WORKING WITH ACADEMIC LITERACIES

CASE STUDIES TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE

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CHAPTER 16

MARKING THE BOUNDARIES: KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY IN PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

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Writing is a central feature of all aspects of the doctoral process. Students are engaged in textual activities such as the taking of notes, the keeping of research diaries, the analysis of interview data and the preparation of reports and conference papers well before they write their thesis. Hence Barbara Kamler and Pat Thomson (2006, p. 4) conceptualize doctoral research as a continuous process of inquiry through writing, and for David Scott and Robin Usher (1996, p. 43) research is "writing and the production of a text." However, despite the dominance of writing in the process of knowledge production, the area of doctoral writing remains relatively under-theorized as a social practice. While there is a profusion of self-help and advice books on the market, most take a skills-based approach in which deficits in writing can be addressed through learning a set of decontextualized tips and techniques (Kamler & Thomson, 2004). This "study skills" model (Mary Lea & Brian Street, 1998) treats writing as a set of technical transferable skills, failing to recognize how academic writing practices are situated in wider social and institutional contexts. Although there are guides for supervisors (Kamler & Thomson, 2006) and students (Rowena Murray, 2011) which do acknowledge writing as a social practice, Claire Aitchison et al. (2012, p. 2) conclude that relatively little is known about "how doctoral students actually learn research writing, how supervisors 'teach' or develop the writing of their students and what happens to students and supervisors during this process."

In researching students' and supervisors' perspectives on doctoral writing, Aitchison, et al. (2012) found that both parties identified feedback as the primary mechanism through which students learned how to write. The nature and content of this feedback was crucial to the relationship between supervisor and student and to the development of the student's doctoral identity. In this chapter, the role of feedback in constructing doctoral writing practices is explored through an analysis of the written feedback given to doctoral students. Interviews with students and supervisors can provide some insight into the perceptions of, and attitudes to, feed-

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back. However, previous research has identified an interesting disjuncture between what lecturers *did* and what they *said they did* in relation to marking and feedback (Barbara Read, Becky Francis & Jocelyn Robson, 2004; Frank Webster, David Pepper & Alan Jenkins, 2000). Furthermore, written feedback on student work is a specific genre of writing, which can itself be seen a social practice. It is therefore a productive site for the study of the educational discourses which staff engage with in making and justifying their responses to student writing.

This study is part of an ongoing practice-based project relating to the written feedback that is given to students in higher education. An earlier phase of the research analyzed samples of feedback from a range of units in an undergraduate criminology programme to consider how the feedback given to students were shaped by the departmental, disciplinary and institutional contexts (Creaton, 2011). This phase of the project analyzes feedback from a very different type of programme—a professional doctorate—which raises different, but equally interesting issues about the discourses which underpin marking and feedback. The chapter begins with an overview of the professional doctorate and then analyzes some of the key themes that emerge from an analysis of the written feedback that was given to students on the first stage of the programme. It then goes on to consider the implications of these findings for enhancing feedback practice and concludes with a discussion on the value of the academic literacies approach as a tool for pedagogical enhancement (see also Kaufhold Chapter 6 and Badenhorst et al. Chapter 7 this volume).

THE PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE

The feedback analyzed for this study came from a professional doctorate in Criminal Justice (DCrimJ) programme offered by the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications does not distinguish between the PhD and the professional doctorate: both are awarded for "the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication" (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2008). However, there are some differences in the structure, delivery and ethos of the awards. Professional doctorate programmes usually include a series of taught modules as a precursor to the research phase and in the DCrimJ, students study four taught doctoral level units (Professional Review and Development, Advanced Research Techniques, Publication and Dissemination, Research Proposal) followed by a research project which culminates in a 50,000 word thesis. Students are required to be engaged in a relevant field of professional activity and in this programme, a wide range of criminal justice sector backgrounds are represented, including the police, probation, social work and the law. The teaching of the units is embedded in the criminal justice context and stu-

dents link their assignments to their specific field of professional activity.

A professional doctorate programme was chosen partly for practical reasons—unlike the largely bilateral and private nature of feedback that is given by a PhD supervisor, the feedback that is given to professional doctorate students on the taught phase of programme is agreed between a first and second marker, scrutinized by an external examiner and retained for audit purposes. There was, therefore, an accessible source of naturally occurring data through which the conventions around academic and professional discourse could be interrogated. However, the professional doctorate is, in any event, a rich source of data for the investigation of discursive practices. David Boud and Mark Tennant (2006) note that the informal, situated and contingent knowledge generated through professional practice (Michael Eraut, 1994, 2000) can present some challenges for academic staff inducted in more formal disciplinary-based knowledge of the academy (Tony Becher & Paul Trowler, 2001). Whilst dispositional knowledge generated through reflection and reflective practice is well established in educational and health disciplines, it may be viewed with suspicion in disciplines located within a more positivist tradition. The multidisciplinary nature of criminology means that students and staff come to the DCrimJ with a range of different epistemological, theoretical and methodological perspectives. These are reflected in the written texts that are produced for assessment, and it is these texts and the responses to them, which are the subject of this chapter.

The sample comprised 63 assignments which were submitted by students in 2007-2011 for the Professional Review and Development module. This module is the first one that students take on entry to the programme and includes a critical review of the concepts of professionalism, professional practice and professional knowledge; reflective practice and an introduction to the philosophical underpinnings of research. Students are assessed through a three-part assignment which requires them to critique an academic journal article from the perspective of their professional practice; to provide a reflective account of their personal and professional journey to the professional doctorate and an assessment of their learning and development needs; and to critically analyze the concepts of professionalism, professional practice and professional knowledge within their own field.

The feedback that had been given on these assessments was uploaded to NVivo for coding and analysis. The first phase of coding was concerned with analyzing the comments at what Theresa Lillis (2008) terms the transparent/referential level. These included comments that staff made about student writing, particularly in relation to surface level features of the text. The second phase of coding focussed on the discursive/indexical level, looking at the linguistic features of the feedback indexing wider discourses. This chapter discusses two key themes which emerged from the analysis of the data: the relationship between professional and academic

knowledge and the negotiation of doctoral identity.

KNOWLEDGE

Markers made a range of comments about aspects of students' writing, such as structure and referencing, which also featured in the undergraduate feedback from the first phase of the project. The most significant difference between the two samples was the markers' attitude to language which explicitly positioned the student within the text. In traditional undergraduate essays, markers strongly disapproved of students using the first person or making reference to their personal or professional knowledge or experience. From an academic literacies perspective, these conventions can be seen as having an ideological function beyond a simply stylistic preference. The exclusion of personal experience, the absence of the author in the text, the use of objective prose are all features of a dominant "essayist literacy," which privileges the discursive practices of particular social groups. Lillis (2001, p. 115), for example, found that the "institutional rejection" of personal experience was a particular issue for the student writers in her study, who felt marginalized by the lack of opportunities for drawing on their own lived experiences as a resource for meaning making within higher education.

However, aspects of the professional doctorate assignment required students to explicitly engage with their personal and professional perspectives. Markers also made it clear that, even in relation to the more conventionally academic aspects of the assignment, it was critical to position themselves as a practitioner:

> I think it would have added value to position yourself at the outset. As a police officer you would presumably take a particular view of this.
>
> … although you allude to your profession right at the end, you have not explicitly stated why this article is of interest to you in your particular professional role/context.

Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater (1996, p. 127) suggests that locating oneself assertively and deliberately within a text reflects ethical, rhetorical and theoretical choices on the part of the researcher. However, for students, these choices are often determined by wider disciplinary and institutional constraints. In the case of the professional doctorate, the deliberate foregrounding of both the personal and the professional can be seen as disrupting some of the traditional epistemological and disciplinary boundaries and practices which have applied in dominant academic writing contexts. Acknowledging the legitimacy of professional and personal knowledge requires a reconsideration of the academic writing practices which are entwined with the particular type of disciplinary knowledge generated in the acad-

emy. It can also make explicit the function that writing and feedback practices serve in reinforcing power relationships and existing patterns of knowledge construction.

IDENTITY

A second key theme which emerged from the analysis of the feedback was how tutors positioned themselves in relation to the students through the feedback that they gave. Markers often addressed the students by name and made extensive use of the second person to frame their comments. A more intimate relationship between the marker and the student was also established through the use of other metadiscoursal features. The use of hedges and tentative language was prominent, with markers using phrases such as "would have liked," "wondered if," or "possibly" when discussing areas of possible omission or further discussion. Even where there were areas of disagreement, phrases such as "I'm not sure that I agree," or "I'm not entirely convinced" were used. The feedback was also noticeable for the extent of personal engagement that markers had with the text. There were examples of markers responding to points in the student essays with anecdotes from their own professional experience, drawing on examples from their current research or sharing their perspectives on the doctoral journey. There were also numerous expressions of pleasure and enjoyment in reading the students' work and in the prospect of working with the student in the future.

The pedagogical discourses employed by members of staff on this course are in significant contrast to those at undergraduate level, where feedback was written in a largely impersonal tone, was more authoritative in nature and disclosed little about the marker's own position. These differences suggest a renegotiation of the identities of students and markers at doctorate level. At undergraduate level, there is usually a very clear difference in status and expertise between the staff and student, which is reinforced through the form and language of the feedback genre. However, professional doctoral students often occupy senior positions within the criminal justice sector and have embarked on the programme with the intention of becoming "researching professionals" rather than "professional researchers." The student may be seeking academic recognition of their existing professional knowledge and experience rather than an apprenticeship to the academy. The language used in the feedback reflects the different nature of the relationship in which knowledge is exchanged rather than simply validated.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Mary Lea & Brian Street (2006) argue that the academic literacies approach has both theoretical and practical value—as a heuristic model for understanding literacy practices and as a framework for curriculum development, training programmes and

personal reflection and development. How then can the evidence from this research project inform current practice in approaches to marking and feedback more generally?

Firstly, a close analysis of the feedback that staff give to students can provide useful evidence to monitor and inform assessment practices. Royce Sadler (2005, p. 192) argues that the focus on making assessment criteria transparent is misplaced, because the difficulties in defining terms precisely simply "sets up new verbal terms that in turn call for more elaboration, and so on in infinite regress." A more productive approach, he suggests, is to identify the norms of the assessment community through a close examination of the nature of, and reasons for, the actual marking decisions made by tutors. Through this inductive process it should be possible to identify and convey to students the standards which are embedded in the tacit knowledge of a particular localised assessment community.

Arguably, however, these strategies may simply reinforce existing patterns of knowledge construction and representation within the academy. A central criticism of the communities of practice approach is that issues of power, authority, and structure tend to be unacknowledged and under-theorized. The approach does not account for how particular groups of students may be excluded or marginalized from the process of legitimate peripheral participation (Romy Clark & Roz Ivanic, 1997; Lillis, 2001) or how dominant literacy practices may serve as a barrier to engagement rather than as a shared resource (Lea, 2005). The development of a more coherent set of shared standards may make for fairer assessment practices, but does not challenge the role of the university in defining and reifying particular forms of literacy practices.

Thus, Lillis (2003) argues for a more radical transformation of pedagogical practice. She uses Mikhail Bakhtin's work as a theoretical framework through which to argue for a shift away from monologic approaches that privilege the single authoritative voice of the tutor and towards dialogic approaches which include a range of discourses and voices. Practical examples of this approach include: "talkback" rather than feedback on students' written texts, opening up disciplinary content to a wider range of external interests and influences, and opening up academic writing conventions to new and different ways of knowing. This, she argues, is the crucial step through which an academic literacies approach can shift from a theoretical frame to a pedagogical frame.

A second practical implication of this research relates to staff development. A starting point would be to have course-level or programme-level discussions in relation to establishing what views are in relation to acceptable forms of knowledge and representation practices within the discipline. What sources of knowledge are acceptable within the discipline and is there a preferred hierarchy? For example, should students be looking for theoretical support or to empirical evidence in the first instance? When looking for sources of evidence, are particular types ruled in or out, for example internet sources, or newspapers? This exercise is not necessarily expected to result in a consensus which can apply across all units and disciplines—

it is a rare discipline indeed where a course team would be able to agree on all of these issues. However, it provides the basis upon which to share some of this tacit knowledge with students and to highlight or flag up areas where there might be lack of consensus or certainty.

Another strategy for explicating some of this tacit knowledge would be the analysis of written feedback that is given to students within a particular unit or course. Discourse and/or conversation analysis provides a useful way to identify underlying assumptions and conventions in particular contexts. It provides an opportunity for questioning hegemonic or conventional practices within the discipline and for showing how taken-for-granted practices can be explored and made visible. It also has the advantage of enabling discussions about shared aims and tacit assumptions to be had without identifying or singling out particular members of staff. These practical strategies to uncover some of the tacit knowledge underpinning judgements about marking and feedback might provide valuable information about the norms, conventions and practices of the discipline that can then be shared with students. Alternatively Ann Johns' (1997) work on "students as researchers" suggests a way of getting students to investigate the academic setting in which they are writing and the values and expectations which underlie the texts they are being asked to produce.

In the context of the professional doctorate, the application of the academic literacies approach suggests a number of ways in which feedback and assessment practices could be reviewed. There is evidence of markers encouraging students to reconsider their academic writing practices and in developing different types of feedback relationships. However, the giving of feedback remains a largely private and monologic process and the final assessment—a thesis and viva—is the same as for the traditional doctorate. This might be seen as evidence of what David Scott, Andrew Brown, Ingrid Lunt and Lucy Thorne (2004) see as evidence of a "colonization" model in which dominant academic modes of representing knowledge take precedence over other methods of communication and dissemination. Tom Maxwell (2003) suggests that this is characteristic of "first generation" professional doctorates, which tend to conform to existing institutional doctoral practices. However, as professional doctorates become more established, he suggests that "second generation" doctorates offer a more radical potential to reshape the academic and professional partnerships. This might be reflected in the development of alternative forms of feedback, for example, dialogic feedback within the professional doctorate cohort as a whole; alternative forms of written representations, for example, practice based reports; and alternative forms of assessment, for example, a portfolio of evidence.

CONCLUSION

The example of the professional doctorate shows how an academic literacies approach can connect academic writing and feedback to wider discourses around

knowledge and identity. The analysis of the feedback given on professional doctorates suggests that feedback practices are epistemological, in that they involve judgements about what counts as valid knowledge in the department, discipline or the academy. They are also ideological, in that they are implicated in reinforcing existing patterns of power and privilege. Given the crucial gatekeeping function of marking and feedback, an understanding of how academic staff construct the boundaries of appropriate knowledge and identities and the extent to which they may allow them to be contested, is key to an effective theorization and teaching of academic writing.

CODA: FEEDBACK TO THE AUTHOR FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Jane,

This was an interesting and enjoyable read. However, it was interesting to note that, despite the implied critique of traditional academic writing conventions, this piece was written largely in accordance with those very conventions. So for example, it is written in the third person and you have avoided positioning yourself explicitly in the text. However, your own experience does seem very relevant—you are a member of the course team for the programme which is the focus of the research study and you even wrote some of the feedback that you analyzed as part of the project! I think it might also have been worth mentioning that you completed a professional doctorate yourself and encountered some of the same difficulties in negotiating the boundaries between the professional and the academic with which these students are grappling. Isn't it the case that your identities as course team member, marker and (ex)student will give you a particular perspective on these issues?

The fact that you have found it difficult to write outside the genre (despite the active encouragement of the editors of this volume to do so) illustrates the problems that are likely to be encountered in encouraging changes to deep-seated academic writing practices. A first step may be to set tasks which involve a standard written assignment but which encourage students to provide some interaction of commentary on the text (for example, asking students to write a couple of feedback paragraphs on an assignment; using the comment function to provide commentaries on the text). This allows students to produce conventional academic text but which also enables some engagement with and critique of the processes through which it is produced. Maybe you should consider something similar with this chapter?

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REFLECTIONS 3
WHAT'S AT STAKE IN DIFFERENT TRADITIONS? LES LITTÉRACIES UNIVERSITAIRES AND ACADEMIC LITERACIES

Isabelle Delcambre in conversation with Christiane Donahue

Isabelle Delcambre is Professor Emeritus at the Université de Lille, France and a member of the Théodile-CIREL laboratory. Christiane Donahue is Associate Professor of Linguistics, Director of the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric, Dartmouth College, US, and a member of the Théodile-CIREL laboratory. Isabelle and Christiane have worked together, exploring university writing in France and the United States via exchanges and shared projects, and have been learning about writing research and teaching in each others' contexts for some twelve years. They have published together and separately on these topics, in particular as the result of a three-year study of French university student writing across disciplines, led by Isabelle.

Christiane: You have been at the forefront of research about writing in secondary and postsecondary education in France for decades (e.g., Delcambre 1997). What is the current status of post-secondary writing research and teaching in France?

Isabelle: Many research fields study *university practices*—this question is within that context. Aspects that have long been studied include the role of metacognition in university success, and sociological studies (e.g., Pierre Bourdieu & Jean-Claude Passeron, 1964) about students' trajectories and socialization, their failure in the first years, their modes of living and studying, etc. Studies of writing at university, the genres produced there and the forms of continued learning of writing in university contexts have contributed to establishing this larger area of university practices as a field, *la pédagogie universitaire*. In particular, the focus has been on supporting students' entry into a "writing universe." Not all college writing is in the form of exams for evaluation. We have asked ourselves, who are students? Future professionals? Future academics seeking knowledge? Who are faculty? Teachers or researchers?

This diversity of purposes for writing indicates a diversity of practices. Possibly,

a student who writes as a future professional encounters different genres and difficulties from those encountered by a future academic seeking knowledge; the same is true for faculty. Descriptions of academic genres in a rhetorical or functional vein dominated in the 1990s in France. Yves Reuter (1998) was the first to theorize the question of student writers and their difficult relationship to academic writing. The question of the author's identity, or the enunciative perspective on writing appears much later in our research discussions (see the work on "writerly images," Isabelle Delcambre & Yves Reuter, 2002). The current focus on authorship from an enunciative standpoint is the focus of other research groups in France, most notably the Grenoble group (cf. Françoise Boch & Fanny Rinck, 2010).

Christiane: Tell me about your first encounter with "Academic Literacies"?

Isabelle: I discovered the debates between Jack Goody (e.g., 1977, 1986) and Brian Street (e.g., 1995) in the 1990s. I was first influenced by Goody's theory about writing and the construction of thinking that writing provides; and then I heard of Brian Street's work, incidentally, and I was somewhat astonished that Goody's theories could be challenged. That shows the intellectual domination of Goody's theories in France at that time for researchers, who were not so well informed about research abroad. Later, during a major research project funded by the French government, I met many colleagues from AcLits, and read their essays, discussed with them, and so on …

Christiane: What points of shared interest did you find in these discussions?

Isabelle: I was first astonished (and a bit envious) when I encountered the well-established importance of university writing research in AcLits. In those years in France, very few people were interested in such questions, apart from those who developed a "technical skills" point of view on students' difficulties (less frequent nowadays, with the development of "pédagogie universitaire"). The AcLits search for explanations of students' difficulties by the means of concepts such as social practices, identity, power, empowerment and transformation met, in my opinion, our didactic points of view on attitudes towards writing ("rapport à l'écriture"), representations (of writing, of the self as a writer, of knowledge, etc.) and disciplinary awareness (for all these concepts, see Yves Reuter et al., 2013).

But some of these concepts do not receive quite the same definition. For example, *social practices* seem to be, for didacticians, more a range of determinations (historical, cultural and personal) and less a high-stakes object of negotiation, power or struggle. In the same way, when we talk about *representation* there have always been questions about what was intended. In fact, in Educational Sciences, this term, borrowed from social psychology, is quite ordinary, referring to the ideas that people construct about writing processes, writing's functions, its objectives and so on.

In addition, it seems that for AcLits *social practices* applies to social contexts as well as to academic contexts, with the same reference to power and domination (see Street et al., Reflections 5 this volume). In didactics, too, practices are understood both at the university level and in the social world, but I think that didacticians have focused on the influence or relationship between the social and the school world, even in the most ordinary practices of writing. The concept of "pratiques sociales de référence" (referential social practices) proposed by Jean Louis Martinand (1986), a didactician of technology, is often used to understand the distance between school genres and socially grounded genres when accounting for the difficulties students may encounter when trying to fulfill school expectations. Many conflicts or tensions could happen between these different kinds of practices.

Christiane: The term you have developed in French research is littéracies universitaires—university literacies; what are the roots of that term?

Isabelle: This field brings together two long-term research traditions, didactics and linguistics, to describe practices and written genres in university contexts (though certainly other fields come into play—psychology, cognition, ethnography …). "Literacy" emphasizes the contextual, social and cultural aspects of reading and writing.

The intellectual history of the term "literacy" in France includes: Goody (1977, 1986) as a point of departure (thus shared in some ways with UK developments); Françoise Boch et al. (2004) offered attention to university writing in a sustained way, both theoretically and in terms of practices, but not yet using the term "literacy"; Jean Marie Privat and Mohamed Kara in 2006 published "La littéracie," reflecting on the anglo-saxon tradition of the term; Kara developed "Les écrits de savoir" in 2009, reflecting on the heuristic functions of writing in research disciplines.

In a different vein, Béatrice Fraenkel and Aïssatou Mbodj (2010) developed the social and cultural senses of literacy extensively, introducing in France the New Literacy Studies work, translating foundational pieces such as Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole (1981) and focusing primarily on the ethnological dimensions of New Literacy Studies.

A new name was needed for this new research field with its particular data, its multidisciplinarity, its methods and concepts. "Littéracies" allows an echo of "academic literacies" given the shared ground and objects of attention; it allows at the same time attention to what is different. It also allows an essential connection to disciplinary and institutional contexts in the elaboration of practices, but avoids the link to "académique," seen in French as negative, pretentious, formal; "university literacies" is an institutional sphere of discourse production.

Christiane: Why not just "didactics of university French"? Why "literacies"?

Isabelle: "Didactics of French" generally refers to the analysis of teaching and learning French as a language, or to remedial practices; it does not generally take up the epistemological and discursive activities of writing. A "didactics of writing" would be meaningless in a French university, in contrast to what US composition theory had to create when it separated from/opposed English literature as a university department and discipline. Because the discipline "French" does not exist in universities (neither for teaching nor for research), references to a "didactics of university French" would seem rather to be linked to French as a school subject.

Why do you think didactics has not developed as a field in Anglo-Saxon traditions? What are (if there are) the specificities of didactics from your point of view? To what extent is it possible to link them in the American panorama? Or maybe it is impossible?

Christiane: This is complex. "Didactics" as a field does not indeed seem to exist in at least US Anglo-Saxon traditions. We have Education and we have research in pedagogy, directly informing our teaching. Didactics seems, to me, to fit the research tradition that resists "applicationism" (by which I mean applying research results immediately to pedagogical contexts seeking practical applications) in favor of research that is more detached from the direct realities of teaching. Thus, didactics of, say, science, focuses on the theory of science teaching and learning as a research discipline. This gets complicated for writing; if we discuss a "didactics of writing" we are positing writing as a discipline. And so, here is a strong link to Composition Studies or Writing Studies in the United States, which takes as its object the teaching and learning of university writing as a discipline. Where does "Ac Lits" fit within these framings I wonder?

Isabelle: Unlike "university literacies," whose emergence is linked more to the extension into university levels of the research questions and themes that had been constructed for secondary and primary education writing research (didactics of French), from my point of view, AcLits came about as a specific area of New Literacy Studies, in order to describe non traditional students' literacies or literacies associated with new practices (distance learning, new media), and with a critical vision with respect to the implicit norms and ways of working of the traditional university. As I understand it, AcLits seeks to understand the specific terrain of the university; it studies relationships to writing; non-native speakers' encounters with UK university writing; transformation of practices of writing linked to digital environments; distance learning and writing; relationships between personal and university writing; scholars' writing practices. It supports thinking about university writing as mobilizing relationships of power and forms of identity construction in which students' writing practices are caught; it develops, in response, a critique of academic writing conventions and attends to different disciplinary contexts. How

do you generally understand AcLits in relation to your US domain?

Christiane: For me, US-style "first-year composition" has many of the features that AcLits has developed in terms of writing in the university at large, in the disciplines and beyond. That is, in the United States we have tended to think of the first year of college writing as the site of negotiation and resistance. In the theorizing and analysis of this work, we have sought to understand transformative practices in these contexts. The domain of disciplinary writing has settled far more squarely into an integrative model with a sense of norms and conventions, even as it has argued for writing as transforming the knowledge of the discipline (see also discussion in Russell and Mitchell Reflections 2 this volume). One of the recent trends in US writing scholarship, the "writing knowledge transfer" research, is relevant here in a lateral way. The idea of writing knowledge "transfer" was initially focused on what students learn that can be re-used in subsequent tasks and contexts. What's interesting is that the goal of integration is more appropriate for the "transfer" model, while knowledge "transformation," given the dynamic nature of learning and growth, works with appropriation, negotiation, resistance, critical reflection, metacognitive reshaping.

Isabelle: I'm thinking now about the connections and differences between what we refer to as "university literacies" and "Ac Lits." University literacies does not focus on multimodal or new media literacies, at least not yet. To date, university literacies has remained a research field without engaging much with pedagogical practice, while AcLits has engaged both with teaching practices and broader institutional practices. This is perhaps due to the structure of French universities (where faculty are more professors and lecturers than "simple" teachers) and to the dominant contempt for pedagogy (due to faculty evaluation models, which do not give credit for pedagogical activities).

Perhaps most important: AcLits analyzes students' resistance to university acculturation, reflects on questions of power relations and authority in writing practices, and seeks perhaps even to encourage these resistances; university literacies' point of departure is not ideological but descriptive (the descriptive analysis of university discourses and students'/teachers' representations).

Transformation in the sense of challenging or resisting dominant conventions is not the goal of university literacies, at least not to date. Transformation at whatever level—i.e., opening up debate about what kinds of language/s, conventions, semiotic resources can be used at university, is not important to university literacies. University literacies does not have a critical stance towards practices of writing or evaluation, unlike French didactics in secondary school in the 1980s, which deconstructed traditional writing exercises and was highly critical of the practices underlying these exercises (see Jean-François Halté, 1992, for example). University literacies is far too

underdeveloped, far too institutionally "weak" to be transformative in this way. That said, French didactics took 15 years to transform secondary school writing practices, and even today, traditional practices resurface periodically in some contexts.

Christiane: So, transforming the university itself and its writing practices is not within the current goals of university literacies. But perhaps university literacies seeks to transform the students' experiences of entering a universe that is in many ways foreign to what they have known until now? To listen to and understand those experiences? To unseat the dominant view of "writing" as "micro-linguistic competencies," especially in light of the changing international nature of language demands? Doesn't "university literacies" seek to transform, in a way, the French university?

Isabelle: Yes, for sure. University Literacies is grounded in the idea that students get to the university with writing knowledge and practices that must transform in order to enter into the disciplinary writing practices that they will progressively discover throughout the curriculum. And also in the idea that it is the responsibility of faculty to accompany students in these discoveries, rather than to hope that someday such accompanying will no longer be needed. The ANR research project (e.g. Delcambre and Donahue, 2010, 2012; Isabelle Delcambre & Dominique Lahanier -Reuter, 2010) showed how much the transition from the undergraduate level to the master's level profoundly transforms students' conceptions. They talk at length about the new writing challenges they find as they write their master's theses. University Literacies supports the idea that learning writing is an ongoing task. In that sense, we can say that University Literacies has a transformative approach, based on empirical research that allows descriptions of students' and teachers' representations and creates an understanding of the conditions needed for fruitful dialogue between these two groups.

Christiane: I'm also thinking that critical discourse analysis—used in Ac Lits and all about power and authority—has specific, deep roots in French theory?

Isabelle: Yes, but the French theory (Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Passeron, 1964; Bourdieu 1998; Michel Foucault, 1971), which is the roots of CDA and used in Ac Lits is not discussed in the French university contexts from where "littéracies universitaires" emerges (as you showed in your paper with Cinthia Gannett, John Brereton, Theresa Lillis and Mary Scott—see Donahue et al., 2009). Even if, in France, Bourdieu is central in sociology, and Foucault in philosophy and literature, the fields of didactics, linguistics and even sociolinguistics are not really influenced by Foucault and Bourdieu …

However French university literacies does include attention to social context and status, student success, etc.: Bourdieu and Passeron, for example (with their extensive focus on social selection, social reproduction), are always on the horizon

of studies of university students' writing. As an effect of the disciplinary organization of the French university, a current rule is not to trespass on others' research domain. Thus, sociological studies are used as contributions to didactics inquiry ("disciplines contributoires," Reuter et al., 2013), not as main references. Yves Reuter does theorize the notion of "tension" as a distinctive feature of writing practices—and this notion can be seen as not so far away from notions of resistance and negotiation. However, tensions in writing are often presented as a way to understand students' difficulties and to help them to resolve these tensions, to modify their attitude towards texts and academic writing. In my opinion, they are not presented as an occasion to modify the academic world or conventions, or only in a very "light touch" and individual way.

There are shared interests between Ac Lits and Univ Lits in the attention given to making visible the implicit expectations of university work, crystallized in a set of rules; it is a complex adaptation for students moving into the postsecondary world; students must "affiliate" with the world of the university, and secondary education cannot prepare them—given the decoding they must do. Seeing it this way means students are not "missing" something but are in a social negotiation. Teachers' and students' representations aren't compatible.

But there are differences between Univ Lits and Ac Lits: university literacies currently focuses on the need to describe textual objects generally practiced in university fields and studies; to identify their specificities (especially those with which students have difficulty) to facilitate learning and appropriation; to deal with difficulties often associated with new genres, new practices, and the distance between students' written culture and university written culture.

Christiane: How might the plural "literacies" be important to both Ac Lits and University Literacies?

Isabelle: It signifies the multiple social and cultural practices in play. It challenges the idea that literacy is an individual (isolated) cognitive act, as Lea and Street noted in 1998. It allows us to signal that literacy is always linked to social and cultural practices of reading and writing in particular contexts (disciplines too).

Christiane: What questions do you have for the future of University Literacies and of Academic Literacies?

Isabelle: Currently, the creation of the "ESPE" (Ecoles supérieures du professorat et de l'éducation), which take the place of the former teacher-training institutions inside the universities, is an opportunity for many university structures to think about writing programmes, first for the teachers-to-be, and then, I hope, for all the students …. There are also some universities that are thinking about writing support programmes aimed at PhD students who are "moniteurs," as it was a tra-

dition in the former CIES (Centres d'initiation à l'enseignement supérieur). These "monitors" were, from 1989 to 2009, doctoral students who were paid to learn to become university professors and received a particular training while they covered the small-group work sessions of university courses. Currently doctoral candidates do this work, but they are no longer trained in a consistent way: what individual universities do depends on the political decisions made in each university.

Will we see a didactics of university disciplines taking shape, as scholars like Francis Grossmann and Yves Reuter have suggested in a 2012 issue of *Pratiques*? If it does, it is likely that a deeper reflection on epistemological dimensions of university writing practices will develop. In the same way that didactics of disciplines in secondary school thought through their uses of writing and the specific issues with writing (not just in French but in the sciences, history, mathematics), university disciplines need to elucidate their uses of writing and their textual practices, beyond the narrow level of linguistic micro-skills.

As far as AcLits is concerned, we are very intrigued in France by the questions it asks. The French context does not yet seem ready for some of these questions. But the University Literacies aspects I've just mentioned seem in some ways quite shared with AcLits: deeper reflection on epistemological dimensions of university writing, for example, or deeper understanding of the fluid nature of genres that are adopted and adapted by different university populations.

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SECTION 3
TRANSFORMING RESOURCES, GENRES AND SEMIOTIC PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 3

This section of the book picks up the central concerns of the volume both in providing exemplars of how the transformative approach is being instantiated in practice and in foregrounding how Academic Literacies can engage generatively with other theories which inform approaches to writing. It focuses in particular on the "semiotic stuff" of writing for knowledge making with an emphasis on changing textual and semiotic practices in society more widely and the implications of these for text creation and meaning making. Although the contributions in this section range widely in terms of both approach and contexts, they all point to the transformative possibilities in the work they describe. Whilst some focus upon the theoretical underpinnings necessary for understanding emergent textual configurations, challenging our taken-for-granted assumptions about what we value, others provide detailed accounts and/or personal reflections of practice around supporting student writers. In three of the contributions the "digital" offers an organizing frame with regard to the changing status of knowledge and the potential for engaging in transformative practices for both readers and writers. All offer a window onto everyday work that we hope will inspire readers to scrutinize and rethink some of their/our own practices.

Fiona English takes a close lens to the notion of genre, arguing that we need to move on from identifying the features of genres and teaching these to students. Her research indicates that our concern should be with what genres can actually *do* and how they come to shape our thinking and our knowledge production. Her interest is in how a transformative academic literacies perspective can underpin both classroom activity and theory with respect to genre pedagogy. For English, genre is no longer merely a pedagogic goal but becomes a pedagogic resource. Illustrating this move, she offers examples of what she calls "regenring" and explains what happened when her students reworked their essays using a range of different genres. This not only made visible how genres work but impacted on student's disciplinary knowledge, engagement and understanding. English's approach shows how an academic literacies perspective can actively engage with other theoretical traditions to transform how we might think about writing work. As she points out, genre work in writing pedagogy is drawn from a range of theoretical traditions but there is a danger that when these become translated into practice the focus for students is on the reproduction of genres and, therefore, of knowledge. In contrast, "regenring" draws in the academic literacies frame, theoretically and methodologically, and helps student to engage at the level of epistemology (thus revealing the transformative nature of what she proposes), so that students can become producers of knowledge.

Lynn Coleman also extends the theoretical lens in offering a further illustra-

tion of how academic literacies can engage generatively with other traditions. She does this through a detailed exploration of the semiotic practices that emerge when sets of practices drawn from the contrasting contexts of industry and academia are brought together in a graphic design course. Her interest is in broader structuring processes and how texts come to be within the curriculum, arguing that combining academic literacies research and Bernsteinian perspectives can help us to understand how curricula, subjects and assessment practices are constructed. In this respect she explores "scamping," a term used in graphic design which refers to the process of making ideas visible through creating a drawing or sketch. She highlights the literacy practices that support scamping and uses Bernstein's concept of recontextualization to illuminate how these practices emerge from bringing together those from both professional and academic domains. She argues that we can track the privileging of particular literacy practices as professional-based practices intersect with and become transformed by academic-informed values and practices.

The transformative possibilities of visual representation are at the heart of Fay Stevens' chapter as she explores the value of collaborative journal writing in relation to issues of self and identity. Her concern is with the potential of collaborative journals for both individual and collective transformation. She contrasts students' expression of loss of identity and lack of creativity in their assessed academic writing with their experience of contributing to a collective journal and being able to represent who they felt they were or wanted to be. Stevens provides examples of the richness, diversity and combination of text type and image in this collaborative, social and creative space. Although contrasting strongly with the academic writing tasks with which they are more familiar, contributing to the journal appears to have enabled the students to develop an awareness of self, both in relation to being at university more generally and being a writer in a particular discipline. The entries created by the students suggest that image is central to this process of transformation and meaning making. In addition, Stevens draws on a range of theoretical perspectives—which broaden what we might traditionally see as those associated with academic literacies—to develop her argument that the journal is a method of inquiry rather than merely a space for writing.

Claire Penketh and Tasleem Shakur's concern is with a collaborative blog as an emergent textual practice. They outline how they used blogging in order to help make visible both students' and tutors' reading and writing practices. The blog was introduced on a course in human geography as a way of helping students to explore their understanding of key texts and make connections between these and their broader experiences. They did this by encouraging students to combine words with "found" images in their postings to the blog. Although the authors acknowledge that the reading of postmodern texts—a prerequisite for this course—was both challenging and difficult for students, the blog provided a shared space where students were able to explore what it meant to read and write differently in this context

using the combination of word and image. Penketh and Shakur believe that this gave their students the freedom to read in unpredictable ways, rather than always expecting the text they were reading to be transparent. The blog was not only potentially transformative for students, in relation to their reading practices, but also for the teachers as authors, who found themselves rethinking the role of writing in enhancing reading, which, they suggest transformed their own practices.

A transformative approach to meaning making is a key orientation to the work of Gillian Lazar and Beverley Barnaby. They consider the meaning and value of grammar outside of a prescriptive agenda and how working with grammar can relate to an academic literacies approach that scrutinizes the dominant values, norms and institutional practices around academic writing. Working with both university lecturers and students on the thorny issue of "poor grammar," they ask whether an academic literacies perspective can usefully incorporate a specific focus on grammar, when on the face of it this might signal a "study skills" approach. In tackling this conundrum, they offer worked through examples of the activities they introduced to students to help them reflect upon the relationship between choices of grammatical forms with aspects of their own identity. The authors explore some of the tensions that emerged between students' desire to "learn the rules" and the exploratory approach that they were asking students to engage with, which met with some resistance. They also examine their experiences of working with academic staff and moving away from surface level notions of grammar towards considerations of meaning making. They conclude that the role of the writing specialist is always to provide spaces for questioning and exploration in order to enable both students and their teachers to recognize the power of genuinely transformative attitudes towards grammar and its relationship to meaning making.

Diane Rushton, Cathy Malone, and Andrew Middleton's interest is with the integration of digital technologies into writing work with students. In attempting to open up possibilities for transformation, they consider the relationship between the spoken and the written word. In their chapter they report on the use of Digital Posters, which they have found offer students a different kind of space for them to experiment with their own academic voice. The authors argue that this contrasts with what is possible when students are working on their own academic writing. The screen capture technology they use relies on visual prompts from just one power point slide. Key to its success is that it requires students to respond verbally and spontaneously and that creating their own Digital Posters helps them to engage in their chosen topic in ways they are then able to take forward into their own academic writing.

Helen Bowstead's call for transformation goes out to academic literacies researchers and practitioners themselves, who, she believes, should be transgressing and challenging normative texts in their own work if the field is going to have a lasting impact on what we expect from our students. She develops this position

through a personal account of reflection and her dissatisfaction with the way in which, she argues, we attempt to impose one voice on our students, despite the diversity of an international student body. Her interest is in working with personal narrative and textual forms that embrace student heterogeneity, and in doing so she brings some complementary theoretical perspectives to sit alongside the academic literacies literature. Bowstead examines and questions her own complicity in imposing rules and norms around writing that the academy sanctions, which she suggests serve to make invisible issues of personhood for her students who are bringing rich experiences from outside the academy. She concludes that although academic literacies has opened up spaces for the exploration of meaning making, identity and power it is perhaps the case that those working in the field are not doing enough to actually challenge the institutional practices which are implicit in the kinds of texts they/we produce.

In the final chapter of this section, Colleen McKenna raises important questions about the spaces the digital offers for the transformation of writing practices. Through an expansion of Lea and Street's original framework, she demonstrates the dialogic and oppositional potential of some forms of digital academic writing. Her interest here is in the possibilities that online writing offers to be transformative for readers and writers, academics and students. Drawing on examples of digital texts from both these groups, she introduces the term "intertext" in order to capture the ways in which online texts are much more than a translation from one text type to another. She argues that digital intertexts always bring dimensions that are highly significant in the processes of meaning making and can disrupt the ways in which we build academic arguments and subvert the taken for granted conventions of academic writing. Although design always has rhetorical requirements that are central to meaning, McKenna illustrates how digital academic texts are offering new possibilities for reader-writer relationships, text production and distribution. Her contribution reminds us of the dominance and power of historical academic writing practices but at the same time also points to the slow uptake in valuing digital textual forms. The latter, she argues, have a transformative potential both in disrupting institutional regulation and offer different ways and opportunities for building scholarly identities.

This section closes with a conversation between Bruce Horner and Theresa Lillis who seek to understand each other's positions on the link between "difference" and transformation in the academy. At the centre of their conversation is the question of what is understood by "difference" and in particular what difference looks like in semiotic or textual terms. Horner cautions against valuing "different" textual forms (for example the mixing or meshing of languages) as necessarily indicating a challenging of dominant conventions, or of assuming that texts which use semiotic practices that differ from conventional academic writing necessarily signal greater authorial agency than texts which seem to simply enact dominant conventions.

Lillis agrees that there is a danger of reifying or fetishizing any specific semiotic form but also argues that there is an urgent need for the academy to recognize and value a greater range of linguistic and semiotic forms and practices than is currently the case within dominant assessment regimes. Horner argues that a way out of any potential impasse is to adopt what he calls a "spatiotemporal framework" and, drawing in particular on the work of Lu (e.g., 1994), emphasizes that a pedagogic goal must always be to explore with student writers the significance of their choices, whether these be, as Horner states "to iterate conventional discursive forms" or to make "ostensible breaks" with these forms.

CHAPTER 17

GENRE AS A PEDAGOGICAL RESOURCE AT UNIVERSITY

Fiona English

In this chapter I want to consider genre as a dynamic and transformative resource in the learning and teaching portfolio. I argue that conventional approaches to genre tend to be both limited and limiting with their emphasis on what genres look like and what they are for and argue instead that it is more helpful to explore what genres actually do, how they shape our thinking and the knowledge we produce. Using examples taken from a larger study (Fiona English, 2011), the discussion shows how such an approach can enable students to develop not only a meaningful genre awareness but also a deeper understanding of their disciplinary knowledge.

GENRE AND ACADEMIC LITERACIES

Genre has been an important category in writing pedagogy for many years but has taken different forms depending on different theoretical frames of reference. In the United States it has been firmly based within the long standing rhetoric and composition tradition whereas in the United Kingdom, for example, it has been more linguistically oriented following Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (e.g., 1989) whereby genres are seen as social processes that enable us to shape texts in particular ways to achieve particular goals (e.g., Jim Martin, 1993). This approach with its strong focus on the features, or elements, (grammatical structures, lexical configurations and organizational strategies) that typify a given genre has been very influential in the teaching of writing at school (e.g., Tom Gorman et al., 1990) and at university (e.g., Ken Hyland, 2007).

However, with the increasing drive for quick "solutions" to the "problem" of student writing in the climate of a "skills" over knowledge (Ron Barnett, 2009), emphasis has been placed on a "how to" approach and much genre-based writing pedagogy has come to concentrate on producing *genres* rather than on producing *knowledge.* A genre becomes simplified into little more than a template (a report, an essay etc.) and so long as the "elements" are in place, an appropriate a successful text, it is supposed, will emerge. As Gunther Kress (1994) warns, "Effective teaching of genres can make the individual into an efficiently intuitive, and unreflecting,

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user of the genre …. The genre will construct the world for its proficient user. Is that what we want?" (p. 126).

This divorce between content and form ignores the reality of the writing experience and the many different kinds of *work* involved and writing comes to be viewed as technique, a means of displaying knowledge. It is here that an academic literacies perspective can intervene by offering a critique to such thinking, foregrounding writing as knowledge *making* instead of transmission (e.g., Theresa Lillis, 2003) and in so doing, offer a thicker description of what it means to write at university or school both in the context of research and pedagogy (e.g. Mary Lea, 2004).

DOING ACADEMIC LITERACIES

The work I discuss here presents an example of how academic literacies can work in both pedagogy, in underpinning classroom activity, and theory, in encouraging new thinking about taken-for-granted literacy practices such as genre. It also confirms that academic literacies, far from being a methodology, as it is sometimes taken to be, is more an epistemology, a way of thinking about literacy as negotiated and contested practices (Lea & Brian Street, 1998) within the specific and complex communicative landscape (English, 2011) of the educational institution.

The example I use emerged from a credit-bearing first year module option that I developed whilst working as an academic literacies practitioner at a specialist university in London. The module was institutionally understood as "study skills" but as I had been given free rein over the content, I was able to develop a programme around practices rather than skills, oriented towards learning at the level of analysis and critique so as to encourage students to reflect their own textual interactions. Genre was obviously a key topic, but rather than adopting the kind of modelling approach that typifies study skills courses, we problematized such fixed-form concepts and explored instead how genres developed out of specific practices and why. Following on from this, the final assignment involved students reworking an essay that they had already submitted for their major studies (e.g., politics, social anthropology, linguistics, economics) using any genre they liked, a process I now call "regenring." I asked them to also submit the original essay alongside the new version as a point of reference for me.

The students chose to rework their essays using a range of different genres including journalistic (a tabloidesque report on a time travellers conference on political systems), pedagogic (an "information" booklet for 11 year-olds on the use of loan words), and, most popularly, dramatic (e.g., a simulated radio debate and phone-in with Freidman and Keynes; a play in eight scenes enacting an ethnographic study of the "built environment"). What the students produced far

exceeded any expectations I had, not just in terms of the quality of the writing and the evidence of their genre awareness, but, more importantly, on the impact that this work had had on their disciplinary understanding and engagement. They were more "alive" than the essays and the students seemed to have enjoyed writing them, something that was commented on in interview:

> It wasn't so much having to reproduce facts and saying the right thing to get the marks, it was more of an exercise in doing it the way you wanted to. (Peter)

Whatever the genre used, it quickly became clear that there had been a profound shift, not only in terms of what I might once have thought of as generic "shape" but in the materiality of the work itself. Regenring involved far more than simply relocating material from one "frame" into another. It had had a profound impact on the students' knowledge and understanding as well as on their own sense of involvement. As Dan, one of the group pointed out, commenting on his play:

> And I felt that by using the characters … I found myself free or freer to express my opinions or my ideas of my feelings toward the subject in a way that the purely conventional way of writing didn't or wouldn't allow me. (Dan)

CASE STUDY

For the purposes of showing the effects of regenring, I have chosen to discuss "Sonia's" work. She was taking a degree in African Studies and had completed the first term of the course but was already disaffected with her studies. She commented on this when talking about her reasons for choosing the regenring assignment.

> Since I've started university I've felt myself struggling with the academic work and yearning to do something creative. This assignment seemed like a good opportunity. (Sonia)

The following extracts come from different parts of an essay written in response to the following instruction, *Give an account of the origin and present day function of one African lingua franca,* and reflect the tone of the whole essay.

Extract One

[-1-] The word "Swahili" is Arabic in origin and means coast. Swahili is spoken on the East coast of Africa by many as a first language and has spread into the interior as far as the Congo as a lingua franca. Though Swahili uses words adopted from Arabic, English and Portuguese, it has the definite structure of a Bantu language and is written in the Latin script.

[-2-] Swahili is presumed to have started its life in the region of the Tana River estuary and to have spread further when Arabs and Persians settled in the area due to trading, thus spreading the language along their trading roots. In 975 Ali Ben Sultan al Hassan Ben Ali bought the island of Kilwa in exchange for a few bales of textiles and it became an important trading centre encouraging the use of Swahili along the coast south of the Zambezi River.
[-3-] There are a very large number of Swahili dialects that have derived from specific social situations, some of which are dying out because of a change in social circumstances. Due to the function of some of these dialects, such as the mode of common communication in the army and work force the dialect has undergone considerable simplification and lost much of its structure until it can only be called a pidgin.

The first thing that strikes us about these extracts is that Sonia has adopted a literal approach to the task. The extracts typify the whole essay in their encyclopaedic exposition of the topic and the assertiveness with which the information is presented seems at odds with the "struggle" that Sonia refers to above. There is a textbook type quality about the discourse which, as Bruno Latour and Steven Woolgar (1986) point out in their discussion of "statement" types (pp. 75-88), tends to present information as uncontroversial fact, using unhedged assertions in contrast to "authentic" professional disciplinary debates and arguments. In Sonia's essay there is no commentary on the information presented, nor is any indication given of its sources apart from the list of four references at the end. In fact, although it is obvious that Sonia has been able to identify relevant information and use certain linguistic terms of reference it is not clear whether she has understood the relevant body of knowledge or whether she has simply located it.

In contrast to the essay, the regenred work offers a very different take on the topic. Her alternative title, *Culturally Confused*, indicates a different kind of understanding of the topic compared to the original essay. It problematizes the idea of a "lingua franca" by locating it in the context of culture and identity. The new version is produced as a dramatised scenario of a father telling a bedtime "story" to his two children aged eight or nine and in the process becomes grounded in a "real world" context. Extract Two is a good illustration of this.

The demands of the genre, characterisation and setting and the to-ing and fro-ing of dialogue between the children and the parent, force Sonia to shape the information differently. The "facts" of the essay are now represented as dialogue which means they are discussed rather than presented, argued over rather than accepted. Despite the factual exaggeration regarding the number of languages spoken in Africa, this version introduces new dimensions to the work, not least of which is a "critical perspective," that most elusive, but desired, aspect of student academic performance. Ultimately, in the new version, Sonia has laid claim to the disciplinary material and instead of merely displaying a series of "facts," as in her essay, she provides a *view* on the topic.

A further aspect of Sonia's regenred work is the provision of detailed supplemen-

tary notes. These include contextual notes, which explain why she designed the new version as she did, and stage management notes, which explain the physical and interpersonal contexts of the play. In this way Sonia uses both the physical environment, as discussed in Carey Jewitt (2005), and the interpersonal histories of the participants as semiotic resources. The contextual notes demonstrate the strength of agency that Sonia has in relation to the new work and the confidence with which she can creatively combine "*imagination as well as the intellect*," something she feels unable to do in conventional academic work. Extract Three is an example of this.

Extract Two

Parent:
At this point seated in the armchair addressing the children.
"Can you remember what our bedtime story was about yesterday?"

Child 1:
"Yesssssssssss! It was about …
[six more exchanges]

Parent:
"OK, anyway, today I thought I could tell you the story about how Swahili came to be such an important language in East Africa. People always talk about the importance of English as a world language but they rarely consider that there exist many other important non-European languages all over the world. People need to learn one of these important languages so they can talk to people who have different first languages to themselves."

Child 1:
"Umm … Why would they be speaking to people with a different language?"

Parent:
"That's a good question you bright little spark! Now in the situation of Africa there are two hundred thousand different languages spoken. It's not like in England. In Africa if you go from one village to the next you are likely to find a different language …."

Extract Three

The set … must be minimal and modern with two single beds and an armchair to the left. Perhaps the beds could have patchwork quilts on them and the wooden floor a Moroccan rug. A giant world map can be stuck to the walls behind the beds, with pins, scribbles and highlighter indicating places they have been, want to go, or various important and trivial facts the children have learnt. Some of the visible toys should serve an education function and not be associated with popular culture. It is clearly a conscientious household striving to create a corner of individuality and safety in a contrary, consumer world. … Through the window should be a view of an intimidating grey city, harsh and cold against the bedroom warmth. The city serves as a contrast to the African world the parent talks about ….

Such information has no place in an essay because essays orient away from "everyday" experienced knowledge towards academic "articulated knowledge" (Diana

Laurillard, 1993) problematized in Lea (1998). However, these stage management notes do something that essays also do; that is they provide authorial guidance. Successful essays do this by choosing specific textual materials such as discourse links or expressions of modality that indicate how the reader is supposed to understand the writer's intentions, as has been widely discussed (Maggi Charles, 2006, English, 1999, Susan Hunston & Geoff Thompson, 2000). Writers of plays use stage management instead and Sonia has made good use of this resource in asserting this authorial control.

There is a further dimension to Sonia's new version, that of reflection on being a student, something that is almost always invisible in conventional essays but which other students using dramatic genres also found themselves doing. In the present case, it is represented by the children themselves who both guide, through questioning, and subvert, through challenge and distraction, the father's "story." Their interventions are intended to shift the discussion away from what *he* wants to talk about to what *they* want to talk about. As his contributions become longer and longer there is a gradual shift from initial enthusiasm on the part of the children towards a growing boredom which echoes, it is tempting to say, Sonia's own experiences at the time.

Extract Four

> Parent:
> [after a lengthy phase of expounding on the topic of Swahili] "Sorry, I can see you're getting bored now—but I just want to tell you one more thing!"
> [he proceeds to tell it …]
>
> Child 2:
> "If you lived in Africa people would put sellotape over your mouth or everyone would always be asleep!"

The opportunity to give voice to such feelings would be considered out of place in a student essay, but here it is made possible by the construction of the plot and the characters who "perform" it. In fact, the humour of the child's remark in Extract Four reflects an attitude, not of despair but rather of exasperation, an attitude confirmed by Sonia's eventual re-engagement with academia.

THE ORIENTATION OF GENRES— A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

To understand what was going on with this work, I developed an analytic framework (see Figure 17.1) that could be sufficiently flexible yet theoretically robust enough to explain how genre choice affected both disciplinary content and student experience which were the two key aspects that the students reported

during interview. The concept of "orientation" allows for a focus on these elements by separating them out into two main categories (the social and the material) and then subdividing them into the more specific analytical categories: *contextual orientation,* associated with the circumstances and purposes surrounding the production, *discursive orientation,* associated with authorial identity and agency, *thematic orientation,* concerning choice of topics and organization and *semiotic orientation,* associated with choice of mode (e.g., writing, speaking, performance) and what I call textual resources (e.g., grammatical structures, vocabulary, gestures).

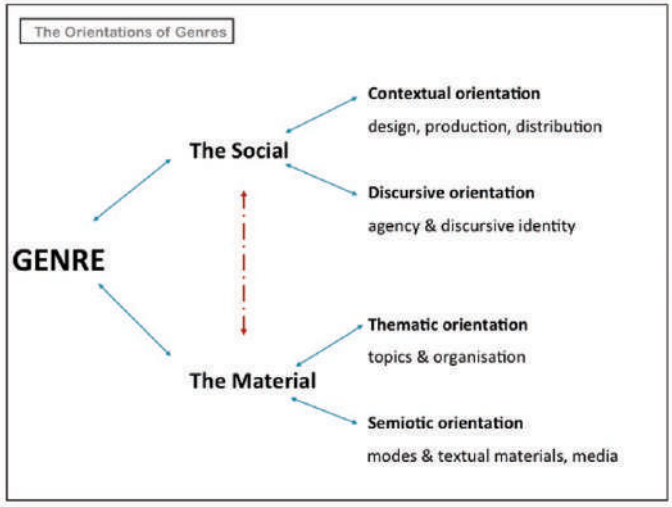

Figure 17.1: The social orientations of genres.

Working with Sonia's two versions, Tables 17.1 and 17.2 demonstrate how the framework can be used to reveal the effects of the different genres. It is possible to consider each category separately by reading across and down each table but it is also possible to see how the two tables interact by considering how the material resources that are used (thematic and semiotic) reflect and promote particular social effects (contextual and discursive). Because of the constraints of space, I can only offer the tables as exemplification. A full explanation can be found in English (2011).

Table 17.1 focuses on the context in which Sonia produced her work and how that context positioned her. Setting out the differences using the categories in this way demonstrates more clearly the affordances of the different genres in relation to the orientations established above.

Table 17.2 summarizes key differences in the material orientation of the genres. It considers how each version is organized, the themes they include and the modes and textual materials they use in their production.

Taking both tables together it is possible to see how the social is reflected in and promoted by the material (thematic and semiotic), and the material in turn, reflects and promotes the social (contextual and discursive). Using the analytical tool of orientation highlights, the ways in which genre choice affords different ways of knowing, different ways representing and different ways of experiencing.

CONCLUSION

In this discussion I have argued for a new direction in genre pedagogy using the

Table 17.1—Social orientations of genres

THE SOCIAL		
	Essay	**Interactive Bedtime "Story"**
Contextual Orientation		
Design	Responding to client's design	Designing for client
Production	Essayist (student essay)	Dramatic, didactic "conversation"
Distribution	For institutional assessment Normative practice, reproduction of … Evaluation against normative implicit disciplinary (and institutionalised) criteria and/ or values	For institutional assessment Alternative practice, experiment, reconfiguration of … Interpretive effect—for assessment/ evaluation against non-normative disciplinary criteria and/or values
Discursive Orientation		
Purpose	Display knowledge of client's design Display learning	Experiment with learning/ writing Tell (teach) about Inform Entertain
Process	Acquire Reflect Reproduce Replicate	Reflect (on disciplinary materials) Reflect (on experience) Synthesize Recontextualize Create Inform Contend/Evaluate
Identity	Novice as though expert	Expert as if parent (Unwilling) pupils (as if) young children
Role	Performer	Informer (parent) Dissenter (children)
Agency	Mediated Disguised/ unidentifiable Intertextual	Unmediated Visible Interpersonal

insights provided by academic literacies. Rather than seeing genre as a pedagogical goal, I have shown how it can be used as a pedagogical resource. Of particular relevance to the present book is the clear evidence from the example used here

Table 17.2—Material orientations of genres

THE MATERIAL		
	Essay	**Interactive Bedtime "Story"**
Thematic Orientation		
Organization	Essay management (introduction, "body," conclusion i.e., sequence of information/ideas) Descriptions, examples	Narrative & stage management (sequence of events) Story telling Interactions between characters, dialogues
Topics & specific characteristics	Disciplinary topics Linguistic terms of reference Swahili as a lingua franca Examples of history and uses presented as list	Disciplinary topics "Everyday" terms of reference Swahili as a lingua franca presented as political act, linked to discussion on linguistic terminology Didactic parent and argumentative, assertive children.
Semiotic Orientation		
Modes	Writing (writtenness)	Written speech/scripted speech (spokenness) Characters, props, stage management
Textual Materials	Impersonal forms (e.g., "it" fronted, nominalizations, passive constructions) Clause complexity/ density of expression Disciplinary terminology—unexplained Formal (writing-like) expression (e.g., full forms, subordination) Topically organized with no explicit threading Absence of interpersonal resources (i.e., no cohesive directives, lack of attitudinal markers, no links between topics) Explicitness as asserted fact—encyclopaedic information (e.g., no hedges)	Personal forms—subject fronted, personal pronouns + impersonal forms where "father" is "recounting" the essayist information Clause intricacy + clause complexity during "recount" sections Disciplinary terminology explained + colloquial terms Colloquial (speech) expression Topically organized but strongly mediated by dialogic interactions (e.g., responses to questions, challenges, recapitulations) Frequent use of interpersonal resources, interruptions, agreements/ disagreements Explicitness—pedagogized information—didactic, directives (e.g., People need to learn …), approbation (e.g., That's a good question) hedges (e.g., Perhaps it's to do with …)

of how this approach to genre enables students to engage at the epistemological level that academic literacies argues for, as has been well documented in Lea and Street (1998), Carys Jones et al. (1999) and more recently in Lillis and Mary Scott (2007). The analytical framework, which draws on social semiotics (e.g., Kress, 2010), serves to reveal the transformative nature of the regenring activity offering insights not only into the nature of academic knowledge and the close association between the genres used and the knowledge produced, akin to Basil Bernstein's (2000) vertical and horizontal discourses, but also into the experiences of students in their attempts to interact with the disciplines they have chosen. Working with students in this way also encourages the critique that academic literacies thinking promotes and provides the opportunity for students to position themselves as producers of knowledge rather than as merely receivers.

The discussion also raises questions about the genres that typify university education and the ways that they constrain how disciplines can be understood. I am not arguing for the abandonment of essays, nor am I suggesting that they are a poor way of helping students reflect on their disciplinary material. What I am suggesting is that we incorporate a wider range of genres into the learning and teaching repertoire, even including tasks such as the regenring activity described here. In this way it may be possible to encourage "*new ways of looking at old questions*," as one of my lecturer informants put it when asked what they hoped to see in their students' assignments. However, this will only be achieved if we develop new ways of asking those questions and offering students new ways to explore them.

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CHAPTER 18

HOW DRAWING IS USED TO CONCEPTUALIZE AND COMMUNICATE DESIGN IDEAS IN GRAPHIC DESIGN: EXPLORING SCAMPING THROUGH A LITERACY PRACTICE LENS

Lynn Coleman

Most students in higher education are typically required to demonstrate their learning and thinking through the production of some form of written text, often an essay. However, in course environments where knowledge forms and practices are constituted visually or rely heavily on other semiotic resources for meaning-making, this is frequently not the case. Students in such academic contexts demonstrate their learning and give expression to their thinking in predominantly non-written and visual ways. This chapter draws on an aspect of a larger research study that used academic literacies as its theoretical and methodological framework. The study explored the literacy practices of students completing courses in visual art and media fields at a vocational higher education institution in South Africa. In these courses, students demonstrate their learning primarily through the production of visual, digital and print-based products such as film clips, posters, logos, photography, and three-dimensional (3D) product-packaging.

In this chapter I draw attention to students completing a graphic design (GD) diploma course and how they use drawings as the primary way of communicating their design ideas. Drawings that are used in this manner to visually articulate design ideas are called "scamps" and the process associated with creating such drawings is called "scamping." Scamping is also a valued practice in the professional context of GD where the designer is expected to translate information provided by a client and visually capture their concepts with scamps. I explore the process of scamping through a literacy practice lens but also subject this analysis to a further reading centred on how assumptions about knowledge in the academic and professional domains influence, guide and give value to the literacy practice itself. The

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discussion illustrates that a consideration of knowledge recontextualization provides an explanation of how professional knowledge practices influence the literacy practices privileged in the academic domain. The exploration of scamping in this graphic design context provides a good example of the evolving semiotic practices in higher education that result when different sets of practices drawn from industry and academia are brought together. A further implication of this intersection of practices is the creation of a pedagogic space where the lecturer is able to act as a co-constructor in the creation of assignment texts alongside the student.

THEORETICAL FRAMING

Academic literacies as a field of research has typically focused on writing in higher education (HE) (Theresa Lillis & Mary Scott, 2007). However, a steady shift in this focus has seen the field's theorization being brought to bear on "new contexts" of vocational and professional studies (Mary Lea, 2012; Mary Lea & Barry Stierer, 2000; Candice Satchwell & Roz Ivanič, 2007), and the increasingly expansive range of communicative practices in the academy (Chris Abbott, 2002; Arlene Archer, 2006; Lucia Thesen, 2006). South African researchers have also explored the potential of visual communicative modes as an additional means whereby students can demonstrate their learning (Archer, 2006; Thesen, 2001). In recent research Mary Lea (2012) has argued that the nature of the texts students are required to produce for assessment purposes in HE are increasingly coming under the influence of a global shift from traditional discipline-based courses to professional programmes. She also proposes that an academic literacies lens can be generative for exploring the new assessment and learning spaces created as the inherent tensions between "professional practice-based knowledge and a theorized written assessment of that knowledge" jostle for position in HE (Lea, 2012, p. 94). My work is located along this new trajectory and explores meaning making and learning in vocational practice-based course environments where the construction of written texts is less prominent. In my research the concept of literacy practice is conceptualized in terms of epistemology (Lea, 1999, 2012). This understanding allows me to highlight the productive connection between curriculum theorization and the argument that literacy practices and knowledge in learning environments are embedded in each other.

CONSIDERING KNOWLEDGE IN THE CURRICULUM

Academic literacies has been valuable for exploring how students demonstrate their learning through their production of written and non-written texts. As a field of research however, it has been less helpful in providing the theoretical tools to explore the broader structuring processes implicated, but not directly visible, in the

literacy practices that support the creation of assignment texts. Lea predicts that "as academic, disciplinary and professional boundaries shift and blur" academic literacies researchers will be required to focus not only on the "micro-practices" of text production but also cast their inquiry to broader institutional practices, like the curriculum, in order to fully understand the new learning spaces being created in the academy (2012, p. 109). Such a framework is already an imperative within vocational HE as the impact and influence of the professional domain cannot be excluded from conceptualizing how curricula, subjects and assessment practices are constructed. Simply focusing on the literacy practices used by students to demonstrate their learning does not go far enough in explaining how such practices become privileged or the role the professional domain plays in structuring such practices. Basil Bernstein's (1996, 2000) notion of *knowledge recontextualization* offers a way of attending to this theoretical gap. Using recontextualization as an analytical lens provides a language of description for theorizing how professional practices and knowledge become implicated in the literacy practices associated with assignment production. Recontextualization describes the processes through which knowledge produced outside the educational context (in the disciplines or in the professional domains) becomes transformed, adapted and re-appropriated to constitute content subjects and the curriculum. Bernstein argues that as knowledge moves from its "original site to its new positioning, as pedagogic discourse, a transformation takes place" (2000, p. 32). This transformation occurs because as knowledge moves from one context to another, a space is created for ideology to play a role (Bernstein, 2000). The important outcome of this process is that knowledge associated with the curriculum, i.e., curriculum knowledge, is, therefore, different from what might be called disciplinary or workplace knowledge (Johan Muller, 2008). In its broadest sense, the main outcome of this recontextualization process is the curriculum (Suellen Shay, 2011). The curriculum is therefore influenced by ideologically mediated choices of key curriculum role players like lecturers or curriculum developers. The choices made by curriculum role players' about what knowledge to include in curricula is therefore also influenced by their assumptions about the purpose of education and their conceptualizations of learning and teaching or ideal graduate attributes. According to Bernstein, educational knowledge is de-contextualized or "abstracted from its social base, position and power relations" as a result of recontextualization (2000, p. 38).

WHAT IS SCAMPING?

Scamping is a term used in GD to refer to the process of making design ideas visible by creating a drawing or sketch. Scamping relies strongly on what graphic designers in education call hand skills, i.e., a suite of skills requiring the use of one's hands to cut, mount and manipulate a variety of materials, the foremost of these

being the ability to sketch and draw. Hand skills are often contrasted with the use of technologies such as the computer or digital design tools when creating design products. Scamps are characteristically small drawings or sketches produced with pencils onto layout or photocopy paper. The materials used to produce scamps, that are cheap and easily erasable, function to give the scamping process a rehearsal quality, imbuing the scamps with a provisional or draft status. Multiple scamps are typically produced to explore a single idea and these are commonly drawn alongside each other. Unsuitable ideas are simply crossed out and newer iterations are drawn alongside the discarded drawings, as shown in Figures 18.1 and 18.2.

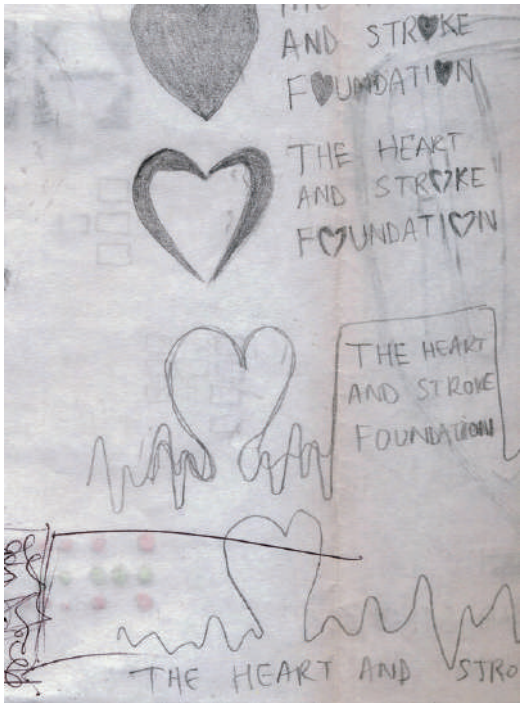

Figure 18.1: A series of scamps produced for a logo design project.

Because scamps are produced with impermanent and relatively cheap materials, the need to create a final, perfect design idea or concept is circumvented. Placing multiple draft ideas together on the same sheet of paper suggests that they all share the same status as potential "final" design concepts.

In the course, scamps are distinguished, on one level, from finished or final drawings on the basis of the "mark-making" materials used. Final drawings are commonly presented separately, can be mounted and are completed using gouache, paint, or copy markers on cartridge or bleed-proof paper; thus mark-making materials that are expensive and difficult to alter. In addition to being distinguished by their material

qualities, scamps are also contrasted with other forms of drawing practiced in the course, specifically perceptual or naturalistic drawing associated with Fine Art:

> I'm saying it's drawing but it's different drawing … there's perceptual drawing which might be more what the Drawing subject does … scamping is drawing for design.

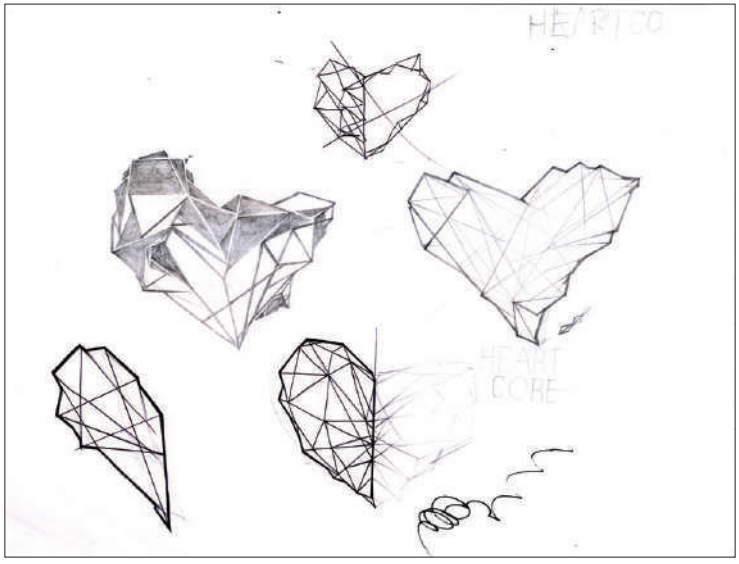

Figure 18.2: Scamps showing how a student experimented with a logo design idea.

In the interview extract above, Tessa, a course lecturer, alludes to the notion that the curriculum conceptualizes the act of drawing in different ways. The subject called Drawing, places focus on naturalistic and perceptual drawing commonly associated with the Fine Art discipline. The subject privileges personal expression using various observational and rendering techniques to create realistic images of, e.g., a landscape. When Tessa says "scamping is drawing for design" she is associating it with the activities of a designer who is more concerned with creating a visual message that meets a very specific purpose. Examples of this can be seen in images above of the logo scamps students produced for a Cape Town based organization. The scamps attempt to represent visually what such a logo might look like and show how the students experiment with image, text, typography, layout, composition and placement of their logo concept. In the course, lecturers talk about scamping as an image generating tool where one's conceptualization and thinking about a design product is visually expressed. This understanding is captured later by Tessa when she says "Scamping is really conceptual drawing"; suggesting that the primary semiotic purpose of scamping is the visualisation of conceptual ideas and the

main way in which a creative or design concept becomes translated into a concrete and visual form.

SCAMPING AND ASSIGNMENT PRODUCTION

Scamping cannot be fully understood without relating it to the way assignments are completed in this course. Scamping is integral to the "Design Process"—a curriculum constructed procedure that guides and sequences the different tasks and activities students are required to undertake when completing a design-based assignment. A description of how assignments are meant to be produced is provided by this sequential six-stage process. Each stage is named and a description of the function the stage serves in the overall assignment construction process is provided. Scamping takes place at stage three of the process where students "put pencil to paper" and visually give meaning to their conceptual ideas. The design process is often directly incorporated into assignment briefs, with this practice especially evident at the 1st and 2nd year levels.

The design process aims to guide student assignment practices; however, it also provides direction for the role that lecturers are required to play as students construct their assignments. For example, the process explicitly requires students to "Show the lecturer what you are doing" and "Consult with [your] lecturer." Lecturers also need to "Sign off" or approve concepts before students are allowed to move onto the next stage of assignment construction. The process suggests that lecturers are continually involved in activities building up to the construction of the final assignment text. Additionally, periodic opportunities for lecturer-student interaction in the act of such text design and construction are also created. Helen, another lecturer in the course, highlights how this role is pedagogically constructed when she describes what happens when students show her their scamps.

> I look at the scamps … and the student might say right these are the ones that I've come up with and then I'll say okay, "This looks promising or that doesn't because that's been re-done so many times" …. So I will give them guides saying this is a good potential option, this one not so much or that one, it's too, futuristic or it's too this or it's too that. So I will give them guidance. They'll be showing me their ideas on paper … and then I'll say fine if you like it then maybe take that one further or show me more variations.

The lecturer's primary role is to comment on the quality of the work, and in the lower levels of the course this might involve approving or rejecting scamps. As Helen's description suggests, lecturers might propose alternative approaches and encourage students to be more exploratory and creative with a concept. These feed-

back moments provide opportunities for lecturers to offer guidance on how to overcome design related problems, while also checking that students are sticking to, or meeting, the requirements of the brief. In the course context, scamping and the production of assignments more generally also includes a prominent collaborative aspect. The lecturer is involved in providing continual feedback throughout the production of the assignment text, even though the creation of the text is undertaken primarily by the individual student.

SCAMPING IN THE PROFESSIONAL DOMAIN

In the discussion above I have shown that scamping is a fundamental semiotic practice that allows students to express and communicate their creative ideas and conceptualization through drawing. I have also suggested that the act of scamping is underpinned by conventions and rules, embedded and regulated by the curriculum and pedagogic practices that prescribe the material qualities of scamps and the function of scamping during assignment construction. These literacy practices support scamping as the key means of communicating design conceptualization. Scamping is, however, a practice rooted in the professional context. In the following extract, Helen explains how scamping is a fundamental aspect of the professional designer's practice.

> … as a designer you should be able to internalize what your client is giving you and be able to translate that information onto paper into a visual that the client can see …. So we're teaching them that, once they've got the research or once they've got their information they should be able to start translating that onto paper or into some sort of visual format for your client to see ….

Helen describes how, in industry, scamping as a practice is associated with translating "information into paper on to a visual that the client can see," suggesting that the designer is expected to visually represent their conceptualization of information provided by the client through scamps. She also recognizes that industry-referenced practices shift and change when incorporated into the academic domain. Helen's reference to "research," that is the first stage of the design process, signals that in the absence of a real client the creation of design products in the course has a different initiation point.

USING RECONTEXTUALIZATION TO UNDERSTAND SCAMPING

In this section I illustrate how subjecting the data on scamping to a further reading using recontextualization as an analytical lens helps to illuminate how the

literacy practices that support scamping in this context are created through the bringing together of valued practices from both the professional and academic domains. The act of designing a logo in the professional context is largely dependent on several variables including the client, the designer(s), the purpose that the logo is meant to serve, the development timeframe and the budget. This means that in industry the design process of this logo can be a dynamic, quick and flexible process. However, when this process is recontextualized into the GD course it becomes the "design process"—a sequence of six steps usually carried out over six to ten days, in a classroom and/or computer lab environment where the pace, sequencing of selected tasks and the evaluation of such tasks are carefully constructed to adhere to the educational values and principles espoused by the course and its lecturers. In the process of creating the design process in the GD academic context, a translation occurs of what it means to undertake design work in industry. Typically, in industry, the design of any product is initiated by the client. The designer is tasked with interpreting the client's needs and as a first step visually representing their conceptualization with hand drawn scamps. Based on the data collected, the process of interpreting the client's needs happens quickly. The ability to draw scamps is prized as it allows the designer to visually express initial conceptualizations at the point of interaction with the client.

In the academic context, the design process, while attempting to capture and simulate professional design practices, is also a construction tailor-made to accommodate the contextual and educational demands and realities of the academic setting. Thus, the purpose of the design process, particularly as it is manifested in assignment briefs, is not simply to provide students with practical direction, for example, on how to construct a logo. It is also fundamentally about facilitating students' learning of a variety of conceptual principles about color theory, layout, and composition that are associated with various sub-disciplinary areas aligned to GD. The briefs therefore direct attention not only to the sequence and pace at which tasks need to be completed, often much slower than typically expected in industry, but they also include lecturer-facilitated explorations of conceptual and procedural knowledge to support the design work being completed.

In the academic context, stronger focus is placed on student learning and in this respect the design process foregrounds the lecturer's role in facilitating this learning. A simple reading of the assignment practices might suggest that the lecturer simply "stands in" for the client. However, the lecturer's role is deeply imbued with an educational function that accounts for a fundamental shift in how the design process is recontextualized in the academic context. The lecturer's feedback, that is structured to be continual and supportive, means that in certain instances there is a degree of co-construction of the assignment text as the lecturer helps the student refine and polish their ideas, and focus their efforts on meeting the requirements of the brief. The process of scamping and assignment construction, while mainly individual,

always takes place in a communal, public and collaborative manner, and the draft quality of the produced text is as highly prized as the final assignment. This is in stark contrast to the construction of essays in HE, that is a highly individualistic and private activity that rarely accommodates the creation of draft or multiple versions of the same text for review. A conclusion could therefore be drawn that only the final essay product, rather than the process of its construction, is subjected to evaluation and the lecturer's role is primarily centred on the evaluation of the final text.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The purpose of this chapter has been twofold. Firstly, using a literacy practice lens it describes how students in a GD course use scamping as a way to visually express and communicate their design ideas and conceptualization. Secondly, I have presented an argument that illustrates the value of bringing a recontextualization analysis to the study of literacy practices. Using recontextualization as an analytical lens, I show how practices valued in the professional domain can come to inform the type of literacy practices students are required to use when completing assignments in their course. Furthermore, by paying attention to ideological process associated with choices about knowledge, recontextualization as an analytic lens offers a more nuanced understanding of how professional-based practices intersect with, and become transformed by, the academic-informed values and practices. In this way this provides insight into processes that give rise to privileged literacy practices. In the GD context, the literacy practices associated with scamping are forged as a result of the intersection between academia and industry, foregrounding the visual but also making provision for lecturers as co-constructors in the creation of visual assignments. Discussing scamping in GD through a literacy practice lens draws attention to the ways in which learning and thinking in HE are being continually mediated by an evolving range of semiotic resources.

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CHAPTER 19

"THERE IS A CAGE INSIDE MY HEAD AND I CANNOT LET THINGS OUT": AN EPISTEMOLOGY OF COLLABORATIVE JOURNAL WRITING

Fay Stevens

This chapter presents the outcomes of a journal project initially set-up in conjunction with cross-disciplinary courses in Academic Literacies (Writing in Academic Contexts, Writing Science), taught at The Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT), from 2008 to 2011, as part of a Teaching Fellowship I held at that time. The project sets out to encourage journal writing and image making, consider issues of collaborative writing, social practice and identity and promote the transformative role collaborative journal writing can play within varying academic contexts.

In 2008, I encountered "The 1000 Journals Project," based around the global circulation of 1,000 journals: contributed to by those who encounter a journal (in a café, for example) and left for another person to stumble across. I was intrigued with the idea of the journal as mobile, independent, and as a particular kind of space for writing with its own emergent identity. I adapted the concept and introduced a collaborative journal into the academic literacies courses I was teaching. This project (The Journal Project), aimed to engage with the practice of contributing to a journal as a collaborative, interactive, academic, and transformative way of thinking and writing. It is a multi-authored method of communication and expression that can be shared within the community of writers participating in a writing-based course. A journal was circulated on a weekly basis and participants were invited to actively engage with the process of writing and image making in whatever way they felt pertinent to their writing, studies and life at university. The journal was presented as a medium through which students could further explore themes covered in the courses, in a space independent of written assessment. Participants were encouraged to be as creative, experimental, formal, academic, and exploratory as they wished. The outcomes are a collection of seven journals rich in discourse, imagery and ideas that encompass a wide-range of topics and issues central to an Academic Literacies approach to teaching, learning and writing.

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I focus on the following themes: the journal as collaborative endeavour, putting "self" into the journal, image making and emergent textual practices. Theoretically, I concentrate on the journal as a method of inquiry via discussion on issues of identity and construction of "self." I argue that the journals have potential for transformation, both individually and collectively, within a group of course participants.

THE JOURNAL AS COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOUR

Journals are often considered to function as particular spaces for writing (e.g., Phyllis Creme, 2008). Here, writing can be seen as an activity that always occurs in a social context, at both a more local, immediate level and at a broader social and cultural level. As such, there are different ways in which writing can be understood as a "social practice" (e.g. Roz Ivanič, 1998; Theresa Lillis, 2001). This might include, writing within specific academic and disciplinary communities (e.g. Elizabeth Sommerville & Phyllis Creme, 2005; Fay Stevens, 2009), as well as expressing personal and social identities. Yet, during class discussions, students expressed a loss of identity during the course of their studies and targeted academic writing as responsible for it. This loss was expressed as a stripping away of creativity and being made to write in a way that felt abstracted and not representative of who they "really are," or want to be.

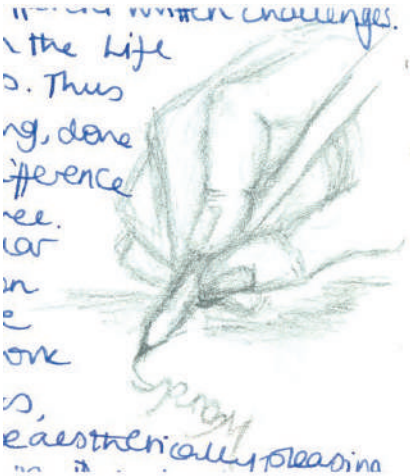
All seven journals contrast in terms of coverage and content. It is interesting to see how the first journal entry shaped the focus and intention of following entries and how the journals took on an identity of their own. One journal, for example, set the scene with an opening that focused on gratitude. Following entries responded to this and as a consequence the journal has spiritual and therapeutic overtones. In contrast, another journal focused on the complex and composite identity of being a human scientist. Entries here, focused on the complex nature of the discipline and a writers' struggling sense of identity within it.

Collaboratively, all journals, in some way, focused on an individual/collective and writerly identity and the processes of transformation taking place. More often than not, this is expressed visually and textually as a process of struggle and negotiation. In general, journals engaged with fluidity, creativity, playfulness, and collectivity, particularly as a series of responses to previous entries. In many respects, the journals evolved into collaborative safe spaces in which participants developed a spirit of inquiry, knowledge and wisdom that was directly representative of the individual but written in collaboration with others.

PUTTING "SELF" INTO THE JOURNAL

Identity is a modern conceptual construct used in the social and behavioural sciences to refer to people's sense of themselves as distinct individuals in the context of community. At a basic level, identity could be said to refer to people's socially de-

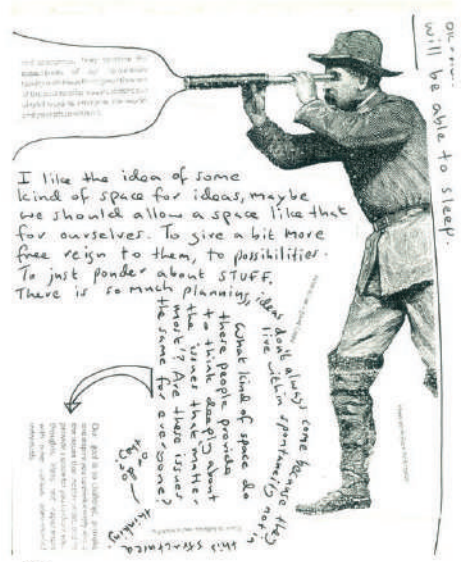
termined sense of who they are—a kind of social statement of *who one is,* referring to a sense of "self" (aspects of the individual) that draws upon trends (representative of the collective), so as to present oneself simultaneously as part of a whole and as unique (Antonio Damasio, 2000). From a corporeal perspective, writing can been seen as a technique of the body (Marcel Mauss, 1973), a kind of dexterous, woven movement (Tim Ingold, 2000, p.403) and a sort of fiction created by language and all that we think of as being language (Jacques Derrida, 1967).



A

B

C



D

Figure 19.1: Visualising self in journal. .

Corporeal imagery features notably in the journals:

This includes an image of a hand in the process of writing "words" (Figure 19.1A), where the entry states that "writing can be exciting … frustrating … explorative … reassuring," while another image is of a figure writing in café (Figure 19.1B). The visual placing of the writer within the space of the journal includes an entry in which a collage figure bears a striking resemblance to the student who made the entry (Figure 19.1C) and an image of a person looking through a telescope (Figure 19.1D) and peering into the distance. Accompanying text states:

> I like the idea of some kind of space for ideas, maybe we should allow a space like that for ourselves.

"Self," in some instances, is visually present in other forms. In one example (Figure 19.2), the participant (human scientist) represents herself as a sequence of pie charts. Initially, her writing is expressed as two separate circles; what she refers to as "purely separate spheres of writing," where one chart represents "essay criteria academic assessed uni work" and the other "for me subjective personal journal diary." The following chart fuses the circles together. Here, she asks "do they overlap?", placing her "self" in the middle: a combination of the two spheres of writing. Finally, she states that "my writing is all part of the same thing, with different aspects that blend together," with an accompanying circle in which she places "myself as the writer" in the centre.

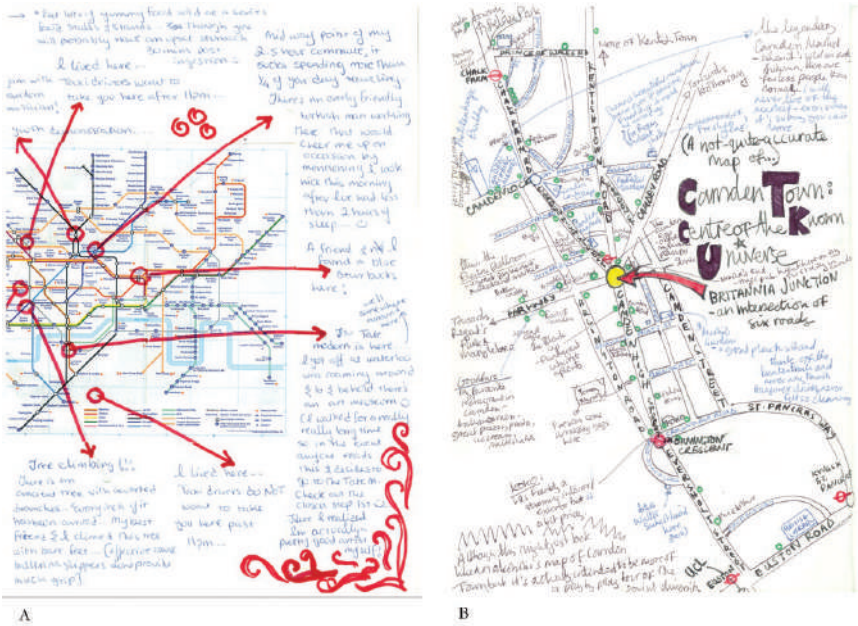
Figure 19.2: Visually working through putting "self" back into writing

Through the interplay of text and image, these particular journal entries explore the possibilities of connecting to and representing a "true" or "real" self, that has

somehow become elusive to the writer. Participants demonstrate an awareness that their academic writing is not just about conveying an ideational content. It is also about the representation of "self" (e.g., Celia Hunt & Fiona Sampson, 2007; Ken Hyland, 2002) and expressing a sense of "self" (Peter Ashworth, 2004, p. 156; Phyllis Creme & Celia Hunt, 2008; Kristján Kristjànsson, 2008; Mary Lea & Brian Street, 1998). Moreover, that it is a social act that involves sharing work with peers (e.g. Maria Antoniou & Jessica Moriarty, 2008), as well as a set of processes which may contribute dynamically to knowledge making (cf. Graham Badley, 2009).

IMAGE MAKING

The concept of text comprises an infusion of words and pictures (e.g., Mike Sharples, 1999, p. 130) and an interweaving of text and graphic elements (cf. Ingold, 2007, p. 70). Writing, image and colour are said to lend themselves to doing different kinds of semiotic work, where each has its own distinct potential for meaning (Gunther Kress, 2010). We could even ask, "where does drawing end and writing begin?" (Ingold, 2007, p. 120-151).



Figures 19.3A and 19.3B: "Mapping identity."

The interface of image and text is executed in a variety of ways in the journals: text written around images (Figures 19.1C, 19.1D, 19.5A), as well as images around and integrated with text (Figures, 19.3A, 19.3B, 19.5C). Moreover, varieties of maps de-

pict and describe spatial and conceptual journeys and places (Figure 19.3 [A-D]). Maps can function as a form of gesture (Barbara Belyea, 1996, p.11) or "self" (Rebecca Solnit, 2001) on the page, often with the purpose of providing directions so that others can follow along the same path (Alfred Gell, 1985; Ingold, 2000, p. 241).

A map of the world (Figure 19.3C), composed of text and a collage of cut out pieces of plastic bag (with varying designs and colours), includes the statement:

> Will this eventually lead to global citizenship, which is still an abstract idea, or even a global identity, or will nationalism and tradition come out on top. It is with that question that I will leave you, because no matter how much I speculate, the fact is; only time will tell.

Figures 19.3C and 19.3D: "Mapping identity.

Here, the participant is mapping out a concept, communicating directly to the reader as a visual and textual process that facilitates their own understanding of the topic, as well as an awareness of their thoughts and opinions on it; being both the writer and reader (writing to "self") of the entry.

A "Dissertation Map" (Figure 19.3D), is reminiscent of a pirate map that alludes to the dissertation as some kind of treacherous journey to get to "hidden treasure." References to London, include a tube-stop memoir (Figure 19.3A) that reveals an engagement with the collaborative free-sprit of the journal, stating the information might come in handy if the journal were ever lost and the finder "felt like roaming around London." Moreover, a map of "Camden Town: Centre of the Universe" (Figure 19.3B) presents a bricolage of information that includes social history and memories of previous visits, with a statement that identifies the map as "a play by play tour of social diversity."

These cartographical visuals act as evocative mediums for communicating a variety of information—corporeal, individual, composite, spatial and social—where the reader is required to engage concurrently with text and image and engage with the process of taking a journey as they "read" the map. Here, images can be seen to be much more than an adjunct to writing: they do not restate the data or reduce the need for prose, but offer a kind of separate or parallel "text" for reading and interpretation (see also Gimenez and Thomas Chapter 1, Good Chapter 3, Adams Chapter 4 this volume).

EMERGENT TEXTUAL PRACTICES

The journals demonstrate that when the opportunity arises, the process of experimentation is fully engaged with. Moreover, that emergent textual practices lead to a variety of methods and outcomes that engage with issues central to an academic literacies approach to writing.

Michel de Certeau (1984) imagined the modern writer as the isolated Cartesian subject, removed from the world and confronting the blank surface of a sheet of paper in much the same way as an urban planner confronts a wasteland or a conqueror confronts the surface of the earth (pp. 134-136). Being faced with the blank surface of a page is often expressed as one of the most worrying encounters a writer faces. Interestingly, a majority of entries in the journals subverted the linearity of the A4 page and presented an interplay of text and image. Figure 19.4, for example, is an entry of words and images that rotate around the page. Based around the theme of "A Night of Wanderings," the entry explores the "ping" of ideas as they pop into your head in the early hours of the morning and is playful in its approach to space, imagery, colour and text. Here, the reader not only engages with the content and visual impact of the entry, but also the gesture of reading, that involves moving the journal around in varying positions and shapes in order to read it and

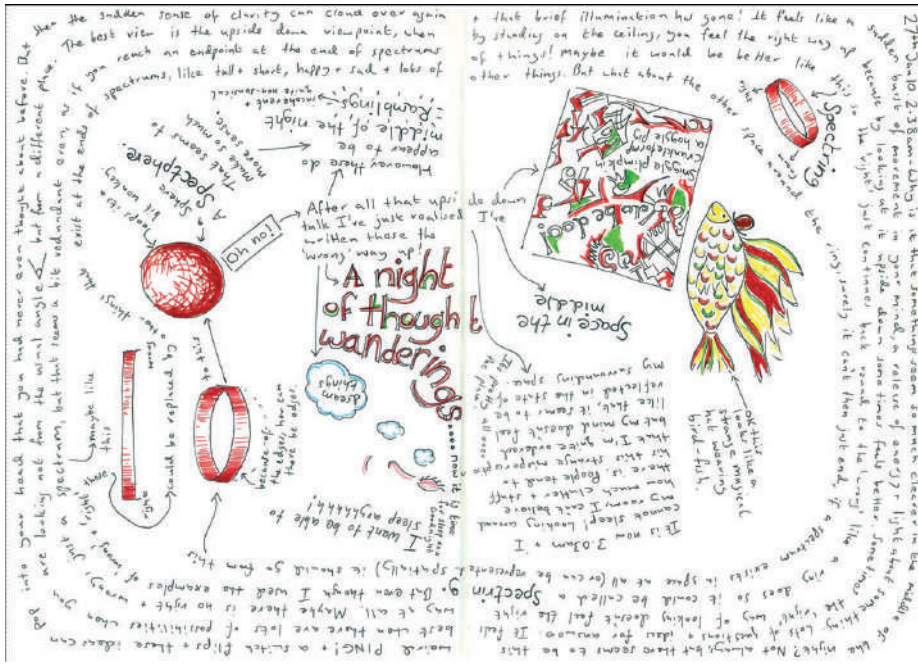


Figure 19.4: Non linear writing.

engage with the materiality of the journal in a three-dimensional way. As such, the journal moves from being looked at/read to an object that has tactile multi-sensory qualities.

Thematic references to flying (Figures 19.5A, 19.5D) and containment (Figures 19.5B, 19.5C) are also present. The flying images are associated with text that tends to have a positive and spiritual quality and associated with a sense of realization and free-spiritedness. In direct contrast, images of containment seem to reflect constraint and frustration. In Figure 19.5C, containment is portrayed as a cage that sits within the mind of a human figure. The cage contains comments such as, "I don't want to be put into a category." "I am going to learn German." "Do I want to find a uniform way of expressing myself?" These are expressions of intention somehow constrained by the cage, but more specifically by the mind of the writer.

CONCLUSION

A fascinating aspect of this project is the resulting richness of the journal entries, with regard to the diversity of style of both text and images and the readiness of the participants to experiment with the process. I am touched by their willingness to engage with the journals and their candour when expressing their sense of self, identity and relationship with the written word and the visual image. Framed in this way (as

Figure 19.5: Emergent textual practices.
Images of flying (A & D) and containment (B & C).

collaborative, social, creative), the journals can be seen to be a powerful transformative tool for developing an awareness that identities are somehow being challenged and shaped as an outcome of being at university, breaking the bonds of perception of academic writing and how this is associated with their sense of "'self," both individually and collectively. Moreover, in this case, the journals facilitated a semiotic

means of viewing self through the concept of being a writer in a particular discipline.

Writers gain opportunities to refine their judgment and decision making as to when and how they present information visually (cf. Robert Goldbort, 2006, p. 174-194) and these journals are associated with a "spirit of relaxation" associated with growth (cf. Elise Hancock, 2003, p. 28) and learning that may be fostered by providing participants with writing spaces that offer them freedom, but also an opportunity to re-make themselves (e.g., Phyllis Creme, 2008, p. 62, cf. Maggi Savin-Baden, 2008). Here, writing is a socially-situated set of meaning-making practices (cf. Lesley Gourlay, 2009, p. 182). As such, journaling can become a personal journey and tied in with a holistic vision of life (Clare Walker Leslie & Charles Roth, 2000, p. 93-100). There is a strong sense of desire and anticipation concerning a shift in a sense of "self" as a process of going to university and the journals appear to have become containers for an epistemological medium of expression, associated with a collective sense of "belonging" at university (cf. Mark Palmer, Paula O'Kane, & Martin Owens, 2009), an individual desire to not lose a sense of "self" during the process and an awareness that processes of transformation are taking place. As one participant articulates:

Academic writing feels like something I've produced that is separate to me and is passed on to the audience. In comparison journal entries feel more like an extension of me, and part of who I am.

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CHAPTER 20

BLOGGING TO CREATE MULTIMODAL READING AND WRITING EXPERIENCES IN POSTMODERN HUMAN GEOGRAPHIES

Claire Penketh and Tasleem Shakur

In this chapter we outline the creation of a "blog" as an emergent textual practice, designed to promote reading and writing for human geography students in their final year of undergraduate study. Aware that students on the "Postmodern Human Geographies" module were frequently challenged by the complexity of key readings, and, conscious that students appeared to read too little, we made significant changes to our practices in order to shift student conceptions of the role of reading and writing in this course. We introduced three strategies: a reduction in the reading expectation via the use of focused reading lists; the introduction of a blog where students were encouraged to respond by writing and contributing images and/or video links; and participation in a field trip to a contemporary art exhibition where the students, as readers, became observers of contemporary art work. This chapter will focus on the development of the blog as a means of encouraging students to develop their understanding of key texts by creating pieces of short writing and connecting these with found images. The creation of an explicit focus on reading and writing practices in this module offers a starting point for us to explore the transformative nature of the production of this collaborative online text for tutors and students.

EXPLORING READING AND LEARNING

There is a concern with encouraging students to "get their heads into their books" (see also Good, Chapter 3 this volume)**.** The clear relationship between reading and writing practices is recognized in the development of academic literacies approaches (Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006, p. 102). Reading in the academy is acknowledged as a complex and creative process where the reader actively contributes to the making of meaning (Saranne Weller, 2010). There is an acknowl-

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edgement that attention should be paid to making the connections between reading, writing and thinking explicit to our students (John Bean, Virginia Chappell & Alice Gillam, 2011) and Bean (2011, p. 161) advises us that students "need to be taught to read powerfully," moving beyond reading for meaning to an understanding of how the text works. Such literacy based practices are recognized as forms of social enterprise where "spoken and written texts—do not exist in isolation but are bound up with what people do—practices in the material, social world" (Theresa Lillis, 2001, p. 34). In order to promote students' understanding of how a text works it therefore seems appropriate to encourage them to lift their heads occasionally in order to connect what they read and write with their experiences in the world. For us this has involved manufacturing a series of shifts between language, image and experience by encouraging students to combine, words with found images in response to their key readings in the form of a blog.

Before we go on to discuss the blog in more detail it is worth considering the connections between reading, writing and learning and the blog as a strategy to enhance our students' understanding. A central concern of this chapter is with the combination of word and image via the blog. We will now, therefore, explore the complexities of reading in the academy (Weller, 2010) by referring to two images; *Dusty Boots Line* by Richard Long (1988) and *City Drawings Series (London)* by Kathy Prendergast (1997).

Dusty Boots Line (Long, 1988) can be found at http://www.richardlong.org/Sculptures/2011sculpupgrades/dusty.html

Long's image, a photograph of a straight line in the landscape, is a simple scuff from A to B, from anywhere to nowhere. If we conceptualize reading as this "Dusty Boots Line" it is a means of moving from one point to another, a simple and clear line in an anonymous landscape. It would be a brief brisk walk, perhaps reading for information, moving through the text in a predetermined way. This might represent a simplistic and instrumental view of reading "as a means to an end" discussed by Weller (2010, p. 89) or "surface" reading (Roberts & Roberts, 2008).

City Drawings Series [London] (Prendergast, 1997) can be found at http://www.quodlibetica.com/wordpress/wp-content/files_flutter/1285879161CDLondon.jpg

The simplicity of walking a clear and unobstructed line contrasts with Kathy Prendergast's complex image, a hand-drawn map of a city with obliterated and erased lines. Although aspects of this landscape may be familiar (the River Thames in the London city map, for example) it is largely unclear and complicated. There are recognizable elements to which we might be drawn but some obscured pathways and a lack of clarity reminiscent of some of the tutor conceptions of reading identified by Weller (2010).

We argue here that reading for transparent objectives and predictable outcomes may not always be the most productive for promoting powerful reading and writing. The module "Postmodern human geographies: Space, Technology, and Culture" en-

courages students to read and apply the work of key postmodern theorists (e.g., Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard) to their understanding of space, culture and technology. The material is acknowledged to be complex and students are encouraged to understand the contested nature of the relationship between technology, power, and knowledge in contemporary culture via their reading. Students acknowledged that attempting the reading for the course was problematic and had disrupted their understanding of what it meant to read effectively. In the initial sessions, students were introduced to readings from a key text, Michael Dear and Steven Flusty (2002), in order to enable them to make connections between postmodern theory and human geographies. They were asked to explore what they already knew about space, culture and technology and the relevance of this to human geography. We discussed the uncertainties of the topic and many students found the elusiveness of definitions of postmodernism disconcerting. One of our students commented on their initial experience of reading one of the key texts:

> Lee: I hated it [reading], the first couple of weeks—a lot of it was my misconceptions. It wasn't like your straight line oh this is the book, by the time I read this book I'll be able to sit down and write an assignment, it wasn't like that …
>
> A lot of it was very theoretical—on the whole the texts that you read for some of the modules it's black and white you know there's an end result there's an essay to write there's an assignment to do so I can read and I can copy and paste my way through.

Here Lee identifies a different kind of expectation in relation to his undergraduate reading, recognizing the differences in the type of material he was asked to read and his previous experiences of reading and writing at university. In describing his former experiences of writing he can track a clear and direct line between reading and writing. He describes a certainty in working to an end result that can be clearly defined. However, the reading expectation for "Postmodern Human Geographies" demanded that students work with uncertainty. Although potentially disconcerting for students, we recognize the possibilities of working with readings that might promote this different type of learning experience.

The work of Dennis Atkinson (2011) has been useful in exploring these ideas about uncertainty in the processes of learning and this has helped us to think about how we might encourage students to read and write with uncertainty. Drawing on the work of French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, Atkinson describes real learning as an ontological shift involving the potential of a new state "that-which-is not-yet" (2011, p. 14).

Atkinson says:

> If we conceive of learning as a move into a new ontological

> state, that is to say where learning opens up new possibilities, new ways of seeing things, new ways of making sense of what is presented to us in our different modes of existence, then this movement involves, "that which is not yet." Accepting such new states involves accepting new states of existence as learners. This idea would indicate a space of potential.

"Dusty boots line" represents "that-which-is" or that which is predetermined where the potential for real learning is closed down. Prendergast's map, in this context, represents "that-which-is-not-yet" where uncertainties about the nature of the text can offer "a space of potential." Uncertainty appears to offer potential for "real" learning but this can also be problematic. In previous iterations of the module there was an implicit expectation that students engage with complex reading but little work with students on the ways that they might do this. There was also no explicit reference made to the role that writing could play in enhancing students' understanding of the course. There appeared to be a mismatch between a module that embraced an engagement with complex reading yet offered no explicit teaching of strategies to do this effectively. We will now explore the blog as a strategy that offered an opportunity for students to open up a space for reading and writing in order to explore these uncertainties.

THE BLOG

The use of a blog, although new to us as a teaching and learning approach, is not particularly new or novel but part of an increasing range of technological approaches (Churchill, 2009; Will Richardson, 2006). The abbreviated "web-log" offers the potential for connectivity and collaboration via "micro-publishing" (Jeremy Williams & Joanne Jacobs, 2004) with the ability to share ideas and potentially reach a wide audience. This use of technology has strong associations with democracy and accessibility but this is off-set against concerns regarding a flood of low-level trivia. For us, the blog was an accessible platform where students could share their experiences of key texts via short pieces of exploratory writing. We considered these opportunities to write as particularly important since the module was assessed via spoken contributions to seminars and a final oral presentation. We were concerned that there were no formal opportunities for students to develop their thinking via writing about the texts and the blog provided a significant platform for the students to engage with "thinking-writing" (Sally Mitchell et al., 2006). The blog was created as an interpretative space where students could work with uncertainty via "low stakes" exploratory writing (Peter Elbow, 2001). We opted for a "closed blog" only accessible to our group of students and tutors to support this comparatively risk free approach.

Importantly, the blog emphasized visual as well as written contributions, and as tutors we aimed to encourage students to bring something to their emerging understanding of the text. We wanted to use the blog to support the students' understanding by their development of text/image combinations. For example, students were asked to consider the seemingly impossible task of defining postmodernism (Figures 20.1 & 20.2). They were able to draw on architecture, fashion, literature, and film in order to question difficulties of definition and express confusion at their first engagement with their reading. We designed the blog in order to promote a collaborative approach to understanding between students. In addition, tutors modelled their own thought processes via short pieces of writing and uploaded images that would resonate with key readings. Students were able to read each other's ideas and see images that others had connected to their readings. This next section explores the significance of the role that the image can play in deepening our understanding of language and outlines some of the key ideas that informed our practices in this respect.

VIOLENCE AND THE IMAGE

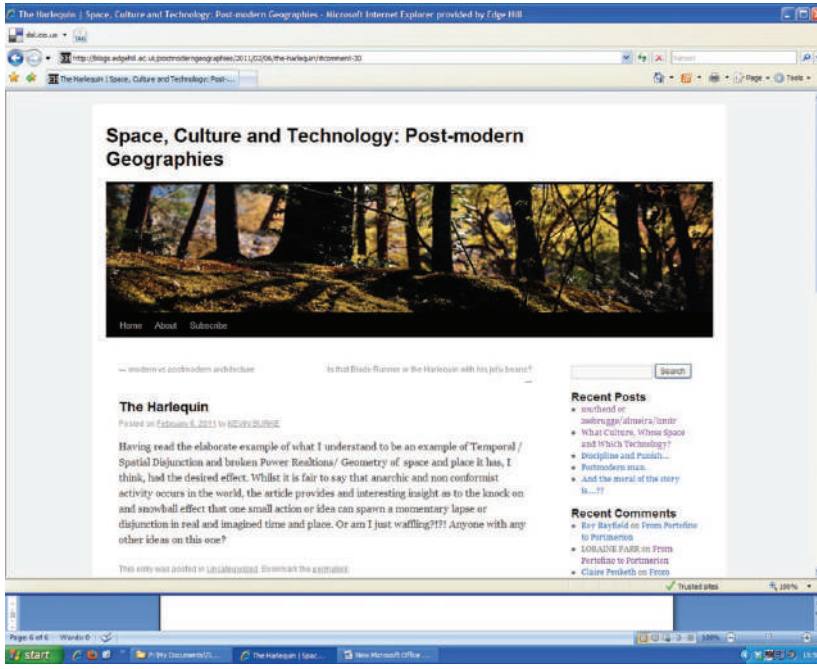

Figure 20.1: Initial Responses (1)—exploratory writing and image finding in response to defining postmodernism.

The essayist tradition as the dominant mode of teaching, learning, and assessment in higher education, prioritizes particular language-based practices. In designing the blog to visibly connect reading and writing, students constructed their own writing in response to the writing of others. Gunther Kress (2011, p. 206) discusses the centrality of language in learning and teaching where it is accepted as the "major route and vehicle for learning and knowing." He suggests that the routes we take through a word-based text can be "taken care of" by established traditions of interpreting reader or author meaning (Kress, 2003, p. 50). However, he encourages us to think about multimodal experiences, acknowledging that there are other vehicles or modes for learning, which can enrich the ways in which language is experienced. He suggests that the image, creates a reading path which is not "automatically given or readily recoverable." It is not only "difference" in mode but the "violence of the image" which "punctures" the language-based system (Jean-Luc Nancy, 2005). Nancy's description of violence as "a force that remains foreign to the dynamic or energetic system into which it intervenes" reinforces the significant differences between language and image based systems. It is possible that the use of a multimodal approach, combining images and observation within the reading process, could be employed to productively disrupt usual reading and writing practices.

Figure 20.2: Initial Responses (2)—exploratory writing and image finding in response to defining postmodernism.

An emphasis in the module on the relationship between knowledge, power and technology encouraged us to draw on these resources in order to explore the creation of multimodal texts to promote learning. This could be described as the creation of a range of semiotic resources informed by Shirley Brice Heath's description of a web or ecology of learning environments (Brice Heath, 2000). Students engaged with their key reading and were encouraged to respond by introducing images and or video links that resonated with their understanding of their reading for that particular week. The inclusion of images was a deliberate attempt to create alternative spaces for interpretation and exploration, by resisting fixed responses (Elliott Eisner, 2004).

As a shared space, the blog was designed to be both democratic and accessible. Following the taught seminar sessions, students were able to use the blog to discuss various visionary and experiential geographies, uploading relevant postmodern architectural photographs, for example, and links to other literature, whilst making connections with the writing of peers, tutors and a guest lecturer. The blog appeared to be a useful space for creating multimodal texts as interpretive tools for making sense of the key readings. For example, one student uploaded an image from the film *Bladerunner* in response to a piece of science fiction that had been

Figure 20.3: A student's response made to "The Ticktockman" in Dear and Flusty, 2002.

set as a key reading (the "Ticktockman" shown in Figure 20.3). The posting of this image and the related comments prompted a later discussion between tutor and student via the blog. This took place outside the usual "face to face" teaching time and provided useful material for discussion with other students in the next session. It provided a useful extension of the face-to-face taught sessions and also prompted interaction with the key reading as students responded to their reading by bringing images and text to the blog.

SUMMARY

The use of the blog provided opportunities for regular short bursts of writing of comparatively informal texts with opportunities for student participation. Explicit connections were made between reading and writing from the outset and there appeared to be a greater level of interaction with key readings, evidenced, for example, in increased levels of participation in the seminar sessions. Students were active in their participation and contributed to written and visual resources for the module via the blog. We perceived a disruption to the reading paths experienced by this group in comparison to previous cohorts and we would attribute this to the ecology of reading and writing environments that were co-created via the blog. Importantly, students contributed to the production of these environments, rather than their consumption, and the responsibility for working towards some form of understanding was shared by tutor and student. The blog also created a space for writing to be reintroduced. Although there was no requirement to write for assessment, the blog created a forum where written and visual sources were valued for their contribution to collaborative meaning-making. In working with a new text form, and one that enabled creative combinations of text and image, the blog made us, as tutors, re-think the role and purpose of writing to enhance reading, transforming our own as well as students' practices in this respect.

There is an expectation that students in their final year of study will be confident in their understanding of academic practice. However, students are working with changing contexts and shifting expectations and there is value in making reading and writing practices visible for students at every point in their learning. In working with the blog as an emergent textual practice we were forced to revisit our own practices, making our own uncertainties visible to our students through image and text.

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CHAPTER 21

WORKING WITH GRAMMAR AS A TOOL FOR MAKING MEANING

Gillian Lazar and Beverley Barnaby

Academic literacies has been described as an "overarching framework" (Joan Turner, 2012, p. 18) which aims to scrutinize critically the dominant values, norms and institutional practices relating to academic writing (Caroline Coffin & Jim Donoghue, 2012). One dominant value, often articulated by some academics and students, is that "correct grammar" at sentence-level is essential for good academic writing. However, this focus on sentence-level grammar is often associated with a top-down prescriptiveness in which "peremptory commands" about correct usage are linked with a negative evaluation of a person's speech or writing (Deborah Cameron, 2007, p. 1).

This chapter focuses on a small-scale project at a post-1992 university[1] in North London, in which a number of first-year "Education Studies and Early Years" students were referred to a writing specialist by an academic in order to improve their "poor grammar." The writing specialist had already collaborated closely with the academic and her colleagues in "Education Studies and Early Years" in developing three "embedded" sessions (Ursula Wingate, 2011) which were integrated within the students' modules, and were delivered during course time. The sessions were broadly informed by a "Writing in the Disciplines" approach, involving collaboration between academics and the writing specialist in terms of the design, content, and delivery of the sessions, and in encouraging students to engage from the outset with disciplinary discourse (Mary Deane & Peter O'Neill, 2011). These sessions aimed to make explicit to students the lecturers' tacit assumptions of what was required in academic writing assignments (Cecilia Jacobs, 2005) in relation to genre, argumentation, structure, academic style, and referencing. Nevertheless, even after the delivery of these sessions, a cohort of 23 students was identified by subject academics as still having significant problems with writing, primarily with "poor grammar." The academic who referred the students to the writing specialist was motivated by a strong commitment to provide appropriate support to these students, as weak grammar had been identified by academics teaching on the programme as the key difficulty which was preventing them from progressing in their studies.

The writing specialist was interested in unpacking the notion of "poor gram-

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mar" with both students and academic staff, since labelling students as having poor grammar seems to raise an important issue. To what extent can a focus on grammar form part of an academic literacies approach, since an emphasis on "surface features, grammar, and spelling" is often characteristic of the study skills approach, which attempts to "fix" students' problems with writing in a top-down, instrumentalist way (Mary Lea & Brian Street, 1998). Is a focus on sentence-level grammar compatible with the notion of exploring writing as a social practice, and its concomitant emphasis on issues of identity? The writing specialist was interested in investigating some of the views of academics with regards to grammar, particularly the ways that these manifested in the kinds of comments/annotations they wrote on student assignments. She was also interested in devising and delivering a series of classroom-based activities which might enable students to explore grammar in more transformative ways, for example, by investigating how grammar can be understood as a tool for making meaning, as well as the relationship between grammar, student identities and the complex power relationships both within the university and the wider geopolitical context. This chapter thus begins with a brief discussion of the overall context, and of a small-scale investigation of the views of three academics regarding "correct grammar" and the ways that these were instantiated in the kinds of annotations that they made on student assignments. Sample activities for classroom use are then provided, followed by students' reactions to these activities. We conclude with a brief discussion of some of the tensions and transformative possibilities arising from this project.

THE CONTEXT

The project involved working with a cohort of 23 students, identified by the academics marking their work as having "poor grammar" in an assignment in which students were required to outline and evaluate the contents of a chapter in a prescribed textbook. The cohort of students was linguistically extremely diverse. It included students who described themselves as native speakers of English, but who also used non-standard forms of grammar typical of local communities in London (Sian Preece, 2009). The cohort included bilingual or trilingual students who routinely used grammatical forms which may be considered acceptable in global varieties of English, such as Indian or Nigerian English, but which are generally considered wrong in standard British English (Andy Kirkpatrick, 2007). An example of such a form is pluralised uncountable nouns (e.g., *informations, knowledges, researches).* A third group encompassed international students, who had learned some English at school in their own country. Finally, there was a category of multilingual students, often refugees, who spoke one language at home with their family, had been educated in a second or even third, and had then had to acquire English in informal settings when they arrived in the United Kingdom.

Given the constraints of timetabling, it was decided that four one-hour "grammar" sessions would be provided. Despite the efforts of academic staff to put a positive spin on the sessions, some of the students who were referred to the sessions may have felt stigmatized initially. In questionnaires devised by the academic following the delivery of the sessions, 69% of the students said that they appreciated the offer of help, while 31% said that it made them feel "uneasy," "uncomfortable," and "let down." Thus, it is clear that labelling students' work as grammatically deficient played into a very normative view of what constitutes acceptable academic writing. On the other hand, for many of the students involved, acquisition of sentence-level grammar in English was a largely unconscious process which had never been subjected to conscious analysis or reflection. This had two negative consequences. Firstly, students were limited in the ways that they could manipulate grammar to convey different meanings. Secondly, when students were asked to proofread their work by lecturers, many of them could not identify the ways in which their work departed from the grammatical norms that the lecturers were enforcing.

THE LECTURER PERSPECTIVE

Why did the academic staff involved in the project consider grammar to be important, and how did they signal this to their students? What types of grammar "errors" did they consider significant in student writing? In order to explore these questions, three lecturers who had marked student assignments on the course were interviewed. They were also asked to annotate chapter reviews from three students, bearing in mind the main areas of grammar which they felt should be pointed out to students.

The interviews with the lecturers revealed not only a strong consensus about why grammar was important, but a sense that grammar was not just a surface feature of writing, but a tool for communicating meaning:

> … in order to make sure they convey their ideas clearly, they need to learn basic grammar. (Lecturer 1, Interview 22/2/2012)

> Grammar is very important, because the meaning is lost if the grammar is incorrect. The clarity of expression and communication is linked with grammar. (Lecturer 3, Interview 23/2/2012)

In addition to the interviews, the small sample of marked chapter reviews was analyzed, which revealed that lecturers had different approaches to marking grammar in assignments. One lecturer simply underlined errors, without providing any further information; another replaced the error with a "correct" version, while a third provided a "correct" version, but also wrote some explanatory comments in

the margin. Overall, this approach to marking revealed a top-down prescriptiveness aligned to the 'study skills' approach to teaching writing (Lea & Street, 1998).

When the lecturers' annotations for the assignments were compared, it was clear that there was both a high level of agreement about which types of errors should be pointed out to students, as well as a high level of conformity to the norms of standard British English usage. In the interviews, grammatical areas which were mentioned as ones to point out to students included "faulty" sentence construction, incorrect punctuation, incorrect spelling, omission of "little" words such as definite articles, misuse of tenses, confusion between singulars and plurals (including pluralising uncountable nouns), and inappropriate word choice. It was significant that the list included the omission of definite articles and the pluralising of uncountable nouns, which are often features of non-British varieties of English (Eyamba Bokamba, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2007). For students who are "native" speakers of these varieties in countries such as India and Nigeria, the "mistake" may only become evident in the context of British Standard English.

DEVELOPING CLASSROOM-BASED ACTIVITIES

In order to devise appropriate activities for the students, an analysis of common student "grammar errors" in the chapter reviews was undertaken. From the analysis, it was clear that, in addition to difficulties with grammar, some students had not understood the overall rhetorical purpose of the review, and had simply summarized the chapter contents. This suggests that "poor grammar" can sometimes be a blanket term that encompasses other aspects of "poor" writing. The assignments of other students revealed a good understanding of the purpose of a review, but were grammatically weak, often in the key areas identified by the lecturers. The question which then arose was how to develop students' grammatical competence in these areas in ways which emphasized the meaning-making potential of grammar, while also stimulating awareness of what Ann Johns (1997) calls a "socio-literate" perspective. This meant that the activities attempted to enable students to make connections between grammar and issues relating to identity and power relationships in writing. For example, if students routinely used grammar forms identified as "non-standard" in the British context, either with friends and family in the United Kingdom, or in more formal settings in their home country, then what kind of shifts of identity were required for them to use standard forms in their academic writing? An inventory of classroom activities was developed in response to this. The design of these activities was also informed by some of the evidence in research into second language acquisition that "form-focused" instruction (i.e., drawing students' attention explicitly to the form and meaning of a particular grammatical structure) is beneficial to their learning of grammar (Nina Spada, 2010). The working assumption was that form-focused instruction might benefit

all students in the group, even if they were not second language speakers of English. In addition, the tasks incorporated a number of principles for promoting language awareness, including discussing the language analytically, employing learner-centred discovery activities and engaging students both affectively and cognitively (Simon Borg, 1994).

SOME SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

1. Reflection on Different Varieties of Grammar and Students' Identities

The aim of these activities was to encourage students to reflect on how the grammatical forms they utilized might signal particular aspects of their identity, and to validate the complex hybridity of many student identities as expressed in the grammar they used. Suresh Canagarajah (1999) has pointed to the difficulties that students may experience in bridging the gap between the English they use in their vernacular, and the standard forms used in academic writing. Top-down feedback comments by academic staff underline the notion that there is only one "correct" form of grammar, thus potentially stigmatizing non-standard uses of grammar and the expressions of identity that go along with them.

a. Students draw and discuss diagrams, detailing their own linguistic profile, including the different languages and varieties that they speak, with whom they are used and in what context.
b. Students discuss sentences, contrasting sentences or paragraphs containing standard and non-standard grammatical forms, and explore when and by whom they might use them. For example, with family and friends versus in the university. How might shifting from one repertoire to another feel?
c. Students discuss a series of statements relating to grammar:
   Do you agree or disagree with these statements. Why?
   - Using particular grammar makes you a member of a particular club.
   - Grammar can never be wrong; it can only be inappropriate.
   - Changing the grammar I use, changes the person I am.
d. Students are asked to "think ethnographically" and note down examples of different grammatical forms they notice being used in their daily lives; these can then be discussed in class.

2. Contrastive Analysis

The aim of these activities was to emphasize that the manipulation of different grammatical forms empowers writers to make meaning in different ways. For

example, students compare a number of different sentences or paragraphs contextualized within academic texts, which illustrate contrastive uses of grammar, e.g., the active voice and the passive voice; or the use of the present simple and present perfect, versus the past simple when quoting. Do they reveal any differences about the writer's position in the text (Ken Hyland, 2002), or about the writer's attitude to the contemporary relevance of the quote (John Swales & Christine Feak, 2004)? How would students feel about using them and why?

3. Strategies for "Noticing" Different Grammatical Forms

The aim of these activities was to draw on some of the strategies commonly used in English Language Teaching to enable students to analyze the meanings encoded in specific grammatical forms. This might encourage students to engage cognitively with grammar, rather than slavishly accepting the "correct form" with no real understanding of why they might actively choose to use it.

a. Encouraging students to develop a series of "concept questions," which can help them to disambiguate grammatical meaning. For example, in relation to the sentence *The book is aimed at professional*, students could apply these questions: *Do you mean one, or more than one "professional?" Is this okay in the version of English spoken in your home country? In standard British English, how do you make it clear how many professionals there are*? Students are asked to apply these concept questions when proofreading.
b. Students are asked to compare a text with numerous grammar "mistakes," with a "reformulated text" (Scott Thornbury, 1997) with none. How significant are the mistakes in the original in terms of meaning? In what ways does the reformulated text change the meaning? In what ways does the reformulated text conform to standard usage? How important (or not) is this?

STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO THE ACTIVITIES

All of the activities above were used in the four sessions with the group. Initially, the intention was that the students should keep a reflective log of their reactions to the activities, but disappointingly, the responses to this were limited. When questioned, students mentioned that they were very short of time as they were working on assignments that counted towards their final grades, whereas the logs did not. However, some responses were received:

> I found the activities useful, especially the activity that involved us getting into pairs and discussing how our mother tongue

differs from English.

From my point of view all the exercises we have in the lessons are useful but I have find(sic) that punctuation and the use of articles as one of the most important points to remember when we have to write an essay as it can change the meaning of what we are trying to say. It is also important to know when we should use singular and plural, as it might mean the opposite of what we are trying to explain.'

CONCLUSION

During the implementation of this project a number of tensions emerged. One surprising tension was that many of the students were initially keen to "learn rules" about grammar, and tended to classify any deviance from standard British English as "wrong." Discussions about the legitimacy and appropriacy of non-standard English became quite heated, with a few students vehemently insisting on the use of the standard form in all contexts. There was sometimes a slight impatience with discussions about the broader socio-politics of language, with students simply wanting to know what was "correct." This suggests that the views of students reflect the views about language held in the wider society, including the belief that prescriptive rules regarding correct usage are valid in all contexts. Thus, one of the tasks of the writing specialist is to encourage students to question and explore these in order to genuinely transform attitudes regarding grammar. Nevertheless, most students were very appreciative that the complexity of their linguistic identities was valued and seen as a resource, which may not always have been the case within the university context. This would suggest that the activities utilized in the sessions were genuinely transformative for some students in encouraging them to move from a view of grammar as simply "right or wrong," to one in which grammar is regarded as a tool that can be manipulated for expressing different aspects of identity in different contexts. The students thus appeared to develop an improved awareness of the kind of grammar considered appropriate in an academic context, while also feeling that their complex linguistic identities were being validated. For example, a number of students reported on feedback forms that the activities used in the sessions had changed their views about grammar and its relationship to meaning, and that they enjoyed the activities in which they were asked to draw on their own linguistic repertoires.

Another tension was between the academics' comments that grammar is a tool for making meaning, and the evidence from their annotations that standard forms need to be enforced, either by underlining these or providing the "correct" forms for the student. Theresa Lillis (2003) has called for a dialogue to be at the centre

of an academic literacies approach, but lecturers' annotations about grammar generally communicate rather top-down prescriptiveness, with little space for encouraging critical engagement by students. Perhaps marking annotations could instead include "concept" questions relating to any ambiguities in meaning arising from the way a grammatical structure has been used in an assignment. Or perhaps annotations could encourage students to consider more deeply the issues of identity that may arise when they experiment with "new" forms of grammar. Overall, the collaboration between the writing specialist and academics has been transformative in initiating a dialogue about how marking methods could encourage a more dialogic relationship between staff and students, and in encouraging academic staff to consider how their marking practices can move from a "study skills" model of writing to one which is informed by an academic literacies approach. Such an approach enables academic staff to be more cognisant that the grammar used by students is not simply a surface level feature of text, but is often a complex manifestation of students' identities.

Joan Turner (2004, p. 108) has argued for "the constitutive importance of language in the academic context" to be better recognized. As sentence-level grammar is an essential part of this language, it will continue to generate both tensions, as well as creatively transformative responses, among those teaching and researching academic writing.

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NOTE

1. The term "post 1992" universities in the United Kingdom refers to former polytechnics or colleges of higher education that were given university status through the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, and also sometimes to colleges that have been granted university status since then.

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CHAPTER 22

DIGITAL POSTERS—TALKING CYCLES FOR ACADEMIC LITERACY

Diane Rushton, Cathy Malone and Andrew Middleton

This chapter explores an inter-disciplinary collaboration which set the written word to one side to explore the student voice in a space between speech and writing. It presents an emerging Digital Posters pedagogy in which student experimentation with the spoken word is designed to support their critical engagement with their subject and by extension their ability to produce the structures of academic writing. The method has been developed collaboratively over three years by the authors: an academic, a writing tutor and an educational developer. The approach has proved liberating for both staff and students and has provided a means of exploring conceptions of academic literacies as being about critical and constructive growth through the students' exploration of language and their representation of knowledge.

THE CHALLENGE

The massification of UK higher education and the growing diversity of the student body exacerbate the difficulty of establishing appropriate expectations for, and engagement with, academic writing. Diversity was central to the challenge in this case study, which involved students enrolled on two Sheffield Business School Level 5 (year 2) Business units: Managing in a Global Context (full-time degree, Erasmus, Chinese students, full-time Higher National Diploma (HND) students) and Globalization and Business (part-time degree/HND students). The primary challenge, stated simply, was how to engage these students in writing that promotes learning at degree level; a challenge further compounded by the teaching team's diverse understandings of the function of writing.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE

Colin Bryson and Len Hand (2007, p. 360), in discussing learner engagement, reflect that "positive engagement … is unsurprisingly linked to [students] enjoying what they do" and as Karen Scouller (1998) argues, good performance in essay writing is linked to students developing and using deep learning strategies. We felt

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a fresh approach was required in engaging the students, one that was not likely to be perceived as addressing a technical deficit and one that developed within the subject itself. As a team we wanted to create a novel arena; one in which students could explore their own voices and, ultimately, re-engage with their own thinking and appreciation of writing as a space for exploring thinking.

DIGITAL POSTERS AND THE DIGITAL VOICE

The realization that a deeply engaging novel approach to embedding writing development was needed coincided with a university innovation project called Digital Voices. This initiative aimed to explore the value of the recorded voice to enhance learning and one of the methods being promoted in that work, Digital Posters, appeared to offer a new environment in which students could discover their academic voice. The Digital Voice project proposed that new, every-day technologies disrupt existing understandings of the "learning environment" and introduce diverse opportunities for using the recorded voice as a way to promote learning. At the same time, the Digital Voice project was intent on exploring usergenerated media as an integrated, pervasive phenomenon; not as something distinct and supplementary to existing teaching and learning concerns.

WHAT ARE DIGITAL POSTERS?

In this case, a Digital Poster is a video based on a single power point slide and produced by a student during a two hour workshop. Students are expected to record a five minute visually rich presentation with spoken commentary. They use screen capture technology, rather than a camera, to record their PC screen. The resultant recording is saved as a digital video file which can be played back immediately in the classroom or later online (see example: http://youtu.be/NitL1LqtG9c).

Technically, digital posters are made feasible by the simple production process which involves the use of familiar software (PowerPoint) and less familiar, yet reliable and highly accessible screencasting software (Camtasia Studio). Familiarity and usability are critical characteristics of the Digital Poster method, supporting the principle that, even though students will be required to work in a way that is new to them, the technical interface should not raise anxiety or otherwise disrupt the primary learning activity of talking about, listening to and reflecting on ideas and knowledge. It is important for the effective engagement of the students that the activity is straightforward, enjoyable and ultimately understood by them as being relevant and useful.

In this case study students used Digital Posters to report on the initial findings from their research into an agreed topic. Prior to attending the workshop, the students selected four or five images, representing their findings about the topic,

which they were expected to organize on a single PowerPoint slide. It was explained to the students that they would need to use the images as "visual bullet-points" to support their commentary on their research topic. The students were required to work without written scripts and, instead, to depend on their visual cues as prompts. This was intended to create a structure while allowing them to explore different ways of explaining what they had discovered. The students were each given a headset and screencasting software to record their slide and talk. They were asked to begin by introducing their topic before addressing each of their selected images. To conclude, they were expected to identify any connections between the structural components. Once satisfied with their commentary, the students were able to add zoom and pan effects to their recording using other features in the software. This process resulted in the production of a visual and verbal journey around and then across their slide of images.

WORKSHOP DESIGN

The workshop is organized around four phases: modelling, presentation, production and reflection. The tutor begins by modelling the process in the PC Lab using a headset and the installed screencasting software. The methods are also explained on an illustrated handout which students follow later. The modelling intentionally highlights the difficulty of finding the right words and celebrates the hesitancy found in utterances such as "um" and "err," identifying them as being symbolic of the thinking required to construct an effective presentation of knowledge. This emphasizes that technical perfection is not an expected outcome of the exercise and that finding the right words requires some effort and experimentation.

It is important to stress here, as it is to the students, that the main value of the Digital Posters method is the formative process of making and thinking about the different ways they have to present their knowledge. It is the students' consideration of how they can best visually represent their chosen topic; explain their engagement with their topic and their knowledge of it, which is important at this early stage in their assignment. The students become involved in an electronically mediated, self-regulated, iterative process of talking about their study and rapidly reflecting on their presentation by making design decisions. The iterative cycle in the Digital Posters concept involves the student speaking and recording, replaying and reviewing, and then revising and re-recording their presentation until they are happy with it, or until the workshop moves from the presentation phase into its production phase. It provides an environment in which students can organize their thinking.

The structure of the workshop ensures that students are continuously engaged in making decisions within an ethos of "good enough" production quality, typical of user-generated digital media tasks (Martin Weller, 2011). Each presentation cycle takes about ten minutes depending on the extent of the revisions the student

determines to be necessary. During the cycle students are asked to listen to the words they have used, the fluency with which they have used them, the suitability of the structure they have selected and how these factors enable or hinder them in making a coherent presentation. The intention, therefore, is not for students to get anything "right" but for them to explore the open-ended nature of an academic assignment, the need for them to manage this and to develop a suitable academic voice (Peter Elbow, 1995, p. xlvi). The task confirms the uncertain, emerging and fuzzy state of knowledge at this stage in their thinking. The forgiving nature of the spoken word and the inherent open-endedness of images contrast with the apparent finality of the written word at the heart of the student's anxiety. The spoken word gives the student room to navigate what they know and to find the appropriate structure and vocabulary they need. This multimodal view of literacy readily accommodates tentative and reflective expression and brings together the benefits of spatial logic through the visual elements and temporal logic in the use of words (Gunther Kress, 2003).

The production phase of the workshop provides some time for each student to develop their presentation using the software's zoom and pan tools. It allows the student producer to add visual emphasis and to make connections across the structure as well as creating a high level view of the topic in conclusion. The final review phase of the workshop takes the form of a ten minute plenary in which students reflect on the method and whether it helped them to explore their thinking and identify gaps in their knowledge. This metacognitive approach highlights the importance of language, structure and voice in representing knowledge. It is the academic equivalent to a warm down exercise in which students talk about their experience. The following section is largely based upon an analysis of transcripts from these plenary conversations.

REFLECTING ON THE WORKSHOPS

This section draws on our classroom observations of students making their digital posters and, in particular, on the workshop discussion. The data come from eight workshops conducted with approximately 40 students in the third year of this work.

It was immediately evident that students were intrigued by the technology and engaged positively with it. Beyond some initial shyness, the usual reticence of students to speak up disappeared as they began to record their reports. The challenge of recording a personal artefact appeared to absorb the students, immersing them in a private space, albeit within the public environment of a busy PC Lab (Figure 22.1). Students sat side-by-side in the lab, each speaking directly to their screens before playing back the recording. Not only did the use of technology appear to transform the public space into private space, but it also worked as an interactive

mirror, creating a strong virtual audience for some students.

Figure 22.1: Students producing digital posters in a workshop.

The impersonality of the technology and the lack of social dynamic helped some students to focus on the task in hand:

> When you make eye contact with people [in presentations] you kind of think you're buying yourself a bit more time. It's just different when you're staring at a computer screen. It's like "Go"—that's it …

Others personified the computer as a listener; their partner in their dialogic exchange,

> You can kind of forget you're talking to a screen. You're talking to someone. So it's like they're listening and there's a connection there.

The novelty of the technology and the task was perceived positively as being "fun," "interesting," and "a good way to engage your attention," and contributed to a high sense of engagement and ownership:

> You learn a lot because you don't want to do it badly. Because it's your voice you want to get it right.

The Digital Poster method requires students to work without a written script or notes and many students remarked on how the use of images helped them to structure their thinking. This student's comment was echoed by many others:

> I think it is useful [to think about structure in terms of pictures] because you think about a picture in a lot more words than just writing. You get an image in your head and you create thoughts around the picture. I think it helps to open your mind about the topic.

As the concept of photo elicitation suggests (Douglas Harper, 2002), the students explained that while the pictures made room for thinking, they also created a focus:

> The pictures help you to concentrate. When you look at them your thoughts start to take shape and they help you to focus on your topics.
>
> It was easy to come up with words just by looking at the picture.

The technology enabled students to capture their words with spontaneity and then revisit and reflect on this as they mentally redrafted their digital poster. The interplay of "product" and "process" involving the rapid reversioning of artefacts seems to locate Digital Posters in a space between speech and writing. The process encouraged a metacognitive engagement among students alongside their focus on producing content. Because the method is modelled as an unusual, imperfect, and transitory media, it created a space for low-stakes, critical self-evaluation.

Due to the novelty of the medium, the students were not inhibited by preconceived ideas of perfection. The medium acted as a mirror:

> I spoke it initially, but when I listened back I realized I'd said it incorrectly … it emphasizes the importance of having a good understanding of the subject you're talking about.
>
> It's good listening back to yourself because you can hear whether or not you know what you're talking about.

There was some evidence that the iterative process facilitated a shift in tone from a more personal to a more public, formal voice; one more suited to the academic context and task. The Digital Poster workshops were an isolated event for

the students, but several suggested they might do something similar independently:

> I think it will definitely help a lot [to do more of this at home]. It's giving me a clearer view about what I'm doing.

> On future projects, if I'm not sure where I'm going, [using pictures to indicate structure] would help [me] to pick out what are the key points and elements which I need to use and which ones I need to research more on or change the ideas.

DIGITAL POSTER GALLERY

The students were given the option of uploading their posters to a "student gallery" in their Blackboard virtual learning environment. This created an audience for the products, allowing for peer review and comparison. The Digital Poster gallery also allowed the authors to reflect further on the approach. Having four pictures on one slide, rather than on a series of slides, meant the stronger students tended to make the connections between the visual elements, relating them back to an overarching idea or main point. This was echoed, but not replaced, by the use of the software's zoom and panning functionality to add emphasis.

The simple use of visual prompts encouraged students to engage in their topics in ways which could translate into their academic writing. For example, the relationship between carefully selected graphics and presentational clarity was a characteristic of the most successful posters. They created a coherent structure and organization; features that potentially make it easier for the "reader" to follow the presenter's train of thought, whether in speech or in writing. Feedback was given on the posters that had been uploaded to Blackboard. This provided an opportunity to deconstruct the best examples and begin to explore with the students how academic literacy develops, how abstractions such as critical analysis and the use of evidence and structure translate into language.

CONCLUSION

A major driver for this work was student disengagement with academic writing and their difficulty in valuing writing as anything other than a means of reporting their state of knowledge. Exploration of the Digital Posters method has not only helped to clarify to the students the significance of aspects of academic writing, but has been revelatory to us as developers of the method too. In particular the relationship of academic discourse to student selfregulation (Zimmerman, 1989), conceptualizations of multiple literacies and multimodality (Kress, 2003), and the benefits of reassessing digital media-enhanced learning environments have been influential in developing our own thinking.

The student production of Digital Posters created a useful framework with which to engage students as reflective and critical learners despite their reticence at being challenged. The novelty of the medium, the decision-making associated with designing the poster presentation, the clear communication required to represent the state of each student's grasp of their topic, and the immediate feedback coming through the iterative review, reflection and revision cycle, all contributed to creating a rich, immersive, intensive and engaging learning opportunity. For us, the shift from written media to the spoken word and the integration of audio-visual media seemed to recast the whole issue of student engagement in academic discourse and academic writing.

We found that the strongest indication of success in this study was in comparing the eagerness of the students to talk about their experience of constructing their Digital Posters, and their compulsion to produce "a good take," with their previous reticence to engage in discussions about academic writing. Looking to further developments, we are interested in exploring the intertextual and dialogic aspects (Mikhail Bakhtin, 1981) in the transfer of presented knowledge from one medium to another, which we hope might help us to engage students more critically with the relationship between their digital posters and their academic writing.

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CHAPTER 23

TELLING STORIES: INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' WRITING THROUGH PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Helen Bowstead

In an increasingly diverse educational context, the attempt to impose "one voice" and one "literacy" on the myriad of "voices" and "literacies" that now make up our student bodies seems ever more futile and ever less desirable. In this reflective piece, I suggest that in order to embrace this diversity, those who work in the field of academic literacies need to challenge and transgress the constraints inherent in "normative" texts in their own professional writing. By drawing on personal narrative and incorporating alternative textual forms, I hope to both argue and exemplify how those who work with student writers can, and should, be troubling dominant academic discourses.

Early responses to the massification of the British Higher Education system were very much informed by notions that many of the new type of university student were somehow lacking in the "skills" needed to succeed. Academic Literacies research has done much over the past 20 years to challenge this deficit model, yet, in my experience at least, the way the attributes and educational experiences of "international" students are conceptualized and described still very often perpetuate the perception that they are somehow "lacking" or "less."

> Discourses of internationalization often position Western and Asian education systems and scholarship in terms of binary opposites such as "deep/surface," "adversarial/harmonious," and "independent/dependent" and uncritically attribute these labels to whole populations and communities of practice. (Janette Ryan & Kam Louie, 2008, p. 65)

Within the binaries and generalizations commonly used to describe those who come from other cultural and educational backgrounds, there is little that does not

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reflect traditional Western notions of knowledge production or that encourages a positive engagement with the rich diversity an international student body brings to the HE context. In the same way that those students labelled "non-traditional" may struggle to learn the rules of the game and to participate successfully in higher education, so many international students have also found themselves excluded from academic discourse because the language skills and modes of knowledge production that have served them well until their arrival in the United Kingdom are suddenly deemed "deficient." Ursula Wingate and Christopher Tribble (2012, p. 484) argue that "all students, whether they are native or non-native speakers of English, or 'non-traditional,' or 'traditional' students, are novices when dealing with academic discourse in the disciplines" and will therefore need support with their academic writing. But if we accept the claim that all students are "novices," then this begs the question: Who are the experts? It would seem to me that one answer might be; those of us who write and publish academic texts. As Theresa Lillis and Mary Scott point out (2007, p. 18), "the high status academic journal article continues to serve as an implicit model for the texts students are expected to produce," and in almost every case that model closely follows the conventions of a "normative" text.

In my work I support both "home" and "international" students; my job is to help them improve their written language skills and to adapt to academic culture in the United Kingdom. I work closely with many students, often one on one, and while a student's language skills may be the focus of my work, often the personal and the political intervene:

> Angel came to see me because she wanted to practise her spoken English. What shall we talk about I ask her? She doesn't know. Well, tell me how you came to be in Plymouth, I say. Angel begins to talk. She speaks of life under Saddam Hussein. Of chemical warfare and the rising levels of infertility that are the terrible consequence. Of twelve nights in the basement of her house, hiding in the dark. She tells me how she had to battle with a hostile administrative system to be here. Of her determination to complete her PhD and take back something of value to her homeland. To help rebuild Iraq.

More and more in my work and in my research I find that I cannot help but respond to the individuals I engage with, and to what their story is telling me about them and about the world we live in (see Scott and Mitchell Reflections 1 this volume). There is a richness, a depth, a multi-layering in these narrative accounts that fascinate me and which I wish to capture in my writing. Van Maanen (1998, cited in Jaber Gubrium & James Holstein, 2003) says that how research is presented is at least as important as what is presented. Conventional academic writing is a powerful discourse that conceals and excludes; as Laurel Richardson argues, "*how* we

are expected to write affects *what* we can write about; the form in which we write shapes the content" (cited in Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, p. 187). She argues that traditional modes of representation serve only to conceal the "lived, interactional context in which the text was co-produced" (Richardson, 1997, p. 139). And so, as I write about the individuals I meet and the way in which these encounters impact on my own writing practices, I try to embody these struggles in the shape and form and content of the text, and to "out" the personal in type (Ken Gale & Jonathan-Wyatt, 2009). I also write in the hope that this "story-telling" and "story-retelling" can help to break down some of the cultural, educational and emotional barriers that position students, and in particular "international" students, both as "other" and "deficient." Stories reflect the discourses that work upon us and therefore there is a need to subject personal narratives to a very "intense and focused" gaze in order to arrive at a better "understanding of the social, of the way individual subjectivities are created and maintained through specific kinds of discursive practices, within particular historical moments, in particular contexts" (Bronwyn Davies & Susan Gannon, 2006, p. 4). Davies and Gannon argue that it is only by recognizing the ways in which discourse works on us, and we on it, that we can begin to initiate some kind of change, to begin the vital process of "disturbing and destabilizing sedimented thinking" (2006, p. 147).

My work with Angel has spanned several years now. In her initial visits to me she wanted to develop her spoken English skills. She hadn't been in the United Kingdom much more than a year then, and had only recently begun work on her PhD. She struggled to convey quite basic information, both orally and in her writing, and gaining her doctorate seemed very far away, to both of us. We have been on a long and eventful journey, one that has revealed much to me about the nature of writing and the power of language. Angel is a university lecturer in Iraq. She is highly educated, and she is knowledgeable and passionate about her subject. Both academically and professionally I am her inferior, and yet because she has chosen to study in the United Kingdom, she is regarded as the one who is deficient. She has struggled to acculturise on a number of levels. Not just to the language of the academy and her discipline, but also to the myriad of other contexts and communities she must negotiate in order to "survive and succeed." Often her "lack" of language has been perceived as a "problem." Proof that she should not be here. An excuse to exclude and dismiss:

> Angel is having a difficult time. She is losing weight again and there is a blankness behind her eyes. She has been on placement in a local secondary school for the past few weeks so I haven't seen much of her. She thought she would be invited to teach, or perhaps share some of her expertise. But Angel has been treated very badly by some of the staff at the school. They ignore her in

> the corridor and send her on menial errands.
>
> "Miss, yes you Miss, I need some more lined paper."
>
> Angel is disappointed in these English women and their behavior toward her. I am disappointed too. I have met those kinds of people before.

Discourses can have very real effects on people's lives. Failing to acknowledge the power discourses have to impact on the way we think and behave, or the way in which we are complicit in their construction and perpetration, is to become a prisoner of what Paulo Freire terms a "circle of certainty" (Freire, 2000, p. 39). If we believe that the world can be ordered and named, if we believe in absolute truths, then we lose the ability to "confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled" (Freire, 2000, p. 39). Freire argues that it is imperative that we engage in dialogues with our fellow men and women and to open ourselves up to what it is that is *really* being said. Working with Angel, listening to her stories and becoming her friend, has expanded my capacity to "know" and has helped me to begin to recognize and trouble the powerful discourses that are currently being constructed to define and maintain notions of the Muslim "other." It has also helped me to recognize the ways in which similar discourses impact on my engagement with all those who might just as easily be categorised as "not us." One of the things that drew me to write about (and with) Angel was the way her life and PhD work intertwined. In her research, she explores the communication barriers children who speak English as an Additional Language experience when they talk about pain and I know Angel and her family experienced the very same language and cultural barriers every day: Angel has lived the "real" experience of the EAL children she has chosen to research. Yet there is no evidence in Angel's professional writing of the painful and personal challenges and obstacles that she has overcome in its creation. For though there is nothing more personal than the work of the "lone scholar," traditional academic discourse encourages, even insists, that the writer must conceal herself and deny her subjective experience.

> Angel has had an article published. She is pleased and proud. She sends me a copy to read. I recognize her work immediately. It is part of her thesis that we have spent many hours writing and rewriting. I am intrigued by the smooth, professionalism of the piece. It reads as a journal article "should." Gone are the awkward sentences and faulty grammar. Her theoretical basis is fluently and clearly expounded. The research relevant and appropriately referenced. Angel's work has been fully translated into the "accepted" language of the academy. Although I am excited for Angel, I am also saddened that she has been so successfully

> "erased" from the text, that there is still no room for the personal or the subjective or the imperfect in the traditional "science story."

I am convinced that in order to challenge the powerful discourses of the "normative" text and to make way for a richer more varied, and more inclusive notion of what can constitute "academic" writing, there is an imperative for those of us who write professionally to reveal our subjectivities in both what we write and in the way we write. Lillis and Scott (2007) note the value of ethnographic research as a tool for addressing inequalities but also suggest that the often small-scale nature of such research projects may have inhibited empirical and theoretical developments in the field of academic literacies. But writers such as Ron Pelias argue that, conversely, it is vital that educators and researchers engage *more* and not less in what he terms "empathetic scholarship." The notion of a shared humanity is central to my research and my writing and I refuse to buy into the notion that ethnographic, even autoethnographic, practices are somehow lacking, less, or deficient. And so, like Pelias and others, I choose to position myself as a writer, and as a researcher who, "instead of hiding behind the illusion of objectivity, brings [herself] forward in the belief that an emotionally vulnerable, linguistically evocative, and sensuously poetic voice can place us closer to the subjects we wish to study" (Pelias, 2004, p. 1). I choose to produce texts that create spaces in which both the personal and the political can resonate and where linguistic norms and textual forms can be troubled (Helen Bowstead, 2011). Inspired by Laurel Richardson I have experimented with poetic transcription and in doing so I have experienced the evocative power of words liberated from the "bloodless prose" of the traditional academic text (Stoller, p. xv, cited in Pelias, 2004, p. 10). In exploring alternative textual forms, I have found I am able to write my way into a place where I can not only formulate a more meaningful response to the social, political and educational issues that I face in my work, but also give voice to those I work with in a way that both honours and empowers them (Richardson, 1997):

> Angel sits next to me while she writes. I try not to watch as her hand moves across the page. I think her hand will move right to left. Awkwardly, as my own would. But it dances across the page. There is nothing linear about the way she writes. When she is finished, I ask her to tell me what she has written. I write down her words but I am not sure I can capture in English what she has expressed in her own language. I decide not to try.
>
> Angel talks of the pity she sees in people's eyes, of how she feels "second-rate," inferior. But I do not pity her. I have only admiration. She has a lion's heart. I imagine how beautiful her PhD

would have been if she had been able to write it in her own language. How much more she would have been able to say and express. How she wouldn't have needed me, or her supervisors to correct her grammar and shape her prose. But even digitally Angel's language is denied her. Kurdish is not a language easily accessible in Microsoft word.

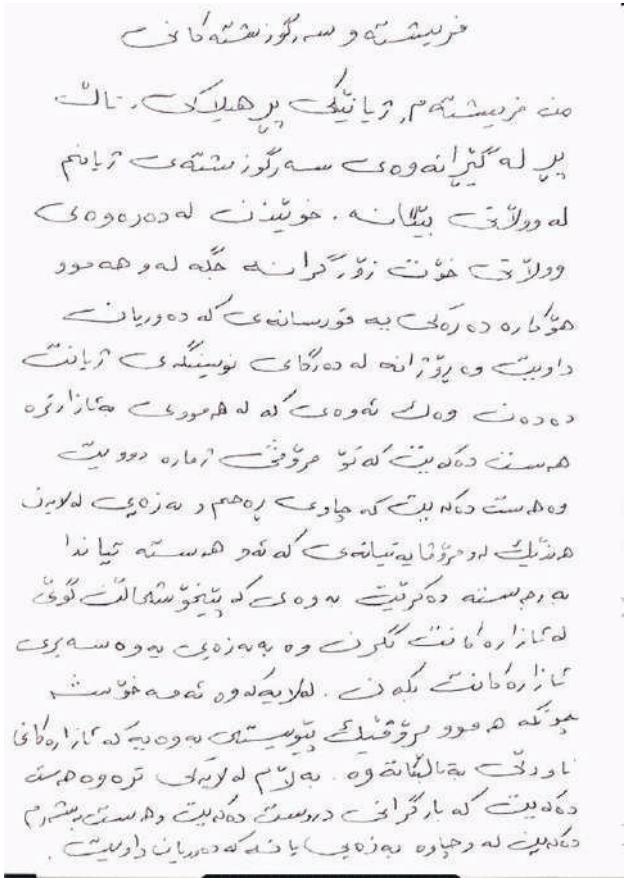

Figure 23.1: Angel and her painful stories.

As we move into a new era of funding regimes and shifting student populations, it is clear that, in many institutions at least, there is going to be a continued and potentially more aggressive push to recruit internationally. In this increasingly globalized higher education context, it seems to me there is an even more urgent need for a radical rethinking of "the ways writing is related to much deeper questions of epistemology and what counts as knowledge in the university" (Ivanič & Lea, 2006, p. 12). I have long felt complicit in something which troubles me greatly. I

know for many students, including Angel, that they get through by following the rules, rules that I help impose. But even when they become more skilled players of the game, when they have become more familiar and more articulate in the language of their subject and of the institution, they often don't have the time, the energy, or the confidence to challenge and contest the dominant discourses that they find themselves writing to. Though the academic literacies model has opened up spaces for students to explore notions of meaning-making, identity and power, and though it has foregrounded "the variety and specificity of institutional practices and students' struggles to make sense of these" (Mary Lea & Brian Street, 2006, p. 376), perhaps what those who work in the field still do not do enough is to explicitly challenge those institutional practices in terms of the *kinds* of texts they themselves create and publish.

Westernized notions of coherence and cohesion are, like any discourse, are a construction and, if I can quote George Gershwin, "it ain't necessarily so." I believe that engaging with alternative writing practices, and by that I mean writing that is not bound by the "often impoverished perspective on language and literacy that is trumpeted in official and public discourses" (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 21), affords professional academic writers huge opportunities for engaging in the production of texts that embrace and promote forms of knowledge production that not only reflect and celebrate, but also *embody,* what it means to be part of the complex "new communicative order" that is emerging in our ever globalized world (Street, 2004, cited in Lillis & Scott, 2007). In her discussions with student writers, Theresa Lillis (2003, p. 205) often encountered "a desire to make meaning through logic and emotion, argument and poetry, impersonal and personal constructions of text," to create the kind of "hybrid" texts that are "pregnant with potential for new world views, with new 'internal forms' for perceiving the world in words" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 36 cited in Lillis, 2003, p. 205). Yet, it is incredibly difficult for (novice) student writers to transform their writing practices unless they are exposed to (published) academic work that embodies this desire to trouble academic norms and to explore alternative textual forms. It is not that such texts do not exist, nor that they fail to meet the highest of academic standards. Writers such as John Danvers (2004), Ken Gale and Jonathan Wyatt (2009), Ron Pelias (2004), Laurel Richardson (1997,) Tammy Spry (2011) and Elizabeth St. Pierre (1997) have all published texts which, though they are often striking and personal, and sometimes challenging and difficult, easily meet the criteria that Richardson and St. Pierre (1994, p. 964) suggest can be used to measure texts produced through "creative analytical processes." That is to say that, as well as making a substantive contribution to our understanding of social life, these works demonstrate an aesthetic merit that is both complex and satisfying, and a deep reflexivity that clearly evidences the author's accountability to the people studied. And while it is important that "confounding expectations should not become a

new orthodoxy" (Danvers, 2004, p. 171), these are all texts that have a significant emotional and intellectual impact on the reader (see also Horner and Lillis Reflections 4 this volume). Therefore, I am convinced that if we wish to develop a system of higher education "premised upon the explicit aims of inclusion and diversity" (Lillis, 2003, p. 192), then it behoves us as the writers in the field to seek out and produce textual forms that embody and embrace the heterogeneity of our student populations, texts which can act as models of the kinds of alternative modes of mean-making that our student writers can engage with, and aspire to.

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CHAPTER 24

DIGITAL WRITING AS TRANSFORMATIVE: INSTANTIATING ACADEMIC LITERACIES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Colleen McKenna

Online writing has the potential to be transformative both for readers and writers. Online texts can be distributed, disruptive, playful and multi-voiced, and they can challenge our assumptions about power, publication, argument, genre, and audience. Increasingly, researchers are exploring how academic work can be performed in digital spaces (Sian Bayne, 2010; Robin Goodfellow, 2011; Colleen McKenna, 2012; Colleen McKenna and & Claire McAvinia, 2011; Bronwyn Williams, 2009); however nearly all this work takes student writing as its focus and all of these cited texts are published in conventional formats (journal articles or book chapters). An exception is Theresa Lillis, 2011 who manipulates standard article formatting by juxtaposing texts on a page—but the piece is still subject to the constraints of a conventional, paper-based journal. Nonetheless, academics are increasingly turning to digital spaces to write about their work, and a body of online scholarship, that largely sits outside institutional quality and promotion structures, is growing up, almost in parallel to more conventional genres of articles, books and reports. Furthermore, online journals such as *Kairos*, which publishes only multimodal "webtexts," are promoting peer-reviewed, digital academic discourse.

In this piece I will consider some of the characteristics of digital writing (such as voice, modality, and spatial design) that are transforming practices of textual production and reading.[1] Building particularly on Lillis's work on dialogism in academic writing (2003, 2011), I will attempt to demonstrate how certain types of digital academic writing can be mapped onto her expanded version of Mary Lea and Brian Street's academic literacies framework, as dialogic, oppositional texts. I will argue that digital academic writing has a huge potential to represent academic literacies principles in practice as well as in theory. In terms of practices, I will draw on digital texts written by professional academics and students, as well as my experience of writing. I am regularly struck by the limitations of writing academic

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pieces about the digital in a paper-based format. So, part of the basis of this chapter is the development of a digital intertext which explores the ways in which online academic writing can instantiate aspects of academic literacies theory.

JOURNEYS INTO DIGITAL WRITING

In order to explore issues associated with doing academic work online, I have developed a digital intertext which can be found at the following site: http://prezi.com/ux2fxamh1uno/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share.

In this context, I am using the term "intertext," borrowed from postructuralist literary criticism, to mean a text that is in conversation with another and which addresses similar, but not identical, material. "Intertext" seems more apt than "online version" because the movement between text types is not an act of translation: I am not just reproducing arguments expressed here in another space. Rather, while related concepts are being articulated, the digital environments demand and enable a range of different textual practices, particularly in terms of modality and spatial design. (For an example of a rich pair of digital intertexts, see Susan Delagrange's work on the digital *Wunderkammer*, Delagrange, 2009a, screen shot in Figure 24.1, and Delagrange, 2009b).

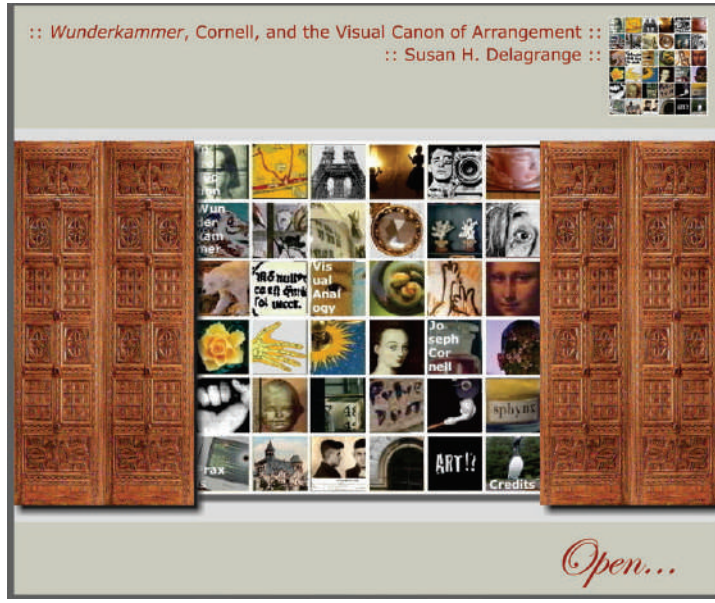

Figure 24.1: A screen shot from Delagrange (2009a).
Image by Susan Delagrange CC BY-NC, published originally in Kairos.

A particular challenge in my writing has been the selection of an apposite digital environment for the creation of the intertexts; "digital" writing can take many forms, and determining what genre, and thus what technical platform to use has been more difficult than anticipated. There were a number of issues to consider such as how far did I want to go back to first principles: for example, did I want to code the text in html? Did I want to build in opportunities for dialogue with readers? Did I mind using pre-formatted spaces? Is part of the purpose of this work to write within easily available and known genres such as blogs?

In terms of accessibility and familiarity of text type, a blog appeared to be an obvious choice. The affordances of blogs are that they allow for textual units or lexia of varying lengths, and they enable hypertextual, multimodal writing with inbuilt spaces for audiences to respond, so dialogism and hybridity are possible. There is also a tendency for the growing body of online academic writing referred to above to be published in this format. However, having initially written a blog on this topic, I ultimately found that the default organizing principle imposed too much of a linear, chronological arrangement of material.

So, after several false starts, I developed a Prezi.[2] Although Prezi is largely associated with presentations rather than texts to be read, there is no reason why it cannot be the source for text production. Indeed, the journal *Kairos* regularly publishes webtexts written using Prezi software. The advantages of Prezi texts (hereafter just Prezi) are that they offer a blank, "unbounded" space in which writing, images, audio, hyperlinks and video can be arranged. A chief affordance is the ease with which textual components can be positioned spatially and juxtaposed with one another; such visual organization is rather more constrained by mainstream blogging software. Furthermore, Prezis are technically easy to write and the author can offer multiple pathways through the text or none, leaving the reader to explore the digital space. The drawbacks with a Prezi are that the dialogic opportunities and practices associated with blogs are less evident and it is not really designed for extensive linking with other hypertexts.

Nevertheless, there is a certain writerly openness afforded by Prezi: there are no margins or pages—just screenspace. As Lillis (2011) drawing on Lipking suggests, in printed texts, there is a "danger of fixing the boundaries of our thinking to those of the published page …" Digital academic texts have the potential to disrupt our ways of making arguments and describing ideas. They can foreground space and process, and they are often characterized by a lack of closure. They challenge what Lillis calls a textual "unity" and what David Kolb refers to as a "single ply" argument. Digital texts have the potential to bring dimensions including positioning, depth perception, alignment, juxtaposition, distance, and screen position, among others, to meaning making.

MODALITY—DISRUPTIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE

As has been suggested elsewhere, one of the defining qualities of digital writing is the capacity to create multimodal texts (Bayne, 2010; McKenna, 2012; McKenna & McAvinia, 2011). Students have suggested that the ability to introduce images, audio and animation enables them to knowingly disrupt and playfully subvert the conventions of academic writing and to introduce humour, irony and shifts in voice that they otherwise would not have considered to be appropriate in academic texts (McKenna & McAvinia, 2011).

However, for some students, engaging in this type of work prompts fundamental questions about what constitutes academic texts and practices. (For example, do online texts have conclusions? Who is your audience?) Writing in digital spaces has the potential to throw into relief textual features and reading and writing practices that are largely invisible with more conventional essayistic work. As Gunther Kress (2010a) has observed, multimodality shows us the limitations and "boundedness of language." And beyond that, multimodality offers new and different opportunities for academic meaning making: "There are domains beyond the reach of language, where it is insufficient, where semiotic-conceptual work has to be and is done by means of other modes" (Kress, 2010a). The implication of this work and that of others, such as Lillis, is that digital texts may help "liberate" writers from the "structures of print" (Claire Lauer, 2012). Similarly, Delagrange (2009a) speaking of creating her digital *Wunderkammer* describes, how, in early iterations of the work, the written text literally and functionally "overwhelmed" the visual components of the work. The process of redesigning and rebalancing the work caused her to reconceptualize the topic, and she makes the point that, particularly when working with visual material, the very act of creating multimodal, digital texts creates a change in intellectual interpretation, argument and rhetorical approach.

SPACE, ORGANIZATION AND MAKING ARGUMENTS

A strong consideration when writing digital texts is the rhetorical function of spatial organization (and disorganization). In these texts, design is a mode: it is critical to meaning-making and has rhetorical requirements: layout, screen design, sizing; the positioning and presentation of elements all contribute to meaning making (Kress 2010b). Of course, this is not to say that design does not have a semantic role in conventional texts; however, I would argue that there are many fewer restrictions in digital writing, and much more scope to use spaces, gaps and other design elements. Additionally, digital texts enable multiple lines of argument or discussion to co-exist. Within individual sections of text or animation, a certain idea might be developed, but instead of an emphasis upon transitions sustaining a narrative line across an entire piece, a writer can represent the complexity of a web of ideas

through a digital text, drawing on a mix of modes:

> It would be misleading to claim that all exposition and argument could and should be presented simply and clearly. Often that is the best way, but … sometimes complex hypertext presentations would increase self-awareness, make important contextual connections and present concepts and rhetorical gestures that refuse to be straightforward and single-ply. (David Kolb, 2008)

One such rhetorical gesture is juxtaposition. Digital texts enable juxtaposition of sections of writing, image, video (among other modes) on many levels: the positioning within the frame of a screen, through hyperlinks, through pop-up animation, to name a few. With a digital environment such as Prezi, the sense of juxtaposition can be extended with the simulation of a 3D space; a reader can zoom into the text to reveal items seemingly located underneath texts on a particular screen. Or, they can zoom out, revealing "super" layers of writing, imagery, animation that appears to sit above a portion of the text. Perspective, as well as positioning can therefore be a feature of juxtaposition. (In accordance with Kress's statement above about the boundedness of language, this rhetorical device is much better illustrated in the digital than on paper).

For Lillis (2011) juxtaposition is a transformative literacy practice that enables alternative ways of articulating academic knowledge including the enhancement of the single argumentative line with extra layers of "information, description and embedded argumentation." Additionally, juxtaposition introduces the potential for a multivocal approach to academic writing, with juxtaposed texts in dialogue with one another, thus enabling linguistic and modal variety (Lillis, 2011). Set out in this way, the practices and features of juxtaposition that Lillis values (plurality of genre, tone, mode and discourse) are frequently features afforded in digital text making. In earlier research (McKenna & McAvinia, 2011) we found that students, almost without exception, used juxtaposition and multimodality in this way when they were given the opportunity to write hypertext assignments.

More recently, Bayne has spoken of the liberating impact of offering her MSc students the option of writing "digital essays." The students use virtual worlds, blogs, video and hypertext to create digital texts which are experimental and unstable. She argues that through this work, students are able to interrogate the writing subject and that there is generally an enhanced awareness of the power relations between reader/writer. The texts are multimodal, disjointed, and often subversive, but they are sophisticated, provocative and stimulating (Bayne, 2012). Both the awareness of power as a feature of academic writing, as well as an awareness of the authorial self are prominent themes of the academic literacies research, particularly work by Mary Lea and Brian Street (1998), Roz Ivanič (1998) and Lillis (2001). Digital texts are useful in enacting these concepts in both practice and theory.

Additionally, Bayne's account suggests the transformative impact of engaging with multimodality and radically different opportunities for textual organization that digital texts have on authors: conventional literacy practices are defamiliarised and writers are potentially awakened to new possibilities for knowledge making. As one student writer told the author: "It [digital writing] does disturb the standard writing practices …. I definitely felt that in the hypertext I could not carry on writing like I did in the essay' (McKenna & McAvinia, 2011). We might ask whether a similar disruption is achieved through the publication of academics' digital scholarly work which disrupts the "normative stances towards meaning makings" (Lillis, 2011) that tend to operate in the academy. For example, Lauer (2011) citing Marshall McLuhan, writes about experiencing a "hybrid energy" when combining images and audio in a digital text, that enabled her to reflect more deeply and differently on her topic. Delagrange, too, observes that it is "impossible to overstate" the impact upon her argument and analysis of working in a digital space and attending to design, coding, screen organization and the integration (and dislocation) of different modes (2009a).

CONCLUSIONS: DIGITAL TEXTS AND ACADEMIC LITERACIES

Both digital texts (with their discontinuities and instabilities) and the associated practices (such as the dialogic interaction between reader and writer and the experimentation with new academic genres) are examples of academic literacies in action. Lillis suggests that the multivocal, dialogic academic text contests the primacy of the essayistic, monologic approach to writing that still is dominant in higher education. In her extension of the academic literacies framework (2003) she identifies dialogism as a literacy goal, and there is no doubt that digital texts and their related practices would sit comfortably in extended sections of her framework, particularly in the way that they make visible and challenge official and unofficial "discourse practices" (Lillis, 2003). Whereas Lillis asks "what are the implications for pedagogy?", this paper extends the question to ask what are the implications for professional academic writing?

Another component of the academic literacies framework foregrounded by digital writing is textual production. Textual production—in this case digital creation and publication—encompasses issues of power, modality, and writing as a social practice. Indeed a consideration of production highlights a potential point of fracture between institutional structures (publishers, universities) and writers. As many have observed, the academy is rooted in print literacy (Bayne, 2010; Goodfellow, 2011; Goodfellow & Lea, 2007; Colleen McKenna & JaneHughes, 2013), with its inherent and symbolic stability and fixity. Print-based texts are

more easily controlled—both in terms of acceptance for publication and reader access—than digital ones are. The print "industry" supports a preservation of the status quo in terms of financial and quality models. And so, while I have been exploring the disruptive and potentially subversive features of digital writing from a rhetorical perspective, I feel they are also potentially disruptive from an institutional perspective: allowing scholars to cultivate an identity and readership that is much less easily regulated by a university, discipline or publisher. Beyond this, it is worth bearing in mind Delagrange's observation that the production of digital texts is a "powerful heuristic in its own right" (2009a).

As more academic texts are published in online spaces, pressure will build for institutions to acknowledge the merit of the digital, both for students and academics. That is not to say that I think that conventional essays/articles/books will be displaced, because as suggested above, these new texts are often doing different types of intellectual work. Rather, we will have a wider range of genres and readers as well as a richer understanding about how knowledge can be articulated and read. As suggested above, a notable journal in this regard is *Kairos* (http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/about.html) which publishes refereed "webtexts" (the journal's term) ranging from recognizable, "conventional" papers that have been formatted to enable easy navigation to more experimental forms including powerpoint, webpages, videos, and Prezi documents. *Kairos* is designed to be read online and a founding principle was that a discussion of new forms of writing ought to be conducted in the forms themselves: "As we are discovering the value of hypertextual and other online writing, it is not only important to have a forum for exploring this growing type of composition, but it is essential that we have a webbed forum within which to hold those conversations." (Mick Docherty, n.d.) Beyond such a forum, the value of digital discourse—which often displays a richness and diversity of resources that get flattened in the process of making monologic texts—should be acknowledged in the broader academic community.

Digital academic texts offer new opportunities for modality, spatial organization, reader-writer relationships and text production and distribution. Not only can academic literacies provide a useful frame through which to view such writing but, in return, such texts may help extend the literacies model. Beyond that, the social practices around production, distribution and reception of digital texts offer fertile ground for future academic literacies research.

NOTES

1. The "naming" of these sorts of texts is still relatively fluid (Lauer, 2012). In this paper, I am using the terms "digital writing" and "digital texts" to refer to academic work that is multimodal, created and distributed online, and which resists being easily "published in nondigital form" Delagrange (2009a).

2. For more information about Prezi software and texts, see www.prezi.com.

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REFLECTIONS 4

LOOKING AT ACADEMIC LITERACIES FROM A COMPOSITION FRAME: FROM SPATIAL TO SPATIO-TEMPORAL FRAMING OF DIFFERENCE

Bruce Horner in conversation with Theresa Lillis

Bruce Horner is a professor of rhetoric and composition at the University of Louisville. His work takes place within the context of US Composition. In this extract from a longer and ongoing conversation about connections between "Academic Literacies" and "Composition" and, in particular what is meant by transformation, Bruce explores what he sees as a key challenge—how to define and engage with the notion of "difference" in academic writing.

Bruce: A key challenge for us is how to engage with "difference." Scholars of "academic literacies" commonly conceive of difference in three ways: as a characteristic of its subject of inquiry—"academic literac-ies"; as a defining characteristic of the "new" students enrolling in higher education through programmes of massification; and as a goal—transformation (see Theresa Lillis & Mary Scott, 2007).

Theresa: When you say scholars of Academic literacies are you talking about "Academic literacies" as a specific field of work, linked mainly to the United Kingdom, or are you including work on writing from a range of contexts—like "basic writing"?[1]

Bruce: I use "academic literacies" to refer to a "critical field of inquiry with specific theoretical and ideological historical roots and interests" (Lillis & Scott 2007, p. 7), and more specifically an approach grounded in Brian Street's (1984) "ideological" model of literacy as social practice and as seeking to involve a "transformative" rather than "normative" stance towards existing academic literacy practices. But I would also include in "Academic Literacies," US work—mine too—that arises out of disciplinary traditions of literary study and cultural theory and in the United States context often located in the institutional and pedagogical site of "Composition."

In general, I think all of us working with academic writing—whatever the spe-

cific institutional or geopolitical location—need to be wary about slippages in how we think about difference. Such slippage may limit how we understand the goal of transformation and how that goal is to be achieved in the teaching of, or about, academic writing and literacy practices. In that slippage, differences among literacies, including academic literacies, come to be conflated with differences among students, and then these differences are identified with specific textual forms—often in terms of whether these are recognizably conventional or not.

Theresa: By "specific textual forms" would you for example mean specific uses of language? Specific languages? Specific levels of formality (or use of language often associated more with spoken language than written language)? Specific clusters of rhetorical conventions?

Bruce: The problem is complicated because any one of these levels of language—lexicon, syntax, register, organization—as well as notational practices more generally, can be claimed as nonconventional and that lack of conventionality identified with the (student) writer's social identity. While this is preferable to identifying such ostensible breaks with convention as evidence of cognitive lack or pathology, it assumes and reinforces a stability to what constitutes conventional academic writing while ignoring the role of the reader in producing a sense of conventionality or its obverse when reading, and likewise assumes a stability to the social and linguistic identity of the student writer that also ignores the mediating role of writing (and reading—Joseph Williams' 1981 essay on "The Phenomenology of Error is still one of the best accounts of this).

One recent version is where what are recognized, and known to be recognized, as instances of code-meshing—e.g., the insertion of representations of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in academic essays whose lexicon and register are conventionally formal—are fetishized as in themselves doing transformative work. This shifts attention away from what might be said to assigning special status to specific techniques of saying. For example, Geneva Smitherman's (2000) insertion into her academic writing of features readers will identify as AAVE is hailed as in itself doing transformative work. This ignores the actual transformative import of what she is saying, and also overlooks the way in which her use of such features signals, primarily, her status as an established academic scholar—it is, after all, only those with low status who are expected to "watch their language."

Theresa: I understand the potential dangers and I'd probably have used the word reification rather than fetishization but think fetishization brings a useful nuance here. But I must say I am sympathetic to the attempt to disrupt strongly regulated production—and reception practices—and I think Smitherman's mixing or meshing actually adds power to the arguments she is making—in other words the

form is not just for form's sake but has an epistemological purpose too. I also think scholars who try to illustrate how mixing might work in their own writings can be caught in a double bind here: if they try to play (for pleasure and fun as well as for serious academic purposes) with resources, they can be accused of using their status to get away with this; but if the same scholars encouraged students to play, without doing so in their own work, they'd be accused of making those with lesser power take responsibility for transforming the academy. I also think that you're overstating the power that scholarly status confers. As we know from our work on writing for publication (Theresa Lillis & Mary Jane & Curry, 2010), scholarly status—and how the language/s used—varies considerably within global scholarly hierarchies.

Bruce: I take your point about published scholarly writing. The danger for me, which you suggest, is in the tendency to argue for pedagogies that advocate "mixing" of forms as a goal in and of itself, which redirects our energies, and those of our students, in less useful directions: formal experimentation for formal experimentation's sake, outside and ignoring issues of context, including power relations, and purpose. More generally, I'm concerned about the slippage between people and forms. This slippage manifests in the use of a spatial framework whereby students, writing, and specific literacy practices are located in terms of relations of proximity, overlap, and hierarchy. Transformation is then understood in terms of resistance, challenges, or opposition to those relations: "importing" literacy practices belonging to one domain to another; challenging hierarchies among these practices by, say, granting legitimacy to those deemed subordinate or "vernacular"; multiplying writers' repertoire of practices, and identities; or deviating from the conventions and practices deemed "appropriate" to a given domain.

Theresa: I agree that there's always a danger of talking as if domains are hermetically sealed from each other—as if the "academic" domain were separate completely from the "home" domain (and I'd guess we'd need to carefully consider how we construct "home"). But I'm assuming that you aren't saying that we shouldn't question the dominant/conventionalized practices that have come to be defaults in specific domains, such as academia? I would be surprised if this were the case given what I know of your work—you challenge the institutional deficit positioning of students who are labeled as "basic writers" (Bruce Horner & Min Zhan Lu, 1999) and in your work on a translingual approach (Horner et al., 2011)) seem to be calling for us (teachers, readers, writers,) to rethink the ways in which we approach texts that look "different" in some way.

Bruce: That's right, though I'd put it somewhat differently now than I may have previously. What I think we most need to challenge, especially at the pedagogical level, is the stability itself of those dominant/conventionalized practices. We can and should teach these practices as historical rather than fixed. So whatever prac-

tices student writers (and everyone else) opt to participate in on a given occasion should be questioned, whether those practices are identified with the dominant or conventional or not. Many of us (especially those involved in basic writing) have been focused on rethinking practices identified as different from such dominant/conventionalized ways, and often to defend the logic of these different practices, we've tended to engage in a peculiar textualism locating practices spatially but not temporally, hence as fixed rather than contingent in significance.

Min-Zhan Lu's chapter, "Professing Multiculturalism," in our book *Representing the "Other"* (1999) best exemplifies our position. The example discussed there of a student who first wrote "can able to" to express having both the ability and permission to do something, then revised this to "may be able to" shows a writer exhibiting agency in both instances. As Min argues, "can able to" should be probed for its logic rather than being dismissed as a simple grammatical error (though error is always a possibility). Writers can then consider whether to maintain that more idiosyncratic usage or a more conventional usage, aware that either decision carries risks and rewards.

For me there are two difficulties arising from adopting a spatial framework for understanding difference in academic (and other) literacies, students, and their literacy practices: first, such a framework appears to grant greater stability, internal uniformity, and a discrete character to the various kinds of literacies, literacy practices, and student identities than is warranted; and second, active writerly *agency* comes to be identified strictly with writers' recognizable deviations from these (thereby) stabilized practices. This poses a dilemma to teachers pursuing transformation of seeming to have to choose between either "inducting" students into dominant literacy practices—to allow for students' individual academic and economic survival—or encouraging students to resist the restrictions of these conventions, thereby putting their academic and economic futures at risk. The fact that requiring production of dominant writing conventions appears to align pedagogy with the (for many, discredited) ideology of the autonomous model of literacy (Brian Street, 1984), and the fact that the students concerned are likely to be from historically subordinated populations, and thus in most need of improvement to their economic situations, make this dilemma particularly acute.

Theresa: I agree that it would be irresponsible for teachers to tell students to resist conventions when using such conventions is central to success—to passing exams, to being recognized seriously as a student. But does anyone actually do this, particularly within disciplinary based spaces? Although I've argued—both implicitly and explicitly—that a wide range of textual forms (at the level of sentence level grammars, vocabulary, modes, languages) should be encouraged and debated in the academy, as a teacher, working with undergraduates and postgraduates in my field

(applied and social linguistics), I make students aware of the rules of the game and the consequences of not using these. In some instances, there are opportunities for me to open up default conventions—for example when I'm setting and assessing assignments—but as often—and for writing teachers working at the edges of disciplinary spaces—this is often not possible.

Bruce: I think you're right that few teachers encourage students to avoid conventional academic conventions in their writing. But the terms for using these—often couched as "following conventions"—are often paltry and bleak: "do it to get by," to survive. That approach leaves the actual contingent nature of deploying specific forms unquestioned: curiously, again conventional language gets a pass, its significance treated as a given rather than subjected to genuine questioning. And our textualist bias leads to a conflation of notational difference with social or conceptual difference. Clearly there are times when breaks with conventional language are demanded insofar as that language stands in the way of conceptualization—neologisms like *translingualism* are a case in point. But I suspect that rejection of work on grounds of its breaks with conventional language is often a cover to reject that work because of the conceptual challenges it poses (as I think some of the cases in your 2010 book with Mary Jane Curry illustrate).

I guess what I'm saying is that we need to shift our metaphors or frameworks so that we don't get caught up in only ever recognizing transformation as something that is marked as different in the academy—or only ever recognizing value in *forms* our training leads us to recognize as "different." That would seem merely to flip, while reinforcing, binary oppositions of the conventional/unconventional while retaining an attribution of stable significance to form alone, treated in reified fashion. A US example of a scholar's efforts to grapple with the confines of the spatial framework in pursuing the goal of transformation is an essay by David Bartholomae, "The Tidy House: Basic Writing in the American Curriculum" (1993), frequently cited as calling for the abolition of a separate curricular space to teach students deemed "basic writers," i.e., those deemed unprepared to produce post-secondary-level writing. (see Horner, 1999a, pp. 192-193.) Bartholomae invokes Mary Louise Pratt's now well-known concept of the "contact zone" to counter what he sees as the tendency of basic writing programmes to "bridge AND preserve cultural difference, to enable students to enter the 'normal' curriculum but to insure, at the same time, that there are basic writers" (1993, p. 8). The problem, he sees, is that "the profession has not been able to think beyond an either/or formulation—either academic discourse or the discourse of the community; either argument or narrative; either imitation or expression" (Bartholomae, 1993, p. 324). To counter this, he calls for making "the contact between conventional and unconventional discourses the most interesting and productive moment for a writer or for a writing

course" (Bartholomae, 1993, p. 19).

The focus on points of contact promises to allow for the possibility of interaction among conflicting beliefs and practices. However, the spatial framework invoked (the "space" of the contact zone where, in Pratt's words, "cultures meet, clash, and grapple with one another" (Pratt, 1991) risks reinforcing, by assuming, the stability of the distinctions that Bartholomae aims to challenge: (basic/normal; conventional/unconventional; different/normal). Thus whereas his critique begins by complaining of difference as a product of the basic/normal framework, he ends up advocating a curriculum that retains the notion of students as different, but that adopts a strategy of their integration, rather than segregation. As critics have since complained, the interaction to be advanced is difficult to imagine.

If Bartholomae's work simply illustrates the continuing limitations a spatial framework imposes on thinking about differences and pedagogies of transformation, another example, Roz Ivanič and colleagues' UK study *Improving Learning in College: Rethinking Literacies Across the Curriculum* (2009) directly addresses such limitations. Ivanič et al.'s study initially focused on the ways in which students' "everyday" literacy practices might interact with and support their learning of the literacies required in their college courses, and therefore explored the possible "interface" between and among these different literacies associated with different "'domains' of students" lives (2009, pp. 1-2), the "'border literacy practices' and 'border crossing' of literacy practices from the everyday to college" (pp. 22-23). However, Ivanič et al. ended up calling into question the "ways in which 'context,' 'domain,' 'site,' and 'setting' are conceptualized" (2009, p. 23) and, as well, the associated metaphors of "boundaries and borders, and of boundary zones, boundary objects and border-crossing" (pp. 23, 24). Ultimately, they concluded that such metaphors, "inscribed in the method we had used to collect the data" about literacy practices, led to a "static two-dimensionality about the Venn-diagram representations and mapped spaces which follow from talk of 'borders' and 'border-crossings,'" rendering "the concept of 'border literacies'" "untenable" (Ivanič et al., 2009, p. 172): "we had assumed a border space, but as we moved to bordering as a practice rather than identifying border literacy practices as entities, we saw that the relationship between domains and practices was more complex and messy: they co-emerge" (p. 172). As Ivanič (2009) has observed elsewhere, "'whole' literacy practices … cannot be recontextualized wholesale into educational settings because the social domain changes the practice" (p. 114).

Theresa: I can see the problems with setting boundaried framings around language, writing, and semiotic practices, but isn't it also the case that the assessment of student writing in the various disciplines that make up the academy tends to be driven by quite rigid notions and ideologies about what counts as acceptable

discourse which is monolithic and monologic in nature? In other words, quite rigid boundaries exist which student-writers (and teachers) constantly bump up against rather than being given opportunities to interact with. Isn't the writing space of "Composition" very different?

Bruce: Yes, you're right. One of the privileges of working in composition in the United States, at least for many of us, is that the composition course, even the required first-year composition course, for all its problems, remains a "special writing space," with instructors given significant say in assessment, as opposed to writing in other sites—one reason I oppose moves to abolish that course. I sense you're pointing to the need to direct our energies more to our colleagues outside writing studies (broadly conceived) and to the public. You've argued elsewhere (Lillis, 2013) that while we might rightly reject commonplace ways of valuing writing in terms of its ostensible "correctness," that does not absolve us of the responsibility for (and the inevitability of) arguing for some kind of valuation of writing. So we might direct our energies towards discussing these other ways of valuing writing: for example, its level of engagement, conceptual heft, accuracy, and so on. These are values that our academic colleagues, as well as the public, might well already share. Here I think I'm simply echoing your argument (Lillis, 2013) that we advocate for our own values in language use, as against prescriptivist grammar values invoked as ideologically neutral "standards."

Rethinking our metaphorical framings here, I think a temporal-spatial framework—rather than just a spatial one—might allow a conceptualization of difference and transformation that is both more readily within the reach of ourselves and our students, and at least potentially of greater consequence. It might help resolve the dilemma those pursuing transformation of academic literacies face of seeming to have to ask students to choose between submitting to dominant conventions in their writing or deviating from these at the risk of academic failure; and it radically challenges key features of the ideology of the autonomous model of literacy against which those taking an academic literacies approach are set. I attribute the fact that we typically do not recognize differences in temporality *as* differences, or as making a difference and accomplishing transformation, to the continuing operation of that ideology in our *dispositions* to language. I'm thinking of Pierre Bourdieu's caution that language ideology has "nothing in common with an explicitly professed, deliberate and revocable belief, or with an intentional act of accepting a 'norm.' It is inscribed, in a practical state, in dispositions which are impalpably inculcated, through a long and slow process of acquisition, by the sanctions of the linguistic market" (Bourdieu, 1991[1982], p. 51)

Theresa: I think the dichotomy may be overstated—I wouldn't see it as choosing

between submitting to dominant conventions in writing or deviating from these at the risk of academic failure—I think it's more about focusing on the cracks between practices, allowing some of the forms to come through IF they enable writers to work at the kinds of knowledges that they want to work and towards what they want to mean. For me it's about increasing the range of discourses and semiotic resources that it's permissible to use in the academy. Obvious examples come to mind are the use of vernacular forms that you mentioned already—or I guess more precisely, the use of what have come to be defined as "vernacular" forms. But what does a focus on temporality get us? Or help us to avoid?

Bruce: My sense is that we should shift our emphasis from what is permitted or allowed in language (and media) to a focus on what we and our students might and should be attempting to work at in their compositional work (broadly construed). This focus on temporality gives us the ability to recognize students' agency as writers, and its deployment both when they iterate what seem to be conventional, "permitted" forms and when they deploy forms that are identified as breaking with convention. Pedagogically, that's a crucial advantage. This focus would certainly expand the range of discourses and semiotic resources under consideration, but I worry that framing the issue in terms of those resources in themselves, and which ones will be allowed, gets us sidetracked into 1) thinking about these as stable entities with inherent values, rather than focusing on what we might want to accomplish and why, and 2) mistaking dominant definitions of conventional resources and their meanings for all that has been, is, and might be accomplished in their guise. Of course, the material social conditions limiting access to and uses of particular resources would also come up for investigation. To bring it closer to home, in terms of languages, a translingual approach that my colleagues and I have argued for works against both conventional multilingualism and monolingualism: neither "English" as conventionally defined nor the usual proffered alternatives adequately represent what we have to work with. We are always instead writing "in translation," in Alastair Pennycook's terms (2010), even when appearing to write "in English."

To reiterate, a focus on temporality helps us to recognize the exercise of writerly agency even in iterations of what we are ideologically disposed to misrecognize as simply more of "the same," rather than identifying such agency only with what we are disposed to recognize as deviations from an ostensibly "same" practice. Musical iteration perhaps best illustrates this: a "repeat" of the same phrase in a melody (e.g., standard blues tunes) is both the same as what is repeated and, by virtue of following the first iteration of that phrase, different in temporal location and significance, which is why it is not typically heard as an unwitting mistake. From this perspective, difference is an inevitable characteristic of iteration rather than exceptional

or alternative. Applied to writing, the question of difference and transformation is thus no longer whether to allow previously excluded difference to "enter" the academic sphere in order to achieve its transformation. Instead, it is a question of what kinds of difference and transformation to pursue, given their inevitability. From this perspective, such phenomena as hybridity and translation would be seen not as exceptions but part of the unacknowledged norm, as would the changes to practices arising from their re-location to "different" domains about which Ivanič remarked. With difference recognized as the norm, any apparent "sameness" would need to be accounted for as emerging products of practices. Iterations would be understood not as reproducing the "same" but, rather, as contributing to the ongoing sedimentation, or building up, over time, of language practices and the "context" of their iteration (Pennycook, 2010, p. 125). Context here would be understood as in co-constitutive relation to utterances and speaker identity, and, as in exchanges between colonizer and colonized, as creating new meanings and new relationships between meanings, with the potential to undermine the status and distinction of the dominant and transform the identities of all the participants (Homi Bhabha, 1985; Pennycook, 2010, p. 44; Pratt 1991).

Theresa: So, in pedagogical terms—what does it mean to adopt a spatio-temporal framework rather than just a spatial one? How would a shift in framework shape the work of a teacher of writing (in a separate writing space) or of a discipline in which students are doing writing?

Bruce: I think it would mean calling into genuine question (with one possible answer being to confirm) the aims and effects of any iteration. For example, what might iteration of an ostensible deviation from or reproduction of conventional discourse seem to accomplish for a writer and particular readers, how, and why, and so on. If we assume difference as an inevitability rather than an option, we change our question from one asking whether to allow difference in writing to asking what kind of difference to attempt to make in our writing, how and why. In posing such questions, teachers would in effect be assuming not their preference for a "contact zone" pedagogy or the need to introduce difference into the classroom but, rather, recognizing the classroom as always already a site of differences, "contact" or, better, relocalizing of practices: differences would be identifiable not as characteristics students (or their teachers) have brought to the classroom, or introduced there, but rather as always emerging products of specific reading and writing practices. Like the "errors" commonly, if mistakenly, seen as simply introduced by students "into" writing, differences are in fact "social achievements" resulting from interactions between readers and writers (see Horner 1999b, pp. 140-144). So, if students select to iterate conventional discursive forms, those can and should be put to question,

just as iterations of ostensible breaks with these should be. And of course, given the contingent and interdependent relationship between context and discourse, these would be genuine questions for the students and the teacher.

NOTE

1. Basic writing' is a term used in the United States to identify the writing and courses in writing for adult students identified as unprepared to do college-level writing.

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SECTION 4
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMINGS OF ACADEMIC WRITING

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 4

Many chapters in this book make reference to the ways in which literacy practices are shaped by institutional factors but in this section questions of transformative possibility within normative institutional frames are foregrounded. The chapters take a look at how particular institutional contexts shape and influence what can and cannot be said about—or count as—academic writing, what its purposes are seen to be, and how it is experienced by those who produce it. Whilst they point to practical and conceptual difficulties in challenging institutional norms and expectations around academic writing, the chapters also record instances of where successful outcomes—transformations—have been, or might become, possible.

Corinne Boz describes a project at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, which succeeded in shifting work to help bridge students' transition from school to university away from a focus on the skills of students and onto the pedagogical practices of tutors. In doing so the project sought to transform first the dominant institutional framing of writing as a problem of student underpreparedness, and second, the apprenticeship model of teaching in which questions of discourse are left under-articulated and assumed to be acquired largely through socialization alone. Boz observes that the project contributed to a new visibility in the institution for issues around teaching and student transition. Tutors who took part found themselves better equipped to discuss their expectations of disciplinary writing and at the same time experienced the benefits of engaging in dialogue around teaching—something hitherto not prevalent or valued in a system based on teaching through individual tutorials.

Another university initiative designed to make writing visible is described by Lawrence Cleary and Íde O'Sullivan, who were charged with setting up a Writing Centre at the University of Limerick, Ireland. To achieve this institutional transformation they drew on influences from Academic Literacies and New Rhetoric, creating the Centre as an institutional resource that would help students to recognize the situated nature of disciplinary language and to exercise their own critical agency as producers of various kinds of text. At the same time an emphasis on the "composing process" would offer the individual possibilities for "perpetual transformation" of meanings, values and the self. To show how these Writing Centre goals play out in practice, Cleary and O'Sullivan take us through a strand of teaching in first year Engineering that moves from close comparative and historical analyses of textual features to a discussion of language and rhetoric's role in creating authority and identity for the writer.

Cleary and O'Sullivan describe the setting up of their Centre as a "political act," that is, a principled intervention in the status quo based on certain choices. Other

chapters describe similarly political moves. The Research Training Event series developed by the British Association for Lectures in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP- currently also referred to as Global Forum for English for Academic Purposes Professionals), and described by Lia Blaj-Ward in her chapter, draws on Academic Literacies thinking to further the BALEAP goal of equipping and supporting EAP lecturers to become active researchers of their practice. The series is motivated by a recognition of the way in which the institutional positionings of EAP teachers' influence and limit the opportunities they have to conduct research, and it seeks to redress this. The rationale for the work contains a recognition that developing the status and self-awareness of EAP practitioners is a professional imperative if they are not simply to serve, but also to shape, global, governmental and institutional agendas around the international student experience.

The agency and institutional positioning of the writing teacher is the subject of Joan Turner's chapter also. While noting her institution's official claim to offer students a "transformative experience," her focus is on the "thornier" challenge of transforming institutional conceptions and expectations—here specifically in relation to proofreading. She reproduces a dialogue with a colleague that begins to nudge these understandings and expectations towards greater reflexivity and critique. Although she makes no claim to have fully achieved "transformation" through this encounter, Turner nevertheless contends that engaging in such dialogues within the institution should represent an important dimension of the work of the academic literacies practitioner.

How writing is framed institutionally is frequently a reflection of and response to wider agenda, national and international. In their chapter, Angels Oliva-Girbau and Marta Milian Gubern, explore the complex framings of what it means to write academically in a Catalan University that needs to comply with the Bologna process. They explain how they created an introductory course that aimed to equip students to write in genres of academic English and at the same time to exercise critical caution about such genres and the diminution and downgrading of expressions of knowing within their own Catalan language and culture. They reflect on the difficulty of maintaining these two aims at once, particularly the difficulty of engaging students in "contestation." They report that students were most likely to comply with a sense of English as the "language of prestige," and to embrace "Anglo-American academic genres as the solution to their communication issues," making their transformations as learners *towards* rather than away from the normative. The chapter sharply highlights what's at stake in such a process of assimilation from the perspective of a minority language.

The power of contextual framings and dominant ideologies is also looked at in Catalina Neculai's discussion of the possibilities for writing that are opened up and closed down by the neo-liberal agenda in UK Higher Education. She describes how the "calculative, market-driven spirit" of her modern university has created an em-

ployability curriculum which is instrumental in its motivations. At the same time, however, she argues that this curriculum provides spaces and visibility for more humanistically-inclined teaching of writing. So whilst the discourse of employability frames writing at an institutional—and arguably, sectoral—level, it is possible, she argues, for smaller groupings or individuals to exercise less compliant forms of agency. Further, Neculai argues that teaching academic writing as a discipline—"a functional field with its own meta-codes, discourses and community of practice"—is a way of transforming its status from "service" to "subject."

In contrast, perhaps, the "cautionary tale" which Kelly Peake and Sally Mitchell have to tell restates the difficulties of working meaningfully with writing where institutional framings identify it as a deficiency of skill that can be overcome. They describe their attempt to bridge sectoral boundaries by working with secondary schools on students' writing, detailing how, in order to access funding streams and institutional agendas, they had to work directly with students and with autonomous understandings of and approaches to writing—and language more generally—as well as with the dominant logic surrounding progression from school to university. They argue that the limited success of their enterprise came from working with, rather than challenging these understandings. A more genuinely transformative approach, they conclude, needs to involve work with teachers, exploring and developing their practices in order to understand and enhance the experiences of their students. Peake and Mitchell note the irony of reaching this conclusion, which—but for the persistence and power of dominant framings of literacy and deficit—they had known all along.

Transformation then is always an ongoing ideological tussle in which assumptions—one's own, one's students, one's collaborators, the institution's—need to be subject to scrutiny and discussion.

This section includes two *Reflections* pieces. The first is a conversation between Brian Street, Mary R. Lea and Theresa Lillis looking back at research which opened up the differing perspectives of students and of teaching staff in various disciplines, and considering the options it presented for taking a transformative stance towards what is possible in universities. Foregrounding the importance of ethnography as a way of making visible often taken-for-granted practices (see Sally Mitchell's comments on the importance of ethnography in the Introduction to the book; see also Reflections 2) they reflect that big institutional issues, such as access and success, are simply not fixed by deficit-driven skills-based approaches. They maintain that it is the impulse in Academic Literacies to question and contest that provides a basis for constructive ways forward in transforming institutions.

The book closes with Lucia Thesen who reminds us of how institutions are historically and geographically located and the consequences of such locations for the ways in which we seek to understand practice, pedagogy and theory. Thesen explores what a transformative agenda looks like from the perspective of the global

south. Her Reflections touch on many of the themes raised in the book whilst engaging from the specific geohistorical location of South Africa. She foregrounds: the experiences and desires of students from communities historically excluded from higher education, the question of what it means to belong in academia, the potential threats to other senses of social belonging resulting from taking part in academia, the impact on meaning making of dominant academic literacy conventions and ideologies of knowledge. In a book where many of the contributions are from the global north, Thesen's Reflections remind us all of the need to engage in transnational conversations and, when doing so, to acknowledge the historical specificity of our speaking positions, seeking to develop shared understandings without masking difference.

CHAPTER 25

TRANSFORMING DIALOGIC SPACES IN AN "ELITE" INSTITUTION: ACADEMIC LITERACIES, THE TUTORIAL AND HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Corinne Boz

Studies of transition to higher education highlight the fact that, in higher education contexts in the United Kingdom, undergraduate students receive limited one-to-one contact with academic staff. The lack of opportunity for regular, individualized contact with teaching staff can cause feelings of alienation and confusion about academic expectations (Anthony Cook & Janet Leckey, 1999) and can also be responsible for a lack of knowledge/understanding on behalf of the academic staff of students' personal/writing histories (see Ruth Whittaker, 2008). Ultimately, problematic student transitions may lead to issues with student retention (Mark Palmer et al., 2009). It has been argued that a more individualized educational experience would help to support students through those initial transition issues (Whittaker, 2008), although ever-expanding class sizes and increasing student-staff ratios arising from the massification of higher education would seem to make this an idealistic scenario.

The tutorial system at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (Oxbridge) affords the opportunity for close and sustained dialogue with tutors potentially providing ideal conditions for a supported and individualized transition from school to university. Given this potential, many people are surprised to find that a project supporting student transitions at the University of Cambridge exists at all. However, the following quotations from First Year undergraduates taken from our annual Undergraduate Learning Enhancement Survey illustrate that being prepared (Gillian Ballinger, 2003; Alan Booth, 2005; Maggie Leese, 2010), adapting to new expectations, particularly when they are often implicit (Theresa Lillis & Joan Turner, 2001), and understanding new discourses (David Bartholomae, 1986; Tamsin Haggis, 2006; Mary Lea & Brian Street, 1998) are significant challenges in our context also, reflecting experience across the UK higher education sector more widely:

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> Although I think my essay writing skills were developed sufficiently in a certain way before I arrived, I have found that the difference in approach and style has been great and difficult to adapt to. (First year student)

> I often felt that my [tutor] was talking to me as if they were addressing a third year, not a first year fresh out of school who was confronting a subject for the first time in a completely alien manner, and in something close to a foreign language. Of course there is a jump between A-level and undergraduate study, but I often felt as though I was expected to have made that jump before I reached my first [tutorial]. (First year student)

> I felt very unprepared; the only advice given prior to university (and indeed throughout the year!) was that "people learn in different ways," without mentioning what these "ways" were. (First year student)

These comments are taken from students who have been very successful at A-level (or equivalent), they have met or exceeded academic expectations and have therefore been able to learn and, crucially, present knowledge in the ways that have been expected from them in their educational contexts to date. And yet, for some, our annual surveys reveal that the transition to university learning and writing is a greater challenge than expected.

In this chapter, I will discuss some of the issues surrounding transitions to academic writing at university for our high-achieving students and illustrate the ways in which we have incorporated the theoretical principles of an Academic Literacies approach into the design and delivery of our transitions project. In addition, I will demonstrate the ways in which the data, research and experience in our "elite" institutional context extends the boundaries of current Academic Literacies research to represent high-achieving students who have been underrepresented by the research to date (see Ursula Wingate & Christopher Tribble, 2012, for further discussion of Academic Literacies' focus on "non-traditional" students). For the purpose of this chapter, I am defining the university as "elite" in relation to its position in the world university rankings (see Times Higher Education, 2015). In defining our students as "high-achieving," I intend this to reflect their academic achievement at A-level. Of those students accepted for admission in 2014, 97.3% achieved the equivalent of A*AA or better counting only their best three A Levels (excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking) (University of Cambridge, 2015). In addition, I am consciously moving away from defining students with the dichotomous "traditional/non-traditional" label as it masks the diversity of the student population and has become increasingly meaningless (see Elaine Keane, 2011).

CONTEXT

The Oxbridge tutorial system is internationally renowned and commands "an almost mystic, cult status" according to David Palfreyman (2008). In Cambridge, the tutorial[1] constitutes the core of the educational provision provided by the 31 self-regulating colleges with curriculum, lectures, and practicals being provided by the central university via faculties and departments. Tutorials are described as follows:

> … a medium through which students learn to work autonomously, to learn with and from others, to argue and to present arguments, to handle problems, to question their own assumptions, and to meet deadlines. (University of Cambridge, 2009)

The tutorial is designed to allow tutors and students to discuss, explore and learn from each other (see Paul Ashwin, 2005, for a more detailed discussion of the Oxbridge tutorial and the qualitatively different ways in which it is perceived by undergraduates). The number of students within a tutorial most usually ranges from one to four or five depending on discipline and, in most cases, students will be required to produce a piece of work for each tutorial. It is significant to note that this tutorial work is formative and carries no summative assessment. Students are assessed by end-of-year examinations, in most cases.

Tutors are selected by the college and are responsible for the academic progress of their undergraduates. They may be eminent professors or first year PhD students and are selected for their disciplinary expertise. The system confers a large degree of freedom on tutors in terms of their approach to teaching, and this allows them to provide the conditions for an ideal dialogic learning situation where both tutor and student work towards creating new meanings and understandings through the process of critical discussion. The diversity of experience and pedagogical approach to teaching does, however, provide a challenge for the university in terms of accounting for quality of teaching and ensuring parity of experience for all its undergraduates.

Although it can be argued that the ideal Cambridge tutorial offers dialogic space for discussing/learning/creating subject content and knowledge, survey data from our context demonstrates that the same focus is not always given to dialogue around disciplinary writing practices and this can be problematic for students. Indeed, as David Russell et al. (2009) suggest, in their broader discussion of writing practices in HE, although the undergraduate courses of Oxford and Cambridge are "writing intensive" they are not necessarily "writing conscious" (p. 402). Students can find this lack of explicit writing focus challenging as they attempt to understand the requirements of genre and discipline, indicating that if this essential element is missing the dialogic situation is less than "ideal."

THE PROJECT

The Transkills Project was established in 2008, through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/lts/news/ltsn17.pdf). Occupying a collaborative space (resourced by the Education Section, Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies, and Personal and Professional Development) outside of faculty, departmental or collegiate structures, it emerged from institutional discourses centred upon student deficit and the recognition that the traditional academic socialization or apprenticeship model of writing support (see Lea & Street, 1998) might not address the needs of all students. Dominant perceptions were that first year students were no longer able to write on arrival at university, that this inability to write took time away from teaching disciplinary knowledge and tutors were becoming increasingly frustrated in dealing with issues that were perceived to be the responsibility of the school system. The initial aim of the project, then, was to investigate the experiences of first year students in their transition to undergraduate study at Cambridge and provide resources to support them, acknowledging that "transition support should not be extraneous to the mainstream activity of the institution, but integral to the learning experience" (Whittaker, 2008, p. 3). It was also our explicit aim for the project to support all incoming undergraduates and not just those considered to be "at risk" (see Wingate, 2012; see for discussion of 'risk', Thesen Reflections 6, this volume). In addition, we aimed to embed a scholarly model of support firmly based on our own institutional data and enhanced by current research into writing and transitions (see Anne Pitkethly & Michael Prosser, 2001).

In the Cambridge teaching system, texts are produced and discussed for and within the tutorial context and so enhancing student writing practices involved the tutorial, the tutor and the student. This engendered a move away from considering writing as a deficiency in the students' skill set towards an Academic Literacies perspective emphasising writing as a social practice in which meaning and text are constructed in dialogue and relations of power are implicated. In moving away from a traditional skills-deficit model of writing, our project became about, not only supporting students in learning to talk about and produce effective writing within their discipline at university, but also about developing tutors' understanding of student writing practices, of the ways in which the students' practices have been shaped by their previous A-level writing histories, and the tutor's own role in supporting student writers in transition. It provided an opportunity to support tutors in becoming more "writing-conscious" (Russell et al., 2009). This is where our project began to challenge the implicit institutional framing of academic writing. It is significant to note, however, that in attempting to address the challenge of supporting students in acquiring academic literacies, we were not attempting to spoon-feed for, as Ronald Barnett states, "A genuine Higher Education is un-

settling; it is not meant to be a cosy experience. It is disturbing because ultimately, the student comes to see that things could always be other than they are" (Barnett, 1990, p. 155).

The design and delivery of our resources has been decided in collaboration with "experts" familiar with the requirements of each different context and as a result our provision has been varied in nature. However, we have found that the process represented in Figure 25.1 is most effective in bringing about changes in both perspective and experience and most closely reflects the principles of the Academic Literacies framework incorporated into our approach.

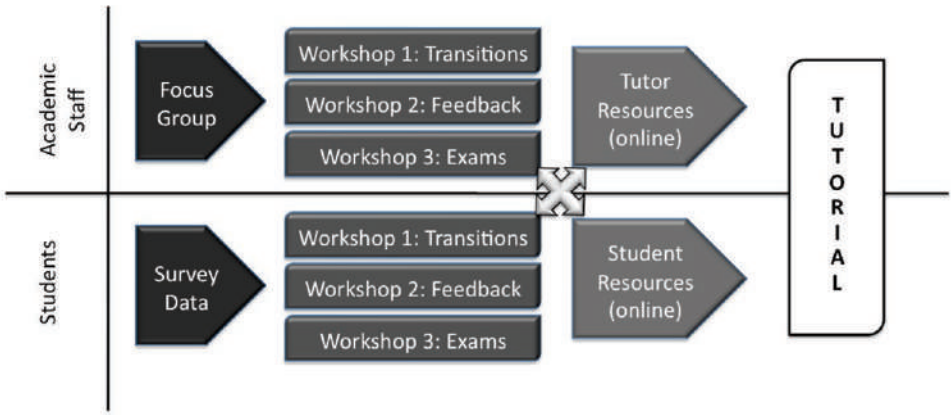

Figure 25.1: The Transkills Project—the process of creating dialogue around writing beyond the tutorial.

Figure 25.1 represents the process we have used to engage a range of faculties and departments, spanning Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Biological Sciences, in enhancing writing support for first year students. Biological Sciences is used here as an illustrative example of a process used more broadly. In the first instance, we identified a group of Directors of Studies who were willing to act as a focus group. Issues raised at this initial discussion echoed the wider institutional discourse of student deficit with Directors of Studies highlighting the need for online writing support resources for students. Before developing these resources, however, the issues highlighted in the focus group discussions (see Figure 25.1) formed the basis of a series of workshops with tutors. These workshops were open to tutors of all levels of experience and not presented or perceived as initial "training" for new tutors but rather an opportunity for dialogue with peers around teaching practice.

To take into account the time pressures on academic staff, the workshops were delivered in a blended format with participants receiving an online pre-workshop resource in advance of a one-hour lunchtime session with a follow-up online resource delivered after the workshop. The pre-workshop resource was critical to the

success of this process. Containing a short survey form, it asked participants to respond to questions pertinent to the upcoming workshop and relating to themes arising from the student survey data. Participant responses were then available to the workshop facilitators in advance of the session, allowing them to tailor the session to the specific group of people attending. This proved invaluable in ensuring that the sessions were perceived to be relevant to both individual and disciplinary context. The comments received via the pre-workshop package were collated and presented back to the workshop participants in the form of visual maps which provided an anonymized and less face-threatening way of beginning discussions around the workshop theme.

The outputs of the workshops, including student/tutor data, essay samples, and other documents used, were collated and sent out as a post-workshop resource. Significantly, however, the discussions and opinions captured at the tutor workshops were incorporated into designing the student workshops and online resources. As Figure 25.1 illustrates, as far as possible, the resources for staff and students were mirrored, both centring on the same themes drawn from tutor focus groups and student survey data (e.g., For tutors—Providing Effective Feedback /For students—Using Feedback Effectively). Some aspects of the content were also mirrored: the same authentic, first-year tutorial essays were included in both tutor and student sessions, for example. Quotations from tutors were also incorporated into the student resources and vice versa. This "mirroring" helped the project team to create an ongoing dialogue, a discussion around student writing outside of the tutorial context.

As the colleges of the university are responsible for teaching, the student workshops were delivered within the college rather than faculty/department. In the initial stages of the Transkills project, the project team delivered all workshops in collaboration with colleges. Later, the project team moved towards a model of facilitating workshops for college teaching staff who consequently delivered workshops to students within their own colleges. To date, 28 of the 31 colleges have been represented at these sessions.

DISCUSSION

In creating these new spaces for discussion of discipline-specific academic writing practices outside of the tutorial context, we provided an opportunity for tutors to consciously consider their students' writing histories (by highlighting A-level writing practices), to articulate their own framing of academic writing and have this debated by peers and to consider ways in which their own teaching practices could be adapted to support student writing in transition. Crucially, we also created space for explicit discussion of the dialogic nature of the tutorial and examined ways of best facilitating the types of learning situations "where pedagogic practices

are oriented towards making visible/challenging/playing with official and unofficial discourse" (Lillis, 2003).

Feedback collected from tutors, both immediately following workshops and three to six months later, suggested that they had appreciated a focussed discussion on the recent changes to the A-level system and the implications this had for their teaching practice. Since attending the workshops many felt that they were better equipped to discuss writing in tutorials. In addition to these factors, however, one of the most common responses from the tutor feedback was that they valued the opportunity to talk with other tutors about their tutorial practices. The space these workshops provided has not traditionally existed within our institutional structures but was clearly valued by participants:

> Yes my [tutorial] practice has changed since attending the workshops. I have more confidence that the feedback I give students is constructive as I try to cover the various points covered in the feedback sheets supplied in the workshop i.e., structure, argument, content etc. I have also tried to use some of the techniques suggested by other [tutors] in the workshop. (College tutor)

> I have definitely adapted my tutorial practices since attending the workshops. I now give much more specific guidance to students about essay writing and in particular structuring their essays. (College tutor)

> I found the workshops very useful and they have had an impact on my [tutorial] practice, primarily in terms of the type of advice that I give regarding essay structure …. The workshops were also useful in confirming some of the things that I already do in [tutorials] … and this is useful because, to some extent, we tend to carry out [tutorials] in isolation as far as technique is concerned. (College tutor).

We also provided spaces for students to articulate their experience of the transition from A-level writing to disciplinary writing and provided opportunities beyond the tutorial where students could reflect, with peers, on the goals of their texts and their role as active participants in the feedback process.

CONCLUSION

In summary, an Academic Literacies framework has allowed us to begin to reframe discussion of academic writing practices within our institution. It has enabled us to move discussion away from shifting responsibility onto the stu-

dents for arriving at University with a deficit skill set (the high-achieving profile of the students here makes this approach hard to justify, in any case). It has also helped to demonstrate that the traditional apprenticeship model of implicit induction, so often relied upon in the tutorial context, is not necessarily adequate even for high-achieving students. It has afforded us the opportunity to frame the discussion in terms of understanding both student and tutor practices, examining learner histories and the implications of A-level practices and the way these different factors interact. Discussions are not framed by deficiency in either students'or tutors' skills and therefore have not been initiated from a point of blame. This factor has been significant in fostering engagement across different contexts within the institution. The project has contributed towards changes in the nature of dialogue around writing and learning within our institution and, in doing so, has contributed towards changes in pedagogy at the level of the tutorial. Significantly, the work of the project has directly contributed towards the establishment of a new 'institutional space," the Teaching and Learning Joint Sub-committee of the General Board's Education Committee and Senior Tutors' Standing Committee on Education, a body with a specific remit to consider issues relating to the teaching and learning of undergraduates and act as an interface between the colleges and the university on study skills development, including support for transitions between school and university.

In addition to the ways in which an Academic Literacies framework has informed our institutional support of academic writing, I would argue that the pedagogical application of the approach in our context is significant in extending the practical and theoretical reach of the Academic Literacies perspective away from the focus of early Academic Literacies research (e.g., Lillis, 2001) on "non-traditional" students to illustrate its effectiveness in establishing transformational spaces in an "elite" context where all students are considered high-achieving.

NOTE

1. At the University of Cambridge, the one-to-one teaching for undergraduate students is called a "supervision." However, as in any other context this is called a tutorial, and, to ensure a clear distinction from graduate supervision, I will use "tutorial" and "tutor" to refer to the teaching session and the teacher.

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CHAPTER 26

THE POLITICAL ACT OF DEVELOPING PROVISION FOR WRITING IN THE IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

Lawrence Cleary and Íde O'Sullivan

In 2007, when the authors of this chapter were being selected to get Ireland's first writing centre up and running, concerns about postgraduate writing for publication coincided with national and institutional drives to up-skill the population for participation in a knowledge economy. A feature of our context is that our institution began its life as a National Institute of Higher Education and maintains strong ties with local industry to this day. Student retention and transferable skills development were Higher Education Authority concerns that largely determined some goals for our target groups. Those groups included mature students, international students and students coming in through the Access programme as a consequence of low, or the absence of, Leaving Certification exam scores (http://www.examinations.ie/). The national discourse about writing at third level in Ireland up to that time was largely limited to talk about writing development for professional academic advancement.

Surveys conducted by Íde in 2005 and 2006 had given us some insight into teacher and student attitudes towards writing and the teaching and learning of writing, into the ad-hoc writing development initiatives that were already in play and into student and staff preferences for ways forward (see Lawrence Cleary et al., 2009). Both of the authors of this chapter come from backgrounds in applied linguistics with a focus on academic writing—Lawrence also having the additional, very positive experience of Janice Neuleib's undergraduate writing programme at Illinois State University. Given our backgrounds, we both had some idea of how to satisfy student and staff preferences, but as researchers charged with forming a systematic approach to writing development based on best practice for students and staff across four faculties, we had to do our homework.

Roz Ivanič and Mary Lea (2006) are keen to remind writing developers that choosing one pedagogical theory of writing over another "is always a political act"

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(p. 14), even if it is rarely recognized as such. The reminder from Ivanič and Lea is reminiscent of an even earlier caution by James Berlin (1982, p. 765) that choosing one pedagogical theory of writing over another is more than just quibbling about which feature of the writing process to favour. "To teach writing," wrote Berlin (1982, p. 766), "is to argue for a version of reality, and the best way of knowing and communicating it." The writer-centred approach adopted by our writing centre is in many ways typical of writing centres in the United States. We do not intervene in students' papers, but into their processes (Stephen North, 1984), talking to them about strategies for reaching their writing goals. The *author*ity over their paper is theirs. Our approach is largely eclectic, drawing on many traditions including ESP, EAP and corpus and systemic functional linguistics, each uniquely informing and thereby expanding our understanding of student writing and the writing of professionals in the disciplines. Crucial to our politics, however, we draw from the literature on Academic Literacies and one particular form of the US Rhetoric and Composition model, New Rhetoric.

This chapter explores the influence of Academic Literacies and New Rhetoric on the pedagogical approach to the development of writing in one higher education institution in Ireland, namely the University of Limerick. A single lesson in one writing Centre initiative will serve to illustrate how these two traditions can come together to foster the development of a writing tradition that provides writers with the tools and materials needed to evaluate any writing situation, to enter into the discourses relevant to that situation as critical agents in the creation of knowledge—rather than passive recipients of trickle-down ideological and epistemic values and to consider the implications of their lexical choices and structural strategies with respect to their credibility and the realities for which they advocate. Though focusing on a single tutorial, the demonstration reveals much about the politics of our eclectic approach.

POLITICS AND PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES

We suspect that most writing developers would struggle to relate Rhetoric and Composition studies with Academic Literacies studies, especially if their experience of Rhetoric and Composition is the ritualized curricula of the dominant Current-Traditional model that most people think of when they think of first-year composition. Sharon Crowley (1985) refers to such a model as the teaching of "a bizarre parody of serious discourse and the process by which it is produced" (p. 159). Correspondingly, John Heyda (2006) links the Current-Traditional model to earlier models of "vocationally-oriented instruction" that quickly proved capable of descending into "a writing-by-the-numbers charade" (p. 155). However, Rhetoric and Composition is not a theoretical monolith, but harbours many competing traditions. The value of integrating aspects of rhetorical theory, in particular

the rhetoric advocated by Berlin (1982), Robert L. Scott (1967), Ann E. Berthoff (1978), Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker and Kenneth L. Pike (1970) and Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede (1994), is not altogether inconsistent with the values honoured by Academic Literacies scholars and practitioners.

The earlier caution from Ivanič and Lea (2006, p. 14), about the politics embedded in writing pedagogy, results from their recognition that, to paraphrase Orwell's pigs: "All writing is equal, but some writing is more equal than other writing." Language is "the prime carrier of ideology" (Romy Clark a& Roz Ivanič, 1997, p. 29) and "[w]riting is of strategic importance to the outcome of those ideological struggles" (p. 21). There is resonance between Clark and Ivanič (1997), Brian Street (2003) and Paulo Freire (2000) with respect to their ideas about the socially situated nature of knowledge and the role of hegemonic forces in maintaining value for particular kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing, not least of which is the dominant educational practice which subordinates students (learners) to teachers (knowers). This recognition of the socially situated nature of language and struggles over how language and social practices mean in any given writing or teaching situation is reflected in the work of New Rhetoric scholars as well:

> Rhetorical theories differ from each other in the way writer, reality, audience, and language are conceived—both as separate units and in the way the units relate to each other. In the case of distinct pedagogical approaches, these four elements are likewise defined and related so as to describe a different composing process, which is to say a different world with different rules about what can be known, how it can be known, and how it can be communicated. (Berlin, 1982, pp. 765-766)

Berlin describes reality as one of the elements of the composing process, yet these components taken together "identify an epistemic field—the basic conditions that determine what knowledge will be knowable, and how the knowable will be communicated" (Berlin, 1982, p. 767). The reality we teach is determined by how we treat each component in the writing process. The New Rhetorician values a process of truth-making or meaning-making that makes room for each student's experience of reality and the perpetual transformation of those truths as a result of the dialectical interplay of writer, reality, audience and language. Truth in this view of the process is "always truth for someone standing in relation to others in a linguistically circumscribed situation" (Berlin, 1982, p. 744).

DO YOU WRITE LIKE AN ENGINEER?

Our demonstration of how the politics of the two traditions combine will be limited to a discussion of a single lesson in one particular provision, *ME4001,*

Introduction to Engineering, a compulsory module for first-year students in the *Engineering Choice* programme. The writing component of this module might best be described as a mini-module-within-a-module, comprised of four hours of lectures, entitled *Report-writing for Engineers*, and four *Do you write like an Engineer?* tutorial hours. The majority of students on this module are from traditional backgrounds, coming in directly from second-level education having scored well on Leaving Certification exams (see also Fischer Chapter 5, Paxton and Frith Chapter 11 this volume).

Students on this module write three papers for assessment that together constitute forty-five per cent of the student's total grade. The submissions are assessed by a postgraduate TA and, in the third paper, by two peers. Finally, for each submission, colour-coded feedback for self-assessment is provided by the writing tutor with the help of two postgraduate Engineering students.

Introduction to a technical background report

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Digital Versatile Disc, or DVD, is a collection of new optical disc technologies that have the potential to significantly improve the quality of a number of consumer electronics and personal computer products. These discs are capable of holding up to 17 gigabytes (GB) of data storage, with current research offering a potential for 15 times more storage. This technology is made available through advances in laser technology and advances in manufacturing processes for optical discs. A Digital Versatile Disc is basically a double density, double sided, compact disc. In addition, the laser used to read a DVD utilizes a shorter wavelength, allowing the storage surface of each of these layers to be more compact.

The purpose of this report is to present the format, creation, current applications, and economic forecasts for DVD technology. To emphasize the advances afforded using this technology, a side by side comparison with current Compact Disc technology will be used. Motorola's Research and Development is currently investigating the possibilities for implementation of a DVD Group to interact with current research and product groups. This report will give the introduction and background necessary to determine the feasibility of DVD integration into current marketing and research products. This report will provide a simplified explanation of the construction methods required for DVD replication, solely for the purpose of presenting the difference in construction needed to manufacture a DVD.

The four parts of this report will discuss (1) a technological overview of DVD, utilizing a comparison of CD vs. DVD technologies, (2) the construction of a DVD, (3) current applications utilizing DVD, and (4) projected sales and revenues of DVD devices. The technological overview section will use a comparison of current CD specifications vs. DVD specifications to convey the advances made possible using DVD. The construction section explains the manufacture of a DVD to show the physical advantages of DVD for data storage and retrieval. The section covering current applications examines the five current formats for DVD specifications and how they are currently being used today. Finally, the sales and revenues section includes forecasts of DVD sales and distribution based upon current sales and technology releases.

Taylor, T. (1998) "Report on DVD Technology and Applications" in McMurray, D. ed. *Online Technical Writing Handbook*, available at http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/cgi-bin/color0.cgi?frameset=on&noter=../textbook/finrepx1a.html&viewer=../textbook/finrepx1b.html [accessed August 23, 2007].

Concluding paragraphs in an article in an academic Humanities journal

WHERE DOES THIS GET US?

Are these strategies a cure-all or a panacea? Do they let you off the hook for teaching rhetorical forms, the rules of argument, process writing, usage, and punctuation? Not at all. However, they are powerful enhancers of learning, especially for students who may other wise struggle in English class. Their most significant contribution is in helping students understand language structures in nonverbal ways that may be more intuitive to them than verbal explanations. The greatest success I've seen students achieve is that they actually complete well-organized, logically sequenced essays, whereas before they struggled mightily experienced overwhelming frustration, and often failed to hand in anything at all.

A word of caution here, though: these techniques don't work for all students, nor are they formulas or recipes that can be applied indiscriminately. It helps tremendously if you or your students have some notions about their domains of greater and lesser intelligence. And some students may shy away from (OK, some may even ridicule) the use of movement and manipulatives in a secondary or post-secondary setting. We've found it best to present these techniques as experiments in learning, which we invite students to join. We model them, both showing and explaining, and back up our presentations with relevant research in neurology and cognitive psychology. Most of our students have responded enthusiastically and seen satisfying gains in their ability to think, read, and write. Or as Joanne once said, Tinkertoys: there's nothing playschool about them.

Hecker, L. (1977) 'Walking, Tinkertoys, and Legos: Using Movement and Manipulatives to Help Students Write', *The English Journal*, 86(6), 46-52.

Figure 26.1: Comparison for clause-type preferences.

After asking "Why do reports from engineers and essays from students in the Humanities look different from one another?" in the first tutorial, the texts above are projected onto the screen at the front of the classroom. The tutor inquires into the differences in proportional representation of colour. Naturally, students point out the preference for red structures in the text to the left and for green structures in the text on the right. The text on the left is identified as being from an engineer's feasibility report, the one on the right as belonging to a teaching and learning spe-

cialist writing for an academic journal.

Groups of students are instructed to work together to determine the function of the red and the green with respect to whatever precedes or follows it, be it blue or green or another red strand. The tutor asks, "What is the passage in red or green doing?"

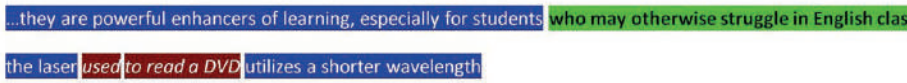

Figure 26.2: Subordinate clauses versus non-finite verb clauses.

In the samples above, for instance, students are asked about the relationship between the green and the blue in the first sentence. Eventually, we work out that the green is defining *students*, answering the question: *Which students?* Interestingly, in the second sample sentence above, students work out that "used to read a DVD," in red, is doing the same thing, defining *the laser*. So the question becomes, if they do the same thing, why does this engineer choose red structures over green structures?

This is an opportunity for the writing tutor to model the kinds of inquiry with which good writers typically engage. Perhaps, if we could understand how the red and the green structures are different from one another, we could say why the engineer prefers the red structure. When asked about their thoughts on the differences between the two structures, students usually report that the red structure sounds more factual, more to the point. The tutor has learned that this understanding of the difference is intuited and has merit. He then shares two differences between the structures: firstly, that the green structure contains a conjunction, a word that expresses an explicit relationship—in the case above, a relative pronoun—and a verb marked for tense—time, person, number, and mood; in the second sample sentence, two non-finite verbs (a participle and an infinitive) are left to *imply* the relationship between the information in the red structure and that in the blue structure which precedes it.

If the green structure expresses the relationship more explicitly through the use of a conjunction, why does this engineer prefer the less explicit relationship expressed by the red structure, as in the second sample sentence, where the relationship needs to be inferred? After all, we usually think of engineers as embracing precision. Asking students to reformulate sentences, changing red structures into green structures and green structures into red structures, students come to see red structures require fewer words. Though less precise than green subordinate clauses, the red non-finite verb phrases and clauses allow for more information to be stacked up in a more concise way. Engineers, after all, love concision too. Students learn that there is a bit of a trade off when choosing this red structure: some precision in the expression of the relationship is sacrificed in the interest of concision. But why does the red structure sound *more factual* than the green structure?

At this point, students are informed that at the turn of the twentieth century, the writing of scientists and engineers looked more like the sample Humanities text (William Vande Kopple, 2003, pp. 370-371)—hardly any red structures, but lots of blue and green. What changed? Why the gradual increase in preference for red structures over green? Students may offer some theories, but it is not a question they are expected to be able to answer—the question is designed to intrigue them. Students are asked to speculate on the role of time, person, number, and mood absent from the structure currently preferred. Students often portray the red structures as communicating more factual information. An examination of the content, though, does not reveal more facts. However, that the structure *sounds* more factual, more *certain*, is clear. Despite not being marked for tense, the structure seems to imply modality or degrees of certainty.

If this structure is preferred by engineers, what allows today's engineers to express a greater degree of certainty than yesterday's engineers? In the tutorial, this question is usually followed by a long silence. Students must think about what has happened over the past one-hundred years. With time, someone volunteers an explanation. A typical response might be that today's engineers and scientists know more. "We know more facts" is how they often express it. Sooner or later, students volunteer that today's engineers have more knowledge to work with and that they have better, more precise tools. These conjectures agree with the conclusions in the literature: with more precise and reliable measurements, engineers today feel more confident about their results and more readily generalize their conclusions (Vande Kopple, 2003, p. 371). The tensed verb ties the empirical observation to a particular time, implying that the results cannot be generalized beyond its immediate context; a loss of tense has the rhetorical effect of communicating that the occurrence is typical.

These revelations about what the various clause structures communicate leads to a class discussion of cases where it might be inappropriate for an engineer to communicate such typification and of the effect that misrepresentations of degrees of certainty might have on the readers' sense of the writer's credibility. This is a rhetorical issue, but it is an issue that is basic to identity as well. If a writer wishes for a text to communicate something about herself, then the writer needs to consider not only how her language choices signify at the level of denotation, but what is implied and what acts are performed, if any, by those choices. The tutor argues that over- or understating the value of the findings in research undermines the reader's sense of the writer/researcher's credibility. Using a grammatical structure that incorrectly implies that a case is typical is to engage in faulty reasoning—not a method of justifying conclusions that we typically associate with scientists and engineers. If the degrees of certainty expressed are not reliable, it is only natural that readers would ask: What else is unreliable? What other evidence is not valid? Can I trust this writer? If I were to rely on this engineer's conclusions, how would I be viewed by the engineering community?

CONCLUSION

This mini-module on the writing for engineers does not challenge the epistemology of science. Instead, we indirectly pose the question to students: Are positivist values alone sufficient for dealing with each and every engineering writing situation? Is it enough to just be *factual*? Is that the only kind of knowledge that counts? We run across sentences like the following in the relevant literature:

> It would *appear* to be impossible to obtain J~c for tearing and cleavage for the same material—either it will fail by cleavage or tearing at Q = 0 giving either J~c or J~c; the other must be obtained from a theoretical model or by extrapolating experimental data. (O'Dowd, 1995, p. 463; *italics* ours)

And the great thing about having electronic texts projected onto a screen in class is that we can search for all sorts of examples of the language of uncertainty and condition, among other features. By asking students to write about issues relevant to professional development, looking at texts on engineering ethics, policy and education to see how engineers write about those kinds of issues, by delving deep into the implications of linguistic features common in engineering writing, we are asking students to reconsider the scope of what it means to be an engineer and to re-evaluate what counts as evidence in each rhetorical situation.

However, it is a little more difficult to engage young engineering students in discussions of how engineering practice is a social practice and about how they are positioned by the requirements of the module, the course, and the discipline/field, particularly with respect to how they are positioned by the process by which they satisfy (or fail to satisfy) those requirements. Though we do not explicitly inquire into how the values of science cohere with the cultural values students bring with them into this new third-level educational context, sometimes the inconsistencies come from the least expected places, and it is the job of the tutor to inquire into the social construction of the epistemological principles that constitute individual realities.

It is interesting that student responses to feedback on their writing—for example, requests for literary sources for particular claims or supporting information or objections to language that calls attention to the author's cognitive or affective processes or agency—are amongst the best opportunities for exposing some of the values that they do bring with them into university. Objections to citing and referencing requirements and to prohibitions against allusions to one's own agency are opportunities for a tutor to lead an examination of the confrontation between the language and methods whereby students expressed their authority and agency in the past and how it is expressed in the present writing context. Such objections are opportunities to examine the role of context in the way that knowledge is best posi-

tioned for rhetorical (argumentative) reasons and how audience and language function in this new context to affirm or negate the identity a student wishes to portray. Objectionable practices can become opportunities if viewed as rhetorical strategies for the creation of both knowledge and identity. A sanction invalidates; a strategy authorizes. Just as there is guilt by association, there is credibility by association. By avoiding language that suggests subjectivity, we conjure that sense of indifference that we commonly associate with the unbiased scientist, an identity to which the writer perhaps aspires. These are opportunities to examine the language writers use to establish identity, voice, tone, authority, etc. It is not the goal of our module on writing for engineers, however, to teach linguistic structures. The module, instead, demonstrates to students that they must assess how language is working in a given context in order to make the best determination of whether it is creating the reality for which they wish to advocate.

Just as the Academic Literacies approach has capacity also to value the roles played by the study skills and academic socialization models for writing development (Lea & Street, 1998), writing centres are "firmly grounded in an epistemological mix" (Eric Hobson, 2001, pp. 108-109). Both Academic Literacies and New Rhetoric approaches view each writing situation as a situated social practice "always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (Street, 2003, p. 77) that determine "what can be known, how it can be known, and how it can be communicated" (Berlin, 1982, p. 766). Drawing on these insights, it is our writing centre's goal to teach a writing process that both foregrounds the writer's relationship with language, reality and audience in the meaning-making process and makes possible the conditions whereby she may consciously and critically transform the epistemic field into which she writes. The writer we hope is thus both informed and empowered.

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CHAPTER 27

BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY THROUGH AN ACLITS-INSPIRED PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Lia Blaj-Ward

In a 2007 article which they describe as part AcLits research overview, part position paper, Theresa Lillis and Mary Scott wrote:

> At this point, we consider that our aims should be to: … Sustain current support and critical discussion systems that exist for the development of researchers in academic literacies, acknowledging the marginal position of many in this field. (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 22)

This chapter addresses the aim identified by Lillis and Scott (2007) through exploring an initiative to support the development of research literacy among practitioners delivering English for Academic Purposes (EAP) provision for international students, in the UK higher education system and in other national higher education systems where non-native speakers of English participate in courses taught in this language. *Research literacy* refers to the ability to engage with existing research reports and to produce accounts of research that illuminate aspects of EAP practice in a rigorous, persuasive and engaging way.

The chapter opens with three scenarios of EAP practitioners preparing to undertake research; it describes the thinking behind a professional association's initiative to build an EAP researcher support network, partly in response to the three scenarios; it explores ways in which AcLits course design principles helped shape this initiative and suggests points for further consideration. The viewpoint reflected in the chapter is that of the coordinator of the events and follow-on resources which formed part of the researcher development initiative.

SCENARIOS

Alexandra works in a language centre in a UK university and teaches in-sessional EAP, i.e., non-assessed, non-credit-bearing language support for international

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students. She designs teaching materials which help international students develop their ability to write postgraduate dissertations. The students in one particular group she works with have different supervisors with different expectations about academic writing. Alexandra would like to interview the supervisors and report the findings in a more formal document, beyond integrating those findings into teaching materials. She is also considering starting a PhD to explore feedback strategies in more depth.

Brian is in charge of pre-sessional courses in a different university. Prior to starting their studies for an academic degree, a number of international students are required to take a pre-sessional EAP course and their acceptance onto the university degree course is dependent on successfully completing the pre-sessional. Brian would like to find out how his students subsequently perform on university courses, both in order to enhance the quality of the pre-sessional and to encourage subject lecturer input into the pre-sessional course content; he believes that subject-specific EAP provision is likely to increase students' academic performance at university.

Carina is the head of an EAP unit in a UK university. She needs to generate evidence to persuade senior management in her institution that an in-sessional course, delivered by the unit to support a particular Business programme, is fit for purpose and a justifiable expenditure. At the same time, she is reviewing staff development strategies within the unit she leads.

POINT FOR CONSIDERATION

Alexandra, Brian and Carina are qualified to master's level in their area, but not all have completed a research-based dissertation or have comparable experience of academic, practice- or policy-oriented research. Time for academic research and related publication activities is not formally built into their contracts and workloads. Their situations can, however, yield valuable insights not only for their immediate contexts but also for the wider professional community and to develop a theoretical knowledge base in EAP. *What support network can be made available to Alexandra, Brian and Carina to ensure that their questions are developed into projects with successful outcomes?*

INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS FOR EAP RESEARCH

To place the above point for consideration into the institutional context in which Alexandra, Brian and Carina deliver EAP teaching, coordinate and/or are involved in strategic planning of EAP provision, the three scenarios outlined above are grounded in a UK higher education context, where links between academic research, on the one hand, and teaching and learning practice, on the other, are gradually becoming stronger, albeit not consistently so across academia. EAP pro-

vision is strongly embedded within institutional structures associated with teaching and learning; staff delivering EAP provision usually hold the status of teacher practitioners rather than discipline academics with research responsibilities. The nature of institutional mechanisms of reward for research (the UK Research Excellence Framework, www.ref.ac.uk) means that there may be limited institutional support for EAP practitioner research. The work of EAP practitioners is often invisible in high status research publications. Within their institutional context, EAP practitioners may have access to professional development related to the design and delivery of EAP provision, but it is less likely that they will be formally supported to plan and conduct research and they are not legitimate participants in the "research game" (Lisa Lucas, 2006) in academic life.

In the United Kingdom EAP-related research is conducted in Applied Linguistics departments, whereas research into the internationalization of higher education systems, which could potentially be informed by insights from EAP provision and in its turn have a bearing on international student support, is conducted in a range of other research-focused departments (e.g., Education, Sociology, Business). These areas have limited if any input from EAP practitioners like Alexandra, Brian, and Carina (a notable exception is a study by Diane Sloan and Elizabeth Porter, 2010).

RESTES: WITHIN/OUTSIDE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

BALEAP, *The global forum for EAP professionals* (www.baleap.org), has responded to the situations exemplified by the three scenarios by creating opportunities for the development of a support network, through setting up ResTES, a Research Training Event Series consisting of face-to-face one-day training events. Participants (presenters and audience members) have varying degrees of investment in research; they may be researching their own teaching practice, working towards a research degree, conducting institutional research for quality assurance purposes or interpreting research to construct policies. At the time of writing this chapter, five one-day face-to-face events have taken place. The events, hosted in 2011 and 2012 by universities in different locations in the United Kingdom, were open to an international audience of BALEAP members and non-members. The rationale behind the series is described as follows:

> The academic experience of international students in English-speaking countries has gained increased visibility as a result of new developments in government policy and legislation. Perhaps more so now than ever before, research into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) can and should inform decisions made not only in the context of individual academic practice but also at the level of institutional and governmental agendas on academic aspects of the

> international student experience. (BALEAP, 2011, p. 207)

Each of the five events that constitute the research training initiative addressed a separate aspect of the research process: 1. Defining the research space: Literature reviews and research questions; 2. Methodologies for researching EAP contexts, practices and pedagogies; 3. Issues in EAP classroom research; 4. Qualitative data analysis in EAP research; 5. Quantitative data analysis in EAP research. The format for each of the first four events was half a day of input by an expert or experienced researcher in the field (a masterclass) followed by half a day of presentations of work in progress scheduled in a single strand. A call for presentations of work in progress was issued prior to each event. The fifth event was delivered as a one-day workshop on quantitative data analysis in an IT suite software.

In order to pre-empt projecting an image of the research process as a set of discrete stages through which researchers proceed linearly, resources from the series are available online (www.baleap.org). Event participants can thus revisit materials, and BALEAP members not taking part in face-to-face events can work through the material in an order and at a pace appropriate for their individual interests. The online resources bring events together as a coherent whole and showcase accounts of ongoing research.

The emphasis on presenting work in progress rather than finished accounts reflects the ResTES ethos of peer learning, i.e., "the sharing of knowledge, expertise, experience, highs and lows in practice and research, pedagogic principles and professional interests, curiosities and uncertainties" (BALEAP, 2011, p. 207). Participants at the events have varying degrees of experience of conducting research, which creates fruitful peer learning opportunities.

ACLITS: CHALLENGING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A programme supporting the development of REF-type outputs such as academic journal articles (*Writing for Publication*), informed by AcLits and sponsored by an academic journal is discussed by Theresa Lillis, Anna Magyar and Anna Robinson-Pant (2010). The research outputs on which the ResTES work-in-progress presentations focus do not necessarily, however, fall within the Research Excellence Framework (REF) remit. Nonetheless, AcLits lends itself well as a basis for developing the ResTES, given that ResTES is intended as a catalyst for research and as a set of opportunities for practitioners to develop as researchers. This is due to AcLits' exploratory rather than prescriptive approach to literacy development and its emphasis on creating spaces in which institutional frameworks and expectations can be integrated and transformed.

One particular aspect of AcLits, namely the pedagogic principles for course design (Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 2006), informed the development of ResTES. The

origins of AcLits can be traced back to an endeavour to reframe student academic literacy not as a set of generic skills or as the object of straightforward enculturation into the practices of a specific academic discipline but as the site where individual identities, social practices and institutional frameworks interact and are reshaped in the process. AcLits has developed primarily in relation to assessed academic writing within university degree courses, where its perhaps most immediate relevance lies. The attention it pays to power, authority, institutional contexts, individual and social practices and identities, however, makes it a robust and flexible framework to explore ways of supporting EAP teacher practitioners to develop research literacy in relation to EAP.

In one of the key AcLits texts, Mary Lea (2004) discusses how she and her colleagues drew on the relationship between writing and learning identified through AcLits research to develop principles for course design, and illustrates these principles with the help of a case study of an online course delivered globally in English to a group of postgraduate students working in education-related roles. Four of the principles put forward by Lea (2004), in particular, resonated with the aims and the contextual specificity of ResTES. These four principles stipulate that the AcLits approach to course design

a. acknowledges that texts do more than represent knowledge,
b. involves thinking about all texts of the course—written and multimodal—and not just assessed texts,
c. attempts to create spaces for exploration of different meanings and understandings by all course participants,
d. sees the course as mediated by different participants. Allows spaces for this and embeds this in both the course content and the course design (Lea, 2004, p. 744).

The selection of four—rather than the wholesale adoption of all—principles listed in Lea (2004) is underpinned both by the ResTES designers' choice to explore the situatedness of AcLits and by AcLits' inherent flexibility as an enabling rather than prescriptive pedagogic framing. A later study by Mary Lea and Brian Street (2006) offers two examples of courses aimed at different audiences (a programme developing the academic literacy of pre-university students in the United Kingdom and a course aimed at supporting law academics to write introductory law course materials); in their 2006 study, Lea and Street further elaborate on the last principle selected for discussion in this paper (principle d, see above) by noting that the tutors and participants

> worked closely … to collaboratively investigate the range of genres, modes, shifts, transformations, representations, meaning-making processes, and identities involved in academic learn-

> ing within and across academic contexts. These understandings, when made explicit, provide greater opportunities for teaching and learning, as well as for examining how such literacy practices are related to epistemological issues. (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 376)

AcLits research and the AcLits design frame are closely interrelated, in that the former generates insights into literacy, teaching and learning which can inform further course development. The remainder of the chapter elaborates on the ways in which the four AcLits course design principles identified above are helping shape BALEAP's researcher development initiative; the "Points for further consideration" in the closing section of the chapter highlight aspects into which additional research is needed to take the ResTES forward and further refine its design.

ACLITS AND RESTES

While the overall framework of ResTES was inspired and informed by AcLits principles for course design, participants were not formally and explicitly introduced to these principles or to the research from which they were derived. AcLits underpinned the design of learning opportunities; it was not part of the content explored at ResTES events. Lea and Street (2006) also chose not to introduce the Law academics on the *Writing Level One Course Materials* workshops explicitly to the AcLits conceptual underpinning of these workshops, and instead enabled them to experience the AcLits approach through the activities designed. They found that this did not hinder fruitful discussion and academics' exploration of literacy as a situated social practice. In the case of ResTES, the implicit rather than explicit presence of AcLits within the series is partly explained by a desire to maximize the space for presenters and participants to negotiate their own understanding of what it means to develop as a researcher.

a. Texts do more than represent knowledge.

The research texts with which ResTES participants engage either as consumers (e.g., published research) or as producers (e.g., draft reports or writing produced for the award of a postgraduate degree) position participants as researchers in the field and the identity work involved in transitioning from practitioner to researcher is supported through opportunities to offer constructive critique of published work and feedback on work in progress. As well as prompting identity work, texts provide guidelines within which new knowledge can be created. In the inaugural ResTES masterclass, Ian Bruce, an established researcher in the EAP field (e.g., Bruce 2008, 2011) shared with the audience a literature review excerpt from one of his published texts and invited them to unpack the textual strategies he had used to position his work among existing research. In the second half of the event, as

an audience member, he engaged with the "texts" which the presenters of work in progress contributed to the event (PowerPoint slides, oral commentary, handouts) and offered constructive feedback on how the projects could be shaped to reveal more fully the voice of the author, make claims of legitimate participation in the chosen research field and open avenues for further inquiry.

b. Think about all texts of the course—written and multimodal—and not just assessed texts.

While most of the EAP research shared at ResTES events may eventually be incorporated into written documents following institutionally-endorsed academic writing conventions, the aim of the series is to capture snapshots of various stages in the development of research projects, those stages which are frequently edited out of final published documents but which are central to developing research literacy. ResTES presenters may be working towards producing a piece of writing assessed as part of a postgraduate degree in a specific higher education institution, but within ResTES emphasis is placed on supporting the journey towards creating new knowledge. While masterclasses unpack published texts, work-in-progress presentations centre on draft texts which are transformed in the interaction between audience and presenters. To take just one example of how a multimodal text was used in the context of ResTES, one work-in-progress presenter at the third event (*Issues in EAP classroom research*) chose to communicate the milestones in his ongoing research journey through the medium of prezi (http://prezi.com/). When complete, his research will be reported in a master's dissertation. As a pedagogic tool to enable peer learning, the dynamic account of the research process captured the real research experience more effectively than a draft methodology section following accepted academic conventions.

c. Create spaces for exploration of different meanings and understandings by all course participants.

Unlike in the case described by Lea (2004), which involves a course delivered to a student cohort expected to engage in a pre-established number of teaching and learning activities for a delimited period of time, the coherence of the ResTES series comes not from the assessment element linked to the award of a degree but from participants' own choice about the level of investment they are prepared to make in this form of professional development. Event participants explore different meanings and understandings related to research methodology in the space of the face-to-face event; EAP professionals who access resources online can relate these to their own research experience or use them as a starting point for further involvement in/with research. For example, at the second ResTES event one of the presenters was an international student conducting doctoral research at a UK university on pre-sessional courses. The pre-sessional tutors and course directors in

the audience were able to bring to the discussion a different set of understandings of the way in which access and researcher roles can be negotiated in such a situation. They were also able to take away a nuanced insight into how they could act as gatekeepers in their current roles or, had they been conducting similar research to that of the presenter, the implications of their own roles for gaining access to and reflecting on relationships in the data collection context.

d. The course is mediated by different participants. Allow spaces for this and embed this in both the course content and the course design.

As key stakeholders in the training event series, participants have a greater level of input into the content and focus of each event. Two levels of participation are associated with face-to-face ResTES events: presenting work in progress and participating as an audience member. Collaboration between tutors and students is taken one step further. While in the context of one particular higher education institution tutor and student roles are often hierarchical and formally assigned, in the learning and teaching space created by ResTES they become flexible and interchangeable; presenting participants become tutors, while at the same time receiving useful feedback from their audience. One ResTES participant at the fifth event (not a presenter) attended this event in order to consolidate his knowledge about quantitative research methodology and, for the benefit of others planning to engage in/with quantitative research, recommended a number of texts about quantitative methodology that he had found useful. While participant feedback from each event informed the design and delivery of subsequent ones, the evaluation sheet for the fifth event was redesigned in order to facilitate a greater level of participation in the series, beyond attending the face-to-face events. The redesigned evaluation sheet invited participants to annotate resources and share information about the likely extent of their involvement in research (and/or supervision of research projects) in the near future, as a basis for refocusing the ResTES in response to evolving researcher development needs.

REACHING OUT

Plans to evaluate the impact of the training series are in place, to learn how participants like Alexandra, Brian, and Carina in the chapter-opening scenarios benefitted from engaging in AcLits-informed development opportunities and to use the lessons learnt as a basis for taking the series forward. Meanwhile, an open access, online publication, *Snapshots of EAP Research Journeys* (Lia Blaj-Ward & Sarah Brewer, 2013), was chosen as a vehicle for disseminating, to a global audience, research experience narratives written by presenters and non-presenting participants at ResTES events. The choice was made in line with AcLits' emphasis on giving participants greater responsibility for mediating learning and teaching

opportunities (in this case, by creating resources that can support the development of research literacy). It also reflected how

> the ResTES team (BALEAP's Research and Publications Sub-Committee) is looking forward to facilitating cross-border dialogue about supporting, generating, and using EAP research to enhance student experience in a global higher education community. (BALEAP Research and Publications Sub-Committee, personal communication, 16 September, 2011)

The current priority to facilitate cross-border dialogue means that in addition to being of value as a design frame, AcLits can offer a helpful tool for formulating questions in order to explore the politics of academic knowledge production (Lillis & Curry, 2010) in the global context and to collect scenarios of EAP practitioners based outside the United Kingdom which can inform the further development of ResTES. Some of these questions, based on discussions among ResTES designers and event participants, are phrased as points for further consideration below and will be addressed at forthcoming ResTES events and in related publications.

POINTS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- To what extent are conceptualizations of EAP shared in the global EAP professional context? What EAP aspects are EAP professionals researching?
- To what extent are EAP literacy, teaching and learning practices similar or different across the institutions in which EAP professionals work?
- What are the commonalities and differences in institutional support for EAP in the various institutional/national contexts in which EAP professionals work, both as regards teaching and as regards research?
- To what extent are EAP research methodologies transferable and translatable across institutional/national contexts?
- What languages and local academic conventions are privileged in the contexts in which EAP professionals disseminate their research findings?
- What kinds of research literacy do EAP professionals possess and what research literacy do they need to acquire, in order to make an impact in the contexts in which they work, as well as on a wider scale?

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CHAPTER 28

ACADEMIC LITERACIES AT THE INSTITUTIONAL INTERFACE: A PRICKLY CONVERSATION AROUND THORNY ISSUES

Joan Turner

SCENE ONE: AN EMAIL EXCHANGE

> Graduate School Representative (GSR): I wonder if we could meet to have a chat about the somewhat thorny issue of PhD students getting their theses proofread.
>
> Ac Lits Practitioner/Researcher (ALR): Yes, an extremely thorny issue. Main problem is usually what needs to happen isn't "proof-reading" as in the sense of proofing an article before sending off to publication. Most changes involve clarification of meaning with the original writer, hence time (and money).

SCENE TWO

Some weeks later, a face-to-face conversation takes place. At the request of the academic literacies practitioner/researcher, this was recorded:

> ALR: Right, OK—so tell me from your perspective what the issues are.
>
> GSR: OK … This matter was raised as part of a supervisor workshop. One of the issues raised was about international students in particular having their theses proofread—um … not so much on the basis that their English language isn't up to scratch, but more to do with the fact that the student is perfectly capable of writing and articulating their research and their research outcomes in their own language, but no matter how good their English is, may not quite get it right in English …. I was hoping that a way

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forward might be to have a small panel of proofreading organizations, that we can say to students "we don't recommend any one of these but pick from one of these, they understand what they can and can't do in terms of correcting your work and making suggestions," but then you start getting into where the boundaries are—and then I'm out of my comfort zone. So that's kind of where I'm at, really, but still having the same sort of queries from a lot of people, can I have my thesis proofread.

ALR: At what stage are they asking for that?

GSR: Quite late on.

ALR: The final stages … So, it's a big job then?

GSR: Yeh.

ALR: And of course it probably doesn't actually mean proofreading in the standard sense of proofreading—where you're submitting an article for publication and you're just making sure there isn't a typo or the paragraphs start in the right place or whatever.

GSR: (somewhat uncomfortable intake of breath) mmmhh, well you see, I don't know, you see, I would hope, perhaps naively, that it *would* be at that level, because if somebody's about to submit, then there should be a confidence that they're submitting something that's worth examining and that is going to pass …

ALR: Yeh, um, it is a terribly thorny issue. I mean I know because I've worked with a lot of PhD students across the college, and I found it was becoming such a … I mean I wasn't proofreading, I was trying to analyze their English and help them to formulate it so that they could actually say more clearly what it was they wanted to say—but that was with me reading the text, marking it up and then having one-to-ones with them …

GSR: So quite close reading then really.

ALR: Yeh, because you can read a text and you can change it and it can mean all sorts of different things. And also, you can change one word and it can change the emphasis.

SGR: Absolutely … and if you're one step beyond that, they've got to sit and defend that thesis in front of examiners who may or may not be friendly and supportive, and who may or may not pass them, or who may pass them with 18 months corrections or

something.

ALR: So I think proofreading's the wrong term really. I suspect it's very seldom that proofreading's exactly what they require. They do require a lot more input …. It's a grey area. You have to say it's "all my own work"—well, is it all their own work? 'Cos the writing is quite an important part of the work.

SGR: It's tricky. I suppose … I can't see the wood for the trees at the moment …

I don't think there's going to be a straightforward answer, except to say that there is particular support for dyslexic students—and I wonder whether we can draw on that in some way …

ALR: (audible deep breath) but that's a different type of support really. I mean, we run in-sessional language support classes for PhD students, and my worry is that these students haven't really made use of those …

GSR: The more you think about it, the harder you try and deconstruct it—the harder it's got to put it together again—it almost feels like there's a PhD in there somewhere (joint laughter).

PROOFREADING: A THORN IN THE SIDE OF WRITING PEDAGOGY

While it was not explicitly stated in the above conversation, there seems to be an institutional expectation that the role of academic literacies practitioners is similar to that of proofreading, and that writing or language centres should either carry out or facilitate that role. This assumption is implied in Stephen North's 1984 proclamation, born of frustration, in a North American context, that: "[the writing centre] is a place for learning not a proofreading-shop-in-the-basement" (North, 1984). Similarly, Peter Spolc (1996), in an Australian context, discusses issues of responsibility when he finds that students expect writing specialists to offer proofreading services, a situation he describes wryly as "the skeleton in the academic skills closet." The continuing experience, internationally, of this assumption on the part of students has led to many writing and language centres explicitly making the negative statement on their websites or notice boards that they do not do proofreading. Discussions around what to do about the recurring institutional demand for proofreading also appear from time to time on mailbases such as BALEAP (the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes) or EATAW (the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing). In these discus-

sions, it is the principles of learning and pedagogical practice that are highlighted in contrast to proofreading, which entails neither (see also, Joan Turner, 2011). One participant in a focus group on the topic of proofreading, conducted by the author with writing practitioners, asserted vigorously:

> We should be working with students to highlight weak areas that need to be improved and giving them examples of how to improve it but we certainly shouldn't be going through crossing every "t" and dotting every "i," I absolutely don't think that is our job.

A HUMPTY DUMPTY EXPERIENCE

Given this rather fraught relationship between writing pedagogy, whatever the theoretical perspective, and proofreading, it may be seen as positive that the graduate school representative in the above conversation had prefaced her consultation on proofreading with the understanding that it was a "thorny" issue. This had not been her initial understanding, however. Rather she had come to see it as "thorny." In this respect, she has undergone a transformative learning experience, albeit one that leaves her somewhat "nettled." She has come to understand the difficulties of deciding "where the boundaries are" between proofreading and "making suggestions" for example. She gives the impression of having become increasingly exasperated by the fact that the simple solution, which "proofreading" appeared to present, has opened up more and more dilemmas. As she put it:

> the more you think about it, the harder you try and deconstruct it—the harder it's got to put it together again.

This expression evokes the "Humpty Dumpty" nursery rhyme, in which, after he falls off a wall and breaks apart, "all the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again." The sentiment underlines the difficulty of posing proofreading as a solution to thesis completion and submission. It also justifies the academic literacies critique of a "quick fix" approach to academic writing, discussed for example by Mary Lea & Brian Street (1998). The apparent "quick fix" has fragmented into a number of different "thorny" issues, which can no longer be re-integrated into a neat whole. Indeed, the "thorns" appear to accumulate rather than diminish. They include:

- establishing a boundary with the proof reader that includes spell checking and grammar checking but doesn't alter the content of the work;
- not removing or distorting the student's own voice;
- defending a thesis in a viva when the student hasn't had complete control over word choice;

- students must sign that a thesis is "all their own work," but does using a proofreader alter that?

These are all problem areas that an academic literacies practitioner would instinctively be aware of, hence the professional disassociation of their role with that of proofreader. These issues also place the practice of proofreading in relation to student academic writing within an ethical framework. Similar ethical concerns were voiced by proofreaders themselves in research undertaken by Nigel Harwood and others at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom (Harwood et al., 2009, 2010).

MEANING AND MASKING MEANING

In Lewis Carroll's (1871) *Through the Looking Glass*, Humpty Dumpty declares that words can mean anything he wants them to mean. In the above conversation, it is the academic literacies researcher who takes on the role of arbiter of the word "proofreading" and its meaning. She states:

> Proofreading's the wrong term.

In fact, the ideological role of the use of the term "proofreading" in higher education needs to be unmasked. When it is used in the context of students needing to improve their writing, or bring a PhD up to submission standard, it indexes an insipid and diluted view of what's involved. It also risks denying those students who have put a great deal of effort into developing their writing and their English language proficiency, the educational importance of their achievement. At the same time, it masks deeper underlying issues of international higher education, and its multilingual student body, that institutions seem reluctant to address. For example, the institutional discourse around written English in higher education has not yet engaged with the wider debates circulating in relation to scholarly publication. These include the role of academic literacy brokers in the publication of L2 scholars (e.g., Christine Casanave 1998, John Flowerdew, 2000, Theresa Lillis & Mary Jane Curry, 2006, 2010); multilingualism in composition studies (e.g., Suresh Canagarajah, 2011; Christiane Donahue, 2009; Bruce Horner & John Trimbur, 2002) and the role of English as a Lingua Franca in English language teaching, where the acceptability of varying forms of English is promoted (e.g., Jennifer Jenkins, Alessia Cogo & Martin Dewey, 2011; Barbara Seidlhofer, 2005). It is incumbent upon an academic literacies perspective, which I have characterized as "an overarching framework, within which to embed a focus on the myriad processes and practices associated with reading and writing in contemporary higher education" (Turner, 2012, p. 2) to engage with these wider debates, and bring them into their practitioner, as well as institutional, discourse. The use of "proofreading" as a mechanistic solution to maintaining the status quo skates over all of these issues, and therefore needs to be resisted.

ENABLING THE TRANSFORMATIVE AT THE INSTITUTIONAL INTERFACE

One of the rationales for this edited collection is a focus on the relationship between academic literacies practices and their "transformative" potential. The notion of the "transformative" is a powerful one for higher education more widely, as can be seen for example in the following mission statement from my own university:

> We offer a transformative experience, generating knowledge and stimulating self-discovery through creative, radical and intellectually rigorous thinking and practice.

The above context of the transformative relates to student experience, and the proposed changes to their consciousness and thinking patterns as individuals. In their work from an academic literacies perspective, Ivanič (1998) and Lillis (2001) chart this kind of transformative development, as well as detail the struggles the students have with institutional expectations. A transformative trajectory need not only be one where students adapt to institutional expectations, or where students (and practitioners) reach a higher stage of learning, or renewed sense of identity, but can also be one where institutional assumptions and practices change. The exigencies of international higher education highlight the need for such institutional change. Echoing the "ideological stance" (Theresa Lillis & Mary Scott, 2007), which focuses on the transformative rather than the normative in academic literacies practice, the relevance of the above conversation may be seen in its attempt to encourage the transformation of mechanistic perceptions of the work of academic writing, which the use of the word proofreading suggests.

There is no claim here, however, that any institutional transformation was achieved in the above conversation. It is nonetheless important to have such difficult conversations, to resist solutions such as proofreading, which it seems writing practitioners are adjudged to be able to provide, and at the same time, to keep the conversation going. One outcome of the above conversation was the suggestion of further conversations, ideally with the graduate school board, and a presentation at a future meeting was proposed.

The institutional interface, then, is an important site for academic literacies work and its transformative agenda. However, the route to transformation is strewn with prickly thorns, and not one easily signposted to "mission accomplished."

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REFLECTIONS 5

REVISITING THE QUESTION OF TRANSFORMATION IN ACADEMIC LITERACIES: THE ETHNOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE

Brian Street in conversation with Mary R. Lea and Theresa Lillis

Brian Street is Professor Emeritus of Language in Education at King's College London and visiting Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. His anthropological fieldwork on literacy in Iran during the 1970s and his theoretical work articulating an "ideological model" of literacy are foundational in literacy studies. Together with Mary R. Lea, he carried out ethnographic research on writing and reading practices in UK universities and their 1998 paper is highly cited and debated. In this extract from ongoing conversations, several of them recorded, Brian discusses with Mary and Theresa the impact of his disciplinary roots—anthropology—for studying literacy and his perspective on the transformational orientation of academic literacies research and practice.

Theresa: In reflecting on what academic literacies is, I think it's important to consider its strong ethnographic orientation. So I wonder if you can say something, Brian, about the importance of your own research and disciplinary background, in terms of anthropology and ethnography for developing this space—this particular approach to writing, reading and knowledge-making in the academy.

Brian: I think for me it emerged from having spent years working in New Literacy Studies which itself emerged from an anthropological perspective on language and literacy and in particular the idea of using ethnographic perspectives to try to understand what people are actually doing in reading and writing. In the dominant model—I work in development contexts, quite a lot, where the this model is very influential—the dominant view tends to be, "people are illiterate, what you need to do is pour literacy into them, and that once this is done other benefits will automatically happen—social, economic etc." The ethnographic approach says, "Hang on, look and listen to what literacy practices they're already engaged in." And very often, the response to that will be "they don't have any, they're illiterate, they're

stupid." An ethnographic perspective forces you to suspend your own assumptions as to what counts as literacy and to listen to and observe what people are actually doing. So we've done a lot of that around the world in terms of the New Literacy Studies. It involves challenging what we refer to as the autonomous model of literacy, the assumption that literacy is just one uniform thing which happens everywhere, and instead adopting an ideological model, which states that the ways in which we understand reading and writing are always embedded in power relationships, ideologies, culture and meaning.

And that was the basis for looking inside our own systems, in universities and saying let's apply these ideas here. The dominant perspective here is not unlike the developing world which is, "Here are these students arriving. Students can't write". Lots of people say, "Nothing to do with me. I'm a tutor, I teach geography, economics. Send them off and fix them." Pour the literacy into them. And what we—Mary and I—began to develop—was an ethnographic perspective in the same way as we had done in international contexts. We said, "Let's see what the students are bringing with them." So one of the things that tells you is that firstly, students are coming with a variety of ways of addressing reading and writing. The second thing it tells you is that when they're in the universities in courses, the ways in which they're expected to read and write vary from one subject to another. The dominant model, the autonomous model says, literacy is literacy. When they arrive, if they can do it, fine, if not fix them. And the academic literacies' view I think says there are multiple versions of this thing "academic literacy"—most obviously that the writing and the reading requirements of the different disciplines vary. An example I remember from my own discipline, anthropology, was interviewing an anthropologist at a university who had marked a student essay and had written in red ink down the side at the bottom, "You cannot write. Get down to the study skills centre." And the student (we interviewed him as well) said, "I haven't a clue what they're talking about! My main major is history. I get good marks; my tutors think I can write. What's all this about?" And that's a classic example that what the disciplines expect is quite different. And it's at the level not just of skill but of epistemology. So in history when this student wrote an essay, the assumption was that you had a sequence and the sequence was of time across periods which you then connected in terms of causal events—what happened in nineteenth century England, the corn laws may affect them then parliamentary moves in the late nineteenth century. In anthropology, anthropologists are very wary of that sequential kind of evolutionary move because that's how very often people have seen *other* societies and anthropologists challenge this linear sequencing and say they don't want a sequence from, for example, so called primitive through to intermediate modern to postmodern. What we want instead are, if you like, structural, post-structural accounts of social institutions, meanings and people's *own models* of what goes on. And that's a big

one, *people's own models.* So apply that to the different disciplines and the writing of the essay in anthropology, the epistemological, ideological, academic literacy perspective and assumptions are so different. And this student—and lots of students we encountered—have to learn to switch and very often their own tutors don't realize this because they're sitting in their own little edifice: the history guy sits here and anthropology there. And they say, "Nothing to do with me. I'm not a linguist I shouldn't have to teach academic literacy—they should know that already." What they don't necessarily recognize is that they are actually making epistemological, ideological literacy assumptions about what *they* think is a good essay—and the other tutor will have a different view. Students often recognize it slightly more—particularly if they're taking mixed degrees. You take business studies, you're doing economics one term, sociology another, business planning management another, and each of those will have their own conceptions as to what counts as thinking and what counts as writing. Now you know it sounds simple enough when I put it like that but actually, it does involve some kind of transformation of what counts as writing at university in the thinking and in the eyes of the tutors.

Theresa: So that kind of transformation is in terms of the tutors' own understandings of what's involved?

Brian: Yes and in fact that's one of the big issues. I taught a course at the University of Pennsylvania where we examined these issues with post graduate students and they began to unpick "hidden features" of academic writing (see Fischer this volume, chapter 5). They'd been told what the explicit features were you know, paragraphs, spelling, layout but there were also lots of hidden features—such as notions of tone, voice, and stance. Tutors implicitly used these hidden features to mark essays but they weren't made explicit. One point that this illustrates is that it's not just the students who need support—and if you like transformation—it's the tutors. And trying to take that idea into the universities and say, okay, you want to enhance the writing practices of students on degrees, so maybe it isn't enough just to address the students, maybe you also need to address the faculty and there you do come up against a block quite often (for further analysis and discussion, see also Tuck Chapter 14 and Roozen et al. Chapter 15 this volume).

Theresa: So, one goal of Academic Literacies drawing upon ethnography is to make visible the multiple literacies and the fact that in universities there are different practices, different rhetorical and epistemological practices associated with different disciplines. One pedagogical implication could be in terms of practice. That what tutors and students need to do is to make visible those conventions—as they currently exist—and to induct people into those practices. So to make visible, using whichever tools we have, and obviously there are strong traditions for doing this—like EAP, English for academic purposes and Contrastive Rhetoric—which have

worked hard to identify, label, make visible and teach key textual and rhetorical features. So I'm just wondering, from your perspective, is there a difference in terms of what academic literacies seeks to identify, make visible or engage with?

Brian: Maybe there are two levels. The first is what we can think of as the access level so Academic Literacies isn't rejecting study skills, socialization—the other models—it is recognizing that those are necessary parts of the process, if you like, of academic socialization. But in order to accomplish them you also need transformation at two levels: one is transformation at the level where the tutors themselves recognize that they actually have a contribution to make to the teaching and learning of writing. That writing isn't something separate. This is something that for example Sally Mitchell and colleagues have worked very hard at and is obviously a key goal in WAC and WID (see Russell and Mitchell this volume, Reflections 2). But the other level—and the bigger one—which became very obvious when working with mature students (I think some of your work dealt with this, Theresa) where you get people in midlife coming back to university who've been writing in many ways—maybe they've worked as nurses and had to write reports—and maybe now they've hit university and the tutor says "you can't write". Gradually what comes out is the recognition that this is a different literacy practice and what you would hope is a kind of negotiation: the student saying "I'm not entirely convinced that the genre you're requiring for this discipline is actually the best way to go about it" and the tutor saying "I don't necessarily think that what you learnt in writing reports as a nurse is the same as what a degree requires which is reflexive critical, analytic writing." What I would say is, *Okay let's negotiate that difference***.** That's a transformation. That's a totally different ideological relationship between tutor and student and between discipline and professional practice. From a literacies—and academic literacies view—we'd say let's look more closely at what the students are bringing and look more closely at what the tutors are expecting, then let's talk about how the two can mesh together.

Mary: I agree and this was my starting point in the early 90s (Lea, 1994). Now, I'm thinking about this question and notion of transformation—what it is and the extent to which it is a goal or value of Academic literacies research and pedagogy. Where do you see "transformation" in relation to our 1998 article?

Brian: I don't think that you and I were directly concerned with issues of transformation in the article but we were concerned with issues of power in and around student writing and in taking a specific institutional perspective. Our interest was in power as process rather than structure and our aim was to make this process evident. We were definitely articulating what we might call a "change agenda," which looking back on it now was quite strongly transformational—but maybe not quite in the Lillis and Scott (2007) sense.

There are probably always going to be tensions between the normative and transformative and how you actually instantiate what we called an academic literacies model in practice. In some ways, supporting people to access and engage in literacy practices that are valued, and ultimately powerful, may appear to be normative rather than transformative. So I think there are always going to be tensions between these perspectives. When we start looking at power it leads us to ask questions about who has control over resources, what counts as knowledge or how knowledge is articulated. I think both of us would say that it is issues of power that run through academic literacies' work in different contexts. That's where our key issues lay and this is what we were trying to tease out. Central to this, of course, was our institutional framing, which was not just about students and their writing. Maybe inevitably though—because the institutional lens is always on the student—it was that focus which got taken up and, of course, our three models were articulated around approaches to *student* writing.

Mary: Yes, I think our interest was as much with tutors and broader institutional practices as with students. One thing that happened was that in the interviews the tutors began to give us documents around writing as they talked about their practices. So we collected a vast range of unsolicited data, in terms of documentation, which foregrounded this institutional perspective. It was these documents, coupled with our observations within the different institutions, that made the institutional perspective so prominent.

Brian: Indeed. And our 1998 paper encompassed that institutional focus in the "academic literacies" approach, which we contrasted with "study skills" or "academic socialization." Our intention here was to foreground aspects of practice which had significant implications for teacher-student interactions around writing. In that respect we argued that practice around student writing is always located in relations of power and authority and never reducible to sets of skills and competences necessary for success in the academy. In fact, we recognized then, and it has been made apparent in subsequent work, that we should not simply separate the three "models" with water tight boundaries. They are not discrete, and indeed aspects of each may be evident in the others.

Mary: An important point. I think one way of understanding that relationship is to take a specific example, like "genre conventions." Traces of these are likely to be found in all three models in practice but what would be significant analytically is the way in which genre is being articulated, often implicitly, in different institutional contexts. "Study skills" can be identified through prescriptive attention to the formal linguistic features of genre conventions in generic models of academic writing, for example, "you shouldn't use the first person." "Academic socialization" could involve disciplinary specialists working with students to help them understand how to rec-

ognize specific disciplinary or subject based genres such as "writing about theory and practice in social work courses." Issues of genre can also be approached through an academic literacies lens. Rather than focusing on genre features or what they look like—teaching genres—an academic literacies perspective is concerned with revealing how genres create knowledge in particular ways. Or as Fiona English argues, (see Chapter 17) what genres actually do. From an academic literacies perspective, this involves working with both students and their teachers to make visible the different ways in which particular genres shape knowledge and, ultimately offer students more control over them and over meaning making processes. In each instance genre is made visible. The contrasting ways in which this is being done in relation to each of the three approaches, study skills, academic socialization, academic literacies, signals difference in the relationships of power and authority between the participants involved and their engagement and control over meaning making resources. None of this can be decoupled from institutional decision making about where and how to locate work around writing and the values and beliefs which underpin this. What we pointed to in the 1998 paper was that the analytical lens offered by academic literacies research makes the workings of such institutional practice visible. So this picks up on the question Theresa asks previously—"Is there a difference in terms of what academic literacies seeks to identify, make visible or engage with?"

Theresa: Yes indeed. Thinking again about the dominant model of literacy that you were problematizing in the 1998 paper—I'm wondering whether you see such a model adversely affecting students from all social groups. I'm thinking about literacy and language, and thinking both locally within the United Kingdom and then globally—if we think of the position of English in academia, both in publishing but also in its increasing use as a medium for higher education. If there's an ideological notion of a standard literacy/language doesn't this have particular negative repercussions for groups of people from particular social classes—working class—or backgrounds—users of English as a second language etc.

Brian: Maybe it worked under imperialism—the idea that, "we'll take this narrow standardized view of English and we'll make that the standard for people moving up the system." But this has never worked in actual communicative practice. For example, I was in Singapore at a project meeting where people were speaking versions of English and Hindi and Arabic; so what we actually ended up speaking around the table was a mix. At the same time, you can go into a UK classroom if the teacher is just trying to teach standard English; well these kids are coming from such mixed experience of everyday life that this standardized dominant model in southern England doesn't bear much relation to the world they are actually living in. So it becomes rather isolated. You can use it for a while to set supposed standards, tick for this kind of accent and this grammar but once they go out into

jobs and start working, particularly international business it looks rather quaint and irrelevant and all the research shows that. I've more recently been working in Brazil where universities are expanding and you're seeing the usual statements and arguments, "Oh look, these nontraditional students, they can't write! Send them to the skills centre! What are we doing with them at university?"

An academic literacies view would say, hang on, slow down. Let's look more closely at what the students bring in. Then let's look at what the tutors are expecting. Then let's talk about how the two can mesh together. Let's negotiate this. And recognize that it will vary from one department to another, from one year to another, from one university to another. And that can create all kinds of resistance amongst those people who want to a have some kind of uniform standard. That is a big issue that needs addressing. You can have uniform standards that are, so to say, monolingual/monoliterate, or you can have uniform standards that involve multilingual variety and diversity. So there's a communicative point here, do we want people to communicate? Or do we want them to be able to tick boxes to say they've met some obscure but rather irrelevant standard?

Theresa: You've both been working this area—both in terms of new literacies and academic literacies—for some considerable time in a whole range of contexts. Are there particular challenges or priorities you see for people working in this area, both in terms of research and in terms of practice. Are there things you think we really need to pay significant attention to?

Mary: My concern is just how intransigent the deficit model is—even when people are using the term "academic literacies" to describe what they do, in practice there still seems to be slippage into "fixing" particular groups of student. More recently I've been working on literacies and digital landscapes and the use of the term "digital literacy/ies" is fraught with similar problems. I think that wherever "literacies" is taken up across post-compulsory education there is a real danger that it loses it critical edge and becomes decoupled from fundamental issues of power and authority. The challenge for me is how we can regain "literacies" and all that the plural use signals in terms of contested practice.

Brian: One metaphor I'd use comes from the person from Algeria who was appointed to follow Kofi Annan as the UN representative in Syria. He said, "All I can see in front of me is a wall but I know that walls have cracks in them and that's what I'm going to work on." So that's what we're doing. Universities look like walls but there are some cracks. The main cracks are the number of students who are seen as failing, who drop out. And the phrase that tutors in this country use as much as anywhere is that "students cannot write." So let's address that head on and say, what does that mean? And what we can do about it? And an academic literacies

view I think can offer a much more constructive view than study skills, academic socialization, EAP—even some of the rhetoric in the United States which can get narrow—because academic literacies says "let's question our assumptions about what counts and how we've arrived at it." And it could be that by challenging our assumptions we can explain why large numbers of students who could otherwise do well are being thrown out of the system. So that's the little gap in the wall I think that we might make our way through.

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CHAPTER 29

RESISTING THE NORMATIVE? NEGOTIATING MULTILINGUAL IDENTITIES IN A COURSE FOR FIRST YEAR HUMANITIES STUDENTS IN CATALONIA, SPAIN

Angels Oliva-Girbau and Marta Milian Gubern

In 1999, 30 countries signed the Bologna declaration, which would set the grounds for the creation and development of the European Higher Education Area, aimed at making European universities more competitive by progressively eliminating the area's segmentation and by increasing student and teacher mobility (for details, see http://www.ehea.info). The subsequent process of adaptation caused a general upheaval in Catalan academia, as many students and teachers resisted what they perceived as a move towards the marketization of higher education. The Bologna process had a strong impact on the structure of new degrees and on the working patterns of university professors of all levels due to the introduction of seminar work at undergraduate level and more student-focused pedagogies. It also dramatically shifted the language balance towards English. As a result the already complicated balance between Catalan and Spanish in education and research is now being reconceptualized to make room for English and its prevalence as the academic language of prestige. These efforts towards internationalization have affected students' and faculty's relationship to their background languages and their self-image as members of academia.

This chapter looks at the effects on students' attitudes and beliefs, of learning to operate within academic genres in English. It focusses on a first year course in the Humanities designed to compensate for the lack of previous programmes in writing instruction and students' low English language proficiency whilst helping them develop an academic identity. Both ourselves and our students are members of a multilingual community in which a minority language (Catalan) coexists with Spanish and other foreign languages, a community that is being pressurised to adopt English as the key to internationalization. We argue that teaching methodologies based on an academic literacies approach can increase students' awareness

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of the elements that make up academic communication, help them analyze the inter-relationships between these elements, and challenge the status quo in which minority languages and their speakers are marginalized from the construction of knowledge. However, we acknowledge the difficulty of engaging students in contesting academic genres and roles at a stage when they are still struggling to become part of the academic community.

DEVELOPING ACADEMIC LITERACIES AT UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA (UPF)

Within the Bologna process, the new Humanities degree at UPF (Barcelona, Spain) requires students to enroll in subjects taught in English to graduate. This degree starts with a two-year period of general courses, followed by a specialized second cycle. The general period includes two instrumental courses aimed at preparing students to deal with the genres of the different disciplines within the Humanities (Art, History, Literature, Philosophy, and such), one in Catalan/Spanish and one in English, both during students' first year. Both subjects need to overcome students' resistance to academic know-how courses.

In the new European context, academic literacy entails for our Humanities students the mastering of academic genres in students' two mother tongues (Catalan and Spanish), and in English, with German or French courses available as well. Academic genres, can be regarded as 1) the mediating instruments of academic interaction; 2) the prevailing form of assessment; 3) tools of learning and knowledge construction; and 4) marks of identity. Academic genres are students' key to their permanence at university and their long-term learning. Becoming participants in the academic community requires students to accept the entry rules of the community, have their participation sanctioned by the expert members of the communities, and actively participate in the exchanges of the community so as to be eligible for acceptance and show adherence to the community. Alongside and through academic genres, students are expected to acquire the community's collective goals and knowledge, and prove their value as valid members of this community.

> Academic writing, like all forms of communication, is an act of identity: it not only conveys disciplinary "content" but also carries a representation of the writer … our discoursal choices align us with certain values and beliefs that support particular identities. (Ken Hyland, 2004, p. 1092)

However, the process of initiation can be problematic for students, as academic genres can sometimes contradict discourse practices that identify them as part of their home community, and therefore challenge their values and identity.

Because of the gradual process through which new members acquire the genres

of a discipline, writing ends up seeming a transparent thing, the simple transcription of knowledge and research, what David Russell (1991) called the *myth of transparency.* As a result professors often misinterpret students' difficulties learning to read and use genres. The *myth of transience* (Mike Rose, 1985; Russell, 1991) helps the academics mask their lack of involvement in students' acquisition of academic genres behind the assumption that past students did not need any further instruction, and that it is a problem with the present students only. Such misconceptions about how students acquire discipline-specific ways of communicating can lead to a negative view of students' struggles to become part of the academic community, with language and literacy becoming visible only as a problem to be fixed through additional or remedial measures (Theresa Lillis & Mary Scott, 2007).

For non-native English speakers, academic literacy involves an extra challenge, as the practices of the different linguistic communities cannot be automatically transferred, even within the same discipline. Apart from the language-related issues they may find, students are hindered by their own rhetorical identities, which "may be shaped by very different traditions of literacy" (Hyland, 2004, p. 1091-1092), determined by often implicit cultural-specific issues that cause a "crisis of representation and associated instability of meaning" (Barry Smart, 1999, p. 38). Students' contribution to collective knowledge, and hence their value within the academic community, is thus undermined by their image as poor producers of academic discourse in the language of prestige (Aya Matsuda, 2003; Marko Modiano, 1999*).*

Based on her study of international students' writing in German, Stella Büker (2003) classified into four categories students' conflicts in writing academic papers in a foreign language: the content-specific level, the domain-specific procedural level, the level of cultural coinage, and the foreign language proficiency level. The first level covers subject knowledge, as first-year students feel extremely inexperienced regarding the knowledge of their discipline. Field-specific procedural knowledge refers to the generic conventions that characterize academic writing—students' need to employ the procedures typical of the field, even if they have not had any specific instruction in them. Regarding the problems derived from cultural coinage, the conventions of particular academic communities are strongly influenced by their different traditions, with, for example, the Anglo-American style being quite different from the Continental style of academic writing (see Lotte Rienecker & Peter Stray Jörgensen, 2003). Such cultural differences affect both the focus and the form of the academic genres members write in, and do not solely depend on the language they are written in. When writing essays, students need to cope with planning, revising, and putting down in words their ideas according to a topic and a set of formal rules they are new to. Simultaneously, they need to deal with their deficits in foreign language competence, even if they choose to do part of the task in their mother tongue to avoid this problem. However, the main issue regarding foreign language proficiency is that the students' language issues mask their difficulties at

other levels, as we observed in a preliminary study (Angels Oliva-Girbau, 2011). Students writing in L2 tend to see their lack of competence in L2 as the only source of their problems in writing, disregarding the cultural, discipline-specific and procedural problems they may have.

ACTIVITIES TO DISPEL THE TRANSPARENCY OF WRITING

The materials for the first-year course on English for the Humanities are aimed at promoting students' explicit discussion and contestation of their own developing identities within the activity system of the Humanities as a way to scaffold their acquisition of the tools and goals of the academic community. It is our belief that such programmes should include not only textual and contextual work, but also opportunities to reflect on and negotiate identity issues, which can contribute to empowering students to see themselves as valid members of the academic community. During the first two years of the study, we interviewed volunteer students and distributed questionnaires in order to assess the materials and adapt them to the context of the new Humanities degree. However, the number of students who participated in the voluntary interviews was too low to be considered representative of the students' situation. Consequently, during the third iteration of the course, we decided to use students' writing on the course as data for our research as well, in order to provide us with an emic perspective of students' process of initiation. The reflective activities used in the course have two goals. First, to foster students' development of their academic persona through the study of academic genres in relation to the other components of the academic community. Second, to guide students towards awareness and reflective analysis of the ambivalence latent in their negotiation of difference between their previous identities and their academic ones, so that they may become capable of managing their construction of a new academic identity.

In order to reach these learning goals, the course instructors 1) teach students about the components of the academic community in which they intend to participate and offer them opportunities to reflect on them through the analysis of texts; 2) promote students' awareness of the cultural, ideological and linguistic aspects underlying the nature and mechanics of Anglo-American style genres in comparison to Continental genres and how these determine their relation to the other components of the academic community; and 3) provide room for discussing the conflicts students experience regarding the construction of their own identities in relation to their initiation into the academic community, contesting institutional views on literacy, knowledge, language choices and power relations.

Activities are intended to promote awareness, analysis and contestation. These responses do not exclude each other, but occur in a continuum, as awareness leads to analysis, and both are necessary to create opportunities for students to challenge

their novice status, identity and possibilities within the system. Awareness activities refers to tasks aimed at raising students' awareness of the nature of the academic community and its components. Analysis refers to activities that guide students' analysis of the genres of the discipline and the underlying assumptions that determine their functions and features. The third category, contestation, covers activities that provide room for discussion and challenging of the academic community and its components, students' role, and their process of initiation. As an illustration, we present two activities that were carried out during the first weeks and the last weeks of the term respectively.

First, as follow-up to a whole-group discussion in seminar two, we designed a collaborative task in which students had to tell out of a list of descriptors which ones corresponded to canonical Anglo-American or Continental genres, regardless of the language in which they were written but on the basis of the contents, the writer's approach, structural features, and such. The list of descriptors was based on the work of Rienecker and Stray Jörgensen (2003), and adapted to students' language level. In an on-line forum, students presented one or two of the items they had chosen and justified their decision in a short paragraph. Firstly, we wanted students to become aware of the cultural differences across different discourse communities. Secondly, we wanted students to see the connection between the adoption of certain genres and the cognitive processes involved in the construction and communication of knowledge. And thirdly, we wanted them to develop their own approach to somewhere in the continuum between Anglo-American and Continental genres, and take control of their discoursal choices to construct their own identity as writers. When presenting the task in class, we used practical examples and students' own experiences to help them understand the descriptors. However, the exercise made students think that there is a prescriptive dividing line between genres in one tradition and another, and it made them link genres to the languages they are written in. Indeed, students viewed their own genres, cognitive processes and identities as defective and inadequate, in opposition to those of native English speakers. Writing in Catalan or Spanish became something wrong, something to be done as a last resort.

Towards the end of the course, our second activity was introduced. Based on Halliday's functional components of discourse, it aimed at raising students' awareness of the way genres do things with words, i.e., the functional components of genres and how they are realized by textual features. Additionally it aimed to expose the context beyond texts, and to look at the relationship genres establish between members of the community, between writers and their individual and collective goals, and between writers and their texts. The third goal was to help students reflect on the extent to which a writer's expert/novice status determines the choice of specific generic features, giving students the chance to challenge the transparency of writing by exposing the rules of the game. For every section of an essay (introduction, body

and conclusion), students had to write a list of the functions that different sentences performed in it—such as attracting the readers' attention, illustrating one's arguments, acknowledging the limitations of one's research, and so on. These functions were then connected to a diagram showing academia as an activity system (Yrjö Engeström, 1995; Alexei Leontiev, 1978; David Russell & Arturo Yáñez, 2003) made up of subjects who share some common goals which they try to achieve using tools and patterns of interaction that are unique to that community. Students analyzed a sample paragraph from one of the three sections using the list of functions they had previously written, connecting linguistic resources to functions. At the end of the session, students were asked to guess the status of the writers, and their relationship to the other elements of the activity system, using quotes from the texts as evidence. For example, the use of hedging in the results section often signaled the writer's lack of commitment to the contents of the paragraph, and hence his/her novice status. The use of canonical ("expert") and non-canonical (written by previous students, for example) paragraphs provided students with a wide range of language resources to implement, and exposed the heterogeneity of academic genres regardless of their language and field of use. Though the activity also presented non-expert, non-native speakers as efficient communicators, we were interested to note that students' contributions systematically failed to acknowledge this, hence ignoring the gradual progress in their own and their peers' progress from novice to expert status.

GENRES, IDENTITY, AND THE BUILDING OF AN INCLUSIVE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

The data we gathered through students' participation in these activities shows an increased awareness of other levels of difficulty besides their foreign language skills. Thus, their trouble understanding and producing such genres was no longer purely linguistic, but also determined by cultural differences, problems finding an audience, lack of content and procedural knowledge, status, and such:

> It's very difficult to change our way of thinking …. I start writing in English, but then I forget a lot of things that I wanted to write, therefore I first write in Spanish or Catalan and then I translate to English. Well, I know it's wrong but if I write directly in English I can't control my ideas.

When asked in different activities to reflect on their problems with academic genres in English, students realized that they lacked control over content, form, audience and reception. Even though this lack of control existed in their native language(s) too, it was exposed even more clearly by their deficiencies in writing in English, and because of the different planning and writing processes Anglo-Amer-

ican writing requires from them. As a consequence, their still insecure academic identity was undermined by their inability to communicate transparently using academic genres, certainly in their L1, but even more so in English where they struggled between their will to create and their will to communicate: "I can start writing only when my thoughts are totally structured and when I know how I am going to conclude. So I have the feeling of being paralyzed for a while before starting the writing"; "I often explain more things than are necessary and I often expand the topic and add some new ones, which is not correct in English texts."

Students' wish to contribute was still strongly individualistic, rather a personal challenge than a contribution to collective goals. They felt that they needed to assert the legitimacy of their belonging to the academic community, which depended solely on their ability to articulate their contributions in an academic manner and submit them to the approval of an audience superior in status to them. In this respect, academic socialization overlaps first-year students' entrance into maturity and their reach for new more powerful and independent roles. At this point, reasserting their academic identities was much more important as an individual goal than the collective goals and patterns of interaction established by the community; the social construction of knowledge is not feasible when one cannot see oneself as a legitimate member of the community. Students felt they were constantly in competition with one another: when asked about the functions of conclusions, their replies were "to undermine the opponent," "to defend your point of view," and "to completely convince your reader."

The data gathered during the final seminars of the course seems to indicate that students reached a later stage of their process of initiation. The students who were committed to the seminar work appeared to feel more confident regarding the legitimacy of their academic identity, and their capacity to participate meaningfully in the construction of the ideational contents of their area of interest. In the last questionnaire, one of the students stated that he/she felt:

> … prepared to write texts that have coherence, cohesion and a complete, clear sense. It is very important, because in this way we can express our opinion impersonally, and we will be listened to by the world.

Students' struggle with the acquisition of academic genres is tied up with the conflicts derived from their process of initiation into the academic community. Explicit discussion of this process helped deny the transparency of academic genres, and exposed students' difficulties, thus changing their focus from language to content, and from tools to goals, functions and relationships. By gaining a deeper understanding of how to use generic tools and how genres shape/are shaped by identity, students appeared to gain more control of the image they project and their

relationship to the ideational contents of the Humanities and other members of the system. More control means that students may be able to make their own choices by connecting, through generic patterns, their construction of their academic identity and their representations of the elements that make up the community.

Language-wise, students started the term in denial of English and the genres they associated with this language. Then, as the term progressed, they reversed this attitude to place English as the only language of true academic communication, in opposition to the creative capabilities of their mother tongue and the genres associated with it, which students saw as relegated to private use. The contributions of students attending the seminars—and the silence of the absentees—evidence the fragility of students' academic identities. Students either discarded their previous identities (linked to their mother tongue) as inadequate, or refused to join the part of the academic community that regards English as its lingua franca. Throughout the course, we failed to engage students in the series of opportunities the materials offered for contestation: we found no evidence of a student daring to challenge the prevalence of English. On the contrary, students seemed to accept their subordinate position because of their inability to change their background, cognitive processes, and identities. Rather than challenging academic genres and the cognitive processes and values associated to them, the students who participated in the seminars embraced Anglo-American academic genres as the solution to their communication issues. Students linked their reading and writing problems to their identities as Catalan/Spanish writers. By rejecting genres in these languages, they distanced themselves from the apparently defective cognitive processes and status associated with users of less prominent genres and languages.

The increasing internationalization of academia and the widespread view of English as its lingua franca can create a barrier for students from other language backgrounds, preventing them from entering the new European university or leading them to view their own language and culture as inferior to it. However, students need not be acculturated into the system, as their other identities can contribute to enrich the academic community. In the new academic community, there should be room for different views, genres, languages and the different contributions all these can make. When designing materials for non-native speakers, it is important to emphasize the multiplicity of literacies in academia, and their corresponding cognitions, identities and goals. As discussed in this chapter, the course activities designed within a more genre-based pedagogy sometimes narrowed students' view of the components of academic communication, and mistakenly presented dominant academic genres as the only possible option. On the other hand, the materials designed according to the principles of academic literacies were successful in increasing students' awareness of and capacity to analyze the components of academic communication, and exposed to some extent the power relations that are established, negotiated and challenged using genres, between users, communities

and languages.

Only within the context of plural literacies can minority languages retain their purpose and relevance. If we fail to enable students to challenge the status quo and lead them to accept English as the only language of academic communication, we are depriving their native tongue of prestige, and we are depriving them of the opportunity to create and contribute meaningfully to the social construction of knowledge. In fact, the notion of a unique academic literacy would create a linguistic elite and ignore valuable academic contributions just because they come from the fringes of the system.

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CHAPTER 30

ACADEMIC LITERACIES AND THE EMPLOYABILITY CURRICULUM: RESISTING NEOLIBERAL EDUCATION?

Catalina Neculai

> Against an increasingly oppressive corporate-based globalism, educators and other cultural workers need to resurrect a language of resistance and possibility, a language that embraces a militant utopianism, while being constantly attentive to those forces which seek to turn such hope into a new slogan, or to punish and dismiss those who dare look beyond the horizon of the given.
>
> – Henry A. Giroux, 2007

Academic literacies research (hereafter AcLits) has keenly scrutinized the rapport between the knowledge and pedagogies of academic writing in higher education institutions and the dominant "institutional order of discourse" (Theresa Lillis, 2001). This sustained scrutiny has produced an understanding of academic literacy that runs against and problematizes the dominant ideological basis of the academy. Moreover, AcLits has regarded the mainstream institutional outlook on academic literacy as a homogenizing force which appears to sand down the differentials in students' academic, social, and cultural writing practices and identities across the university. In response to this academic homogenization, AcLits has recognized the plurality and heterogeneity of academic literacy (see the AcLits special issue of *The Journal of Applied Linguistics 4*(1)) and offered solutions for active dialogic and transparent writing pedagogies (Lillis, 2001, 2005). Since the birth of AcLits in the 1990s, such theorizing has taken place against the backdrop of an increasingly neoliberal educational apparatus that has sought to link the formation and mutations of a particular subject—in university parlance, the formation of a particular graduate—with the economic system of business and enterprise. This neoliberal educational project has gained dominance by means of certain "techniques of the self" (Graham Burchell, 1996), amongst which the skills-driven curriculum of employability is the most evident.

While AcLits has not overtly engaged with the neoliberal essence of today's higher education institutional order of discourse (for a veiled attempt, see Paul Sutton, 2011), it may provide a solid research matrix for interrogating the neoliberal agenda, and particularly its underlying assumptions with regard to the teaching and learning

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of academic writing. AcLits may not offer an immediate solution or programmatic response to neoliberal institutional practices but it could help writing teachers and researchers in their various local contexts envisage possibilities for contestation, resistance or change (for "utopian pedagogies" of resistance against neoliberalism, see Mark Coté, Richard J. F. Day & Greig de Peuter, 2007). In this transformative spirit, two questions need to be asked: how can we make academic writing less instrumental in the reproduction of the neoliberal order? How can we shift our language and pedagogies in order to subvert rather than maintain this order?

In this chapter, I explore possible answers to these questions by focusing on a specific programme initiated at Coventry University, UK, which aims at increasing students' "employability" after graduation (for details, see http://www.coventry.ac.uk/study-at-coventry/student-support/enhance-your-employability/add-vantage/). This undergraduate scheme, referred to as Add+Vantage modules, includes modules on academic writing which are delivered by the Centre for Academic Writing (CAW) and in my discussion I focus in particular on a third year module, "Academic Writing: Your Dissertation or Final Year Project." In my analysis, I implicitly acknowledge the institutional, curricular, disciplinary, and social spaces of academic literacies afforded by the employability curriculum while trying to project a counterhegemonic stance in line with the AcLits position formulated at the start. My argument is that, in pertaining to the employability scheme, the teaching of academic writing suffers from an inescapable double bind of compliance and resistance with the neoliberal order. On the one hand, CAW's undergraduate writing provision mainly exists because of this neoliberal agenda whereby a new university like ours seeks to trace students' post-graduation career pathways. On the other hand, the very existence of this provision is vulnerable as it depends, in turn, on the existence of the employability scheme and on the ways in which the scheme chooses to define and make room for the teaching and learning of academic writing. This institutional vulnerability of our modules means that attempting to question or challenge the neoliberal status quo, its language and writing ideologies is fraught with difficulties.

At this point, a couple of caveats are worth noting. Firstly, I articulate the following viewpoints and interpretations in my capacity as convenor for the Dissertation module as well as a member of the team of lecturers at CAW who deliver the suite of academic writing courses (hence the use of the collective "we," representing our joint efforts to streamline the modules). Secondly, I avow an ideological bias against the dominant neoliberal values in higher education whereby the teaching and learning of academic writing are simply instrumental in the production of "commercially oriented professionals" (Kathleen Lynch, 2006, p. 2). Instead, I conceive of academic writing development as a process of consciousness-raising, a democratization of literacy practices, conducive to personal and collective intellectual, social and cultural development.

ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY

The values, principles and relations in our society are dictated by the values, principles and relations in the marketplace. Succinctly put, this equation represents the nature of neoliberal ideology, which underlies the contemporary culture of commercial profit, entrepreneurship, commodification and flexible specialization (for a brief, yet compelling analysis of neoliberalism, see David Harvey, 2005). The implications for higher education in the trans-Atlantic space have been highly visible: the heavy privatization of its resources (Lynch, 2006), the unabashed promotion of a market-driven and market-targeted educational system, the loss of critical literacy (Henry A. Giroux, 2011), "the cult of expertise" (Giroux, 2008, p. 1), increasingly blunted capacities for democratization, civic engagement, and academic freedom from the constraints of the market (Giroux, 2008). Academic "performativity" (Stephen J. Ball, 2012), audit and measurements of impact, satisfaction, and performance have become unquestioned systemic currencies in the neoliberal academy.

One of the local consequences of the neoliberal order has been an institutional concern with employability as a set of formally acquired skills, knowledge and competences. According to this agenda, reaching "the positive destination" at the end of the university degree is more than an accidental or implicit bonus of learning and participating in the university cultures, of studying a discipline or a number of interrelated disciplines. Employment is regarded as the net result of strategic teaching and learning of work-related skills, supplemented by privileged access to the world of employers and employment throughout the duration of the degree. In the United Kingdom, new universities which, historically, have a vocational orientation, have been even more attuned to the employability programme. Coventry University, in particular, has introduced the Add+Vantage scheme in line with its corporate mission: "employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship" (Coventry University, 2012b). While the university prides itself on its entrepreneurial achievements, it also measures its success by the support offered to its students and by aiming to create cohesive communities and viable local and trans-local partnerships. This apparent antinomy between a calculative, market-driven institutional spirit and a humanistic inclination is also built into the university's undergraduate employability curriculum.

The Add+Vantage scheme is intended to add employability value in two ways. Firstly, it seeks to cultivate in students a set of personal competences required in the labour market, such as flexibility, decisiveness, self-confidence, or reflectiveness, alongside a set of pragmatic abilities such as problem solving or written/oral communication skills. Secondly, it attempts to produce a number of pre-defined selves: the "global," the "creative," the "entrepreneurial," the "influential," the "community-focused," or the "e-graduate" (Coventry University, 2012a).

The range of themes under which the various modules are offered include: work experience and skills, global languages and perspectives, enterprise and entrepreneurship, professional accreditation and development, and research skills. While the scheme is administratively coordinated by the Careers Office, its component modules are designed and delivered by academic staff in faculties and departments. Departmental boards of study assure the quality of the module design, delivery and assessment while student surveys measure satisfaction rates. Add+Vantage serves all three years of study and although peripheral to the degree curriculum, it is both a credited and mandatory programme for all undergraduate students; in other words, it is a prerequisite for graduation. Students enroll on the programme at the start of every academic year and can choose a different module each year. Students' registration takes place on a first-come, first-served basis, which means that they may not always be able to attend the module of their choice. Class numbers are limited to 24 students, with a module spanning ten weeks, in two-hour weekly iterations.

In the Add+Vantage programme, the modules offered by CAW sit under the rubric of research skills. By taking part in the scheme alongside the other faculties, the Centre for Academic Writing has gained a foothold in one strand of the university curriculum which has opened up possibilities for participation in a faculty board and in departmental affairs, for the creation of a new platform publicizing and promoting the other kinds of writing facilitation at CAW as well as mediated access to departmental resources and inside writing practices. Active cross-fertilisations happen between the teaching of writing through the scheme, the academic writing tutors' one-to-one work with students and the lecturers' consultations with academic staff on their teaching of writing in the disciplines. Thus opportunities for a systemic, more complex approach to writing instruction within the university become available to CAW (for a full profile of CAW, see Mary Deane & Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, 2012).

CHALLENGING DESIGN: WHICH LITERACY? WHOSE LITERACY?

In a neoliberal understanding, academic and workplace literacy are regarded as co-extensive and become reified into something that is always already there in the form of standards, norms, rules or correctness, said to be defined and dictated a priori by employers (Romy Clark & Roz Ivanič, 1997, pp. 214-215; Fiona Doloughan, 2001, pp. 17, 24). Thus, literacy has become a catalyst in "the production of particular kinds of knowledge and *sanctioned knowers*" (Cindi Katz, 2005, p. 231—emphasis mine), which places universities unapologetically, "at the heart of the knowledge economy" (David Blunkett, as cited in Jonathan Rutherford, 2001; Katharyne Mitchell, 2003, p. 397). It is in this sense that the pedagogization of employability cannot be severed from "the pedagogization of literacy" (Brian Street,

1995, p. 113) whereby instilling knowledge of writing legitimates and scaffolds graduates' future writing-intensive roles in the service economy. The production of writing in the knowledge economy, characterized by a global reach and trans-national networked practices, is often seen, by employers and academic institutions alike, to rest on a generic, stable literacy infrastructure which could be transferred successfully from locale to locale due to the erosion of national economic and industrial boundaries. Employers' demands for demonstrable writing abilities are thus oblivious to the contexts of various communicational acts (Doloughan, 2001, p. 24) and writing practices. Such disregard for writing in context may in fact preclude transferability and render the undifferentiated instruction of academic and workplace literacies an unaccomplished project from the start.

The writing ideology of transferability and objectification transpires in the ways CAW is called upon to build and teach its three-year set of Add+Vantage modules, which, upon first reading, represent everything that the AcLits paradigm has sought to debunk in the writing-*qua*-skills model. Firstly, the recruitment process seldom permits students' enrolment on the CAW writing modules for three consecutive years, which thwarts possibilities for creating a developmental framework akin to an undergraduate writing curriculum. Secondly, randomized enrolment results in amalgamated cohorts of students with different disciplinary affiliations that are difficult to manage pedagogically. Yet, these two insufficiencies of design have not remained unchallenged. Historically, we have made efforts to channel the enrolment process and cluster students in keeping with *meaningful* differences and disciplinary affiliations. As a result, the former first year module "Introduction to Writing at University," a generic, rite of passage-type of module, was divided into three distinct paths: "Academic Writing for (Applied) Sciences," "Academic Writing for Social Sciences," "Academic Writing for Arts and Humanities." While we acknowledge the internal variations of these makeshift disciplinary formations (Mike Baynham, 2000), controlled heterogeneity has secured a commonality of students' academic affiliations, an academic lowest common denominator, which has helped forge a more cohesive writing community with each Add+Vantage module and class. Furthermore, in order to articulate the cultural and critical underpinnings of literacy practices, another first year module has been developed: "English Academic Writing in a Global Context." However, unlike year one provision, in the second and third years, "Developing Academic Writing Skill" and "Academic Writing: Your Dissertation or Final Year Project" do not, as yet, follow a disciplinary logic.

There are also other, more subcutaneous ways in which we have questioned the neoliberal underpinnings of the employability programme. Each module descriptor (see Table 30.1) addresses the employability agenda in an oblique way by highlighting the contribution of academic writing to students' developments in their own fields of study while the lexicon of neoliberalism is almost absent in these descriptors, thus creating a type of resistance through indifference. By engendering

an elsewhere and a pretext for student writing that intersects with the curricular space of subject degrees, the CAW writing modules also draw upon, help build or even challenge disciplinary writing spaces. Moreover, through a series of "codes," such as *genre*, *criticality*, the concept of *writing as a process* and as *discourse*, the module descriptors also create a space for academic writing as a field of knowledge and practice in its own right. This epistemological space is further expanded and explored through the writing-infused lexicon of the syllabi and assignment briefs, and through the relational, writing-aware nature of seminar activities and assignment production. Fully articulating and accounting for the disciplinary hybridity of students as well as for the inherent variations in their individual writing expertise and practice still remains a utopian project. However, the changes in design and practice show that the CAW modules are not stagnant curricular and pedagogical constructions.

THE DISSERTATION: ADVANCING INTELLECTUAL LITERACIES

One example of non-compliance is the third year module, "Academic Writing: Your Dissertation or Final Year Project." This is a peculiar case in point not only because of its great success amongst students (six different iterations are currently being taught, with only three two years ago) but also due to its temporal proximity to graduation and therefore to the much invoked "positive destination" (see for example of this employability discourse http://www.pkc.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=13188&p=0). Designed as a companion to students' processes and practices of dissertation writing in their own subjects, the title unsettles the stability of the dissertation genre by allowing for alternative final year research projects beside the conventional dissertation. In some disciplines, such as engineering or performance studies, the alternatives to dissertations are the report on design or the so-called long essay. During the module, covert tensions exist, at times, between entrenched, legitimized dissertation writing conventions, such as the classical IMRaD macro-structure (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion), and their disciplinary or individual project variations, or between IMRaD structures in the social sciences and thematic mappings in arts and humanities projects. Inevitably, departmental academic writing cultures and departmental guidelines (where these exist) also come into play, making the Add+Vantage module a site of debate over more stable, consistent meanings of dissertation writing as product, process and practice. In a sense, the module's success also stems from students' desire for coherent and consolidated textual and research practices. That is why, turning atomized literacy practices into synergetic ones, without homogenizing writing teaching and learning, is a primary pedagogic challenge.

Table 30.1: Academic writing vs. neoliberal focus in selected module descriptors

Module Titles	Overt Academic Writing Lexicon	Covert Neoliberal Lexicon
Year 1 Academic Writing for: • Sciences • Health and Social Studies • Arts and Humanities	• learning about academic genres and cultures associated with degree subjects • researching, planning, revising and editing texts • interrogating genre conventions of argument-based essay writing, report writing, reflective writing and case studies	developing students' employability in subject-related careers by enhancing their written communication in relevant genres
Year 2 Academic Writing: • Developing Skill in Academic Writing	• reviewing the concept of writing as a process • introducing strategies for structuring and developing academic papers • analyzing written texts • assessing a range of sources when researching • constructing an academic argument • learning appropriate reflection and referencing skills using *The Coventry University Harvard Reference Style* • writing as a primary medium through which students' knowledge is developed and assessed	contributing to Personal Development Planning (PDP)
Year 3 Academic Writing: • Your Dissertation or Final Year Project	• conceptualizing, planning, drafting, revising and editing final-year projects and dissertations • focusing on "evaluate," "synthesize," "argue" and "reflect"—articulating the place of these types of discourse and practices in academic communication	acquiring and developing competences that contribute to academic development and, implicitly, to future workplace roles that are increasingly writing intensive.

In order to respond to this challenge, the main thrust of the module, which guides my work as a pedagogue, is the advancement of *intellectual literacies* as a

complex set of literacy practices that are not simply entrenched in and determined by academic, institutional imperatives. The logic is that by enhancing the intellectuality of my teaching of writing, I implicitly minimize or disregard the mercantile attributes of the neoliberal order. This task is even harder and very sensitive to openly acknowledge in formal institutional settings, such as boards of study, since the neoliberal educational status quo is generally maintained covertly through the marketing of academic writing as a set of transferable, trans-local and trans-disciplinary competences. In its attempts to probe the depths of final year academic writing for research, the module draws attention to the linkages that exist between modes of active reading, active thinking, and active writing inside and outside of academia. The dissertation becomes then a pretext for such probing. I do not wish, however, to invalidate the importance of students' preparation for their graduate careers, but simply to plead for a holistic, non-segregationist approach to student career development that could also feature in the teaching and learning of academic writing *through* the disciplines. This possibility is, in fact, granted by the relational nature of academic literacies: the relations between texts and students, between students' identities and the conventions of their research writing, between students' thinking, reading, and writing practices.

During the ten weeks of the module, students bring to the table the diversity of their individual research projects, the heterogeneity of their writing knowledge and experience, the fluidity of their disciplinary affiliations. Their intellectual labour is only pre-coded in the themes of the syllabus (see the second column in Table 30.2) which include: macro and micro-level modes of textual construction; register, writerly identity, and voice; problem identification, definition, and exploration; critiquing; methodological frameworks; peer reviewing, addressing feedback through revising and editing. This generic "technological" design becomes a unifying principle in class, thus creating a commonality of literacy practices and a matrix of shared goals. The workshop activities, on the other hand, (the third column) are centred on the students and propose a relational, constructivist mode of engagement with writing.

Furthermore, three features of the "Dissertation" module make of it a more complex matrix of teaching and learning than the neoliberal skills-driven model might indicate. First, class activities frame individual writing practices and processes dialogically: discussing in pairs or collectively emotional and cognitive aspects of academic writing in general, and of dissertation writing in particular, exploring individual knowledge of writing, expectations, frustrations, and challenges through dialogue and keeping dissertation writing diaries. These are complemented by a session dedicated to the double peer-reviewing of the coursework draft assigned for summative assessment. In conjunction with this, formative written feedback to writing is complemented by "talkback" (Lillis, 2005) in class and during office hours, thus generating opportunities for one to one tutorials to accompany class

Table 30.2: Sample syllabus—"Your Dissertation or Final Year Project"

Module Outline (N.B. Seminar themes and workshop activities may be subject to change, depending on your writing requirements, class interactions and discussions.)		
Week:	**Seminar themes**	**Workshop activities**
1.	The module: workshops, assignment, deadlines; dissertation writing vs. other writing.	Warm-up discussions and reflections.
2.	The process, practice and genre of dissertation writing: from proposal to project.	Discuss the role the following factors may play in your dissertation writing: your dissertation proposal, your own writing practices and knowledge of academic writing, your colleagues and your supervisor, your interest in your subject, your vocational aspirations.
3.	Style and language use: words, sentences and paragraphs.	Use and analyze formal features of academic writing in contrast with other writing.
4.	Working with the dissertation structure: why introductions come first and conclusions last.	Analyze samples of dissertation structures; write an outline of your own dissertation structure, detailing the role of each section.
5.	Reading for the dissertation (1): summaries, arguments and critiques.	Write a summary and critique of an article which you will use for your dissertation, and will have read in advance of the seminar.
6.	Reading for the dissertation (2): the literature review as intellectual dialogue.	• Write a mock literature review based on two articles that you will use in your dissertation and will have read in advance of the seminar. • Analyze literature review samples.
7.	Your dissertation: So what? Questions, niches, problems and claims; analyzing introductions.	Identify topics, questions and problems in sample dissertation introductions; identify your own dissertation topic, main questions and potential problem to solve.
8.	Working with evidence: research methods, data analysis, the ethics of research.	• Identify and write the rationale for choosing your research methods and type of data analysis; reflect on the ethical dimensions of your research. • Planning your assignment with a view to producing a draft by next week.
9.	Peer reviewing week	Bring a draft of your assignment to class for peer reviewing
10.	Abstract writing and executive summaries/Assignment editing and revising.	• Analyze abstracts and executive summaries. • Revise and edit your assignment draft.

interactions. Second, differences in disciplinary discourses are actively brought to bear upon discussions by: teasing out variations in formal conventions (structuring and style in particular); highlighting the tight connection between producing and interrogating knowledge in students' particular subjects and dissertation projects; constructing problems and critiquing academic literature from within disciplinary frameworks, whereby students are asked to explore and share articles relevant to their work. Last, the module construes academic writing as a subject of knowledge, reflection and evaluation. Students are thus inducted into a new discipline, a functional field with its own meta-codes, discourses and community of practice. This transformation of academic writing from an infrastructure of support into a discipline is achieved in at least two ways: through an assessment design that is analytical and reflective in nature, either focusing on comparing and analyzing student and published writing, reflecting on the complex dimensions of one's own dissertation writing or comparing previous coursework writing with dissertation writing; by means of a reading list that telescopes the field's recent incursions into academic writing as product, process and practice. These two approaches come together in the requirement that students substantiate their analyses and reflections on writing through recourse to academic writing literature.

CONCLUSIONS

The neoliberal order of discourse and its educational corollaries have already started to produce a body of research into writing for employability or writing for the knowledge economy, in its milder, non-politicized variety (Deborah Brandt, 2005; University of Bath, 2011-2012; Juliet Thondhlana & Julio Gimenez, 2011) or research into the collusive relations between literacy and neoliberalism, in its more radical and ideologically resistant form (David Block et al., 2012; Christian Chun, 2008). This paper aligns itself with the latter strand of research with the hope of recapturing the role of academic literacies in "creatively transforming human culture" (The Miami Plan as cited in Jill Swiencicki, 1998, p. 27) with its diverse voices and identities as those found in the academic writing class. Through some of AcLits' valuable formulations, I have sought to indicate how the academic writing employability modules delivered by the Centre for Academic Writing at Coventry University minimize and disrupt the workings of the neoliberal Add+Vantage teaching scheme, thus making academic writing less instrumental in the reproduction of the neoliberal order of discourse. In my analysis, I have adopted the combined position of a "long-marcher," who voices an ideological Marxist critique, and of a "whistle-blower," who interrogates the incorporation of academic writing from within a corporatized framework of teaching writing (Dyer-Witheford, 2007, p. 49). Ethical dilemmas abound, but so does the hope that academic writing will eventually build its own spaces of knowledge-making and practice-honing, free of neoliberal dictates.

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CHAPTER 31

A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT A WRITING COURSE FOR SCHOOLS

Kelly Peake and Sally Mitchell

… in which two optimistic writing developers seek to work with students to develop their writing, and find themselves thwarted by myriad conundrums, unknowns and disappointments, until finally they abandon their efforts and rethink their position …

On and off over the last four years, we[1] have been working on various writing development projects with sixth form[2] students from local schools as part of our university's outreach and access programme which aims to encourage and enable students across its neighbouring communities to go on to higher education. Our remit within this programme was to focus on students' problems with academic writing. The core of our work with schools began as a "writing course." Since its first iteration we have changed the course significantly, relocating it from inviting students from multiple schools to our university campus to going to teach students from a single school in their own setting, and also refocusing it in terms of content. Our initial approach sought to draw students' attention to the features of writing that are often valued at university level, experimenting with types of texts, then linking these to writing students brought with them from school. Then as we became familiar with the students' writing, we began to hone our approach to draw on Language Awareness (Rod Bolitho et al., 2003; Leo van Lier, 1995) and to focus largely on the linguistic expression of, and linking between, ideas in written texts. We felt that it was here that the students often had fewest resources, and that without these resources they were unable to participate fully in the "types of text" activities we had first offered them.

Although the funding context which initiated our work has changed, the university where we work remains committed to widening participation. The course too, in its various forms, remains part of what the university is happy to offer; it is, moreover, "an offer" that schools are happy to take up. At face value, therefore, we have been successful in our attempt to work with writing in schools; schools are keen to invite us in and we have had positive feedback on the materials we have developed. Nonetheless what we are doing with this course continues, despite the changes we have made, to strike us as a flawed approach to writing development in schools (and,

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indeed, more widely). In this paper—which we think of as a cautionary tale—we explore our thinking around these flaws. To ground our discussion we first ask you to consider the course as enacted in two short vignettes drawn from our experiences this year.

LOCATION 1

A new sixth form in an urban school. We meet the Head of Sixth, tell her what we've done previously, show her our materials, get a sense of how they might fit in to what the students are doing; she is generally enthusiastic, assures us it will be relevant and useful. We agree to offer a five week course adapting our materials to take into account the students' needs, and helping them work on the writing they are doing in their classes. We plan for a meeting with a wider spread of teachers prior to starting, but it is postponed and not re-scheduled. As a result we start the course without much sense of what the students may be doing and what teachers are hoping for from us.

We arrive and sign in. Students start to appear but are shepherded by the Head of Sixth, who sets to work directing them to the various tables. We have no register, and miss an opportunity to establish contact with the students ourselves. We get on with the lesson but students are tired, distracted, chatty among themselves. We are struck by how at home they are with one another and as a result, how little attention we are getting. They grumble that the exercise is similar to one they've done in English lessons, and when asked to write are fidgety and reluctant: "Can't you just give me a sentence to start, Miss?"

The following week very few students appear. Some are evident outside the window on the street; there is waving. Questioned why there are so few, a boy explains "They're not here because they got out before they were caught." So, the end of the school day is a race to escape. "It's like a prison here," he says. We find out that the workshop was compulsory, when we'd thought of it more loosely as "recommended" perhaps.

The next two weeks are better, more focused, although the students are still reluctant to work on their own writing. The final week numbers are right down again; we'd planned to start with them looking at their own writing, but the four students who've turned up haven't brought any: unbeknownst to us they had an essay deadline the previous week, and now they are not doing writing; they'd rather start preparing a presentation. Our course now feels like a homework club.

LOCATION 2

A large sixth form college that feels like a campus. We are asked to work with their honours programme students, a group of academically high achieving stu-

dents who have been identified as likely to go to university; this is a different approach for us, we feel positive. It's challenging though, as it means delivery to the whole group—120 students—but we work with this, agree to have tables set up in the hall, that teachers and college tutors will participate, that we will pass on our materials for them to use in their teaching. We redesign the course for the larger numbers and different environment. We meet with a couple of teachers and some tutors a couple of weeks before we start—they are very positive about our focus and approach.

We arrive to find the hall unprepared. When the session is due to start one (lone) student has arrived, former students employed as "college mentors" are milling about; they suspect students have gone off to get lunch. We wait, a handful of students drift in, mentors go off to telephone the rest. After half an hour we decide to start—we have 28 students, a nice class size. It emerges that no students can stay for the planned hour and a half so we cut back our plan. Students have brought a range of writing—personal statements, scholarship applications, a science report, English essays. It's a good session with focus that leaves us generally feeling energised. No teachers attend.

No teachers next week either. We find ourselves in an out of the way classroom, again starting late—and working now with only seven students out of our possible 120. Lots—we find out circuitously from one of the college tutors—may have gone off to visit various universities, our own included. Everything about this planned course seems to have crumbled, except for the fact that we turn up, but the fact of our turning up has no impact on anything much—the action is all elsewhere. As this course was promised to be literally much more centre stage, what, we ask, has shifted between the enthusiastic planning and take-up and the reality?

The third and final week. We arrive, expecting little, having decided to run a much shorter class in case no one turns up. Six of last week's students have returned and two from the first week; they have all brought work, all listen and participate in the discussion around the activity which gets them looking at tone and formality. There is concentration, quiet discussion, reviewing and rewriting sections of their texts. Two girls in particular make significant changes, really finding focus in the claims they are starting to make. We are all surprised by the end of the hour. It feels like, for these few students, it is finally coming together, just as we are about to leave.

THE COURSE AS "AUTONOMOUS" AND THEREFORE PERIPHERAL

To unpack a little of what is going on in these vignettes and why our experiences felt so unsatisfactory, we've found it helpful to engage with Street's distinction between autonomous and ideological models of literacy (Brian Street, 1984; see

Chrissie Boughey, 2008). We see that problems with the course in both instances stem from its separation from the locations' practices, purposes and players. By creating a course on writing that stands outside of mainstream activities, subjects and the timetabled hours of the school, we inadvertently reinforce a notion of writing as an autonomous entity that is separable from the actual context in which writing takes place and has meaning (as, for example, "assignment" or "homework" or "exam"). In designing materials for such a course, we are in a sense forced to see them this way too, as autonomous, detached from the teaching and learning happening in school. It follows that, of necessity, we treat the writing that students bring to work on in the course largely autonomously; we can be no real judge of its quality, if quality is in reality determined by assessment frameworks which we do not employ. As such our teaching and materials, when they work, are, we could argue, only accidentally successful; their effectiveness intrinsically and inevitably limited by the conditions of their use. It is the autonomous nature of the course, we conclude, that makes it peripheral and largely inappropriate or irrelevant as a vehicle to achieve transformation.

WRITING IN SCHOOLS IS A SOCIAL PRACTICE AND WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THIS

Against this, the experience we capture in the vignettes prompts us to recognize that writing is already a part of "social practice," or what James Gee calls "Discourse"—"not language, and surely not grammar [which he differentiates as discourse], but *saying(writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations"* (1990, 1994, p. 142)—and therefore ideological. Discourse or social practice here is not a cool, theoretical concept, but something highly complex, instantiated, and dependent on the messy and changeable relationships of participants to each other, to themselves, to their space, to their texts. It creates insight around the moment, for instance, when one of "our" students resisted rewriting a short text by a fellow student because that student was known in the year group as "a really good writer." "Writing" here clearly emerged as part of social practice, of "having one's being" at this particular school, in this particular peer group. If we were to have any purchase in that classroom, we needed to recognize this.

A SOCIAL PRACTICE LENS ALERTS US TO LIKELY DISJUNCTIONS IN OUR UNDERSTANDINGS

Outside of a social practice perspective, our course might be expected to have run relatively smoothly: it was something that was perceived by teaching staff and by ourselves—both parties experienced in education—as meeting the identified needs of the students. The teachers and advisors we spoke to in setting up and

developing our approach gave us lists of concerns (structure, formality, argument) that were familiar to us; they also sometimes seized upon our materials as addressing precisely the problems they encounter in reading their students' scripts. We know little, however, about whether and how these materials might translate into their regular subject teaching. A social practice lens suggests that the apparent unity in our goals may well gloss disjunctions in our experiences and understandings that would show themselves only in local contexts of use. For example, we would not expect materials used in a classroom that sits outside the social practices of a school and by teachers—ourselves—who are also outsiders, to carry the same meanings if employed by subject teachers in subject classes for subject-based assessment ends.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES ARE LINKED BUT THIS ISN'T ALWAYS RECOGNIZED

Such intimate linking of goals and activities is not, though, convenient for educational planning, particularly where an apparently clear "issue" such as "student writing" has been identified. Nicholas Burboles in his paper "Ways of thinking about educational quality" (2004) observes that models of education that emphasize outcomes (which most models do, even if only weakly), often omit to recognize that outcomes are related to practices; they assume, that is, that one can substitute any kind of practice without affecting the achievement of the outcome. In fact, as we've noted, neither goals nor practices are autonomous: "Activities do not simply aim at goals, they partly constitute and reconstitute them" (John Dewey 1899/1980, glossed by Burboles, 2004). There can be different players in these processes of constitution and reconstitution too; the agency is not solely that of those invested with authority. So for example the students in our first location who came to the final week of the course, successfully resisted our plans for a writing exercise, and used the time instead to get ahead with their homework, something they'd earlier complained the course was preventing them from doing. Their expressed aim was always in any case different than ours—not an abstract "write better," but a clear "write better in exams."

WRITING IN TRANSITION IS A QUESTIONABLE NOTION

When we began our work with schools we framed it as being about "writing in transition"—an invitation to students to come, after school, into our university context, largely to think about writing in the ways we think about it. However the very notion of transition, resting on moving uni-directionally from one known to another known, came to seem problematic: we didn't really know much about the writing done in schools; at the same time, we were aware that any generalized notion of "writing in universities" was flawed. In addition, we noted

with some unease a tendency in discussions of "transitions work" (e.g., Ursula Wingate, 2007) to characterize what goes on in universities in terms of highly valorized activities (criticality, argument, research)—and by implication to suggest that none of these qualities are present or developed in pre-university education. We saw such characterisations as potentially contributing to a strongly teleological model of education in which long-term extrinsic goals (graduate employability for example) come to dominate the here-and-now experiences of students and their teachers, creating an instrumentality for writing we would not want to promote (see Mitchell, 2010). We picked up that others were voicing related concerns: Carol Atherton (2003), for example, pointed out that A-level English is not just a preparation for university English: many students don't go on to university or if they do, study different subjects. And Michael Marland (2003) was asserting that A-level experiences needed to be recognized as intrinsically valuable, and that the needs of higher education should not be allowed to obscure them. This thinking sensitized us to the limitations—and potential harm—of framing our work in schools as "transitions work."

CONCLUSION: WE NEED TO MOVE TOWARDS "TALKBACK"

Even practices that apparently achieve their intended goals, Burboles (2004) cautions, may have other unintended or unarticulated consequences. The more we have thought about our writing course whether offered at the university or—in an attempt to get closer to "where students were at"—in schools, the more we are persuaded that we need to attend to a more complex notion of both practice and consequence. We conclude that we cannot separate writing from its social practice; we must work within the contexts in which writing is produced and becomes meaningful, acknowledging "the values and attitudes towards print, and the socially embedded understanding of the purposes of a text these values and attitudes give rise to" (Boughey, p. 194). In practical terms this more ideological stance means working with teachers to understand and enhance *their* practices, rather than with handfuls of individual students. Our aim, we feel, should be a recasting of Lillis' "talkback" dialogue (2003, 2006) where we move away from interaction whereby we, the "HE experts," dispense the advice which will help "solve" students' easily defined writing "problems" to one in which the purposes of the school are primary, the responsibility is the teachers' and our role is to facilitate processes by which they can select, adapt and incorporate ideas and materials around writing into their everyday teaching and curriculum. This positions the students' and teachers' A-level experiences as being intrinsically valuable, and does not allow the needs or expertise of higher education to obscure them (following Marland, 2003). We feel we should—and do—resist offering even a set of recommendations on how to accomplish this type of dialogic relationship, as to do this would yet again detach writing

from its social practice.

WHY OUR CONCLUSION IS NOT MORE OBVIOUS

Ironically, what we describe here as an aspiration for our work with schools is the position we have always taken in our work in writing and curriculum development at our university (see e.g., Teresa McConlogue, Sally Mitchell, & Kelly Peake, 2012; Sally Mitchell & Alan Evison, 2006). We are intrigued to recognize that in our work with schools we adopted a model (the stand-alone course) that in other contexts we would have argued vociferously against. But the situation is instructive; it points, we think, to the persistence of a skills-based, decontextualized conception of writing and "problems with writing," and the instrumental value of this conception—even to us—as a way to make writing visible. Creating a course enabled us to begin to participate in the institutional framing and funding of widening participation work which is measured by the participation of individual students. It enabled us to respond to the attractiveness both to the university and to schools of an identifiable product that could be offered and taken up. In contrast to this "something for nothing" deal, the challenge of getting involved in complex school contexts and finding time and space to work with staff who are already working at full capacity, would probably have been beyond us. (This remains a significant challenge, after all, for many writing developers within their own institutional contexts.) Four years on, however, we are in a stronger position; in dialogue with teachers and university colleagues about our cautionary insights, equipped with a flexible/challengeable body of ideas around writing at A-level, and clearer and more adamant that the way forward for working on writing in schools is through embedded partnership *within their* myriad social practice contexts.

NOTES

1. Based at a large UK HE institution in the East End of London, we are part of Thinking Writing, a small team of educational developers who work primarily with academic staff around the roles that writing can play in learning in the disciplines.

2. The term "sixth form" refers to a non-compulsory two year course that students can choose to take at the end of secondary education in England and Wales; it often offers a route into further or higher education. The most common qualification that students work towards in that time is the "A-level."

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REFLECTIONS 6

"WITH WRITING, YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED TO COME FROM YOUR HOME": DILEMMAS OF BELONGING

Lucia Thesen

Lucia Thesen has been working in academic writing development at the University of Cape Town since the mid 1980s. In that time the institution has changed profoundly in some ways, providing access to historically excluded students, but not in others. The complexities of the shift from apartheid to a democractic South Africa underpin Lucia's practical and theoretical work and are reflected here in her exploration of the meanings of transformation.

TRANSFORMATION FROM A SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE

What does the transformative agenda in Academic Literacies look like from a cluster of neo-classical buildings that cling to a mountain, facing north, from the southern-most university on the African continent? My starting point is the quote in the title: "With writing you are not expected to come from your home." These are the words of Sipho, a student (quoted in Gideon Nomdo, 2006) who is reflecting on his university experience.[1] As a first generation working class black student in a historically English speaking, white, elite university,[2] a profound political transformation has created policy space for him that was not possible under apartheid. But for students granted entry through new policy spaces, formal access does not easily translate into what Wally Morrow calls epistemological access (2007). After a false start as a student of economics, he leaves the university, returning later to major in drama where he finds a disciplinary shelter, if not a home, from which he goes on to become an accomplished actor and director.

His words have stayed with me since I first read them in Nomdo's piece. The modality is strong, conveyed in the present tense as a statement of fact and generalized to "you." Is this true for the universal "you," or is it more of an expression of a particular moment, for a particular person? What about the expectations of writing that he refers to? How negotiable are they? Is there something necessarily estranging about the semiotic act of writing? Or is it only academic writing that he is speaking about—what Kate Cadman (2003) calls "divine discourse"—a project

of the Enlightenment that claims the capacity to be neutral, to be able to generalize and speak across contexts? Is it possible/necessary that in the act of academic writing we feel that we belong? What would we belong to, which places, histories, conversations? Does belonging matter for the academic literacies stance and does a better understanding of how we (both students and academics) might see ourselves as belonging contribute to its transformative agenda?

Academic literacies continues to offer an important academic shelter in my life as a teacher-researcher as it values situated practice. In the introduction to our book, *Academic Literacy and the Languages of Change* (Lucia Thesen & Ermien van Pletzen, 2006) we reflect on how our work at a South African university has been caught up in wider circles of context, foregrounding the political transformation from apartheid to the democratic era. The word transformation is widely used in all areas of public life in this country and it is always sharply loaded and contested. It is strongly associated with the historical break with apartheid, following the "elite pacting" (Linda Chisholm, 2004) of the early 1990s. There is no doubt that we have undergone a profound political transition from a pariah state to a nervous but so far resilient democracy where intense processes of negotiation between competing values and practices are the norm. It is hard to describe just how significant this shift has been at the symbolic level; at the same time, it is important to acknowledge how incomplete, uneven and problematic aspects of this transition remain, many of which are still the subject of on-going contestation. The gap between symbolically impressive policy and practice on the ground is particularly important. There are no easy answers about the role of education in these processes: all decisions seem to require a deep engagement with a series of dilemmas where superficial answers will surely let us down.

ACADEMIC LITERACIES: LAYERS OF MEANING

I think of academic literacies as theoretically informed activism to change practice. My understanding has been honed through years of convening a master's level semester-long course that focuses on academic literacies. Students who register for this course are typically academics from a range of disciplines, school teachers (the term academic literacy has recently made its way into schooling) or adult educators with an interest in language in the educational process. I tell students my value system regarding student text: I am not interested in hearing whether this piece of writing is wrong or right: I want to hear you say, "That's *interesting*. Why does it look like that? Has it always been like this? What is the writing/drawing/text doing? Is it fair? How might it be different? What would we need to know and do for it to be different?"

Through working with students I have identified three different intersecting, sometimes competing, angles on academic literacies. First is academic literacies as

a *shorthand for academic literacy practices*: this is a descriptive term for the vast and changing history of how the academy comes to value some forms of communication above others in different disciplines. These practices were there long before us, and they will remain long after we have gone, in forms that may be hard to imagine now. For now, writing is most strongly caught up in assessment and how the university communicates research. It hasn't always been like this. At times the oral has held sway over the written (William Clark, 2006). The written form is paramount, but digital literacies are escalating changes in both written and oral forms, shrinking the academic world in some ways but widening rifts in others. There is a geographical as well as historical dimension to these changes, as the anthropological tradition in Literacy Studies has shown so clearly. From a southern African perspective, time and space meet in colonialism and the end of apartheid, and the processes of postcolonial emergence are what shape us most strongly, as I shall expand on later. This foregrounds the dilemmas that come with writing and is what makes the student's comment about writing and home so resonant.

The second meaning of academic literacies refers to a *form of pedagogical work* that has a direction towards some ideal notion of the conventions of "good writing" in English. While we know from Meaning 1 that there is no settled unitary version of good writing that can be taught once and for all, there are many aspects of convention that can and must be taught if we are to embrace the access challenges of massification. We can't open the doors of learning and then let new students fail. Academic literacy/ies as work responds to the institutional refrain that "students can't read and write." This is the meaning that defines a crisis, that creates a problem to be solved, that raises state funding and pays my salary to do the kind of work that we do. In South Africa, this work has been tied to a political project of the transformation of higher education since the mid-1980s, to admit historically excluded working class black students to the university, and to make sure that although the playing field is not level on entry, we do enough to make sure that they graduate strongly enough to make meaningful choices at the end of the degree, some joining the university as the next generation of academics. This meaning is sustained by the myth that writing problems can be fixed (Brian Street's 1984 autonomous model). A distinguishing feature of academic literacy/ies locally is that it also involves systemic policy work. Our group helps shape policy, create flexible routes through the degree process, and in a recent language and academic literacy implementation plan, commits to working in partnership with academics in the disciplines. Academic literacy/ies is everyone's responsibility.

The overarching meaning of Academic Literacies (with capital letters) as *epistemology and a methodology* (Theresa Lillis & Mary Scott, 2007) is a cluster of tools and methods (and people), an emerging sub-discipline that takes a critical stand on communicative practices (particularly writing) in the changing university. It does not look only at induction to high status academic literacy practices of the day, but

looks at practice and how notions of reading and writing are expressed in particular time/place arrangements. Crucially, it is also interested in alternative, more socially just, innovative practices where new forms of hybrid writing can take hold. This meaning is most effective as a research-in-practice lens that ideally brings the first and second meanings of the term academic literacies into a productive relationship with one another.

And here I want to reflect on the student Sipho's words through the Academic Literacies lens to argue that a key part of transformative practice is a *process of engagement* that asks questions about belonging. This belonging refers to both global and local elements. It doesn't aim to settle these questions of belonging. If we are to take transformation further, we have to understand how students (and academics) engaged in knowledge-making weigh up their commitments to what they bring along, and where they hope to go, and what they want to be. Transformative practice calls for deep conversations about hopes and fears and attachments. This conversation needs openness to risk and risk-taking (Lucia Thesen and Linda Cooper, 2013). I begin by situating the quote from Homi Bhabha below in analysis of writing practices in the post-colonial university. This foregrounds the dilemma that underlies the comment about writing and belonging. You have to engage with academic writing, but if you succeed, you may have sold out or lost out on something valuable and defining that will also have implications for what counts as knowledge.

"ANGLICISED BUT EMPHATICALLY NOT ENGLISH" (HOMI BHABHA, 2004, P. 125)

Homi Bhabha explains the concept of the mimic man, how colonialism makes subjects who are almost the same, but just different enough for the difference to matter, to need "civilizing." The phrase "Anglicised but not English" signals the importance of postcolonial studies in trying to understand what transformative writing practices could look like. While speech is a universal human capacity, writing is not. Its materiality as inscription played a key part in colonialism. As Adrien Delmas writes, "Writing was the medium by which Europe discovered the world" and in the process it took on a range of "top down" technical, administrative, religious, scientific, and educational functions (2011, p. xxviii). The state of being ambivalent, torn between discourses, is what the postcolonial subject has to come to terms with. This ambivalence has arguably been relevant for a long time, and is certainly relevant since the inclusion of working class and women students in the academy. If the postcolonial situation is the condition of the majority of students now participating in higher education globally, it may be a perspective that has far more global relevance than either the Academic Literacies or composition studies traditions have thus far acknowledged.

The idea that writing pedagogy takes place in multilingual, diverse, contested, and congested "contact zones" (Mary Louise Pratt, 1999) is beginning to take hold in many settings. The contact zone is increasingly the norm as universities become more diverse with massification. Examples are Theresa Lillis and Mary Jane Curry (2010) in academic publishing and Xiaoye You's (2010) history of English composition in China, which argues that writing in what is locally called the devil's tongue (English) is actually writing in *our* tongue, as nobody "owns" a global language like English. You's history of composition is one way of making academic literacy work more "ethically global."

Bhabha argues that if we want to understand the global, we need to start with the local. The term "local" resonates in Academic Literacies, with its connections to the New Literacy Studies. The "second wave" of research (Mike Baynham & Mastin Prinsloo, 2009) in the literacy studies tradition with which the Academic Literacies position is associated pushed for studies of local literacy practices. As a South African writer, I have always struggled with this: on the one hand everything we do is so strongly situated in the local context. If one backgrounds context, reviewers and readers often ask for more local setting. But the more context is given, the more likely one's research is to be read as exotic, tragic, or lacking. We want to "come from home" but also to be read as contributing to global conversations. Achille Mbembe helps to explain this ambivalence in his thought-provoking piece on African "self-writing": discourses on African identity force people into "contradictory positions that are however concurrently held" (2002, p. 253). The shadow side of the Enlightenment has ascribed to Africa a meaning that is inferior—"something unique, and even indelible … and has nothing to contribute to the work of the universal" (p. 246). This inferiority bleeds into territory. African identity is translated in local, territorial, terms, but always in a racist discourse that creates the dilemma for writers: I am in/from/of Africa but I am also part of the world.

So "to come from your home" is not a straightforward matter of belonging. It points to territory, an earthing that gives one some recognition, but at the same time it racializes identity. So belonging is for many writers in the postcolonial university a space full of contradictions and dilemmas. Using Bhabha's concepts of "unhomed" and "hybridity," Bongi Bangeni and Rochelle Kapp (2005) have explored the experience of black students in a historically white institution looking at their state of being in-between, and how it changes over time, as they make their way through the undergraduate degree in the social sciences. The data for their paper is drawn from the richness of conversations generated by the question "What was it like to be at home during the vacation?" While the interviews they report on in this paper do not focus specifically on writing (they focus more on students' non-academic lives), there are moments where one of the students, Andrew, talks about how writing reflective pieces in various courses helped to

achieve some kind of integration and sense of a coherent self. Similarly, Sipho in Nomdo's article also finds a form of writing that he feels more comfortable with. This form is achieved through a combination of his writing and performance in Drama:

> I try to create a new form, even to recreate my own self because I feel I've been clouded by other things. There's a lot of things I need to unlearn. Writing actually gives me that opportunity. The pen, I don't use it that much, I use it in point form, this is the situation Drama gives me the physical ability to recreate myself, for example, playing somebody else that I'm not everyday but that I might be inside. (Nomdo, 2006, p. 200)

This is a different view of writing not as alienating, but as a tool for the project of the self, an exploratory, reflective and reflexive form of writing that is low stakes, and may or may not be part of assessment practices. It is also interestingly secondary to the primary means of communication, which in the discipline of Drama, is the body. Most importantly, it is feeling towards new forms, experimenting, imagining. Insights such as this remind us of the importance of hearing what projects of the self students are busy with, and how they bring their histories to the academy. The concept of "risk" and "risk taking" can help open up this kind of discussion and insight (Thesen and Cooper 2013).

A final reflection on my own theoretical belonging: the three angles I identify that make up Academic Literacies—changing practices, pedagogy, and emerging discipline—sometimes work together, and sometimes don't, and I'm comfortable with the tensions between them. I find them risky, but productive. I suggest that by belonging to the community of teacher-researchers in the Academic Literacies field, I am also able to belong to other theoretical conversations, in particular in this piece, to conversations about postcolonial ambivalence. Given that practices are so strongly rooted in historical and geographical (including translocal) contexts, it is important to keep the academic literacies approach alert and responsive, through deep conversations with others who are interested in the possibilities of the transformative "acts" in pr*act*ice.

NOTES

1. The dilemmas experienced by the student Sipho (a pseudonym) are described in Nomdo (2006) who uses Bourdieu to show how issues of class, race and language work for different students participating in a US-funded scholarship programme for black senior undergraduates..

2. The terms of racial classification, central to apartheid's project, are still relevant in public life, 20 years after democracy.

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AC LITS SAY …

Imperatives that have shaped my academic life (with apologies to Paul Morley and Katherine Hamnett). These T-shirts were designed by Peter Thomas and presented in a symposium at EATAW 2015: 8th Biennial Conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing, held at Tallinn University of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia, in June 2015. Image provided by Peter Thomas, Middlesex University, UK (p.thomas@mdx.ac.uk).

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WORKING WITH ACADEMIC LITERACIES

The editors and contributors to this collection explore what it means to adopt an "academic literacies" approach in policy and pedagogy. Transformative practice is illustrated through case studies and critical commentaries from teacher-researchers working in a range of higher education contexts—from undergraduate to postgraduate levels, across disciplines, and spanning geopolitical regions including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cataluña, Finland, France, Ireland, Portugal, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Key questions addressed include: How can a wider range of semiotic resources and technologies fruitfully serve academic meaning and knowledge making? What kinds of writing spaces do we need and how can these be facilitated? How can theory and practice from "Academic Literacies" be used to open up debate about writing pedagogy at institutional and policy levels?

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