

## **K Session Abstracts**

### ***K1. Writing assessment: Social processes and social consequences***

Chair: Kathy Patterson, *U.C. Santa Barbara*

#### **The social consequences of writing assessment: Negotiating tensions in design**

Sandy Murphy

*U.C. Davis*

[smmurphy@ucdavis.edu](mailto:smmurphy@ucdavis.edu)

There are two main themes that run through this presentation. The first is the social nature of assessment. I argue that assessment is an inherently social activity and that we can understand and improve it only by taking into account the social forces that drive it and the particular contexts— social, cultural, economic, and political—in which it operates. The second is the impact that design decisions necessarily have on stakeholders and curricula. I make the somewhat obvious point that consequences in the social world flow from decisions about assessment design. Drawing upon research that colleagues and I have conducted on the impact of writing assessment, I illustrate some of the consequences of particular decisions for teachers, for students, for communities, and for writing curriculum. Finally, I discuss the idea of design tensions in writing assessment and propose that assessment designers need to explicitly identify potential tensions and contemplate their resolution.

Design tensions arise when means, ways, and values come into conflict. In the assessment arena, they arise when there is competition for limited resources, when the multiple stakeholders in the social context of a writing assessment want it to serve different purposes, when stakeholders hold different values or visions of the ultimate goal, and when stakeholders at different levels of the system grapple with issues of power and control. One example is the tension between the need for efficient, cost-effective assessments and the need to create assessments that are aligned with contemporary views on literacy. Another is the tension between assessment designed for learning and assessment designed for accountability. The research presented includes studies of both local and large-scale portfolio assessment projects as well assessments with more traditional formats. I conclude with an argument for an integrated, systemic, value-sensitive approach to writing assessment design that pays attention to the needs, experience, and values of multiple stakeholders.

#### **Cognitively-based assessment of learning: Writing**

Thomas Quinlan

*Educational Testing Service*

[tquinlan@ets.org](mailto:tquinlan@ets.org)

Paul Deane  
*Educational Testing Service*

Traditional assessments of children's writing have been criticized on various points. In particular, critics have faulted so-called "one-shot" writing assessments as providing an incomplete picture of a child's ability as a writer, as well as fostering a formulaic approach to writing. Currently, Educational Testing Service is researching ways to address these long-standing weaknesses in writing assessment. As part of a major initiative (the Cognitively-based Assessment for, of, & as Learning), ETS is developing a new K-12 writing assessment designed to provide a more valid measure of a child's writing skill, that would also facilitate the learning and development of writing skill. We aim to design of assessment tasks that teachers will consider worth teaching toward; thus, tasks will be embedded in a process approach to writing and call upon children's ability to think critically about writing.

In a "one-shot" writing assessment, composing a high quality essay demonstrates writing competency while composing a mediocre essay reveals little. Writing an essay requires the coordination of multiple skills, in which children have greater or lesser skill. A writing assessment can and should show-off children's writing skill to best advantage. Clearly, to gain an accurate evaluation of children's writing skill, we must understand children's abilities in an integrated performance (e.g., composing an essay), as well as their abilities to handle the ancillary processes (e.g., activities related to prewriting or revising). In our approach to assessing children's writing, we scaffold these ancillary processes that contribute to skillful writing. By comparing how a child performs on these scaffolded ancillary tasks, relative to their performance on the integrated task, we can gain a rich profile of that child as a writer.

This presentation will describe the on-going work on this next generation of writing assessment, from conception to sample writing prompts.

### **Exploring effective ways to assess the writing of young students**

David Coker  
*University of Delaware*  
[dcoker@udel.edu](mailto:dcoker@udel.edu)

Kristen D. Ritchey  
*University of Delaware*

Sara B. McCraw  
*University of Delaware*

Eileen Erwin  
*Gesu School, Philadelphia*

In the past twenty years, much has been learned about the complexity of writing development (Coker, 2006; Graham, in press). Although the research base has expanded, there has been relatively little attention focused on the assessment of early writing skills (Ritchey, 2006). Given concerns about the writing proficiency of elementary students (Persky *et al.*, 2003), researchers and teachers need better methods to identify struggling young writers and to monitor the progress of writers over time.

Our presentation will present the results from an on-going, longitudinal study of two curriculum-based measures (CBM) of writing with second and third graders ( $n = 50$ ). The first measure contains pictures that depict three events in a story. Students are asked to write a short story based on the events in the pictures within five minutes. The second measure is also designed to elicit a narrative. Students are given a brief prompt and then asked to write a story about what happens next. They are given one minute to plan and three minutes to write the story. Both measures were administered multiple times (five waves) during the spring of 2007 to the same group of urban students. In addition, the Test of Early Written Language (Hresko *et al.*, 1996) was used to assess the concurrent validity of the measures.

In the presentation, we will discuss the utility of various approaches to scoring the measures (based on productivity and content), and we will report on analyses of reliability, validity, and whether the measures are able to monitor growth (i.e., slope utility). This methodological goal is crucial because significant questions remain about the validity of these measures (McMaster & Espin, in press). In addition, our discussion will address the potential benefits and drawbacks of using CBM assessments with young writers.

## ***K2. English language learners' writing development***

The increasing number of immigrants to the US who speak languages other than English has highlighted the need to provide appropriate instruction in reading and writing. At the same time, a growing body of research has demonstrated the advantages of developing bilingual and biliterate students and reducing the effects of language loss on learning, identity, and school achievement (Cho & Krashen, 1998; Shin, 2005; Tse, 2001).

The four papers focused on English language learners' writing development are grounded in sociocultural theory. Vygotsky's (1978) view of human learning and development highlights the crucial role of language in learning. Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) dialogic theory suggests that all of individual thinking is modeled after social interaction. Wenger (1998) emphasizes the nature of the community and views individual identity as the nexus of membership in multiple communities. These theories are useful for understanding English language learners' development as writers in English and their native languages.

### **The role of home and school contexts in supporting literacy: Cases of Taiwanese students**

Sarah J. McCarthey  
*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

[mccarthe@uiuc.edu](mailto:mccarthe@uiuc.edu)

The paper comes from a larger study of five Spanish-speaking and six Mandarin-speaking 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders we followed over a two-year period across home and school contexts. We observed in students' classroom settings including ESL instruction, native-language instruction, and all-English instruction. We collected writing samples in students' native languages as well as English, and interviewed teachers, parents, and the students to understand students' writing development in English and their native languages.

Here I focus on Taiwanese students who came from families who shared a linguistic background; yet, students' school experiences differed significantly, influencing their writing development. Paul's family had strong ties to Taiwan since his father ran a business there, and his mother was an accountant in the US. Paul was born in the US but spent his early elementary years in Taiwan until he entered US schools in the fourth grade. Although a "reluctant writer" in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in both Chinese and English, he produced many pieces of writing during the ESL and all-English classes, and was a strong English reader. However, when he moved to a private school without ESL instruction in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, he turned in only one piece of writing the entire year. His teacher disparaged his persuasive writing piece, focusing on format, grammar, and spelling errors.

Susie arrived in the US in second grade and had few opportunities to learn to write in Chinese while in Taiwan. Her family emphasized her English acquisition and did not promote Chinese writing other than the homework assignments in the native-language class at school. However, Susie became an avid English writer in Year 2 when she was placed in a supportive ESL context with a Taiwanese peer. What seemed to accelerate her interest in writing was the ESL teacher's assignment of a diary in which Susie could record both public and private thoughts. Her expanded interest in writing resulted in her co-authoring and illustrating a story in English at home for a writing contest. The contrasting cases demonstrate the role of classroom contexts in supporting (or undermining) English language learners' development as writers at the same time that they reveal the complexity of students' developing identities as bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural students.

### **Developing biliteracy in Korean-Americans**

Yeonsun Ellie Ro

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

The three-year case study focuses on a second-generation, Korean-American family to understand first and second language and literacy development. Using ethnographic qualitative methods, I focused on the kinds of bilingual and biliteracy events that occurred in their daily life, especially in home, school, and community settings, and examined the influence of social and cultural factors on the focal children's first language and literacy practices and development.

I met the family while working as a teacher at the Korean Saturday school, and then tutored the children in Korean weekly for two years. I conducted observations in their home before and after her weekly tutoring. In the third year, I continued monthly observations at home and followed the students into their all-English classroom settings. I interviewed the parents and the two older children informally throughout the three years. I also conducted assessments of the children's biliteracy skills in Korean with an emphasis on reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and writing development. In this middle/upper-middle class immigrant home, the computer was one of the main tools to facilitate bilingual/biliteracy development.

Findings suggest that the family embedded bilingual and biliterate experiences into their daily lives in an effort to maintain the Korean language. Computer technology including electronic email, instant messages, and a family website was one of the main sources for the focal children's biliteracy development. In the school setting, teachers acknowledged how important it was to promote the first language; yet in reality, the classroom did not provide any opportunities or time to pursue the teachers' beliefs and values.

Over the three years, the focal children slowly lost interest in maintaining their first language and ethnic identity. For example, from the second year to the third year, the focal children's preference in writing changed from Korean to English. The oldest child's (age 9) English reading and writing abilities were above average in his fourth-grade classroom; however, his Korean reading and writing ability remained at about a third-grade level. The second child (age 6) who liked to pronounce Korean words and possessed a strong bi-ethnic identity, showed the same level of literacy proficiency in both languages. However, the second child's interest in maintaining Korean and her skill level paralleled the older child's development at the same age (6). Despite the parents' efforts to help the children maintain and develop the Korean language and literacy, it appears that the focal children are "at-risk bilinguals/biliterates" because their Korean development is not keeping pace with their English development.

### **Biliterate writing development of a Korean student**

Hye-Young Park

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Considerable research has stressed the negative consequences of native language loss and the benefits of becoming bilingual and biliterate for children of linguistically and culturally diverse families (Fillmore, 1991; Tse, 2001). This paper is part of a larger ongoing study of my 12-year-old son Danny's writing development in Korean and English. In the course of two and a half years, I have collected about 197 writing samples. For the purpose of the present study, I used a subset of Danny's writing samples including 76 Korean and 45 English samples of personal narratives and 7 Korean and 13 English samples of persuasive essays to illustrate his development. Using the categories of organization, voice, and elaboration, I analyze writing samples within and across each language and genre.

The findings suggest that over all Danny developed his writing proficiency in both languages. However, his writing pieces represent different degrees of development, depending on the language and genre. His Korean writing reflected some progress, whereas his English writing demonstrated more significant development. His English writing, both in personal narratives and persuasive essays, showed development towards organization and voice as well as elaboration. When comparing his writing in the two genres in Korean, there was more progress in persuasive writing in a short period of time, but little progress in personal narratives. Danny's English and Korean persuasive writing, and oral discussion shared considerable structural features, confirming that there was more transfer between the two languages in his persuasive essays.

This study contributes to the literature on writing development in two different languages and genres by providing detailed information on the bilingual child's writing experience. It also supports Cummins' Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 1976) suggesting that the linguistic knowledge of one language can transfer to another.

### **Chinese students' writing development within an ESL context**

Xun Zheng

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

While several studies have documented writing activities of college students who are learning English as a second language, only a few studies have focused on writing in elementary classrooms for English language learners (McCarthy & Garcia, 2004). Framed by Vykotsky's social theory of learning and scaffolding, the current study focuses on the interactions between/among an ESL teacher and her six Chinese students in an ESL classroom in the Midwestern US. The researcher, who was also a volunteer for this class, spent an entire semester working with the teacher and helping the Chinese students on their science project writing. Fourteen classroom observations, one interview with the teacher, and one interview with each of the six focal students were conducted; students' writing samples were also collected.

The close examination of classroom writing activities demonstrated that writing was a very important task in this ESL class. The teacher adopted numerous strategies to enhance her students' writing ability such as conferences, more direct instruction and electronic communication. Discourse between the teacher and students influenced students' writing behaviors. However, the students' writing products were not reflective of the students' initial ideas, but rather reflected the intentions of the teacher.

Another finding of the study showed that Chinese students regularly used their first language in seeking further sources of information to use in their writing. Such a finding confirms that students' first language can be a tremendous support in second language learning, and further indicates that students in this class were socially interconnected, voluntarily using their first language to gain the assistance of adult helpers and peers in class, as well as their parents after school.

*Significance*

The four studies identify factors that influence students' writing development in English and their native languages. Providing a variety of opportunities for writing in home and school contexts as well as support from teachers, peers, and parents are crucial for the further development of students' writing.

### ***K3. Growing into academic language: Students' writing development***

#### **A developmental study of referential cohesion**

Harriet Jisa  
*Université de Lyon, France*  
[harriet.jisa@univ-lyon2.fr](mailto:harriet.jisa@univ-lyon2.fr)

Audrey Mazur  
*Université de Lyon, France*

Michel Fayol  
*Université Blaise Pascal, France*

This study examines referential cohesion in written and spoken texts produced by French-speaker/writers. Subjects in three age groups (10-, 12-, and 14-year-olds), each group consisting of 40 subjects, were asked to produce a narrative and an expository text in both written and spoken modalities. Spoken and written French contrast in many ways and our goal is to show how later language development is profoundly impacted by experience with written language.

One area in which spoken and written French contrast markedly is in how referents are maintained in subject position (Jisa, 2004). The unmarked structure in spoken conversational French shows a subject clitic pronoun with very few lexical nouns occupying subject position. In contrast, in more formal registers of French, clitics are avoided to maintain referents in subject position through the use of, for example, lexical noun substitutions, pronoun ellipsis, relative pronouns, or non-finite syntactic packaging. Relative pronouns and subject ellipsis, as opposed to full nouns and anaphoric pronouns, exhibit tighter syntactic packaging by establishing a dependency relationship between two clauses (Berman & Slobin, 1994). Non-finite connectivity represents perhaps the most tightly packaged structure (Foley & Van Valin, 1984). Forms for maintaining referents as subjects show variation both in compactness of information and in register appropriateness, with the more compact forms indicating a more formal register.

Our study investigates how children grow into an academic register and how the development of written language impacts later language development. While it is possible to say that in early stages of development children write as they speak, in later stages of development children learn to speak as they write. Our study highlights how experience in literacy-based activities impacts language usage in general.

## **Writing development and knowledge crafting**

Eva Lindgren

*Umeå University, Sweden*

[eva.lindgren@educ.umu.se](mailto:eva.lindgren@educ.umu.se)

Mariëlle Leijten

*University of Antwerp, Belgium*

Luuk Van Waes

*University of Antwerp, Belgium*

This paper presents a sub-study of a project, which investigates how writers in different age groups work with texts, particularly in relation to reader orientation. A second sub-study will investigate to what extent writing development can be stimulated through conscious reflection on cognitive processes involved in writing. The instruments used for the study are observations of writing processes through keystroke logged writing sessions, stimulated recall and questionnaires. The study is framed within theories of Knowledge-telling, Knowledge transforming (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) and Knowledge-crafting (Kellogg, 2006).

According to Kellogg an important aspect of the most advanced level in writing development - 'knowledge crafting' - is the ability to integrate writer, text and reader fully into the composition. This entails knowledge about others as well as an ability to place oneself in the reader's position in order to evaluate whether the text communicates the intended message correctly. Thus, reader orientation is an advanced process that, when fully developed, characterises professional writing. During the process of writing a text, knowledge crafters would revise and plan with the audience in focus, adapting the text towards an intended reader (Kellogg, 2006).

One way of approaching a wider understanding of these processes is to analyse the pauses and the revisions writers undertake during writing and to couple them with information from the writers themselves about reasons behind pauses and revisions. Methods that are suitable for such an approach are keystroke logging and stimulated recall. This paper presents the result of the first of two sub-studies which investigates what constitutes writing processes on the three levels knowledge-telling, knowledge-transforming and knowledge-crafting. By analysing the writing processes of 10-year-olds, 15-year-olds and adult expert writers we set out to answer the following questions:

- What writing and revision strategies can be found that differ between and within levels?
- How do writers on different levels revise to adjust the text towards the reader?

Finally we will briefly outline the scope of the second sub-study, which aims to investigate if and how writing development from one level to another can be promoted through conscious reflection on individuals' writing processes.

### **Transitions from high school senior writing to college freshman writing**

Jim Webber  
University of New Hampshire  
[jwebber@unh.edu](mailto:jwebber@unh.edu)

The longitudinal tradition (Haswell, 1991; Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Sternglass, 1997; Herrington & Curtis, 2000; Carroll, 2002; Sommers, 2004; Lundsford et al., 2004; Juzwik et al., 2006) has focused on the development of college writers over time. However, few longitudinal studies (e.g., Harklau, 2002) have followed writers from high school to college. This understudied transition is being theorized by Yancey (2006), Sommers (2004), and Tingle (2004) and pedagogically explored in Hjortshoj (2004) and Dombek and Herndon (2003), yet specific accounts of student change are rare.

This study documents 3 high school seniors' specific writing experiences (research essays, written exams, analytical essays, journalism pieces, etc.) and then documents those same students' first-year writing experiences in college. By February of 2008, we will be able to share preliminary findings based on high school interviews and a small archive of these high school students' writing. In addition to gaining specific insights into the ways writers change over time across curricular and institutional boundaries, this study will engage with larger disciplinary concerns about the "expertise" of writers in transition (Sommers) and writers as brokers of multiple knowledges (Yancey). The study attempts to bring discursive constructions of academic writing in the transition from high school to college into conversation with the detail of students' experiences.

### ***K4. Growth from rich soil: Multimodal learning environments for young writers***

#### **Young children's informational writing: A multimodal perspective**

Marilyn Chapman  
*The University of British Columbia, Vancouver*  
[marilyn.chapman@ubc.ca](mailto:marilyn.chapman@ubc.ca)

This presentation reports some findings from a three-year longitudinal study of children's writing in "information literacy rich" classrooms from first through third grade.

Theoretical Framework. This study is situated within a social constructivist perspective informed by theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1986). Literacy develops out of external social activity through internalization of the processes, practices, and genres provided by the sociocultural context (Bakhtin, 1986; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

Informational literacy learning is part of genre learning: reading, writing, and using informational texts, which are typically multi-modal. Rather than simply text types with regularized structures, genres are ways of communicating that reflect a dynamic interplay of content, context, function and form, (Freedman & Medway, 1994).

Method. Beginning in first grade, an informational book writing activity was conducted in 4 schools in May of each year. Children (n=140) chose their own topics and formats. All of the compositions were analyzed for text structure; lexico-grammatical features; format features, such as headings, labels, and bolded text; and visual features, such as diagrams and illustrations. Focal children (n=48) were interviewed about their books.

Results. With the exception of 2 narratives in first grade, all texts produced by the children across the three years displayed expository lexico-grammatical features, headings, and typical informational visuals, including an array of charts and diagrams, tables of contents, and so on. Text structures ranged from simple attribute series (Newkirk, 1987) in first grade to multi-paragraph reports. Expository format and visual features were more extensive in each successive year.

Significance. There has been little research into informational writing in the primary years, especially longitudinal studies. This study provides important insights into children's information writing as multimodal texts that reflect the characteristics of the texts they encounter, and the changes in their texts over a three-year period from first to third grade.

### **Learning to write in science: Insights from young children's multimodal informational texts**

Christine C. Pappas  
*University of Illinois at Chicago*  
[chrisp@uic.edu](mailto:chrisp@uic.edu)

Maria Varelas  
*University of Illinois at Chicago*  
[mvarelas@uic.edu](mailto:mvarelas@uic.edu)

There has been a call for connecting science learning with language and literacy, yet very little is known about the nature of young children's writing/drawing in the context of science education. The proposed paper focuses on multimodal texts produced by primary-grade children in two integrated science-literacy units (Matter and Forest) in six urban classrooms (2 each, K-3)—the illustrated information books (as well as their conversations about them) that they produced as a culminating activity at the end of each unit. We are conducting four analyses on these books: linguistic registers, text-picture relationship, science content, and influence of other unit activities. Our preliminary analyses indicate that almost children employed the particular features of the science discourse genre (e.g., using generic nouns, present-tense verbs, general pronouns, and so forth). Four possible text-picture relationships are possible: Text-Picture Redundant

(TPR) if the majority of the ideas are expressed in both text and pictures; or Text Elaborative (TE) if the majority of ideas are expressed in text only; or Picture Elaborative (PE); or Text-Picture Complementary (TPC), if the number of ideas expressed only in pictures is about equal (and not negligible) to the number of ideas expressed only in text, and the ideas in each mode are different. TPR and TE were the most common book types, with boys mostly creating the TE books and girls producing TPR ones. With respect to content, in the Matter unit, students mostly expressed the macro properties of shape, hardness, space, and compressibility and the micro properties of bonding and speed, influenced mostly by hands-on explorations, a CD-Rom on molecules, and their acting-out drama as molecules in three states of matter. In the Forest unit, most children wrote about/depicted characteristics of animals (what they look like, where they live, what they eat, their predators, etc.), influenced mostly by the read-aloud information books. The paper will present these findings, as well as give illustrative examples.

### **Effects of a literacy curriculum that supports writing development of Spanish-speaking English learners in Head Start**

Carola Matera  
*U.C. Santa Barbara*  
[cmatera@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:cmatera@education.ucsb.edu)

This presentation will report the results of a study that applied a randomized experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of a literacy curriculum which incorporated explicit opportunities for Spanish-speaking Head Start preschool children (N=76) to develop writing abilities in English. The study also addressed English language acquisition by providing instruction in the child's first language (Spanish) for learning new concepts while incorporating new vocabulary in English. The curriculum addressed print concepts, storytelling and writing through motivating and creative activities as a means to develop pre reading and writing skills. Its primary objective was to evaluate children's English writing at the end of a ten week intervention. In addition, the study measured a possible interaction between treatment and initial language skills for children who participated in the treatment condition. Analyses of variance demonstrated that the treatment group had statistically significant gains compared to the control group in English and Spanish writing. In addition, there was a statistically significant relationship between children's initial vocabulary skills and treatment on English writing. Implications for practice will be discussed.

### **Do international online collaborative projects affect ethnocentrism in students?**

Diane Boehm  
*Saginaw Valley State U., Michigan*  
[dboehm@svsu.edu](mailto:dboehm@svsu.edu)

Herman Kurthen  
*Grand Valley State U., Michigan*

Lilianna Aniola-Jedrzejek  
*Poznan U. of Technology, Poland*

Ethnocentrism, the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture, generally remains invisible until or unless some experience brings it to an individual's attention.

For the past five years, students from Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) in Michigan have conducted online collaborative projects with students from Poznan University of Technology (PUT) in Poland. SVSU students, mostly regional first-generation-in-college, have been enrolled in either Freshman Composition or an upper-level Writing in the Professions course. PUT students, primarily second or third year students from western or central Poland, have been studying in different science faculties and been enrolled in English language classes for low- to high-intermediate proficiency levels. In each project, students interacted online for four to six weeks via a learning management system to carry out a collaborative task via email, virtual chats, discussion boards, wikis, Skype (internet phone), etc.

Our anecdotal observations have led to deeper research questions: does such transnational online collaboration influence students' ethnocentric attitudes by helping them develop intercultural awareness, stimulating their re-thinking of their own cultural identity while becoming more open to the different perspectives and values of other cultures? Using James Neuliep's 22-item GENE scale, designed to measure ethnocentrism, for self-assessment, we have measured students' attitudes at the outset and upon completion of each semester's collaboration. We have correlated these results with a measurement of individualism-collectivism, using a survey designed by Harry Triandis and his colleagues (the US has a high individualism rating; Polish culture is far more collective). Our current two semesters of results suggest no linear effect, although we continue to replicate our study to confirm our findings. In addition, based on our preliminary empirical findings, we are working on new conceptualizations of our question about the value of transnational online collaboration.

### **Blogging across borders: Multimodal, conversational writing for students in Sweden and the United States**

Magnus Gustafsson  
*Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden*  
[magusta@chalmers.se](mailto:magusta@chalmers.se)

Donna Reiss  
*Clemson University*  
[dreiss@wordsworth2.net](mailto:dreiss@wordsworth2.net) <http://wordsworth2.net>

Art Young  
*Clemson University*  
[apyoung@clemson.edu](mailto:apyoung@clemson.edu) <http://www.clemson.edu/~apyoung>

From the perspective of the interdisciplinary and writing research traditions of “teacher research” (Goswami and Stillman, 1986; Daiker and Morenberg, 1990) and the “scholarship of teaching and learning” (Boyer, 1990; Kreber, 2007), we will rhetorically analyze an online, multimodal, cross-cultural, pedagogical project designed to strengthen and enrich students’ learning of course material and development of their writing abilities.

Recognizing the teaching/learning rationale suggested by Charles Lowe and Terra Williams that “weblogs can facilitate a collaborative, social process of meaning making, ...a social environment where anxiety about the teacher and of school writing is reduced, while also drawing on other benefits of writing publicly” (2004), we will analyze Weblog conversations among two student groups in the United States and one in Sweden. All three courses were conducted in English; for students in Sweden, English was their second or third language. At the start of Spring semester 2006, while students were getting to know each other and their professors face to face, they also read in English and discussed “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T. S. Eliot with unseen students enrolled in different-level university literature courses. These differing cultural contexts encouraged students to attend to the ways their readers understood the language in the poem as well as the language in their own writing for an international audience.

Our presentation emphasizes the community building, knowledge-making features of electronic correspondence in online and hybrid educational contexts. Rhetorical analysis of students’ electronic discourse informs our recommendations for designing assignments in which students develop their writing abilities while they learn disciplinary knowledge and discourse conventions. We offer suggestions for further research into intercultural blogs and other online collaboration tools as writing environments that enhance literacy and international communication. For details, see Cross-Cultural Collaborations Project Home: <http://www.wordsworth2.net/projects/crossculturalcollabs>.

### ***K6. Marginalized cultures within the university setting***

#### **Writing outside the lines: Extra-curricular writing practices of Latino college students**

Jessica Singer  
*Arizona State University*  
[jsinger14@verizon.net](mailto:jsinger14@verizon.net)

Recognizing the wealth of writing that occurs beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of school and its role in shaping literate development throughout the undergraduate years, Kathleen Blake Yancey (2004) argues for the creation of a curriculum that weaves together “the writing outside of school and that inside” (p. 308). In response to Yancey’s call, a small but growing body of scholarship has begun mapping the richly literate landscape undergraduates inhabit outside of school and its impact on their school writing

(Fishman et al., 2005). While this work has included undergraduates from non-mainstream communities, it has yet to address the extra-curricular writing experiences that Latino's bring to the university. Working to fill this gap, Marcia Farr (1993, 1994) and Juan Guerra (1998) have documented the writing that animates Chicago's mexicano community, although their work has only recently begun to explore how such writing can shape engagement with school literacy at the undergraduate level (Guerra and Farr, 2002). Drawing from case studies of Latino undergraduates in California, this panel will add to the conversation about the extra-curricular writing experiences that Latino undergraduates bring to the university.

The presentation, "Self-Sponsored Writing Practices of Latino College Students," will share findings from a retrospective interview study of first generation Latino college students at a large university in California. The presentation will examine the writing histories and writing samples of two undergraduates, Daisy and Eddie, who were nominated by college professors for their outstanding writing. These extensive histories reveal the importance of extra-curricular writing practices, such as poetry slams, journal writing, blogs, email, and My Space logs, in shaping student's writing growth at the college level. These findings suggest the need for teachers and researchers alike to re-examine our assumptions about the experiences with literacy that Latinos bring to the undergraduate curriculum from their home communities.

### **Impact of non-native speakers on collaborative writing projects in an undergraduate business communication course**

Gina Genova  
*U.C. Santa Barbara*

Jeff Hanson  
*U.C. Santa Barbara*

Janet Mizrahi  
*U.C. Santa Barbara*  
[mizrahi@writing.ucsb.edu](mailto:mizrahi@writing.ucsb.edu)

Collaboration is a challenge for even the most gifted and evenly matched group of writers, whether in the boardroom or classroom. Differing personal experiences, work styles, and abilities affect a collaborative project, requiring ongoing and skillful maintenance to promote a team's healthy internal dynamics. The addition of a non-native speaker would seem to further complicate the process of collaboration.

At the University of California, Santa Barbara, our entry-level business communication course requires a major collaborative project. Because of the varying levels of linguistic competence of our diverse student body, we sought to measure the impact of non-native speakers on this project. Over the course of a year, we distributed surveys to nearly 50 sections of the course in an effort to measure if and how the teams' overall diversity created challenges. With speakers of nearly 30 different languages participating, our

research seeks to identify related issues and their effects on team members and project performance. Ultimately, our goal is to aid instructors' guidance of their teams toward more positive outcomes.

This session will describe the methods, results, and analysis of our year-long confidential survey with more than 800 student responses. Implications for business communication instructors teaching collaborative writing projects will frame the panel presentations and subsequent open discussion.

### **Locating discursive spaces: Self-identifying with science through academic writing among American Indian women in higher education**

Carol Brandt, Ph.D.

*Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University*

[cbrandt@vt.edu](mailto:cbrandt@vt.edu)

In this research I asked, how do women from non-Western traditions understand themselves and their participation in science? Where do they find opportunities to practice scientific discourse, that is, to write and speak about science? In this paper I use ethnographic case studies to understand how American Indian women self-identify with science as they write or as they converse about science with faculty, friends, classmates, and family.

I invited four undergraduate Navajo women majoring in biology at a university in the southwestern United States to undertake this research with me. This study spanned one academic year and includes semi-structured interviews, social and classroom observations, and participants' class papers and exams. In the data analysis I used the constant comparative method and I also looked more closely at the structure of figurative language within the narratives of participants, as well as using a rhetorical analysis of their class papers.

A key finding in this study was to describe and map the *discursive spaces* that afforded each participant an opportunity to engage with science, and those locations where their awareness of academic language was heightened through metadiscourse. The participants found locations where they could explore the way text and talk was used in science. Two of the students spoke about "comfort zones" as a way to talk about relationships and networks of support, characteristics that I attributed to discursive space: opportunities to bring their lives and worldview into the construction of dialogues and written texts. The comfort zones coined by the participants in my dissertation research were not locations of complacency or ease. These were sheltered spaces where they could engage in critical discussions about the nature of schooling in the university system. Here they could test new ways of self-identifying with academic knowledge and develop new ways of writing.

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## ***K7. The visual dimension: Multimodal tools to promote student interaction with texts***

### **The impact on learning with the multimedia and multimodal social presence of the author: Results from three case studies in Social Sciences**

Terry Inglese  
University of Lugano, Switzerland  
[terry.inglese@lu.unisi.ch](mailto:terry.inglese@lu.unisi.ch)

Let's imagine to have access to a multimedia and multimodal database which might possess a series of video interviews with 'famous' scholars, which are usually read and studied only through written texts, and let's imagine to offer to freshmen in Social Sciences these multimedia and multimodal materials in combination with some scholarly written texts. From the educational perspective this means being able to offer students a combination of different texts and materials. How would students read and study these texts after having encountered the authors in class through a *multimedia and multimodal mediated* manner?

At the University of Lugano, Switzerland, and within a Political Science course, we developed three case studies using TV video-interviews produced in the 80s and 90s with well renowned Social Sciences' scholars, like Paul Feyerabend, Karl Popper, Claude Levi-Strauss and Michel Foucault (defined as the *audio-visible authors*). Students were invited to watch and listen to these authors in class, to elaborate on some key concepts mentioned by the scholars in the videos, and to read and study their texts.

In addition to these audio-visible authors, students had to study a text of an *invisible author*, that is to say, one who writes texts in a detached, formal, and academic manner. At the end of the course, we compared the students' written compositions' performances on both types of authors.

The paper will first describe the still undiscovered value of using multimedia TV archives for Social Science courses; it will define the terms 'multimedia and multimodality' and 'social presence of the author' in learning contexts; it will describe the instructional design of the our Political Science course; and finally, it will show the students' written composition results, through a series of comparison: a) grade; b) amount of written words; and c) amount of times students mentioned both types of authors in their written texts.

The results of the three case studies will be interpreted within the conceptual frameworks of the auratic value of the new media (Kress), the second orality (Ong), the visibility of the author (Nolen, Paxton), the rhetorical awareness (Hass) and the role of intersubjectivity (Brandt) as important affordances that the new media can promote in educational research studies, and specifically on how literacy is changing with the use of new technologies.

### **Graphical tools as a pattern language for technical writing**

Lawrie Hunter

*Kochi University of Technology, Japan*

lawrie\_hunter@kochi-tech.ac.jp

The entry level second language writer of technical English is performing a number of cognitive activities simultaneously: recalling lexical units, remembering appropriate register and attending to sentence word order, and orchestrating rhetorical structure and readability. In combination with lack of confidence in decoding the wording of problems, this imposes considerable cognitive load (Chandler & Sweller, 1992). This paper outlines the author's collection of graphical tools for reducing such cognitive load: illustrations, sentence charts, readability charts and knowledge structure maps, and demonstrates the use of each tool.

In my action research on approaches to learner support for second language academic writing, striking feedback on knowledge structure mapping has been found in learner reaction to new tools, in terms of

1. immediacy of reception,
2. persistence of use and
3. creativity of use.

From the pattern language point of view, this suggests that the mapping technique, combined with other graphical heuristics, is a low-text pattern language for technical writing.

Illustrations can support and/or confirm the learner's comprehension of task input language and motivate problem solving. Sentence structure charts are highly prescriptive, but do afford check-list confirmation that the writer has gotten all the necessary parts together for sentence construction. Readability charts enable the learner to apply basic cohesion principles. Knowledge structure maps (following Mohan, 1986) keep learner attention on the information aspect of task. Rhetorical structure maps concretize argument. Bringing this all together, a decision matrix is proposed which can help clarify instructor decisions about (a) degree of explicitness of scaffolding and (b) assessment criteria, e.g. selection of best lexical model/correct application of model.

### **Composing across domains: Multimodal literacy in digital spaces**

Aimée Knight

*Michigan State University*

[knightai@msu.edu](mailto:knightai@msu.edu)

To help students consider multiple aspects of meaning making, I developed an interactive website called the Aesthetic Toolbox which helps students to explore a broad range of artistic genres, such as poetry, painting, photography, sculpture, architecture and music. Its heuristic design enables students to perceive and respond to multiple qualities in

works of art and literature. In my view, students are “aesthetically literate” when they employ multiple strategies to perceive and respond to works of art and literature.

It is important to consider the ways in which “aesthetic literacy” has generally been ignored in scholarship regarding multimodal literacies, which traditionally have focused on issues of visual rhetoric and visual culture as modes of teaching students about meaning making. I propose that arming students with an “aesthetic literacy” could compliment their knowledge of visual literacy and expand their opportunities to cultivate the critical and interpretative aspects of their meaning making.

This presentation demonstrates results of a study to promote critical analysis and interpretation of works of art and literature in the classroom, as it employs the Aesthetic Toolbox. This study will show how multimodalities can help students develop flexible representations of knowledge which allow them to abstract key concepts and apply them to new situations—new genres. I employ the use of a time series within-subject research design which looks at how students’ composition performances reflect their aesthetic literacy, with the goal being to validly assess if and how “transfer” is represented and conceptualized across domains, with the intervention of the Aesthetic Toolbox.

### ***K8. Ethnographies of writing: Local and global***

#### **Ethnographic writing research from a cross-national perspective**

Birgitta Ramsey  
*Southeastern Louisiana University*  
[bramsey@selu.edu](mailto:bramsey@selu.edu)

After being trained in ethnographic research in the United States and doing research in Sweden, I have realized that Europeans and Americans have different ideas about what would seem to be identical research methods. When I discussed an ethnography I had conducted in my composition classroom with colleagues in Sweden, I discovered that my research was considered “unscientific” in a Swedish context. The reason was that I had studied my own classroom. Puzzled at first, I have since then reflected on this cross-national difference. To me—who had read, for example, *Gnys at Work*, in which Glenda Bissex describes the literacy acquisition by her own son—strict demands for objectivity had never been a factor. My foremost concern had been to gather different types of data (from observations, recordings of class discussions, interviews, students’ writing) so I would be able to look at my classroom from different perspectives. Initially I was worried that it might be difficult to teach and to conduct research simultaneously.

After I finished my research, I concluded that the advantages of studying my own classroom by far outweighed the disadvantages. Because I was doing research with my own students, I had been more engaged in all aspects of my teaching than ever before. I had become more aware of my students as individuals and determined to do more to

involve all of them in discussions, by providing opportunities for shy students to let their voices be heard in e-mail exchanges and electronic discussion boards.

What counts as academic knowledge? What do we as researchers gain or lose when we combine a scientific research paradigm with ethnographic research methods? Based on personal experiences, I would welcome the opportunity to renew and expand this discussion with representatives from different research traditions.

### **Analyzing the *extra*-function of text in local music culture**

Patrick Thomas  
*Kent State University*  
[pthomas4@kent.edu](mailto:pthomas4@kent.edu)

Jillian Coates  
*Kent State University*  
[jcoates2@kent.edu](mailto:jcoates2@kent.edu)

Christa Teston  
*Kent State University*  
[cteston@kent.edu](mailto:cteston@kent.edu)

**Summary:** Understanding how texts shape and are shaped by local discursive activity is essential for civic participation. This presentation examines the multiple roles textual artifacts play in the construction, mediation, and representation of local music discursive activity.

**Abstract:** Stephen Witte's (2005) analysis of speed bumps as mediational means offers an explanation of how semiotic representations get their meaning, as well as how the relationship between design of the material representation and the activity within which it is used extends the object's semiotic value and function. The object's ostensible function is augmented when the object is in use for a particular activity.

As many scholars have suggested, local community discourse is functional in varied ways (Halliday, 1978; Witte, 1992; Olson, 1998; Haas, 1999). This presentation will report on an observational study at a local music store. We discovered, not surprisingly, that textual artifacts in this space functioned generally as indicators of enculturation into local music culture. Using a grounded theory mode of analysis, we investigated the kinds of semiotic representations in the store, and dimensionalized these textual artifacts by their primary functions: informing, publicizing, educative, indicators of membership, etc. In this process, however, certain objects revealed no primary function within the music store, yet their placement in the store (as objects on display) suggested a kind of *extra*-function—not related to music, but still an instance of local discursive activity.

In this presentation we describe the extra-function of textual artifacts as evidenced in the notion of “fit”: that is, the primary function of a textual artifact is evident based on a

goodness of fit between the object and its placement in the store. However, in several instances, the extra-function becomes evident in textual artifacts that do *not* fit with the kinds of community practices and activities that comprise “local music culture.” Instead, we present examples of ill-fitting textual artifacts that point to the range of possibilities that are available for participation in (and the shaping of) localized community activity.

### ***K9. Reflective writing: Preparing critical and professional practice***

#### **Reflective writing in service of literary writing for future teachers**

Marléne LeBrun, *Université de Provence, France*

In what ways do literary writing practices associated with the reflective writing done in a dialogue-based journal enable future teachers in training to develop both a critical and writerly posture and a theorized research posture in their preparation to teach elementary school? Literary writing is taken here to be an act that presupposes taking into account the reader in its creation. Tools like reading journals and writers’ notebooks enable students to work out two dimensions of literary writing: metatextuality (critical writing) and hypertextuality (writing derived from literary texts). I will examine the effects of associating literary writing and reflective writing, through examining the interactions between the different types of writing called on and the impact of the level of development of the competencies in use and of the evolution of the future teachers’ relationship to writing.

The data on which this research is based were collected in two classes about French “didactics” (the theory and research of teaching French): 150 journals, as well as interviews with representative future teachers in April 2006 in Quebec and April 2007 in France. They are the object of a current research project (located at the research laboratory THEODILE and funded by the French *Association Nationale de Recherches*) and offer numerous possibilities for analysis of university writing practices and the writers’ postures that they produce. I hypothesize that the shared reflective journal is an heuristic that provides reflective traces that reveal writers’ representations and resistances. I will analyze the ways in which future French and Quebecer elementary school teachers represent and appropriate literary writing practices transferable to their students’ level and construct and appropriate didactic self-reflection in the subject of French by stepping back, through their participation in a teacher preparation class in French didactics, from the teacher’s authority figure and the knowledge that figure transmits.

**Site du colloque :** <http://education.ucsb.edu/netshare/wrconf08/>

#### **Learning to reflect**

Luigina Mortari, *Italy*  
[luigina.mortari@univr.it](mailto:luigina.mortari@univr.it)

Premise

The educator is a practitioner. But a good practitioner is not a mere executor of preconceived projects set out by the so called 'theoretical experts'; instead he/she has to be a builder of knowledge, that is, he/she should construct pedagogical knowledge from the experience.

In order to work out an experiential knowledge one must be capable of an intensive and continuous reflection. The thesis of this paper is that this capability can be improved through training which requires *writing our own cognitive life*. Indeed, writing increases the power of reflection.

### Theoretical frame

Reflection has been an issue for long time in the *University of Verona, Verona* pedagogical debate. The fundamental points of reference for this debate are Dewey, Schon, Freire and Foucault (Fendler, 2003). On this basis there are many definitions of reflection. But it has been forgotten the contribution of Husserl about a conceptualization of the reflective practice, who speaks of a "second reflection" or meta-reflection, that is a reflection on the cognitive life. In order facilitate this meta-reflection it is necessary to learn to write what happens in the mind.

### Research design

On this premise I organized a training for reflection in the context of a "Master of Educational Research for Teachers". In order to facilitate the teachers in learning the capability of reflection I proposed to them to write a 'reflective journal' in which to record all the reflections which accompanied the process of conception and implementation of an educational research.

My research consists in analysing the journals on the basis of this research question: what kind of reflections have been possible through the writing approach?

### data collection:

I gathered all the journals and transcribed them verbatim.

### method of analysis

The method of analysis is qualitative. On the basis of the grounded theory, I worked out an inductive process of analysis which consists in approaching the journals without preconceived procedures of analysis in order to construct one which is faithful to the quality of this precise writing. This inductive method implies repeated readings of the journals in order to:

- (a) identify the reflective moves recorded in the journals;
- (b) label any moves;
- (c) categorize these moves;
- (d) label each category;
- (d) identify the most frequent categories to reveal the essence of this kind of writing.

The paper presents the data which emerged from this analysis.

## ***K10. Effective instructional strategies***

### **Modelling: An effective instructional strategy in collaborative revision**

Elke Van Steendam  
*Universiteit Antwerpen, Belgium*  
[elke.vansteendam@ua.ac.be](mailto:elke.vansteendam@ua.ac.be)

Gert Rijlaarsdam  
*Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands*  
[G.C.W.Rijlaarsdam@uva.nl](mailto:G.C.W.Rijlaarsdam@uva.nl)

Lies Sercu  
*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium*  
[lsercu@onyx.arts.kuleuven.ac.be](mailto:lsercu@onyx.arts.kuleuven.ac.be)

Collaborative revision is often advocated as an effective teaching method in writing education to help learners to improve their revision and writing skills (Boscolo & Ascorti, 2004; Rouiller, 2005). However, research has revealed that to increase the probability of success, dyadic revision should be structured (MacArthur, Graham, Schwartz & Schaffer, 1995). Guidance can be provided by encouraging students to use a procedural facilitator (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006) during revision or by strategy instruction in the form of modelling (Couzijn & Rijlaarsdam, 2005).

Within the framework of a quasi-experimental study we tested the effect of observational learning and dyadic revision on EFL students' revision and writing skills. 250 freshmen were randomly assigned to 2 experimental conditions. In a first condition students watched a mastery model of collaborative revision after which they participated in an emulative practice session either individually (1a) or in pairs (1b). In a second experimental condition students practised revisions in pairs before doing the revision task either individually (2a) or in a dyad (2b). During the revision task all students were encouraged to use a procedural facilitator which had either been modelled implicitly in the observational learning condition or explicitly taught in the learning-by-doing condition.

To determine which instructional strategy is most effective, students' writing skills were measured one week after the intervention. In this paper we discuss the results of multilevel analyses of the writing post-test. First, we explore which of the 2 experimental conditions is most effective to teach students how to write a well-structured letter of application. Secondly, we investigate the interaction between the instructional strategy and individual characteristics such as level of English, writing and revision skills. Results indicate that poor learners benefit most from observational learning. We will interpret the results in the light of previous research on modelling and collaborative revision.

## **Strategy-focussed writing interventions for typically-able sixth graders: They work, but why?**

Mark Torrance  
*Nottingham Trent University, UK*  
[m.torrance@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:m.torrance@staffs.ac.uk)

Raquel Fidalgo  
*León University, Spain*

Patricia Robledo  
*León University, Spain*

Jesús-Nicasio García  
*León University, Spain*

Strategy instruction aims to benefit the quality of students' texts by providing them with cognitive routines to regulate their writing processes (principally methods for planning and revising). We taught 71 Spanish sixth-grade students planning and revision strategies using an intervention that made extensive use of teacher modelling and student emulation. After the intervention students wrote substantially better texts than normal-curriculum controls, and concurrent, probed-self-report measures of writing process indicated a greater tendency to pre-plan, but not to revise. These effects were remained 3 and 28 months later. Relationships between process, product, and metaknowledge measures were, however, either weak or absent. This raises questions about the mechanisms by which strategy interventions act: Does student writing improve as a result of learning strategies or because the process of learning strategies gives students a more thorough understanding of what good text should look like? We explored this question in a second study. Three groups of 25 typically-developing students completed either (a) planning-focussed instruction (five weeks) followed by revision-focussed instruction (five weeks), (b) the same intervention but with planning and revision components reversed, or (c) a product-focussed intervention in which writing strategies were not taught. All three interventions were designed to deliver the same information about the features of good text. Process, product, and metaknowledge measures were taken pre-intervention, after the first part of the intervention, and after the second part, and at similar times for the control. At time of writing data are not yet available from this study. In our presentation we will summarise findings from both studies and draw conclusions about the mechanisms by which strategy interventions affect student writing.

### **Effects of sentence-combining instruction**

Bruce Saddler  
*University at Albany- SUNY*  
[BSaddler@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:BSaddler@uamail.albany.edu)

Kristie Asaro  
University at Albany- SUNY  
[ka217@yahoo.com](mailto:ka217@yahoo.com)

For some writers, difficulty with crafting sentences can significantly constrain their ability to represent their thoughts in text formats. There is evidence that decontextualized teaching of written syntax neither generalizes nor influences composition quality. However, Hillocks (1986) indicates sentence combining is an effective approach to teaching written syntax. With its emphasis on developing syntactically complex sentences, sentence combining provides a means for students to develop metalinguistic knowledge that will hopefully result in producing sentences that more closely approximate their intended meaning, and may improve the quality of written texts.

In this session I will review the research and theory supporting the efficacy of using sentence combining to develop syntactic control and complexity. I will summarize a research project (Saddler & Graham, 2005) wherein I examined the effects of sentence combining practice on the writing and revising ability of forty-three fourth grade students classified as skilled or less skilled writers, based on their pre-intervention sentence combining scores on the TOWL-3 Sentence Combining subtest (Hammill & Larsen, 1996). The students were randomly assigned to an experimental group that learned sentence combining skills or a comparison group that learned grammar skills designed to increase vocabulary. The students wrote and revised stories at pre and post intervention and completed the TOWL-3 Sentence Combining subtest.

Several measures were used to determine if sentence combining instruction would transfer to connected writing and revising including: story length, number and quality of revisions, and holistic quality. Analysis revealed that sentence combining instruction increased written sentence combining skills for writers in the experimental group. In addition, sentence combining instruction improved the quality of the revised stories written by students in the experimental group. These findings suggest sentence combining instruction can increase the sentence combining skills and the quality of stories written by fourth grade students at various ability levels.

### ***K11. Research on creativity across the curriculum***

In *Creativity and Beyond*, Robert Weiner discusses the value placed on the concept of creativity, noting that “people from all walks of life and all economic classes—seem to want to be viewed as creative in some respect” (2). However, in the context of student writing, what constitutes creativity in different disciplines has not been determined. This panel will discuss the results of a survey applied to students and faculty in several disciplines on perceptions and definitions of creativity.

### **Can first year composition papers be creative, and if so, what does that mean?**

Irene L. Clark, *California State University, Northridge*

Irene Clark will examine the role of creativity in the Composition course. The presentation will report on the results of a survey that asked Composition instructors at a state university how much they value creativity in student writing at various levels. The survey focuses on the features writing instructors pinpoint as contributing to an essay's creativity and examines the compatibility of creativity with academic writing.

**To what extent can papers across the disciplines be creative and what might 'creative' mean within various disciplinary contexts?**

Julie Neff, *University of Puget Sound*

Julie Neff will report on the results of a survey distributed to students in several disciplines that examines what students say about the value of creativity in their academic writing, about whether they believe their professors value it, and about how concepts of creativity vary among disciplines.

**Creativity in psychology research papers**

Catherine Hale, *University of Puget Sound*

Catherine Hale will examine the parameters of creativity in student research papers within the discipline of psychology, the format of which is highly defined and determined by APA guidelines. This presentation explores how creativity is manifested in student research papers from the perspectives of psychology professors, sophomore and senior psychology majors, and peer writing advisors who work with psychology students at a writing center.

***K12. Histories of composition: Research and theory***

**The Dartmouth Conference and the geohistory of the native speaker**

John Trimbur

[jtrimbur@WPI.EDU](mailto:jtrimbur@WPI.EDU)

This is a revisionist interpretation of the now legendary Dartmouth conference of 1966 (officially the Anglo-American Seminar on Teaching English, funded by the Carnegie Foundation). The idea is that Dartmouth must be understood not just as the canonical encounter of the British growth model (Britton, Dixon) and the American curriculum sequencing model (Moffett), as recounted by Jim Berlin and Joe Harris, but also as another meeting in a series of meetings in the postwar period (sponsored by the British Council, USIA, foundations, and universities) that shaped an Anglo-American language alliance. One of the neglected aspects of Dartmouth is the report edited by Albert H. Marckwardt "Language and Language Learning" that basically installs a "native speaker" as the pupil and subject of English education. This paper looks at the work the "native speaker" did at the Dartmouth conference in terms of articulating, in keeping with Cold War ideologies of modernization, a modernizing vision of language as growth and development. I want to suggest further, following Alastair Pennycook, Suresh

Canagarajah, and Robert Phillipson, that such a “native speaker” is notable for the way it establishes Anglo-American English as the gold standard in the postwar English language teaching industry and as what Walter Mignolo calls a metropolitan “locus of enunciation” that territorializes language in relation to race, nation, and geohistorical location. I will examine the connections among birthplace, nativeness, and language that have tended to biologize the “native speaker” in applied linguistics in the metropolis and postcolonial challenges to the very idea of the “native speaker” that have emerged along with the globalization and localization of English. Finally, I will show how Joshua Fishman, in his remarkable contribution at Dartmouth “The Breadth and Depth of English in the United States,” anticipated the destabilization of the metropolitan “native speaker” by demonstrating the uneasy settlement of English and the active presence and residual traces of many languages in U.S. linguistic memory.

### **Unpacking critical thinking: Seminal theory in the service of pedagogy**

Cheryl Hogue Smith

*California State University, Bakersfield*

[cjsmith@csub.edu](mailto:cjsmith@csub.edu)

Critical thinking or analytic thinking or higher order thinking all refer to the same constellation or category of mental operations that are usually said to reside at the heart of writing instruction and define one of the principal aims and justifications for required freshman writing classes in colleges and universities. Yet, ironically, the literature of the field of composition, while freely indulging itself in references to critical thinking, offers few definitions of critical thinking and almost no guidance on how to distinguish critical thinking from other forms of thinking or from a range of discursive practices that characterize academic writing and conversation in higher education.

This presentation will trace the historical and contemporary uses of a range of terms in the field of composition studies and cognate disciplines that signify some version of critical or analytical thinking, and demonstrate how the concept remains ill-defined, conceptually vague, and subject to counterproductive instructional uses and misuses. As a corrective to this history of an inadequately conceptualized model of critical thinking, this presentation will seek a more adequately formulated account of critical thinking in the speculations of two theorists whose work has been seminal to the main lines of pedagogical and theoretical discourse in the field of composition: James Moffett and John Dewey. Through a careful explication of Dewey’s notion of reflective thought and Moffett’s theory of discourse typology, this presentation will offer a pedagogically useful and theoretically satisfying account of critical thinking and illustrate how such a construct can help teachers address the discursive difficulties experienced by basic and developmental writers in freshmen writing classes in colleges and universities.

### **What’s the story here? Turning towards narrative in composition and rhetoric scholarship**

Kathryn Comer

Ohio State University  
[comer.64@osu.edu](mailto:comer.64@osu.edu)

The “narrative turn” of recent years has influenced research and practice in a remarkable range of fields, from medicine to law, literature to political science. Given the current prevalence of narrative discourse across the disciplines, a careful assessment of its uses is essential. I propose to start this investigation at home, in my area(s) of composition and rhetoric. Through discourse analysis of recent scholarship in leading journals in the field, this project explores how, when, and why scholars engage issues of constructing and interpreting narratives. Particular attention is paid to critics’ use of narrative in their own writing, their engagement with theories of narrative, and their discussion of narrative as a pedagogical tool.

Preliminary findings illuminate the rich influences of narrative theories upon the form and content of contemporary scholarship, but they also reveal several telling blind spots. While critics consistently employ and analyze rhetorical narratives, works that engage narrative and pedagogy rarely draw connections to rhetoric. In terms of writing instruction, these disciplinary blinders lead to uncomplicated celebrations of identity formation through expressive narratives, without adequate attention to the rhetorical nature and uses of narrative. Such results highlight troubling gaps in the (ideally) symbiotic relationship between theory and pedagogy, and the resulting loss of potential advances in both.

Like all gaps, though, these offer productive areas of inquiry and debate that are relevant, even urgent, in light of the weight accorded to narrative in academic, civic, professional, and personal spheres. Ultimately, this study points to growing opportunities for successful pedagogical negotiations of the “narrative turn,” and calls for a critical and coherent conversation about the role(s)—actual and potential—of narrative in writing instruction and beyond.

### ***K13. Research as rhetoric: Composition faculty/librarian deep collaboration***

This panel argues for a rhetorical approach to university library research which results from collaboration between writing faculty and librarians at GWU. We understand the university library's function as archival: selecting texts from a variety of discourse communities, collecting and systematizing disciplinary knowledge, collecting and systematizing texts representative of a culture’s collective knowledge, responding to information economy and cycles of scholarly communications, and providing access to knowledge in a university community. As they construct and select archives, libraries enables writers to foreground rhetorical choices made within by a power/knowledge system and make visible differences among discursive traditions and communities. The library, as a system and as a rhetorical structure that stores multiple and conflicting traditions of thought, imagery, cultural representations, and vocabulary, provides students a site in which to participate in the process of selection, classification, ordering, and distribution of disciplinary discourses. Talking about the library as a rhetorical system

constituted by and impinging upon other rhetorical systems opens up research into questions of discursivity, representation, power/knowledge, and disciplinarity. These qualities of university libraries allow us to rethink how we teach research based writing in terms of systems and in terms of discourses. How do we encourage students to move “finding the information” to broaden their notion of research? How can researchers understand how and why discourse communities use languages and represent social subjects? How can libraries become sites for first year writers to read these institutional functions, asking: Who is collecting? Who is producing knowledge? Who is writing? Who is publishing? What are the key values and questions at play? Who is allowed to speak and on behalf of whom? How are collections shaped by disciplinary criteria and questions?

How do we put into practice this approach? We have begun to answer these questions through collaboration.

### ***Community-based research as a rhetorical lens for library research***

Phyllis M. Ryder, *George Washington University*

One of my favorite moments in teaching these days happens when the librarians introduce my students to the 2000 Census. My students work with local DC community organizations, and they are pumped up: those who are tutoring middle school students understand the urgency of that work when they read that only 68% of students in DC’s Ward 1 graduate from high school. But another group is confused: how does the census record the homeless, ask the students who are volunteering with the Dinner Program for Homeless Women? How many of the homeless are women?

I used to ask students to research a contemporary, public issue of interest to them and make a case for public policy. That strategy privileged the site of the library for academic research, affirming the value of the university as the location of knowledge production. However, it allowed little room for the critique of the role of the academic, disciplinary system of knowledge-production or of the role of the library in archiving it. Recently, I’ve begun to teach writing by asking students to partner with community non-profits for a semester and to write about and for that community. Now students wrestle with the ethical questions of knowledge production—who has the right to make claims about a community? They also explore the limits of government and library archival structures. What worldviews are hidden in the terms used in phrasing a question? Who is left out of the research all together? Why is that information not in the census? Later in the course, as we dig into the academic research about key issues related to the organizations, this question still lingers. Who conducts research about these issues and for whom?

### ***A proto-disciplinary approach to first-year writing: The comics medium as an object of student research***

Phillip Troutman, *George Washington University*

Faculty of topic-based composition programs are re-thinking their relation to disciplinary writing. Is it non-disciplinary, generically "academic" or pre-disciplinary, tracking

students into particular fields? Can it be substantively multi-, inter-, or cross-disciplinary and remain focused on writing? I propose a proto-disciplinary model in which students gain specialized knowledge through the academic writing and research process. Instead of a topic, we use an object of research: the comics medium (sequential image/text narratives—chiefly comic books, graphic novels, and manga). While some students are familiar with comics, and most are conversant with visual culture, it is the unfamiliarity of scholarly discourse about comics that justifies its use. But comics scholarship itself is proto-disciplinary: it is the purview of no single field, so students can find scholarly approaches of interest from history, literary studies, philosophy, clinical psychology, education, language instruction, aesthetics, semiotics, technology studies, and others; its study is nascent in most of these fields, so students can make genuine contributions through their own original research; and, its scholarship maintains links to popular criticism so students can learn to transpose arguments from one register to another. By taking forays into disciplinary research and writing, students build areas of expertise, both specific knowledge and ways of knowing, that allow them to situate their arguments within specific discourses. A proto-disciplinary composition course challenges students to engage in specific academic discourse without insisting on any one disciplinary path.

### **Faculty/librarian deep collaboration**

Cathy Eisenhower, *George Washington University*

Librarians and writing faculty who collaborate in the first year writing program often do not share an approach to “information” as overdetermined discursive representations with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery doctrines, style and bureaucracy. For writing faculty, research based writing recognizes multiple forces that shape information and shape literacy, and foregrounds the subjects who participate in (or do not participate in) public discourse and knowledge creation. Librarians and writing faculty share commitments to agency – librarians value objective approach to information and writing faculty value writer’s conscious and critical approach to research. However, these ideas of agency reflect different disciplinary commitments. How might writing instructors engage librarians to discuss these conflicting values of overdetermination and agency—both to enrich how we teach research writing and rhetoric collaboratively and how we build library collections that put into play both mainstream and marginalized discourses?

### ***K14. “Diving into the wreck”: A feminist inquiry of the dissertation in composition***

Adrienne Rich’s poem “Diving into the Wreck” provides a suitable metaphor for feminist graduate students of composition in the midst of the dissertation process. These students who are ABD frequently navigate the continuum between isolation and community, collaboration and competitiveness, wellness and dis-ease, as they struggle to find time to write in spite of the demands of work and family—trying to make headway amidst the often choppy waves of love and loss and deadlines. Each of the panelists below has armed herself with coursework, research, and dissertation committees, but now must “dive” alone to salvage her separate degree.

Most stories of writing the dissertation are written after the degree has been attained—when something of value has been salvaged from the wreck, when we got “the thing [we] came for: / the wreck and not the story of the wreck/ the thing itself and not the myth” (Rich, 61-63). The dissertators on this panel, however, have agreed to come up for breath mid-process, to take a break long enough to reflect upon the tactics and strategies used by feminist compositionists in the past, the recent past, and the present as they strive to succeed day after day, chapter after chapter, and revision upon revision.

### **Re-calling the ghosts of feminists past: How feminist dissertators have negotiated the dissertation process**

Jennifer Johnson  
U.C. Santa Barbara  
[jjohnson@writing.ucsb.edu](mailto:jjohnson@writing.ucsb.edu)

Certainly, I am not the first feminist compositionist to consider the confines of the dissertation genre in my field. Others before me have described their experiences in *The Dissertation and the Discipline: Reinventing Composition Studies*, edited by Nancy Welch, et al., and *ALT/Dis: Alternative Discourses and the Academy*, edited by Patricia Bizzell, et al. Based on the principles of *Feminist Empirical Research* as described by Joanne Addison and Sharon McGee, the feminist dissertator not only has the right but the obligation to “have a voice in the development and reporting of the research” (3). Moving beyond a radical feminism that would label the current dissertation process in composition as a patriarchal construct that favors male ways of knowing, Elizabeth Flynn’s *Feminism Beyond Modernism* endorses a post-modern feminism that “does not oppose modern intellectual and social traditions” (13). “Rather,” Flynn claims, “[post-modern feminists] are critical of [these traditions] and attempt to find alternatives to them” (13).

By interviewing six well-established compositionists who identify themselves as feminists, I will look at the ways they negotiated the boundaries of the dissertation genre. I will also investigate their perspectives regarding the conventions and limitations of the genre and how it has changed over time.

### **Diving into the recent past: Exploring the use of feminist action research in the dissertation process**

Mysti Rudd  
Lamar State College-Port Arthur  
[mysti.rudd@lamarpa.edu](mailto:mysti.rudd@lamarpa.edu)

Does a dissertation have to be written in acadamese with a target audience of less than a dozen? Does the emphasis on collaborative learning necessarily have to end as the dissertation process begins? With over 60% of Ph. D. candidates not completing their degrees (according to Barbara Lovitts’ *Leaving the Ivory Tower*), the material realities of

writing a dissertation are worth investigating in order to discover what helps or hinders candidates as they dive for their terminal degrees.

Though it may seem that I am asking whether the dissertation in composition has to be written in the traditional way, I am more interested in exploring the ways in which principles of post-modern feminism and critical pedagogy can be incorporated into the dissertation process.

To answer this question, I will interview six self-identified feminist compositionists who have successfully defended their dissertations within the past two years, paying close attention not only to the strategies they used to “survive” this process, but also noting the ways in which they tried to change the very process itself. I am particularly interested in the interviewee’s answers to this question: as feminists in the field of composition, do we have an *obligation* to critically reflect upon the dissertation process and the product that results from it—or should we jump through the hoops of attaining the degree before we question the process and the genre?

### **Present practices of two dissertating compositionists: Collaborating through blogs, listservs, and dissertation study groups**

Amy Lynch-Binieck  
[lynchbin@kutztown.edu](mailto:lynchbin@kutztown.edu)

Kathleen Klompian  
*C.S.U. Channel Islands*  
[kathleen.klompian@csuci.edu](mailto:kathleen.klompian@csuci.edu)

What would it look like if compositionists currently navigating the dissertation process utilized the feminist tenet of collaboration—sharing knowledge, information, and social as well as emotional support? Composition research includes a great deal of information about writing collaboratively—from Elbow's seminal *Writing Without Teachers* and Anne Ruggles Gere's *Writing Groups: History, Theory and Implications* to Kami Day's and Michele Eodice's desires to compose a co-authored dissertation and later a book on co-authorship.

Dr. Lynch-Binieck and Kr. Klompian will build on this scholarship by conducting auto-ethnographic studies of their attempts to form communities to support them through their dissertation processes. They will evaluate the usefulness of technological communication and a bi-monthly study group, respectively and report on how these strategies have impacted their dissertation processes as well as their final products.

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