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Symposium on Internationalization

Editor’s Note: This issue of the journal, much like the last three June issues of *College Composition and Communication*, also includes a symposium, in this case addressing internationalization, a topic of increasing interest to the field. Helping us understand something about how this interest developed, former Chair of CCCC Charles Bazerman, who is also the Chair of the International Society for the Advancement of Writing Research (ISAWR), opens the symposium, citing his own wealth of experiences from around the world and, as his title suggests, arguing that the we of writing studies is a global we. Our second contribution, authored by Terry Zawacki and Anna Habib, focuses on international students, provides details located in work with these students, and in the process, demonstrates how our work with these students can inform our work with all students.

Sisters and Brothers of the Struggle: Teachers of Writing in Their Worlds

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There is a lot happening in the world. Specifically, there is a lot happening in higher education writing outside the United States. But this is hardly news to CCCC members who have seen increasing numbers of sessions and workshops...
at their convention devoted to writing in a global context, the formation of the Committee on Globalization of Postsecondary Writing Instruction and Research, the formation of the Transnational Writing SIG, and articles appearing in this journal (for examples, Muchiri et al. in 1995; Lu in 2005; and Donahue in 2009). Further, related organizations such as the Writing Center Association, the Writing Program Administrators, and the Network of WAC Programs have added international to their names or scope. The International Society for the Advancement of Writing Research (ISAWR) conference has emerged from the triennial Writing Research Across the Borders Conference, meeting previously in Santa Barbara, California, and Fairfax, Virginia, and now this year in Paris and 2017 in Bogota. The WAC Clearinghouse has started a book series, International Exchanges on the Study of Writing, with new titles, including the recent global survey Writing Programs Worldwide: Profiles of Academic Writing in Many Places (Thaiss et al.), and republications of books from other regions.

A few of the key organizational moments in the global emergence of higher education writing instruction have been the founding of SIGWriting (a special interest group of the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction) in 1988, the formation of the first writing centers in German-speaking countries in 1993, the Writing Development in Higher Education (WDHE) initiative in the United Kingdom in 1994, the European Writing Centers Association (EWCA) in 1998, the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW) in 2000, the Simpósio Internacional de Estudo de Gêneros Textuais (SIGET) in Brazil in 2003, the Red de Lectura y Escritura en la Educación Superior (REDLEES) in Colombia in 2007, and the Journal of Writing Research in 2008. Behind these were development of writing programs and writing centers in various pioneering universities throughout Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

A hortatory call for engagement with these activities in the United States and outside, speaking of all the good reasons and all the benefits, is hardly necessary, and many US colleagues have growing international experience that will only increase because of the needs of campuses here and elsewhere, creating new partnerships. Rather, I offer a personal perspective on the people engaged in writing in different educational contexts that I have met over the years. This essay is a tribute to them, as well as to all compositionists in the United States, recognizing the shared commitments and experiences that bring us to this line of work, how engagement with student writing and student development form shared sensibilities and characters, and how we have all struggled to enact our
values and commitments despite cultural and institutional challenges. This life of teaching of writing binds us together and makes for mutual recognition and understanding, common cause and friendship, despite the differences of our institutional organizations and resources; national cultures and politics, or disciplinary backgrounds. Such differences give us interesting tales to tell each other, contrasts to talk about, and novel puzzles to think through—but reading student writing and standing by students’ sides as they enter the world of academic and professional writing make it easy to understand what we talk about with each other and to share a common set of sympathies and orientations.

The stories I tell here are entirely my own impressions from experiences, contacts, and communications. I have been extremely lucky in the opportunities that have opened to me over my career. I have gotten to visit places, make friends, read work of colleagues, and work with programs and projects I never could have imagined when I began teaching three or four sections of first-year composition each term at City University of New York over four decades ago. These opportunities at first happened for particular personal reasons, but in recent years opportunities are expanding not just for myself, and I see many of my colleagues, both senior and junior, developing extensive international experiences. Each experience then opens new doors. So my one bit of hortatory urging is that when an opportunity appears, step up to it and enjoy the richness it will provide, despite bad timing or inconvenience, and let one thing follow on another. Perhaps the stories I present here will make the situations outside the United States a bit more intelligible and familiar, so it will be easier to take the first step.

My first extended experience with writing development overseas taught me how important but how difficult it was to build writing supports within established institutions and academic cultures, but also how situations can change through persistence of teachers determined to serve needs they see through close contact with students. When I first prepared a report on the state of student writing in all majors at the National University of Singapore in 1982, I found that almost all writing of consequence in the undergraduate curriculum occurred in the annual subject area written exams. As in most universities around the world, there was no general education or freshman year, and nothing like first-year composition. The level of writing was much like the writing of well-trained students entering university in the United States, but because of the lack of instruction and infrequency and variety in the writing tasks, there was little growth in the analytical, critical, or conceptual sophisti-
cation of writing over the undergraduate years, beyond an increasing quantity of knowledge displayed.

The only organized support for writing in the university at that time were courses in a language proficiency unit for those who did not pass an English language test. Since primary and secondary education in Singapore was English medium, and students admitted to the university had already risen to the top of the national educational system, the identified language issues were mostly the result of dialect variation. A few of the instructors in those courses, however, understood that more important issues of university writing had to do with organization, sophisticated forms of representation (such as handling complex intertextuality), and locating what it is that one wanted to say. The student struggles were exacerbated by writing instruction at the upper secondary level being directed toward an examination called the General Paper, consisting of an impromptu essay on a topic of general concern. As a result, thought development, planning, organization, and revision got little attention. The undergraduate examination system, the General Paper, and the deficit view of language proficiency were deeply embedded in the educational culture and created reward structures for both students and teachers that militated against change. A few years later, when I returned to help develop some more support programs campus-wide, we were able to institute only small components in the English major, largely by adding a few practical writing tasks into existing discourse analysis courses. We were able to introduce a short-lived minor in the master’s degree program called “English Applied Discourse.” Within a few years, however, that vanished.

Yet, some of the key teachers in the Proficiency Unit who understood student struggles in writing moved when another institution gained university status, incorporating the National Institute of Education. In this new situation they were able to introduce some new ideas to the younger generation of teachers and have gradually begun to engage with the Ministry of Education about modification of the General Paper requirement. Further, continuous assessment (that is, papers written in the year under non-exam conditions would count toward grades) has gradually been introduced now in both secondary and postsecondary education. Furthermore, as Singapore has become a major hub in international communication and science, there is growing recognition that writing is part of how students can become more analytical and creative. The older National University has also begun to create new smaller colleges within it, with both writing centers and required composition courses, and there
is some talk that these reforms would be taken up across the whole campus. When I was there a year ago, the teachers in the small college programs and the staff in the writing centers engaged in the same kinds of discussions about their students and the design of tasks and courses that we are familiar with in the CCCCs. The instructors in these programs tell the same stories we do about students growing and clarifying ideas and becoming more successful and more intellectually sophisticated.

While Singapore has had great political stability for forty-five years, rapid economic growth, English-medium instruction at all grade levels, and English as the main language of business and government, Nepal has multiple regional languages in schooling, ongoing poverty, and political troubles that have interfered with educational development. However, similar to Singapore, it sees higher education as a way to participate more fully in the global economy, and all higher education is English medium. Again there are teachers who have come to see the effect of writing on their students’ intellectual growth and the limiting impact of a lack of writing competence. Teaching conditions and university structures have limited the kinds of teaching, and the struggles students have with writing are more basic because of the complex linguistic situation and the uneven preparation in earlier schooling. Further, because of low pay, teachers must work in multiple jobs (a condition familiar to our freeway fliers, but far worse) and have even less time for individualized student contact. Yet they still have seen how students grow through writing and know their own personal development through their writing, so they are willing to struggle to make educational reforms, despite massive institutional and political obstacles. They know the future of their communities and individual students are at stake in their struggle. These are situations and values with which we all can sympathize.

Hong Kong presents a more rapidly changing story, with expansion of university access, moving from a single university to eight in a few years, and with increasing emphasis on English within secondary and higher education. In order to create more globally attuned citizens, for political and economic reasons, a new general education first year has been mandated at all universities, including increased English language instruction to meet the English-medium requirements of the entire curriculum. At the moment all eight universities are innovating programs to address the need, with several moving toward a language program that is more like US composition, led by faculty who over the years have been supporting students in their writing struggles.

China, of course, presents a massive and complex picture, with an even more rapidly growing higher education system. Nonetheless, some challenges
are widely shared, such as first-language writing instruction in schooling built on traditional models that do not necessarily prepare students to write for modern academic subjects. Often instruction in academic writing is synonymous with instruction in English writing, but students frequently perceive little value for either in this exam-oriented higher educational system. Motivation and instruction are driven by English writing examinations required of all students nationally, whether or not students perceive any realistic role for English language writing in education or anticipated careers. Mandated instruction in English is growing at all levels, and some instructors I have met are struggling to find ways to make writing meaningful and motivated. One other particular challenge is that graduate students and newly minted doctorates in the sciences and other disciplines are required to publish in English, though their experience in both academic writing and in English may be limited. Despite the difficulties for the erstwhile researchers and the language instructors who support them, doctoral research writing provides a motivated and realistic situation calling for writing instruction.

Latin America, as well, has in the last decade moved from almost no writing support in higher education to programs developing across the region, especially in Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, largely in the first language of Spanish or Portuguese. The growth in writing support has been driven by wider access to higher education, concern for democracy in changing political climates, participation in globalized research and professions, engagement in Internet communication, and recognition of the challenges of writing encountered in advanced degrees and resulting in research publication. In each of these countries, with their distinctive higher education structures, there is no easy or natural institutional place to provide writing support, as students typically apply to and enter a faculty or “career” (what we would call a major department), usually with a tightly structured set of required courses. Yet in each country pioneers have struggled to teach students and raise awareness of the importance of writing. In Colombia, the work of a few has led to the national government-sponsored initiative REDLEES (http://www.ascun-redlees.org/), which has held annual conferences since 2007 and has supported a variety of initiatives on campuses throughout the country. Colombia will host the 2017 Writing Research Across Borders Conference in Bogota. Argentina, Chile, and Mexico have had less systematic development of higher education writing support, but programs have been developing on individual campuses. As successes in one location inspire others, and as the research and publication about needs and successful models spread, networks
are developing both within each country and across all Latin America. In order to help understand and support development of higher education writing in Latin America, with the help of a CCCC research grant, I am working with a group of regional teachers and researchers on the project Iniciativas de Lectura y Escritura en la Educación Superior en América Latina (ILEES). At the project website (http://www.ilees.org/) are results and analyses of surveys and interviews concerning the various programs throughout the region, research networks, publications, and influences.

Despite differences in institutional structures, the educational missions of higher education within the separate nations and cultures in Latin America are remarkably closely aligned with those of the United States because of the common histories, cultures, and situations across the Americas. We all are rich multicultural societies made of many immigrant groups from several continents mixed with indigenous peoples, still struggling to overcome histories of slavery and colonial devastation of the indigenous people and the accompanying racism. Almost all countries of the Americas are founded on anticolonial revolutions and have struggled to assert democratic ideals. Education is viewed in all these countries as part of nation forming and building equitable and democratic societies, along with economic advancement. I have also found an intellectual openness and interdisciplinarity of thinking in my Latin American colleagues that lead to a more wide-ranging exchange than happens elsewhere. Through Latin America, I have learned not only about the work of Latin Americans but also about scholars and teachers of other countries whose work has not penetrated the English-only world of the United States. It is also sobering and humbling to recognize that US interventions have left suspicions in the region and a rightful need for self-definition from out of the shadow of the northern neighbor.

While I know Middle East higher education only secondhand, I get a somewhat different picture, as the vehicle for writing development is US-style universities, either locally founded or as branch campuses of US universities (this branch campus model is also starting to spread in Asia). These US-style universities have a general education first year with composition courses in English, so the question is, as in the United States, not whether composition should be taught, but how—particularly how composition pedagogy can be implemented, modified, or reimagined to fit local circumstances. While the instruction is in English and continuous with US practices, it is inflected by complex linguistic situations, attitudes toward global English, the differing social positions of the students, the cultural climates of the countries, and the
rapid changes in economic and social development. There is a substantial traffic of US based instructors to such campuses. Teachers and scholars from the region also participate in international conferences and seminars in the United States and Europe. The teaching of writing here, as elsewhere, is a way into the lives of the students and their personal development, and through them into understanding the culture and transformations of the region. Teachers cannot help but get fascinating views into society and become attached to individual and communal aspirations, as students learn to articulate their identities and develop the means of powerful assertion in their lives, even within deeply traditional societies.

Europe is a more familiar world to most US academics, although the academic world of each country is individual, making the teaching of writing an entryway into the complexity of culture, even as the educational systems of European countries are coming into closer contact with each other through movement of students and faculty, fostered by the Bologna process (the name given to a series of agreements to coordinate higher educational standards across the European Union). While structurally writing has had little explicit place in European universities, practices of writing draw on long and well-established national traditions of education and literacy, often defined within secondary education. Nonetheless, globalization, the expansion of educational opportunities, the internationalization of disciplines and professions, the demands for research publications, and the Internet have made advanced writing skill a more prominent need. The need for the production and translation of texts within the multilingual reality of the European Union further inflects higher education writing instruction. On the other hand, some Eastern European countries have until recently had rather stagnant higher education and are just reforming to meet contemporary demands. Further, the timing and extent of democratization of higher education and the diversity within campuses have resulted in different schedules within each of these countries. Because there are few existing curricular structures to support student writing across the continent, writing supports have to be invented and institutionally argued for, often with contingent and limited funding. This situation has required committed teachers, moved by the needs and experiences of the students and inspired by the student successes in face of difficulties. These struggles, as elsewhere, have forged an understanding of the institutions and institutional politics and how to make them serve the needs of the students. There is wide and varied research growing out of multidisciplinary, critical, and theoretical traditions in different countries.
Teachers of writing are a hardy, hardworking, and visionary bunch, impassioned and inspired by the needs of their students even while having to contend with unfavorable institutional realities. They are often at the forefront of educational change and expansion of educational access. They view education as doing more than it currently does, and they see the transformation of individuals, societies, and cultures through all the forms of development associated with advanced literacy. And they often have to enact these commitments from the margin of their institutions. Yet while our colleagues around the world are so much like us, their stories are just different enough to stop us from saying we have heard it all, and just different enough to help us see our own situation afresh. These are people you would really like to get to know.

Works Cited


Internationalization, English L2 Writers, and the Writing Classroom: Implications for Teaching and Learning

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When Kathleen Yancey invited us to contribute to this symposium, based on our research with international student writers, she asked us to consider what the increasing presence of these students in our writing classrooms implies...
for how we in writing studies do our work. While we, of course, accepted this invitation, we did so with some reservations about what meaningful observations we could make in the few thousand words available, especially in light of our international students’ enormously varied linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. For our research over the past several years, we’ve been interested in the experiences of international English-second-language (L2) writers and the language-related concerns of the teachers for whom they write across the curriculum. So here, then, we’ll necessarily limit our remarks to these linguistically diverse students, and, to narrow our focus, we’ll consider the significant role language plays in how international L2 (or IL2) students process the writing lessons we teach, given that they are, at the same time, in the process of acquiring the linguistic and sociocultural knowledge necessary to produce the texts their US teachers expect. Our goal is to describe, albeit briefly, some of the academic writing concerns expressed by the IL2 students we interviewed in order to make visible the language and writing knowledge they’re negotiating as they “shuttle between languages” (Canagarajah). Their concerns suggest to us the need for more explicit attention to language in our teaching, but not just as a problem for L2 or basic writers but as a rhetorical tool all students can use to move beyond the formulaic, overly generalized “rules” for academic writing in which they’ve been schooled over the years and across the secondary and postsecondary curriculum.

Ours is not a new suggestion, and it’s certainly one that’s been debated in writing studies since at least the 1960s, as Susan Peck MacDonald explains in her 2007 historical review of how, when, and why language came to be “erased” in our writing process pedagogies and why it’s time now to reexamine our role as teachers of language. We agree, and we think the increasing push to recruit international students, which is leading many US institutions to lower TOEFL or IELTS requirements for general admission, pushes us, in turn, to consider what new or different questions we in writing studies should be asking about where and how we can attend to students’ language development—cognitive and sociocultural, grammatical and rhetorical, linguistic fluency and accuracy—with and within the writing processes we’re teaching our students to employ.

But first, a disclaimer of sorts to say that we do not have backgrounds in TESOL or second language writing: rather, our interest in effective pedagogies for L2 writers was initially motivated by our roles at the time as writing center and Writing Across the Curriculum writing program administrators (WPAs) at one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse institutions in the country, where teachers and tutors looked to us for answers on how to help these
students succeed, given the language and writing differences present in their papers. As our interest in this topic grew and our roles changed and expanded with the creation of our university’s Center for International Student Access, we began reading more deeply in the L2 writing scholarship to inform our research and practice, including research on the processes of language and genre learning (e.g., Schleppegrell; James; Leki; Swales; Canagarajah; Tardy; Johns) and the role of metalanguage and meta-awareness in the transfer and transformation of writing, rhetorical, and genre knowledge across (and within) linguistic, cultural, and disciplinary borders (e.g., Gentil; Brent; Larsen-Freeman; Donahue). We’d also been following arguments in the literature around translingualism (Horner et al.), the monolingual and cultural assumptions embedded in the “invisible curriculum” of process pedagogy (e.g., Matsuda, “Myth”; Hyland), and the need to reconceptualize the composing processes of multilingual writers as a negotiation among and across languages, cultures, texts, and changing contexts for writing (Canagarajah). This scholarship, then, provides the background for our discussion even as we’ve chosen to foreground the voices of our IL2 students to illustrate why we’ve come to see language—it’s users, uses, styles, forms, and functions—as a central concern in our approaches to teaching writing process(es) for all students.

We begin with how the IL2 students we interviewed described the academic writing styles and structures, whether explicitly taught or intuited by the students, that their teachers expected in the schools where they’d been educated before coming to the United States and the contrasting expectations being conveyed to them by their US teachers in courses across the disciplines. In almost all cases, the students attributed these differing expectations to language and culture, rather than to the rhetorical and academic contexts in which they were writing. Many of the students, for example, spent considerable time describing the “beauty,” “richness,” and “complexity” of the school writing they’d done in their own languages that was so unlike the perceived straightforwardness of English. “In Arabic,” Malak said, for example, “it’s using the words to draw a picture; it’s not like using the wording in a simple meaning.” And Kanisha, a student from Sri Lanka, explained that he feels “sad” when he writes in English “because so much of the richness of language is lost” and, as he’s learned, “any beautiful language I use is wasted” on US readers. It’s unclear where the students we interviewed had acquired their perceptions of the appropriate style for writing in their first language (L1) since most said they had never really talked about writing as writing in their prior schooling; regardless,
it was obvious that many felt a significant change in their writing identities when they shifted to English. Ayesha, from Pakistan, described that change in her question to us: “When I write in Urdu, my culture thing comes to me. How am I going to put that in English, you know?”

It’s possible that the students characterized their home languages as more “rich and beautiful” and as a deep part of their identities as writers because of their limited experience with academic writing in their L1 or because of their still-developing proficiency with writing in English, which sharply contrasted with their fluency and sense of themselves as “good writers” in their first languages. They may also have been repeating generalizations used to describe more formalized writing (literature?) in their home countries, just as they seemed to be echoing the general terms US teachers across disciplines typically use to describe the “good” academic writing they expect (Thaiss & Zawacki). Ayesha, for example, described good writing as “the three Cs”: “We must be clear, concise and complete.” Diana from Colombia explained: “We need to be concise, to be precise.” In these descriptions, we could also hear the tension many IL2 writers experience around how to make their language concise at the same time that they are trying to fully develop their ideas, to be “complete,” a tension any student may feel as he or she tries to figure out these seemingly contradictory teacher directives but made more difficult when the student is also trying to generate at the word and sentence level the correct and appropriate language for the task.

Similar to their reliance on generalized, culturally based descriptions of the stylistic preferences for writing in their L1 (“rich,” “beautiful,” “abstract”) and in English (“simple,” “direct”), most of the IL2 students we interviewed described the expected forms and structural conventions of academic writing in their L1 as more “complicated” and “implicit” than the direct, explicit approach that they’d been told is expected by US academic audiences. “American readers,” as many pointed out, expect an “obvious” thesis in the first paragraph, and transitions and paragraphs that are “efficient” and “easy to follow,” a structure they often found limiting and repetitive. Ignacio, for example, a third-year exchange student from Spain, recited the formula he’d learned, perhaps in his political science major here, for making an academic argument for US readers: “Tell me what you are going to tell me, tell me, then tell me what you told me. I found it pretty restricting at first. But now I am more at ease with it.” That Ignacio is feeling more “at ease” when he follows this formula indicates that he’s been successful in fitting his argument into the explicit “tell me” structure.
but not necessarily that he understands why such explicitness is valued, especially when it seems to contradict rhetorical values he’s learned from his past college schooling in Spain and France. Many of the students we interviewed, like Hanyan from China, for example, suspected that the reason explicitness is required is that American readers “want the essay to be easier [so] they don’t need to think about something because writers have to write everything.” For Nigerian student Karimatu, who was experiencing considerable difficulty with her academic writing in English, the purpose of the organizational “rules and regulations,” so unlike the “flowing” ideas in the Hausa writing she’d done, seemed to be to allow teachers to “figure out a bad writer right there and then.”

While students like Ignacio and Diana, who also told us she felt restricted by the highly structured writing she was learning to do in psychology (“I think that too much structure doesn’t allow students to think really. I feel like, Stop it. I want to do something else but I can’t”), have been succeeding as writers in their programs, they, like so many of our English L1 students, didn’t seem to understand how form and style work together to achieve rhetorical ends within a specific community of practice. So, even though Ignacio has learned to feel at ease with the “tell-me” structure and has tried “to adapt myself to the way Americans write,” he still feels he lacks “something to make it sound nicer, or to make it sound—I don’t know how to express it—more interesting or attracting.” Besides lacking the language to express what he thinks is needed to make his writing more interesting to his intended audience, he also lacks an understanding of how to achieve this goal. And Ayesha too, who told us that she was learning in her business writing class how “to kill the gap between the writer and the reader,” was short on specifics about how she could do that, although she, unlike Ignacio, seems to have been told that she could achieve that rhetorical goal by imagining a situation where she was writing to “your employees or giving a presentation” and “thinking at their level,” directions that assume she has the linguistic ability and the sociocultural and genre knowledge to do so.

And this leads us to consider the knowledge domains on which student writers need to call to analyze and successfully carry out a writing task, including knowledge of the subject matter, writing processes, rhetorical approaches, and genre conventions appropriate to the community of practice (Beaufort). This is a challenging undertaking for all students, but especially so for IL2 students who must also have acquired the sociocultural knowledge to understand and evaluate the task and the conceptual resources and linguistic ability to generate correct, accurate, and appropriate prose as they compose (Gentil; Tardy;
Ferris, *Teaching* 25–47). This latter point raises the question of how we writing teachers can facilitate that language-learning process. While helping students to develop fluency as writers has always been a goal of process pedagogy, our practices assume that all of our student writers can easily access the language needed to write fluently and with some degree of syntactic and lexical accuracy in order to generate meaningful drafts. And yet, as Ayesha lamented, “I do have ideas and I do want to put something down, but I am really short of words.”

Which brings us back to our role as teachers of language. As Paul Kei Matsuda shows in his review of the issues around teaching language in context, explicit grammar instruction has the potential, depending upon the individual student’s stage of development, to raise language awareness and facilitate language development, whether that instruction occurs through feedback on individual students’ papers, through lessons focused on “learnable rules . . . informed by usage-based descriptive grammar,” which he calls “pedagogical grammar,” or through teaching genre as a “clustering of language resources” (“Let’s” 151–52). Moreover, as Diane Larsen-Freeman argues, teaching grammar in context—or “grammaring,” to use the term she coined to mean teaching grammar not as a “static system of rules” but as dynamic, contextualized choices writers make—affords the transfer of grammar knowledge (116–17), particularly when accompanied by metalinguistic commentary (Matsuda, “Let’s”) and self-monitoring strategies for reflecting on and evaluating language and writing choices (Gentil; Tardy). We still have much to learn, however, about how students, whether English L2 or L1, are transferring the language and writing lessons we’re teaching (or even whether they’re learning what we’re teaching) as they take up, adapt, translate, and transform, consciously or not, these lessons for other tasks, contexts (linguistic, cultural, social, academic), and rhetorical purposes (Donahue; James; Larsen-Freeman; DePalma and Ringer).

Considering, then, the complexity of the question we were invited to address about how internationalization may be changing what we in writing studies know and do, we want to suggest that to answer this question we need to cross fields (Writing in the Disciplines, applied linguistics, second language writing) and curricular/co-curricular borders (bilingual education, intensive-English programs) at our own institutions to collectively build on our knowledge about contextualized language and writing instruction and, further, to generate new questions about the languaging and writing processes through which students acquire academic writing competence. One such question relates to the scalability of language instruction; that is, given the diversity,
linguistic and otherwise, of our students, how we can use what we know about the individualized nature of L2 learning and writing development to enact an inclusive languaging and writing process pedagogy for all students? When and how, for example, is explicit language instruction appropriate for the full class and not just in our feedback on an individual student’s writing? And yet another question relates to what we writing instructors need to know about pedagogical grammar and “grammaring” in order to provide explicit individual feedback or classroom lessons that will help students learn how “variations in language occur in tandem with variations in genre” (MacDonald 614).

Finally, we want to suggest that the questions IL2 students themselves ask about the way language works, grammatically and rhetorically (“What does however mean?”), can give us insight into some of the questions we’ve just posed. Their questions can also help us see how they are processing our writing instruction (“How will I use this rhetorical situation idea when I go home to Saudi to work?”) as they cross over from one language to another, whether linguistic, general academic, or local and field-specific. Pausing to listen to our IL2 students, in our teaching and our research, as they puzzle over how and whether the styles, forms, genres, and rhetorical concepts we’re teaching are translatable to other linguistic, social, cultural, and professional contexts they will be entering, compels us to acknowledge and adapt to their growing presence in our writing classrooms, which, by extension, moves us to rethink the language and writing needs of all of our students for the diverse contexts they will enter. But more than that, as our programs internationalize, the value these IL2 students bring goes beyond our ways of doing in the classroom to our ways of knowing—and questioning—the cognitive and social writing processes we teach when language and culture are added to the mix.

Notes

1. For this discussion, we’ve chosen to use the designation L2 to connect our work to the body of scholarship on second language writing studies. For a rationale for this designation, see Matsuda, “Teaching.”

2. In previous articles on this IRB-approved research (see Zawacki and Habib, “Negotiating”; Zawacki and Habib, “Will”; Zawacki et al.), we’ve reported on the experiences of twenty-six multilingual students with academic writing across the curriculum and the attitudes expressed by sixteen cross-disciplinary faculty about reading and evaluating the writing of these students. The students we interviewed had been in the United States between four months and ten years and spoke twenty different home languages. For this article, however, we’re drawing only on data from...
students classified as international at the time of their interviews (and whom we’ll call IL2 to differentiate them from resident L2 students); these students, as we learned, came with varying degrees of experience with general academic writing in their own languages and in English.

3. The Center for International Student Access (CISA) was created in 2011 in response to the university’s mission to internationalize. CISA widens the university’s admission policies by offering undergraduate and graduate pathway programs for students whose language proficiency scores do not meet the benchmarks for full admission to the university. In 2011, Anna stepped down from her work in the Writing Center to become English faculty with CISA. Her interest in teaching with this program comes from her own experiences as a multilingual writer/speaker who grew up as a refugee of the Lebanese civil war in Cyprus, where she attended a transplanted Lebanese school that followed the French Lycee curriculum. Terry is on the CISA Advisory Board and, since retiring, is also CISA affiliate faculty.

4. Their teachers may also be attributing the writing differences they notice to cultural ways of using language and organizing texts, as we know from the interviews we conducted with faculty across the disciplines for a second phase of our research (see Zawacki and Habib, “Negotiating”).

5. See chapters in the Cox, Jordan, Ortmeier-Hooper, and Schwartz collection Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing for research on the ways L2 writers negotiate identity in academic settings.

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