

Preparing for the Tipping Point: Designing Writing Programs to Meet the Needs of the Changing Population

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Malcolm Gladwell's bestselling book *The Tipping Point* caught the attention of people in many disciplines, causing them to look at all kinds of natural and social phenomena differently. Briefly, a tipping point comes when one or more seemingly minor changes in the external environment produce a dramatic change in the existence or behavior of a few key people, a change that spreads quickly to others. Tipping points are explained mathematically as the point when a steady-state equilibrium is disrupted, followed rapidly by a chain of events that can be difficult to manage. Nationally, Americans are about to reach a tipping point in the demographics of the student population in college composition courses—in fact, many institutions of higher education have already reached such a point—and that point will have profound implications for the way writing programs are conceived, designed, and staffed. This article outlines the nature of this demographic shift and how professionals can prepare for it by using tested principles of instructional design. Then, by reviewing the information that is available on mainstream composition programs, we attempt to infer the ways those programs will likely need to change to meet the needs of a rapidly changing student population. Finally, we outline issues regarding curriculum for first-year composition, materials and practices for teacher development, and writing program location—issues that we believe writing program administrators must begin to consider, debate, and decide now, if we want to be ready for the near future.

NEW STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Because many universities and colleges consider international and multicultural students as two distinct groups, they usually have independent offices to offer administrative and academic support to them. This division reflects institutional attempts to acknowledge and address the needs of these students as linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Traditionally, international students have been defined as students attending classes on a student or exchange visa. Many have been educated in their first language and primarily in their home country; their most visible characteristic is the fact that they speak English as a second (L2) or another language, and they are developing their English language competence while they study in North American institutions of higher education. The term “multicultural,” on the other hand, has been loosely used to describe United States-born students of non-Caucasian background who have received their formal education in the K–12 public education system in this country. According to Ogbu, these students are “involuntary minorities” whose ancestors were incorporated into the nation through slavery, conquest, or colonization (9). They generally belong to what Gibson has described as “a group occupying a subordinate position in a multiethnic society, suffering from the disabilities of prejudice and discrimination and maintaining a separate group identity” (318). In contrast to international students on visas, multicultural students have a sense of inherited powerlessness, which is, according to Wilson, “the result of restricted opportunities and feelings of resignation originating from bitter personal experiences”(158-59).

While the terms *international* and *multicultural* may have worked in the past, these classifications no longer accurately describe student populations in the twenty-first century. Without disregarding the persisting need for more equitable access to higher education by less privileged groups, we must now turn our attention to the needs of a broader population of linguistically and culturally diverse students, including immigrants and refugees, who are already or will soon be attending our institutions. According to the United States Department of Education’s Center for Educational Statistics, while the population of five- to twenty-four-year-olds grew by 6% between 1979 and 1999, the number who spoke a language other than English at home increased in the same period by 118 %; the percentage within that same age group who “spoke English with difficulty” grew by 110% (qtd. in Wurr 14).

Similar statistics are presented by Fix and Passel in connection with the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan research organization focusing on social and economic trends. According to these authors, more than 14 million immigrants made their home in the United States during the 1990s, and projec-

tions point to an equal number of immigrant entries between 2000 and 2010. The foreign-born population in the United States tripled over the past thirty years. In 2000, 20% of all children under eighteen years old in the US public school system were either foreign-born or first-generation US-born, and by 2015, 30% of the school-aged children will be children of immigrants, either first or second generation. Poverty rates—which greatly affect access to higher education—fell sharply in the late 1990s among the immigrant population in general, pointing to immigrant parents' desire to succeed as well as to their growing ability to pay college tuition for their children, for example.

While immigrant populations have tended to concentrate in certain eastern and southern states, recent immigrants have settled in twenty states in the Intermountain West and Midwest, states without a tradition of immigration or newcomers (see Fix and Passel's *U.S. Immigration: Trends and Implications*). Such dispersal of linguistically and culturally diverse populations is already changing various social institutions, not the least of which are educational institutions. A report from the State of Illinois, for example, shows that the enrollment of Hispanic undergraduates in the state grew by 80% in the last decade and the number of Asian-American undergraduates and graduates grew by 43% during the same time period (see *Changing Demographics*). In addition, recent announcements by the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, point to the easing of restrictions on visas to international students, which will also greatly affect enrollments on our college campuses. All data seem to support the assertion that the immigration and population trends will continue and that access to higher education will continue as well. Given these college population trends, college composition requirements are not likely to decrease, either. We do foresee, however, that changes will be needed in the way college composition is taught because of the changing population that will enroll in the courses.

Finding terminology that accurately describes the socially, linguistically and culturally diverse nature of the new student population has not been easy. Some authors and teachers, choosing from many possible and debatable designations, have called some of these students "Generation 1.5" (Harklau, Losey, and Siegal) or "cross-over students" (Schwartz 42). Because, among other things, the background of this subset of the student population often includes "isolated rural communities with one-room schools, refugee camps, war-torn countries, and families with persistent migration patterns" (Hamayán 281), they are unlike typical international students. The all-inclusive "multicultural" designation does not describe them, either, because, while usually of non-Caucasian ethnicities, these students do not carry the deep sense of permanent and institutionalized discrimination pervasive among

minorities who have lived in the United States for several generations. These new students do share some linguistic, social, and cultural characteristics with both international and multicultural students, but in different ways and to varying degrees, thus presenting institutions, and composition programs in particular, with a new and unusual constellation of linguistic, cultural, social, and educational diversity to address.

As a response to this reality and to ensure that these students receive the academic support they need to be ready to enter college, regulating bodies such as the Academic Senate for California's Public Colleges and Universities have called for intensive language teaching for the immigrant, refugee and other "limited English proficiency" (LEP) students in the public education system. Such assistance is often hindered either because of decisions made by public education institutions that lack funding and/or qualified personnel or because of issues associated with the students themselves. According to Cummins, some of these issues include the length of time it takes students to acquire academic English proficiency, the kind of language instruction they received before entering the public education system in the United States, the length of time they were allowed to study English during the K-12 years, the nature of the students' first-language literacy, and the point at which they started learning English or began their formal education in North American institutions (see also both of Collier's essays).

To those of us who teach in and administer writing programs, responding effectively to these students' needs can be challenging indeed. Because of funding shortfalls and, in some cases, by "legal mandate" (Wurr 15), many small and large institutions cannot offer differentiated composition curricula for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Now LEP students who pursue higher education are heavily concentrated in two-year colleges and other open-admissions institutions (see Worthen 58; see also "Almanac"), but as population demographics change, these students will be more likely to enroll in all institutions of higher education. For these and other reasons, composition classrooms are starting to look like a microcosm of the US population: in the same class one can find any combination of native-born, international, refugee, permanent resident, and naturalized students. The progressively ubiquitous presence of these students in "mainstream" composition classes creates the need to revisit long-held curricular and pedagogical assumptions about first-year composition. One or two ESL specialists on any given college campus can no longer answer all the questions that puzzle mainstream composition teachers, not only about those we have traditionally labeled L2 students (see Shuck, this issue) but also about the increasing numbers of other culturally and linguistically diverse students, whom we must

label L2 as well, but for different reasons. These students will soon make up a large portion of the enrollment of “mainstream” composition classes. This issue of *WPA* attests to that realization.

COMPOSITION PROGRAMS: CURRICULUM BY DESIGN

It may seem obvious to state that curricula should be designed to meet the needs and goals of the stakeholders in any educational endeavor: the teachers, the learners, those who will later teach or employ those learners, and society at large. But even a cursory perusal of the history of composition shows that the interests of all these groups have not always converged, nor have the interests of each even been equally considered or represented in curriculum design. According to Connors, the so-called current-traditional paradigm for teaching composition that evolved in the late nineteenth century and dominated the first two-thirds of the twentieth century was focused largely on enabling an undertrained and transient staff of composition teachers to cope with large numbers of students. Teachers exercised their students in the production of formally correct writing that could be graded with relative speed, on the assumption that correctness would be the prime desideratum of other teachers and employers. In the 1960s and '70s, as theorists recognized how narrow and multifying this curriculum was, new approaches were tried, and new theories were developed that are now generally classified as expressivist, cognitivist, and social-constructionist (the last is also called socioliterate, transactional, or rhetorical). Miller, Groccia, and Miller, for example, have argued that the different general approaches designed to help first-year students negotiate the process of cultural, social, and cognitive adjustment have tended to focus on some things at the expense of others (see also Auster and MacRone). That has certainly been the case with approaches to teaching writing.

Richard Fulkerson, looking back in 1990 at changes in composition theory and pedagogy during the 1980s, characterized the field as having axiological consensus despite pedagogical diversity. By this he meant that the field agreed on the ends of composition instruction but not the means. Taking a second look at the field in 2005, Fulkerson now identifies “axiological diversity” in composition studies, arguing that “we currently have three alternative axiologies (theories of value),” which “drive the three major approaches to the teaching of composition” (655). Despite his assertion, however, Fulkerson admits we actually know very little about the nature of composition programs across the nation because “there is no available and current synthetic account of what goes on in college writing classrooms in the United States: the syllabi, writing assignments, readings, [and] classroom procedures”; thus, the field as a whole “desperately need[s] a comprehensive

empirical study of what actually goes on nationwide” (682, note 3). Fulkerson’s characterization of the various philosophies that underlie curricular practices leads him to predict that, rather than converging on a consensus, the field of composition studies is threatening to fragment along axiological lines.

If Fulkerson is right—and we think the evidence he points to is certainly worth considering—the lack of consensus in the concepts and design of composition programs indicates a need for broad dialogue about the ends and means of composition programs. This dialogue should take into account the needs of stakeholders in any curriculum, particularly the needs of the new L2 students and the needs of the teachers who will be asked to teach them. Given the phenomenon of growing student diversity, designing program-wide curricula and classroom-specific instruction will seem short-sighted—and it will become progressively problematic—unless WPAs learn more about the needs of the new L2 students and develop a plan to address their writing development. As Gagné, Briggs, and Wager have admonished those involved in the process of curriculum and instructional design in general, “It is usually not sufficient for a designer to guess what the skills of an intended audience will be. A better procedure is to interview and test the skills of the target population until you know enough about them to design the instruction appropriately” (25).

According to Paul Matsuda, it was precisely on the basis of the characteristics and needs of academic English-learning that L2 composition took its first steps as a distinct discipline and topic of inquiry (“Second Language Writing” 18). Therefore, the call to look at students’ needs before designing instruction has come initially from those working directly with linguistically diverse students. Daniel Horowitz was one of many to argue that student needs should be the main force driving curriculum design for composition courses (see also Pratt; Savignon). Along similar lines, Leki admonishes faculty and administrators not to just talk *about* students but to talk *with* them, and Kroll suggests that teachers must get to know their students because individuals can tell us a lot about themselves and their needs.

Dick and Carey have maintained, throughout the years, that in all responsive and robust instructional design processes, the curricular, pedagogical, and methodological decisions should reflect at least the following three factors: the acknowledged need for instruction, the content to be presented, and the characteristics and entry behaviors of the learners (*The Systematic Design of Instruction*). People in charge of making instructional decisions need to take the time to find the discrepancy between “what is” and “what ought to be.” This discrepancy is the gap that instruction should be designed to fill. It is, therefore, neither responsible nor advisable to conceive

and design instruction without taking into account the learners for whom that instruction is being designed. Finding out the characteristics, interests and knowledge base of an audience is almost too basic a concept to need mentioning, yet perhaps because it is basic, it can be overlooked. Joy Reid, for example, argues that composition instruction needs to be “thoughtfully designed to integrate immediate student needs with the hierarchy of institutional values, disciplinary goals, and professional expectations” (“Advanced EAP Writing” 144). In his pioneering work in systems theory, Ludwig von Bertalanffy argued that designers of instruction should pay careful attention to the interrelated and interdependent nature of the aspects of any educational setting. Along similar lines, Banathy and Jenlink, also systems theorists, have the following to say regarding a systemic approach to design and to change in general:

There are times when there is a discrepancy between what our system actually attains and what we designated as the desired outcome of the system. [. . .] We realize that something has gone wrong, and we need to make some changes. [. . .] Changes within the system are accomplished by adjustment, modification, or improvement. But there are times when we have evidence that changes within the whole system would not suffice. [. . .] We realize that we now need to change the whole system. We need a different system. (50)

When the population for whom instruction is designed changes, the whole system often needs to be re-envisioned. If enrollment trends in composition classes persist—and it looks as though they will—composition programs may need to do just that: rethink the whole system. To infer whether a systemic change is needed, and if so, how to facilitate it, we first need to consider the programs we presently have. Since we lack reliable national data about what actually happens in today’s composition programs, such an examination must rely on indirect methods. These might include a review of teacher development programs, materials used to prepare new composition teachers, and current philosophical trends in composition. The following is an attempt to understand and assess how well prepared we are for the changing demographic tide.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING COMPOSITION PROGRAMS

Teacher Development. Beyond descriptions of local practices and populations (e.g., Brobbel et al.; Long, Holberg, and Taylor; McBroom; Morgan; Reagan; Thomas; Welch; Weiser), we know relatively little about the way teachers are prepared to work in mainstream writing programs. The few “national” surveys, now ten to twenty years old, are based largely on the responses of doctoral-granting institutions that use a constantly changing stream of graduate students to staff composition courses. Those universities lacking graduate programs, small four-year colleges, and two-year colleges are not even represented in these surveys. The omission of two-year colleges from such surveys is particularly troublesome since they teach composition to approximately 40% to 50% of the nation’s college students, including the highest percentages of linguistically diverse nonforeign students (Goggin 164; “Almanac” 15).

Two-year and small four-year institutions rely much more on regular full-time and adjunct faculty to staff composition courses than do larger universities, which rely mainly on graduate students. In fact, according to Worthen, the percentages of adjunct faculty who teach writing in community colleges have climbed to well over 50% and even 60% in several states (52-55). Such institutions may not even have formal teacher development programs, either because they assume that their full-time teachers already know how to teach composition or because they lack the funds, time, and expertise to offer development to adjunct faculty who staff their courses. The fact that a large percentage of adjunct faculty are former graduate students leads to the further assumptions that they would teach as they were trained to when they were graduate students and that their training likely did not include teaching multicultural and linguistically diverse students. At any rate, it is very difficult to generalize, given the paucity of information about writing curricula and teacher training in two-year and small four-year institutions.

Our lack of information about these institutions is confirmed by Goggin’s research, which indicates that two-year and four-year college faculty have contributed very little to leading composition journals, even though publication in all fields at all types of institutions, including community colleges, has risen dramatically since 1980. Goggin also cites other indicators, such as low membership in CCCC and attendance at conferences, that similarly suggest teachers in smaller and less prestigious institutions do not participate much in the discourse of composition studies, which increasingly emanates only from public and private research universities. This, however, is not stated as a criticism of full-time or part-time faculty in two-year and four-year colleges. Their teaching loads are often so heavy that they lack

time to do research and write about their knowledge. Yet we believe they have much to tell the rest of the profession about teaching diverse students to write.¹

Turning to the data we do have, we find that, in her 1986 study of writing program administration at prestigious institutions, Hartzog concluded that 83% of the forty-four writing programs surveyed required graduate teaching assistants to complete a course in how to teach writing, and another 10% offered an optional course of that nature. In 1996, Latterell solicited descriptions of teacher development courses and course materials from seventy-two doctoral programs in composition and rhetoric. On the basis of thirty-six responses, Latterell concluded that the *typical* teaching practicum is a required, three-credit course, taught by the WPA or a “member of the writing program committee”; it meets once a week for the first semester (and sometimes the second) of a new graduate teaching assistant’s employment. It focuses largely on practical and immediate concerns, such as leading a discussion, making assignments, and evaluating student writing, and requires little reading, presenting only a “brief overview of composition and rhetorical theories.” The GTAs keep a “journal or teacher’s notebook in which they record and reflect on lesson plans, assignments, and their students’ progress” and at the end turn in “all teaching materials as well as sets of graded papers or a selective sample of graded papers for evaluation by the practicum instructor.” As part of the course, GTAs are observed in their teaching and often observe other teachers (18).

From this aggregate view of teacher development courses, Latterell cautioned that WPAs may be “encouraging a notion that writing courses are contentless and that teaching writing requires minimal expertise” because these practica “devolve writing pedagogy from a critical practice with an epistemological grounding to sets of lesson plans and activities disconnected from a teaching philosophy” (19). Thus, they may actually foster the perception that “teaching writing is not valued, even by the rhetoric and composition field. By dispensing ‘training’ in one to two hour doses once a week for one (possibly two) terms, this model encourages the passing out of class activities and the quick-fixes—an inoculation method of GTA education” (19-20). While there is some evidence that GTA training may be efficacious (see, for example, Liggett), Latterell raises serious questions that deserve more investigation. There is little reason to assume that graduate students or adjunct faculty are learning more than a few basics about how to teach writing in general, and may, consequently, have an even greater lack of knowledge of how to address issues of linguistic and cultural diversity in their classrooms.

Books for Preparing Teachers of Composition. Turning to the books often used in teacher preparation courses, we find some encouraging news. However, most of these books, even those published recently, still apparently assume that classrooms will be full of monolingual, monocultural students. For example, the fourth edition of Erika Lindemann's popular *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*—which has always been updated significantly with each new edition—lacks any mention of the unique needs of L2 students who might be present in mainstream composition courses, though the book does contain a strong introduction to the insights that linguistics can give teachers about language acquisition and dialects of English. Of the 109 essays in Duane Roen et al.'s lengthy and diverse *Strategies for Teaching Composition*, only two touch on L2 student issues (“‘Black people tend to talk Eubonics’: Race and Curricular Diversity in Higher Education,” 46-51, and “Teaching Composition with International Students in an Electronic Classroom,” 479-482). Cheryl Glenn et al.'s *St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing* (5th edition) has two paragraphs on diversity in the writing classroom with suggestions for further reading (5), and its anthology of essays includes one on race and gender (392-402), one on diversity (438-461), one on Ebonics (525-542), and one on the “English Only” movement (543-572)—each an important issue to be sure, but not the kind of in-depth exposure to linguistic and cultural issues that teachers will need. Irene Clark's recent *Concepts in Composition* contains a chapter on nonnative speakers of English, followed by a reprint of Silva, Leki, and Carson's article, “Broadening the Perspective of Mainstream Composition Studies” (388-412) and a chapter on linguistic diversity with suggestions for teaching nonstandard dialect speakers; these are followed by three reprinted articles, two dealing with teaching speakers of African American Vernacular English and one analyzing the replication of linguistic stereotypes in popular culture. Inclusion of readings such as these in a text for new teachers is a heartening sign of awareness that today's composition instructors need to know more about the nature of the issues and problems confronting linguistically and culturally diverse students, but it is also only a small step down a long road that teachers and program directors must soon traverse quickly and completely.

Trends in Composition Studies. Most worrisome of all is the possibility that as the demographic tipping point approaches, specialists in composition studies will be squabbling about what foundation the profession should rest on. Fulkerson's 2005 analysis, “Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century,” draws on textbooks and on current research to conclude that there is greater axiological diversity now than there was in the 1980s, when composition teachers across the nation at least agreed on the ends of instruc-

tion, if not the means. Now, he says, disagreement exists about ends as well as means. Fulkerson identifies four competing perspectives, each with its attendant axiology, epistemology, view of the writing process, and view of pedagogy: (1) the ever-persistent formalist “current-traditional” rhetoric; (2) the dominant critical and cultural studies popular in English departments; (3) a widespread and “quietly expanding” expressivism; and (4) rhetorically informed perspectives with varying emphases on argument, genre analysis, or entering the academic discourse community. He predicts that the field is on the verge of a new round of theory wars.

If Fulkerson is right—and one could certainly quibble with his use of inferential rather than empirical methods for reaching his conclusions—our readiness to deal with increasing numbers of linguistically diverse students seems more problematic than ever. Assuming that the four approaches he describes are the most widely used, we believe that new curriculum designs that address the needs of a different student population will have to be based on careful understanding and evaluation of the possible candidates. Space precludes a full analysis of each of the approaches identified by Fulkerson, but we offer here some brief reasons why we believe a rhetorical or socioliterate approach should inform the curriculum design of composition courses for the new student population.²

With respect to the critical and cultural studies approach, we note that, in response to Sarah Benesch’s argument for a place for politics in L2 composition teaching, Terry Santos has convincingly shown why such an approach to college composition is unlikely to address the needs of the linguistically and culturally diverse students we expect to see in greater numbers. One reason, Santos says, is that such an approach goes against the strong desire of these students for writing instruction that supports their educational, social, and career goals and prepares them for immediate academic needs. Another reason is that the assumptions and goals of critical pedagogy have simply not attracted very many teachers of L2 writing; thus, very few materials and textbooks have been published for classrooms using this approach (188). We think that a critical-cultural approach might have something to offer L2 students at a later point in their academic careers, but they need to learn first the norms and standards of academic and professional discourse before they attempt to unmask or criticize them.

For similar reasons, it is unlikely that adopting expressivist approaches to teaching will prove a sound choice for the changing student population. Although expressivist emphases on self-exploration, self-actualization, and developing one’s writing voice may help students develop their “fluency, confidence, and personal [. . .] literacies,” Johns argues that such a focus “can be detrimental to students as readers and writers within academic

contexts” (10) and has an “insidious benevolence” which “may not provide adequately for all students, particularly those who are culturally, socially, or linguistically distant from English academic languages and discourses”(14). By focusing instructional efforts on personal meaning and discovery, these approaches can, and often do, divert time and attention from, students’ introduction to academic discourse practices. According to Martin, expressivist views “promote a situation in which only the brightest, middle-class monolingual students will benefit” (qtd. in Johns 14; see also Atkinson and Ramanathan).

Rhetorical approaches—focused as they are on linguistic and sociocultural strategies for negotiating the constraints and complexities posed by various audiences, purposes, and situations—seem the most likely candidates for serving the new student population. But they, too, would also require redesign informed by insights offered by both first and second language composition teachers and researchers. In their 2004 article, dealing with the history of the influence of applied linguistics and composition studies on second language writing studies, Silva and Leki articulate the inherent philosophical differences between composition studies and applied linguistics in matters of ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology, and political orientation, among other issues. According to these authors, applied linguistics, the parent discipline of second-language acquisition and L2 composition, views itself, its role, its instructional objectives, and even language itself from a positivist, realist, objectivist, empirical, manipulative, and explanatory perspective. L1 composition studies, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the relativist, subjectivist, hermeneutic, and dialectical nature of reality and of the field. The authors further state that applied linguistics focuses primarily on aspects of instruction related to the international and multicultural origin of its learners and has a much more diverse teacher population and more varied linguistic emphases, while composition studies focuses on the monocultural and monolingual make-up of its learners *and* tends to have a teacher base of monolingual, US-native, Caucasian speakers of English. Clearly, what we need in an approach to composition that is better designed to serve the new population of students is an open and informed dialogue between scholars of both approaches.

REDESIGNING COMPOSITION PROGRAMS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The preceding assessment of the nature of contemporary composition programs, while admittedly brief and limited by insufficient national data, does suggest that a systemic redesign of composition programs should be under-

taken to prepare for the all-too-imminent tipping point. If we are to undertake systemic change, we must first consider the questions that will need to guide it:

- What should the larger disciplinary goals of first-year composition be?
- What body of knowledge do students need to acquire?
- What materials will we use to teach composition?
- What should be the focus of teacher development?
- How should teacher development be planned and executed?
- What program-wide changes in terms of disciplinary orientation, materials, and personnel will need to take place?

Independently of where students of the near future are found along the cultural-educational-linguistic diversity continuum, many or most will need further support in academic English and in their transition and adaptation to postsecondary academic culture. While there is still much debate about the objectives and function of composition studies in the overall postsecondary curriculum, it has become apparent that the curriculum must reflect careful consideration of students' academic literacy needs. For students to learn what Kern calls the "socially-, historically-, and culturally situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning," which vary by purpose as well as "across and within discourse communities and cultures," composition courses will need to focus "on a wide range of cognitive abilities, on knowledge of written and spoken language, on knowledge of genres, and on cultural knowledge" (16). These practices and these focuses are the same for L1 and L2 students, we argue, varying *not* in kind but only in degree.

Although the concept of academic literacy is much more common in applied linguistics and in general L2 literature than it is in recent composition studies literature, the 2000 WPA *Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition* is congruent with Kern's view of academic literacy. It outlines the rhetorical, critical thinking, reading, and writing skills that students need, as well as the processes they should follow and the knowledge of conventions they must attain to develop their academic literacy. But how will L2 students who are still developing their linguistic ability perform in these areas if they do not receive further *and* explicit instruction in how to use academic English language as well as support in the large cultural transition they must make?

There is, we believe, a tendency in mainstream composition programs for WPAs and teachers to engage in a kind of self-deception that if we teach what we believe we should teach, the students will learn what they need to learn. The changing student population will soon challenge this notion by forcing us to question our assumptions and goals. In addition to using the *WPA Outcomes Statement*, we propose a consideration of what Singhal has called the linguistic, cognitive, and language discovery components of writing. These include phonological, lexical, grammatical, and sociolinguistic aspects of language as well as strategies for knowledge-receiving, knowledge-making, and knowledge-transmitting. Going into more detail than does the outcomes statement, Singhal outlines lower-level objectives, some of which deal specifically with applying “major grammatical conventions of academic English meaningfully and accurately to oral and written communication” as well as the writing of “focused, coherent, and substantially supported multi-paragraph essays in correct, formal, grammatical English appropriate for college level” (11–12).

INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND CHANGE IN COMPOSITION PROGRAMS

The advent of the composition classroom in which L2 students will have an increasingly greater presence calls for collaboration and interdisciplinarity between the mainstream and L2 fields. While there have always been similarities between mainstream and L2 composition, their differences have not always been easy to bridge. According to Matsuda and Silva, “Despite the efforts of some writing specialists and ESL specialists to fill the gap between first- and second-language writing scholarship and pedagogy, the differences between perceptions and expectations of specialists in these two intellectual formations that have evolved separately over the last four decades have not been easy to reconcile” (*Landmark Essays* xiv). Ironically, during the same period that L1 and L2 composition have grown disciplinarily and philosophically apart, the dividing lines among the student body have become progressively blurred.

Composition teaching focusing on linguistic and cultural acquisition issues, which has been the thrust of the L2 composition field, must now become an integral part of all composition teaching. The “disciplinary division of labor” which occurred between L1 and L2 composition allowed L2 composition to develop as a field and create its own identity, pedagogy, research agenda, and methodologies (Matsuda 18). In the design of new mainstream composition curricula, professionals in composition studies can now look to the accumulated body of knowledge available in L2 composition and find much of the information they need to answer some of the inevitable and necessary questions about L2 students. Interdependence and

collaboration are all the more important now because the future of composition programs nationwide and the academic success of students will depend on WPAs integrating the accumulated knowledge of those working in mainstream composition and those in L2 composition programs so that WPAs can design better curricula and teacher training programs.

Mainstream composition programs that have mainly served monocultural and monolingual students in the past will have to be prepared for the increasing numbers of new L2 students—those students whose English proficiency is not as developed as that of the native speakers, but whose proficiency is also different from that of those L2 students attending college on a student visa or of the multicultural students. To be prepared for this new generation, composition program directors must undertake needs analyses and then design curricula in light of those analyses. We believe that this redesign will be enhanced if WPAs begin now to discuss and debate the particulars of the following four factors: philosophical bases of instruction; books and materials for teacher preparation courses; teacher selection and development; and program location.

As we have argued above, we believe that a composition program informed by a cultural/critical studies or an expressivist approach does not serve L2 student needs as well as a rhetorical approach that takes as its goal competence in communicating to various audiences, using the genres and strategies that discourse communities have developed for various rhetorical situations. We believe a rhetorical approach will jibe best with the increased attention to language and cultural issues that must be a part of a redesigned curriculum for a diverse student body.³

It follows that those who educate new teachers will need to devise materials and find or write books and articles that draw more heavily than instructors presently do on the accumulated knowledge of L2 writing researchers. As noted above, many of the currently used teacher preparation materials are heavily monolingual and monocultural. Despite the epistemological and methodological differences between L2 and L1 writing research and practices outlined by Matsuda and Silva, we now must find ways to surmount those differences to meet the needs of the students who used to be on the margins but who will increasingly make up the middle (*Landmark Essays*). It also follows, then, that teacher preparation must be a lengthier and more substantial process. In the near future, we believe it will not be possible simply to rely on a crash course a few weeks before the semester starts to orient monolingual, monocultural teachers to their new positions, even if the crash course is followed by a practicum and in-service training during the first semester of teaching. Silva argues for the hiring and visibility of L2 professionals in writing programs, a recommendation that ought to be seriously

considered by recruitment committees so that L2 professionals can contribute to curriculum planning, and choosing or creating materials for educating future teachers, and can participate in teaching methods courses.

Teacher selection and development will play a critical role in writing programs of the future. Graduate students in English and former graduate students hired as adjunct faculty are the largest supply of labor for mainstream composition programs—not necessarily because they are the best prepared, but because they are available and want employment, and because writing programs need many relatively inexpensive teachers for the numerous small, labor-intensive sections of writing that must be offered. However, there is usually little in the undergraduate or graduate education of these teachers that will have prepared them to teach writing to L1 students (a course many of these new teachers never took themselves) and probably nothing in their education that will have prepared them to teach writing to linguistically and culturally diverse students. As Latterell has noted, the practice for training new teachers tend to develop procedural knowledge, but what is needed is more declarative knowledge, especially about such topics as language acquisition, cultural influences on writing, and contrastive rhetoric. According to Hedgcock, the domain content that writing teachers should master includes grammar, sociolinguistics, discourse strategies, and language awareness, as well as metaknowledge of learners, learning processes, and instructional approaches. Even if program-wide curricula do reflect the needs of the linguistically diverse population, teacher commitment and systemic change will, according to Weiss, come about only if teachers are allowed to and expected to find their own strategies and solutions within each classroom. It is difficult to imagine that we will have teachers with the depth of declarative knowledge needed for the composition courses of the future if they are constantly recruited from the ranks of English BAs and MAs who have spent most of their academic lives studying literature and literary theory.

The issue of teacher selection leads to the fourth issue, questions about program location that we believe must be discussed and debated among WPAs: when enrollments tilt more in the L2 direction, will English departments continue to be the best home for writing programs? That becomes a consideration because the curriculum of FYC courses must also tilt with the weight of more knowledge and practices from applied linguistics. If teachers of FYC will need deeper and more extensive declarative knowledge, and if they will need lengthier preparation time to qualify as teachers, what challenges will these requirements pose for English departments? Will writing programs be better able to function if they are more autonomous and if they don't feel obligated to draw their teachers so heavily from English graduate programs? Or can undergraduate curricula in English departments change

sufficiently so that students will arrive at the graduate level better prepared with declarative knowledge they can draw on if and when they become composition teachers?

A WPA's life is almost never one of equanimity and equilibrium. Major and minor crises may develop at just about any time, and it is obviously better to see them coming whenever possible. We foresee the need to plan now, as individuals and as a profession, for the changes that will soon be required to address the phenomenon of changing demographics in the student population. On many campuses, in individual classrooms, the tipping point has already arrived. When enough teachers face enough students for whom present methods of instruction and present materials and methods of teacher development are inadequate, the tipping point will be programwide, then nationwide. We believe that we all will be wise to seize the initiative and begin preparing now for the realities that, if they are not here yet, certainly lie just ahead.

NOTES

1 For helpful profiles of community college writing programs, see Adger; Davies, Safarik, and Banning; Desser; Holmsten; Lovas; Nist and Raines; and Worthen.

2 Although Fulkerson claims the current-traditional paradigm still informs many composition programs, he doesn't elaborate, and we do not address it as a possible candidate either.

3 For detailed arguments on why the socioliterate approach works best for L2 students, see Preto-Bay, "The Socio-cultural Dimension," and Preto-Bay, "The Academic Literacy Needs of Second Language International College Students."

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