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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the different discourses circulating within the Adult Learning Division, and in particular, the ESL Program and Basic Writing Course, of Monroe Technical College in Wisconsin. The paper considers those discourses that are related to the experience of a part-time ESL writing instructor. It examines discourse on multiple levels. First, the study looked at the institutional discourses circulating at the community college. Next, the study analyzed the discourse in interviews conducted with the instructor and program administrators to show how the level of affiliation with the institution that each informant displayed had material implications for the course. Finally, it identified and compared the cultural models these informants held about ESL students. In the case of the Basic Writing 3 course, the Open Door Discourse spoke most strongly to the well-educated, middle-class students who had been previously prepared to take advantage of the college's resources. The Sorting Discourse worked with the refugees and immigrants who were without the means to find what they needed in the institution. The level of affiliation to the institution manifested by the instructor and administrators' discourses underscores the importance for instructional staff to be integrated into the social worlds in which they work. Part-time instructors are generally prevented from enjoying such integration, however, thereby affecting the quality of instruction they provide to students. (Contains 16 references.) (VWC)

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Positioned by Discourse:

Obstacles to Effective Teaching in a Community College ESL Writing Class

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This paper examines the different Discourses circulating within the Adult Learning Division of a community college. In particular, I will consider those discourses that related to the experience of a part-time ESL writing instructor, which complexly and problematically positioned him vis-à-vis the institution. These competing Discourses (Gee, 1996) can be identified as the "Open Door Discourse," the "Sorting Discourse," and the "Alternative Learning Division Discourse," which includes an "ESL Discourse." Within the institution these Discourses both constructed and reflected the positioning of the students, instructor, and program administrators. As well, these Discourses affected the outcomes that students achieved in the Basic Writing 3 class, ranging from dropping out of the class to transferring to four-year institutions of higher education. Ultimately, 75 percent of the 18 students in the course dropped out, for a variety of reasons: their multiple goals and varying educational backgrounds; the instructor's part-time status and lack of support in the institution; and the division's reliance on part-time instructors to provide extra-curricular services to students.

Historically, two-year colleges have publicly espoused a variety of competing and conflicting goals, primary among them to provide students with a "second chance" to open the door to higher education. The number of students in community colleges has now surpassed 5.5 million (Shor in Tinberg, 1999, p. 52). A less public but equally strong mission of the community college has been to divert students away from more prestigious four-year institutions (Brint and Karabel, 1989). Thus partly because of its "open-door" policies, the community college's sorting function has caused it to hold subordinated status in the world of higher education. Within the community college itself, teaching

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"remedial" courses in basic writing and English as a Second Language (ESL) also holds subordinated status, as do the students in these classes.

Nonetheless, since the 1970s, the number of nonnative speakers of English, who often take such courses, has continued to rise in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998, 98-036). To serve these students, two-year colleges increasingly rely on part-time faculty, hiring an average of two-thirds of their faculty on a part-time or adjunct basis (Tinberg, 1999), a statistic that holds true for the college under study. Such reliance on part-time instructors creates consequences that are at odds with the "open-door" mission of two-year institutions and detrimental to the education of students and the working conditions of their instructors.

In this paper, I will examine discourse on multiple levels. First, I look at the institutional Discourses circulating at the community college I studied. Next, I analyze the discourse in interviews conducted with the instructor and program administrators to show how the level of affiliation with the institution that each informant displayed had material implications for the course. Finally, I identify and compare the cultural models (Gee, 1999; Strauss and Quinn, 1997) these informants held about ESL students. Such models affected both the classroom practice and institutional policies that isolated the instructor and deprived him of the support he needed to enact the community college's rhetoric. The cultural models also had direct consequences for students, many of whom similarly lacked institutional support in pursuing their goals.

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The Research Setting

The study consisted of a semester-long ethnographic observation of a Basic Writing 3 class at Monroe Technical College (MTC),[1] which is located in a medium-sized Midwestern city that also houses a large research university. Within MTC, all noncredit adult education courses, including ESL and pre-college, or basic, writing, are offered by the Alternative Learning Division (ALD). Like the other "basic skills" courses at the college, Basic Writing 3 is a noncredit course that is considered remedial. These basic skills courses are intended to prepare students to take the GED/HSED tests or to take college transfer or training courses, including freshman composition. Although the students in this Basic Writing 3 class were nonnative speakers of English, the course was officially classified not as ESL, but as a basic education course. For advanced ESL students, the basic skills courses offer the next step after the five levels of ESL the Alternative Learning Division offers.

The Basic Writing 3 Students

Approximately 18 students attended the class at the beginning of the semester, but only 4 remained by the end. It is important to comprehend the complex make-up of the class's student body, with highly variable educational levels and goals, and quite different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as its complexity presented a major challenge to both the instructor and the policies of the division. These students included 12 immigrants or refugees[2] and six students related to international students or post-doctoral fellows at the

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[1] The names of institutions and people in this paper are pseudonyms.

[2] The distinction between immigrants and refugees is difficult to make without knowing—and sometimes with the knowledge of—why people have emigrated to the United States. For example, the retired Russians in the class had fled the Soviet Union's anti-Semitic policies and practices; they could be called refugees.

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university, some of whose plans included returning to their countries. Of all students, 12 had earned at least bachelor's degrees, and five of these had graduate degrees. Many of those with advanced degrees were retired Russian Jews. Katarina, a younger Russian mechanical engineer married to an American accountant, planned to become an accountant herself.[3] All of the international student family members had at least bachelor's degrees. One of these, Minji, a Korean woman whose husband is a research sociologist at the university, already had a bachelor's degree and was about to begin a second one in music education. A family of three Palestinians who had grown up in the United Arab Emirates, Leila, Rana, and their older brother, Ali, were planning to enroll in one of the state university's four-year campuses. Of the refugees, Phia, a young Laotian man, had a diploma from a local high school, worked full-time at a plastics manufacturing company, and wanted to become a police officer. Ahmad, a young man from Sierra Leone, also worked full-time at a bakery and held a second job driving a taxi. He was attempting to pass the GED tests with the ultimate goal of going to college and becoming a lawyer.

The Basic Writing 3 Instructor

The course instructor was George Cleary, a white, middle-aged man who had taught English as a foreign language for more than a decade in Mexico, but had little preparation or experience in teaching second language composition in the United States. Cleary was hired three weeks into the semester because of scheduling problems with the

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However, the two younger Russian women were married to Americans and thus could be considered immigrants. Ahmad and Phia were refugees from the political situations in Sierra Leone and Laos, respectively. The Hasan family—Leila, Rana, and Ali—had left the United Arab Emirates in search of educational opportunities and to escape the discrimination that Palestinians face in the UAE.

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first teacher. Spring 1999 was Cleary's first time teaching in the Alternative Learning Division. At other MTC sites, he was teaching composition in the Arts and Sciences Division, and ESL to migrant Mexican workers. Cleary also worked as a medical interpreter about 20 hours a week, and had child-care responsibilities.

The Department and Division Administrators

A middle-aged, white woman originally from North Carolina, lead teacher Maureen Powell has worked at MTC since 1976. In addition to teaching, her duties include setting up classes, hiring instructors, budgeting, and choosing and ordering textbooks, supplies, and computers. Ricardo Garcia, the dean, has worked at MTC since 1986, for the first two years as ALD coordinator, then as dean. A middle-aged Chicano, Garcia is from Texas but has worked in other educational institutions in the Midwest.

Data Collection

The class met twice a week for two hours at each session, over a 14-week semester. Data were collected by ethnographic observations, with field notes taken for every class observed, except for those classes held in the computer laboratory. Audiotapes were made of the 13 classes observed in the classroom, but not the classes observed in the computer lab. Interviews were conducted with six students (three who left the course—Phia, Ahmad, and Katarina—and three who stayed—Minji, Leila, and Rana), the course teacher (twice), the lead teacher, and the dean of the ALD. Supplemental data collected consisted of course handouts and documents, student questionnaires and papers, program and institutional documents, and the textbook, *The*

[3] With the exception of Ali Hasan, the students described here were all interviewed for this study.

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Writer's Express (McWhorter, 1997), which was designed for native English speakers rather than second language learners.

Analyzing the Discourses Circulating at MTC

This paper will use different types of discourse analysis to look at three aspects of the discourses circulating at MTC and in the Basic Writing 3 course. First I will examine the Discourses (Gee, 1996) of the college, the ALD, and the ESL program as expressed in documents, observations, and the administrators' comments. Apart from these data sources, it is important to approach sociocultural discourse analysis keeping in mind Gee's (1996) concept of Discourses:

> Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. A Discourse is a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize. (p. 127)

Shifting from the broader frame of analyzing the institutional Discourses, I will next conduct an indexical, or deictic, analysis of the pronouns that the instructor and administrators used in their interviews. Deixis refers to grammatical elements of speech that indicate relationality between the speaker and the environment, including other speakers (Duranti, 1997; Hanks, 1996; Halliday, 1994). Clear forms of deictic expressions are the demonstrative words 'here' and 'there', which take their meaning *only* in relation to their environment. Personal pronouns also function as deixis, indexing both social bonds and rhetorical choices. As Besnier notes, "in all societies, pronouns are complex shifters par excellence, whose meaning is highly context-bound, multifarious, and prone to subtle manipulations by language users" (1995, pp. 144-45).

Clearly the words individuals utter are informed by multiple factors, including families, neighborhoods, cultures, social status and social languages, and the social parameters, goals, and other participants in a given speech situation. Patterns in the usage of deictic expressions may also shift within the discourse of one speaker depending on the topic and environment at hand. However, it is compelling to unravel the ways in which grammatical choices relate to and contribute to the material conditions under which we produce discourse.

My choice to analyze pronouns in the informants' discourse was not random. Rather, in multiple perusals of the interview transcripts, great variability emerged in pronoun usage among the informants. Furthermore, given the material conditions of the community college, the sense of institutional affiliation among agents in the institution functions as an important indicator of their involvement with its policies and practices. As Hanks posits, "indexicals prove the most obvious and perhaps the most central nexus between linguistic form and the situations of utterance production" (1996, p. 169).

Finally, this paper undertakes an analysis of the cultural models of ESL students in the informants' interviews, to link these models with the events and problems of the Basic Writing 3 course. Cultural models are images, metaphors, schemas, or storylines that exist partly in an individual's head and are partly represented in social and cultural mediating devices. They define what counts, for a given social or cultural group, as "normal" and "natural," for example, in being a first-grade reader, an immigrant, or a college instructor (Gee, 1999, Ch. 3).

Competing Institutional Discourses

The Institution *as* Discourse

It is important to consider how the Discourses of the Basic Writing 3 course, the Alternative Learning Division, and Monroe Technical College interplay and intersect with each other. Discourse conditions in this study included the sterile, windowless environment where the Basic Writing 3 class met, as well as the entire building of the ALD, a former high school. The ALD was left behind in this building when MTC moved to a larger campus on the outskirts of the city near the airport in the mid-1980s. This physical separation also speaks to ruptures in the institution.

Discourses express themselves through the agents involved in their production as well. For example, in the case of Cleary, the instructor, his habits of the dress present clues to the role of status in the community college environment. Without fail, Cleary taught wearing dress slacks, a button-down shirt, and a tie. In contrast, it is currently atypical for most (male) college professors to dress this formally. Several factors may relate to Cleary's decision to dress in this manner: the many years he spent teaching in Mexico, where professionals dress more formally than in the United States; his desire to show respect to his students; his desire to command respect from his students; and his embodiment of his own cultural model of a college instructor.

Other relevant material conditions, as noted, include the status of both students and the part-time faculty within the division and the institution. On a larger scale, MTC operates in a world in which two-year colleges command less respect, status, and resources than do four-year institutions. This subordinate status has material, intellectual, and emotional repercussions for the people who act within its boundaries.

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Discourses of the Institution's Mission

Institutional documents are useful sources of Discourses. According to its mission statement, Monroe Technical College "provides accessible, high quality learning experiences that serve the community." Thus a community-oriented objective appears immediately in the institutional discourse. This mission statement applies to the entire institution, of which the Alternative Learning Division comprises only one part. In many ways, the ALD operates quite separately: The majority of its classes are offered off the main campus, and there is little connection between the ALD and the credit-granting programs of the college. Within the ALD, according to Garcia, the ESL program serves "two major functions": "I think we play the two roles, [one] is to help people learn English, just to be able to survive on a daily basis, get their jobs, work with their families, and be citizens. And then we have the role of helping them to be successful and training in another education." The basic education courses of the ALD are meant to provide one point of crossover from these "survival" ESL courses to academic, program courses in other divisions of MTC.

Discourses of the Faculty and Curriculum

The mission statement notes that the college "offers intellectually rigorous studies facilitated by highly skilled faculty in technical and vocational skills, basic literacy and arts and sciences." However, based on this study, it is difficult to characterize the Basic Writing 3 course as "intellectually rigorous"; nor was its instructor "highly skilled." Further, to achieve its proclaimed goals, MTC "designs educational activities using up-

to-date research in education, business trends and student learning outcomes." Again, the instruction of Basic Writing 3 did not reflect an understanding of "up-to-date research in education [or] student learning outcomes," another point in the mission statement.

More realistically, the ALD's pamphlet describing the English as a Second Language Program specifies a curriculum that tends toward survival skills, as the pamphlet lists in increasing order of difficulty: "personal identification; money; shopping (for clothes & food); time; transportation; housing; directions; telephone; banking; health; community service; employment—finding a job, —on the job; clarification; social language; grammatical structure; listening/comprehension." This list of topics and skills related to "survival skills" would be commonly found in adult community-based educational programs. Its existence in the curriculum of an institution of higher education demonstrates the mixed nature of the ALD, and the vying objectives of the community college.[4] The ESL program's overarching goal "is to enable adults to communicate in English in day-to-day life and work situations. To help achieve this goal, students who can speak and understand spoken English adequately are assigned to Lab and other basic skills classes along with native speakers of English." The pamphlet implies but does not specify a scaffolding of ESL students into pre-college basic skills courses, again muting one aspect of the ALD's mission.

Institutional Discourses of the ESL Student

In the same way that institutional discourses present contradictory directions for the goals and curriculum of the college, its discourses about ESL students are conflicting.

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According to the mission statement, MTC "welcomes all individuals who can benefit from the services provided [and] supports students to choose and prepare for successful careers by assessing students' skills and needs." The ESL Program pamphlet identifies a narrower target population: "Adults whose native language is NOT English can attend classes to improve their English speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. ESL classes are open to adults who are American citizens, permanent residents or refugees." These excerpts describe both the open-door nature of the institution and its functional, work-related orientation to student outcomes. Yet in respect to the potential student population in the Monroe area, even this inclusive-sounding discourse excludes certain students, namely, those who are in Monroe either as international students at the university or their families. In reality, though, because of their cultural capital, some students in this category gained access to MTC's ESL courses, and became a sizeable portion of the students in Basic Writing 3. Their presence added to the challenges of teaching this course.

Discourses of Diversity at MTC

Like many institutions, MTC expresses a current concern with issues of diversity, which is interwoven into the college's approach to the curriculum as codified in its Core Abilities program. The pamphlet for students, "Core Abilities and Your Success" notes that "[MTC] teaches eight Core Abilities that support you as a life-long learner on the job, at home, and in the community. Core Abilities are integrated into each course throughout your learning at [MTC]." The Core Abilities are: communication; critical

[4] In fact, of students 'who participated in ESL classes, 42 percent did so as part of a college program" in 1995 population surveyed for the National Household Education Survey (National Center for Education

thinking; ethics; global awareness; mathematics; science and technology; self-awareness; and social interaction. Because the Core Ability became particularly relevant to this study is global awareness, I will elaborate on the definitions and uses of this Core Ability here.

Global awareness is demonstrated when students: "Express an understanding of the interconnections and interactions among people and systems . . . ; accumulate knowledge of and experience with people in their own and other cultures . . . ; describe the impact of the global economy on life, work, and opportunities; recognize the commonality of human experience across cultures; and recognize the influence of diverse cultural perspectives on human thought and behavior."

However, this Core Abilities program is not officially implemented in the Alternative Learning Division. Thus the community college's mission is enacted differentially depending on the student body and curricula of the institution's divisions. In discussing the relationship of the ALD with the degree programs of MTC, Garcia explained, "what we've been trying to get them to see is that when you need students, you can get them from us. And when you need to improve your retention numbers, guess who can do that." The 1999-2000 report of the Transition Committee, a program designed to help ALD students move to credit courses, states that "basic skills education students are promoted to the college as a source of global awareness and well-prepared and successful degree-credit program students." However, the ALD's attempts to promote its students have been rebuffed by the larger institution. According to Powell,

> We have tried to get other programs involved in, because we have these professional people who had experience in another culture and another setting, we have said, "Yeah, we've got these people. If you would like them to address your programs, please do so." We have, the programs have not, because everybody has global awareness as one Core Ability in every program. But they haven't

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Statistics, 1998, 98-036).

> welcomed the people into the classroom for some reason. . . . We had a woman . . . who was a policeman [sic] in Taiwan and we wanted to take her to the Police Science Department. She had been a policeman [sic] for ten years. And of course the Russians are in various technologies that they could speak to people.

Powell's words speak to the uneven implementation of the college's mission. Instead of integrating a curriculum of global awareness into its own courses, the ALD functions as a purveyor of "diverse" students who embody global awareness to the rest of the institution, the mainly white population of native English speakers at MTC.

Of interest in this discourse is the slippage among the various uses of buzzwords such as "global awareness," and "diverse" and "international" students. Garcia describes the ESL population in the ALD as "a variety of students with diverse backgrounds," but focuses primarily on their educational differences, instead of class, race, gender, religion, or other characteristics. He correctly attributes to the local university an international influence on the ALD programs: "In our program here in Monroe, it's more diverse because you have a university, so you have a lot of people that come from all over the world." The discourse of global diversity functions to obliterate more local concerns about racial relations by sidestepping the question of where African-American, Native American, and Latino/a students fit. ALD administrators cast their gaze on certain national and ethic groups more than others. For example, little discussion occurs about where the Mexican students, who comprise the largest numbers in entry-level ESL courses, end up. None, for example, were enrolled in the Basic Writing 3 course.

The mixed discourses of the institution and ESL students resonate with the variable discourses of affiliation of the informants. In the next section, I examine how informants' pronoun usage indicated the extent of their affiliation with the Alternative

Learning Division, and the consequences that such affiliation had for the Basic Writing 3 course.

Deixis as a Discourse of Affiliation

The following analysis of the use of the pronoun 'we' will explicate the ways in which the discourse of the informants demonstrates their affiliation with the Alternative Learning Division, its students, and its work. It is important to remember the role of the interviewer: In these interviews, speakers are discussing a less-than-ideal situation in which they are all involved to some degree, with an interviewer who is connected to the university, with its higher status.[5] The informants remain aware of the power differentials at work in the institution as well as between themselves and the interviewer. Multiple motivations and interests therefore are expressed in these discourses. As Hanks points out, "We have to separate the 'speaker' from the person who happens to be speaking. The former is a social role, whereas the latter is a social agent capable of occupying many roles" (1996, p. 201).

The discourse of affiliation with the ALD—represented by pronominal usage—ranged from that of the classroom teacher, George Cleary, who evidenced the least amount of affiliation, to that of the, lead teacher, Maureen Powell, in the middle, to that of the dean, Ricardo Garcia, whose discourse identified him the most strongly with the programs of the ALD. Although a statistical summary of pronoun usage provides only a shallow sense of the distribution of pronouns in these discourses, comparing these

[5] Except for the first interview conducted with Cleary in February 1999, the interviews all occurred near the end or after the semester.

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numbers is initially illuminating.[6] Figure 1 presents the variable uses of 'we' and their referents in interviews.

Informant	Referents for 'We' or 'Our'
George Cleary, Interview 1, February 1999 11 pages long 12 uses of 'we' or 'our'	Institution: 2 Teachers: 4 Class: 7
George Cleary, Interview 2, June 1999 19 pages long 7 uses of 'we' or 'our'	Students: 1 United States: 1 Family: 2 Institution: 3
Maureen Powell, Interview, 11 pages long[7] 41 uses of 'we' or 'our'	Self: 1 Basic Writing 3 Class: 1 Other MTC programs: 1 Alternative Learning Division: 38
Ricardo Garcia, Interview, 16 pages long 49 uses of 'we' or 'our'	Self: 1 Institution: 48

Figure *1: Number and Referents for Uses of 'We' or 'Our'*

Not only does Figure 1 demonstrate the wide range in incidence of the use of 'we' among these informants, from Cleary's 12 to Powell's 38 to Garcia's 49, but the breakdown of referents is also intriguing. The administrators' discourse refers frequently to the institution, while Cleary's almost never does. Given the dean's remove from the daily implementation of programs, Powell's responsibility for handling much of the ongoing activity of the division, and Cleary's part-time status, the positions these people occupy on this continuum make sense. However, an analysis of how they use pronouns to position themselves and others is more compelling.

[6] Pronoun counts include related grammatical forms of the pronoun, for example, 'their' and 'them' in addition to 'they'.

[7] Because half of the interview conducted with Powell did not tape record, the transcript of her actual utterances presents only half of her speech in the interview.

The Discourse of "We" in the Alternative Learning Division

In surveying overall pronoun usage in these discourse sample, the use of 'we' by both administrators (as well as 'I' used by Powell, and 'you' used by Garcia) emerged as notable—as, in contrast, did its relative absence in Cleary's discourse. As mentioned earlier, Powell uses 'we' to refer to the institution 38 times. In addition, her two subject omissions were of the pronoun 'we'; they are shown marked by [S] in this example, in which she describes the Transition Program:

> Technically, our definition of a Transition Student is someone who is in adult basic education, or ESL, who within a year, will be ready to enter another program. And so we mentor and monitor these people. We introduce them to, we have a get-together in which they talk to people, administrators from the [other MTC] programs. We have them talk to people with, in the counseling department and financial aid and sort of facilitate them getting applied into the programs. Uh, [S] take them out to visit programs [at the Airport Campus] and that kind of thing. And [S] get them in contact with our counterparts at [the Airport Campus].

In this example, and throughout her interview, Powell identifies strongly with the programs of the ALD. However, she is careful to disaffiliate herself from the other divisions of the institution, which have been a source of frustration to her, as noted above.[8] Perhaps because her duties include classroom teaching, she does not seem to distinguish herself here as an administrator from the other instructors.

Garcia also unsurprisingly uses the pronoun 'we' to indicate identification with the Alternative Learning Division. Commenting on Basic Writing 3, he says, "when we offer the writing class they tend to be filled by ESL, *ex*-ESL students, and then we tend to treat it as an ESL class. I mean, we shouldn't. It should be a writing class."[9] In the

[8] See Brint and Karabel (1989) for a discussion of empire-building among community college leaders.
[9] Italics indicate emphasis in oral speech unless otherwise noted.

following excerpt he too contrasts the Alternative Learning Division to the rest of MTC, by animating the voice of someone outside the division using 'you' to refer to the ALD:

> Well, we're not a program, therefore we look, like, oh, you know, you're different, you're grant [funded]. Oh, but you're really, you're really not about teaching. Your teachers aren't really teachers. Oh, but you know, your people should have gotten it [an education] before, but they didn't, before, so you know.

These deictic usages relate to the material practices of the classroom and the administration of the Alternative Learning Division partly by delimiting the possible and separating it from the unthinkable. In contrast, Cleary rarely used pronoun 'we', perhaps indicating his tenuous connection to the institution. In his first interview, he most frequently used 'they' in reference to students (65 times); in the second interview, he used 'I' most often (100 times).

Powell's consistent identification with the division allows her to take a long-term perspective that softens the rough edges of the failure of this course. She can classify the events of the semester in Basic Writing 3 as an isolated aberration compared with what 'we' normally do in the ALD. For the dean as well, pronoun shifts allow a widening of the focus from this particular course and semester onto the division overall. Garcia's mixture of 'we' and 'you' enables his uneven participation in the daily operations of the division and allows him to identify with certain parts and not others—such as the course under study.

Cultural Models of ESL Students in Circulation in the ALD

Although Cleary, Powell, and Garcia all articulated versions of service to students in their interviews, in practice, these conceptions assumed very different shapes. Much of this variation related to their cultural models of students—what students' identities and

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goals were, what makes "good" students, how ESL students differ from other students, and how the college was structured to assist them.

To unpack these models, we need a clear understanding of cultural models and their functions. Cultural models do not simply exist as mental structures; they "can have motivational force because these models not only label and describe the world but also set forth goals (both conscious and unconscious) and elicit or include desires" (Strauss, 1992a, p. 3). On an individual basis, "cultural models differ in not only the extent but also the kind of directive force they provide" (Strauss, 1992b, p. 217). Thus an instructor's cultural model of a good writing teacher may include spending a lot of time responding to student papers, holding conferences with students, and providing resources that enable students to choose topics to write about. The reality of the teaching situation for part-time community college instructors, however, may preclude the enactment of this model, creating internal conflict, frustration—and poor job evaluations.

The Instructor and Administrators' Cultural Models of ESL Students

George Cleary held two somewhat contradictory models of students, categorized by whether they were native or nonnative speakers of English. Between the two interviews, conducted when Cleary had just begun to teach Basic Writing 3, and after the semester ended, his opinions shifted about the two groups of students in the ALD and the Arts and Sciences Division. He began by using the term 'normal' to characterize the native English speakers he taught at the Airport campus (2/9/99). At the same time, he found the ESL students "much more eager, much more sociable, they're easier to teach . . . because they're friendlier" than the native English speakers (2/9/99). Unlike the native

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English speakers, ESL students "know how to be good students. . . They're interested in your presentation. They're not falling asleep. They're not distracted. They don't look disinterested [sic], just the opposite. They look very interested. They enjoy being here. They give you wonderful feedback and satisfaction as a teacher" (2/9/99). Academically, Cleary was interested in using students' cultures as part of the curriculum, to benefit others as well as themselves:

> It's wonderful to find a group like this. They're so varied. I mean, it's so rich in culture. . . . That's what I want to pull out of them also. Just get some of that culture into this classroom. And that also gives them a sense of self-worth. That they know that their culture is interesting to other people and is viable. (2/9/99)

Overall, Cleary categorized the ESL students in interpersonal terms as much as academic: They are "wonderfully expressive; they're whole dynamic people . . ."; "wonderfully agile mentally. . . [with] a good insight into things, a good perspective on their world, the world we all share in common." He highlighted that "they're marvelous people . . . . . They're very motivated; they're doing the work." By the end of the semester, however, the native English speakers at the Airport campus seemed to comprise "just normal classes. They start a class, and they finish it and they do the required work and pretty straightforward" (6/19/99). He contrasted that with the high drop-out rate and low rate of completion of work in the Basic Writing 3 course. He could only point to the Hasans and a few others who "stuck with it. They were just very consistent, had a very positive attitude, and they were there, doing the work. They consistently did the work." Nonetheless, he complimented the class as including "a lot of wonderful people who go along with whatever's being presented" (6/19/99).

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From these sometimes contradictory descriptions, aspects of Cleary's cultural model of a good student emerge. Consistently working hard headed the list, as did the interpersonal characteristics that often reflected Cleary's values: participating, acquiescing to the teacher, showing gratitude. However, an undercurrent of infantilization of the ESL students ran through Cleary's discourse. His assumption that these adult students need to have their "sense of self-worth" boosted reinforced Cleary's idea of the teacher as parent and the student as child. It may also reflect a larger cultural stereotype that positions nonnative speakers of English as dumb (in both senses) and childlike, not to mention geopolitical stereotypes of nonnative speakers of English as lazy, inferior, and unintelligent. Twice in the interviews Cleary quoted approvingly one of his own professors, who liked to say, "Little steps for little people." Although Cleary does not seem to intend any disparagement of his students by this statement, and despite his otherwise flattering statements about ESL students, it is hard to ignore its connotation.

Maureen Powell had perhaps the finest grained understanding of the range of ESL students attending ALD courses. In describing some of the program's southeast Asian students, Powell differentiated between generations:

> the youth are the typical American youth, . . . but the older people, it's a different issue. . . . The older men in particular had a fair amount of education . . . and a very sure sense of where, what they needed to do. They didn't push themselves too hard. They were always very polite. And sometimes they didn't think they were as good as they were, but they knew what they were going to do.

In contrast, many youth had been raised in refugee camps, where they lacked the funds to pay for school. Powell's overarching cultural model, however, included attributes more common to the well-educated students such as the Russians. For example, in reference to a question about whether Basic Writing 3 students learn to use academic databases on the

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Internet, she answered, "Most of the students in that class are not looking for that kind of thing yet." Yet of the 18 students in the course, only the three retired Russians and perhaps one or two other students had no further academic goals.

Related to his comments above in the institutional discourse of the ALD/ESL program, Dean Ricardo Garcia noted that MTC serves "a variety of students with diverse backgrounds," from Russians, who are "very well-prepared people in their language," to Hmong students, who are not. ESL students' goals may include "employment, self-improvement, or to enter a[n academic program] or to function within a program or a course setting or to be successful in, let's say, nursing or welding. . . . or just be better citizens and to be able to facilitate in family activities." Garcia mentioned that "one of the magnets for our students is the Business Division" of MTC. Within ALD, however, Garcia acknowledged above that ESL students are treated differently than native English-speaking students, without specifying how: "When we offer the writing class they tend to be filled by ESL, *ex*-ESL students and then we tend to treat that as an ESL class." Overall, although Garcia's model of ESL students seems vague, perhaps because of his purely administrative position, he seems to understand the core issues for ESL students in terms of their needs and goals as well as the treatment and services they receive.

Given the wide range of students attending the ESL/ABE courses at MTC, it is not surprising to identify variation within the instructor and administrators' cultural models of students. Nevertheless, these administrators and instructor seem to lack vision in terms of student aspirations, especially compared with the stated goals of the students in this Basic Writing 3 course. The circulation of outdated and stereotypical models of ESL and composition students reduces the likelihood that students will be offered

challenging courses. As expectations and support for ESL students in these crucial ALD courses are minimized, as in this study demonstrated, it is understandable that students would leave the class.

As for other consequences, in the Basic Writing 3 course Cleary did not realize his ideal of understanding students on an individual basis, which would have enabled him to better tailor the curriculum to their needs. Cleary's shortage of time and institutional support prevented him from getting to know his students, their goals, their writing, and their problem areas. His comments in the second interview about the difficulties related to his part-time status reflect this situation. He acknowledged the unsatisfactory nature of the course: "I feel that way, that it didn't live up to anyone's expectations, well, up to a few, a few people who completed the course, it lived up to their expectations. But it didn't live up to my expectations." Here he equates students' completion of the course with their satisfaction, a cruder measure than whether the course prepared students for future coursework in credit programs.

The cultural models of students that are previously held by instructors are likely to remain unchallenged when staff do not have, in Sternglass's (1997) phrase, the "time to know them." In such cases, instructors remain having a poor understanding of students' cultural and educational backgrounds, goals, and hopes. This lack of knowledge affects the curricular and methodological choices that instructors can make, and therefore the quality of instruction. In Cleary's case, it hindered his efforts to understand and leverage his students' disparate backgrounds and current situations and his ability to address their academic needs.

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Furthermore, by allowing into these courses well-educated students who do not fit the legal criteria for the type of students that MTC is charged with serving, the ALD deflects attention from the lesser-educated immigrant/refugee students who often need these educational services more than the well-educated "international" population. In practice, instructors may respond more comfortably to well-educated, middle-class students than to refugees/immigrants with greater and more varied needs. In this course, the latter group of students all dropped the course relatively early.

Conclusion: Obstacles to Effective Teaching

This paper has demonstrated the variety of Discourses circulating within Monroe Technical College, its Alternative Learning Division, and in particular, the ESL Program and Basic Writing course. It is perhaps inevitable that an institution charged with a contradictory mission, as is the community college, will result in displaying ruptures in both discourse and practice. In the case of this Basic Writing 3 course, the Open Door Discourse spoke most strongly to the well-educated, middle-class students who had been previously prepared to take advantage of the college's resources. The Sorting Discourse worked on the refugees and immigrants who were without the means to find what they needed in the institution. The level of affiliation to the institution manifested by the instructor and administrators' discourses underscores the importance to instructional staff of being integrated into the social worlds in which they work. Part-time instructors are generally prevented from enjoying such integration, however, thereby affecting the quality of instruction they provide to students. A lack of time is chief among the problems caused by institutional reliance on part-time instructional staff, for both the

part-time workers as well as the few full-time staff who must attempt to compensate for this shortage of staff. In such situations, getting to know students' backgrounds, goals, and aspirations becomes a luxury to all involved. Further, the ALD administrators predicated the success of supplemental student services on this degree of understanding on the part of the instructors. For instance, interventions such as the Transition Program rely on the instructor's knowledge of students so that they can be referred to the program. Ultimately, administrators and instructors operating with outdated cultural models cannot tailor curricular content, instructional methods, and additional services to the real people who inhabit their classrooms.

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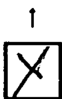 X		
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