move writing swiftly through networks and store it purposefully in digital archives.

To reiterate, networked computing and digital writing can support research on student writing by blending the existing labor of teaching with the labor of researching student texts. Students and teacher-researchers are already producing digital writing using networked computing technologies. In the overwhelming majority of educational settings, asking students and teacher-researchers to modify their use of these technologies for the purposes of research does not add undue burden. Further, the fact that digital writing is made of code rather than paper means it can be collected, organized, stored, and analyzed using basic software.

In what follows, I move away from these abstract descriptions and into examples of how these practices took place in my research.

Using Recent Developments to Conduct Research on Student Writing

In this section, I offer concrete recommendations that teacher-researchers might use in their own research and professional development projects. The section describes my methods for collecting and organizing student writing as well as some suggestions for analysis and future innovation. Underlining these descriptions and suggestions are a set of principles designed to be applicable across institutions.

Goal-Driven, Technology-Centric Research on Student Writing

The overarching goal of my research was to develop a model for assessing student learning using metrics taken from campus- and department-level outcomes statements. The outcomes stipulated that students should demonstrate mastery of a range of competencies such as "apply, analyze, evaluate, and create knowledge" ("Principles"). The complexities of these competencies motivated my decision to base my research on end-of-semester student writing rather than test results or surveys or any other text that might evidence student learning. Similarly, the complexities of studying a large, diverse English department motivated my decision to collect an expansive corpus of student writing in an effort to represent the range of teaching and learning happening.

These seemingly academic research decisions informed all of the technological decisions that I detail below. All teacher-researchers looking to conduct research on student writing should begin by articulating similar research goals before considering technology options. This is not to imply that research goals will completely dictate technology use; there will always be a give-and-take between goals and technologies.[6] Still, beginning with a

clear sense of an ending will help focus technology use and avoid systemic problems with technical implementation.

The LMS as Data Collection Tool

My data collection method was designed to increase faculty involvement by limiting the impact on the everyday work of instructors and students. I accomplished this goal by identifying the key functions of routinely-used technologies and, then, developed a protocol to collect student writing using these familiar technical features. The result was a data collection that did not require instructors or students to engage in activities that significantly departed from the regular labor of the course. Based on these principles, I decided to collect student writing using our campus' LMS, Oncourse Collaboration and Learning or, more commonly, Oncourse. This software features many of the usual functions of contemporary LMS—grade tracking, test administering, email messaging—but what drew me to Oncourse was the way it was integrated into the everyday labor of teaching in the English department. At the start of each semester, new Oncourse sites are created for every section of every course and instructors are expected to populate these sites with syllabi and other course documents. Instructors are not required to ask students to submit writing via Oncourse, but many do because 1) it helps to manage the paperwork of collecting student writing and, 2) it allows them access to the Turnitin plagiarism detecting software. In addition to being familiar and accessible, Oncourse was attractive because of its collaborative administrative functions. The LMS allows a course's instructor of record to "enroll" other instructors into the course's Oncourse site with administrative privileges, giving them the ability to assign grades, post content, and download student writing. These collaborative options allow for a researcher to access and collect student writing from multiple courses with minimal involvement from the instructor of record.

The data collection protocol that grew from these technologies had three steps. First, instructors were asked to inform their

students of the research project and distribute a one-page study information sheet that included my contact information and instructions on how to "opt-out" of participating. Because the project did not require instructors or students to engage in activities that significantly departed from the regular labor of the course, my university's Institutional Review Board deemed that the study posed little to no risk to students or instructors and did not require an informed consent document.[7] Second, instructors invited their students to upload a document written in the later part of the semester—a decision motivated by the assumption that many courses assign a lengthy writing assignment due at the end of the course. Students were not compelled to participate in the study. If they did not want to be involved they could choose not to upload a document or, if uploading was already required by the course, they could ask for their documents to be omitted from the archive. Finally, instructors were asked to "enroll" me into their Oncourse site with administrative privileges which allowed me to download student writing into a digital archive located on a secure university server.

To test the protocol's viability, I ran a pilot study that collected data from introductory- and senior-level courses taught in one semester. Only one of the five courses included required students to submit their end-of-semester writing through Oncourse while the others invited students to submit documents electronically for the sake of the study. At the start of the semester, 89 total students were enrolled in these courses and roughly half (n=43) submitted documents for the study.[8] Collectively, these students submitted 164 documents including essays, short stories, poems, and reflections on the semester. Not surprisingly the course that required submissions had the highest student participation (n=17 of 22 or 77%) and the second highest number of documents submitted (n=66). The results of the pilot suggest that the protocol was successful from a technical standpoint; instructors were able to allow me access to their courses, and I was able to download student writing. Logging into a course and downloading all of the student files took less than five minutes per course. The

results also suggest that the protocol has limitations when it comes to student participation. Simply inviting students to participate did not yield a fully representative sample. To collect such a sample, more direct collaboration with instructors is required to create a teaching/learning situation that highlights the role of the LMS as described below. Since this pilot, electronic submission of student writing via Oncourse has increased, in part, due to the surge in online courses where every assignment is submitted electronically and, in part, due to what seems to be an increasing familiarity with the campus LMS.

I want to stress that using the LMS as a data collection tool was an appropriate choice because this networked computing software 1) is integrated into the everyday work of teaching, 2) includes functions that support collecting student writing, and 3) serves my larger research goal of assessing student learning. Given different parameters, an LMS might not be the ideal networked computing option for data collection. Teacher-researchers must assess their local contexts before committing to a particular technology for conducting research on student writing. That said, I argue that the principles outlined here might be applied to a variety of circumstances and networked computing software. For example, an institution seeking to study student writing but lacking an LMS might decide to use email for data collection. Email data collection can be as simple as asking students to submit an assignment via email to a teacher-researcher or as sophisticated as asking students to email an assignment directly into a folder located on a cloud storage platform. A discussion with local IT support will likely uncover more varied and powerful options for using networked computing than I am able to outline here. Such a discussion will be useful so long as it attends to the teacher-researcher's goals and local contexts.

Creating a Digital Archive: File Structuring

When I use the term "digital archive," I refer to any secure, deliberately organized collection of electronic files compiled for the purposes of documentation or research. Digital archives might

be physically located on the hard drive of a laptop or the disk array of a file server or in the memory of a USB flash drive or any other device that can hold electronic media. The challenge of creating a digital archive is not in obtaining the technology to store files, but structuring it in such a way that it promotes future examination. In practical terms, this means organizing folders and naming files based on research goals. I admit that the topic of data structuring is not the most exciting one, but purposeful organizing and sorting can make the difference between a useful archive and a frustrating, digital mess.

For the pilot and the data collection that followed it, my file structuring scheme was informed by my research goal of assessing student learning using campus and department outcomes statements. These statements identify two sets of competencies: the competencies students should master by graduation and the competencies students should practice on their way to graduation. The second set of competencies are distributed over the four *levels* of courses (100 level, 200 level, etc.) that roughly correspond to the four years students are taking classes. I created a system of folders that echoed the importance of development over time by storing student writing according to the year, semester, course, and section in which it was produced. Figure 1 shows an iteration of this organization. Given a different research objective, a different file structure might be more appropriate. For instance, if a teacher-researcher is following a cohort of students enrolled in the same class over the course of a year, she or he might use each student's ID as the foundation of the structure and use assignment and draft numbers as subfolders as illustrated in Figure 2.

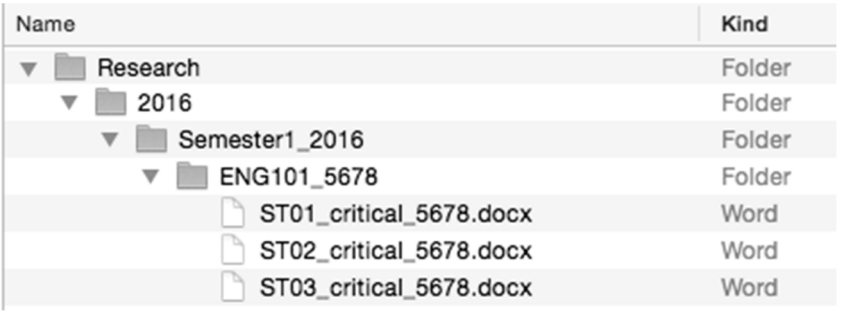

Figure 1: Proposed File Structure Emphasizing Time

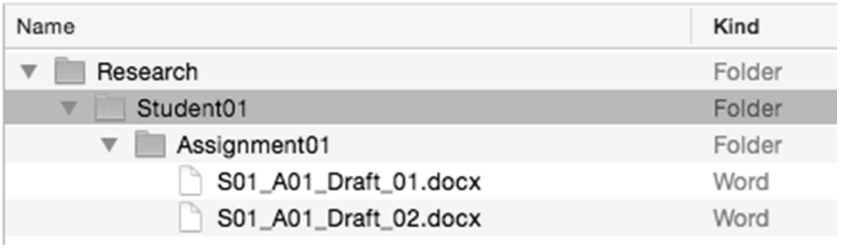

Figure 2: Proposed File Structure Emphasizing Assignment Drafts

Creating a Digital Archive: File Naming

In this section, I discuss ways of increasing data granularity—the concentration of identifiable details or *grains* of information in a system—using a file renaming scheme. The file structure I used in my digital archive offers a coarse granularity by introducing four grains of information into the system: Year, semester, course, and section number. Knowing that I was going to collect a large corpus of files, I wanted to develop a finer data granularity in order to facilitate research on student learning over time. To do this, I developed a file renaming scheme to incorporate key data into the identifier of each piece of student writing. The files I downloaded from Oncourse were named according to their writer's preference and featured names like "EnglishPaper4," "poemCrystal," and "AB_Resume" that offered little in the way of systematically identifiable information. I renamed them using readily available metadata. Briefly, *metadata* can be thought of as

"data about data" or information that describes other information. The information affixed (often literally) to library books is a useful example of metadata used for organization; each book in a library is tagged with encoded information about its subject, author, and year of publication to aid sorting and searching. For many of the same reasons, I renamed each file entered into the archive based on its author, its content, and the section in which it was produced. Put differently, my formula for file renaming was Student ID + File Contents + Course Section Number. Using this formula, a rhetorical analysis written by Andy Buchenot in English 101 section 5678 would become "ST01_critical_5678.docx" in the archive. To protect privacy,[9] student ID's were used in place of names. To assign content, I skimmed each piece to determine if it was "critical" for expository and analytic essays, "creative" for fiction and poetry, "reflective" for pieces that examine a student's own experiences, or "other" for outliers such as résumés or genre collages.

As with file structuring, file naming should be designed to serve a teacher-researcher's goals. The scheme presented above was designed to help me collect student writing in an effort to find evidence of student learning at various course levels. A research project with a different goal would necessarily use a different file naming scheme. A teacher-researcher following student writing produced in one class over multiple drafts might use a file naming scheme based on Student ID + Assignment Number + Draft Number. Files named in this way would help a researcher quickly find multiple iterations of the same assignment completed by multiple students.

Automated Processes to Support Research

Simply renaming files and organizing them into a digital archive opens up possibilities for broad, automated analysis. For instance, using a file manager like Finder or File Explorer, I can search through the metadata contained in the file name to get a broad sense of the student writing assembled in the archive. A search for "critical" shows how many analytic/expository essays I have

collected and gives a partial indication of how many are being assigned in the department. Adding Boolean operators, I can create more complex searches that will tabulate how many critical essays I have collected in a particular class or at a particular course level. The same principles can be used for other research projects (How many files do I have from Student 01? For how many assignments have I collected at least three drafts?) so long as the appropriate metadata has been included in the file names.

The digital archive also opens up possibilities for fine grained automated analyses of the contents of student writing. A familiar example of this kind of analysis is word processing software like Microsoft Word that can produce quantitative data about word count, average sentence length, and assign a readability score for single documents. A more sophisticated example is corpus analysis software like WordSmith Tools which can return data on word frequency and concordance across multiple documents. It is beyond the scope of this article to fully survey the automated options for researching digital writing, but digital archives might be extremely useful for supporting the kinds of analyses provided by these software. While quantitative analysis can produce intriguing representations of student writing, I contend that they are most useful when used in tandem with human produced assessments. Knowing that, on average, essays in a 300-level contain more words than essays in a 100-level course is interesting, but it is not actionable information unless it is examined alongside an analysis of the essays' content.

The Database as Research Tool

Incorporating additional metadata further increases data granularity but requires a more complex system than deliberately naming files and folders. To handle this additional metadata, teacher-researchers might explore using database management software to handle the computational heavy lifting of tracking information and connecting it to the relevant files. When I use the term "database" in this article, I really mean "relational databases," a common type of database comprised of a series of tables

containing related but different information. Database software builds relationships across the information contained in these tables allowing a user to find patterns among diverse data.

The database I have created for my research on student writing is comprised of several tables of metadata about the documents, courses, and students described in the digital archive. I have one table (for clarity's sake, Table A) comprised entirely of information about the documents contained in the digital archive. Each row of the table starts with a unique document code and each column that follows contains metadata about that document including the ID of the course for which it was written and the ID of the student who wrote it among several other pieces of metadata. I have another table (Table B) comprised of information about the courses referenced in the digital archive. Here, each row starts with a course ID and each column follows with metadata about the course (when the course was held, whether the course was held in-person or online, etc.). Both tables contain a shared piece of information, the course ID, but use this information in different ways. In Table A, it describes a document and, in Table B, it is a unique identifier. The database management software I use, Microsoft Access, creates relationships between the information in these two tables and allows me to conduct complex searches through the reams of metadata. Using the database management software, I can search out all of the documents created for English 101 in the fall terms of 2014-2015, for example. I could run the same search in the digital archive itself using a file manager, but the database management software conducts the search much more quickly. The database management software also allows me to run searches that would not be possible to conduct simply using the archive. As an example, I recently conducted a search for critical essays written by English majors during their senior year. To find this information, the database connected several tables and hundreds of pieces of metadata to create an orderly list of 174 documents that met my criteria. I took that list to the archive (to help protect privacy, I only connect the database to metadata about student

writing and not the student writing itself) and assembled my list of desired files.

The decision to use a database was informed by my interests in assessing student learning using institutional outcomes statements. To assist in this process, I wanted to design resources that would allow me to gather collections of student writing with shared characteristics that could be assessed by a team of trained readers. For example, I could create a collection of student writing produced for 300-level courses and, then, assess these documents based on the 300-level student learning outcomes. With the database, I am able to able to isolate a greater number of variables in the collections I create. Continuing the previous example, I can learn something about the influence of online teaching on student learning in 300-level courses by creating two collections of student writing—one from in-person sections and one from online sections—assessing them, and then comparing any differences in the outcomes. This kind of systematic study of student writing is what Graham and Harris call for when they urge us to move away from "teaching lore" and toward "high quality intervention studies" that rely on a systematic analysis of teaching and learning (93).

The decision to use a database was also informed by the material demands of my local context. I was fortunate to have use of Microsoft Access through my university, but there are a variety of free options for constructing relational databases including MySQL Workbench and LibreOffice Base, both of which have readily available tutorials and support communities online. There is not a universal database management program; I used Access because it could be used to serve my research goals and was already integrated into my university's server. Teacher-researchers should evaluate their institutionally available technologies before making any software decisions. Part of evaluating institutionally available technologies is making connections with IT specialists. I benefitted immensely from the support of a knowledgeable, patient IT staff whose help informed the shape of my database as well as my digital archive. Whether

you are creating an expansive database or just a modest archive, developing a good rapport with institutional technology staff is a crucial step.

Using a database to index a digital archive is a fairly advanced version of conducting research on student writing. This level of complexity is not necessary to conduct high quality research. As described above, simply structuring and naming files with an eye toward research opens up possibilities for research. Much can also be accomplished by entering metadata into a spreadsheet or even just a table. My point is not to champion the database as the only way to conduct research, but to argue that it is one particularly fruitful tool.

Continuity and Flexibility

As it continues to define communication in the twenty-first century, digital writing will likely change in form and content as technologies develop. Consistent organization within a digital archive can account for some of these changes by providing a foundation for continuing research. A hierarchical file structure based on research goals, for example, will stretch to accommodate changes in the preferred file format while still affording insight for research. In practical terms, a .docx file might be tagged with metadata and entered into a digital archive in much the same way that a .doc file might. So long as the file structuring scheme is followed, these new file types can be folded into existing research. However, some new forms of student writing pose more challenges for established archives. For instance, student-produced websites, blogs, and other networked texts do not exist as individual files stored on a single computer. Instead, these texts are comprised of multiple files stored across many computers. These multiple, distributed texts are far harder to corral into an archive than a discrete .docx file uploaded to an LMS. There are options for capturing these network texts in a digital archive including uploading direct links to the web-based content, capturing static images of the page, and copying the HTML mark up that defines the form of the text. There is not a single best

practice for this kind of data collection, but a teacher-researcher should be prepared to develop new protocols for incorporating texts in ways that serve her or his overall research goals.

It is worth brief mention that, even accounting for normal data degradation, digital files benefit from a longer lifespan than their paper counterparts. Routine back-ups further increase any archive's longevity creating options for digital archives to become useful sources of institutional memory. The digital archive is a resource that, potentially, stretches beyond an individual research project.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Given the mercurial nature of digital technology, it is risky to make recommendations tied to specific software or hardware for fear that it might go the way of MOOs, MUDs, and Myspace. In the recommendations that follow, I focus more on principles that might be applied to a variety of technologies and institutions. My use of LMS, digital archives, and database management software is a strong model, but teacher-researchers should be ready to adapt that model to fit their local conditions using the principles below.

Articulate Research Goals

As explained above, my research goal is to use student writing in service of assessing student learning as defined by the outcomes in departmental and institutional statements. The influence of this research goal can be seen in every step of my research methods, from data collection to metadata indexing. Admittedly, operating under my particular research goal closed down as many opportunities as it opened up. My focus on end-of-semester documents meant I did not develop a method for examining the drafting process, for example. Conducting any kind of research means making such choices in order to create a cohesive project. In projects that involve digital technologies, these choices also shape the ostensibly neutral tools that we use to work with student writing. Of course, no tool is truly "neutral" as it is a product of a particular set of assumptions and values, a point

Andrew Feenberg makes eloquently in his discussion of the philosophy of technology (5). My larger point is that teacher-researchers should not lose sight of research goals as they navigate the complexity of digital technologies. There will be give-and-take between research goals and technological possibilities, but the overarching research goals should be a foundational part of any project to use digital technology to study student writing.

Identify Commonly Used Functions that Support Research Goals

As mentioned above, the time and effort involved in conducting research on student writing is a significant barrier preventing teacher-researchers from taking on such projects. Thankfully, we find ourselves in a moment where the incorporation of networked computing and digital writing into the work of teaching have made research on student writing more possible. To make the most of these possibilities, teacher-researchers should assess their local conditions in order to marshal the appropriate technology. This means investigating what technologies are routinely used at an institution and which of the technology's functionalities might be used to support research. At my institution, for instance, our LMS is used frequently to communicate with students and, increasingly, to collect student writing. At other institutions, an LMS' primary use might be to continue in-class conversations on an online bulletin board or to host student blogs. At yet another institution, the only networked computing option might be the Google for Education suite of applications. In each of these situations, teacher-researchers should identify overlaps between their research goals and the available functionalities in order to develop protocols for using technology to study student writing.

Encourage Faculty "Buy In"

Research on student writing often starts in a single teacher-researcher's classroom, but, to conduct the kind of research that Graham and Harris and others recommend, it is necessary to gain

a wider frame of reference by securing support from colleagues. One way to engender support from colleagues is to involve teachers and administrators in the process of designing a research goal. This might mean everything from sending out email to holding informal meetings to preparing a formal proposal. What is important is to make your colleagues into stakeholders, into individuals who have something to gain from spending time adding another instructor into their course homepage or explaining to their students the importance of research. It won't be possible to involve everyone in this way, but it is an admirable goal to reach out to as many as possible. Regardless of individual instructors' involvement in the planning stage, it is crucial to limit the time and energy they are asked to participate in a research project. Data collection, for instance, should be as integrating into the everyday labor of teaching writing as possible. This goal can be achieved by using technologies that other instructors are already using as much as possible. The less labor instructors must take on to participate, the more likely they are to contribute their time.

Develop File Structuring and File Naming Schemes

A digital archive is only useful if it is organized in a way that lends itself to being searched and analyzed. When I undertake the slightly dull process of creating folders and renaming files, I am reminded of new media theorist and rhetorician Karl Stolley's advice that "file naming and organization is essential to keep yourself sane" (45). Stolley is writing about creating directories for websites, but the lesson translates nicely: An organized set of files is always easier to use and far less maddening than a disorganized set of files. This advice becomes especially true as the number of files in an archive stretches beyond 30, 50, 100, or 1,000. It also bears repeating that the utility of the organization depends on the goals of a research project. For my goal of creating targeted samples of student writing, a hierarchical structure starting with year and ending with course section was sufficient. For a project examining a small group of students over several years (i.e., the kind of longitudinal studies that Lindquist and

others are presently conducting), an organization starting with a student name and moving toward specific years and then documents might be more useful. In all cases, the organization and file naming should be internally consistent and supportive of a project's goals.

Consider the Future Applications

My final recommendation might be read as an extension of my first. Teacher-researchers should start the process of conducting research on student writing with a specific interest in mind—be it research questions or a curricular development or anything in between. That interest should shape the project design from the software used to store files to the protocols used to collect them. In the same way, a project that has started producing data should be improved and augmented based on the possibilities these data suggest. Research on student writing does not end in a conclusion; it ends in new questions, new teaching strategies, and new initiatives that invigorate teacher-researchers.

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Notes

[1] See the National Council of Teachers of English's *The Teaching-Research Connection*, the Conference on English Education's *Understanding the Relationship between Research and Teaching,* and the Two-Year College English Association's *Research and Scholarship in the Two-Year College* among many others.

[2] In his review of composition scholarship that uses student writing, Joseph Harris contends that Lu, Miller, and Tobin's works present "arguments in which the meanings of student texts matter—and are very much open to debate" (676).

[3] Details about a study are necessary to produce what Richard Haswell calls RAD research—research that is replicable, aggregable, and data supported (198). Haswell rightly argues that RAD research is crucial to growing the field of writing studies (201).

[4] Data on student computer use suggest that the majority of students in secondary schools have ample opportunities to produce digital writing. A 2015 Pew Research study reports that "87% of American teens ages 13 to 17 have or have access to a desktop or laptop computer" and 73% have access to smartphones (Lenhart n.p.). Students at colleges and universities report even higher rates of computer access. According to a report published by Educase in 2014, 90% of students own a laptop, 86% own a smartphone, and 47% own a tablet (Dahlstrom and Bichsel 14).

[5] Since publishing this definition, the WIDE collective has renamed themselves as the Writing, Information, and Digital Experience research center. More about their current iteration can be found here: wide.cal.msu.edu.

[6] See Bruno Latour's "Morality and Technology: The End of Means" for an engaging discussion of how our goals are adapted by the technical processes we undertake: "If we fail to recognize how much the use of a technique, however simple, has displaced, translated, modified, or inflected the initial intention, it is simply because we have *changed the end in changing the means* (252 original emphasis).

[7] Policies on what kinds of research require review vary. In many cases, research on student writing only needs review if it is going to be disseminated outside of the immediate educational context (e.g., a conference presentation). Regardless of the circulation of the results, all studies involving human subjects (students, teachers, members of the community) should at minimum be discussed with local research offices.

[8] This initial enrollment figure might not reflect the final enrollment. When students drop a course after the start of the semester or simply fail to finish, they might still appear on the Oncourse roster.

[9] My collaborators and I are the only ones able to see these file names. When student writing from the archive is shared with others (usually in the form of paper copies), all identifying features are removed and a second coded name is assigned to further protect privacy.

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RETHINKING AP ENGLISH

Alice Horning

In the vast rooms of a convention center (now in Kansas City, previously in Louisville), more than a thousand high school and college English teachers from all over the United States come together each June for a week of reading of the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition exam's free response essays from thousands of high school students. I have been a reader for many years, and have lately been promoted to the ranks of table leaders. Table leaders are experienced readers who lead tables of eight or nine readers. We provide guidance and support, do early second readings of all readers and generally are responsible for maintaining work flow, order and consistency in the scoring of student work. We also arrive at the reading session a day early to read and discuss sample papers in our assigned question, get to know one another, and prepare to work with our tables of readers for the week.

Recently, for the first time in more than ten years of reading the AP, I was assigned to read the synthesis question. This relatively new type of question requires students to read a set of 6-8 short source materials, including at least one visual such as a chart, graph, photo or other material, and respond to an essay prompt by using at least three of the sources in some way to support their ideas (see Appendix A for a sample question). The training provided by AP requires that leaders and readers buy into this approach and apply the scoring guide we are given in a fair and consistent fashion. In other words, we don't have to agree with the guidelines but must apply them as consistently as possible in the holistic scoring of students' work. Readers are trained on sample papers on the first day of the reading and repeatedly re-trained throughout the week. Table leaders are given daily statistical reports on readers' scoring so that they can monitor

performance and provide feedback as needed to improve readers' consistency and adherence to the scoring guide.

Because I have focused my research and publications on college students' critical reading and am aware of the serious weaknesses in their reading abilities as a by-product of this work, I was somewhat taken aback by the expectations AP has for the use of sources in the synthesis essay on the exam. Admittedly, students have less than an hour to read the sources and write this essay, along with two other essays in the two-hour free response portion of the test. And this part follows an hour of multiple-choice questions on grammar, style, and rhetorical analysis, so the test is a challenging mental workout. On the other hand, the idea that just "mentioning" a source puts a paper in the upper half did give me pause. Over the week of the recent reading session on the synthesis question, I had an increasing feeling of dis-ease and dissatisfaction with AP's approach to reading and using sources. While the AP English Language *course* is now more focused on critical reading, the exam still sends a message that the most superficial kind of reading can give students high test scores that allow them to skip coursework that might help them develop a full array of critical literacy skills.

I have a niggling feeling that something is not quite right about what is going on with AP English Language and its purportedly equivalent first-year writing course(s) at many institutions around the country. I know I am not alone in this concern. The AP English Language exam has grown by leaps and bounds: in 2015, there were more than 527,000 English Language exams taken, up from about 156,000 exams in 2002 (College Board, *AP*). This growth alone and the related amount of money being spent by individual students, school districts, states and the federal government to pay for or support AP exams are cause for concern in and of themselves. But at least two recent studies raise many other issues, such as the inequity in the population of students taking AP courses and exams (Nao) and the varied and inconsistent ways that AP is used when students apply and enroll at colleges and universities across the country (Sadler, Sonnert,

Tai, & Klopfenstein). That niggling feeling I have that something is not right with AP is shared by others who have studied the whole system in detail and is supported by careful studies of what happens to students once they take an AP course and exam (Hansen et al., Nao, Puhr).

In the case of the English Language and Composition exam, it's not just the growth, equity and other issues that are worrisome; it's what the exams look like and the scoring expectations on the synthesis question. In particular, it's the message that students can get high scores without doing careful, critical, thoughtful reading and writing that will be required for success in college and beyond. Today's AP is not the AP you may remember from your own high school experience. Indeed, you may not have taken the AP English Language and Composition course or exam, as it did not start until 1980 according to the College Board website (College Board, *English Description*). While I am totally in favor of any student taking an AP class and being challenged by the curriculum and writing requirements, I have grave misgivings about the exam and the credit/placement being offered as a by-product.

There is good evidence that even students who do well on the AP English Language and Composition exam should take first-year writing in college (Hansen et al., "An Argument;" "Are Advanced"); moreover, there is good evidence that neither the AP English Language course nor the first-year writing courses it purports to supplant do enough to develop students' skills in critical literacy. Hansen and her co-authors did two studies looking at the writing of 182 college sophomores in courses beyond first-year writing. They compared those who had taken both AP English (either Lang or Lit) and first-year composition and found that these students performed significantly better than those who had either experience alone. Moreover, they recommended that advanced *placement* (i.e., not credit or course waivers) be granted only for AP English scores of 4 or 5, not 3, as students scoring a 3 did not do as well as those earning the top scores. These findings support my own studies of reading, which

show that a key weakness in the current first-year writing curriculum and exam—AP or otherwise—is its lack of a deep and careful focus on the development of critical reading and literacy skills needed by students in college, in their professional lives, and for their full participation in our democratic society.

While AP courses and the English Language and Composition exam provide a start toward helping students develop the strong reading skills they will need in the future, there is much more AP could be doing to prepare students for the critical literacy essential to success in and out of school. Realistically, neither the College Board nor most colleges and universities are going to stop offering and accepting the AP English Language course and exam. However, they should all see that AP courses are preparation, not a replacement, for college writing courses. While the course helps students with reading to some extent, the exam suggests that quick reading of short texts with little analysis is enough to earn a high score. Teaching students to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, use, and document source materials with integrity is essential to the substantive development of their critical literacy. For this reason and a number of others related to the nature and development of academic critical literacy, both the College Board and colleges need to rethink the shape and use of the AP Language course and especially, the exam.

The case for this claim rests on several key points. First, a close look at the current AP Language course and exam as well as its typical administration and scoring will make clear how students take the course and test and how it is commonly used. To be fair, a few of the concerns that arise from the current course are addressed by AP's new Capstone program, but that program is too new (begun 2014) to solve the larger problems of critical reading and literacy; moreover, students must still complete four exams to earn AP's Capstone Diploma, so the exam itself is still a problem. Once the course and exam are thoroughly discussed, I will present a clear definition of academic critical literacy which will establish the goal that students should be meeting, regardless of what course(s) they take or when and where they take them.

From a different perspective, the field of composition studies has made clear the knowledge and skills students should have through reports and position statements, so it is useful to look at what those say and how well the AP Language program develops them in the course and measures them on the test. In addition, the major professional organization in the field has made explicit in a recent position statement how high school work in college writing should be treated. This discussion will reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the AP Language program in meeting students' need to develop academic critical literacy. Finally, this detailed review of the program and its uses leads to specific and pragmatic suggestions for ways that colleges might make better use of students' AP experiences.

AP Course and Exam—Standard Practice

The AP program works differently in each location, but in general, these are typical features. First, students can take AP courses if their high school offers them and then may choose whether or not to take the exam associated with each course. They can also take any AP exam whether or not they have taken the related course, simply by registering and paying the required fee. Some school districts may encourage or require that students take the exam if they have taken the course; districts may get "credit" for having a certain number of students take AP exams when they are evaluated under "No Child Left Behind" or other evaluation schemes. For AP English Lang (or AP Lang as most high school and college teachers who work as readers usually refer to it), the AP program requires teachers to submit syllabi for an audit to certify that the course offered meets AP's criteria (College Board, *AP Course Audit*). Audits are conducted by the staff of the AP program and by experienced AP teachers (*AP Course Audit*). Some skepticism about the audit process is discussed by Hansen and Farris, authors of *College Credit for Writing in High School*, which examines the larger issues of critical literacy from the varied perspectives of high school and college teachers and administrators. Among the chapters in this book, Hansen's

opening chapter notes that the audit process is relatively superficial, especially when compared to the professional and rigorous evaluation of courses and student work required by the International Baccalaureate program (Hansen 23-24).

Colleges and universities, for their part, set their own rules institutionally or often by department for acceptable scores and the granting of placement or credit based on course equivalencies. A number of different policies and practices exist and there is a lot of variation among institutions. For a quick sample, I looked at current policies at a handful of Michigan colleges and universities including my own institution, Oakland University, University of Michigan and a private school, Hope College, plus a few others. Some accept a score of 3 and grant 3 or 4 credits but most require a score of 4 or 5 to grant credit. Generally, though, students will almost always receive credit for scores of 4 or 5 (the top scores). Few if any grant credit or advanced placement for scores lower than 3. Of the seventeen states with state-wide or system-wide policies posted on the AP website, none offers credit for scores below 3 (College Board, *AP Higher Ed*). According to College Board data, 3200 colleges and universities accept the AP Lang score in some way, granting credit or advanced placement (College Board, *AP Program*). The exam has grown over time as mentioned previously and is now the largest course and exam in the AP program, with more than 527,000 exams taken in 2015 (College Board, *AP Program*). For this reason along with many other more substantive concerns, the overall approach to AP Lang warrants rethinking.

AP Lang—A Closer Look at the Course

A closer look at the course, the exam and its scoring may be helpful in exploring why a rethinking is needed. There is a thorough description of the AP Lang course and exam on the College Board's website. Part of the site is called "AP Central;" it is an area for the public and professionals that includes course descriptions and other materials for faculty and administrators. The following discussion draws on the AP Lang official public

course description, effective 2014 (the most recent revision), per the website (College Board, *English Description*). The main goals of the course appear in Appendix A; they focus on critical literacy needed for success in college and for civic engagement. It is worth noting that this updated goal statement is a strong revision of earlier goal statements from AP, a definite step in the right direction. Students are expected to read many different kinds of prose materials from different time periods and different disciplines, as well as electronic texts. The revised course goals specifically include these points about reading:

- Writing expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions based on readings representing a variety of prose styles and genres
- Reading nonfiction (e.g., essays, journalism, science writing, autobiographies, criticism) selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques
- Developing research skills and the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources
- Conducting research and writing argument papers in which students present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources (College Board, *AP English Language Course Overview*)

Two AP teachers shared their syllabi and assignments for this course with me at my request. The first of these (Teacher A) is a woman who teaches at a private high school in the south. The students served by this school come from an upper middle class population and generally go on to attend top-ranked, highly competitive colleges and universities around the country. This teacher has scored the AP Lang exam for many years and is thoroughly familiar with it. The second teacher (Teacher B) works at a public high school in an upper middle class community in the Midwest. The students served by this school also go on to attend

prestigious colleges and universities across the country. The school district is considered a high-performing national exemplary district in the US (National Blue Ribbon Schools). This instructor has not scored the exam, but he has years of experience with the course.

An excerpt of Teacher A's syllabus for the AP Lang appears in Appendix B. This course was submitted to AP for review as part of its audit process (*AP Course Audit*), and satisfied AP's requirements. The course includes extensive readings (lists omitted for the sake of space) including both literary genres of various types and nonfiction prose. Students have ample opportunities to develop the academic critical literacy skills discussed below. Students with experience in this course should have no difficulty with the prompts on the exam, also discussed below. However, to the extent that these teachers teach "to the test," the reading tasks and skills may not provide the students with a full set of critical skills. Teacher A's synthesis assignment appears in Appendix C. She explained to me (personal communication, July 8, 2013) that this assignment is the first of a series of steps that will take several months to unfold. Students will move ahead by actually reading the sources they've found and then learn to integrate them into their papers and cite them appropriately. As students begin to work with their sources, they are also working on vocabulary and building other critical reading skills and abilities.

A similar portion of Teacher B's syllabus for AP Lang appears in Appendix D and his assignment for the synthesis research project appears in Appendix E. It is important to note that he has divided the course into specific sections, and each has a different focus for the students' reading and writing work. I have omitted the resources and reading lists for each segment in the interest of space, but it is clear that this course focuses on both reading and writing and that students are being taught the relevant skills in analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application. Like Teacher A's syllabus, this course syllabus was submitted to AP for review in its audit process and satisfied AP's requirements (bear in mind the

critique of the audit process noted by Hansen, discussed earlier). These samples demonstrate that the course can give the students substantial experience with reading and writing. They show that teachers do generally work with students to analyze readings for main ideas, engage in style analysis using their understanding of rhetorical tools and techniques, evaluate each source, and synthesize as demonstrated in their assignment requirements. They also do focused work on vocabulary development, again as illustrated in their syllabi. The problem isn't with the course or with what teachers do.

The problem is with the stated goals of the course, notwithstanding the recent improved description, and especially with the test and what students need to do to score well on it; a good summary of the requirements and scoring appears in the test prep book *5 Steps to a 5* by Murphy and Rankin. It should be clear that the problem is that even though the course gives students a start on these basic skills, the more extensive critical literacy skills are not there when AP Lang students appear in college, as shown by the work of Hansen et al. ("An Argument;" "Are Advanced") to be discussed below. To see why, a closer look at the exam itself is needed.

AP Lang—A Closer Look at the Exam

The exam includes an hour-long multiple choice section, in which students examine passages and answer questions about structure, style, rhetorical features and related topics. The rest of the test runs for two hours and fifteen minutes, and consists of the three free response questions. These questions fall into clear categories: the first is generally referred to as the synthesis question, which entails reading and using six to eight sources provided in the exam booklet, each of which is less than a page in length. The other two are a rhetorical analysis question and an argument question. The rhetorical analysis question typically presents a passage of text (for example, the first time I scored the AP Lang exam, the passage was Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) and asks students to discuss the rhetorical strategies used

by the writer. The argument question states an issue or topic, asks students to take a position and defend that position with evidence from readings, observation, personal experience or other sources. The students have fifteen minutes to read the sources for the synthesis question, and then two hours to write all three essays. A typical synthesis question is provided on the AP Central site, as follows:

> (Suggested time — 40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)
>
> The United States Postal Service (USPS) has delivered communications for more than two centuries. During the nineteenth century, the USPS helped to expand the boundaries of the United States by providing efficient and reliable communication across the country. Between 1790 and 1860 alone, the number of post offices in the United States grew from 75 to over 28,000. With this growth came job opportunities for postal workers and a boom in the cross-country rail system. The twentieth century brought substantial growth to the USPS, including large package delivery and airmail. Over the past decade, however, total mail volume has decreased considerably as competition from electronic mail and various package delivery companies has taken business away from the USPS. The loss of revenue has prompted the USPS to consider cutting back on delivery days and other services. Carefully read the following seven sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that argues a clear position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. Make sure your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from,

whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Stone)
Source B (graph)
Source C (O'Keefe)
Source D (Hawkins)
Source E (McDevitt)
Source F (Cullen)
Source G (photo) (College Board, *AP Central*, 2012 exam)

Note that students are advised not to resort to summary of the sources but are directed to synthesize and make use of them in support of their argument.

The sample syllabi suggest that at least some instructors make a real effort to help students build the skills they need to respond to the synthesis question appropriately. But the test itself and its scoring do not really require or draw on whatever skills students might have developed in their AP Lang class. And the test certainly does not call for students to demonstrate that they can analyze, evaluate, synthesize and apply information from readings to support an argument. There are three specific reasons why the exam itself falls short. First, the test provides students with six or eight sources, but not one of these is more than one page long. There's no way to tell from the responses whether students could follow an extended argument of more than a page. Second, the test does not ask students to evaluate the source materials, to question their authority, accuracy, currency, relevancy, appropriateness and bias (the Association of College and Research Librarians' criteria for evaluation of source materials (ACRL)). Finally, the test does not ask students specifically to put the sources into conversation with one another, the sort of synthesis expected in college and professional writing.

This last point warrants further discussion. The scoring guide for the 2012 synthesis question states that "For the purposes of

scoring, synthesis means using sources to develop a position and citing them accurately" (College Board, *English Scoring Guidelines*). The scoring guidelines for 2015 have not changed substantively from those of 2012 or prior years. Papers that get top scores need to synthesize any three of the sources, using this definition of synthesis. Naturally, readers will look at how the sources are used, but the AP scoring guidelines do not explicitly require analysis, synthesis in the sense of considering the sources in relation to one another and the writer's point, or evaluation of the sources. Thus, the test does not require or measure students' abilities in academic critical literacy as defined in more detail below, including using what they get from reading. And while this level of expectation may be beyond the abilities of high school students, the intention is that AP Lang replace a college-level writing course, where these are the expectations. So it is appropriate to expect students in AP to be able to meet these same goals. If they cannot, then re-thinking how AP Lang is used is definitely in order.

Specifically, the scoring guide for the top scores says:

> 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in development, or impressive in their control of language.
>
> 8 Effective Essays earning a score of 8 effectively develop a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing. Their prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.
>
> For the purposes of scoring *synthesis* means using sources to develop a position and citing them accurately. (College Board, *English Scoring Guidelines*)

Here are the opening two paragraphs from an essay in response to the prompt above that was scored as an 8 or 9 by AP:

> In a fast-pace [sic] society of sleek innovations and modern new technologies, it can be easy to get lost in the hype of popular new gadgets and trends while if not forgetting, moving away from the traditions and enterprises that were so vital to the United States as a developing country. One of these pioneering enterprises, the United States Postal Service (USPS), has become a casualty of the innovation we laud so highly. While we should not discount the progress made in the past decades that has facilitated a transition to faster and sleeker technologies, it is also paramount that we support and maintain traditions and symbols of the American dream like the USPS by applying modern principles and revamping the company's image and organization.
>
> The United States Postal Service not only serves to deliver mail, get money orders and set up P.O. boxes, but also to remain a symbol of our countries [sic] development and progress (Doc. D). It serves to remind the US population of where our country has been and can give citizens a feeling of pride that can be matched by few other countries. With this reminder of where we have been comes a respect for the traditions of our ancestors. Cullen argues, "E-mail is fast and simple, but to me an old-fashioned, handwritten letter has value in this speed-obsessed world." (Doc F). While new technology and trends come and go, a personal touch and sentimental value gives the USPS value more profound than speed or ease. Hawkins agrees, "It's nice to sometimes get a personally written letter in the mail…nothing replaces a personally written letter to an old friend. It gives the message a more intimate feeling" (Doc D). The USPS represents more than a graph of profit or delivery points. It represents a long standing tradition that unites Americans.

(College Board, *English Scoring Guidelines,* sample response; the full text is available at AP Central)

Notice that the writer relies on quotes which, while they do support the point being made, require little analysis or synthesis. In fact, the writer mentions the sources without probing them at all. The scoring of this paper points to the chief weakness in the AP *exam*: it sends a message that this kind of reading and use of materials is sufficient to get the top score. From the students' perspective, it is hard to see why academic critical literacy is a crucial goal, when this response is good enough to get a top score.

As noted, there are a number of critiques of the AP Lang course and exam; in part perhaps in response to some of this criticism, AP has created a relatively new program called AP Capstone. It involves 2 new courses, AP Seminar and AP Research, each of which requires extended research, reading and written work. The Seminar course is prerequisite to the Research course and each culminates in a test that entails writing under timed conditions. These courses go through an audit process, surely similar to that required for AP Lang, with the same concerns noted above. It is not clear from the Capstone website how the exam is scored, but the teacher evaluates the students' work at the end of each of the classes. To qualify for an "AP Diploma," students must complete both courses and exams successfully (i.e., score 3 or higher) and also take four AP exams. If students complete only the Seminar and Research components of the Capstone program, scores of 3 will yield an "AP Certificate" (College Board, *AP Capstone*). This program certainly appears to be a step in the right direction in terms of developing students' critical literacy skills, but it is too new (started in 2014) to assess whether it develops the reading and writing abilities students need, and it still hinges on yet another test. It does expand AP's array of tests and fees for sure.

Although the new Capstone program appears to move in the right direction in terms of helping students develop their critical literacy skills, the continuing use of tests that entail superficial

reading of short texts does not help achieve this goal. As a practical matter, it is hard to imagine any kind of timed test that would work appropriately for this purpose. Reading, and especially the kind of critical reading required in college and beyond cannot easily be tested in an AP-type test of a few hours. Other kinds of instruments (like those used in the Capstone courses) can provide a much better indication of students' abilities as can performance in college courses where critical literacy is an integrated part of the curriculum. The point of this detailed critique of the current AP Lang course and test is to make the case for this integration.

It should be clear from this extended discussion that while the AP Lang course works appropriately to help students begin to develop critical literacy skills, the test suggests that the most superficial reading is ample. High test scores do not reflect students' abilities to analyze, synthesize, evaluate and use reading material to support their ideas in an argument. This goal is the one higher education aims for in courses and requirements. A consensus on this goal in some form appears clearly from a chorus of voices: my own research with experts, the outcomes developed by writing program administrators across the country, the College Board's own research arm, the competing test organization, ACT, and from colleges themselves as well as the National Council of Teachers of English, the major professional organization of English teachers, both K-12 and college level. These voices together suggest, albeit in different ways, that AP Lang and the use of the exam should be re-thought.

A Key Goal: Academic Critical Literacy

One of the substantive reasons for examining the use of AP carefully lies in a definition of academic critical literacy, the explicit or implicit goal of all college reading and writing courses. The definition that follows is one that I created after completing and reporting on a series of case studies of the similarities and differences among eight novice and five expert readers (*Reading, Writing*). The experts were all academics with PhDs who regularly

read and write complex texts. The novices were all college students. Here is the specific definition of the critical literacy of the experts I studied, created to state a clear goal teachers need to work for with student novices:

> Academic critical literacy is best defined as the psycholinguistic processes of getting meaning from or putting meaning into print and/or sound, images, and movement, on a page or screen, used for the purposes of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application; these processes develop through formal schooling and beyond it, at home and at work, in childhood and across the lifespan and are essential to human functioning in a democratic society. (*Reading, Writing* 41)

In setting this definition, I intended to capture both reading and writing and to capture the fact that to an increasing degree, literate activities occur not only on pages but also on screens. My definition or description of what students should know and be able to do is certainly not the only one available, but it arises from my direct observation of expert readers and specifies the goal students need to meet in order to succeed in college, in their careers, and in their professional lives.

The field of composition studies has presented a number of definitions that are also relevant to this discussion. Probably one of the most widely-accepted statements of what students should know and be able to do at the end of first-year writing comes from a document created by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, usually referred to as the *WPA Outcomes* (CWPA). The CWPA is a nationwide organization for those who oversee writing programs in colleges and universities. The *Outcomes* document was originally developed in 2000 and most recently amended in 2014. As I have argued elsewhere ("Enhancing," forthcoming), one section of the *Outcomes* is especially relevant to the present discussion, and that is the section on "Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing" which reads as follows:

By the end of first-year composition, students should:

- Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts
- Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations
- Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources (WPA *Outcomes*)

The idea of the *Outcomes* document was to provide a kind of template that colleges and universities could adapt to their own individual campuses and needs, rather than a single set of standards. This document has been widely used by college writing programs around the country, and is often cited as a useful starting point for discussions of the goals students may be expected to meet in composition courses. This newly-revised *Outcomes* section now goes much farther than it did initially in specifying the reading abilities students should have, providing a solid baseline of synthesis and evaluation of sources for use in writing. It also fits well with the definition of academic critical literacy presented above.

Yet another definition or description of the goal we are all trying to achieve comes from AP itself, which offers its own definition of critical literacy in the Course Description document for AP Lang. This description was revised and updated in 2014.

The section of the course description on research is especially relevant in this connection. It makes the following key points:

> …the informed use of research materials and the ability to *synthesize* varied sources (to *evaluate, use and cite* sources) are integral parts of the AP English Language and Composition course. Students move past assignments that allow for the uncritical citation of sources and, instead, take up projects that call on them *to evaluate the legitimacy and purpose* of sources used. One way to help students *synthesize and evaluate* their sources in this way is the researched argument paper.
>
> Research helps students to formulate varied, informed arguments. Unlike the traditional research paper, in which works are often summarized but not evaluated or used to support the writer's own ideas, the researched argument requires students to consider each source as a text that was itself written for a particular audience and purpose. Researched argument papers remind students that they must sort through disparate interpretations to *analyze, reflect upon, and write* about a topic. When students are asked to bring the experience and opinions of others into their essays in this way, they enter into conversations with other writers and thinkers. The results of such conversations are essays that use citations for substance rather than show, for dialogue rather than diatribe. (College Board, *English Description* 8-9, excerpted, emphasis added)

The course description, it should be clear, asks teachers to develop students' skills in analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and use of materials quite specifically in the course goals. All the key words or ideas are in the description as my added emphasis makes clear. However, it is important to note that the description of course outcomes is not strongly focused on reading and research or on the essential skills of critical literacy. It focuses almost entirely on students' writing abilities. The list includes twelve

outcomes and only one of these mentions "arguments based on readings" (College Board, *English Description* 10; see Appendix A). In addition, the outcomes mention analysis only twice and synthesis not at all. And even if teachers emphasize this kind of work (which they do, as illustrated by syllabi discussed earlier), the exam sends a different and much more superficial message about the skills that are needed.

The College Board's research offices have developed a very detailed reading competency assessment model that provides a definition of reading useful to this discussion. The "Cognitively Based Assessment *of, for* and *as* Learning" reading competency model offers the following description of some of the essential reading skills beyond being able to decode written text:

> Model building skill is the collection of abilities that allows one to construct meaning from either decoded text or spoken language. This skill set includes all of the skills needed to construct meaning from words (vocabulary), sentences, paragraphs, and the overall discourse structure of text. Model building involves the ability to locate and retrieve information (literal comprehension) as well as the ability to infer and generalize unstated relationships within text. Both the literal and inferential levels of text processing help the reader to construct a mental model of a text's meaning. A mental model is a structured representation of the literal and implied meaning of text. It includes the ability to chunk, organize, and summarize information. …Applied comprehension skill is the ability to use the information contained in text or spoken language for some particular purpose. Applied comprehension involves going beyond the literal and inferential interpretation of text or spoken language in order to use the information to achieve a particular goal (e.g., solve a problem, make a decision, create a presentation or Web site). Applied comprehension in the CBAL model is broken down into three types of reading: reading that requires integrating and synthesizing

> information from multiple sources; reading that involves reasoning, explaining, and generating explanations by integrating new information with relevant background knowledge; and reading that requires application of critical thinking skills to evaluate text contents (evaluate/critique). (O'Reilly and Sheehan 5)

It's worth noting that the CBAL model specifically integrates analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and using reading materials for particular purposes. These are the key elements in the definition of academic critical literacy proposed above.

Finally, because what is at issue here is the ability of high school students as they are being taught and assessed by the AP Lang exam, it is worth looking at how the other major testing organization defines reading and literacy skills. So, the last definition useful to this discussion comes from the ACT. The ACT exam, taken by thousands of students every year, is not by any means a perfect instrument: it is a timed, paper-and-pencil multiple choice test (though it has in recent years added a writing sample as well). It does, however, have a section specifically devoted to reading in which students have 35 minutes to read four short passages of text and answer 10 multiple choice questions on each passage. A thorough study of student performance on the Reading portion of the ACT released in 2006 shows that only about half of 563,000 students tracked over three years earn a score of 21 or better (scale is 0-36), and are successful in college, where success is defined as a 2.0 GPA and returning for a second year of college. ACT specifies quite precisely the abilities it is measuring, a functional definition of students' abilities with complex texts, as follows, using the mnemonic RSVP:

> Relationships:
> Interactions among ideas or characters in the text are subtle, involved, or deeply embedded.
> Richness:

> The text possesses a sizable amount of highly sophisticated information conveyed through data or literary devices.
> Structure:
> The text is organized in ways that are elaborate and sometimes unconventional.
> Style:
> The author's tone and use of language are often intricate.
> Vocabulary:
> The author's choice of words is demanding and highly context dependent.
> Purpose:
> The author's intent in writing the text is implicit and sometimes ambiguous. (ACT, *Reading* 17)

Only half the students in the 2006 study were able to perform well on these aspects of reading; more recent results in 2015 show a decline in these skills, such that only 46% of students hit ACT's benchmark score (ACT, "Condition"). Moreover, the ACT's definition of "success" is quite limited; the organization does not make any claims about the desirable outcome of attainment, i.e., college completion.

And tests, in any case, have many weaknesses. Because no standardized test can fairly and thoroughly represent students' abilities, a different kind of qualitative measure provides further insight. Students' reading difficulties as they read and write research papers are reflected in the findings of the Citation Project, a major study of first-year writing. After reviewing about 2000 student citations to published work in papers written at schools and colleges across the country, Jamieson and Howard found that only 6% of the citations entail substantive summary of the source, and most papers mention a source only once and usually draw from the first page or two of the material used (Jamieson and Howard). These findings suggest that students typically do not read source materials thoroughly and are generally unable to go beyond summary if they get that far.

Finally, it is useful to understand how the synthesis question was developed in the context of the foregoing exploration of the critical reading and literacy issue. In *College Credit for Writing in High School*, Hansen and Farris have one chapter that is most pertinent to the issues under discussion, Kathleen Puhr's "The Evolution of AP English Language and Composition," which details the development of AP Lang over the last ten years or so. Puhr makes clear the connection between the recent changes in AP Lang and the work of the AP Test Development Committee (of which she was a member) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the national organization for those who direct college writing programs. The two groups worked together beginning in 2002 (Puhr 73) to add the synthesis question to the AP Lang exam. They also worked to develop the course, adding a stronger focus on rhetoric as well as the audit now used to review syllabi for the course.

Puhr points out that the AP Lang course is typically offered to high school juniors, integrated into American literature as a standard part of the curriculum. As a result, the course has a literary rather than a rhetorical focus with much less emphasis on nonfiction prose than is needed to develop the kinds of skills that are the focus of typical first-year composition courses. In a helpful table (Puhr 77), she shows how the WPA *Outcomes* statement fits together with the AP Lang course outcomes. However, she notes that not all AP courses offer or achieve these goals, for three main reasons: the mix of AP Lang with American literature, unprepared students taking the course, and unprepared teachers teaching it (Puhr 79). These various problems have led the CWPA organization to issue a position statement concerning pre-college writing courses including AP, the International Baccalaureate program (IB) and various kinds of dual or concurrent credit schemes (Hansen et al. *CWPA Position*).

The position statement specifically recommends that the AP Lang *course* can be an extremely valuable experience that prepares students for college writing. However, the English tests (both AP Lang and AP Lit) may not be "valid indicators that students are

prepared to bypass FYW [first-year writing] and [the CWPA organization] does not recommend that students take AP English tests in order to try to exchange their AP scores for FYW credit" (Hansen et al., *CWPA Position* 6-7). The problem with this position is that at a number of institutions, AP scores of 3 waive one first-year composition course, and scores of 4 or 5 waive two courses. Moreover, while elite private institutions can choose not to accept AP scores, many public institutions cannot make this choice lest they lose enrollment, since students and parents are looking for ways to shorten time to degree and limit costs in the face of the ever-increasing cost of college. If the goal is to produce a highly literate citizenry as Hansen et al. suggest (*CWPA Position* 12), waiving college composition courses based on AP test scores is not the best way to reach this goal. Indeed, a detailed study in 2010 of students whose high school class focused on the rhetorical analysis question of the AP exam showed that students improved their scores on that question, but did not achieve the goals that WPAs consider most important in first-year writing courses as discussed above in the section on the WPA *Outcomes* document, notably synthesis and evaluation (Warren).

From this review of definitions of reading and literacy and various attempts to measure or assess students' abilities, two points should be clear. First, the definition of academic critical literacy proposed at the start of this section captures a consensus of definitions from a variety of sources in the field. Second, although the College Board encourages the development of these skills in its expectations for AP Lang courses, it sends a different message with a test that entails the most superficial kind of reading. Despite the addition of visual material to the synthesis question prompt, and despite the requirement that students use the sources to support their argument, the AP Lang exam does not demand the academic critical literacy students will need for academic, professional and personal success. While AP will surely continue to offer the AP Lang exam, and while colleges will surely to continue to accept it in various ways, the recent statement put out by the CWPA organization makes clear that better approaches

to AP are needed to serve students' need for a full array of critical literacy skills in college and beyond. Again, the CWPA position statement makes clear that the *course* does provide students with useful beginning preparation in academic critical literacy, but the exam sends a distinctly different message.

What to Do? Making Better Use of AP

Given the problems with AP in general and with AP Lang in particular, what needs to happen? How can college and university faculty address these issues, especially since it is unlikely that institutions are going to stop accepting AP credit?

There are a number of ways that postsecondary faculty and institutions can create more appropriate responses to and uses of the AP Lang exam. First, high school AP teachers need to be more fully prepared to teach the AP Lang course; AP has recognized this need and has attempted to address it with regular workshops and in-service training for AP teachers around the US, but stronger preparation particularly in the teaching of writing and rhetorical skills is needed as well. This point has been made by my colleague and long-time AP reader, table leader, and consultant Ron Sudol, professor emeritus at Oakland University. For their part, colleges and universities, as I have suggested, also need to offer focused instruction in critical reading and thinking skills in every course across the curriculum, to go with widespread writing across the curriculum ("Reading Across the Curriculum").

In addition to these steps, English departments and writing programs might consider different ways of making use of students' AP Lang exam results, especially in ways that Ed White, a national expert in writing assessment, has argued should be tied to the courses and expectations of the local program of the institution the students attend (White 140-41). The studies by Hansen et al. discussed earlier show that AP English should be used for advanced *placement,* not for credit. Students submitting AP Lang results might be required to take a more advanced writing course and to demonstrate success in that course before credit is granted, with a minimum score of 3. They might be asked to submit a

portfolio of work done for their AP Lang course before credit is granted, regardless of the exam result, since that would allow college instructors to see the work that they did and assess the critical reading and writing preparation students have. A college or university might devise its own instrument that would measure academic critical literacy skills as I have defined them here and require students to demonstrate their skills through that instrument before accepting AP credit.

These approaches would allow for some kind of direct assessment of the skills students should have from AP Lang. In many institutions, each department is able to set its own requirements for the use of AP and in such institutions, these options would move toward a more substantive examination of students' ability levels. These ideas are supported by an NCTE Research Policy Brief issued in 2013 (Gere). The overall idea here is that the critical reading and literacy goals students need to achieve cannot be developed in a single course or measured by a single test. Any approach that helps students to develop their abilities to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and use information and ideas they get from reading can and should be applied over time and over a variety of courses and a variety of disciplines. (I am grateful to *JTW* reader Deborah Rossen-Knill for her guidance in clarifying this point.)

Institutions can also help students develop their reading and critical literacy skills by setting their policies differently. They could, for example, grant students AP credit for scores of 4 or 5, but require that students complete some or all of the required course sequence in first-year writing or in upper-level or gen ed writing intensive courses in addition to their AP work. A different approach would consider the AP Lang course as satisfying a pre-requisite or offer credit as for elective courses. Yet another possibility would be for institutions to offer only partial credit (say two credits instead of four) and then only students who take and pass another course with a C or better would receive this credit toward their degrees. Any or all of these strategies would allow institutions to continue to accept AP courses for credit in some

form, but make clear the importance of students developing skills in academic critical literacy.

AP Lang is a good starting point, but its focus on academic critical literacy is limited, at least in terms of the message sent by the exam itself. The course itself, as my high school colleagues' syllabi show, does a good job in beginning the development of the relevant skills. The problems with the AP program at large and particularly with the AP Lang exam are based on evidence from a number of different sources. Not only do education scholars and critics have concerns about AP, but so do those most directly affected by AP Lang, college writing teachers. The lately revised goals of the course, moreover, still do not fully address the academic critical literacy my research shows that novice readers need, and the test does not measure their development. For all these reasons, the uses of the AP English Language exam should be rethought so that it is confined to the liminal space of high school; college and university writing teachers and the institutions themselves should reconsider how they accept and apply credit for AP Lang. Postsecondary education in reading and writing and all other subject areas must be the space where academic critical literacy is taught and mastered by every student.

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APPENDIX A

AP Lang Goals (College Board, *English Description* 11-12)

The goals of an AP English Language and Composition course are diverse because the rhetoric and composition course in college serves a variety of functions in the undergraduate curriculum. The following, however, are the primary goals of the course:

▸

Developing critical literacy:

In most colleges and universities, the course is intended to strengthen the basic academic skills students need to perform confidently and effectively in courses across the curriculum. The course introduces students to the literacy expectations of higher education by cultivating essential academic skills such as critical inquiry, deliberation, argument, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Few colleges and universities regard completion of this entry-level course as the endpoint of students' English language education; subsequent courses in general and specialized curricula should continue building and refining the skills students practice in their rhetoric and composition courses.

▸

Facilitating informed citizenship:

While most college rhetoric and composition courses perform the academic service of preparing students to meet the literacy challenges of college-level study, they also serve the larger goal of cultivating the critical literacy skills students need for lifelong learning. Beyond their academic lives, students should be able to use the literacy skills practiced in the course for personal satisfaction and responsible engagement in civic life.

To support these goals, rhetoric and composition courses emphasize the reading and writing of analytic and argumentative texts instead of, or in combination with, texts representing English-language literary traditions. Like the college rhetoric and composition course, the AP English Language and Composition course focuses students' attention on the functions of written language in and out of the academy, asking students to practice the reading as well as the writing of texts designed to inquire, to explain, to criticize, and to persuade in a variety of rhetorical situations.
In this approach to the study and practice of written language, a writer's style is important because of its rhetorical, rather than its aesthetic, function.

APPENDIX B: TEACHER A'S AP LANG SYLLABUS (EXCERPT)

English 11 AP

AP Language & Composition

Nature of Course

There are two major components to this course: the survey of American Literature from the Puritan Age to the present and the preparation of students to take the AP Language and Composition Exam. The literary portion of the course stresses the influence of the role of historical events on literary schools of thought. Students investigate the major periods of Puritanism, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, and the related Twentieth Century movements.

Because students will take the AP Language and Composition Exam in May, the fiction and non-fiction reading assignments in this course will help students become better critical readers as well as help students broaden their own array of rhetorical strategies and stylistic choices for use in their writing of formal and informal essays. As we progress through American literature required fiction and non-fiction reading assignments, students will strengthen their skills in rhetorical analysis, a skill required for the AP exam. Students will also learn to write in the various modes of discourse (narration, description, comparison and contrast, process, cause and effect, exemplification, argumentation, etc.) and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Students will be expected to write an extended documented argumentative essay as well as write several documented synthesis essays in preparation for the AP Exam.

Students will also be expected to read outside of class on a topic of their choice throughout the spring semester. One or two of these outside sources must be visual in nature (cartoon, graph, artwork, etc.). On a bimonthly basis, students will make an oral presentation of the articles they have read and discuss how the article either supports or refutes their position on their topic. They are also required to note how the authors have developed their arguments in each of the articles the students present.

Goals of the Course

In addition to enhancing critical reading skills, the goal of this course is to prepare students for college-level writing across the curriculum and to prepare students for life-long writing experiences, both personal and professional. (C1) Students are to learn to assess, to analyze, and to write about poetry, short stories, novels, essays, autobiographies, biographies, and plays of selected major and minor American writers and to examine the intellectual and historical environments in which the works appear. Students will be expected to annotate each reading assignment as they read. Throughout the course, student will learn to write effectively, read critically, and think analytically so that they can become effective communicators both orally and in writing.

Because there will be an emphasis on writing, students are expected to refine their essay-writing skills. Many essays will be written in class and graded as a first draft. The expectation is that students with the aid of the teacher's comments will then revise the essay into a finished version. The student may also opt to take his/her paper to the Writing Center for additional teacher or peer feedback. The teacher will also provide comments on the final version, which will be submitted with all drafts. (C 3 and C10) Each revision is due a week after the paper has been returned to the student. Each student is expected to keep a log of skills to work on as well as skills mastered in each essay. Essays along with the log are kept in a portfolio and later returned to the student. Additionally, students will be expected to continue their study of grammar and vocabulary, and to sharpen their multiple-choice and essay test-taking skills.

APPENDIX C: TEACHER A'S SYNTHESIS ASSIGNMENT

Language and Composition AP Summer Reading Assignment for *This Land is Their Land:*

After reading Ehrenreich's book, choose one of her essays and write a three-page argument about the topic. You can agree with her, disagree, or offer a nuanced position that accepts some of what she says and refutes the rest. Use the classical organizational scheme to develop your argument. If you don't know what this is or if you have any questions, please email me at XXX@YYY and I'll send you a graphic organizer to help you with your argument.

After you have written your argument, you will do some research. Specifically, you need to find three sources to incorporate into your paper, which will be due during the first week of school. Your sources should support your position. It is important that you turn copies of these sources in along with your paper. At this stage of the process, you will not integrate your sources into your argument. When I first see your paper, I should see just your argument with no sources used.

After formally studying the process of writing a synthesis essay in the first week of school, you will revise this draft and incorporate your sources into your essay. You will be required to follow MLA guidelines regarding citations, works cited, and page formatting. Your synthesis essay will be graded.

APPENDIX D: TEACHER B'S COURSE SYLLABUS (RESOURCES ETC. OMITTED)

AP® English Language and Composition

Syllabus

Course Overview

AP® English Language and Composition is a two-semester junior-level writing course which covers a variety of rhetorical modes and prepares students to take the AP® Language and Composition examination in the spring. Students who enroll in this course typically have successfully completed the requirements of the ninth and tenth grade Honors English courses. AP Language is a college-level course that focuses on the rhetorical strategies writers and speakers use to impart their messages. Students will develop their own reading, writing, and thinking skills as they analyze a wide variety of non-fiction literature and visual media such as film, photography, political cartoons, and compose their own essays in a variety of styles and contexts (impromptu, multi-draft take home essays, extended multi-draft research papers) for a variety of audiences. The course prepares students to "write effectively and confidently in their college courses across the curriculum and in their personal and professional lives." The ability to write well, to write powerfully, and to command the English language confidently are worth more than mere test scores and letter grades; we believe that language shapes the world.

Course Planner – Semester One

We teach the course over two semesters, dividing each semester into two thematic quarters. Although students' schedules rotate, the teachers of this course plan together via e-mail and common planning times (bi-weekly professional team times and lunch). Students bring their AP English binders with them and as the teachers have all been sharing syllabi and curriculum materials, the switch is fairly seamless.

First Quarter (Reading and Writing to Discover One's Voice)

The first quarter emphasizes reading and writing in the descriptive and narrative rhetorical modes while developing skills of close reading and rhetorical analysis. Students then move to a study of the modes of pointing to instances and definition to better enable them to construct well-developed arguments. Students become familiar with the language of stylistic analysis as they learn how the tone and syntax of a selection can significantly affect its meaning.

The course opens with an immediate follow-up to the summer reading: George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*; students complete a timed, in-class writing (cite prompt) that serves to introduce them to the demands of the course and synthesize elements of the summer reading. Additionally, each student spends the summer reading a columnist of

his or her choice and completing informal response journals aimed at defining that columnist's style. The impromptu and subsequent classroom discussions of the students' summer columnists establish a context for the course which is explicitly addressed in the College Board's "Course Description," which the students receive, read, and discuss.

Close Reading

The first month of the course stresses the development of close reading and annotation skills. After learning the meaning and significance of an author's tone of voice and the textual features that contribute to it (Diction, Imagery, Details, Language, Sentence Structure), students practice analyzing and annotation short selections with teacher guidance. Model annotations and discussion questions in the course text, *The Brief Bedford Reader*, help students learn how diction, imagery, and syntax significantly affect the tone of a piece.

APPENDIX E: TEACHER B'S RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

Synthesis Research Paper Steps:

- Identify an issue
- Introduce the issue, providing background and context and defining any key terms.
- Ask a question on which reasonable people could disagree.
- Model this one-page overview of your topic after the AP Language Exam synthesis prompt; include a title with "Reading Time" and "Suggested Writing Time," directions, an introduction that provides a paragraph or two of background information, an assignment in which you pose your research question, and a list of sources.
- Make sure to develop an engaging question that invites a variety of responses.
- I will grade this model synthesis prompt on the clarity and specificity of the writing as well as the quality of the sources (which should represent varying styles (political cartoons, graphs, charts, pictures, essays, letters, articles, letters to the editor, etc.) from a variety of genres (magazine, newspaper, encyclopedia, online database articles, published books, historical documents, television/media, literature, etc), and reflect a variety of perspectives.

Next…

In your study groups, engage in lively discussion about the issues raised in the prompts. Take notes on these discussions and plan your draft. Make any changes necessary to the sources or prompt as you prepare to create a first draft of your paper

in class on April 20. Feel free to gather more sources in anticipation of expanding your impromptu draft into a 6 - 8 page research paper following MLA formatting.

Keep in Mind…

- While we will provide media center time, you will need to complete the bulk of the research on your own.
- The goal here is to apply your developing argumentative skills:
    - the ability to frame an issue
    - the ability to balance logical and emotional appeals
    - the ability to muster compelling evidence
    - the ability to converse with source material while developing your own position (as Joliffe advises, "read, analyze, generalize, converse, finesse, and argue")
    - the ability to expand a 2 - 3 page impromptu into a 6 - 8 page extended argumentative piece, simultaneously pursuing economy of language and depth of analysis.

REDESIGNING THE RESEARCH ARC OF FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION: RENEGOTIATING AND REMAPPING AN APPROACH TO INFORMATION LITERACY

Amy Locklear

An abundance of scholarship produced in the last several decades critiques the traditional college research paper and how it is taught in First-Year Writing (FYW) courses (e.g., Melzer and Zemliansky; Larson; Sutton; Downs and Wardle). One line of criticism is that the product-driven praxis of many research-writing FYW courses fails to successfully facilitate transferrable information literacy practices (Larson, Veach, Downs and Wardle). Other concerns focus on the habits of students when reading and using sources, particularly their online information-seeking behaviors (Corbett, Goodfellow, Purcell et al.). In 2011, Sandra Jamieson and Rebecca Moore Howard published the results of The Citation Project,[1] an empirical study that gathered data from "sixteen US colleges and universities" in order to create a "portrait of how students in [first-year] writing courses work with their sources" (Jamieson 1). The impetus for their study stemmed from an ongoing concern within English Studies (and other academic fields) with academic plagiarism and its prevention. Their research, however, operated on the premise that plagiarism prevention was only one "desired outcome"; the larger, more important goal was to promote changes in classroom pedagogy in order to help students better understand how to

effectively engage with source materials ("Sandra Jamieson"). As one of sixteen participating institutions in this study, Auburn University Montgomery (AUM) contributed student research paper samples culled from our second-semester First-Year Writing course sequence, hereafter referred to as FYW2. What the final Citation Project report uncovered was "a gap between the broad aims of college Writing instruction and the source-based papers students are actually producing in first-year Writing classes" (21). Drawing upon that study's results, this article outlines steps taken by the AUM Composition Program to reconceptualize our FYW2 course to address both Citation Project recommendations as well as concerns expressed by English Studies scholars over plagiarism and research writing skills. In this context, I examine two layers of change: (1) the rationale behind reframing our overall programmatic arc, and (2) my own classroom pedagogy and praxis following the new design. Couched in the intentional metaphors of **exploration**, **conversation**, and **remix**, both the programmatic and classroom redesigns reframed our researched argument process as inquiry- rather than proof-driven.

In Fall 2012, one of the original research team members of The Citation Project, Dr. Tricia Serviss, presented results specific to AUM's Composition Program to our teaching faculty, prompting our Program's director to call for large-scale curricular revisions in order to address these findings. Specifically, the results generated for our institution suggested that, not unlike the national results, our students were not deeply engaging with sources in ways that promoted critical meaning making ("Citation" 18), leading us to ask what changes we could make at both curricular and pedagogical levels. Several key findings of the Project are particularly relevant for this discussion. Among student papers submitted by our institution,

- 93% of citations "work with two or fewer sentences from the source rather than ***engaging*** [emphasis mine] with a sustained passage in the source" (12),

- 50% of citations are quotations (compared to 42% nationwide),
- 30% of papers demonstrate a misuse of source material in the form of either patchwriting or failure to correctly mark quotations,
- 48% of our students depend more on internet sites than sources such as books or journal articles (37%). Significantly, our student samples "cite[d] general websites with twice the frequency that they cite reliable informational sites such as…the CDC" (15), and
- 77% of citations are drawn from sources shorter in length (most fewer than four pages) and from material found in the first three pages.

And our program is not atypical. The Citation Project's authors observe that all of the institutional data suggest that, nationwide, "students are not engaging with texts in meaningful ways" (18). These results indicated to our instructional team a need for extended, deeper instruction on source use, not just teaching plagiarism avoidance—something our former course design was clearly not effectively providing. Our redesign team determined that *engagement* and *student agency* must become central to any shifts in pedagogy. Our thinking was that if students saw source materials as external objects of proofs, designed to be skimmed and positioned as authoritative data points, they may not see themselves as participants engaged in a dynamic relationship with sources when it comes to information-seeking behaviors. Such critical literacy is vital to achieving a transferable set of research behavior outcomes beyond the FYW classroom. The bulleted results above from The Citation Project became a diagnostic starting point with which we began to redesign the overall arc of our FYW2 framework and classroom practices.

Following the new curricular arc and the Citation Project's recommendations, these classroom-level efforts to reconceptualize FYW2 began with new framing metaphors

intended to (1) shift the nature of the student-source relationship (from exteriorization to interiorization via **exploration**, **conversation**, and **remix**), and (2) incorporate native digital literacies in order to foster a stronger sense of engagement as stakeholders in the process, in addition to (3) facilitate intentional rhetorical shifts in choices of course materials and assignment language, and (4) follow an extended arc of scaffolded, heuristic-based assignments to enhance opportunities for student information literacy and critical research practices. This article offers some of the key changes made to both our curriculum's overall assignment arc as well as my own pedagogical shifts as a representative classroom within this new arc.

The Wider Context: Where We Fit In

The Citation Project's data analysis results echo concerns found throughout Writing, Composition, and Information Literacy Studies' scholarship, specifically concerning the merit and shape of the research paper traditionally assigned to freshman students at the end of the FYW2 course. Considered together, results from The Citation Project, the Association of College and Research Libraries "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education," Purcell et al.'s report on "How Teens Do Research in the Digital World," as well as countless other anecdotal experiences represented in the scholarship are clear indicators that the way we teach the FYW2 research paper demands examination and even revision. A review of some of the recent scholarship focused on this question suggests that current approaches to teaching the research paper often seem to promote generalized skill set acquisition, largely centered on academic information search skills and plagiarism avoidance (Howard, Serviss, and Rodrigue 178). Some scholars argue that the research project in FYW2 should be reconceived following a writing-across-the-disciplines alignment to better facilitate transfer (Sutton 46). Others, like Downs and Wardle, believe that the freshman research task would be better theorized and practiced through a writing studies' lens in order to broaden students' views of

writing's purpose in the academy (552-553). Still others (Larson) move the issue completely out of the FYW experience altogether, suggesting the research essay as currently taught ill-serves the academy and the student once beyond the first-year writing classroom. Given these discussions, it seems clear that the form of the traditional argument research paper as a *product* showcasing correctly cited authorities is no longer accepted as a monolithic standard for the first-year composition sequence. In fact, many compositionists argue that a generic research project may not effectively prepare students for one-to-one transfer of knowledge to other disciplines at all (Larson, Sutton).

What, then, is the solution? Writing and Information Literacy scholars offer a variety of proposed avenues for restructuring the freshman research essay as part of FYW2. Some, like Holliday and Fagerheim, focus on the primacy of the information literacy component, outlining a local curriculum design which more closely integrates the roles of the composition instructor and the library instruction staff (169). Grace Veach, Dean of Library Services at Southeastern University, proposes a similar partnership, calling for a purposeful revision of the operational metaphors in use, promoting a traditional rhetorical "place" or "topoi" filter in order to assist instructors in their efforts to address the tendency for students and composition courses to emphasize information gathering over critical inquiry (105, 110). However, such proposals seem to pivot to some degree on a focus that privileges a skills-practice-product approach, rather than students' agency when engaged as active knowledge-making discourse community members (similar to concerns expressed by Gee, Bodi, and Rossen-Knill and Bakhmetyeva). To the latter focus, recent scholarship by Joseph Bizup, Len Unsworth, and Patrick Corbett contributes critical elements that, when situated within the needs-context highlighted by The Citation Project, inform the curricular and pedagogical revisions outlined here.

Setting the Stage for Change: Curricular Remap

Prior to Citation Project-inspired revisions, the two-semester FYW sequence at AUM followed a pattern fairly common among university FYW programs. The focus of our first semester (FYW1) course, English 1010, was (and remains) expository writing; the second part of the sequence (English 1020 or FYW2) focused on producing a researched persuasive argument essay. Our state's Higher Education Council mandates six graded assignments for each semester – for a total of twelve for the entire first-year composition sequence. Prior to these outlined changes, our 1020 course design featured four stand-alone analytical projects, supplemented with minor writing assignments such as a mid-term or final exam and a writing journal or blog. The sequence followed a skills-based design: (1) analysis of one argument, (2) analytic comparison of two arguments, (3) synthesis of three arguments, and (4) a final persuasive research essay based on a student-selected arguable issue. (However, according to instructor preference, the focus text or issue was not always the same across all assignments.) Instructors used a common course textbook and assignments (including an *option* of digital technologies) to reinforce the workshop-based course, with outcomes of "understand[ing], describ[ing], and apply[ing] techniques of persuasion in a variety of situations" ("English 1020"). A significant problem with this sequence was that students often did not begin exploring a research topic until well into the semester, creating a sort of mad dash to the finish line for both students and instructors. This raised a question of transfer: how could we know if students were internalizing the progressive nature of the process-to-product *implied* by this sequence of skills-focused projects? Instructors and students alike often complained that there simply "wasn't enough time," a concern recently echoed by Kristin Arola and Michael Stancliff, who argue for a pedagogy of "slow composition." This process of teaching and writing that allows students (and, I would argue, instructors) to "slow down, take a breath, and think about what [they] are gathering and why

[they] want to gather it in the first place" (Arola) would play out in our redesign's new map.

After reviewing the Citation Project's recommendations for AUM, our program's Curriculum Coordinator proposed a curricular redesign based on a scaffolded sequence of unified assignments, beginning with a short topic-exploration essay that calls for students to write reflectively and informally about their own research interests. This assignment is followed by a progression-based series of linked "mini" writing projects emphasizing exploration and evaluation. Rather than emphasizing *product,* the sequence asks students to focus on research as *activity*, adding stages on a semester-long timeline much like a Russian nesting doll. As described by our Curriculum Coordinator, this curriculum remap emphasizes an

> interconnected, detailed, and gradual development of research practices.... The focus is on developing information literacy/citation practices (as emphasized by The Citation Project) in a structured manner that will still allow for the freedom of individual pedagogical approaches without sacrificing the program's ability to present students with a consistent and quality educational experience.

Such an arc might be best described as an approach promoting *heuristics*—teaching habits that can be repeated—rather than *product* (such as an analysis essay), allowing us to "slow down," deepen critical thinking opportunities, and make space for student literacies to play a larger role in moving deeper into the discourse of academic writing. The arc calls for reflective as well as formal assignments promoting critical, metacognitive thinking along an extended timeline, allowing students to dig into sources—a need suggested by The Citation Project results. Thus, instead of having only one assignment devoted to an exploratory task, the entire remapped sequence would facilitate multiple stages of inquiry and exploration.

For example, in our previous format, the first four weeks of the term focused on analysis practices based on a single source. Instructors often chose a single, common source based on the theme of the section or provided students with a selection of sources from which to choose. One drawback of this practice is that it created distance between the text and the students' interests, denying full student agency in the source topic choice. Even if some instructors allowed students freedom to choose their own text, the levels of students' unfamiliarity with the subject and discourse practices of analysis related to research were daunting. While the course outcomes emphasized critical reading for analysis, students rarely had any compelling internal motivation to see the product as anything more than practicing behaviors they had not yet internalized. When faced with such a task so early in the term, my students often claimed in end-of-course surveys that they had a hard time making connections between these early and the final projects, frequently using terms like "rushed" or "confusing." Reframed, such responses might reflect their novice status in the academic discourse community practices, but might also suggest a lack of personal presence (agency) in the meaning making expected of them. Simply put, they haven't had time to warm up, explore, invent, or familiarize themselves with the discourse environment in ways that promote constructive intellectual curiosity (one of NCTE's "Habits of Mind").

Such extended inquiry space is prominent in our revised curricular arc. Instead of beginning with a four-week analysis product, students writing in the new arc are asked to consider first their own discourse communities of family, friends, work, and play to discover conversations related to our themed course subject. Over several class periods, I ask students to use their pre-existing methods of knowledge-making (conversation, social media, Google searching) to create a list of ten topics they find personally interesting. From this basic list, students—individually and in groups—explore, revise, and narrow this list using a variety of filters (e.g., asking reporters' questions) and a series of critical reading exercises. Early in this process, I post large sheets

of paper around the classroom, each with subject headings based on an early survey of student interests: Business, Sciences, Education, Healthcare, Art & Music, Law/Politics, Social Media, and one simply marked "Other." Students visit each sheet and transfer from their lists as many one- or two-word topic phrases as possible. In a second round of writing, students then revisit each sheet and record a question (the 5 Ws + should/if) next to as many topics listed as possible (not their own). The result leads to such interesting student-generated questions as:

What would happen if all of the libraries closed down? (Education)	How will the business of hospitals change when genetic engineering becomes prevalent? (Business/Health)	When is the use of technology as an art form turning from true forms of art? (Art / Other)
What if animal testing was banned? (Science)	Where would life be better without the Internet? (Social media)	How will genetic engineering have effects on spreading of disease? (Health)

Students frequently remark such collaborative exploration sparks new questions and perspectives they had not previously considered on their own, making discovery a *topoi*.

This remap facilitates a pedagogy utilizing such "meaning-making structures" to invoke the multiliteracies of students (Unsworth 2). Similar to the contours of Corbett's "stage-process approach" design, this scaffolded arc encourages the adoption of an "inquiry-based writing" pedagogy (Corbett 268), drawing first upon students' familiar practices (what Corbett calls "exploration"), and adding regular metacognitive writing elements to build from reflective "generative" practices in a semester-long sequence of research activities (269). Thus, following the new map through the semester, students are asked to only move from

"the familiar to the new" (i.e., the help of "expert tools" or sources) after they have had an opportunity to "investigate" first, then "rethink, retool, and expand their research" in an ongoing trajectory framed as exploratory and conversational inquiry (Corbett 271). Such practices, we reasoned, would create what Kalantzis and Cope refer to as a "critical frame" (247), an opportunity to bridge students' native information literacy discourse skills toward those habits of mind promoted by the academy, a precept promoted by many in the fields of composition and education (e.g., Dewey; Bartholomae; Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola). Our reasoning was that such revisions to the former sequence would allow students time to "steep" in the practices; further, allowing for personalization of efforts framed as exploration might help student writers "own" the process.

Deepening the Change: Pedagogy and Reintegration

In the individual classroom, revisions to pedagogy continue this curricular shift from *product* literacy (how to replicate the academic research essay's form) to a *rhetorical* literacy that reintegrates student agency. Such rhetorical design moves seek to reposition students *within* the discourse community as intentional agents, rather than as outsiders seeking access through imitation (Bartholomae 135). As an instructor, my goal was to reconceive and assign research activities as a process of **discovery** to help students find and integrate their own voices into the discourse. The heart of this reconceptualization takes place using framing metaphors to operationalize the shift, and deliberately rhetoricizes materials to reflect an approach to research that intentionally integrates student literacies. As the New London Group's research demonstrates, the role of students' native literacies in classroom learning has been too long undervalued. Taking cues from the Citation Project results, my classroom-based changes focus on facilitating deeper moments of engagement. To do so,

student literacies need to play an integral role in the design of course assignments and classroom activity spaces.

The Messy Art of Questioning Continues

Sonia Bodi suggests we bridge the gap "between what we teach and what they do" by focusing on the act of questioning (109). I refer to many of my in-class activities as "messy" because they do not immediately translate into what might look like "traditional" (i.e., standards of academic discourse) research writing. Instead, they allow students to receive credit for the part of research that had previously been relegated to "prewriting" in a larger, graded research project. By thus highlighting the value of the messy process of inquiry and exploration, the new sequence and implementation emphasize students' agency in the rhetorical act of research, not just the academically valued product. In my application of the new arc, like Bodi I recast student research as inquiry and conversation by making questions a visible part of the work, as much a goal as the final academic paper. In the first iteration of our new arc, I ask my students to write several short (two page) topic inquiry-to-proposal pieces based on answering a series of key questions outlined by our textbook (*The Bedford Researcher*). In the previous four-essay curricular format, many of my students would express frustration when asked to produce analysis papers—assignments based on an academic system that equates synthesis and analysis with research writing from the very start—so early in the semester because they felt as though a research project meant starting with an answer they had not yet discovered. In fact, they were unsure how to even formulate a productive series of questions to guide their search. As Bodi affirms, designing curricular material that both foregrounds and is driven by the power of questioning (inquiry) rather than product serves "to motivate students to learn and understand that what *they* do [emphasis mine] is important in the quest for knowledge" (112).

Text Expertise vs. Student Expertise

Under the new arc, an inquiry focus frames our view of texts. Clearly, our twenty-first century students' encounters with source texts have expanded beyond the book culture at the heart of more traditional research writing pedagogy (Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola), a reality not lost on my own revisions. I began by integrating into my workshop activities existing student discourse practices, including navigating digital media using moves far more similar to discovery and exploration. Putting this "native discourse literacy" to use, as they navigate a series of hyperlinks found in web texts assigned for class reading, my students move from idea to idea in a much more web-like motion, propelling them to discover a different text or reference or concept through a carefully placed embedded reference. Therefore, it made sense to begin introducing students to academic *discovery* by renegotiating the language of the research process, calling their attention to their existing practices (like following hyperlinks) that parallel academic practices. During group discussion of a web text, for example, my students are asked to discuss the additional, hyperlinked material in terms of what we call "informational forensics," seeing the links as offshoots or sidebar conversations. Students are then asked to see these rhetorically—as "forensic investigators" —when considering the new "speakers'" redirection of the discussion. What can they find out about this new voice? Student teams then work together in Google or in the web source itself to track down additional information about the author and publication. Such practices become the basis of later discussions of primary and secondary sources, as well as evaluation. This is in contrast to ways many of our program's past textbooks framed research literacies using terms like "authoritative support texts," phrasing which Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola point to as privileging book literacies over students' ("Blinded By The Letter"). Indeed, in restructuring my own assignment materials, I found that too often the pedagogy and materials associated with teaching a persuasive research assignment in FYW2 reinforce practices of formulaic constructedness rather than the more "messy"

exploration stages encouraged by our new curricular arc of assignments (Head and Eisenberg 2). Thus, assignment texts as well as activities were redesigned to rhetorically position students as **stakeholders** and **conversation partners**, asking them to begin with knowledge inventory (or intrinsic) activities designed to explore existing literacies before they begin looking for extrinsic search materials. To support this shift, our program's Curriculum Coordinator selected a text[2] that could provide the inquiry-friendly approach of our new arc design. In addition, the text incorporates extensive supplemental digital platform materials to incorporate digital literacy habits – both native and academic. Instructors were granted a degree of creative leeway in adapting their classroom practices to the new arc, with the stipulation that all assignments must connect to the textbook and follow the progression of the arc.

In the case of my course, this reinvigorated focus on *inquiry* begins with a carefully targeted metaphor—**the conversation of argument**—to frame both my course pedagogy as well as materials. Given the increasingly popular use of the conversation-vs.-argument metaphor in our field and in an effort to increase student engagement with sources, this metaphor seems well suited to help my students begin conceptualizing sources as their **conversation partners** (intrinsic focus) rather than quarries for mining quotes (extrinsic), the latter a phenomenon noted by the Citation Project's sentence-level data observations (Jamieson and Moore Howard 6).[3] This allows for valued "messiness" in, for example, early student journal-keeping activities. Students are asked to see their journals as a judgment-free sandbox zone, allowing them to reflect and discover broadly and freely in their weekly entries deemed "discovery posts." They are further encouraged to post images, memes, drawings, poetry—as long as it expresses a connection to the course purpose and their topic inquiry. By renegotiating the terms of writing in this way, from formal to informal, the key rhetorical moves become a guiding ethos of redesign and form the foundational pathway to facilitate enhanced critical engagement in research behaviors.

Remapping and Reorienting the Compass Points

The Citation Project's results suggest that students' relationships to and engagement with source texts was an area in need of attention. The question arose: why *aren't* students engaging with source texts on a level more in line with the critical thinking outcomes of our classroom, specifically to encourage them "to *generate* ideas rather than to [merely] support pre-existing arguments" (Jameison and Howard 21)? The answer seemed to lie—at least in part—with the stated goals of research. In our previous curricular designs, the goals of research writing as framed by the academy too often situated students in a role of a novice tasked with imitating accepted models. Our earlier model created a series of "stovepiped" products framed to produce academic behaviors (analysis, comparison, synthesis, research) based on an orientation valuing the source material, in academic voice. The problem with this is that students were being asked to navigate unfamiliar territory with a perspective that was equally unfamiliar, leading them too often to see source materials as an immutable support structure that replaced their own agency. In order to reorient these perceptions, I focused my classroom pedagogy redesign efforts on two key questions: how do students *choose* their source texts and how do they *use* them in their own writing.

Reorienting the Metaphors: A Tour of Burke's Parlor

One key to my classroom remap was to rhetorically situate research in terms of **motive**. In *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson observe that a "metaphorical concept" structures "what we do and how we understand what we do when we argue.... The metaphor is not merely in the words we use—it is in our very concept of an argument" (5). Variations on the current traditional approach to teaching FYW2 assignments too often lean heavily on metaphors of *replication*, mimicking the academic discourse conventions as a means of acquiring knowledge or skill training. Our previous course assignment sequence was certainly framed that way. As previously

mentioned, that metaphor frames literacy as a set of skills to be acquired, a concept that has been roundly challenged by a variety of scholars. Yet curiously, if our textbooks are any proof, many of our freshman composition courses seem to continue to operate within this definitional framework. A cursory glance at the language of textbooks or English Studies' scholarship describes Information Literacy instruction as grounded in metaphors of source-seeking behavior privileging the extrinsic (e.g., search results, support, proofs). In order to implement these curricular revisions at the classroom level, I needed a metaphoric framework that would promote a useful "cognitive [re]orientation" to help students—and instructors—reconceptualize and prioritize their roles in the research process (Luke 73), as well as reconfigure students' understanding of their relationship to sources.

The former course design model, based on a cumulative tier of teaching analytical and research skill sets, asked students to analyze and compare others' arguments. Given the Citation Project findings, this may have unwittingly contributed to a tendency to see argument source texts as objects, whether for analysis or as resources from which to pluck quotations. Students' metaphoric frame under the previous model, then, was one of "proving a case," much as a lawyer might do. While not uncommon or unproductive in discussions of argument, this approach seems to facilitate and reinforce a student's relationship to source material as an externalized object of use, not as an interactive conversational voice involved in a student's journey of inquiry. And while such a metaphor is not invalid, the purpose of the revised arc is to facilitate complex critical thinking. If students too early settle on this legal metaphor as a path forward, too often the research boils down to a familiar pro/con binary; the problem is that both academic and public discourse are rarely that simple. Our new arc, instead, promotes a more complex web of inquiry. To increase the potential for transfer beyond the semester, we wanted the revised curriculum to allow for time to explore the web-like nuances characteristic of potential, dynamic conversation. At the classroom level, in order to help students

reconceptualize their own role in the research process through Luke's "cognitive [re]orientation" (73), during the first week of class I invite students to see themselves entering the Burkean Parlor, a metaphor that then becomes the operational framework with which to introduce the new assignment arc. I begin by introducing students to the following quote from Kenneth Burke:

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before.

This offers a useful and rhetorically significant segue into the first curve of the arc, a topic exploration essay. By asking students to see themselves as part of an existing conversation, one involving many perspectives and stakeholders, they are encouraged to see that their research focus need not be limited to a binary, pro/con approach—a familiar go-to for many freshman writers.

When used as a semester-long touchstone, this metaphor also encourages students to pay attention to related perspectives—to listen as one would in a conversation. By the time we reach the next assignment point in the curricular arc a few weeks later, students are instructed to continue exploring their topic by using their existing search (Google) habits in order to find as wide a variety of "voices" as possible as a means of shaping and informing their perception of the conversation *before* adding their voice. As they do, they are asked to layer in additional search engines and assess the variations in results. At this point, Burke's metaphor continues to be a rhetorical guide along the arc:

> You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar.

At this phase, Burke's conversational framework situates students in the dynamics of a conversation, highlighting possible paths and opening up potential rhetorical movements to examination with students as dialogic participants. To further cement this perspective, one of our first collaborative online activities is designed to promote group interaction as an interplay of voices, providing more of the "messiness factor" mentioned previously. For this step, I ask my class to use a web-based concept mapping program like Mindomo or Popplet to visualize how a topic invites variously phrased questions that reflect the needs and interests of stakeholders. I prepare a Popplet space that includes all students as collaborators and contains topics gleaned from students' early exploratory writing. As a group, students identify stakeholders who might be interested in that topic, then co-create questions those stakeholders might ask. Similar to our earlier subject-based crowdsourced question activity, this next inquiry activity helps student researchers think more critically about their topic as an exploratory continuum.

The final contribution by Burke's metaphor forecasts the type of deepening engagement asked of students in their assignment arc:

> Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending on the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

With this final thought, students are invited to see themselves relieved of the pressure to singlehandedly "solve" a problem they have identified, a mindset that often accompanies a product-based perception of research. Instead, however, the metaphor allows me to ask students to frame their "writer-ly" orientation in a set of a semester-long activities that privilege student agency, developing

heuristics of inquiry and critical thinking as transferable behaviors and addressing one of the stated concerns of the Citation Project's findings. Although introduced as an orientation to the scope of our course work, Burke's metaphor soon becomes a persistent thread and touchstone throughout the semester, allowing the concept to "sink in" over time and with repeated application.

Remapping the Metaphors: From Conversation to Remix

Once our conversational metaphor has been established, this conceptual shift is further reinforced using the concept of *remix*. In brief, a *remix* is defined in terms of recombination, to produce a new thing via "transformation" (Ferguson). The term has more recently been used as a variant of synthesis, often linked to multimodal writing (Johnson). However, a quick survey of recent literature suggests that when the term *remix* is used in connection with FYW composition, it often refers to teaching students to *do* remix as an extension of native discourses rather than as an overt call to critically examine their approach to research material literacies (New London Group, Cope and Kalantzis, Devoss and Ridolfo, or Kress). Building upon these foundations in that direction helps to put a finer point on using this term as an instructional metaphor for freshman research/inquiry writing. In other words, rather than emphasizing digital remix assignments, I use *remix* to frame an overt shift in our composing *vocabulary* to resituate student *identities* and native discourse practices to address student-to-source relationship concerns. My goal is to help students see their sources not in terms of data-mining but as resources to be remixed, in which they are asked to see themselves as active agents in knowledge making. To this end, students may begin to see the potential for synthesizing patterns and relationships between sources.

To illustrate this research habit, early in the term I introduce the Kirby Ferguson video series "Everything Is A Remix." As a pedagogical tool, the videos draw upon student discourse literacies by incorporating several multimedia commonplace

references familiar to most freshman students: music, music videos, popular movies (*Star Wars*), and culturally embedded technologies like the computer. The Ferguson videos introduce the term *remix* to students as a means of explaining ways we commonly synthesize existing materials in other situations by collecting, combining, and transforming materials to create something new. Ferguson provides a series of examples drawn from the entertainment industry to show how familiar cultural artifacts are created through remixing. By emphasizing the creative industries of music and movie-making, the concept formally referred to as synthesis moves away from unfamiliar territory in which they may see themselves as novice outsiders (to academia) and onto more familiar ground. In our classroom, this allows us to further renegotiate the terminology of research to facilitate students' agency and areas of discourse. By discussing information literacy from the vantage point of creation, our in-class conversations and related assignment artifacts foreground *student* contexts and experiences, emphasizing pre-existing strategies. Thus, when we move on to discuss their sources ("conversation partners"), the question becomes, "How can you remix these materials?" To collect (not copy), then combine (synthesize) their materials, the original ideas contributed by their conversation partners can then be transformed thanks to the new framing provided by the students' own perspectives on the topic.

This heuristic approach allows me to explore existing student literacies with them, then transfer these practices into their research behaviors. An added rhetorical bonus is the chance to recast the term *synthesis* in a new light of creative agency. After showing these videos in class, group discussion breaks down Ferguson's terms of "copy/combine/transform," taking care to discuss why the term "copy" is such a problematic term outside of academia (as well as in). Instead, students are asked to explore the premise that they are already adept at the practice of taking existing materials ("collect" rather than copy) and "combine" them to make new connections ("transform"). For example, I ask my students to consider this scenario: whenever they review a movie

after discussing it among friends, or draw upon online reviews before making a purchase, they are *remixing* ideas drawn from inquiry and conversation in order to form an opinion or suggest action. Guided by their working thesis ideas, students are then encouraged to see their early acts of exploratory research (inquiry) and writing as a way to create something new that "transforms" or shifts the conversation in new directions.

Information literacy is thereby intentionally recast in new rhetorical terms, emphasizing the relationship between writers and existing texts as one that promotes more thoughtful source selection as well as deeper engagement. Both of these are Citation Project-inspired goals of the new curricular arc. As frameworks, Burke's Parlor and Ferguson's Remix offer students and instructors new vocabularies to facilitate our redesigned approach to writing and research, something Devoss and Ridolfo call "recomposition." While the Burkean Parlor/Conversation element is not new to FYW pedagogy, using it with remix in our new curricular arc and revised pedagogy practices have become regular features of our teacher training activities. Immediately after our curricular shift, several training sessions were devoted to collaborative revision activities designed to re-align classroom artifacts to focus on ongoing moments of inquiry discovery, not end-products, in an effort to deepen the conversations about the two key areas of student agency and identity that emerged from the Citation Project's findings—source choice and source use.

Changing Frames: Reintegrating Digital Literacies and Native Discourses

In the field of Writing Studies, recent focus on "expanding concepts of 'literacy'" or literacies as socially constituted practices (Goodfellow 131; Gee 13) points to the role of students' native discourses—and specifically how their native "information-seeking behaviors" are often marginalized as "un-academic" (Corbett 265). Another facet of this reframed pedagogy is helping students renegotiate their perceptions of research as "data gathering." As

Patricia Bizell and Bruce Herzberg observe, encouraging students to engage in the research process "not as a sterile exercise in recovering what is already known but as a *socially embedded act of inquiry* that aims to further the collective understanding of a particular discourse community" is key to this research-as-conversation remapping approach (as cited in Bizup 72). The Citation Project's results could be interpreted as an indication that our earlier FYW2 framework and accompanying materials/practices may have been asking students to make what likely seemed to be an abrupt rhetorical shift toward an orientation centered on emulation, not inquiry (Corbett 266). Recent research suggests this may also reflect how students respond to unfamiliar discourse environments (Gee). However, as Bartholomae points out, emulative praxis is often limited in success—and transfer potential —if students are unable to see the connection to "prior texts," which must necessarily include their existing literacy experiences if we are to encourage student agency in the research process (141). Therefore, when our students' writing practices depend heavily on source materials superficially skimmed at the surface, the writer's argument often becomes a string of quotations or paraphrases serving as proofs, subsuming the student voice and falling far short of the sort of "authentic" writing we want to see happening in FYW2 student work.

To counter this, once the classroom's conversational framework is set using the Burkean / Remix metaphor, the next phase of change focuses on inquiry-based search and application practices. Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola suggest that student Information Literacy behaviors (part of which is source retrieval practice) already lean toward familiar discourse spaces (the Internet) rather than toward those promoted by the "new" academic discourse community (e.g., library databases). Results of the Citation Project affirm this (Serviss 13), offering evidence that student attitudes toward the research paper and process suggest the way first-year students conceptualize their place within the academic research writing experience as reporters, distanced from a meaning-making role, is directly connected to

the ways they *perceive* and *use* research sources. This trend begins before they even enter the college writing classroom, as illustrated by a 2012 research study conducted by Purcell et al., which examines research practices evidenced in Advanced Placement high school classrooms. According to this research, the pattern of students' research behaviors are grounded in Internet use, constituting what Dewey refers to as life experiences or native discourse literacies (44). Yet such search behaviors are all too commonly treated in FYW2 classrooms as something to be corrected or expunged. To address such embedded cultural practices, Goodfellow and Corbett suggest that digital literacy as currently used in our pedagogy and praxis should be reexamined (and, in our case reframed) as *more* than simply search skills (which is how "Information Literacy" is often represented). To that end, the curricular revisions in my classroom integrate digital writing spaces and demystify search engines by making them objects of critical analysis.

Because students bring into the FYW2 classroom existing information literacies drawn from their own encounters with digital spaces and media, such elements must be seen as part of their social "'identity kit,'" one which informs learning and practice (Gee 18). What we found, however, was that our previous texts and classroom praxis too often promoted research literacy as something to be acquired or "mastered through acquisition" (Gee 23) or imitation. On the classroom level, I found that my students seemed to operate on a simplistic binary label system of "good research" vs. "bad research," with library databases cast as "good," and sites like Google or Wikipedia (part of students' existing discourse practices) deemed "bad," perhaps a reflection of prohibitions against their use in college research. (Every semester, when I poll my students with the question, "How many of you have been told NEVER to use Google or Wikipedia when writing a research paper?," nearly all of them raise their hands.) In order to encourage students' sense of agency in this process, early in the semester they are asked to read James P. Purdy's "Wikipedia Is Good For You!?" along with Randall

McClure's "Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors Into Research Skills," two open source articles that encourage students to see beyond the labels and approach these familiar resources using strategic, analytical consideration of how these might impact research behaviors and strategies. To promote this in my revised classroom, we watch and discuss the TED talk video of Eli Pariser's "Filter Bubbles," after which students are asked to crowdsource keyword searches using various search engines (Google Scholar, Google News, Google, and Wikipedia) and then discuss the resulting variations. Results became fodder for discussions of ways to fine tune their results by understanding the filters at work in such websites.

Luke's definition of "critical literacies" became an important part of this activity. When our students arrive in the FYW2 classroom, they do so with an abundance of information literacy experience; however, as the Citation Project and the PEW research report illustrate, much of this is grounded in behaviors Corbett describes as "the Google Effect," reflecting student perceptions of how the search engine actually works (267). More to the point, students have rarely considered how the search engine works and its impact on what they discover. Here, Kalantzis and Cope's schema terms of Situated Practice and Overt Instruction offer a useful set of terms with which to view this shift in practices. Situated Practice "works from a base of students' own interests and … experience" (Kalantzis and Cope 240), while Overt Instruction involves instructor-centered efforts that move students "away from the experience of the lifeworld" by overtly guiding them to "examine underlying system and structure … [of] how meaning works" (241). Redesigned course assignments, therefore, ask students to engage in Situated Practice activities that explore and compare the features and functions of search engines versus library databases, drawing upon existing student practices to introduce new knowledge. For example, I ask student groups to keep a record of search terms used to find several sites related to an assigned topic using Google Scholar, Google, and the university's library database. Their findings then lead to a class-

wide discussion of how their search engine choices and key search term choices produce different discoveries. Such activity employed in the sort of extended inquiry arc created by our new curriculum design maintains an openness to the role of student literacies, as opposed to the limits and controls of the more Overt Information Literacy instruction based on one-day librarian-led classroom sessions that were the norm in our earlier curriculum.

Another benefit of exploring information literacy through the variant of native digital literacies centers on the types of reading students may conduct online on a regular basis. As Luke observes, the nature of such reading experiences avails itself to a discussion of "intertextuality" as a means toward "an understanding of the relations among ideas" (73), the type of rhetorical move or "cognitive orientation" (73) we want our writing students to make and which is facilitated by conversation/remix metaphors. The Academic discourse community's research conventions and rhetoric promote research as a recognition and search for "the connection among related pieces of information, not" to simply gather "bare decontextualised facts" (Luke 73). Yet, when research studies like The Citation Project suggest that students' information literacy practices illustrate a tendency to engage with sources not as "complex texts" but simply as "quote-mining" materials (Howard, Serviss, and Rodrigue 186), the level of knowledge construction is restricted to accumulation of sentence-level reporting—what might be seen as a linear approach to texts (Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola), not deeper understanding and engagement. To counter this, and to help frame these proposed changes, I have students write into public discourse spaces like group blogs to extend the conversational metaphor's use. Incorporating blog writing as a semester-long part of the revamped curriculum not only opens the pedagogical space to discussions of digital media and related literacy concerns (for example, the rhetoric of audience and design), but also emulates the discursive nature of conversation when students are asked to comment on one another's blog ideas, deepening opportunities to reframe students' constructive control over their research theses.

Finally, blogging beomes a locus in which to develop a critical meta-language, "position[ing] students not only to comprehend and compose the text forms of their school subjects but also to critique the perspectives on knowledge they construct" in what may feel like non-academic writing (Unsworth 11). When specifically rhetoricized in this way, incorporating digital literacies into this pedagogical reframe combines students' "prior learning" or discourse community experience (Corbett 267) with the mission of the academy, creating opportunities for transition. The digital space provides them with Situated Practice opportunities (Kalantzis and Cope 244) similar to small group discussion, but with writing as the central media.

Retranslating the Map: Revising Our Meta-Language and Materials

Reframing my classroom praxis also required renegotiating the rhetoric of information literacy in order to address the Citation Project's findings regarding student relationships to source materials. If, as the Project suggests, students perceive research sources—particularly those published by discourse community insiders (professional voices) —as material to be consumed, their level of engagement with that material is likely to be as discourse outsiders, lacking what Gee calls the requisite "'identity kit'" that informs how they "act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize" (7). Gee's theories led me to consider that the value of rhetorical thinking in the FYW2 classroom is not simply for students; as teachers, we must also rethink the assignment—and the students—rhetorically. Knoblauch and Bizup both argue that the rhetoric of argument—how it's perceived and framed by students, instructors, as well as academic publishing houses—must be critically examined and reframed in order to help students bridge and navigate research discourse conventions of the academy. As an example of this, Knoblauch surveyed the most popular (i.e., most frequently required) textbooks adopted by colleges teaching a sequenced

freshman research-argument writing course and found that the dominant metaphoric language used to frame discussions of argument in these texts is biased toward images of "winning," and gives limited if any sustained emphasis to a view of persuasion as "understanding across difference" (245). Additionally, she observes that these texts frequently privilege language that promotes "classical or traditional argument" structures, which foregrounds language and structures of proving or "pro vs. con" approaches to source materials (245). While I am not proposing abandoning classical argument for this renegotiation effort, Knoblauch's proposal highlights the importance of critically considering the *influence* such rhetorical factors as texts, materials, and classroom metaphoric frames have upon the way students learn to see themselves in relation to meaning making and—most important to this project—their "relationship to the texts" (Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola).

As important, perhaps, is how these same texts might lead us as writing teachers to frame and rhetoricize the language of the classroom. In my classroom, for example, my reoriented pedagogy was operationalized through a reconsidered meta-language, specifically in terms of student-source relationship. The metaphors of conversation and remix "trickle down" into classroom-level praxis in terms not only of written assignments, but also readings, activities, and vocabulary used to frame them. While planning to implement, I found Bizup's research especially thought-provoking. Bizup's concern with student source use in his own first-year research writing course and his "alternative vocabulary that emphasizes use" could help students see their research behaviors through an intentionally rhetorical lens (75). Bizup's substitution of the terms "background, exhibits, arguments, and methods" or BEAM—terms designed to emphasize what sources *do*—for terms that traditionally emphasize what sources *are* (expert or professional authorities, opinion, news, etc.) illustrates one example of how we can intentionally reorient classroom vocabulary to in turn reorient students' relationships toward resource texts (75). Bizup asserts

that the advantage of such rhetorical reorientation "over the standard nomenclature" of teaching research as a skill-based process of acquisition "is that it allows us to describe writers' [source] materials straightforwardly in terms of what [student] writers **do** with them" (76). This sort of intentional rhetorical repositioning in the research writing classroom is not unlike Bizup's intentional rhetoricization of source labeling, which highlights student writers' agency in the relationship to a source: "Writers *rely* on **background** sources, *interpret or analyze* **exhibits**, *engage* **arguments**, and *follow* **methods**" (76). Once refocused this way, my classroom praxis integrates metaphor-related terms as critical framing devices, encouraging students to work with source materials not just as objects to mine for quotable material, but as a means of exploration situated within the "ways writers *use* their materials," adopting a "posture toward" these sources as part of their own creation of knowledge and texts. Conscious revisions were made to both assignment artifacts and discussion to reinforce this move at every stage of the arc.

Given the Citation Project's call to increase student engagement with texts, it seems logical that a move away from treating sources as "external" agents and toward understanding their function would allow students increased agency when deciding how to engage with the information in a "dialogic nature" (Bizup 76). Bizup's BEAM terminology[4] was not explicitly part of my early retooled classroom rhetoric to minimize new vocabulary and mixed-metaphor overload. However, the reorientation it represents—for both reading and writing—became a key rhetorical strategy for breaking out of the previous curricular mold that constructed students' relationships to research as gatherer/reporter, not explorer/creative agent. The simplest example of this is the terminology used in both assignment as well as activity directions that frame research sources using terms of conversation, exploration, and remix. In my own course material reorientation, Bizup's B/Background corresponds to my remap approach that asks students to regularly see their research sources/conversation partners in terms of stakeholder's

perspectives. Therefore, they are asked "What does your conversation partner provide you in terms of facts?" The E/Exhibit becomes a discussion of examples and illustrations to "show, not tell" in paragraph development. The A/Argument becomes part of our discussion of Claim Types used by their conversation partners (Bizup 75-76) to persuade us. In their weekly journal writing, students must regularly point to the arguments made by their selected resources as part of an annotated bibliography entry. We explore claim types early in the term and practice recognizing them in class-wide shared readings. As part of this, we examine the types of evidence most common to these claim types, following the model provided by Nancy Wood's *Perspectives On Argument*. Finally, the M/Method becomes a discussion of rhetorical appeals—"How do these materials persuade us? How do they work?" The concepts or lenses illustrated by this acronym thereby become operationalized, undergirding the patterning of key rhetorical and functional questions we practice throughout our inquiry-based research design.

Classroom readings further this shift in reorientation. Early in the semester, I assign multimodal texts such as Lynda Stephenson's *Kairos* article "Road Trip: A Writer's Exploration of Cyberspace As Literary Space" (an open source text) as a way to reorient student perspectives of their role in the research writing process. Using Stephenson's article as a way to illustrate the value of exploration in meaning making, I ask my students to consider the *functionality* of hyperlinks as a way to move readers through the text. This allows me to build on earlier framing efforts as well as existing digital literacies, this time as a way of discussing how we "build upon" texts to *move us forward* in knowledge creation and information sharing. Through such digital media incorporation, the early weeks of the revised approach to research writing practices transform what many students carry into the classroom in terms of what source materials "do." That is, writing a research paper is not just unreflective "decoding [of] textual information" gleaned from information seeking that merely mimics students'

preexisting ideas on a topic or what the language of the assignment directs them to find (Unsworth 19). Such an approach to information literacy may be one cause for the types of sentence-level quotation-mining practices represented in papers analyzed by The Citation Project. It is a practice that cannot, alone, be a means of developing the type of "meta-knowledge" that leads to "transformative knowledge" valued in our field (Unsworth 19).

As the 16-week arc progresses, students are encouraged to continue operating within this reoriented framework, exploring and analyzing perspectives found along their path. The new curricular arc facilitates this, extending students' inquiry practices at every stage through reflective activities that reinforce the idea of intrinsically-focused student behaviors and needs ("What kind of information might you need to illustrate your point, and what purpose will that serve rhetorically?"). This exploration/inquiry metaphor consciously incorporates some of the basic principles found in Macrorie's I-Search paper, but on a semester-long scale, intent on becoming a "Transformational Practice" (Kalantzis and Cope 242) in our retooled FYW2 curriculum. Reading and activity selections appropriate to the more recursive stages of research-as-inquiry become part of a **writing assignment** [activity] progression that looks something like this: **[knowledge inventory]** question–search–draft, **[introduction to perspectives]** question–search-conversational connections-analyze, **[entrance to the conversation]** respond-question-search–draft, **[reorient as argument proposal]** annotated bibliographies-conversational connections-application of function-search-draft, and final **[argument construction]**. Each of these stages incorporate layers of recursive mini-writing tasks, digital journaling or blog writing, student-discovered and assigned readings, and information literacy exercises that rhetoricize student agency and student engagement through every phase, culminating in a final research-based academic argument designed to promote student entry into a wider conversation.

Conclusion

For those who teach writing in higher education classrooms, and specifically first-year writing, the terms "information literacy" and "plagiarism" inevitably appear in conversations about teaching the student research paper. Some of the frustration emerging from these conversations centers on students' information search and synthesis practices. Patchwriting, quote-mining, copy and paste, citation errors, critical evaluation of sources—these key phrases appear over and over again in scholarly publications that all seem to ask the same question: how do we get our students to practice information literacy in ways suitable to post-secondary discourse community expectations? However, part of the problem may be the premise of the question itself, as it may presuppose the existence of certain privileged gateway behaviors and perspectives, often contextualizing (whether inadvertently or purposely) the knowledge building process of first-year research writing courses as if external (or scholarly) sources are—first and foremost—"repositories of factual information" (Haas 46). However, this complex set of pedagogical and theoretical frameworks often situates the student writers' relationship to these source materials as extrinsic. Christina Haas refers to this relationship in terms of a student's use of source materials as "'*The book says*,'" privileging not the student's ideas but those of the authors (59). The student's role as a reader and a writer becomes "one of extracting and retaining information," not *engaging* it as a *participant* in knowledge shaping and building (Haas 60). Such perspectives on the part of curriculum design as well as instructor pedagogy often lead students entering the academic discourse community to perceive research and source-based writing as practices to which they can have no relationship other than extrinsic. In other words, the rhetorical frameworks surrounding a first-year composition research writing (FYW2) course may in fact reflect a teacher- or discourse community expert-centered perception of the relationship between student and texts. Such a premise is critically problematic, given the socio-cultural emphasis of numerous theorists in the fields of English and Education

(Freire, Scribner and Cole, Dewey, Bartholomae, Unsworth, Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola). When FYW2 curriculum and pedagogy overtly (or inadvertently, through unexamined repetition) present texts as extrinsic authorities whose privileged knowledge-building positions trump any expertise which the first-year student writers may bring as part of their discourse identity, students see the act of research as a linear construction (or re-construction via re-search) of others' ideas and words, a reflection of the materials provided to them through textbooks and framing discourse (Knoblauch, Corbett, Goodfellow, Wyscoki and Johnson-Eilola).

The recommendations drawn from the Citation Report have spurred calls for a deep revision of the pedagogical frame and praxis of the FYW2 curriculum at AUM. As a start, this shift has been implemented at our own institution through a series of faculty workshops, during which assignment and activity samples are shared and discussed. In answer to the Project's call to "develop pedagogies that encourage students to engage with sources and use them to generate ideas rather than to support pre-existing arguments" (21), this article provides an overview of our revised framework and rationale as situated within the context of a wider awareness of this very need. (A detailed outline of practical applications may be found on my blog page, Adventures in Rhetoric.) After a full year of implementation, the AUM program is in the process of continuing to fine tune our revisions, following feedback from instructor training and student writers. The potential benefits of this redesign may take some time to sift through, but our work with the Citation Project has demonstrated that a shift of this type is timely and warranted. In fact, our textbook selection (The Bedford Researcher) begins its Table of Contents with "Joining the Conversation." We take this as a good omen.

Notes

[1] More details on The Citation Project may be found at the research team's website: <http://site.citationproject.net/>.

[2] The textbook assigned, *The Bedford Researcher,* 4th ed., by Mike Palmquist, was offered to students in both print and e-Book form. The accompanying online resources of bedforedresearcher.com were also incorporated as companion materials; as an open-source platform, this was introduced to students as both an integrated part of the class as well as a lifelong learning resource.

[3] An additional textbook, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter In Academic Writing*, was also incorporated as its framing metaphor of conversational elements coincided with our dominant metaphor, and provided vocabulary and syntax models mirroring conversational structures.

[4] See Appendix A for an overview of Bizup's terms.

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Appendix A

Bizup defines key terms of BEAM on pages 75-76 of his article:

Background / Background Source	• "materials whose claims a writer accepts as 'facts'" (75).
Exhibit / Exhibit Source	• "materials a writer offers for explication, analysis, or interpretation." • "exhibit…is not synonymous with the conventional term *evidence*, which designates data offered in support of a claim." • "Exhibits can lend support *to* claims, but they can also provide occasions *for* claims." • "Understood in this way, the exhibits in a piece of writing work much like the exhibits in a museum or a trial." • Students "know they must do rhetorical work to establish their exhibits' meanings and significance" (75)
Argument / Argument Source	• "materials whose claims a writer affirms, disputes, refines, or extends in some way." • "argument sources are those with which writers enter into 'conversation'" (75-76).
Method / Method Source	• "materials from which a writer derives a governing concept or a manner of working." • "can offer a set of key terms, lay out a particular procedure, or furnish a general model or perspective" (76).

REVIEW ESSAY

EXAMINING TEACHER INQUIRY INTO LITERACY: EPISTEMOLOGICAL, TELEOLOGICAL, AND EXPERIENTIAL TENSIONS

Ryan Schey

Denstaedt, Linda, Laura Jane Roop, and Stephen Best. *Doing and Making Authentic Literacies*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2014. 139 pages. $33.95 (non-member price) $24.95 (member price). ISBN 978-0-814112199. Print.

Filkins, Scott. *Beyond Standardized Truth: Improving Teaching and Learning through Inquiry-Based Reading Assessment*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2012. 133 pages. $33.95 (non-member price) $24.95 (member price). ISBN 9780814102916.

Lattimer, Heather. *Real-World Literacies: Disciplinary Teaching in the High School Classroom*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2014. 159 pages. $33.95 (non-member price) $24.95 (member price). ISBN 9780814139431. Print.

Linda Denstaedt, Laure Jane Roop, and Stephen Best's *Doing and Making Authentic Literacies*, Scott Filkins' *Beyond Standardized Truth: Improving Teaching and Learning through Inquiry-Based Reading*

Assessment, and Heather Lattimer's *Real-World Literacies: Disciplinary Teaching in the High School Classroom* are part of the "Principles in Practice" imprint of the National Council of the Teachers of English (NCTE), a series that endeavors to "offer [K-12] teachers concrete illustrations of effective classroom practices based in NCTE research briefs and policy statements" ("Principles in Practice Books"). Collectively, the writers inhabit that complex nexus of national professional organizations, state and federal policy, university-based research, testing and curriculum corporations, local communities, school districts, and individual classrooms.

Mediating among these various stakeholders is not a simple task though, and navigating the tensions among the stakeholders' commitments requires considerable effort. The authors undertake this task to increase practitioner accessibility to and application of literacy research, policy, and theory. In particular, the authors seek to support literacy teachers in reimagining their own professional practices in ways that can contribute to schooling becoming more relevant and socially just. To encourage uptake of their suggestions, each of the authors, to varying degrees, advocates for teachers to become involved in inquiry communities as sources of support, knowledge, and institutional advocacy weight. This teacher inquiry stance becomes a resource for educators as they negotiate the tensions of working *within*, *on*, and *against* hegemonic schooling practices.

In this essay, I unpack several of these tensions to explore the affordances and constraints of these texts for their audiences of K-12 teachers. Specifically, I discuss three tensions in working within, on, and against hegemonic schooling practices through a teacher inquiry stance: epistemological tensions surrounding expertise and knowledge; teleological tensions about socially just schooling; and experiential tensions of (un)certainty and (dis)comfort. To lay the groundwork for this more detailed analysis, I first provide an overview of the three books.

NCTE's Principles in Practice Imprint

NCTE's "Principles in Practice" imprint as a whole supports practitioners, specifically K-12 classroom teachers, in understanding key ideas from organizational research briefs and policy statements in ways that encourage them to reflect on and subsequently revise their own teaching practices. The book series foregrounds narrative summaries of actual classroom events and employs "practical, teacher friendly language" ("Principles in Practice"). In this way, it seeks to demonstrate, and even bring to life, the principles outlined in official NCTE documents. The imprint has multiple strands, such as one for adolescent literacy, and spans multiple age and grade levels. The books featured in this essay represent two of the strands and high school ages (grades 9-12).

Denstaedt, Roop, and Best 's and Lattimer's books are part of the "Literacies of the Disciplines" strand, which draws on NCTE's policy research brief "Literacies *of* Disciplines" (reprinted as a preface in both books). In this brief and in both books, literacy is understood to be plural and situated, existing as "a set of multi-faceted social practices that are shaped by contexts, participants, and technologies" (Lattimer xi). Disciplines, which are not synonymous with but are related to high school content areas, are understood as sites of knowledge creation that have "flexible and porous" boundaries (Lattimer xi). Denstaedt, Roop, and Best and Lattimer offer portraits of high school teachers from a number of content areas (such as English language arts, biology, construction, and algebra). These teachers foreground disciplinary literacies in their classrooms in ways that the authors characterize as "authentic" and "real-world," terms that they equate with literacy practices that are valued in the economy, post-secondary schooling, and/or career training setting. Through their descriptions of exemplar classrooms, the authors provide concrete tools and best practices for employing disciplinary literacies in their teaching.

Linda Denstaedt, Laure Jane Roop, and Stephen Best's *Doing and Making Authentic Literacies*

Denstaedt, Roop, and Best, for instance, outline a method that practitioners can employ to move forward on a continuum away from merely "doing school" to "doing the discipline" in ways that involve students in "authentic" doing and making practices (28). For them, teaching practices enact authentic disciplinary work when they "situat[e] students as experts while they construct new knowledge and create a product or performance" (15), a situation in which students have decision-making authority, experience accountability, and have audiences beyond the school site. The authors suggest five concrete steps teachers can follow to engage in authentic disciplinary work:

1. See development of authentic literacies as a continuum.
2. Identify and value disciplinary habits, tools, and processes.
3. Engage in substantive conversations around rigorous disciplinary tasks and ideas.
4. Engage in kidwatching and formative assessment.
5. Develop partnerships to deepen understandings of disciplinary learning. (9)

Each of these five topics is featured in its own chapter. At the end of each of the later chapters, Denstaedt, Roop, and Best suggest questions for "Collegial Conversations" practitioners can use as part of inquiry into their own practice as they attempt to move towards "doing the discipline" (28).

Heather Lattimer's *Real-World Literacies: Disciplinary Teaching in the High School Classroom*

Lattimer conceptualizes teaching disciplinary literacies through the use of inquiry education, project-based learning, and linked (or interdisciplinary) learning. In her introductory chapter, she articulates five foundational characteristics of her approach: authentic purpose and audience; flexible processes and negotiable

structures; teacher as facilitator; access to experts; and student ownership. In the remainder of the book, she illustrates these ideas with a chapter dedicated to each of the major areas of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts (reading, writing, and listening and speaking) and a fourth to assessment. She frames her discussion by showing gaps between employment needs and dominant schooling practices. She then presents and analyzes narrative case studies of exemplar classrooms, extrapolating best practices from the case and connecting to the Common Core State Standards. She closes her book with a postscript offering pragmatic suggestions for teachers to take small steps to implement the ideas from her book, such as becoming involved in an inquiry or professional learning community.

Scott Filkins' *Beyond Standardized Truth: Improving Teaching and Learning through Inquiry-Based Reading Assessment*

Filkins' book is part of the "Literacy Assessment" strand of the "Principles in Practice" imprint. He draws on the IRA-NCTE standards for the assessment of reading and writing (included in his book's preface). The standards' creators understand assessment as interpretive and contextual, meaning it should be premised on inquiry into collective responsibility and change rather than individual accountability and blame. Applying this framework, Filkins argues for a more humane inquiry-based approach to reading assessment that is grounded in the expertise and observations of teachers who understand their students' reading ability via contextualized, principled assessments. He advocates for goal clarity, to guide learning and assessments, paired with strong inquiry questions. Filkins argues that principled classroom-based inquiry approaches to reading assessment are the only method that can provide the rich, complex, and accurate information about students' reading ability. In the remainder of the book, he narrates classroom cases from early and later career high school reading and language arts teachers. In doing so, he outlines an inquiry approach to reading assessment, explores its

possibilities for formative assessment, discusses it as a springboard for teacher inquiry into professional practice, and closes by examining the broader assessment landscape.

Teacher Inquiry

Together, the authors of these three books extend the research and policy work of NCTE by intervening at the level of individual classroom practices. Consequently, although they acknowledge larger trends such as standardization movements and the increasing use of corporate produced curricula, they neither substantially engage with these trends nor directly critique them. Instead, they treat them as givens or inevitabilities of K-12 schooling, encouraging teachers to work *within* these constraints to work *on* their own practices. Nonetheless, the authors recognize the pressures teachers face and attempt to mitigate potential readers' resistance in two ways. First, they emphasize the value of "Start[ing] small" (Lattimer 139) or "giving themselves permission to move slowly" (Denstaedt, Roop, and Best 35). In other words, they understand the pragmatics of doing what can be done. Second, they highlight the importance of teachers collaborating with and supporting one another as they adopt an inquiry stance to understand and improve their classroom practices, even though the explicitness of a teacher inquiry framework varies across the texts. Filkins explicitly uses the language of teacher inquiry and advocates for inquiry groups to gather data systematically to use in advocating with administrators for changes (e.g., 110). Denstaedt, Roop, and Best use the language of "collegial conversations" (e.g., 99) and encourage partnerships and supportive relationships within and across settings. Lattimer advocates for "collaboration" and finding "like-minded teacher colleagues" (137) with whom to share resources and knowledge. Thus, the authors understand that the local implementations of their ideas will always look different and that an inquiry community can be a valuable asset for teachers who attempt such implementations. In encouraging an inquiry stance as part of a process of revising classroom practices, the authors

position teachers as the ones navigating the tensions of working *within*, *on*, and *against* locally hegemonic schooling practices. The authors' choice to position teachers in this way offers teachers certain affordances and constraints.

In this essay, I read these three books through the lens of teacher inquiry to explore these affordances and constraints. However, my choice is one among many, and each choice would foreground different yet important questions. For example, other readers might focus on the question of literacy assessment, a topic threaded throughout each book. Since assessment continues to be a significant political topic and increasingly encompasses evaluations of students, teachers, and schools, such a reading would be of great value. Similarly, other readers might focus on themes of curricular and pedagogical relevancy, a topic the authors consider in, across, and outside of secondary and post-secondary contexts. Since U.S. schools continue to sustain long-standing differences in achievement with respect to race, ethnicity, social class, language, and indigeneity, a reading focused on relevancy would likewise be generative.

My particular choice to employ teacher inquiry as a frame led me to consider questions of knowledge, goals, and experience in each of the books. Undoubtedly, this collection of books has much to offer teachers in these areas, but I argue that the tensions result in significant limitations. I now turn to discuss these tensions, focusing on epistemological tensions surrounding expertise and knowledge, teleological tensions about socially just schooling, and experiential tensions of (un)certainty and (dis)comfort. Exploring these tensions is not merely an exercise in critique, though. They impact the sustained local viability of the authors' alternative schooling visions and the effectiveness of their impact.

Epistemological Tensions

With respect to working within, on and against hegemonic schooling practices, tensions exist in the authors' treatment of epistemology, specifically around who gets to be an expert about what, what knowledges are legitimated, and in what circuits

various expertise and knowledges travel. Each of these three books takes as a central issue and seeks to validate and value the knowledge produced by expert classrooms teachers within a broader sociopolitical context that too often devalues, deskills, and deprofessionalizes teachers individually and collectively. Moreover, valuing teacher expertise and knowledge is a cornerstone of schooling represented by the authors. For instance, Filkins argues that classroom teachers who enact principled and contextualized reading assessments produce nuanced, fine-grained, and timely data regarding student learning that are not and cannot be produced by standardized tests. To illustrate, he contrasts the inability of the ACT reading test data to inform day-to-day classroom instruction (as documented by ACT's 2006 report about its own test) with the contextualized reading formative assessments used by Gary Slotnick, a high school English teacher with whom Filkins worked as an instructional coach. Slotnick's assessments enabled him to shape his future instruction and differentiate in individualized ways. Similarly, Filkins argues that corporate-produced formative assessment and intervention materials can never be as responsive and relevant as those that teachers create for their students.

In this argument, Filkins does not position standardized and teacher knowledges as equals but rather privileges *some* teacher knowledges for *some* purposes. By focusing on teachers' practices as assessors, in some ways Filkins works against dominant standardized testing practices, and particularly their meanings, functions, and import in local school districts. In this vision of schooling, standardized testing groups offer expertise about some components of student performance while teachers taking an inquiry stance on assessment become experts on the unfolding dynamics of contextualized student learning. Filkins' perspective—and similar ones adopted by Denstaedt, Roop, and Best and Lattimer—have enormous value for providing teachers adopting an inquiry stance with research-based grounding for (re)shaping the uptake of standardized and corporate testing and curricula in their schools.

At the same time, this affordance of teacher expertise is in tension with constraints regarding the circuits along which these authors imply this knowledge does (not) travel. While all the authors value the potential for teacher knowledge to shape individual classroom practice and potentially cross-classroom local practices, this expertise doesn't travel further. Standardized and corporate knowledges move across the geospatial boundaries of classrooms, schools, and communities and across time as when data accumulates for students over the arc of their schooling careers. However, teacher knowledge is local and rarely, if ever, translocal. Its pathways are fairly restricted as teachers reproduce dominant knowledges of disciplines such as biology or the "authentic" and "real world" literacies valued in the economy. For example, Lattimer offers an example of disciplinary writing in a chemistry class (73-74) where students drafted research proposals that were then reviewed by scientists and other teachers. While this description certainly appears to be a valuable learning experience, it also involves a one-way flow of information and evaluation, where the discipline is reified as students attempt to emulate other experts rather than value their own individual, local, or cultural knowledges or reshape dominant knowledges.

These tensions regarding the circuits travelled by different expertise and knowledges are echoed in Cochran-Smith and Lytle's discussion in *Inquiry as Stance* of the important differences between the practitioner inquiry movement and professional learning communities (52-59). In their conceptualization, practitioner or teacher inquiry focuses on social movements, multiple contexts of change, and equity outside of the school accountability framework. In contrast, professional learning communities focus on school effects, schools as the unit of change, and equity inside the school accountability framework. It is undoubtedly valuable to work within dominant frameworks of schooling to enact changes in practices that produce change within the unit of the school within its own accountability framework. Revaluing teacher knowledge and expertise—as these authors describe— does so in important ways. However, to stop at these

boundaries positions teacher knowledge as only valid within the particular classroom situation from which it emerged, denying broader possibilities. Simultaneously, it positions other actors, such as corporate curriculum writers or disciplinary experts employed in the economy, as the only actors capable of producing knowledges that travel across more diverse and expansive pathways. These dynamics become reproduced without questioning the shortcomings of these dominant ways of knowing. Over longer time arcs, this tension fails to challenge the dynamics through which local teacher knowledge becomes devalued. It also undermines larger questions of educational justice and equity by failing to evaluate the impact of schooling cultures and practices more broadly beyond their own internal interpretive frames and accountability systems. These epistemological tensions are complicated further by tensions regarding the *telos* (i.e., the ends or goals) of socially just schooling perspectives, which I discuss next.

Teleological Tensions

With respect to working within, on and against hegemonic schooling practices, tensions inform the authors' consideration of the ends or goals of socially just schooling. Importantly, these authors all frame their arguments via social justice, although the language they use varies. To illustrate, Denstaedt, Roop, and Best close their book with an appeal for teachers to adopt an authentic disciplinary literacies approach to intervene in an "incredibly leaky" (115) high school to college pipeline that results in wasted lives, which has both a human and a societal cost. Here, they seek to intercede in differential achievement rates both in the immediate context of schooling and in the longitudinal context of employment. There are long-standing and valuable arguments for more explicitly teaching students, especially those from historically marginalized communities, the knowledges and languages of power and privilege (e.g., Delpit; Lee; Gay). Such arguments resonate with the stance of Denstaedt, Roop, and Best, and they are necessary interventions. In this way, these three texts

offer teachers resources for pedagogies and curricula that are more relevant, accessible, and socially just.

Yet, while the end goals of providing more effective instruction or more effective preparation for the workforce are both laudable, teachers face constraints when such goals are the only ones articulated as desirable and possible. Immediately, the reduction of schooling to economic preparation is troubling. The role and function of schooling in a democratic society is more robust than economic instrumentalism, and many teachers understand schooling to involve societal, interpersonal, moral, affective, and other dimensions. In addition, due to the longstanding history of xenophobic and exploitative U.S. policies and practices regarding immigration and citizenship, the question of employment has many more dimensions than merely skill acquisition. Leaving aside these arguments, it is problematic to seek only to improve teaching practices that produce so-called success in schooling without stepping back to reevaluate more generally the definitions of success and failure that schools (re)produce and the implications of these definitions (McDermott and Varenne; Varenne and McDermott; Nygreen). To extend Denstaedt, Roop, and Best's metaphor, there can be issues with the pipeline beyond the leaks along the way. Obviously no single book can resolve this long-standing social problem nor should it be expected to. However, not to acknowledge this tension is deeply troubling to me in part because the omission further obfuscates the problem of not offering the tacit consent that (re)constructs hegemony.

In addition, the authors suggest that the presence or absence of student achievement and engagement solely rests in teaching practices. If teachers therefore adopt the teaching practices illustrated in the books, the implication is that achievement and engagement will correspondingly increase. For instance, after many of Lattimer's classroom narratives, she includes testimonials from students or teachers highlighting achievement and/or engagement (e.g., 47-48). Unquestionably, teacher practices matter, and practitioners should strive to increase the cultural, economic, and experiential relevancy of their pedagogy and

curriculum. However, teaching practices are neither the only educational practices nor only social practices that influence school achievement and engagement. Thus, for the authors, there is not the possibility that some students, such as queer youth, find schoolish literacies inherently alienating as de Castell and Jenson argue or that even when they are aware of the codes of power, some youth, such as homeless young women of color, will actively choose to reject and eschew performing these codes, such as through adopting a politics of respectability, as Cox suggests. Again, it is not that these authors must resolve these difficulties but that they might acknowledge them and the complexities they entail, particularly regarding the intimate interrelations of teaching and social practices. Such an acknowledgement would conceptually enrich the books and extend their meaningfulness and utility for classrooms teachers.

In short, Denstaedt, Roop, and Best, Filkins, and Lattimer all describe compelling ways to work on classroom curricula and pedagogies as sites for social justice through maximizing best practices, thus working effectively within dominant schooling structures. However, they elide discussions of also working against such structures, an omission that becomes troublesome in at least two ways. First, while working within school constraints to work on classroom practices is useful, it can be undermined and even undone if the larger constraints are not acknowledged much less engaged, even if in small ways. Second, these teleological tensions compound the epistemological ones discussed above. When constraints and shortcomings beyond the classroom are not named and are thus rendered invisible, there is little need or relevancy for teacher expertise or knowledge to travel along circuits beyond the classroom or school. Classroom change exists merely for economic functionalism rather than having the possibility of journeying along more broad and humanizing pathways, such as cultivating justice in political economy and the nation-state.

Experiential Tensions

Finally, with respect to working within, on and against dominant schooling practices, tensions inform the authors' consideration of teachers' experiences of (un)certainty and (dis)comfort in adopting an inquiry stance. As I mentioned above, each of the authors seems well aware of the possibilities for practitioner-readers to be resistant to, and even dismissive of, their suggestions. In fact, Lattimer includes a postscript (133-140) narrating an experience where she had coffee with a teacher friend who did exactly this, which in turn prompted her to add a number of pragmatic implementation tips. Collectively, all of the authors demonstrate this type of sensitivity to their intended audiences, seeking to be practical, compassionate, encouraging, and accessible. This responsiveness is a strength of this collection of books and, in my eyes, reflects the authors' commitments to impacting teachers and, by extension, the communities and youth these teachers serve. It also reflects their admirable resolve to mediate the complex nexus of educational stakeholders.

However, I worry that there are affective experiences of uncertainty and discomfort that such assurances sidestep, and consequently the authors leave teachers participating in inquiry with fewer resources for acknowledging, engaging, and moving beyond this uncertainty and discomfort. Fecho argues that experiences of threat are inherent to inquiry. Ignoring, downplaying, or denying their existence is unproductive. He instead argues for teachers to embrace these instances of threat and inquire into them further, which in turn enables transcendence. I agree with Fecho and extend his argument. Teacher inquiry not only involves experiences of discomfort, or even threat, due to others' disagreement with one's ideas, but also similar feelings connected to the uncertainty inherent in asking questions for which one currently has no answers, if such answers can even exist. Teachers adopting an inquiry stance can often find themselves in places of not knowing, particularly as they experience uncertainty with respect to next steps or the "right" steps in the process. In this way, inquiry includes learning not only

new knowledges but also new processes, dispositions, and affective comportments.

In this perspective, inquiry must value and engage with uncertainty and discomfort in principled and contextualized ways. Inquiring teachers can productively conceptualize these experiences, such as mistake making, as learning opportunities rather than dangers to avoid. While attempting to mitigate these affective dimensions can offer the affordance of initially inviting teachers into inquiry work regarding disciplinary literacies and reading assessment, it can also leave them ill equipped or frustrated when they do (inevitably) experience discomfort and uncertainty, or, as Fecho names it, "threat" (10). These experiential tensions further compound the teleological tensions of socially justice schooling or the epistemological tensions of expertise by reinforcing a circumscribed telos and epistemic circuit because they potentially reduce teachers' capacities to enact the powerful tools outlined by these authors.

Conclusion

It is no easy task to attempt to mediate among the diverse perspectives of stakeholders in schooling, especially in ways that support teachers in adopting an inquiry stance towards social justice. Denstaedt, Roop, and Best, Filkins, and Lattimer make valuable contributions to the field of literacy education in this way, particularly around practitioner uptake of research regarding disciplinary literacies and reading assessment. In offering encouraging visions of the possible, though, the authors at times elide some of the epistemological, teleological, and experiential tensions inherent in their endeavors. Certainly, readers do not expect these authors to resolve such tensions, especially because their books' explicit purposes focus on classroom teaching practices rather than other topics. However, there is a significant difference between lacking resolution and omitting acknowledgement. In my eyes, naming tensions—in particular tensions that can undermine the vary enterprise undertaken—is an important and responsible step to take. In my experiences

during the past nine years as a member of a teacher inquiry group focused on interrupting homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia (see Blackburn et al. for a history of the early years of this group), I have found that wrestling with the tensions can be incredibly generative and transformative. Thus, I longed for greater reflexivity and explicitness around these topics in each of the books.

In seeking to enrich readers' engagement with these three books, I suggest pairing them with one explicitly on teacher inquiry, such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle or Goswami et al., which is part of the National Conference on Research in Language and Literacy's "Language and Literacy" series. Nonetheless, high school teachers looking for concrete classroom illustrations of disciplinary literacies and inquiry-based reading assessment approaches will find these three books to be edifying and useful. They offer a wide range of practical classroom tools that have multiple entry points depending on one's context and comfort level. In addition, they are rich resources for teacher inquiry groups to draw upon in their discussions and their classroom projects.

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Reviewed by Natalia L. Guzman

In December of 1996, a controversial debate arose with the decision of the Oakland School Board to recognize African American Vernacular English or "Ebonics" as the primary language of African American children and include "Ebonics" in the Language Arts curriculum in the school district. Since then, we have learned a great deal about how teachers can include other English varieties in the classroom through the use of code-switching (Wheeler and Sword), bidialectism, and contrastive analysis (Rickford et al.). However, questions about how teachers can offer more equitable instruction in literacy that respects and values students' languages remain unanswered. *Other People's English: Code-Meshing, Code-Switching, and African American Literacy* makes a significant contribution to the debate about literacy, identity, race and language blend by providing us with a thorough discussion of the implications of code-switching as a pedagogical approach and the potential of using code-meshing as an alternative approach.

Drawing from linguistics, language arts education, composition and rhetoric, and African American studies, the authors, Vershawn Young, Rusty Barrett, Y'Shanda Young-Rivera and Kim Brian Lovejoy, bring different perspectives that make this book an invaluable source for writing teachers and educational researchers. The introductory chapter situates the book in the thorny question of how to advocate for African American English speakers who struggle in school because of their language. It defines the central concepts of code-switching and code-meshing that are the heart of conversations about more equitable ways to teach writing from K-

12 learners to college-level students. In their discussion, the authors focus on examining the implications of code-switching as a pedagogical approach where "students are instructed to switch from one code or dialect to another, that is, to switch from using African American English to Standard English, according to the setting and audience" (Young et al. 2). Although the adoption of code-switching in schools may be an effective strategy to improve the academic achievement of African American students and other racially minoritized learners or individuals of underrepresented status, the authors indicate an inherent risk of reinforcing negative attitudes among the students. For instance, scholars who reflected on language and racial identity report that although using code-switching facilitated integration and certain success in White environments, it did not alleviate the racial microaggresions they experienced or their struggle with race-related identity issues (Edwards, McMillon, and Turner). As an alternative to code-switching, Young and his colleagues propose code-meshing, a concept which "advocate[s] that African American English speakers be allowed to blend African American language styles together with Standard English at school and at work" (Young et al. 1).

The book further elaborates on code-meshing as a pedagogical alternative in four sections that examine different aspects of the conversation about literacy and equity. Part 1, written by Rusty Barrett, discusses issues related to language ideology and prescriptive grammar, giving the reader an accessible review of the extensive scholarly work on the linguistic structure of African American English. The main theme that emerges in this section is that language awareness and appreciation of language variation are connected. Language awareness implies understanding that all languages, including undervalued varieties of English, are systematic and based on rules. Being aware of the rules that govern the language varieties we speak should help us to understand forms of language ideologies and social prejudice against undervalued communities of speakers. From this perspective, Barrett revisits the teacher's concern about whether there is a "right" way to teach language in the classroom and how

students should learn about Standard English. The code-meshing approach stands out as a proposal that—although it includes explicit instruction in grammatical differences—urges students to "exploit and blend those differences" (43).

In part 2, Young argues that "code-switching is a racialized teaching method that manufactures linguistic segregation in classrooms and unwittingly supports it in society" (58). The theme that dominates is the linguistic double consciousness that comes with literacy practices that seek to transition towards White American language and culture while embracing Black language and culture. Young does not deny the benefits of teaching literacy practices of Standard English. However, his main concern is the emotional and academic consequences of cultural and linguistic assimilation when instructors avoid the conversation about literacy, race, and identity in schools. In this sense, code-meshing—as an alternative to code-switching—is a call to nurture students "who will challenge the hegemony of one-way assimilation with linguistic talents" (64-65). Young invites teachers to move from the question about how we as teachers, prepare African American students to participate in a still-prejudiced society to how we can change the course of racism and prejudice without asking students to renounce their language at any time or any place.

Parts 3 and 4 are dedicated to two experiences with code-meshing in the classroom. In Part 3, Young-Rivera, a former Chicago public school teacher and administrator, offers a personal discussion about moving from being against code-meshing to becoming a supporter, exploring the potential of code-meshing as a model of literacy instruction in the K-12 setting. The main theme of this section is about offering a responsible education as literacy school teachers. Young-Rivera also gives voice to the many concerns and doubts that naturally come to any literacy teacher concerned about the academic success of all students. For language teachers seeking to apply code-meshing as a pedagogical approach, this section offers a five-day unit for middle school teachers as an example of a possible way to include language

blending practices into a diverse classroom. For example, Young-Rivera organized a debate with her students to show them the connection between oral and written speech. Her classes were comprised mainly of bilingual/Spanish-speaking students and African American students, which gave her the opportunity to explore cognates in English and Spanish. The samples of students' work in the chapter and the author's reflection on the implementation of her lesson plans are productive resources for K-12 teachers.

In Part 4, Lovejoy explores code-meshing and culturally relevant pedagogy in a college-level writing course. One of the questions that this section explores is how writing teachers who work with minoritized students can empower them as learners and writers. The theme that defines this section is building a community of learners where code-meshing is one choice, among others, that writers can purposefully employ. Lovejoy connects code-meshing with Canagarajah's research on voice and identity in multilingual writers and expands this conversation about language blending to include strategies to motivate self-directed writing in multidialectal and, in certain cases, multilingual students. By building a community of writers, Lovejoy guides his students through the process of drafting, selecting, revising, editing, and sharing the writing produced for the course. One of the most interesting sections is the discussion about addressing and negotiating the use of taboo language in writing as part of experimenting with code-meshing in an English composition course. Lovejoy offers an example of how teachers can facilitate a dialogic writing process that seeks to use language consciously and effectively to co-construct meaning within the community of readers. Finally, the author also tackles the question about how to negotiate a new pedagogical approach with skeptical colleagues who are concerned about teaching code-meshing in a university writing class.

One of the strengths of *Other People's English* is that it gives the reader an accessible discussion of technical terms such as code-switching and code-meshing in a broader context that summarizes

scholarly work from the fields of linguistics and education. In addition, this book offers concrete examples of how a code-meshing pedagogy may look in action in a variety of classrooms. Each chapter starts with a question that echoes teachers' concerns about the viability of code-meshing and includes different tips and questions for teachers interested in including language blending in the classroom and reflecting as code-meshers themselves. The text also includes valuable reflections about dealing with language prejudice in the classroom and how to include discussions about language, race and identity in connection to literacy and effective writing.

However, the book also leaves some questions unanswered. Although the authors mention their concern with the current high-stakes test-taking culture in public schools, the question about how to prepare effective writers who can also score high in state-mandated testing still lingers for K-12 teachers. There are also unanswered questions about the possibility of using code-meshing not only with African American students but also with bilingual learners, one of which is related to other competing approaches to language mixing. For instance, how does code-meshing as pedagogical approach differ from translanguaging (García and Wei), a term that conceptualizes language mixing as discursive practices that teachers and students employ to communicate in multilingual classrooms and further language learning? Finally, another question that could have been explored more in depth is how teachers can address the difference between language errors and mistakes and the purposeful use of code-meshing in language learners' compositions.

Despite the questions that remain, *Other People's English* is an invaluable resource for all teachers. Although this book focuses mainly in African American learners, writing instructors working with multilingual students will also find this book helpful. As a Spanish and English as a second language teacher, I read with excitement examples of how to create a more inclusive and respectful learning community in a diverse classroom. I also found useful examples of how to include class discussions about language

that promote linguistic awareness and appreciation for language variety when working with both young and adult students. In addition, educational researchers and linguists interested in sociolinguistic justice (Bucholtz et al.) will find fresh ideas originally developed in the field of English composition and writing studies to create more equitable teaching practices.

To conclude, *Other People's English*, a title that echoes that of Lisa Delpit's influential *Other People's Children,* adds an important chapter to the discussion about language as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron) and expression of power. Continuing with the conversation started by Delpit and other scholars, Young and his colleagues do not deny that there exists a "language of power" (153). Instead, they urge educators and researchers to consider that any language variety "can and should be a valued contributor to any language of power" (155). This book also reminds us that the "Ebonics" debate of 1996 is not over, particularly in the current context of high-stakes standardized testing. Code-meshing not only offers a culturally and linguistically responsible alternative pedagogy but also constitutes a call for action against language prejudice to teachers of all levels.

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Reviewed by Christopher E. Manion

Examining 2,101 assignments from a range of disciplinary courses at 100 institutions, Dan Melzer offers a study of college writing assignments in the United States that is massive in scope, a project he styles as a "panoramic view" of college writing. Using this large sample of course materials, Melzer seeks to examine nationwide patterns in college writing: the purposes for which students are asked to write, the kinds of audiences they are asked to address, and the genres and discursive contexts in which they are asked to compose. The conclusions Melzer draws are on the one hand disheartening. Very few of the writing assignments Melzer examines exhibit any of the rhetorical complexity advocates of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) might hope for, and more often than not writing is simply a mechanism for students to parrot received knowledge back to their instructors. On the other hand, Melzer's analysis does find patterns of assignments that resist this traditionalist mold that confirm the important role that well-established WAC programs can play in expanding the potential for writing instruction within their institutions. While the scope of his project and method of collecting materials prevents the kind of highly contextualized analysis typical of ethnographic studies of classrooms or longitudinal studies of individual students, Melzer is able to present a national context for college writing about which administrators, instructors, and researchers should be aware. Furthermore, he makes several proposals to improve this context that WAC directors, writing program administrators, writing center directors, and classroom teachers across the curriculum would do well to heed.

Melzer collected the materials that comprise his study over a period of eight years by searching online for "syllabus" at institutions' websites and then collecting the first syllabi and any related course materials to appear under four disciplinary categories: Natural sciences, social sciences, business, and the humanities. What this approach lacks in context—it necessarily prevents Melzer from consistently collecting much contextual information—it makes up for in volume. Melzer deliberately tries to mirror the scope of James Britton's 1975 foundational study of writing in UK secondary schools, *The Development of Writing Abilities*, which examined 2,122 examples of student writing in order to characterize the role writing played in student learning. Melzer adapts the three categories Britton's team developed to describe the writing students were doing in schools, categories that accounted for the target audiences and function of the writing: transactional, in which writers address an audience in order to inform or persuade them; poetic, where writers mold language to create an object of art, and to play with the structure of language for its own sake; and expressive, where writers address their own thoughts, feelings and experiences to come to personal insights. To these three functions Melzer adds exploratory writing, which addresses informal inventive writing for an audience beyond the self. Melzer also follows Britton by considering the range of roles that writers might consider their audiences playing and the stance writers might take in relation to these audiences. Transactional classroom writing could, for instance, be oriented toward teachers who were positioned as examiners looking to evaluate a student's learning or as instructors seeking to develop or coach a student's thinking. Melzer expands on Britton by bringing to bear more recent insights that genre and activity theorists use to describe the role that different forms of writing can play within particular social contexts, principally how forms of discourse play a part in defining a social group and in achieving that group's common goals (Swales; Bazerman and Paradis; Beaufort). For Melzer, this means considering not just the common formats of assignments he

collected but also how particular forms of writing might address common rhetorical tasks in particular contexts, and the particular audiences, purposes, and the social exigencies that motivate their use. It also means carefully considering how these rhetorical contexts might differ from one discipline to another, or even from one individual classroom to another.

Having established his conceptual framework, in the following two chapters Melzer examines the common rhetorical situations and genres that characterize his sample of course materials. Melzer breaks some bad news first. The range of rhetorical purposes that frame assignments are limited within classroom contexts, and the audiences for whom students write are narrowly construed. Far and away, most of the assignments are transactional (83%), and furthermore are intended to inform (66%) rather than to persuade (17%). In his reading of these assignments, students are most often asked to regurgitate answers accurately from textbooks and lectures. The audience for writing is similarly restricted: Nearly two-thirds either implicitly or explicitly position the instructor in the role of examiner as the target readers for student writing, and very few (7%) asked students to address audiences outside the classroom. Melzer found very little of the kind of inventive writing—expressive and poetic writing—that Britton and the American WAC movement following him hoped teachers would adopt (Russell 276-9), though he does find more exploratory writing in the form of journals and online discussion forums. What is most striking about this sample of writing assignments is that this narrowness of rhetorical purpose and audience held across institutions and across course level. Students at comprehensive research universities were no more likely to write for rhetorical purposes and audiences beyond typical classroom settings than students at two-year colleges. Worse, students at any school moving throughout the curriculum would likely not see increasing complexity in the rhetorical tasks put before them.

From here, Melzer switches his focus to examine in more detail two common recurring rhetorical situations and the discourse communities within which those situations can occur:

the research paper and short answer exams. In his analysis of the research paper, Melzer reports some good news. More often than he expected, research-based assignments reflected an explicit understanding of disciplinary ways of thinking and contexts for knowledge production. These kinds of assignments asked students to synthesize a range of perspectives, creatively choose among a range of genres, and, most importantly, authentically enter the discourse of the discipline. Melzer suggests that the unexpected complexity in research assignments could be a "point of leverage" for those leading WAC faculty development, a way of encouraging faculty to consider approaches to writing instruction that reflect their core disciplinary values and ways of producing knowledge. Melzer then turns toward the other dominant genre he finds among writing assignments, that of short answer questions on exams. The stark reality Melzer finds is that exams account for the only writing students do in a quarter of the courses he pulled materials from. For Melzer, this exam-oriented writing seemed to defy analysis using genre theory, since the writing from his perspective seemed to lack a rhetorical and social context, and involved the "least" social action. Within the short time period of an exam, students were simply asked to recall declarative knowledge to their examiners. The questions students are asked to answer are often stunningly broad, as in an American history course: "'Discuss the developments and events that led to the America's Civil War'" (50). The contrast between these two genres of research and exams could not be more stark in how differently they engage students' rhetorical development. They reflect two poles that WAC proponents often face on their campuses: genres that provide clear opportunities for students to practice the discourse of a field, and genres that frustratingly obscure that discourse.

Melzer's next chapter seeks to theorize what the large sample of writing assignments tell us about the wider discourse communities the assignments represent. To what extent do the assignments reflect the particular disciplinary discourse communities of individual courses, and to what extent is there a

broader, common understanding of academic discourse shared across the academy? Melzer finds a paradox. On the one hand, he sees a number of patterns across the large sample: He sees common invocations of what instructors call the "formal essay," a range of common attitudes toward evidence and systematic research, common recurring language that on the surface references common rhetorical strategies (like "describe," "explain," or "analyze"), as well as a common preoccupation with grammatical correctness in writing. On the other hand, Melzer finds hints underneath the surface that these apparent similarities hide some fundamental differences not only in how disciplinary discourse communities understand these common rhetorical tasks, but also in how these tasks might be framed from one course to another. The upshot of this paradox is that students in these courses might be receiving some baffling mixed signals about the purposes, audiences, and contexts for writing.

While these first four chapters paint a bleak picture for those hoping to see more complexity in the rhetorical contexts and purposes for college writing, Melzer finds a much more nuanced approach to writing in courses that he identifies as being connected to a WAC initiative (though he isn't clear how he makes this identification, whether the materials themselves signal this connection explicitly, or if they were simply collected from institutions that have well-established WAC programs). These courses were more likely to assign expressive writing, reflecting a WAC commitment to writing as a tool for invention and a mechanism to help novice writers position themselves and their interests within specialized discourse communities. These courses were also more likely to frame assignments toward a readership beyond the classroom, often hypothetical audiences that evoked a professional discourse community in the field. Furthermore, these courses often were designed to guide students toward a culminating research-oriented project, including explicit talk about disciplinary genres and ways of thinking and explaining the rhetorical contexts in which the writing activity is meaningful to a disciplinary discourse community. Finally, the assignments in

these courses were much more likely to frame writing as an iterative process, assigning more than one draft, outlining a process for revision, and incorporating peer response. By bucking the wider trends that so severely limited the rhetorical potential for writing elsewhere, Melzer sees these courses as confirming the important role for well-established Writing Across the Curriculum programs to provide curricular guidance and faculty development.

In his final chapter, Melzer puts forward a series of recommendations to help WAC proponents, writing program administrators, writing center directors, and classroom instructors better promote richer contexts for writing in their institutions' curricula and classrooms:

- Facilitators of WAC faculty development should help disciplinary faculty consider how expressive and exploratory writing activities might invite students into a discipline's discourse community, and help faculty better align writing assignments within learning outcomes that reflect a discipline's goals, rhetorical contexts, and genres.
- Administrators of first-year writing programs and writing center directors should provide spaces for students to practice exploratory, expressive, and poetic writing where the opportunity is lacking in the wider curriculum. They should also use composition courses and tutor training to develop an understanding of how genres and discourse communities function in academic contexts, and outline rhetorical strategies to help first-year writers and tutors understand genres in context, even when a context might be under-articulated.

Ultimately, advocates for college writing should promote the ability of WAC programs to transform the cultures of writing within their institutions and promote pedagogies that establish an environment for students to learn more effectively. While many of these suggestions might be familiar to WAC advocates and

researchers, the recommendations take on a deeper urgency given the relatively gloomy context for writing that Melzer lays out in his study.

The strength of Melzer's study lies in the large amount of material he can bring to answer broad contextual questions about how writing operates in American higher education. But this same strength in scope is occasionally undercut by the core weakness of the study: It cannot consistently account for contextual details that are crucial to understanding the rhetorical milieu surrounding the assignments. This is a shortcoming that Melzer recognizes frequently, but he doesn't always acknowledge the contextual ambiguities of his materials in his analysis. For instance, the first document included in his appendix of sample coded assignments is a "study guide" for an exam in an economics course (137). While the document certainly seems suggestive of the kind of limited rhetorical stance toward knowledge that Melzer posits for exam writing, it does not necessarily tell us enough about the exam itself to draw the kinds of conclusions he seems to be making. Another example of this is his interpretation of questions on an American history exam, which Melzer uses to establish the overly-broad nature of exam questions students were asked to address: "It is argued by some that the Soviet-American Cold War from 1947-1991 was inevitable given the results of World War II and the ideological conflict between the two countries. Evaluate that argument" (49-50). While the question on its surface certainly seems broad, I could also see this question operating like the kinds of thesis-governed questions John Bean recommends in *Engaging Ideas*, which "present a proposition for students to defend or refute" (Bean 107), so that this instructor might be expecting students to take a more engaged, critical stance than might be apparent.

I don't make these points to nit-pick the particulars of Melzer's interpretations of individual documents or even to challenge his wider conclusions about the dominant rhetorical contexts and genres for writing, but to illustrate the limits of interpreting course documents (and a limited sample of them at that) outside

of their immediate contexts, especially given what we know about how bewilderingly complex and opaque classroom discourse can be in light of more localized studies (Prior; Giltrow; Beaufort). Melzer acknowledges these complexities in his fourth chapter, but the insights don't inform his earlier analysis. What could have mitigated this challenge for Melzer would have been a fuller account of the kinds of materials he was able to collect for different courses, and a deeper consideration of the range of discursive work that these different documents seemed to be playing in those courses. How often did different kinds of course documents appear in his online search? When were documents implied but not present? What kinds of roles do different course materials seem to posit for themselves in establishing a rhetorical context for writing in a course? To what extent are some materials more explicit than others in establishing the kinds of rhetorical contexts he's studying? Melzer certainly cannot be expected to answer all of these questions in detail given the limitations of his sample, but having a clearer sense of the range and nature of the materials he collected might have given readers a better sense of the gaps he had to account for in interpreting the documents, gaps that might have helped him temper some of this analysis and more clearly point to productive avenues for future research.

None of this diminishes what Melzer achieves in giving the field such a broad perspective of the rhetorical contexts for college writing in the US. A panorama, as Melzer notes, can offer a "shot that pans wide enough that larger patterns in the landscape are revealed." It cannot "capture the level of detail of the close up shot" as detailed ethnographic studies of classroom writing might (2-3). What remains for scholars following Melzer is to provide some more intermediate detail to fill out the landscape between Melzer's panoramic view and fine-grained classroom studies, as one might zoom in and out on a digital map. Melzer's study perhaps confirms what some of us fear about the limited reach of WAC's pedagogical reforms. But it also shows us some promising opportunities for working with instructors across the curriculum to build richer contexts for our students' writing.

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Reviewed by Catherine St Pierre

Generation Vet: Composition, Student Veterans, and the Post-9/11 University is the first scholarly monograph to articulate best practices for teaching writing to student veterans who have enrolled in colleges and universities since the post-9/11 GI Bill went into effect in 2009. Before the publication of *Generation Vet* on Veterans' Day 2014, composition scholars writing about student veterans shared their work in themed issues of journals, conference presentations and workshops, theses and dissertations. Previous scholarship is widely dispersed in a variety of formats, but may provide helpful additional resources for readers who wish to learn more.[1]

The editors and contributors of *Generation Vet* step into the gap between growing numbers of students and absence of professional development to argue that "Composition studies can offer great insights into the pedagogical, rhetorical, and programmatic implications of working with student veterans" (3). The book includes twelve chapters and an introduction that contextualizes veterans' issues. In the introduction, the editors review composition's relationship with veterans from previous wars, historicize the GI Bills,[2] present statistical data about the demographics of veterans and about student veterans' academic preparation,[3] and raise awareness about ethics, finances and teaching in the military/civilian gap.

The book is divided into three sections. Part one, "Beyond the Military-Civilian Divide: Understanding Veterans," considers the classroom as a contact zone where competing values and practices meet and make meaning. Part two, "Veterans and Public Audiences," discusses factors outside of classrooms that influence

how and why veterans compose. Part three, "Veteran-Friendly Composition Practices," explores programmatic and pedagogical strategies for teaching writing to veterans. The strength of the collection is its development of several themes across chapters: correcting stereotypes and stigmas about veterans, exploring implications for practice by understanding military experiences, and establishing places for teamwork and collaboration in curricular and extracurricular writing contexts.

The contributors' methods, terminology, and theoretical backgrounds vary widely, but many employ and return to key concepts and informing themes, creating a cohesive collection that provides background, resources, and recommendations for best practices to writing teachers. None of the contributors suggests to readers that the problems resulting from the rise in student veterans' pursuit of higher education have uncomplicated solutions, but many are optimistic about the future.

Correcting Stereotypes and Stigmas

The title of the book itself, *Generation Vet*, invites readers to negotiate contradictory perceptions of veterans. *Time* magazine dubbed veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan the next "greatest generation" in a 2011 cover story that favorably highlighted veterans' entrepreneurship and altruism. A competing portrait of veterans was presented in *Generation Kill*, Evan Wright's memoir about the 2003 invasion of Iraq that became a popular HBO miniseries in 2008. This text showed Marines as aggressive and destructive. Neither the historical trope nor the killer trope fully captures the experience of student veterans, but keeping both images in mind and negotiating the heroic and monstrous prepares readers to recognize ambiguities and pay attention to context.

Since only one-half of one percent of the US population is serving in the military and seven percent are veterans, the military-civilian divide is worthy of attention when discussing stereotypes, which often arise from media portrayals of veterans. Langstraat and Doe proffer hope that writing classes can offer a space to investigate the ideological differences that inform these

tropes, representations and portrayals, offering both opportunity and challenge. The chapters in *Generation Vet* present helpful resources to capitalize on opportunities and ameliorate challenges.

In their chapter, "'I Have To Speak Out': Writing with Veterans in a Community Writing Group," Eileen Schell and Ivy Kleinbart name the dichotomy in terms mixing the sacred and secular—Savior and Rambo. As they argue, externally imposed narrative tropes are incomplete, which is another reason for veterans to author their own stories and address public audiences with their experiences of war. Tara Wood, in "Signature Wounds: Marking and Medicalizing Post-9/11 Veterans," reviews an argument that claims veterans are rhetorically constructed as Homeric heroes or ticking time bombs, archetypes Wood relates to "supercrip" and "invalid" narratives in disability studies, both of which limit ability to speak and be heard. Wood questions whether those "marked" by mental illness (for example, the signature wounds Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury/TBI) are recognized as fully human beings capable of rhetorical agency.

Wood's essay challenged me to consider how a revised understanding of PTSD and TBI could have benefited CJ, a student of Lynda De La Ysla's who was suspended until he could provide documentation attesting to his mental health and about whom she writes in "Faculty as First Responders: Willing but Unprepared." The administrators who suspended CJ were working from a medicalized understanding of PTSD, placing the burden of "overcoming" the disability on the student. Consistent with TBI symptoms listed by Wood, De La Ysla reports that CJ needed face-to-face clarification on most assignments. He did not return to her college. In response, De La Ysla worked with her campus and community to develop and publicize resources for student veterans. I anticipate that Wood's critique of existing models of PTSD/TBI will positively influence WPAs and teachers who interact with students who are learning and experiencing signature wounds.

Bonnie Selting also observes problematic stereotypes that limit peers' abilities to listen to veterans in "The Value of Service Learning for Student-Veterans: Transitioning to Academic Cultures through Writing and Experiential Learning." Although the Vietnam War ended in 1975, years before any of Selting's traditionally-aged students were born, they associated the term "veteran" with Vietnam era images when many middle and upper class individuals avoided the draft and many who served belonged to minorities or groups with less cultural capital. At least one student reported feeling "removed" from veterans, pitying them, and finding them frightening.

Other stereotypes that contributors challenge include conservative veterans leery of liberal professors (Langstrat and Doe; Hart and Morrow), learning things "barney style" or dumbed down to the lowest common denominator (Hinton), and lack of agency (Hadlock and Doe). These authors reveal the limits of deficit-laden stereotypes through narrative, qualitative, and quantitative data. The multivocal and diverse arguments and perspectives in *Generation Vet* challenge readers to negotiate contradictory perceptions of veterans and make meaning from the incongruities.

Implications for Practice—Using Military Service for Academic Success

In the opening chapter of *Generation Vet*, Hart and Morrow offer guidelines for practice repeated and inflected throughout the book. They advise compositionists to cultivate trust, provide feedback, provide clear rationales, encourage critical consciousness, use repetition and imitation, get expert help when necessary, and capitalize on teamwork and leadership (43-47). Cultivating trust is key to the extracurricular writing groups facilitated by Schell and Klenbart and Karen Springsteen ("Closer to Home: Veterans' Workshops and the Materiality of Writing"), that bridge civilian and military gaps. Thompson's contribution on respecting silence as a response to war, "Recognizing Silence:

Composition, Writing, and the Ethical Space for War," also reminds us of the importance of respecting student boundaries.

Early in the collection, Erin Hadlock and Sue Doe ("Not Just 'Yes Sir, No Sir': How Genre and Agency Interact in Student-Veteran Writing") explain that many of the student veterans they interviewed felt that the writing they did in the military was meaningful and urgent; in contrast, academic writing sometimes felt empty. Corinne Hinton ("'Front and Center': Marine Student-Veterans, Collaboration, and the Writing Center") observed the same problem but hypothesized that veterans' comfort and familiarity with military discourse interfered with understanding the purpose of academic discourse.

Contributors discuss many ways to provide exigency and purpose for academic writing. In "A New Mission: Veteran-Led Learning Communities in the Basic Writing Classroom," Ann Shivers-McNair recounts a time when a student in a veterans' basic writing cohort infused his writing with meaning by composing a proposal for college administrators, an audience outside of class with power to improve student veterans' situation on campus. Likewise, Bonnie Selting advocates for service learning because it provides opportunities for veterans to use military experiences and dispositions to serve the community and apply their writing skills in practical ways. Ashly Bender also positions audience as essential to creating meaning for composers in "Exploring Student-Veteran Expectations about Composing: Motivations, Purposes, and the Influence of Trauma on Composing Practices."

Provide Feedback

The authors of all twelve chapters emphasize praise and ongoing feedback loops. For example, Hart and Morrow indicate that frequent feedback and sincerity tell a veteran that praise has been earned. Hinton reviews veterans' desire for directness and clarity from professors, a call echoed throughout the book. De La Ysla speaks about the importance of face-to-face communication with a student coping with TBI, which is consistent with Wood's

discussion. Hart and Morrow ask us to be aware of the power of comments. Schell and Kleinbart, Springsteen, and Thompson talk about the importance of listening and witnessing texts in extracurricular contexts.

Encourage Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness partially means interrogating power structures, which applies to discourse norms as well as institutions. As Schell and Kleinbart and Springsteen relate, many of the participating veteran writers use the opportunity to investigate power and agency. Hart and Morrow, Mallory and Downs, and Hadlock and Doe use different data sets to argue that direct instruction on academic discourse, its purposes, and its differences from military discourse may ameliorate perceived conflicts and enhance student transition.

Repetition and Imitation

Further, many contributors argue for the benefits of model or example texts and templates. Hart and Morrow discuss the value of repetition and imitation for military learners. Hinton explains processes of teaching and learning in the Marine Corps, which reinforces the idea that student veterans value model texts. For those instructors who are concerned that models will be copied too closely and limit students' development of independent thought, Bender's suggestion to use templates and remixes seems like a promising direction, offering structure for spontaneity.

Other authors discuss how the military influences classroom attitudes and preparations and explain military customs that influence personal conduct and dispositions, from punctuality to perseverance. Qualities and skills that on the surface seem unrelated to writing, like observation (Carroll qtd in Schell and Kleinbart 137), mission orientation (Mallory and Downs), exerting agency in writing (Hadlock and Doe) and respect for leadership (Hart and Morrow) can help prepare veteran writers to report accurately, seek and incorporate feedback and persevere—skills we cultivate as writers and celebrate in our students.

Leadership, Teamwork, and Collaboration

A dominant theme in this collection is the value of collaborative learning and teamwork for student veterans. Hart and Morrow connect this to veterans' work in collective units, which downplay individual accomplishments and emphasize collective success. The emphasis on leadership and responsibility is also vital to Shivers-McNair's program and Selting's proposal of a model of service learning.

Bender suggests mechanisms to transfer online self-sponsored collaborative composing into school-sponsored college composing. Shivers-McNair profiles a program that succeeds because veterans work with other veterans on writing that connects to lived experiences. Selting's proposal to engage veterans in service learning emphasizes the value of collaborative learning for student veterans. Hinton's emphasis on help-seeking behaviors through peers and the writing center repurposes one way of learning to write (mentoring from more experienced Marines) within a college appropriate context.

De La Ysla's account of reaching out to the community, Thompson's suggestions to look for partnerships and resources, Hart and Morrow's call to bring in experts, and Shivers-McNair's discussions with faculty and administrators all illustrate that community and collaboration are valuable not only for students but also for the composition professionals who serve and guide them.

I would also argue that this book itself exemplifies collaboration with experts. Of the seventeen authors, four are veterans or serving on active duty, three are military spouses, two are adult children of veterans, and all have worked with student veterans as composition professionals. Their synthesis of research, theory, and practice allows them to offer expertise that readers can use to guide their teaching of writing to veterans.

Conclusion

Generation Vet offers writing teachers opportunities to consider how to design learning contexts for student veterans. Both the strengths and limitations of *Generation Vet* are in its scope and multivocality. Contributors conducted research in many geographic regions in the United States, employing diverse methodologies and foraging from different scholarly disciplines for theory to illuminate challenges and opportunities.

Both two-year and four-year institutions are represented, but all schools discussed are "brick and mortar," so treatment of online learning is underdeveloped. Bender's study of self-sponsored online composing is valuable but does not look at academic writing instruction in online contexts. De La Ysla is the only representative of a two-year college, yet as we know from the 2009 *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* special issue (36.4), community colleges served significant numbers of veterans in higher education even before the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

There is also space for more research on veterans in basic composition courses, as Shivers-McNair and De La Ysla are the only contributors who address that context directly. The omission of student veterans in Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines programs and business/technical writing presents another opportunity for further research, as all of these subjects allow for greater probing of the role of prior knowledge and military rhetorical knowledge in completing college composing tasks, broadly defined.

The chapters of *Generation Vet* effectively develop as a cohesive collection by amplifying themes and suggestions for practice. I predict that the book will remain relevant for years, yet it should be considered an invitation to further research, not a final word on student veterans and teaching writing.

Notes

[1] D. Alexis Hart and Roger Thompson won a two-year grant from the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 2011. In 2013 they published a white

paper titled "Ethical Obligation: Promising Practices for Student Veterans in College Writing Classrooms." For resources in addition to *Generation Vet*, readers may also wish to consult *Teaching Writing in the Two-Year College* 36.4 (2009), a themed issue on veterans and teaching writing. Because this was published before the post-9/11 GI Bill, some contexts have changed significantly. Hart and Edwards edited issue 14.3 (2010) of *Kairos* on military literacy practices. Composition Forum launched a special issue on veterans in 2013, guest edited by Hart and Thompson. CCCC and WPA have offered workshops, panels, posters, and SIGs about writing with current, former, and future members of the military. Marilyn Valentino brought the issue to the forefront in her CCCC chair's address in 2010 and again as a featured speaker at WPA in 2012.

[2] Lisa Lebduska has published two articles delving into the effects of the 1944 and post-9/11 GI Bills, if readers are seeking more detailed information.

[3] The American Council on Higher Education (ACE) has published several reports that provide more statistical data. *From Soldier to Student* (2009) and *From Soldier to Student II* (2012) are good starting points. The Department of Veterans' Affairs collects copious data, but those can be difficult to locate and process.

[4] The military-civilian gap is covered in a 2011 report by the Pew Research Center. Langstraat and Doe's interpretation and application of this divide to the academic context of teaching writing is very helpful.

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