Beyond the Frontier, Volume III

Beyond the Frontier, Volume III:

Innovations in First-Year Composition

Edited by

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DEDICATIONS

To my 'ohana. It is because of you that I can soar.
—Jill

For Elaine B. Winner, my beautiful Aunt Elaine.
—Tammy

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Jill's Acknowledgements

In Hawai'i, we refer to family as *'ohana*. It is a simple word, but it is packed with meaning. This book is an opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate relatives be they birth or extended family. When someone is *'ohana*, they are close to heart—they are the heart-home. In these uncertain pandemic times, *'ohana* keeps you going and gives you something to treasure. For me, *'ohana* encompasses much more than a sibling, a niece, a nephew. If you are part of my *'ohana*, you are my support system. I'd like to acknowledge my amazing *'ohana,* especially the co-editor of this book, Tammy Winner, and the following people who make life so worth living:

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To those who have been left off this list through my own neglect, I'll buy you a TRD (tasty rum drink) at Tommy's. :)

Finally, I lost my beloved Moi-Moi to liver cancer in the worst year on the planet, 2019. Along came two, middle-aged, rescued Maine Coon kitties, Loki and Hekili. Though they can never take the place of Honi and Moi-Moi, they do a fine job of making me laugh. I appreciate you, too.

Tammy's Acknowledgements

PREFACE

We have now moved into our third volume of *Beyond the Frontier: Innovations in First-Year Composition*. Our first and second volumes came off without too much of a hitch. This third volume presented itself in unprecedented times: COVID-19 and California wildfires. It was Tammy who kept the volume alive and contributed her heart and soul to bring this project across the goal line. We did have an old name re-join us on the project. We are pleased to welcome back Piper Selden, who wrote our Introduction.

As in the past, we are continuing with the theme of panels. This year, we added Multimodal Writing and Sustainability into the continuing panels of Basic Writing, Praxis and Practicality, and Virtual Frontier. Wherever possible, our contributors re-crafted their article to account for teaching in a time of COVID. We are excited to watch the anthology evolve as our times evolve.

As with volumes before, the need for Basic Writing innovations begins this volume. Learner Identity, Listening Rhetoric, and Dual Enrollment are discussed. In times of new learners and new modalities, identity and listening change with each new generation of students, so it is good to see new theories and ideas presented. With Dual Enrollment helping young students to get a jump on their education, the models presented in this section offer food for thought.

Praxis and Practicality provides novel ways of considering pedagogies for a new generation. In this section, you will find new ways of fostering inclusive diversity in these times of inclusion and growth and a way to work with conspiracy theories. Rhetoric, the starting blocks for many writing instructors, is included as well, providing new insight into an age-old study.

The Virtual Frontier leads us through games and Open Educational Resources, both of which are critical learning tools in an age of COVID and virtual teaching. The more resources we have to choose from, the easier our job will be.

One of our new additions, Multimodal Writing in FYC, takes us through time. From digital and visual storytelling to multimodal public rhetoric, we hope you can gather inspiration to innovate in your own classroom, be it virtual or face-to-face and to work with the technological resources at your fingertips and in your imagination.

Finally, the section on Sustainable FYC offers a measured look backward and forward. From Ancient Mesopotamian methods of teaching writing to the promises of community engaged scholarship and strategies for observing the "local," our world is changing faster now than ever before. It is incumbent upon us to heed the lessons of the past as we seek to become more sustainable in both environment and self. We hope that the ideas presented in this section offer a respite from the ordinary.

We invite you to continue on the journey that is *Beyond the Frontier: Innovations in First-Year Composition* in these ever-changing times. No one could imagine the multiple ways education would change when the country first entered into the pandemic in March, 2020, but thankfully, our contributors came through, offering pedagogy that will create teaching opportunities in both virtual and physical classrooms. Ideas are meant to be shared and evolve into methods that work for you and your class. We hope you will find inspiration in the pages of this volume of *Beyond the Frontier: Innovations in First-Year Composition*.

—Jill Dahlman and Tammy Winner

INTRODUCTION

PIPER SELDEN

"Really?" she asks.

"Truly," I answer.

The student peers at me through a computer screen, her forehead wrinkled with disbelief. We are at the end of her first grading conference, having scored a well-crafted essay that she will use for the Common App when she applies for college in a week or so. We reviewed the grading criteria together, read through and discussed her writing, and then graded the paper together with a rubric. She's still frowning, a small but noticeable look like she's working out something in her head. I allow her a minute, not wanting to rush what seems to be a heavy concern.

"It's just--" she begins.

I smile patiently, holding the projected image of her from a home and computer miles away, across a network of wifi, cable, and fiberoptics. It's a marvel, really, that we can connect in this way. Google Meets has been a godsend during the pandemic. Zoom. WebEx. A cell phone when needed. In this way, modern technology allows us to bridge the gap, be it a measure of miles or the need for social distancing during a global pandemic. As they say in theater: the show must go on, and so must education. We find new ways to reach out to students, new ways to approach material, new best practices to share with our coworkers.

Innovation and adaptation. These are qualities I admire about the teaching profession and those who answer the call to educate. Simply put, we are problem solvers, but it's more than that. Teachers teach, but teachers also collect and analyze data, reflect on alternative modes of delivery, and modify praxis to best meet student needs. We inspect, tweak, and adapt, thinking not only outside the box when it comes to educational models but around and sometimes through them. This is our charge if we intend to effectively reach and teach our students in today's ever-changing landscape of learning.

"It's just," my student says again. "I've never thought of myself as a writer… and I never thought I'd ever get higher than a C on a paper. You just gave me an A."

"No," I correct. "You *earned* that A." It's an important distinction, I tell her. "You earned it by writing and rewriting and rewriting some more. You wrestled words for a rough draft and participated in peer review. And you stayed up late some nights, didn't you?"

She nods, then laughs. "Well, thank you anyway."

"Thank you," I say. "What you have to say is important, and I appreciate you sharing your writing with me today."

She smiles, waves, and then the screen goes black.

I'm glad there was a bit of extra time between my grading appointments because interactions like these are important. They are touchstones for a teacher's heart. The way we deliver instruction and interact with our students--online, via email, and during virtual meetups--might change, but the relationships we build are the same.

Now more than ever, teachers must look Beyond the Frontier of traditional teaching. We must read, investigate, and collaborate. We must re-think our classrooms and re-envision what a learning community might be. Classrooms are now as varied as pedagogical models and approaches. We meet face-to-face, fully online, and a hybrid of the two wherein students are sometimes on campus and other times at home. We have flipped classrooms and blended learning; work-based and service-learning; asynchronous, "work at your own pace," and synchronous, "meet as a class in person or online." Our challenge is to rise, to meet students where they are and move from there, even or especially when they doubt themselves or their abilities. In many ways, this makes us odd fellows, metaphoric cheerleaders for students who question their voices, and what those voices have to say.

"You are the future," I often tell students. But I stop short at the cliched, moralizing lecture. They're expecting that, the serious talk about hard work and responsibility they've been listening to for years. They're expecting the teacher's version of "When I was young, I had to walk miles and miles to school. Uphill. Both ways." I don't want to talk *at* my students, I want to talk *with* them. What an opportunity we have to have real conversations, to ask questions, and try to build something better. What drives me is the desire to know and understand, and to do this, I think we need to ask more questions, and then listen for the answers. When we listen, mindfully, we open a dialogue and encourage communication. We spark interest because students sense that we really do care. In this supportive, educational environment, students test-drive ideas and learn not to be afraid. We spark interest and curiosity. We see what's possible.

Kierkegaard wrote that "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." And just like writing is recursive--each step in the

process leading to more steps--so is living. The important bit is to keep moving, to keep reaching forward--beyond what we know, beyond what we imagine. Beyond.

It feels strange, this pinch of time that expands and contracts between keystrokes and a stationary, blinking cursor. My next student dings in, a melodious chirp that alerts me that someone new has entered the Google Meet.

"Am I too early?" he asks.

"Not at all. You're just on time."

"I'm glad we did this essay," he tells me. "Gave me practice for all the apps I have to write pretty soon."

We make small talk as I pull up his essay. Soon I will share my screen so we can review the rubric together. It's helpful for students to know what's expected of them. *Oh…* and having pulled up his essay, I remember reading it the first time. Single mom. First in his family to attend college. He's a bundle of nervous energy, and I could almost see one of his knees bouncing quickly up and down as a stress response.

The student shares that he's worried about his grade because he's "never been a good writer" and doesn't want his grade to tank before graduation. I read his last revision and know that it's a decent paper.

"I just really want to go, you know, to college," he says. This student is clearly a nervous talker. I reassure him with clear expectations of how the grading conference will roll out: review rubric, read the essay aloud, and provide feedback on the final draft, grade. It's the same process. "I'm just curious how it's gonna be," he admits.

Curious, I think, rolling the word around the inside of my head. The thought bounces around my brain like a ball in a pinball machine. I'm the double-flippers to keep this student engaged. Other teachers in other disciplines are the bumpers and lights. Curious, indeed.

Dewey had plenty to say about curiosity. He stated that no real learning can take place without it, and I believe this applies to both sides. Teachers must reach out and beyond, just as much as students do. We should wonder what might lie beyond the frontier and get curious about it. Talk to our friends and colleagues about it. After all, this is one of the sacred responsibilities of educators: as much as we teach, we also must learn.

What can you expect from *Beyond the Frontier?* Be you a fellow educator, someone from administration, a parent, or a student, there is something for you between the covers of this physical or electronic book. I would encourage you to read two articles and share one with your community of supporters. Consider this a think-pair-share activity, and suggest to your curiosity buddy to share his or her favorites too. Believe in

the beauty of connection because it will save us. It starts with the first essay and just might take us beyond what we even expected.

BASIC WRITING/DUAL ENROLLMENT

LISTENING RHETORIC
IN FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

W. ORDEMAN

This morning as I was preparing my lunch before my commute to school, I had the radio tuned to the local news station. The talk show host answered a caller who began an irascible oration the second his call went through. He was livid with one political party and their seeming "disregard" for what "was so fundamental to the American experience." "How could someone in good conscious associate themselves with these people?" he bellowed, "If [they] are willing to stand by and let this happen, then you can be sure that they honestly don't care at all about the future of our country." When I heard this, I had a fleeting memory of a particular day in my ENGL 1310 class from the previous fall. The class began with a discussion of Erik Reece's work, *Utopia Drive.* When I asked the class their thoughts on a specific chapter, *What if?,* in which Reece presents his idea of an ideal society, one student gave a vexed look and folded his arms. "What did you think of it, Randal?" I asked, hoping to discover why this typically engaged student decided to mentally "check-out." "To be honest," he said, "I stopped reading it after the first page. I knew exactly where he was going, and I've heard it all before." This sentiment, apparently, was widely shared among the class.

Recalling this student's remark and hearing the caller on the radio, I couldn't help but wonder again how much my students have been influenced by divisive claims. It seems so much of our public discourse has become a war among straw men - attacking each other's over-simplified opinions for the sake of convenience. Can we expect students to enter into constructive debates when they have not seen it modelled? What can be expected of a generation of students whose exposure to political discourse consists of one side claiming, "join us or you are a communist" (or a "snowflake") and the other, "join us or you are condoning racism." When I enter my classroom later this morning, I must face the fact that the term "rhetoric" (or worse, "persuasion") to these freshmen students is a term largely defined by this type of divisive discourse. From what I can tell, my

students are tired of this kind of "rhetoric." The questions become then, "If I allow this construct of rhetoric to remain unchallenged, what kinds of writing can I expect from my students? What kinds of arguments?"

These concerns have inspired me to incorporate a curriculum of *Listening Rhetoric* into my class curriculum. If we as writing teachers don't address the *ethics* of rhetoric, then it will be addressed by someone (or something) else. In fact, it already has.

Listening Rhetoric

The phrase *Listening Rhetoric* (LR) can be attributed to the late Wayne C. Booth and, for the purposes of this article, is defined by Booth in *Rhetoric of RHETORIC* as *"*the whole range of communicative arts for reducing misunderstanding by paying full attention to opposing view" (10). LR requires audience and authors to take on fluid roles in which they exchange and tether purposes between themselves. The goal of LR is not to convince others of one's claim, but rather to create a fuller understanding for both speaker and listener of each other's point of view. If rhetoric is the study of "misunderstandings and their remedies," as I.A. Richards defines it and Booth affirms (7), then LR is the revealing work. It reveals misunderstandings about claims to understand the values upon which they stand.

Rhetorical Listening

Krista Ratcliffe also writes on LR in her book, *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, and Whiteness*, in which she argues that those in any given conflict can gain an awareness of language proclivity towards binary thinking by listening rhetorically. In the work, she defines rhetorical listening as "a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture" (17). In her interview with Ben Kuebrich, Allison Hitt, and Karrieann Soto, host and executives of the podcast "This Rhetorical Life," Ratcliffe recalls the moment when the issue of LR became relevant to incorporate in her pedagogy. At the time, Ratcliffe's classroom conversations revolved around cultural logics where students tended to remain silent and retain their views instead of taking a stance of rhetorical listening. She recalls teaching a class reading Cornel West's *Race Matters,* and a white student openly admitted that he didn't understand what the "big deal" was concerning racial awareness. Ratcliffe replied curtly with, "Well, don't you think that maybe that's Cornel West's point?" ("This Rhetorical Life" 1) to the cheers and applause of her classroom. In the interview, In the interview, she admits that her sarcastic

tone probably only strengthened his and other students' resolve that academia was full of liberal conspiracies like this one (2). She regrets that she didn't engage the student in a sort of critique of discourse that might have spurred critical thinking of his own opinions as well as those of Cornel West. What she decided to do thenceforth was to help engage students in their assumptions in a way that encouraged them to entertain other possibilities without having to jeopardize their own views. Ratcliffe prefaces LR not as a solution to a problem, but rather as an analytical tactic (6). It may not always be effective in convincing others of your argument, she admits, but it will help students to think critically about their own stance and encourage an ethic of respect: "I may disagree with them vehemently but I can also recognize they're smart, they're committed, they're ethical. And, rather than just dismissing someone as stupid, having the ground of respect is kind of important." (6)

Like Ratcliffe, when Wayne C. Booth talks about the use of LR in the classroom, he is not hoping students come to an agreement necessarily, but rather a fuller understanding of each other. His claims are about disarming unchallenged constructs about others' viewpoints to encourage interlocutors to truly listen and understand the complexity of issues. Booth wanted his students to see that ethical issues are not simply black or white but contain an array of colors, each of which plays a role in light of a given topic. Just as signs communicate meanings of the signified, arguments of an ethical nature (such as gun control, abortion rights, or immigration) are also signs that signify a plethora of ethical values and perspectives. Deconstructing these deferants, those values being signified, does not lead us to an absence of value, Booth would argue, but instead to an incredibly complex wealth of values all of which can be accounted for in the claims people make. The danger of equipping students with the skills of persuasion without LR is to perpetuate the idea of rhetoric as a winner-takes-all practice instead of a constructive discourse.

Value Pluralism

Booth's pedagogical theory comes in part from Isaiah Berlin's theory of Value Pluralism. In this ethical theory, Berlin argues that human nature is characterized by our species' ability to create and live by values. He believes that values are *objective* in the sense that they are held by everyone. The creation and assertion of ethical values made them objective. What makes the human experience unique to every other known living experience is the competition of values within and amongst ourselves, which Berlin claims has been the root of all of our conflict (*The First and the Last*).

In a letter Berlin writes to author Beata Polanowska-Sygulska, he explains his belief that human nature is not "fixed," as Rousseau believed: "I do not believe that all men are in the relevant respects the same 'beneath the skin,' i.e., I believe that variety is part of human existence and in fact…that this is a valuable attribute" ("A Letter on Human Nature"). Berlin proposes that all human life consists of the same set of human needs: "I think that common ground between human beings must exist if there is to be any meaning in the concept of human beings at all." He lists physical (food, shelter, security) and ethical (happiness, self-expression, love, communication, etc.) needs as examples. Humans have different means of obtaining these needs, and the signs we use to express those needs vary greatly (1). Nonetheless, these means need not be seen as "better" or "worse," but equally valued and understood.

These claims by Berlin are influential to Booth's own pluralism as Booth consents that values are connected to something higher than one's own creation. In the afterword of *Rhetoric and Pluralism*, Booth argues that "Everything we do, if it has a point, can be shown to relate to some notion of a cosmos… [which] validates its making. A real point is a point that matters, and to matter...is to matter in some...dimension of reality, larger than any one person's vision" (Antczak 297). He argues that "to matter" exists as a kind of proof of transcendental reality, as proof of the "cosmos." It stands to reason, for Booth at least, that if it matters to the cosmos, it ought to matter to interlocutors within a given discourse.

Booth's essential claim in his book on pluralism, *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* published in 1979, is to "Let the voices multiply; the more voices we have, the more truth will finally emerge" (4). More recently, Cass Sunstein has similarly argued that extremists' views are often a result of group polarization by which members of a group go from inclination to extremism because of a lack of diverse opinions within the group (*Going to Extremes: How Like Minds Unite and Divide*). To avoid these dangers, Booth encourages his readers to embrace a pluralism that "embrace[s] at least two enterprises in their full integrity, without reducing the two to one" (21). This stance requires a specific ethical quality: *active listening*. Booth encourages readers to challenge uniformity of opinion, something we should always "mistrust" (4). He assumes that if critics of a text are in complete uniformity, there is something other than reason that governs their decisiveness. Instead, he suggests that criticism is healthy when there is a complexity of competing critical claims because truth, he believes, emerges in a community of diverse claims.

To understand how such competing views can illuminate our shared values requires active listening and re-defining rhetoric from an act of

persuading-to-win to a discursive but purpose-driven act. This preface would suggest that two claims that are contradictory can be of value though they seem incompatible because they represent true human values. If we listen close enough to others' arguments, we may find we share values, even if we don't agree with the assumptions. The struggle in this activity, as Derrida points out, is the illusory nature of language itself (*Of Grammatology*). Still, Booth calls readers to engage with language rather than let *différance* divide us. The effort to treat others with dignity changes the nature of discourse to focus on learning and maturing in knowledge instead of focusing on simply proving one's argument or ignoring differences.

Booth demonstrates this effort of treating others with dignity in his interview with John Boe in *Writing on the Edge* just before Booth's death in 2005. In the interview, Booth points out that LR begins with the teacher: "if you can demonstrate in what you've said [in the rubric] that the student has really been heard, then the student has some reason for responding" (Boe). As most teachers have witnessed, thorough feedback usually causes students to be more receptive to instruction. This kind of listening not only helps the students improve their writing skills, but also develop critical thinking skills that would lead them to listen to their own assumptions and question the values of their own arguments. Booth would read the student's essays and seek to understand the student's values and see their argument from their point of view before giving feedback.

In Carolyn Fulford's critique of Booth's *The Rhetoric of RHETORIC*, she justly points out that Booth's revised definition of "rhetoric" lacks explication of rhetorical invention. It explains the motive but lacks how one persuades after listening. Booth eludes to praxis only briefly, and throughout the book he only offers one example of how it is used in the classroom. Fulford continues to highlight that Booth's purpose is "in educating people as readers and listeners [rather] than...writers and speakers" (Fulford 361). Booth's argument for teaching LR was a necessary framework for writing pedagogy as many writing teachers have avoided bringing ethics into instruction, but what is required now is practical application. What kinds of writing exercises can help students develop LR? How can we assess these skills in a composition assignment?

Were Booth alive today, it is safe to assume he would be appalled at the depth and proliferation of our polarization. When he made his treatise in *The Rhetoric of RHETORIC*, he was witnessing the faint lines of division that would later grow into chasms so wide students like those in my ENGL 1310 class have stopped engaging in conversation at all. I would like to propose a new means of pedagogy that teaches the principles of LR to freshmen composition students and the understanding that values motivate

claims. Most FYW teachers teach some form of argument in their classrooms, thus incorporating conversations about values can be quite appropriate in fulfilling a number of student learning outcomes.

Writing instructors are accountable for teaching argumentation and critical thinking. Both imply the need for LR. We are expected to teach our students effective writing practices and introduce them into writing in academic contexts. While active listening can be taught in many classrooms, we are charged with teaching composition, thus what is needed is an LR pedagogy that uses LR curriculum to improve writing curriculum and assignments. The mission is not simply to help students develop LR, but rather to help students *write better* through developing the skills of LR. I created an activity that required students to pay close attention to other students' arguments and determine a positive value that has motivated each student's claim. My goal was to show students how our stances in any given ethical claim are grounded upon our values: values that are shared among differences of opinion.

The Assignment

At the time I am writing this, I teach a freshman composition course at a community college just outside of Fort Worth, Texas. My students range between 17 and 20 years old, and most are in their first semester of college. Of my 18 students, nine are students of minorities of which five are L2 students. In the first few weeks of class, I had the students make a Life Plan, which required them to list values most important to them. Students listed values such as "health" or "fulfillment" or "freedom" or "financial independence." I then had the students write out what their "vision" is for their lives and how their values inform those visions. Students wrote down what they aspire to be and what they aspire to do. Afterwards, we demonstrate how their dreams are directly informed by what they value.

In the weeks that followed, we discussed the Toulmin Model as a means of constructing arguments. I provided a lecture that explained how claims are supported by evidence that relies upon warrants for interpretation and logical interpretation (Toulmin). We discuss how disagreements of opinion often occur when there is a disagreement of the assumption. Even if both interlocutors can come to consensus on the facts (which is quite an assumption itself), if those in discourse cannot agree on the warrants, the claim fails to persuade. The exercise that ensued intended to demonstrate how warrants function in an argument and to practice the skill of LR. The learning outcome was to have students change their definition of rhetoric from a competition of argument to a means of arriving at an understanding

of one's values in a claim. I explicitly shared with the students that we were not engaging in a debate but rather conducting an evaluative practice of values and argumentation.

The students were first supplied with a list of values, many of which they remember seeing in the lecture about building a Life Plan. Students were asked to write down three to five values from the list beginning with those of highest importance to them. The purpose of this was to remind students of the values we discussed and get them thinking about said values before making a claim. Then the assignment shifted, and the students were asked to provide a "claim" and "evidence" for the following prompt on a separate sheet of paper: *"To increase public safety, we should arm more citizens with weapons as opposed to increase gun control."*

Students were asked to provide three to five sentences that take a position in reference to gun control. They were instructed not to write their name, only an argument containing a claim, and some evidence or reasoning to support their claim. This part of the exercise was familiar to students as many have had to develop arguments and supply evidence in high school courses. After the students wrote their paragraphs, I collected them and redistributed them randomly so that each student had a different student's essay. The students were then given notecards and a paper clip. On one notecard, they were instructed to write a value they believed their peer's essay exhibited. I provided a list of values they had previously used, but students were also encouraged to write any value they believed relevant to the claim. Then, students were asked to identify their peer's claim in the argument and the evidence provided to make their argument. Finally, students were instructed to identify the warrants/assumptions of the argument and suggest evidence that would act as backing for those assumptions. Once the student had completed the notecard, they were told to clip the notecard to the essay and pass both the essay and the attached notecard to the individual on their right. Thus, a completed notecard from the student consisted of a claim, a phrase that was used as the argument's evidence, the assumption the writer subconsciously employed when they wrote their argument, a suggestion for how to provide backing for said assumption, and one positive value that the reader believes is motivating the author to take this stance.

The exercise continued for two more rounds: students read the argument, wrote down a value, wrote down the argument's evidence and claim, and then supplied additional evidence that would strengthen the argument's assumption. At the end of the exercise, I collected 18 essays each with three annotated note cards attached.

As a result of this exercise, students were required to find a positive value in at least three different claims. This encouraged them to look past what students claimed and determine what kind of values motivate claims. Furthermore, it fostered a conversation about values and how words like "freedom" and "justice" are interpreted and assessed differently. The conversations that followed seemed to demonstrate the students' (even if temporarily) shift in binary thinking, though this will be reflected in their forthcoming essay. Through exercises like these, first-year writing students are able to practice the skill of LR that can be used in other classes to cultivate a better understanding of arguments.

Students in our classrooms should feel at liberty to engage in public discourse about topics that affect their way of life. As a colleague once told me, "If they don't engage in 'sensitive' discourses here, where we encourage critical analysis, where else will they?" Booth believed what destroys critical culture is unquestioned conformity while encouraging and participating in criticism keeps a culture from becoming innate and unchallenged. He charged students to approach the works of others *ethically*: "Only if my opponent's survival is possible without my defeat am I likely to treat his arguments with as much respect as I spontaneously accord my own" (*Writing on the Edge* 28). And he thus asks us to humble ourselves and concede to LR even before entering into discourse.

LR as a pedagogical approach gives educators a unique means of introducing ethics into the writing classroom specifically when teaching subjects like the argumentation and rhetorical analysis. LR engenders ethical stances, ones that encourage the discovery of truth about human values more than "being right" or simply "winning" any given argument. To employ this kind of LR in the writing classroom, we must find ways to incorporate the theory into our writing assignments, and I believe curricula on argumentation, evidence, and assumptions provide the perfect place to start.

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Understanding Learner Identity as Investment and Resistance

Maureen McBride

As student populations continue to diversify, understanding the learners in our classrooms is essential to helping our students in first-year composition be successful in our classes, in their degree programs, and in their future professions. As a critical component of first-year writing contexts, instructors and students can benefit from understanding how students construct a reader identity. Reader identity refers to the ways students "define themselves as readers and how they want others to identify them [as readers]" (Hall 1793). Specifically, being aware of students' reader identities helps instructors understand students' investment or resistance in classroom activities.

Understanding the complexities of students' identity(ies), such as reader or writer, can help instructors better support students as they negotiate their speaking, reading, and writing experiences both as invested, and sometimes resistant, learners. Helping students examine their identities and investment may provide them with tools to be agents of their educational experiences. This chapter will examine how identity and investment play pivotal roles in students' educational experiences in first-year writing classrooms, specifically as readers.

Overview of Relevant Identity and Investment Scholarship

With increased diversification of student populations, the research in language learning and education scholarship is particularly relevant to first-year writing discussions. Additionally, understanding academic reading and writing as language learning can be particularly helpful for instructors, especially acknowledging how language learning is a social practice linked with power structures within our institutions (Norton 2-8). Our students are learning how to trade symbolic and material resources as they navigate the language expectations of reading and writing in college (Darvin and Norton

37), which may be different than their previous learning experiences. For example, revealing reading difficulties may have a more negative symbolic value in college than in high school because of perceived expectations associated with college.

Of particular interest for the purposes of this chapter is Darvin and Norton's definition of identity:

> Identity, being a person's sense of self and relation to the world, is understood as dynamic, multiple, diverse and even contradictory. It is a continual site of struggle, as language learners navigate through different contexts of power, where some subject positions may be in conflict with others. . . [learners] also reorganize a sense of who they are and how they relate to the world. Frequently, they seek to construct identities that would allow them to gain legitimacy in the spaces they occupy. (57)

As identity is constantly changing based on time, context, and experiences, the concept of investment can help educators better understand how to support students in their learning efforts. Investment recognizes the shifts in how learners behave in different contexts, compared to the concept of motivation that often positions learner identity as fixed and ahistorical (Darvin and Norton 36; Norton and Gao 110). Pavlenko and Norton claim that to better understand learners' investments, educators should "examine their multiple communities and understand who can and who cannot be imagined as a legitimate speaker of a particular language variety in a specific context" (595). According to Darvin and Norton, learners invest when they know they can acquire symbolic and material resources that they can use for social and economic gains. For example, as part of how learners may invest in academic situations, students need to understand not only rules of academic language but also understand how the rules have been socially and historically shaped (Norton). When the power structures of language are exposed for students, they can challenge those structures and reframe them to claim some power for themselves. Learners then have the choice of conforming to those norms or not.

Investment is more specific to context than is motivation; learners choose whether to invest in a specific class assignment and should not be labeled as "invested" or "not invested," just as we would not want to label students as motivated or struggling readers. Rather instructors should try to understand when and why students invest in certain learning activities (Lee 441-442). Even when learners choose to demonstrate resistance, they are attempting to construct their identities to be legitimate members of communities (Lee 442). For example, some students want to be seen as legitimate and valued members of a classroom community, and for other students this identity would be in conflict with their social identity (Lee

442). In general, learners resist marginalization by negotiating identities that have power in certain contexts (Lee 442). For example, within a classroom setting it may offer more power to be the quiet student rather than the struggling reader.

Learner resistance to norms is actually quite common (Kim 93-94). Instructors who focus on student motivation may be misunderstanding student "resistance" in their classroom and blame low motivation or lack of competence (Kim 93-94), when in fact the student is not invested because they do not see any potential symbolic or material resources that can be gained from the assignment or activity. Learners often experience inner struggles as they navigate their learner identities and their social identities (Kim 93-94). Older learners (beyond high school) are more aware of the complexities of their identity, value specific social identities, and exercise their agency in learning situations (Kim 96, 98), but it is still important to be aware of how students' identities are dynamic.

Instructors need to remember that language and literacy learning involve the learner's social identity as a member of different groups and communities (Kim 99) and that students are navigating between different social roles and their identities in different contexts. Legitimizing students' complex identities and finding ways to draw from their prior knowledge and experiences can help them find their voices and claim the right to speak and be agents in their education (Darvin and Norton 57). Language is a way for students to negotiate their identities within different contexts (Kim 98); this can be applied to learning the language of academia, specifically of higher education and writing classrooms. James Paul Gee uses the term discursive perspective to explain identities that are individual but also influenced by the input of other people (103-104). This concept impacts reader identity through how the student identifies as a reader (e.g. poor reader) and how people like peers and teachers identify the student as a reader.

Kibler suggests that academic identities, specifically disciplinary identities, are developed through the academic experiences students have. Writing and disciplinary identities are entwined both in terms of learning content, negotiating relationships, and developing academic identities. Language helps students to enact identities; writing serves as a way to (re)construct identities (Kibler 26-28). However, students may be resistant to giving up their everyday identities to take on what is perceived as an institutional identity (Kibler 38). For example, one participant in Kibler's case study discussed the ways in which her identity as a daughter within her family structure was not valued in her writing in an academic (institutional) setting. Her familial identity as a daughter and the social value of her

mother's approval was more important to her than taking on an academic identity in the classroom (Kibler 38).

To understand the complexity of identity formations and negotiations, the impacts of identity should be understood. Identity includes the following three relationships: 1) relationship of the self to the world; 2) relationship across time and space; 3) possibilities for the future (Darvin and Norton 57). Changes in identity occur "as individuals imagine themselves in a new community with new visions of their future" (Xuan 10), such as when students are transitioning into college. As students transition to college, taking an active and reflective role as learners is a way for students to assert their agency as learners (Bandura 2-3). Specifically, if students cannot assert their agency to use academic language, it is more difficult for them to see themselves as legitimate users of academic language or as members of the academic community (Xuan 11). Students need help to join academic discourse communities, including individual course communities, by negotiating ideologies, discourses, and values to construct identities that allow them to participate in that community (Gee 110-111; Okuda and Anderson 396).

Negotiating identities within academic communities can often present difficulties for students. Studies have shown that there is a significant difference between perceived problems by educators and experienced problems by students (Koehne 105). Even when instructors intend to offer multiple positionings for students, students may demonstrate resistance to some of those (Koehne 105-106). One concept that educators may need to embrace is the multiplicity and contradictions that are part of students' identities and ways of being students (Koehne 110-111), understanding that identity is dynamic and understanding that students sometimes make only temporary connections with some identities (Koehne 114-116). Students may construct their identities based on what they are not, or a sense of contrast, and other times as a sense of who they are, or a sense of sameness or shared experience (Koehne 115-116). A lens that focuses on a dichotomy like this is limiting for students; students benefit from a focus on the hybridity of their identities (e.g. college student, daughter, artist) (Koehne 114). Hybridity offers students opportunities to accept and reject parts of identities because they can more accurately reflect their identity(ies) in varying contexts (Koehne 114).

Although educators often respond negatively to student resistance to assignments and to learning, educators can benefit from understanding how the choice to resist may be more related to a student's sense of identity than to a lack of motivation (Garska and O'Brien 69-70). Use and control of English is seen as an important part of academic identity (Garska and