Rhetorical Location and the Globalized, First-year Writing Program

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Abstract: The University of Michigan-Dearborn Writing Program and Writing Center serve an increasingly large number of recent immigrants, international students, and students who as children immigrated to the United States. The Writing Program and Writing Center have for a decade developed curriculum and support services geared specifically toward meeting the needs of this increasingly heterogeneous student body, while at the same time highlighting students' rich contributions to the learning and rhetorical contexts of the university and surrounding communities. Owing in part to the university's proximity to Detroit and in part to Dearborn's own particular history and demographics—a city with the highest proportion of Arab Americans in the U.S.—UM-Dearborn comprises a truly cross-cultural and transnational space. Within this rhetorical context, Writing Program curricula with "cross-cultural" and transnational emphases afford students unique opportunities to learn to write for public audiences with backgrounds, experiences and socio-political affiliations very different from their own.

Like many of my colleagues nation-wide, during the last decade I have witnessed a significant increase in the number of students in introductory, intermediate and advanced writing courses from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and diverse nations. This diversity has ensured a wide range of backgrounds and preparation for college-level writing. Students in the courses I have taught at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, a primarily commuter campus of about 9,000 students in the Detroit metropolitan area, hail from the suburbs and the city, and from dozens of nations including Ukraine, Russia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Oman, the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Gambia, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Spain, Mexico, and Argentina. Most domestic students are drawn from the city of Dearborn and suburban areas around Detroit, though in recent years and as part of its metropolitan mission and strategic plan to increase the current enrollment of 9,000 by about 30%, the university has aimed also to enroll more students from the city of Detroit.

"Cross-cultural" sections of Writing Program courses that involve students in collaborative projects with both local peers and peers overseas – especially courses focusing on cultural difference and on how such difference can affect experiences with literacy and with the learning process through, for example, composing and peer reviewing literacy profiles of overseas partners—provide students with opportunities for learning to "construct a responsive public" for their ideas. In other words, as students in the transnational classroom work with peers from other national contexts, they engage in "glocal" public-sphere building, a task faced by "all speakers and writers who aspire to intervene in society" (Wells 154).

As director of the Writing Program and Writing Center from 2006 until 2012 and as faculty member, I have been awed, inspired and challenged by my students and the richness of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Some of these students have been refugees, having also survived exceptionally difficult journeys on their way to the States. Others have served as translators for the U.S. military, or are veterans of the military themselves. Many have been non-traditional students, most often with children and frequently with full-time jobs in addition to their college coursework. In particular my students include a growing number of both recent immigrants (including a small but increasing number of international students on visa) and those who as children immigrated to the United States and Michigan with their families.

The Writing Program and Writing Center have for more than a decade developed curriculum, such as cross-cultural and transnational sections of writing courses, and support services geared specifically toward meeting the needs of this increasingly heterogeneous student body, while at the same time highlighting students' rich contributions to the learning and rhetorical contexts of the university and surrounding communities. Owing in part to the university's

proximity to Detroit and in part to Dearborn's own, particular history and demographics—a city with the highest proportion of Arab Americans in the U.S.—UM-Dearborn comprises a truly cross-cultural and transnational space affording unique opportunities for students' learning to write more effectively for public audiences—i.e., audiences with backgrounds, experiences and socio-political affiliations very different than their own.

As a small, regional campus living in the shadow of a flagship campus only forty miles away, however, a local narrative of institutional identity that commonly circulates is: Dearborn is not Ann Arbor. My university, where about sixty percent of undergrads are transfer students, does not in fact dwell in the shadow of its larger and more prestigious counterpart: it's really not close enough—either in terms of geography, demographics or resources—to claim such status. The one exception is the College of Engineering and Computer Science, which as the most highly resourced unit on campus could claim legitimate, in-the-sunshine status in its own right. This makes for an interesting reality given the number of Dearborn faculty who have close ties or reside in Ann Arbor, and the quasi-counter-narrative that appears on billboards I pass on my way to campus each day heralding "the Dearborn Difference" as, simply, "U-M excellence, close to home."

While this local narrative at times can seem like a lament—Dearborn is not Ann Arbor in terms of resources, prestige or traditional, academic "preparedness" of students—it also references points of pride: our undergraduate students are rich in life experience and cultural and linguistic heterogeneity not mirrored in Ann Arbor. Dearborn's many first-generation, multilingual and Generation 1.5 students encompass the more than forty percent of students using the services of the Writing Center who also identify a language other than English as their first or "home" language, and this was the case even prior to the recent push to increase enrollments of international students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

On my campus, the creation of the English Language Proficiency Program (ELPP), circa 2012, and expansion of its institutional home in the Office of International Affairs (OIA) was a consequence of the push to increase university enrollments and attendant revenues. There are approximately 50 international students currently taking classes in the ELPP, primarily from Oman, Saudi Arabia and China, among about 700 international students in all (most of them on the graduate level). The program's recent successful accreditation bid to CEA (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation) was geared specifically to increase those numbers: such status made the ELPP eligible to apply to the federal government to issue ESL I-20 visas, and so increase enrollments by attracting students not yet provisionally admitted.

This "Dearborn Difference" in our students' backgrounds profoundly shapes not only students' and faculty's experiences in the classroom, but also faculty's research and administrative work. This is an institutional narrative *based on student identity* that is so powerful as to be almost foundational.

When, for example, students in cross-cultural sections such as mine at the U of M-Dearborn, engage in collaborative projects with overseas peers in France, Lebanon, or South Africa, composing—and as importantly, peer reviewing—analyses of literacy experiences of their partners, they are leveraging their own identities as immigrants, refugees and second-language learners (see, for example, Willard-Traub). In such projects, students come to understand their own experiences through the "eyes" and experiences of another – though the experience of being perceived as different is generally a new one only for monolingual, "mainstream" students who may have never traveled outside of Michigan. Often students also are asked to reflect on how they might act on this "new" portrayal of their own experiences. In such transnational classrooms, assignments such as composing and peer reviewing literacy narratives with overseas partners thus operate in accord with the expanded notions of publicity, authenticity and efficacy in public rhetoric and writing pedagogy described by Brian Gogan: "publicity" defined as the process of "engaging a public [rather] than [as] the product's reach" (541); "authenticity" as the "practices by which writers and readers rhetorically legitimate reality" (543); and "efficacy" as "participation toward change" (547).

Writing Program History & Goals

As director of the Writing Program and Writing Center from 2006 to 2012, I had stewardship over a curriculum that includes eight general education courses taught by about 20 adjunct lecturers and supported by 12-15 Writing Center undergraduate consultants. Prior to 2006, Composition and Rhetoric faculty, including the Writing Program director and assistant director, were housed in the English Language & Literature discipline, within a very large Humanities department. In fall 2006 the Writing Program began functioning as a College Wide Program (CWP), with an independent budget administered by the dean's office, and with the director attending regular CWP directors' meetings and reporting directly to the dean of the College of Arts, Sciences & Letters.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, Composition and Rhetoric became its own voting discipline, coinciding with the formation of two new departments out of the much larger predecessor: the Departments of Literature, Philosophy &

the Arts, and Language, Culture & Communication—the latter the home of the Composition and Rhetoric discipline. Members of the discipline function as an executive committee for the Writing Program, which in addition to offering general education courses offers workshops and related services for students and faculty across the University, oversees the Writing Center, designs and manages the placement exam taken by all incoming students, and sponsors the campus Writing Awards. Initiatives during my directorship included expanding and revising the introductory writing curriculum (described in part below); increasing the number of locations for the Writing Center from one to four; revising the placement process to increase validity and reliability of decision-making and take into account increasing numbers of second-language students; and further developing a range of substantive professional development opportunities for part-time faculty.

In 2012, as Writing Program director, I worked with a faculty committee to articulate a new structure for the relationship between the discipline and the Writing Program/Writing Center (WPWC) as a College-Wide Program. This structure aimed for a distributed leadership that included the roles of Writing Program Director, Assistant Writing Program Director, Writing Center Director, and an advisory committee consisting of tenured, tenure-track and adjunct instructors. In 2010 the discipline developed a Certificate in Writing, and since that time has been developing upper-division courses as we plan for a major in Writing & Rhetoric. Recently developed/forthcoming courses include a course in pedagogical theory and practice, service learning writing, professional writing, and transnational literacies. The discipline also offers writing courses in language use, creative writing, and theories of writing at the upper level.

Explicitly formulated goals for the Composition and Rhetoric discipline encompass the interconnected work of the discipline and the Writing Program, and emphasize opportunities for students to study and practice the allied goals of community-based/public writing pedagogy and writing in "global" contexts:

- Build an understanding of literacy, the writing process, and rhetorical theories as objects of academic inquiry
- Teach strategies of reading, interpreting, and composing diverse creative, academic, digital, and workplace texts
- Provide opportunities for community-based and integrative learning
- Study writing and language in local and global contexts

Unfortunately, declining enrollments in recent years (college-wide, though not necessarily in the Writing Program) have led very recently to a drastic reduction in resources for the Writing Program's work. At the same time that the diversity of student background and experience have continued to increase, fewer full-time and tenure-stream faculty have fewer resources to continue initiatives related to, for example, the professional development of part-time lecturers teaching the bulk of our courses.

A Globalized Context

Generally, one lecturer and one or two peer consultants in the Writing Program and Writing Center at any one time are bilingual. By contrast, the undergraduate student population is culturally and linguistically diverse even in the absence of growing international recruiting, and includes English language learners and Generation 1.5 students from families with roots in countries of the Levant and Middle East (Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Palestine) as well as Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.

As WPA, in 2009 I instituted several themes around which particular sections of our introductory and other writing courses might be organized: multimedia writing (MMW), community based writing (CBW), and cross-cultural writing (CCW). These themes grew first and foremost out of the explicit teaching interests of our faculty. For example, several faculty members had developed service-learning courses as part of or subsequent to their fellowships with the cross-campus Civic Engagement Project. These were courses at both the upper and lower level, and involved partnerships with a range of Detroit area non-profit organizations. Several faculty, myself included, also had interest and/or experience in teaching in other national or transnational contexts, and others were pursuing teaching interests or further graduate education related to new media technologies.

Therefore, secondly, and subsequent to the development between 2007 and 2009 of new learning outcomes for most of our courses, the themes above also reflected how many faculty were practically approaching these learning outcomes in their courses.

A third and most important impetus for creating cross-cultural writing (CCW) sections in particular, however, was to connect the curriculum with the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of domestic students already on campus, leveraging that diversity in the learning of writing and rhetoric.

Specifically, CCW sections have been of two types: those involving a substantial transnational component that has

students collaborating with partners in countries such as France, Lebanon and South Africa; and those without a transnational component but which nonetheless focus students' attention on how texts—both those students write themselves and those they read—attend to globalized contexts, exigencies, and audiences. Even when cross-cultural sections do not involve an explicitly transnational component they focus broadly on the nexus among rhetoric, academic inquiry and culture.

At the same time we began to offer such cross-cultural writing sections, the Writing Program also was working with the Office of International Affairs to develop "bridge" sections of basic and first-year writing courses that would be available to international students (these courses a precursor to the ELPP). The Writing Program's first foray into cross-cultural courses was also my entry into transnational teaching: students in an intermediate expository writing course I taught in Fall 2009 worked collaboratively with peers in France on a business memo assignment as part of the course's focus on rhetoric, genre, and culture—with the latter being defined as academic/disciplinary, professional, or national culture.

Students in this 2009 course were given a common, scenario-based writing assignment that asked them to compose (in small groups of three or four) a professional memo to a work-place audience based on the specifics of the scenario. My students then worked with small groups of second-year, professional writing students in France to peer review each other's collaboratively authored business memos. (While the French institution is a French language university, students in this particular class work in English—though English is a second, or even more commonly a third language, for them.) Students participated during class time (my colleague and I had succeeded in scheduling our courses synchronously, despite the time difference) in discussions about each other's drafts over Skype, having first provided written feedback to each other in response to detailed peer review guidelines.

On the U.S. side, L2 students in this class were speakers of Arabic and French mainly. Several were mothers of young children—among other nontraditional students, and traditionally college-aged, monolingual students. All of these students struggled with both academic English and perceptions of themselves as less capable students because of their English language ability. In the context of this collaborative project with partners in France revolving around a business writing assignment and peer review of that assignment, however, my French colleague and I have demonstrated through an examination of students' written reflections and other artifacts how students came to see themselves significantly differently in terms of linguistic ability, and how they developed an awareness of the cultural and indexical power of language (Willard-Traub & Hammouda).

Furthermore, my colleague and I have found evidence that such a cross-cultural and transnational exchange can foster an awareness of what Eileen Schell (2006) has termed "rhetorical location" (p. 168)—an arguably very important concept for students tasked with writing with and to audiences beyond the university. Awareness of rhetorical location refers to an awareness that forging an effective relationship with a particular audience also must involve articulating a relationship to the culture(s) and language(s) of the communication context. In my class, as students communicated with their partners and gained more understanding of their peers' ideas, circumstances, experiences and context, they not only gained more understanding of themselves and their situations as writers: they also constructed and entered into a mediated, transcultural, and at times translingual community that (further) approximated a public, 21st century audience. This is "headachy, heart-pounding work" (Welch 476), an approximation of the "attenuated, fragmented, and colonized" (Wells 154) public sphere that is a reality for all writers. My L2 students, for example, in drawing on their first or "home" languages in order help translate between U.S. and French peers, were made more aware and appeared more critical of their role and position as writers, of expectations and conventions, and of possible alternatives for communicating their ideas, which in turn helped them to realize that as writers they make choices about strategies they could contest, negotiate and/or adapt as they practiced their agency (Bourdieu, 1977) within settings both academic and public.

Over the last seven years, Dearborn faculty along with colleagues in France, Lebanon and South Africa have been involved in various cross-cultural and transnational teaching projects. These projects have engaged students in a range of collaborative activities via technologies like Skype, email, and Facebook, and have included composing and peer reviewing collaboratively-authored business memos; composing literacy profiles based on interviews of overseas partners; working (for writing center tutors) with undergraduates overseas in creating what I describe as "tutoring collaborations"; and exploring the potentials of digital story-telling for transnational teacher education. The courses involved have included lower-division writing courses, one of which serves primarily transfer and multilingual learners (the same course I taught in 2009); a 300-level expository writing course enrolling many multilingual and non-traditional students; and an advanced course in pedagogical theory and tutoring practices for undergraduate peer tutors hired to work in the writing center. Each course engaged students in at least one assignment that had them collaborating with university peers in another national and cultural context, and in multiple opportunities to reflect on the quality and significance of those experiences. Given the "globalized" public audience students are writing for and with, these sections all have repositioned students' complex linguistic backgrounds as assets, rather

than always conceiving of them as deficits; and they were pedagogically designed not simply as a "nod to" students' complex backgrounds and identities but rather as based *epistemologically* on a study of language use and multilingualism, and on the connections among writing, rhetoric, and culture. Such sections simultaneously also take into account at least some of the realities of the 21st Century "managed" university, as they comprise part of a curriculum that speaks directly to students' specific backgrounds and lived experiences, thereby building an ethos for the study of language and writing independent from—but not in denial about – neoliberal and economic agendas which often drive increased recruiting of international and other students.

A relatively common theme emerging from these varied projects has been some students' tendency—at least initially, and regardless of assignment specifics or level of course—to rely on overgeneralizations and simplifications about their overseas partners' experiences and contexts. This has been true particularly for white, monolingual "mainstream" students – i.e., those students who arguably might learn the most from such transnational partnerships about how to collaborate and communicate across difference, about how to *think rhetorically* about contexts of language exchange, but who arguably also are less experienced in engaging with otherness—in both academic and public settings. Incorporating multiple opportunities for reflection that make manifest for the students their own (and other's) assumptions therefore has been crucial in each instance (opportunities which also, following Bourdieu's notion of "epistemic reflexivity," make more visible assumptions embedded in educational and global-corporatist structures) (Bourdieu 36).

In these teaching projects and in the development of "cross-cultural writing" sections of composition courses generally, my colleagues and I therefore have tried to create opportunities for substantial reflection in order to develop an awareness in students of their own rhetorical locations. Working across not only national, institutional and linguistic borders but across disciplinary and classroom borders as well, these projects have comprised in many ways very complicated communities of practice for students. These communities of practice mimic in robust ways – and even embody—a "public" which is "not simply a neutral container for historical events," but rather is a sphere with "its own history, its own vexed construction, its own possibilities of growth and decay" (Wells 154).

My own experience over the past several years with cross-cultural and transnational pedagogies that emphasize students' collaboration with peers across multiple kinds of "borders"—cultural, national, institutional, disciplinary and linguistic—suggests that such pedagogies help to create a significant *threshold potential* for student learning, and for the transferability of that learning as well. I draw the term "threshold potential" from the field of neurobiology: in the body's central and peripheral nervous systems, the threshold potential comprises not just an important but a required, charged *context* within which nerve cells are able to function to regulate physiology and produce conscious action. Distinct from (but nevertheless related to) the idea of "threshold concepts" articulated by Jan Meyer and Ray Land—who have compared such concepts to portals which "open up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something" (p.1)—and which in recent years has been extended and theorized in important ways by a range of scholars in writing studies (see for example Adler-Kassner and Wardle) the idea of *threshold potential* I am proposing has to do with the necessary—albeit not always sufficient—*contextual* elements required for rhetorical learning and for subsequent transfer of learning to other contexts.

Though not without limitations, cross-cultural and transnational classrooms provide opportunities for such rhetorical learning. Such pedagogies help students articulate new understandings of writing—what it is and how it's practiced; and these pedagogies help students reflect in profound ways on the "work" writing can accomplish, both within and beyond the classroom and the university. As significantly, students in cross-cultural and transnational classrooms come to articulate a sense of change in their own identities as writers and learners. Further, the transnational classroom provides just such a threshold potential for student learning, for three interrelated reasons.

First, the cross-cultural or transnational classroom is explicitly heteroglossic in nature: it makes more visible to students the struggle between institutional ideologies and discourses, and the other (public and private) discourses a writer brings with her into the academy—illustrating, in other words, what M.M. Bakhtin would call the tumult of social heteroglossia (271-272). This type of heteroglossia is one particular example of "socially situated language use" in which there is, in fact, much more at stake for the writer than simply language, for she must "simultaneously *say* the 'right' thing, *do* the 'right' thing, and in the saying and doing express the 'right' *beliefs, values, and attitudes*" (Gee 140) in order to attain (or work to maintain) membership in the complex community of practice comprised by the classroom.

The cross-cultural or transnational classroom is also heteroglossic in the sense that it is very often a translingual space. Even when students do not engage in specific, collaborative assignments with peers overseas, because so many of them are multilingual, L2 and generation 1.5 students, ours are classrooms where the power and privilege attached to certain language(s)—but not others—is made material. In the cross-cultural writing courses I have taught, for example, readings have included Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue", Rasma Haidri's "Urdu My Love Song", Lisa Delpit's "Other People's Children", and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderland/La Frontera*, and book length reports of

transnational research such as Daniel Wilkinson's *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal and Forgetting in Guatemala*, Lawrence Weschler's *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* and Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary*. Along with assignments such as researching and writing a literacy auto-ethnography, these readings have provided springboards for discussion about the intersections among language, literacy, rhetoric and material experience. This reading and writing provide students opportunities for exploring the power of language to build relationships or to dominate or coerce, and for exploring how language is inextricably tied up with identity. When students however are also collaborating with peers overseas—for instance writing a literacy narrative or profile of their partners –the power of language to include and exclude and the privileged status of (standard) English monolingualism and standard academic English is made even more visible. A cross-cultural/transnational approach to teaching thus meets the criteria of "honoring the power of all language users to shape language to specific ends; recognizing the linguistic heterogeneity of … users of language … ; and directly confronting English monolinguist expectations by researching and teaching how writers can work with and against, not simply within, those expectations" (Horner et al. 305).

Second, in addition to its multiply heteroglossic nature, the cross-cultural or transnational classroom provides a threshold potential for student learning because of the overseas, real-world audience it provides for students' work. More specifically, such collaborations provide students with an "external gaze" for their work, leading to deep self-reflexivity: "one needs always the eye of the other to recognize (and name) oneself … the external gaze is a compensatory way of returning a failed inward gaze." (Phelan 15). Especially when such an external gaze or different perspective is incorporated into the writing, students are prompted to engage profoundly with their own situatedness, motivations and biases – what Pierre Bourdieu has termed *habitus.* As in community-based or service-learning writing courses but here with additional emphases on cultural, linguistic and national difference and boundary-crossing, the self-reflexivity resulting from such collaborations can help students confront what Bourdieu has identified as the scholarly bias "more profound and more distorting than those rooted in the social origins or location of the analyst in the academic field"—that is, the "*intellectualist bias* which entices [the writer] to construe the world as *spectacle*, as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically" (39). Prompted by this external gaze, students are no longer spectators but active participants in constructing the terms of their own learning as they come into intimate contact with texts or overseas peers with dramatically different cultural perspectives, and as they inscribe those perspectives into their own analyses.

Further, students seeing the focus of their writing as a concrete problem or "involvement" to be explored practically rather than as a spectacle to be observed and interpreted from a distance emphasizes for them the way in which as writers they are always a part of a particular relationship with their audience(s). The student in a cross-cultural or transnational classroom (not always, but often) recognizes her relationship with her audience in part because she sees that audience as fully distinct from herself. To use another of Bourdieu's terms, she sees her audience as inhabiting a distinct "field" (or fields) (Hilgers and Mangez 5)—for example, a very specific academic, national and/or cultural-linguistic field she has yet (if ever) to enter. Transnational writing pedagogies, in other words, rely significantly on students reflecting on their learning and collaborations with distinct others (for example, see Arnold et. al.)

Third, the transnational classroom specifically provides a threshold potential for student learning because such collaborations with overseas peers are almost always as much about struggle as they are about dialogue. From the logistical considerations of using digital media across several time zones, to the practical obstacles that come from the need to negotiate language differences, to the kinds of misunderstandings and tensions emerging from differing socio-political and historical backgrounds, cross-cultural transnational collaborations are potentially filled with setbacks and "critical incidents" (Robertson et. al.). As such, the cross-cultural classroom, like public writing pedagogy, provides opportunities also for the kind of learning that takes place when "attempts to make voices heard are *foiled*" (Welch 476). Such a classroom strongly invokes the Bakhtinian notion of dialogue as "struggle" rather than as "conversation." In such collaborations, when two different but overlapping sets of "internally persuasive discourses" (Bakhtin 342) meet and struggle with each other within a "zone of contact" (Bakhtin 345), ideological development (on all sides) can occur, preparing the ground for the transfer of learning.

When students in CCW sections attend to the dispositions and beliefs of their partners in their writing, in other words, they are being made aware and sketching the contours of *their own strategies* for "`cop[ing] with unforeseen and ever-changing situations'" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 18) out in the world—in this case, the unforeseen and dynamic relationships with their partners. These are strategies that are historically constituted and "systemic, yet ad hoc because they are 'triggered' by the encounter with a particular field"– in this case the field of the cross-cultural classroom, which itself becomes a "*space of play*" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 19) and agency for students.

In short, cross-cultural writing sections demonstrate that the socially situated language use engendered by profound heteroglossia; the self-reflexivity accompanying an "external gaze"; and the individual, ideological development that

ensues from one (or more) critical incidents in the transnational classroom together can provide students (and instructors) with the threshold potential—the necessary degree of charged context—required for thinking in new ways about what writing is, how it is done, and what it can accomplish. This learning, in turn, can set the stage for the transfer of that knowledge to other contexts.

Institutional Context Matters

Cross-cultural and other themed sections of writing and rhetoric courses at UM-Dearborn grew out of an articulation of a more specific identity for writing courses that also dovetailed with broader institutional initiatives. Hence our theme of community-based writing picked up on the success (and higher administration's support) of a campus-wide, faculty-driven Civic Engagement Project which had included substantial participation from Writing Program faculty (both full and part-time). These community-based writing sections moved civic engagement and service learning opportunities into first year writing courses. Similarly, multi-media writing sections both supported several of our new learning outcomes and dovetailed with campus efforts to build programming in areas such as screen studies and digital media.

Our development of cross-cultural writing (CCW) sections, however, was positioned to lead—rather than follow— wider campus curricular initiatives. Though the Office of International Affairs had grown over a number of years, the English Language Proficiency Program (ELPP) was only starting to be conceptualized at the time we instituted CCW sections. (The international students who already were on campus were mainly on the graduate level in programs in engineering.) CCW sections of various courses—enrolling undergraduate, monolingual and domestic, L2 and Generation 1.5 students who chose these sections rather than being placed into them (as Matsuda and Silva alternately have described)—highlighted writing, rhetoric and academic literacy as both objects of inquiry and intellectual pursuits, and also spoke to the extant (though seemingly undervalued) "domestic" internationalism already on campus.

In the years since 2009, CCW sections of various courses have been taught by a handful of full-time and part-time faculty. The sections tagged "CCW" have involved students in examining literacy and rhetoric as cultural enterprises, and have involved students in collaborations with partners in France, Lebanon and South Africa. Bruce Horner suggests that WPAs "articulate the value of the courses in their programs in terms that resist tendencies toward the commodification of writing and of the learning and teaching of writing" while at the same time they respond "to the effects of globalization" (71). CCW sections, including those that involve transnational collaborations, focus on the links among language, writing, and culture, revealing the ways in which the conventions of western academic discourse grow out of western culture and contextualizing those conventions among multiple, other approaches to both academic and extra-academic or public writing.

For example, most recently I have taught with Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary* in my CCW sections. The first and only memoir by a Guantánamo detainee, this best-selling book was published in January 2015—with numerous redactions—from a 466-page handwritten manuscript. The text embodies an arguably "globalized" materiality, exemplifying for students how the genre of diary or autobiography that Slahi employs challenges the (epistemologically and ethically privileged) position of third-person discourse, for example. At the same time, however, Slahi's observations—written in his fourth language, a language he learned while in detention—work in conjunction with editor Larry Siems's impeccably researched footnotes to demonstrate the mutually informing logos and pathos of first-person narrative, in ways effective even for very complex and public audiences. Students in two classes in Fall 2016 also had the opportunity to meet Larry Siems and discuss with him his experience editing the book, and his wider human rights advocacy work.

This semester culminated in students' composing a "researched advocacy" project geared toward a focused, public audience. While with a few exceptions the genre students chose for this project was a more traditionally framed, academic one, in future iterations (in particular for upper-level courses) I plan to encourage students toward broader ranges of academic genres such as essays and autoethnographies, and public genres such as podcasts, blog posts and digital films, as they imagine audiences both local and "global." Leveraging multiple media and genres will help students conceive of publicity as a *process* of engaging a public rather than as simply a requisite "condition" (Gogan 538) for success.

In thus challenging received U.S. academic cultural assumptions by not only studying but also practicing writing that embodies difference, these CCW sections in effect "negotiate conflicts between specific language users' and global market fundamentalists' definitions of writing [i.e., defined as western academic discourse and mediated by standard American English] and its value, both thematically and practically, in the writing produced" (Horner 71-72).

Conclusion: The threshold potential of cross-cultural curriculum

Narratives of institutional identity circulate within and beyond the boundaries of campuses, while simultaneously intersecting with market metaphors. The year after I stepped down as WPA, I served on a university-wide task force charged with reconceptualizing general education on our campus, work which led to a nascent, university-wide, upper-level writing requirement. An interesting experience in many ways, in retrospect what strikes me now is that 1) the "implementation" committees which followed the task force approached in a very pro-forma or "efficient" way putting into place the upper-level requirement, drawing very little on the disciplinary work the Composition and Rhetoric faculty and writing program had previously done in developing the introductory curriculum (and despite the writing faculty's explicit counsel in this regard); and 2) even when faculty at Dearborn (myself included), were first tasked with re-envisioning general education and spent much time benchmarking programs—including WAC and WID programs—at a range of universities near and far, we ourselves failed to explicitly take into account, at least in much detail, the significant curriculum development the Writing Program had done already, especially around cross-cultural writing. In retrospect, this "blind spot" was in some ways predictable given the pressures on the task force (including a looming HLC site visit). I would suggest, however, that the same kind of institutional narrative that can at times cordon off one discipline from another succeeded unproductively in this instance significantly to cordon off lower-level from upper-level writing.

Generally less useful are narratives that serve to cordon off the intellectual work of introductory writing from upper-level writing in the disciplines. How would robust collaborations across levels of institutional initiative leverage the concepts of "borderlands" and "elasticity" (movement of participants into and out of borderlands) which Gere et al, following Prior and Marcovich and Shinn, have invoked as important to a notion of "new disciplinarity" (245)? How might such an understanding provide space for a new and more nuanced ethos for the learning of all students—an ethos beginning with a valuing of language and literacy broadly, along with writing and rhetoric as *projects of public inquiry* – not as boluses of knowledge? These are, hopefully, questions for the Writing Program and university to consider in the years to come. Despite shrinking resources available to faculty in an increasingly neoliberal, "managed" context, faculty at my institution continue to advocate for, for example, full-time positions that will lend stability and provide leadership in the areas of curriculum development and professional development of lecturers interested in pursuing cross-cultural, transnational, and public writing pedagogies.

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