

2006

An Inquiry Concerning the Teaching of Critical Thinking in an Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Class

Minnette Northcutt
University of South Florida

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An Inquiry Concerning the Teaching of Critical Thinking in an Advanced Placement
Literature and Composition Class

by

Minnette Northcutt

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of English
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Debra Jacobs, Ph.D.
Gary Olson, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Metzger, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
April 3, 2006

Keywords: critical thinking, discourse communities, defamiliarization, critical classroom,
originality

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Dedication

To my family—my father and mother who have weathered, by my side, the many storms that life has thrown my way from start to finish—my husband who not only stood by me through challenges that seemed at times insurmountable, but of late has carried me and encouraged me to finish the race and finish well—my daughters, Madison who motivated me to begin this journey in the first place, and Reagan who reminded me to follow through. Last, but not least, to Christ my inspiration, my comfort, my strength.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr. Debra Jacobs for her support and guidance throughout the duration of this project. I would also like to express my gratitude to committee members Dr. Gary Olson and Dr. Elizabeth Metzger for helping me finish what I started a long time ago. I am also thankful to Dr. Lynn Worsham who encouraged me to achieve more than I thought possible when I first started the graduate program. Finally, I am in debt to my Advanced Placement Literature and Composition students; I could not have finished without their energy and inspiration to see me through.

Table of Contents

Abstract:	ii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Invention or Mimicking?	9
Chapter Three: Negotiating the Discourse Community	15
Chapter Four: Students and Inquiry-based Learning	21
Chapter Five: Inquiry-based learning as a Critical Classroom Approach	27
Chapter Six: Thoughts and Reflections	36
Annotated Bibliography	38
References	77
Bibliography	80

**An Inquiry Concerning the Teaching of Critical Thinking in an Advanced
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Minnette Northcutt

ABSTRACT

This project is intended to serve as an exploratory investigation of inquiry-based teaching in an Advanced Placement (AP) literature and composition course. The rigid curricular constraints of AP courses and the assessment-based guidelines for teaching such courses can challenge the value placed in teaching students to think critically. This project seeks to draw attention to the difficult terrain that teachers navigate when trying to foster environments that facilitate inquiry-based learning while at the same time holding students to the standards set by the curriculum. As an exploratory study, the project aims to identify important issues and questions concerning inquiry-based learning as they have been disclosed by a specific classroom context, that of a twelfth-grade AP literature and composition course I have taught.

In addition to drawing from information and insights, along with personal experiences, derived from a specific classroom context, I examine research and scholarship on the concept of inquiry-based learning. In particular, I consider the scholarly work on invention, discourse communities, and critical pedagogy to offer the most relevant insights to the issues I identify and the questions I raise. The first part of this study consists of examining such areas of scholarship in “dialogue” with one another. That is, I consider the implications the various scholarly works have for one another,

particularly in the context of the AP course I teach. Because this study is exploratory in nature, the second part of my project consists of detailed summaries of the major scholarly works I have examined. Thus, this project serves as a preliminary inquiry for future study, and it serves to help teachers make informed decisions about developing and implementing inquiry-based teaching strategies that can take root in the rocky terrain of assessment-based curricula.

Chapter One

Introduction

Student achievement is on the rise in Florida and I'm especially proud of our minority student gains. We've seen gains in FCAT scores, increases in PSAT test-takers and today, evidence that more students are in AP classes and doing well on those exams. . . . Our state's College Board partnership, increased professional development training for our teachers and the hard work of Florida's students are all factors in this success. With this winning formula, I am confident that these successes will continue, and as we increase opportunity in the K-12 years, more students will enter the State University System.

--Governor Jeb Bush

Despite the fact that educators and education experts have exposed a myriad of problems with measuring student achievement on the basis of standardized test scores, the stock placed in such scores continues to increase. Florida Governor Jeb Bush finds the gains made on test scores laudable because the increases mean that more students will meet the entrance requirements to attend the state's universities. In fact, one of the measures Bush cites as a particular point of pride goes beyond determining admittance into the state university system. High school students who take an Advanced Placement (AP) course and pass the standardized AP exam for that course enter the university with credit for that particular general education course. The students receive ungraded credit hours (so the credits do not apply to the GPA) that enable them to advance to the next course in the general education sequence. If an increase in the number of students who take and pass AP tests is to be considered an accomplishment, then Bush has reason to be proud of the 2002 statistics that show an eighteen percent increase of that number in the

state of Florida compared to the eleven percent increase nationwide, according to a press release for MyFlorida.com that was issued by then Press Secretary Elizabeth Hirst. In addition, the pass rate for the exams also had increased by twenty percent in the state of Florida compared to the sixteen percent increase across the country (www.myflorida.com).

Before having the experience of teaching an AP course in the state of Florida, I probably wouldn't have been troubled by these statistics. Certainly I have shared the concern that teachers have about the extent to which the emphasis on standardized test scores causes teachers to feel coerced into teaching to the tests, but I hadn't realized to what degree the same holds true for AP courses, especially the twelfth-grade AP course I teach in literature in composition. Students who pass the AP exam for this course with a score of three on a five-point scale receive university credit for the first course in the two-course sequence of first-year composition. Students who pass with a four or a five receive credit for both courses in the sequence. As a former teacher of first-year writing at a state university in Florida and as a current teacher of an AP English course in a Florida high school, I have the relatively unique perspective of being able to consider statistics like those reported by Hirst from an insider's position on either end.

It is fitting, at this point, to provide some general background information about the AP Program worldwide. The College Board, self-proclaimed as "one of the largest exam administrations in the world," developed the AP Program in 1955 as a "cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities." According to APCentral.collegeboard, 2.1 million exams were administered worldwide in 2005 which covered thirty-five courses in twenty subject areas. In addition, it is reported

that ninety percent of U.S. colleges and universities “have an AP policy granting incoming students credit, placement, or both, for qualifying AP exam grades.” As mentioned earlier, a score of three or higher on a five-point scale is considered a qualifying exam grade. The College Board website boasts, “On average, 62 percent of the AP Exams taken receive a grade that is recommended for college credit, advanced placement, or both. . . . More than 1,400 institutions grant a full year’s credit (sophomore standing) to students presenting satisfactory grades on a stated number of AP exams.” The exams are administered every May “and represent the culmination of college-level work in a given discipline in a secondary school setting” (www.APCentral.collegeboard).

Because passing the exam gives the student significant leverage in higher education, the College Board has gone to great measures to assure quality control. They implement Development Committees that meet throughout the year and involve college faculty at every level, from development to scoring, in an effort to reflect accurately college-level achievement. The Committees look at many aspects of education in the development process, including “college curriculum surveys, pretesting of multiple-choice questions, and college comparability studies,” in an effort to ensure that the exams are an accurate measure of advanced ability (www.APCentral.collegeboard). The Committees also filter out questions that reflect variant levels of difficulty depending on the set population (males, females, whites, African Americans, and Latinos) to which a student belongs.

The College Board has taken a tremendous endeavor and established what appears to be a tried and true formula for success. Everybody wins! Secondary schools can boast percentages and success rates, colleges can free up their first-year courses to

allow for more non-advanced students to enroll in first-year courses, AP students can save on college tuition and free up their schedules to explore various disciplines and what they have to offer. If we would allow ourselves to believe the College Board on the benefits of AP courses, then we are to believe that we have found Wonka's Golden Ticket to education.

The context of my inquiry is limited, in scope, specifically to an AP Literature and Composition course. It is, therefore, beneficial to give some details concerning the exam guidelines specifically. The exam lasts for three hours and is broken into two parts. Part One is a one-hour multiple choice exam which consists of fifty to sixty questions. The multiple-choice section uses four selections (two prose, two poetry) from literature ranging from the sixteenth century to the present. The selections are designed to be representative of at least three different periods and to include the work of a female or minority writer. Part Two is a two-hour free-response section which consists of three essay prompts. The three essay prompts will generally include an essay on a passage of poetry, an essay on a passage of prose, and an essay on a topic allowing the student to choose an appropriate novel or play. The College Board has been careful to design an exam that can be mapped out in order to ensure, to the best of its ability, that scoring is fair and efficient, reliable and valid, and that teachers facilitating a class will have optimal access to information needed in order to provide the students with the tools for success. My concern is that, in doing so, the perfect environment for teaching-to-the-test is created.

In an effort to develop curriculum for my first AP Literature and Composition course, I was desperate to gather as much useful information as possible. During this

search I worked my way through several syllabi, available on line through the generosity of AP educators who had gone before me, and I found one of the recurring themes to be, quite frankly, teach to the test. Of course no self-respecting pedagogue would come right out and make such a statement, but it was definitely implied. Who can blame them? In addition to the pressure of building up success statistics in order to generate funding for their schools, Florida state law includes a provision that offers secondary teachers a fifty dollar bonus for every student that they produce who scores a 3 or higher on an AP test (Myflorida.com). After taking a couple of these practice tests myself, I can assure you that they can be quite difficult, especially if you have not been armed with the appropriate vocabulary and formulaic answers. There are also several test guides put out by Kaplan, Cliffs Notes, Barrons, to name of few, that provide valuable guidance in whatever discipline is being taught. One of the interesting things about these study guides is that they provide a list of novels that have appeared most often on AP Literature exams in the last fifteen to twenty years. I found myself both impressed and disgusted by the realization that people recognized the need for study aids in the area of literature comprehension and had found a way to capitalize on that void.

Left with little else on which to build my curriculum, I devised a summer reading list from one of the syllabi that seemed to have considered elements of discovery and invention in addition to the AP exam (It may be interesting to note that this sample syllabus was that of a private school teacher, who probably had more freedom over his curriculum than most public school teachers). My students were given a summer assignment that required them to read *Madame Bovary*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Enemy of the People*, and *A Room of One's Own*, and to synthesize

various aspects of the two novels and an essay. They would be tested on the plays upon returning from their summer break. While grading the summer assignments, I was hit square in the face with the reality that the establishment has changed. It no longer looks like the Beadles and their elitist luncheons on “hallowed” ground, who in their own insecurity, inadvertently oppress the thoughts and opinions of the Other. It is instead, for the sake of this inquiry, represented by powerful institutions such as the College Board, and the publishers, administrators, and politicians who would capitalize on such an endeavor.

My AP Literature and Composition course consists of six young men and five young women, who have been marked as the “cream of the crop” in an already, somewhat elitist setting. Of the eleven of them, all are white and represent, roughly, the top three percent in a secondary school of four hundred students. Why is it then, as I read through their summer essays that there is not one authentic thought in the group? In fact, many of them admittedly and openly synthesized *Spark Notes* and *Cliff Notes*, to present a seemingly well-rounded critique of all five of these classics. But wait. Here it is. In the midst of empty platitudes on the *Glass Menagerie*, skillfully hidden in the vocabulary of insight, I find a tiny nugget of, if not authentic thought, at least original interpretation of someone else’s thought: “The nature of Laura’s character can be summed up in the symbolism of the glass unicorn. She is strong as a horse, yet unique and as fragile as a glass unicorn.” Now, you may ask yourself at this point, what is so fantastic about this statement? I would warrant that it is brilliant in its insightful simplicity. Brilliant because it gleams against the backdrop of idle minds, skillfully using an already proven and polished skill (mimicry) to successfully and lazily wow desperate educators who thrill at

the prospect of reading a well organized and clear essay that includes a large vocabulary, few (if any) grammar errors and a nice tight thesis statement that is supported throughout.

This inquiry seeks to understand the impact that assessment-based learning has on inquiry-based learning in the context of AP courses. My examination is limited to one class of twelfth-grade AP literature and composition students but also includes some insights from an eleventh-grade AP rhetoric and composition course. How does one teach students to recognize the difference between invention and mimicking? Is it reasonable to expect a student to have command enough of the discourse community of the discipline to make a true inquiry of that discipline? How does a teacher implement critical-classroom approaches when the curriculum guidelines are rigid and assessment-based? What happens when students are allowed to break free of traditional education models and experiment with inquiry-based learning?

This project focuses on what is involved for teachers in developing inquiry-based curricula that works in unison with assessment-based guidelines that must be met. It shows how students can take responsibility for inquiry-based learning and experience the value of critical thinking as a conduit for knowledge-making. The research and scholarship on inquiry-based learning I consider most relevant to my investigation fall into three categories: work on invention, on discourse communities, and on critical pedagogies. Especially important to my investigation, for example, are works by Janice Lauer, David Bartholomae, Kenneth Bruffee, and Ann Berthoff. The first part of this study consists of examining such scholarship in “dialogue” with one another. That is, I consider the implications the various scholarly works have for one another, particularly in the context of the AP course I teach.

In the context of inquiry-based learning within the ethnically-limited community of the parochial school at which I teach, I found that inquiry and its by-product, critical thinking, are most often passed over by students, because they have mistaken mimicking and counter-invention for authentic invention. Instead of traditional classroom approaches, I relied on inquiry-based learning as a mode for development of my course plan, drawing on genres ranging from Russian Formalism to Cliffs Notes. I hypothesize that invention is not synonymous with originality, but is rather based in personal discovery and authenticity, which can only be achieved by taking our students beyond what David Bartholomae calls “common places” through the process of defamiliarization.

Because this study is exploratory in nature, the second part of my project consists of detailed summaries of the major scholarly works I have examined. Thus, this project serves as a preliminary inquiry for future study, and it serves to help teachers make informed decisions about developing and implementing inquiry-based teaching strategies that can take root in the rocky terrain of assessment-based curricula.

Chapter Two

Invention or Mimicking?

Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise.

--Plato, *Phaedrus*

Those who have participated in the conversation concerning invention, dating at least as far back as Plato and Aristotle, have one major point in common. No one, in spite of concentrated and real effort, has been able to come up with a definition of invention that stands the test of time, granted, rhetoricians such as Plato and Aristotle have certainly staked their claim to authority in the discussion of the issue. The fact that the definition of invention is always and ever changing gives a small insight on the nature of invention. It is, by nature, a dynamic act brought about by critical thinking. Janice Lauer, in her book *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*, presents an encompassing look at the history of invention discussion in rhetoric and composition studies, including some insight into the various positions on the issues, and some information concerning historical texts that are still foundational to the ongoing conversation of invention. Lauer's book is a springboard to many of the questions that develop in this investigation, in that she brings to light a gap in the conversation concerning an issue as large and important as invention in composition studies. In agreement with Lauer, my hope is that

this inquiry facilitates an awakening of invention studies, not just in the field of rhetoric and composition, but in all disciplines.

In “Inventing the University,” David Bartholomae’s perspective is that students “try on” academic discourse by approximating the jargon, rhythm, and air of authority that are inherent in the discourse. Their approximation is faulty to start, in that it is reliant on their perceptions of the discourse community to which they are seeking entry. Because discourse communities are inherently privileged and exclusionary, and students are not yet privy, they cannot possibly “know” the implications of their writing in the truest sense of knowing. One of the biggest obstacles that Bartholomae has observed in student writing is the way by which they negotiate the “voice of authority.” Students recognize that the use of specialized language within a discourse community is indicative of a voice of authority, as a result they attempt to negotiate a voice of authority, not yet earned, by returning to what Bartholomae refers to as a “commonplace” (137).

Evidence to support Bartholomae’s position can be found in student writing from their summer essay assignments. Nine of the eleven students who are in my AP Literature course made up my AP Rhetoric and Composition course in the 2004-2005 school year. Of the nine, six received a score of three or higher on the comprehensive exam giving us a sixty-seven percent passing rate, slightly higher than the national average. Of the six students who passed the exam, one is National Merit Scholar finalist, one is the recipient of a full scholarship to a prominent university, and the others will benefit from at least a partial, if not full, scholarship to just about any institution of his or her choosing. My previous experience and familiarity with the writing styles of over eighty percent of my AP Literature students gave me a unique vantage point from which to review their

summer essays. It was not surprising, then, that their summer essays were well written, articulate, and somewhat scholarly. I was, however, taken back by the word-choice and writing styles that many of them had adopted. The voice represented in their collective responses to the writing prompts differed dramatically from the voice with which I had grown familiar in the AP Rhetoric and Composition course. It occurred to me that the courses differed in that the previous course required students to apply critical thinking skills to nonfiction writing by using questions to guide them to the author's purpose and writing technique, but otherwise allowing them to voice their authentic thoughts about the subject matter as long as they could support those thoughts with specific evidence from the text. In contrast, the AP Literature course presents fictional works and requires students to analyze the text in light of specific literary devices. In other words, of the two courses, the AP Literature course is inherently conducted in a more controlled context. As a result, the students felt pressured to produce essays that incorporated language that was discourse community specific (literary community), as opposed to feeling the freedom to apply critical thinking and authentic thought to their insights.

One student writes of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*:

The great pioneer of the realist literary movement, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, fabricated *Crime and Punishment*; a sinister fiction which depicts the tumultuous conflicts that afflict his anti-hero, Raskolnikov. In contrast to many other Realist writers, Dostoyevsky endeavors to create an appealing persona for Raskolnikov; in order to distinguish the emotional and psychological distortions as the only issues that encompass the ugliness of his crime. Violence is a key technique Dostoyevsky uses throughout the

novel to excite Raskolnikov's inner conflict. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's background in Russia's Military Academy made him not stranger to violence, yet his, at the time, current imprisonment in Serbia bestowed a unique understanding of the utter despair that would drive Raskolnikov to crime and later to redemption. Dostoyevsky uses strategic scenes of physical and psychological violence to orchestrate the psychological severing of Raskolnikov's conscience; and, with further analysis, produces the complete redemption of his soul by directing him to Sonya.

(JS)

This student's (JS) introductory paragraph for his essay is an example of a student negotiating the perceived discourse community of literary criticism. His fabrication is evident to me, in that I am familiar with his writing style from previous courses. The commentary that he makes is correct and articulate, but is lacking in that he fails to include aspects of his familiar voice and insight. If JS' essay was the only example of such oversight, I would not have started this investigation into critical thinking and authentic voice. However, his essay was one of thirty-three that were overflowing with answers and commentary that employed, not the voice of the student, but techniques and mimicry by the students of the voice and techniques they perceived in the scholarly discourse of the literary community.

Although the question of discourse community is addressed later on in this project, aspects of it cannot be avoided when questioning how students misappropriate mimicking as invention. When students are placed in situations that are unfamiliar to

them and they are attempting to find a “commonplace” of reference on which to gain their footing in the discourse, it is natural for the first level of “commonplace” to be found at the definition stage. In other words, students identify with basic stylistic devices such as word use, recognize that there is a specific flow and pattern to that word use, and imitate these devices. Most theorists would agree that mimicking is a natural part of the progression to invention, but many students are never given the opportunity to move beyond this stage. Some theorists, like Anis Bawarshi, have gone as far as to say that students are at some level invented by the very genre in which they are trying to invent.

Bawarshi argues that genres “constitute typified rhetorical sites or habitations in which our social actions and commitments are made possible and meaningful as well as in which we are rhetorically socialized to perform (and potentially transform) these actions and commitments” (81-82). If a position such as Bawarshi’s is even slightly accurate, then the line between mimicking and invention is definitely a gray one. The way in which the act of critical thinking is manifest in an AP Literature class will decide, for the purposes of this investigation, where invention takes place. Drawing on the philosophy of Derrida, Gaurav Desai contextualizes invention as a two-fold agent that requires the individual to both *fake* and *make* knowledge. Looking to the Latin root of the term *invent*, Desai points out that *to invent* means “to ‘come upon’ or ‘discover’ something presumably already there” (121). This project takes into account that twelfth-grade AP Literature and Composition students are in a position to, at the least, invent through mimicking an art, and, at the most, make authentic discoveries of their own in the discipline by applying and articulating critical thinking. This insight leads to another question concerning critical thinking: Is invention an individual or collective act?

In his 2005 CCCC Chair's Address, "Who Owns Writing?," Douglas Hesse posits that writing cannot be owned by anyone other than the student who writes it. This inquiry brought to the discussion the premise that invention, like writing, cannot be owned by anyone other than the student who makes the discovery, whether that discovery was made by someone else prior that student, or not. This notion that ownership of invention is individual points to the process of invention also being individual, and thus indicates that critical thinking is also and individual act, but this wasn't always the consensus in the AP Literature and Composition course. This investigation discovered that the process of invention is often hierarchical, that it is more complicated than individual versus collective, and that they both represent communities in which critical thinking can take place. For critical insights to take root and mature or evolve into a discourse which allows for invention on a collective level, it must first take place on an individual level.

The idea that critical thinking occurs on an individual level before it can occur on a collective level contextualizes invention further as a social act as well as an individual act. Karen LeFevre looks at invention from a social perspective in her book, *Invention as a Social Act*. According to LeFevre, "Invention . . . is best understood as occurring when individuals interact dialectically with socioculture in a distinctive way to generate something" (33). As a dynamic social undertaking of discovery that takes place both individually and collectively through the act of critical thinking, invention elicits the use of both mimetic and authentic devices. But this understanding of inventions raises an important question: Is it reasonable to expect a student to have command enough of the discourse community of any discipline to make a true inquiry of that discipline?

Chapter Three

Negotiating the Discourse Community

A man must know the truth about all the particular things of which he speaks or writes, and must be able to define everything separately; then when he has defined them, he must know how to divide them by classes until further division is impossible; and in the same way he must understand the nature of the soul, must find out the class of speech adapted to each nature, and must arrange and adorn his discourse accordingly, offering to the complex soul elaborate and harmonious discourses, and simple talks to the simple soul, Until he has attained to all this, he will not be able to speak by the method of art, so far as speech can be controlled by method, either for purposes of instruction or of persuasion.

--Plato, *Phaedrus*

Out of all of the topics researched throughout this inquiry, discourse communities had the most information available, both supporting and refuting even the concept of discourse community. This project looks to the writings of theorist/practitioners such as, David Bartholomae, Kenneth Bruffee, Toby Fulwiler, Thomas Kent, James Porter, and Kate Ronald. A majority of the research supports the concept of discourse communities, and agrees that students must strive to gain access to the discourse of the discipline they are studying. If this is true, how does a student make an inquiry into a discipline to which he or she is trying to gain access?

Bartholomae argues that, in spite of a student's failure to successfully approximate a discourse, a student can still gain entrance to that discourse as long as his or her writing carries with it indications that the writer is aware, on some level, that a "context that is finally beyond him, not his own and not available to his immediate procedures for inventing and arranging a text" exists (138). In other words, the writer is

aware of, but cannot, in his or her current position, control the “privileged languages of public life” (139). In his article, “On the Very Idea of Discourse Community,” Thomas Kent argues along the same line as Bartholomae. While Kent does not take issue with the idea that discourse communities exist, he does consider some of the common perceptions of how they function to be faulty. He posits that discourse communities are accessible in that participants in various discourse communities, at the very least, understand enough of the variant discourse to communicate and learn the discourse of the new discourse community to which they are being introduced.

If discourse communities are accessible to our students, then how do we help them negotiate the hurdle that separates the “commonplace” where they connected to the discourse and the place in which invention and knowledge-making can occur? According to James Porter, discourse is intertextual in nature and the very introduction of the student’s voice into the discourse community changes the constitution of that community. Porter defines a “discourse community” as a “group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated” (39). This definition relates to intertextuality in that works that are accepted within specific discourse communities are, by necessity, intertextual. To be accepted, a work must “reflect the community’s episteme” (39). The concern with acceptance into specific discourse communities by adapting to the regulated forms of discourse is that “genuine originality is difficult within the confines of a well-regulated system” (40). If genuine originality is difficult in this perspective, how do students invent within a new discourse community?

Toby Fulwiler, in his article “Looking and Listening for My Voice,” adds a twist to the question of genuine originality within a discourse community by looking to “voice” as an authentic representation of self within an established discourse. He offers ten propositions concerning voice, specifically in writing, that identify voice as being protean, constructed, distinctive, elemental of discourse communities past, and transactional, to name a few. Fulwiler comes to the conclusion that he “write[s] from within and, at the same time, from without an identifiable discourse community” (220). He believes that his authentic voice that comes through in his public writing is, in effect, a rebellion against the confines of his current discourse community. From the perspective of a professional looking for authentic thought and originality within his discipline, voice is a logical identifier.

But what does authentic voice look and sound like to a student who is negotiating the discourse community of the classroom, and the discourse community of the discipline, as well as the metadiscourse communities that he or she is confronted with daily? This question involves once again considering the extent to which students tend to mimic the discourse of the community to which they are seeking admittance. For a student to mimic a discourse, he or she must be able to recognize the “voice” of that community. Kate Ronald narrates a discovery exercise that she conducts in her upper level advanced composition and professional writing classes, during which she asks students about their professional goals. To facilitate the recognition of voice within a discipline, students are then instructed to analyze the rhetoric of their chosen profession. From this exercise, Ronald categorizes four separate student responses: literary persona, the apprentice, the defeated cynic, and the insider critic. According to Ronald, all four

responses seem to indicate that the students are aware “of the ways that community-generated language contributes to the individual’s identity” (133).

My AP Literature and Composition students were very willing to discuss how they perceived the discourse community of literary criticism. Unfortunately, a majority of their points were pejorative and uninformed in nature, and thus contributed little more to the project than an insight into their overall disposition towards the subject matter. Reflecting on the conversation made me realize that the road block that stood in our way of meaningful discovery was that the students had yet to take ownership of this new discipline that they were to negotiate. This discovery led to the creation of a student-driven project that consisted of three parts. First the students would define, in their own terms, the associations that the words *original* and *invention* created in their common places. Next the students would step out of their comfort zones and take on the task of interpreting literary criticism in their own terms. Finally, students would design a CliffsNotes of their own, using a novel of their choice. This student-driven project served two main purposes. It allowed students to experiment and apply critical thinking skills within a discourse community that they were all quite nervous about negotiating, and it provided a venue in which tools and skills that the students would need to succeed on the assessment-based exam were learned and applied in a meaningful and critical way, rather than teaching specifically to the test.

I will discuss the first step of the project in this chapter. The chapters that follow will touch on the last two steps of the project. The first major part of our task was to define the parameters of what we meant when we were using the terms *original* and *invention*. The following is a transcript of the conversation from two student’s

perspectives, one female and one male. Change in voice is represented by initials for each student and myself. (Because the students who volunteered to take notes were occasionally caught up in the conversation themselves, there are gaps in this transcript.)

Question: What is the meaning of *original*?

MN: Our associations become our definitions.

KV: Uninfluenced

JJ: Pre-existing

J: First

JJ: Originality is past tense.

CL: A person who comes up with an original thought just beat the crowd.

Question: What do we mean by *invention*?

J: A creation.

AD: Mechanical

JJ: Physical

CL: Makes writing sound more mechanical and scientific.

JJ: Invention is the process, original thought is the product.

(This sentence is even mathematical by using the word *invention*.)

Question: Is it possible to have an un-influenced thought?

JS: Original thought is taking a concept a step further.

KV: Isn't originality subjective? Something is only original if you have never been exposed to it before.

"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." Ecclesiastes 1: 9

Dictionary Definition of Original was looked up: “produced by ones own mind and thought; not copied or imitated.”

DF: The reason we have patents is because of the race for original thought.

JS: From influences and viewpoint created by experiences, therefore enabling one to make the connections of information that establish original thought.

DF: We have the same thoughts just in this class

This transcript is not all encompassing of the conversation that actually continued to play out over the following several weeks, and does it not include input from every student in the class. Nevertheless, it does represent a sample of the ideas and perceptions that the class was bringing when they were being asked to accomplish goal-oriented tasks. I found that the students, once they felt free to invest in defining the context of their projects, placed higher value on the final outcome of those projects and exhibited a genuine interest in the outcome of the projects of others students as well.

Discourse communities are accessible to students, even if they are not quite ready to offer an authentic contribution to the conversation beyond the introduction of their voice into the community, as long as their contribution, even if it is mimetic, indicates that they are aware that a discourse variant to the discourse of their “commonplace” exists. If mimicking the discourse and recognizing place within the community becomes the point of inquiry, then it is not necessary for students to have command of the discourse in order to make a true inquiry into the discipline. Armed with the confidence that students can, in fact, make inquiry into the discourse of a discipline, what holds teachers back from developing a curriculum that implements critical-classroom approaches that are conducive to inquiry-based learning?

Chapter Four

Students and Inquiry-based Learning

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new?" It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.
--Ecclesiastes 1: 9-10 (NIV)

Before we can understand why a student responds to a discourse community the way he or she does, it is important to understand where a student is coming from. Seeking understanding for where students are coming from led back to Bartholomae's essay "Inventing the University." Teachers have the tenuous task of diagnosing student ability and seeking treatment, if you will allow the continuing analogy, for their writing ailments. Bartholomae is concerned that educators, all too often, misappropriate writing as a "tool" rather than a mode of learning. He addresses the issue of "knowledge-telling strategy," which is a skill that students often adopt that allows them to, in effect, mimic a discourse, but doesn't elicit a deeper and more connective way of knowing the materials that they mimic. According to Bartholomae, this "knowledge-telling strategy" is an important phase (successive approximation) that students must go through to tap into the discourse of the university. He points out that "the approximate discourse, therefore, is evidence of a change, a change that, because we are teachers, we call development" (146). Taking Bartholomae's research into consideration, how does a student connect with the material on a deeper level, and how does a teacher adequately assess when this has happened?

Peter Elbow, in his article “Embracing Contraries,” denotes two distinctions of thinking when he is teaching writing, which he categories as first-order thinking and second-order thinking. First-order thinking is the place where he suggests that writers start. It is a free, creative thought process that doesn’t elicit control over the text. Second-order thinking is a more controlled and directed thought process that he equivocates with “critical thinking” (55). Elbow believes that both orders of thinking are necessary, but second-order thinking, if done first, often brings about stiff, rehearsed writing. He states, “Thinking carefully means trying to examine your thinking while using it too—trying to think about thinking while also thinking about something else—which often leads people to foolishness” (56). If we consider that students are functioning at one of these two levels at all times in an inquiry-based curriculum, it gives some insight into the struggles that they face when trying to contribute anything to the discourse, let alone inventing something that no one before them has considered.

The best resource of inquiry into the way students function in a critical thinking learning environment is an actual study of such an experiment. I found that advanced students in my AP Literature and Composition course are better able to free-up their minds for inquiry, when they are given text and dialogue that they at first believe to be out of reach for their comprehension. Russian formalist, Victor Shklovsky, refers to this as *Ostranenie* or defamiliarization. His concept was that a genre becomes dominant within an era, it develops a system of conventions—plot devices, character types, tropes of language—characteristic of the genre. As writers are drawn to that genre, they become less creative and more imitative. The genre becomes familiar and automated (the mark of unliterary). My students were responding to their perceptions of the academic discourse

community of literary studies in the same way that Shklovsky's uncreative and automated writers were responding to familiar genres. His solution is to bring about a rebirth of creativity in a writer is to defamiliarize that writer, by shaking their perceived notions of a specific genre. Considering the automated answers that I had received to the summer essay prompts mentioned earlier, I decided to implement a defamiliarization experiment of my own (Richter).

The basic premise of the project was to expose students to literary criticism in David Richter's *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, 2nd Edition. Each student was assigned, by lottery, a text from writers such as Derrida, Foucault, and DeMan, to name a few. They were instructed to read through the text, using whatever resources they could find to aid in comprehension, and produce an abstract that they would later share with the class. These texts were chosen to prevent, as much as possible, accessibility to Cliffs Notes and other "dumbed-down" aids, because, as discovered earlier, many students tend to fall back on such resources, often avoiding the primary text all together.

Student responses varied from outlines to detailed essays, but all produced an abstract that was presented to the class. I considered the class presentations to be an intricate part of the project, because they gave the students a very real audience with which to deal; thus eliciting responses that required them to do more than just mimic the style of the theorist they were reading. They actually had to make the leap to take that theorist ideas and present them in terms that could at least touch on the common places of their fellow students. Students were to take notes during the presentation to help foster connections and build vocabulary and knowledge base. Because the subject matter was

so difficult and challenging to everyone, I did not require analysis of the theories, although some students provided one. The main point of the exercise was not to analyze the theories, but to understand and interpret, to the best of their ability, said theories.

The student abstracts varied in depth and writing style, but all were reflective of the voice of the Other trying to negotiate a new discourse community. One student writes of Wayne Booth's "Pluralism and Its Rivals":

At this point, Booth alludes to James Joyce's *Araby*. Though I have never read *Araby*. Booth explains the plot fully enough for one to get the gist. According to Booth, "araby" can mean many different things. He begins each sub-chapter with another description of what araby could mean. For example, one time he begins with "what is araby? why, clearly, araby is an imitation or representation of a character in action." Another time he begins with "what is araby? why, clearly, araby is an imitation of human passion." And again, "what is araby? Why, clearly araby is an expression of the author's deepest anxieties and drives." As told by Booth, araby is different explanations for imitation and illusion, whether it be by the character of by the writer, by deception of intent or of identity. Araby is the glue that holds together Booth's entire argument. (CL)

Another student grapples with Derrida's work:

The idea of structure is that the piece of literature or whatever is being analyzed has a center point. A point in which everything else builds off of and leads back to [. . .] Derrida saw things differently, he concluded that things may mean something different than what they were presented as.

Which in turn moves the center. The center can then be applied outside the given structure, and then there really is not structure after all. Derrida takes his thoughts from philosophers such as Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger and their deconstructivist critiques of other works. He was careful not to get stuck in the circle that they did. Each one of these philosophers contradicted the others. Derrida realized that to truly understand an idea, you have to be able to denounce your own premises when they are proven wrong. Derrida realized that in order to have structure, you can not have structure. [. . .] You can set your own center, but there may be a different center for someone else and you have to be able to accept these different views in order to fully understand a particular work. (KC)

Wading through William Empson's "Seven Types of Ambiguity," another student defers to listing main points. Interestingly enough, he has eight main points, in spite of Empson's seven main types. Another student tip-toes through Foucault's "What is an Author?" in less than a half of a page of written text, but her verbal presentation gave evidence of a deeper understanding than her abstract implies. Overall, the defamiliarization projects proved a venue that allowed students to be challenged, because it removed the option of deferring to dumbed-down secondary and tertiary sources, and required the students to apply what they know to subject matter that potentially exceeds their intellectual grasp. I found that all eleven of my students, although exhibiting variant levels of comprehension, were able to find a common place in which to connect with the text on some level.

While this classroom experiment was far from being a scientifically-sound undertaking, it did provide insight that this investigation was seeking. I discovered that student voices that mimic the style and discourse of the literary discipline, while seemingly superior in inventive qualities, were, in fact, inferior to the inventive qualities of writing that was less pedantic. The inventive quality of the less scholarly sounding project can be attributed to the student's willingness to inquire rather than mimic. I also found that students were less willing to break free of mimetics before they were placed in a position to inquire (defamiliarized), by recognizing that the ability to negotiate subject matter, like that of Derrida and others listed above was within their grasp. Meeting the challenge of interpreting higher-level tasks gave students the confidence in their ability to voice their own opinions and thoughts about less convoluted texts.

Chapter Five

Inquiry-based learning as a Critical Classroom Approach

Serious discourse about them is far nobler, when one employs the dialectic method and plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which there spring up in other minds other words capable of continuing the process for ever, and which make their possessor happy, to the farthest possible point of happiness.

----Plato, *Phaedrus*

A brief survey of the research and scholarship available regarding inquiry-based learning and critical classroom approaches brings to the front two important issues. The first issue is that inquiry-based learning and critical classroom approaches represent theories and techniques that have been part of the composition studies conversation for a long time. The second issue is that, in spite of its longevity, the conversation concerning these approaches to teaching has lost momentum over the last ten years. Researching reasons for why the conversation has diminished, rather than leading to answers to the question “why,” led to some key players in the dated conversation of writing-across-the-curriculum, such as Ann Berthoff, Syrene Forsman, Eugene Garver, Judy Kirscht, and Virginia Lee. These writers represent only a portion of the research that exists in this arena, and were not necessarily chosen for the staying-power of their theories. So, what does inquiry-guided learning have to do with writing-across-the-curriculum aside from being a critical classroom approach?

At this point in the project, we have found that the ground for invention and authenticity within a discipline can be found, at least, within the commonplaces that

students are learning to negotiate within the new discourse communities that they are encountering, and that invention is not necessarily a thought or idea that no one before them has had, it only needs to be a new discovery for the individual to be authentic. What we have yet to discover is how teachers can successfully foster an environment that is conducive to the implementation of critical thinking and still fulfill their responsibility to the students who are assessed in ways that inquiry-based curriculum does not necessarily support (i.e. teaching to the test strategies).

In her essay, “From Dialogue to Dialectic to Dialogue,” Berthoff, a strong proponent of theory-guided practice in the classroom, offers some practical examples of how theory and discovery practice thrive in her classrooms. One of the primary techniques she discovers is that returning to the text is a key aspect of keeping the dialectic alive and viable. Returning to the text and “letting the exercises and assignments grow from one another” is one option for facilitating inquiry-based learning within a set and rigid curriculum.

Another practical example of inquiry-based learning can be found in Forsman’s essay, “Writing to Learn Means Learning to Think,” in which she presents three questions from which students can choose to do a “focused writing.” She constructs these questions with several goals in mind: “(1) to direct their minds to the subject matter of the day, (2) to encourage ever more complex levels of thinking, and (3) to increase the flow of ideas onto paper” (163). Forsman considers guided journal writing to be an extremely important step in writing-to-learn, because it aids in breaking the student’s traditional schooling paradigm—the whole fill-in-the-blank mentality—giving them the confidence in their own ideas to move beyond the fear of expressing their own thoughts. Within rigid

curriculum guidelines that are centered on teaching to the test, like Forsman, teachers can step out of their comfort zones and develop guiding questions that will offer the knowledge that students will need to be successful on assessment tests, as well as foster higher-level critical thinking skills.

Once students had found a new “voice” through the defamiliarization project, they were given the opportunity to play with literary criticism and discovery by using a contemporary novel to develop a Cliffs Notes of their own. There were two main stipulations: the novel had to be approved by their teacher and by a parent, and it could not be found in Cliffs Notes form. The student projects from this experiment, although at times less scholarly than the essays they had written about classical novels, using Cliffs Notes or equivalent resources as their primary text rather than the actual novel, exhibited a much more originality and maintained aspects of true critical thinking skills and authentic voice.

The purpose of the project, as presented to the students, was to exemplify, to the best of their ability, original thought in the development of literary criticism. They were to become the critics. For the purposes of quality control, their final projects were to be designed using the format of Cliffs Notes. A table of contents was provided, with each section worth a test grade, and the project in its entirety counting as the semester exam grade. The project included six sections (1) Introduction to the Novel (include synopsis); (2) List of Characters (include primary and secondary); (3) Chapter Summaries and Commentaries (Literary Critique); (4) Character Analysis; (5) Author’s Life and Works (requires research); and (6) Questions for Review. The students were given the following hints to help them along the way: (1) Determine the author’s purpose before you begin

the project; (2) You have basically written your synopsis for your earlier presentations. Revisit that synopsis with the author's overall purpose in mind; (3) Identify the type of criticism you will use. The criticism aspect of your project is not due until November 21, but you should begin your application as early as possible; and (4) Use the list of literary terms to write up your commentaries. Remember that your commentaries must be addressed within the framework of the criticism you have chosen. The directives for the project incorporated specific tools that the students would need to master for the assessment-based AP exam, and allowed for the students to use creativity and authentic voice in applying these tools in a real-life setting.

Students chose novels ranging from Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*, to Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising*. The most difficult aspect of the assignment was to identify a form of literary criticism, and apply it consistently to the novel. In fact, several of the students discovered that they were using a mixture of the various criticisms, and often their own interpretation of those criticisms. It is significant to acknowledge that this discovery and the ability to articulate it is evidence that the students were beginning to make deeper connections to the discourse community of literary criticism that just a few months earlier seemed foreign and insurmountable to them. The enormity of these projects alone would warrant another thesis length project, but I would like to include a few student commentaries concerning their novels. One student uses political commentary to write of the ideological controversy surrounding Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising*:

There is no question that Tom Clancy's viewpoints have been conveyed worldwide, but the true question that remains here is whether or not

Clancy intended to spread the truth, or propaganda under the guise of a good book to read on a long plane ride. So, what is primarily being examined is the substantial credibility of Mr. Clancy, and the best way to arrive at that conclusion is by an analysis of those who have, in turn, experienced his work. One such “credible audience” would be general acceptance by the people he’s writing about, namely the military personnel. [. . .] A person could have the credibility of the Pope, but all that would be effectively worthless without a scenario capable of capturing the public’s attention. (JJ)

This student goes on to draw on news write-ups and various debates concerning the plausibility of Clancy’s war scenarios and the sources from which he gets his information, a sophisticated treatment that engaged the student in thinking critically about politics and ideology.

Another student uses the framework of social commentary to address the issues brought up in Jodi Picoult’s *My Sister’s Keeper*.

I believe that Picoult’s purpose in this novel is to comment on the strength and necessity of family relationships. Her use of imagery, metaphor, foreshadowing, and a changing narrator reveal to the reader the depths of the bonds formed in a family. Another purpose to Picoult’s novel is to illustrate the lack of control that people have in their own lives. No one knows when it is their time to die, therefore making plans for the future is pointless. Her novel shows that love can heal all relationships and carry people through the trials that they will face. She also shows the permanent

nature that family relationships create. Picoul's main purpose in the novel was to illustrate a family full of problems and the relationships that helped carry them through. (AD)

Although perhaps not as sophisticated as the previous example, this student's analysis does reflect a genuine grappling with themes from the literary text in a manner that allows the student to speak to the themes with an "authentic voice" while still utilizing the language and conventions of the academic discourse community.

The critical thinking project allowed the students to practice and implement a majority of the skills and vocabulary that will be required on the AP Literature and Composition exam taken at the end of the semester. They were challenged and even at times excited about what they were accomplishing, and they displayed a genuine interest in the projects of their fellow students. Once the written portion of the project was complete, the students presented their findings to the class, and opened themselves up to questioning by their peers. An interesting aspect of this portion of the project was that students who had never read the novels being presented asked interested and meaningful questions concerning many aspects of the novels including: author-bias, historical and cultural relevance, and discrepancies in the plot, to name a few. These student-driven questions challenged the presenters to think and articulate insights that lent credibility to their overall understanding of and dedication to what they had written and said.

According to the consensus of a study of inquiry-guided-learning (IGL) conducted by Virginia Lee and a group of her colleagues at North Carolina State University, inquiry-guided learning "refers to a range of strategies used to promote learning through students' active, and increasingly independent, investigation of

questions, problems and issues.” IGL involves various teaching strategies, “including interactive lecture, discussion, problem-based learning, case studies, simulations, and independent study” (5). With a critical classroom practice that is so encompassing, it is difficult to conceive of a teacher not implementing this strategy on some level. This study is an excellent resource for any teacher or administrator who is considering incorporating inquiry-based learning strategies into the curriculum.

With so many positive examples of how learning through critical thinking can be used successfully within any curriculum, why do so many teachers shy away from the technique? In their article, “Evolving Paradigms: WAC and the Rhetoric of Inquiry,” that appeared in *College Composition and Communication* in 1994, Judy Kirscht, Rhonda Levine, and John Reiff offer some logical explanations for why some teachers may lean away from inquiry-based learning. The team maps out their perspective of the conflict between writing-to-learn and writing-in-the-disciplines. One point that is made is that a conflict between the two camps came about by the faculty of many disciplines looking to composition studies for help turning what they perceived to be “deficiencies in their students’ writing” (370). When compositionist joined in the conversation, dichotomies existed in their field that caused the various camps represented to address the deficiency from different perspectives: Writing-to-learn versus Writing-in-the-disciplines.

The team looks to examples in social constructionist viewpoint for ways that this dichotomy within a discipline happens, and ways to bridge the gap that exists. One point that they highlight is that we hold on to our “conceptual models” because they give us a “sense of security about our purpose” (373). They look to the work of social constructionist to gain perspectives on how to find a common ground between the two

camps that exist in WAC. “Social constructionist,” say the authors, “view disciplines as socially negotiated territory and conventions a representations of actions which emanate from a discipline’s center of inquiry” (373). This dichotomy of camps is not necessarily the primary reason that some teachers hold back from trying inquiry-based practices in their classrooms, but the notion of “conceptual models” does shed some light on the situation. Like students, teachers who hold traditional perspectives of education must negotiate a new discourse community to branch out into a new form of pedagogy.

Eugene Garver addresses the issue of teachers stepping out of their comfort zones of tradition, into critical classroom practices in his essay, “The Modesty of Aristotle’s Rhetoric.” His suggestion, although made in the context of rhetorical studies, applies well to the dilemma that teachers face. Garver suggests that the way to “restore the dignity” of rhetoric is by transforming invention to inquiry. The contextual implication of such a move in a classroom setting is, at times, a difficult intellectual hurdle for an educator to surmount. Garver argues that “knowing what one is talking about seems, and is, innocent, yet it can have seriously destructive consequences” (132). He suggests that practitioners should work towards a way of presenting the knowledge that fosters an environment of inquiry. Using his own expertise as an example, Garver posits that “there can still be a form of equality between speaker and listener if I try to present the relevant evidence and grounds for judgment and decision. [. . .] I am inventing arguments rather than presenting evidence that removes the need for argument” (132).

This portion of the investigation discovered that it is possible to surmount rigid curriculum that is assessment-based and implement a classroom strategy that is

conducive to critical thinking, while incorporating the skills and information that students will be required to showcase on an assessment-based testing.

Chapter Six

Thoughts and Reflections

I think that he has a nature above the speeches of Lysias and possesses a nobler character; to that I should not be surprised if, as he grows older, he should so excel in his present studies that all who have ever treated of rhetoric shall seem less than children; and I suspect that these studies will not satisfy him, but a more divine impulse will lead him to greater things; for my friend, something of philosophy is inborn in his mind.

---Plato, *Phaedrus*

This project is described as a critical ethnographic study because it has brought about change in the way I look at critical thinking strategies and how fostering such an environment can benefit students as they negotiate meaning in the various discourse communities that they will encounter throughout their academic and professional lives. In his article, “New Writers of the Cultural Sage: The Ethnographic-Self Reconfigured,” Stephen Brown, approaches critical ethnography as a means for change. Along with changing the way critical ethnography is done, a transition in the goal of critical ethnography has taken place: “Knowledge, instead of being an end in itself, is now the means to a political end; instead of solely serving the interests of the ethnographer, it now serves the needs and interests of the participant” (218). The work of the ethnographer is symbiotic, if you will, with the work of the Other. Knowledge gained in such a context must then be used to foster change for the Other. The concept that gained-knowledge be used to implement change is a pragmatic one in that it fosters “the ethnographic and empowering reciprocity between participants and observer” (220). It is within this

environment of reciprocity that “project-oriented praxis becomes a useful tool for ethnographic inquiry” (221).

The primary goal of this project was to implement and test critical-thinking teaching strategies while at the same time considering assessment-based testing requirements, as a means of challenging students who had mastered mimetics and were ready, but unsure of how to move on to authentic voice. I have discovered the following points through this investigation:

1. The process of invention is dynamic, contains mimetic and authentic elements, and takes place individually and collectively.
2. Discourse communities are accessible to students, even if they are not quite ready to offer an authentic contribution to the conversation.
3. Inquiry-based learning can be successfully introduced into curricula that are rigid and assessment-based.
4. Student’s voices that mimic the style and discourse of a specific discipline have fewer inventive qualities than student voices that are less pedantic.

Another goal of this project is to reignite dialogue concerning invention and inquiry, not just in rhetoric and composition studies, but in all disciplines. Where we go from here depends on where the conversation leads.

Annotated Bibliography

Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." *When a Writer Can't Write*. Ed. Mike Rose. New York: Guilford, 1985. 134-165.

In his article, "Inventing the University," David Bartholomae, using over five hundred student placement essays, looks at the problem that "basic writers" face when attempting to enter the discourse community of academia. His primary concern is that educators often misdiagnose, if you will, the writing abilities of our students and are often treating some of the symptoms rather than treating the actual condition that causes awkward writing at the university level. Bartholomae's position, at length, is as follows:

The student has to appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialized discourse, and he has to do this as though he were easily and comfortably one with his audience, as though he were a member of the academy or a historian or an anthropologist or an economist; he has to invent the university by assembling and mimicking its language while finding some compromise between idiosyncrasy, and personal history, on the one hand, and the requirements of convention, the history of a discipline on the other. He must learn to speak our language. Or he must dare to speak it or carry off the bluff, since speaking and writing will most certainly be required long before the skill is "learned." (135)

Bartholomae's perspective is that students "try on" academic discourse by approximating the jargon, rhythm, and air of authority that are inherent in the discourse.

Their approximation is faulty to start, in that it is reliant on their perceptions of the discourse community to which they are seeking entry. Because discourse communities are inherently privileged and exclusionary, and students are not yet privy, they cannot possibly “know” the implications of their writing in the truest sense of knowing. One of the biggest obstacles that Bartholomae has observed in student writing is the way by which they negotiate the “voice of authority.” Students recognize that the use of specialized language within a discourse community is indicative of a voice of authority. Students attempt to negotiate a voice of authority, not yet earned, by returning to what Bartholomae refers to as a “commonplace” (137).

The “commonplace” is “a culturally or institutionally authorized concept or statement that carries its own necessary elaboration” (137). Bartholomae goes on to argue that, in spite of a student’s failure to successfully approximate a discourse, a student can still gain entrance to that discourse as long as his or her writing carries with it indications that the writer is aware, on some level, that a “context that is finally beyond him, not his own and not available to his immediate procedures for inventing and arranging a text” exists (138). In other words, the writer is aware of, but cannot, in his or her current position, control the “privileged languages of public life” (139).

The central problem of academic writing, according to Bartholomae is that “a student must assume the right of speaking to someone who knows more about baseball or “To His Coy Mistress” than the student does, a reader for whom the general commonplaces and the readily available utterances about a subject are inadequate” (140). He goes on to take issue with the implication that the act of writing is often a cognitive act. In his opinion, writing is indeed a cognitive act, but it is also “the product, and not

the plan for writing, that locates a writer on the page, that locates him in a text and style and the codes or conventions” (142).

Bartholomae is concerned that educators, all too often, misappropriate writing as a “tool” rather than a mode of learning. He addresses the issue of “knowledge-telling strategy,” which is a skill that students often adopt that allows them to, in effect, mimic a discourse, but doesn’t elicit a deeper and more connective way of knowing the materials that they mimic. According to Bartholomae, this “knowledge-telling strategy” is an important phase (successive approximation) that students must go through to tap into the discourse of the university. He points out that “the approximate discourse, therefore, is evidence of a change, a change that, because we are teachers, we call development” (146).

He concludes his article by looking back to the student samples and pointing out instances of commonplace strategies and approximation of discourse. Bartholomae’s challenge to researchers is “to turn their attention again to products, to student writing, since the drama in a student’s essay, as he or she struggles with and against the languages of our contemporary life, is as intense and telling as the drama of an essay’s mental preparation or physical production” (162).

Bawarshi, Anis. *Genre and the Invention of the Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2003.

In his book, *Genre and the Invention of the Writer*, Anis Bawarshi takes a persuasive look at how genre influences invention. In his preface, Bawarshi explains that he is “interested in examining the dynamic relationship between writers and the texts they produce, I am interested in how writers both preface and are prefaced by other texts, namely genres, in relation to which they write” (ix).

In chapter four, “Constructing Desire: Genre and the Invention of Writing Subjects,” Bawarshi describes genres as “sites of action *as well as* sites of invention, topoi in which invention takes place” (78). He makes clear the concept that agency resides within “the discursive and ideological space of genre [. . .] between the writer’s intentions and the genre’s social motives” (79). Bawarshi’s argument is that writers are created, invented by the genres that they create, invent. For his purposes, Bawarshi uses Catherine Schryer’s definition of genre, “stabilized-for-now or stabilized-enough sites of social and ideological action” (81). He uses Schryer’s definition to support his argument that genres “constitute typified rhetorical sites or habitations in which our social actions and commitments are made possible and meaningful as well as in which we are rhetorically socialized to perform (and potentially transform) these actions and commitments” (81-82).

Bawarshi contends that genre’s socializing power is so strong and so innate that those who would make an effort to invent, become willing, but not necessarily, knowing “agents of desires embedded within it” (83). Genre, in Bawarshi’s opinion, does not act alone as a socializing agent, but is dependant on the interpretation of the individual who

accesses said genre for the purposes of invention. “Genre,” Bawarshi states, “exists at the intersection between writer as agent of his or her actions and the writer as agent on behalf of already existing social motives” (92). If genre exists at this “intersection” between writer and social motives, and invention requires an intersection of writer and motive, then genre becomes the conduit for invention.

Bawarshi’s perspective of invention is that it is “an act of turning outward, not just inward, a way of positioning oneself rhetorically and ideologically at the same time as it is a way of discovering and exploring ideas,” and it is, therefore, very much wrapped up in genre (97). When writers invent, according to Bawarshi, they must “assume multiple positions,” and it is the conflict of these multiple positions that represent points of resistance to invention.

Chapter four ends with some examples of what Bawarshi considers viable genres that can be used in the classroom, and close by readdressing his case: “we can and should teach students how to access and interrogate these genred positions of articulation so that students can participate in these positions more meaningfully and critically” (111).

Berthoff, Ann. "From Dialogue to Dialectic to Dialogue." *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency of Change*. Ed. Dixie Goswami and Peter R. Stillman. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1987. 75-86.

In her essay, "From Dialogue to Dialectic to Dialogue," Ann Berthoff presents herself as a strong proponent of theory-guided practice in the classroom. In an interesting twist, she offers practical examples of how theory played out in her classes at UMass/Boston. She relays the struggle that she had getting students to talk in her classes, and offers examples of how she overcame this roadblock to learning. Although the process is informative, what she is documenting in this essay is her own discovery through this process. Berthoff covers everything from adopting the practical skill of logging class discussion to making the philosophical connection that "dialectic and dialogue are consonant and cognate, simultaneous and correlative" (77).

Another important discovery for Berthoff was that returning to a text was a key aspect of keeping the dialectic active and viable. After going through many discovery processes of her own, Berthoff decided she was ready to develop a "composition course dialectically, letting the exercises and assignments grow from one another" (81). She had three main principles in mind while composing this course: (1) It would not confuse composing and editing, but would offer assistance in editing; (2) There would be room for experimental and "creative" learning; (3) The students would think about thinking (81).

While implementing the dialectic classroom strategy, Berthoff, again, went through the process of discovery. She learned that it was favorable to discussion for her

to act as a conductor to balance the facilitation of student dialogue with the propensity to chaos that student dialogue fosters. Another lesson Berthoff learned was that reading, and rereading for the purpose of paraphrasing, was an important tool in discovery.

Brown, Stephen Gilbert. "New Writers of the Cultural Sage: The Ethnographic-Self Reconfigured." *JAC* 24.1 (2004): 207-227.

In his article, "New Writers of the Cultural Sage: The Ethnographic-Self Reconfigured," Stephen Brown "theorize[s] various aspects" of the "discursive power struggle between ethnographic research and the postmodern critique of it: an analysis with broader implications for the dialectical relation between theory and practice in composition studies" (209).

Brown first looks at the ways in which ethnographic studies have become more oriented towards ethical, social, and political goals. In doing so, Brown believes that ethnographic studies is changing, in part, as a response to postmodern critique of its practice. One of the biggest issues in the practice of critical ethnography is how "can they personalize the ethnographic subject without further marginalizing the discourse of the Other" (211). Using working definitions from various discourses, Brown defines critical ethnography as "synthesizing the antithetical tensions of the theoretical and the practical, the personal and the political, the material and the rhetorical" (213). Along with their change in focus, critical ethnographers are adopting new ways of defining and communicating their practice.

One of the significant changes that has occurred is the concept that an ethnographer is alone and uninvolved with his or her subject. Brown describes this transition as moving from an univocal to a multivocal discourse. Critical ethnography becomes collaborative in nature, "meaning is made dialectically, through dialogue with others" (216). There remains a question as to whether true collaboration takes place in a

critical ethnography context, in that the “participants” may be unwilling or have conflicting agendas.

Along with changing the way critical ethnography is done, a transition in the goal of critical ethnography has taken place: “Knowledge, instead of being an end in itself, is now the means to a political end; instead of solely serving the interests of the ethnographer, it now serves the needs and interests of the participant” (218). The work of the ethnographer is symbiotic, if you will, with the work of the Other. Knowledge gained in such a context must then be used to foster change for the Other.

The concept that gained knowledge be used to implement change is a pragmatic one in that it fosters “the ethnographic and empowering reciprocity between participants and observer” (220). It is within this environment of reciprocity that “project-oriented praxis becomes a useful tool for ethnographic inquiry” (221).

Brown points out that critical ethnography is but one of many options for helping create learning contexts that are more authentic. He ends by challenging educators to do the work that is set before them, and to continue to work towards transformation and “redistribution of power” (226).

Bruffee, Kenneth. "Social Construction, Language, and the Authority of Knowledge: A Bibliographical Essay." *College English* 48 (1986): 773-790.

The purpose of Bruffee's bibliographic essay is to put together a brief guide to social construction that "brings social constructionist texts together in one place, presents them as a coherent school of thought, and offers guidance [. . .] (773). He begins his essay with an introduction to social construction and then delineates six variant disciplines as they fit into the social constructionist school of thought.

In his introduction, Bruffee presents two justifications for scholars and teachers of English to consider social constructionist thought as a useful resource. The first justification is "to improve our understanding and expertise as scholars and teachers" (776). The second justification is "professional self-interest" (778). He argues first that our understanding and expertise is improved because a social constructionist viewpoint, in contrast to traditional definitions of knowledge (i.e. reflection and contemplation), offers at least three alternative perspectives for defining knowledge: nonfoundational cognitive assumptions as opposed to foundational cognitive assumptions; thinking as an internalized conversation as opposed to thinking as being measurable; and that the community is the matrix of thought as opposed to the individual being the matrix of thought.

The nonfoundational cognitive assumption, in contrast to the foundational cognitive assumption, is the concept that "there is no such thing as universal foundation [. . .] or structure of knowledge. There is only an agreement, a consensus arrived at for the time being by communities of knowledgeable peers" (777). He summarizes the social

constructionist perspective by pointing out that knowledge is generated by a social justification of our beliefs.

Social constructionist view thinking as an internal conversation in contrast to thinking as being a measurable, objectifiable exercise. In other words, the terms that we use to place meaning to things are merely social constructs that provide a way of “talking about talking” (777).

Bruffee’s final point towards his theory that a study of social constructivist thought can improve our professional understanding is the concept that, in contrast to traditional thought, “social construction understands knowledge and the authority of knowledge as community-generated, community-maintaining symbolic artifacts” (777).

He ends this contrast by pointing out that social constructive theory provides a bridge in the gap (inner mirror and inner eye) that the cognitive point of view has yet to bridge. It is able to bridge this gap by making knowledge identical with language.

Bruffee moves on to his second justification for the study of social construction: professional self-interest for “language, literature, and composition teachers especially,” because it takes language from mere conduit status and places it “at the center of our understanding of knowledge and the authority of knowledge” (778).

The second part of Bruffee’s article is a brief guide to social construction. He lists six categories that social construction can fit into, as he sees it: General Accounts, Community Specific Accounts, Literary Studies, Composition Studies, Social Sciences, and Undergraduate Education. In each one of these categories, Bruffee gives a brief definition of each category, and then touches on scholars who he believes to be important contributors to the social constructionist conversations in these areas.

Desai, Gaurav. "The Invention of Invention." *Cultural Critique* 24 (1993): 119-142.

In the article "The Invention of Invention," Desai investigates the significance of the "invention tradition" as it relates to cultural studies and how the tradition "settles and unsettles the *epistemes* of ... Western thought" (119).

Relying primarily on Derrida, Desai begins by looking at invention itself. The point made in paraphrasing Derrida here is that "it may not be possible to 'invent' something entirely other, but it may nevertheless be possible to 'invent' anyway" (121). Desai defines the term *invent* starting with its Latin root, and thus pointing out that *to invent* means "to 'come upon' or 'discover' something presumably already there" (121). He summarizes his point by presenting invention as a two-fold agent that requires the individual to both *fake* and *make* knowledge. The body of his article is dedicated to exemplifying the *faking* and the *making* that the agent of inventing entails.

Desai first looks to Adam Kuper's *The Invention of Primitive Society*, and other theorist such as, Thomas Kuhn, and Michel Foucault to expand the notion that invention, regardless of the original motives of the inventor, "evolves a logic of its own within the discipline." The discipline in this excerpt happens to be anthropology, but the application is the same. Once a logic has been developed within a discipline "other inventions are necessitated to embed further the logic of the discourse" (125).

Taking his investigation a step further, Desai discusses what he believes to be the myth of virgin cultures. The idea is that an anthropologist gains more credibility and power within the discipline if he or she can claim to be the first to infiltrate this pristine culture. He supports this concept with the work of Renato Rosaldo. Rosaldo's explanation of the idea that the "invention of virginity and the invention of the timeless

native are rooted in the ways in which authority is established in the discipline of anthropology” (127). Desai spends a great deal of time on the virgin myth to set the stage for the next section of his essay: “The Invention Tradition.”

In “The Invention Tradition” portion of his work, Desai problematizes the invention tradition in relation to those who are being invented “the other.” His point is that invention most often takes place without consideration for those who are being invented. If this is the case, what happens when “the *objects* of invention begin to take on the role of the *agents* of invention” (131)? Using the work of Allan Hanson as a spring board and, quoting Derrida as support, Desai presents a convincing argument that the majority of invention that occurs is actually a form of counterinvention.

Counterinvention is brought about as the Other’s attempt to gain respect and acceptance in the conversation of the larger community. The premise is that the agent of invention does not present the act of invention as an absolute truth, but rather as a counterinvention by which the other appreciates aspects of the discourse in order to gain acceptance into the respective community. Desai points out that “propagators of the stories may be fully aware of their fictionalities, but nevertheless assert them because asserting them may let them achieve whatever it is that they set out to achieve” (136).

Desai ends his essay by challenging the reader to study and invent with the passion of the other. Looking to Gayatri Spivak, and pointing out that invention accepted as tradition, in the case of the anthropological example, becomes dangerous when it is an exercise in the practice that serves the interest only of the intellectual elites. His concern is that “the voice of the other is continually being muted” (137).

Elbow, Peter. *Embracing Contraries: Explorations in Learning and Teaching*.

New York: Oxford UP, 1986.

In his essay, “Teaching Two Kinds of Thinking by Teaching Writing,” Peter Elbow attempts to broaden our concept of thinking by refuting what he calls “restrictive combat.” He believes that “the process of learning how to move back and forth between imposing control and relinquishing it” in thinking is where true progress can be made (54).

Elbow makes two distinctions of thinking when he is teaching writing, which he categorizes as first-order thinking and second-order thinking. First-order thinking is the place where he suggests that writers start. It is a free, creative thought process that doesn’t elicit control over the text. Second-order thinking is a more controlled and directed thought process that he equivocates with “critical thinking” (55). Elbow believes that both orders of thinking are necessary, but that often second-order thinking, if done first, brings about stiff, rehearsed writing. He states, “Thinking carefully means trying to examine your thinking while using it too—trying to think about thinking while also thinking about something else—which often leads people to foolishness” (56).

First-order thinking, in Elbow’s opinion, “heightens intelligence” (56). He believes that removing the pressure that often comes with the process of second-order thinking (think, plan, and outline) will “invariably lead the person spontaneously to formulate *conceptual* insights which are rooted in experience” (56). Free-writing brings about “ah-ha” moments that allow the writer to make connections that may have otherwise been lost to process. Elbow warns his reader that first-order thinking can be misleading, and should be followed with second-order thinking, “we must not trust the

fruits of intuitive and experiential first-order thinking unless we have carefully assessed them with second-order critical thinking” (57). Simply stated, first-order thinking gives us a buffet of ideas from which to fill our plate with the perfect ensemble of ideas that complement and complete each other.

He moves on to link the two orders of thinking to the writing process. Free-writing and first-draft exploratory writing fit into the category of first-order thinking; whereas, “rewriting or revising where one constantly subjects everything to critical scrutiny” fit into the category of second-order thinking (58). Elbow is a huge proponent for first-order thinking as a writing exercise as long as the student is aware that it represents only a portion of the project. He states, “excellence must involve finding *some* way to be both abundantly inventive yet toughmindedly critical” (60). He offers “two rules of thumb” for writing within these conflicting orders of thinking: (1) Work on first-order thinking and second-order thinking processes separately; (2) “*start with* creative thinking and exploratory writing and then engage in critical assessment and revision afterward” (61).

Elbow ends his essay by refuting the idea that free-writing or creative writing prior to critical writing is a waste of time. He believes that students are more likely to save time by exercising their first-order thinking before executing second-order thinking. He states, “It’s a matter of learning to work on opposites one at a time in a generous spirit of mutual reinforcement rather than a spirit of restrictive combat” (63).

Forsman, Syrene. "Writing to Learn Means Learning to Think." *Roots in the*

***Sawdust: Writing to Learn Across the Disciplines.* Anne Gere, ed. Urbana, IL:**

NCTE, 1985.

In her essay, "Writing to Learn Means Learning to Think," Syrene Forsman maps out a practical writing-to-learn strategy that she has found successful in her classes. She believes that educators can better facilitate the "ability to think" by walking their students through a process that moves from what Peter Elbow would call first-order thinking all the way to completion via second-order thinking (also Elbow's term).

She begins by teaching the students to journal to help "provide where their minds have been during a period of intense growth and change" (163). Forsman sets a fairly strict context in which journal writing is considered acceptable for her class, but otherwise allows them free license in this exercise.

Taking her writing-to-learn strategy a step further, Forsman presents three questions from which students can choose to do a "focused writing." She constructs these questions with several goals in mind: "(1) to direct their minds to the subject matter of the day, (2) to encourage ever more complex levels of thinking, and (3) to increase the flow of ideas onto paper" (163). Forsman considers guided journal writing to be an extremely important step in writing-to-learn, because it aids in breaking the student's traditional schooling paradigm—the whole fill-in-the-blank mentality—giving them the confidence in their own ideas to move beyond the fear of expressing their own thoughts. Because students are working out of their comfort zones, Forsman points out that trust is an important aspect of the teacher-student relationship. She states, "Learning to trust my

reason as well as their own is an important stage in our development as a writing community” (165).

One exercise that Forsman highlights is what she calls the “peanut exercise.” Students are given a peanut and told to describe it. After a set amount of time, she collects all the peanuts and lets the students pick their peanut from a pile. According to Forsman, this exercise, and others like it, builds student confidence in his or her ability to observe in detail. After all the fun, she discusses the correlation between their powers of observation in the class exercise and the power to observe in literature, specifically in the genres of analytical or comparison papers. Throughout her essay, Forsman offers several practical examples and outcomes of how to successfully implement writing-to-learn strategies.

Forsman points to her student’s evaluations of the class as the best evidence that writing-to-learn strategies are challenging and useful. She explains, “They describe their learning as ‘finding more questions’ and clarifying what they think. They are concerned about consistency of views as well as ‘knowing the material.’ In other words, they are well on their way to becoming thinking learners” (174).

Fulwiler, Toby. "Looking and Listening for My Voice." *College Composition and Communication* 41.2 (1990): 214-220.

In his personable essay, "Looking and Listening for My Voice," Toby Fulwiler presents a "query into the nature of [his] own written voice: where it came from, what distinguishes it, and where it fits in our profession" (214). His curiosity about his own voice in writing was peaked by the ongoing conversations concerning voice at the time. He begins by discussing some of the various views including social constructionist, and spends some time "picking" interchangeably at "voice," which he deems equivocal to "style." Fulwiler delves into the query with five specific questions about his own voice: "do I have an authentic voice (or more than one)? Where can I find it (them)? What does it (they) actually look like? How much does it (they) vary according to circumstances? And how much conscious control do I exert over it (them)" (215). In an attempt to address some of these questions, Fulwiler looks at three specific samples of his own writings for various occasions: his private voice, his public voice, and his eighteen-year-old-self. From these samples, he develops a list of "propositions" concerning voice in writing:

1. If there is such a thing as authentic voice, it is protean and shifty.
2. Most published voices are carefully constructed.
3. Authenticity can best be found by looking at whole pieces of discourse.
4. When people hear a voice in writing, what they will most likely hear is a tone conveyed through an aggregate of smaller discourse features characteristic of the writer's public persona.
5. The structure of a whole piece of writing contributes significantly to the image

of rationality in a writer's voice.

6. Distinctive writing voices commonly depend on language features associated with creative or imaginative writing.
7. The writing topic itself contributes to the sense of voice.
8. Published voices are more distinctive than private voices.
9. My own voice is determined, to a significant extent, by a discourse community long thought left behind.
10. Writers' private, expressive language conveys less sense of voice than their transactional language.

Fulwiler comes to the conclusion that he "write[s] form within and, at the same time, from without an identifiable discourse community" (220). He believes that his authentic voice that comes through in his public writing is, in effect, a rebellion against the confines of his current discourse community.

Garver, Eugene. "The Modesty of Aristotle's Rhetoric." *Inventing a Discipline: Rhetoric Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Young*. Ed. Maureen Goggin. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000. 123-45.

Using Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as his foundational text, Garver attempts a plea to teachers of communication to keep rhetoric "modestly confined to argument, not knowledge of real things" (124). Garver's purpose is to use Aristotelian principles of *Rhetoric* to caution writing teachers concerning their belief in their "work as advancing the cause of democracy" (127). He is concerned that practitioners of composition studies, in holding such high and lofty perceptions of their work, employ "extraneous motives" in their "impulse to specialization" (127).

It is Garver's impression that such an "impulse to specialization" causes many practitioners to fall back on a sophistic tradition of rhetoric. A rhetoric that, in his opinion, "aims at victory rather than the more limited rhetorical aim of finding in a given case the available means of persuasion, it *must* pretend to expert knowledge" (128). In other words, the unyielding need to win becomes more important than the argument. When specialist take a polemic position in the form of eloquence, it is equally as dangerous to argument as scientific positioning. Garver argues that "Rhetoric, like dialectic, is a universal art, not the property of specialists" (130).

One suggestion that Garver makes towards "restor[ing] the dignity" of rhetoric is by transforming invention to inquiry. The contextual implication of such a move in a classroom setting is, at times, a difficult intellectual hurdle for an educator to surmount. At times, Garver argues, "knowing what one is talking about seems, and is, innocent, yet it can have seriously destructive consequences" (132). He suggests that practitioners

should work towards a way of presenting the knowledge that fosters an environment of inquiry. Using his own expertise as an example, Garver posits that “there can still be a form of equality between speaker and listener if I try to present the relevant evidence and grounds for judgment and decision. [. . .] I am inventing arguments rather than presenting evidence that removes the need for argument” (132).

Overall, Garver contends that “the purpose of rhetoric is not to persuade but to find available means of persuasion” (133). He moves on to point out the difference between civic and professional rhetoric. Professional rhetoric is necessarily anticipatory in nature. One must argue, or at least see, both positions in order to refute objections. Civic rhetoric must also see both sides of the argument, but one’s purpose in this instance is to “form a community of inquiry” (136).

Garver acknowledges, or sees both sides of the argument if you will, that a demand for specialized argument that requires eloquence does exist, but which stance to take (modest or competitive) should be left to one’s judgment: “Generally, it is best to stick to common opinion, common values, and publicly accessible modes of argument, but in some cases the stakes are too high [. . .]” (140).

Kent, Thomas. "On the Very Idea of a Discourse Community." *College Composition and Communication* 42.4 (1991): 425-445.

"In the discipline of rhetoric, therefore, I believe that we need to stop talking about social norms, cultural conventions, discourse communities, semiotic mediation, language systems, and similar epistemological constructs, and, instead, begin to talk about the hermeneutic strategies we employ to get things done in the world" (438). In his article, "On the Very Idea of a Discourse Community," Thomas Kent takes issue with the social constructionist viewpoint of discourse community, in that it limits the writer to internalized thought, and he challenges the audience to consider Davidsonian externalism as a viable alternative. He points out three insurmountable problems with the social constructionist viewpoint: it is self-refuting; it is open to global skepticism; and it is relative.

Kent finds the social constructionist views that discourse communities are not commensurate to be self-refuting because "discourse communities cannot be incommensurate, for if they were, we would not even recognize them as being discourse communities" (428). He believes that discourse communities are commensurate in that participants in various discourse communities, at the very least, understand enough of the variant discourse to communicate and learn the discourse of the new discourse community into which they are being introduced.

According to Kent, the social constructionist viewpoint of discourse communities being internal opens them up to the problem of global skepticism: "if separation exists between the mind and the world, how can we ever be sure that we know the minds of others or that we can know with any certainty anything at all about the world" (428)? In

the same line of global skepticism, Kent also finds the social constructionist viewpoint to be relative, and that this relativity keeps them from having any authority or credibility to “talk about the nature of truth, value, meaning, knowledge, or even ethics” (429).

Kent’s answer to the social constructionist’s internal viewpoint of discourse communities is what he refers to as Davidsonian externalism. He posits that “externalists hold that propositional attitudes [. . .] derive from our public interactions with other language users and with the world. Consequently, mental states cannot exist without an external world” (430). To support his point, Kent delineates the Davidsonian model of “triangulation.” The idea is that mental states are reliant on interaction with “someone who thinks, other sentient beings, and a world they know they share” (430-431). He argues that this common place where communication takes place is in what Davidson refers to as a “passing theory.”

The concept of “passing theory” is that each participant brings to the table of communication “prior theories” which make up our current circles of knowledge. As participants are attempting to interpret meaning in discourse, they find a common ground on which communication may take place. This common ground is what makes up the “passing theory.” Kent elaborates, “The passing theory, therefore, constitutes on-the-spot interpretation or what I have called elsewhere “hermeneutic guessing” (433). From this point, Kent moves on to present “Discourse Production as a Hermeneutic Act.”

Kent offers discourse production as a hermeneutic act as an alternative to the social constructionist paradigm of discourse communities. His main issue with the idea of discourse communities is that it is implicit that they are inherently internal and that a participant cannot move from one community to the next because of this notion of

incommensurability. According to Kent, interpretation of a new discourse requires us to engage in hermeneutic activity that allows us to interpret the “strange sounds and marks” of the new discourse “in the same way that we would interpret familiar sounds and marks” of our current discourse (434). After creating a fairly strong case for Davidsonian externalism, Kent looks to some of the consequences of choosing the concept of externalism over the concept of discourse communities.

Kent believes that considering communication to be a hermeneutic act that relies on external “passing theories” to take place, allows one to, at the least, deconstruct the notion that consensus must take place for communication in discourse to happen. If consensus is not a necessity of communication, then discourse communities, which by their very nature marginalize others, are no longer viable. It is Kent’s position, that, if we remove the need to work within the confines of a discourse community and, instead, work within the framework of passing theories, the voice of the other, in discourse, has the opportunity to be clearly heard. He ends his article by pointing out that discourse is a public activity, because it relies on “other language users” and “objects in the world” for communication (442).

Kirscht, Judy, Rhonda Levine, and John Reiff. “Evolving Paradigms: WAC and the Rhetoric of Inquiry.” *College Composition and Communication* 45 (1994): 369-80.

“Evolving Paradigms” is a collaborative article that “explore[s] the theoretical and pedagogical implications of conflict for writing across the curriculum” (369). They “argue that the conflict itself is based on false dichotomy that work in the social construction of knowledge—particularly the concept of ‘rhetoric of inquiry’—is capable of connecting both poles of that conflict in a powerful new synthesis with important implications of the field and for the classroom” (369-370).

The team maps out their perspective of the conflict between writing-to-learn and writing-in-the-disciplines. One point that is made is that a conflict between the two camps came about by the faculty of many disciplines looking to composition studies for help to bolster what they perceived to be “deficiencies in their students’ writing” (370). When compositionist stepped up to the plate, dichotomies existed in their field that caused the various camps represented to address the deficiency from different perspectives: Writing-to-learn versus Writing-in-the-disciplines.

The writing-to-learn camp approached the task from the perspective of what composition studies could offer to other disciplines. They believed that they “could offer the disciplines a sense of writing as an integral part of the learning process” (370). The writing-in-the-disciplines camp approached other disciplines as a study of their own and “proceeded to study the practice of the disciplines as discourse communities and the possibility of teaching these conventions in the composition class” (370). According to the authors, this conflict between writing-to-learn and writing-in-the-disciplines

“represents a fundamental conflict in WAC, both as to its purpose and its understanding of writing” (317). A major difficulty of this conflict within the field of composition studies is that it “interfered with establishing a common language of dialogue.” Discourse, according to the authors, rather than being a tool by which to share thoughts and ideas, became points of political demarcation.

The team looks to examples in social constructionist viewpoint for ways that this dichotomy within a discipline happens, and ways to bridge the gap that exists. One point that they highlight is that we hold on to our “conceptual models” because they give us a “sense of security about our purpose” (373). “Social constructionist,” say the authors, “view disciplines as socially negotiated territory and conventions a representations of actions which emanate from a discipline’s center of inquiry” (373).

The social constructionist view is tied into teaching the rhetoric of inquiry, because it facilitates an environment in which “disciplinary-based writing becomes a highly imaginative activity, which opens up possibilities of new questions, new ways of seeing and organizing thought, new ways of talking about the world” (374).

The remainder of the article is dedicated to a very useful example of the use of empirical study as part of an introductory composition course. The authors believe that using empirical study in the composition classroom allows a student to “raise new questions, to establish new theoretical grounds for plausible explanations and predictions” rather than to arrive at certainty (375). This exploratory method of learning creates an opportunity for the student to transform dialogue within a discipline into dialectic within a discipline.

Lee, Virginia S., ed. *Teaching and Learning Through Inquiry: A Guidebook for Institutions and Instructors*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2004.

The first chapter of Virginia Lee's *Teaching and Learning Through Inquiry* offers a practical overview of the entire book. She and a group of her colleagues at North Carolina State University got together to discuss inquiry-guided-learning (IGL) on their campus. They started by generating a list of questions concerning IGL based on their collective experience. The idea in generating these queries was to "stake out the territory and offer an extended definition developed by those of us who have thought deeply about the concept and are guiding its practice" (4).

The first issue they tackle is the question of whether IGL is a specific pedagogy or an umbrella term. They seem to lean towards an understanding of IGL as a specific pedagogy that falls under the umbrella of several disciplines. The conclusion was that IGL "refers to a range of strategies used to promote learning through students' active, and increasingly independent, investigation of questions, problems and issues." IGL involves various teaching strategies, "including interactive lecture, discussion, problem-based learning, case studies, simulations, and independent study" (5).

After tackling the pedagogy question, the group moves on to the question of "who (or what) is doing the guiding?" The conclusion on this matter seems to be dual in nature. IGL is best accomplished when the student has a question that he or she has developed on their own, with the professors acting as a guide in the developmental process. One point that the discussion group makes is that "[d]epending on our particular profile, some of us may weight the nurturing of student curiosity, will, and purpose more heavily. In turn others may stress instructor control and guidance" (6).

If student desire and faculty guidance are key aspects of IGL, then IGL is accessible to all disciplines. According to the authors, “[c]ritical thinking represents and intellectual core and key qualities of mind, and the disciplines simply represent variations of this core quality” (6-7). IGL must be set within some context in order to be qualified, but it must be generated from a position of questioning, and must, therefore, be allowed the freedom and flexibility of discovery. In other words, “we are at once making and letting inquiry-guided-learning happen” (8).

Finally the group comes to a consensus and gives a definition of IGL, some main points read as follows:

Inquiry-guided-learning refers to an array of classroom practices that promote student learning through guided and, increasingly, independent investigation of complex questions and problems, often for which there is no single answer. [. . .] instructors assist students in mastering and learning through the process of active investigation itself. [. . .] It promotes critical thinking. It develops students’ responsibility for their own learning and habits of life-long learning. [. . .] A variety of teaching strategies, used singly or, more often, in combination with one another, are consistent with IGL [. . .] IGL must also involve writing and speaking both in classroom instruction and in the methods used to evaluate students. [. . .] it is most effective in small classes. (9-10)

LeFevre, Karen Burke. *Invention As a Social Act*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1986.

Chapter three, “Invention as a Social Act,” looks specifically at invention from a social perspective. According to LeFevre, “Invention [. . .] is best understood as occurring when individuals interact dialectically with socioculture in a distinctive way to generate something” (33).

First, LeFevre highlights what she believes are “significant social aspects of invention.” They are summarized as follows:

1. The inventing “self” is socially influenced, even socially constituted.
2. One invents with language or with other symbol systems, which are socially created and shared by members of discourse communities.
3. Invention builds on a foundation of knowledge accumulated from previous generations, knowledge that constitutes a social legacy of ideas, forms, and ways of thinking.
4. Invention may be enabled by an internal dialogue with an imagined other or a construct of audience that supplies premises or structures of belief guiding the inventor.
5. Writers often invent by involving other people: editors, evaluators, “resonators,” collaborators, opponents, etc.
6. Invention is powerfully influenced by social collectives, such as institutions, bureaucracies, governments, and “invisible colleges” of academic disciplinary communities.

7. The reception, evaluation, and use of what is invented depend to a great extent on social context. (33-35)

After summarizing some of the social aspects of invention, LeFevre moves on to position invention as a dialectical process. If invention is, in fact, a dialectical process, then culture plays as large of a role in the invention process as the individual plays. According to LeFevre, what the individual brings to the table is his or her own unique way of interacting within the culture; “[a] culture cannot ‘think’ ideas without the synthesis made possible by individuals who interact with culture in certain ways, nor can individuals create ideas in a vacuum removed from society and culture” (36).

Invention is an act in that it requires someone to initiate the process (inventor) and someone to bring the act to completion (audience). LeFevre stress the point of inventor and audience by stating that “the potential for power requires the presence of others, and the achievement of action requires that others execute and thus complete the action” (38). The audience (reader) is just as responsible for creating meaning. “Thus, writers, readers, and texts are inextricably connected” (39).

Taking the concept a step further, LeFevre posits that this symbiotic relationship between inventor and audience assures that invention happens over time. Discourse, therefore, is not “an isolated event, but rather a constant potentiality that is occasionally evidenced in speech or writing” (41). The concept that invention is not the isolated event of the inventor, but it involves audience, culture, and it changes over time is in opposition to traditional rhetorical views of invention.

To support her theory that invention is not an isolated event, LeFevre offers what she calls a “one-text negotiating procedure” as an example. She talks about the process

by which American mediators were able to help negotiate a proposal that both Egypt and Israel were able to accept during the Camp David Accords. Her example proves that “[r]hetorical abilities are clearly required here, to invent, argue, mediate, speak, and write” (43).

For the true believers in classical rhetoric, LeFevre offers evidence of social perspective in both Aristotelian and Platonic camps. She points out that Aristotle’s position was clearly more social than Plato’s, but that they both have elements of social perspective.

LeFevre sums up invention as a social act in the following ways:

- as actively creating—as well as finding or remembering—that which is the substance of discourse;
- as involving a variety of social relationships with real and imaginary others, with individuals as well as social collectives;
- as dialectical process in which individuals interact with socioculture in a unique way to generate something;
- as an act that generally is initiated by inventors and brought to completion by an audience, often extending over time through a series of social transactions and texts. (46-47)

Porter, James E. "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community." *Rhetoric Review*

5.1 (1986): 34-47.

In his article "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community," James Porter debunks the romantic notion of the writer as free, by presenting the "intertextual nature of discourse." The purpose of his argument is to "demonstrate the significance of this theory to rhetoric, by explaining Intertextuality, its connection to the notion of 'discourse community,' and its pedagogical implications for composition" (35).

Porter begins by presenting two types of Intertextuality: iterability and presuppositions. Iterability "refers to the 'repeatability' of certain textual fragments." Presupposition "refers to assumptions a text makes about its referent, its readers and its context" (35). Porter examines The Declaration of Independence, a Pepsi commercial, and a *New York Times* headline, to give tangible examples of the presence of Intertextuality in various mediums. According to Porter's research, the Declaration of Independence represents far more than Thomas Jefferson's production of original thought. He points out that Jefferson borrows from his "culture's text" for the terminology, from several political documents for his format, and from clichés of his time. In the end Jefferson's work was edited by Congress to be placed in an acceptable format.

Porter moves on to point out that the Pepsi company successfully employs Intertextuality by painting itself as the "great American conciliator" by squeezing its product in the middle of an array of signs that harmonize "tradition and counter-tradition" (37). His final example of Intertextuality is a *New York Times* headline from 1970 that uses presupposition to "upset the sense of order of the readers, in this case the American

public” (38). The point Porter is exerting through these examples is that audience expectation influences Intertextuality: “That, in essence, readers, not writers, create discourse” (38).

Moving from his tangible examples, Porter takes a look at the “Power of Discourse Community.” He defines a “discourse community” as a “group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated” (39). This definition relates to Intertextuality in that works that are accepted within specific discourse communities are, by necessity, intertextual. To be accepted a work must “reflect the communities episteme” (39). The concern with acceptance into specific discourse communities by adapting to the regulated forms of discourse is that “genuine originality is difficult within the confines of a well-regulated system” (40). He identifies a way to get around the confines of the community by explaining that “every text admitted into a discourse community changes the constitution of the community” (41).

The next section of Porter’s article deals with “The Pedagogy of Intertextuality.” He is concerned that in Composition Studies we continue to romanticize the writer by overemphasizing his or her autonomy, often completely disregarding the Intertextuality of our own discipline. As instructors in composition, “our goal should be to help students learn to write for the discourse communities they choose to join” (42). In other words, we should equip them with the wherewithal to “effect change in communities—without fear of exclusion” (42). He points out that our “typical anthologies” are both limited in range and often contain unclear text for the purpose of creating useful knowledge of other discourse communities. Using intertextual theory, Porter suggests that the “key criteria

for evaluating writing should be ‘acceptability’ within some discourse community” (43). He suggests that we can be the most help to our students by avoiding the tradition that limits their exposure to “romantic role models” that “create unrealistic expectations,” rather we should expose them to “writers whose products are more evidently part of a larger process and whose work more clearly produces meaning in social contexts” (44).

Ronald, Kate. "On the Outside Looking In: Students' Analyses of Professional Discourse Communities." *Rhetoric Review* 7.1 (1988): 130-149.

Kate Ronald's article applies practical lessons to the theoretical issue of writing-across-the-curriculum. She specifically looks at the role that an English teacher should play in equipping students with the ability to assimilate the language of his or her chosen profession in an attempt to join their various discourse communities, and at the problems inherent with an English professional taking on such a responsibility.

Ronald begins her research by defining discourse community by quoting James Porter's article "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community" in which he states, "discourse community shares assumptions about what objects are appropriate for examination and discussion, what operating functions are performed on those objects, what constitutes 'evidence' and 'validity,' and what formal conventions are followed" (39). She uses an actual rhetorical analysis assignment that she has given to her upper-level advanced composition and professional writing students in which she asks them about their professional goals and then requires them to analyze the rhetoric of their chosen profession.

The assignment is presented as a discovery exercise that requires the student "to look at texts in order to discover what 'voices' and attitudes are accepted, what constitutes 'proof' in a field, how writers define audiences, how their body of knowledge gets expanded and criticized" (132). She goes on to categorize four separate student responses to this assignment: literary persona, the apprentice, the defeated cynic, and the insider critic. According to Ronald, even though the four types of responses vary, all four

responses seem to indicate that the students are aware “of the ways that community-generated language contributes to the individual’s identity” (133).

In the literary persona response, Ronald gives three examples of student writing in which the student “chooses the stance of an outsider, creating a distance between himself and the professional world” that he or she is attempting to join. She goes on to theorize that fear is a large contributing factor to this distancing. In her observations, students reverted to familiar discourse communities, i.e. English Studies, because they “clearly feel on the outside of the community of professionals” that they are trying to join.

The apprentice response goes a bit further into joining to professional conversation than the literary persona response, in that the writer continues to distance himself from the professional discourse community, but in a way that indicates a desire to earn admittance into said community. In this regard, Ronald feels that her assignment is “to help students take a close look at the way writing defines their professions in order to make some decisions about whether or not they want to enter those professions” (138). She connects this dilemma with David Bartholomae’s comments on the individual versus community.

In the third category of student response, defeatists, the students take themselves completely out of the professional discourse community that they are attempting to join. They may even go as far as to view the professional community as the enemy.

Ronald distinguishes the fourth student response from the other three, because it represents a smaller group of students who have already had the experience of conversing in their professional discourse community. The insider critic response indicates an

acceptance of the conventions of their chosen profession, and at times a challenge to those conventions.

Using the insider critic response and James Reither's critique of composition studies as the clearing house for writing-across-the-curriculum programs, Ronald makes the argument that "students should be asked to be part of the conversation, inquirers in the knowledge community, in all their classes" (144). She bolsters her argument by using Les Perelman's observations that English Studies are in and of themselves professions where students are "taught to value an individual voice, a personal perspective, and they have been rewarded for writing that was modeled after poets and storytellers" (145). While these qualities may be fitting for an English studies professional, they may not be rewarded or acknowledge in other disciplines.

Ronald ends her essay with a challenge to English professionals to "broaden their definitions of texts and contexts" and to use our rhetorical knowledge to "help students recognize the ways language shapes communities and communities determine language" (146). Like our students, writing-across-the-curriculum teachers need to distance ourselves from our own assumptions in order to help our students to "use writing to define themselves as individuals and professionals at the same time" (147).

Winterowd, W. Ross. "The Purification of Literature and Rhetoric." *College English* 49.3 (1987): 257-273.

In this three part article W. Ross Winterowd takes a look at what he believes to be the "Purification of Literature to Theory" and the "Devaluation of Rhetoric to Stylistics." In the first part of his article, Winterowd looks toward influential texts in literature studies that he believes to be contributors to the purification of literature to theory.

Winterowd claims that Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* is "clearly a response to the epistemological and institutional crisis brought on by the ascendancy of positivism and scientism" (257). The point is that there was a need for theory within literature and this need was brought to light in a time during which scientism was recognized as a viable conduit for credibility in the disciplines. Winterowd summarizes his point as follows: "The study of literature is the study of literature's language, and in that study the methods of science are not strictly banned, but would certainly be evidence of a lack of propriety for anyone who turned them on literature" (259).

The second text which Winterowd believes is foundational to theory in literature is Northrop Frye's *The Anatomy of Criticism*. He claims that "Frye made a revolutionary departure when he established theory as the foundation of the profession, for the institution of literary studies" (259). Winterowd's belief is that literary studies are validated by classifying them in scientific terms. According to Winterowd, Frye's work made theory "the basis of literary studies, the foundation on which the discipline was to be built" (260).

Theory of Literature and *Anatomy of Criticism* combined to provide a consistent and rigorous framework for the interpretation of literature. Winterowd believes that

literature was raised to the final level of purification when Culler, in *Structuralist Poetics*, presented “the goal of literary theory is to explain *competence*, not to interpret individual works” (260).

Part two of Winterowd’s article is dedicated to discussing what he believes to be the “devaluation of rhetoric to stylistics.” He argues that rhetoric no longer deals with inventive issues such as *ethos*, *logos*, or *pathos*, but rather it has been reduced to the application, or lack thereof, of style. Winterowd identifies three reasons that he believes that rhetoric has been “purified of theory”: (1) the influence of eighteenth-century psychology; (2) positivistic epistemology; and (3) the purification of literature through theory. Once again, Winterowd points to specific sources that he believes were major contributors to the devaluation of rhetoric. In his opinion, all three sources merely touch on the issues of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* and all turn back to rhetoric as a stylistic enterprise.

Winterowd states that “having been uprooted and severely pruned, rhetoric was left, as I have said, without tradition or theory” (270). He ends his article with what he identifies as essential questions for the humanities: “What does it mean to read and write? What is literacy? How is it acquired? What are its ethics? Its economics? What psychological processes are involved? What are the cognitive consequences of literacy? The social consequences? What are the best methods of teaching” (271)? He believes that, in light of purified literature and devalued rhetoric, the answers to these “essential” questions will be hard to come by.

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