



Promoting Multiculturalism

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Introduction

As is depicted within these chapters, diversity is at the heart of the General College vision. In the first chapter of this section, Jeanne Higbee and Kwabena Siaka note that within GC we define diversity inclusively to include social identities related to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, home language, and disability. Higbee and Siaka report on the next phase of the Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation (MAP IT), a project originally undertaken by the GC Multicultural Concerns Committee to explore multicultural issues within the college.

The next chapter in this section by Barajas reminds us that developmental education and multicultural education are inextricably intertwined. By embedding multiculturalism in our daily practice we can create “spheres of freedom” to enable the success of all students. Barajas illustrates why students of color are likely to identify educational institutions as White spaces and urges us to “acknowledge that students have a sociological imagination that helps them negotiate the educational process” within these spaces.

In the next chapter, Laurene Christensen, Renata Fitzpatrick, Robin Murie, and Xu Zhang describe one of the General College’s most successful programs, Commanding English (CE). They propose that collegiate English as a Second Language (ESL) programs designed for international students fulfill a separate mission but do not necessarily serve refugee and immigrant students well. They demonstrate how combining academics and language literacy instruction in credit-bearing content courses allows CE students to earn 25 to 30 credits toward graduation in their freshman year while developing the skills to transfer to other colleges of the University of Minnesota and graduate. With the increasing influx of immigrant populations to the Twin Cities, Commanding English plays a critical role in making the University of Minnesota accessible to students from a wide array of cultural backgrounds.

In both local and national conversations, when we discuss embedding multiculturalism in our courses we often hear comments like, “Well, I can see how that might fit in the social sciences and humanities, but not in math and science courses.” In her chapter Susan Staats illustrates strategies for teaching mathematics in a multicultural context. She asserts, “By focusing on social issues associated with mathematics applications rather than simply contextual description, students are able to find points of contact between

their own experiences and those of people whose lives seem very different from their own.” Staats demonstrates that inclusion of multicultural content need not reduce the time available for mastering mathematical concepts and meanwhile enables students to display their “mathematical imagination.”

This section concludes with a chapter by Pat Bruch and Tom Reynolds, who articulate how composition courses in the General College have moved beyond earlier standardized and process approaches to the teaching of writing to embrace a dialogical pedagogy. “Dialogical writing instruction encourages students to treat writing as an opportunity to shape people’s understanding of writing at the same time that the conventions of academic writing shape them.” They also discuss how the dialogue approach to both teaching and professional development fosters multicultural perspectives and challenges traditional assumptions of power and privilege.

Students' Assessment of Their Multicultural Experiences in the General College: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents findings of a pilot study conducted during spring semester 2003 to explore student perceptions of their multicultural experiences within the General College (GC). The results of this research indicate that GC students understand the multicultural mission of the General College and believe that the college provides access for a diverse group of students. Students thought that GC provides a supportive learning environment that values diverse viewpoints and that GC administrators, faculty, and staff are invested in students' success. Students' perceptions of GC's student services were also very positive overall.

Enrolling a diverse student body and providing a multicultural learning experience are central to the mission of the General College (GC). For purposes of the research reported in this chapter, diversity is defined broadly to include the social group identities that shape and define our individual identities: race, ethnicity, culture, home language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, and disability. Multiculturalism is defined for purposes of this project as how we respond to these diverse identities, both as individuals and as institutions: "If diversity is an empirical condition—the existence of multiple group identities in a society—multiculturalism names a particular posture towards this reality" (Miksich, Bruch, Higbee, Jehangir, & Lundell, 2003).

Development of the Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation

Previous research (Bruch & Higbee, 2002) conducted in the General College indicated that further attention needed to be devoted to addressing multicultural issues both within GC and as related to the profession of developmental education and learning assistance as a whole. In Spring 2001 the General Col-

lege Multicultural Concerns Committee (MCC) began to explore the possibility of adapting for higher education James Banks and colleagues' (Banks et al., 2001) *Diversity Within Unity: Essential Principles for Teaching and Learning in a Multicultural Society*. In addition to its 12 essential principles, *Diversity Within Unity* included an instrument to assess faculty and administrators' perceptions of educational climate in elementary through secondary (K-12) institutions. MCC formed a subcommittee, named the Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation (MAP IT), to create a comparable assessment tool for use with postsecondary faculty and staff, and piloted that instrument in GC in February 2002 (Bruch, Jehangir, Lundell, Higbee, & Miksch, 2005; Higbee, Miksch, Jehangir, Lundell, Bruch, & Jiang, 2004; Miksch, Bruch, Higbee, Jehangir, & Lundell, 2003). In May 2002 the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL) invited James Banks to GC as a visiting scholar (Bruch, Higbee, & Lundell, 2003, 2004). Banks reviewed the summary statistics from the MAP IT pilot study and praised the subcommittee on its endeavors, urging the group to proceed with its plans to develop a parallel instrument to assess student perspectives.

One of the criticisms of the original MAP IT instrument was that there were a number of items that did not apply to all faculty and staff members, resulting in too many responses of "don't know" or "not applicable." During the summer of 2002, MAP IT subcommittee members toiled at resolving this difficulty by developing three separate assessment tools for administrators, faculty and instructional staff, and professionals who provide student support services such as academic advising (Miksch, Higbee, et al., 2003). During this process, the committee also realized that it would be necessary to adapt *Diversity Within Unity's* essential principles to a higher education setting. The subcommittee's "10 Guiding Principles" have since been widely disseminated at professional meetings (e.g., Higbee & Pettman, 2003) and through a column in *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education* titled "The Multicultural Mission of Developmental Education: A Starting Point" (Higbee, Bruch, Jehangir, Lundell, & Miksch, 2003).

In fall 2002 Michael Dotson, Dean of Counseling and Advising for Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), collaborated with the MAP IT subcommittee in creating the fourth questionnaire to be used with students (Miksch, Higbee, et al., 2003). In winter 2003 plans began for administering the MAP IT Student Questionnaire both in GC as a pilot and at MCTC in Spring 2003. This chapter will present the results of the GC Student MAP IT pilot.

Theoretical Framework and Guiding Principles

This research is founded on a growing body of theoretical work that emphasizes the importance of providing a social context for learning (American College Personnel Association [ACPA] and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2004; Dewey, 1910/1991, 1916/1997, 1938/1997; Gee, 1996; Lundell & Collins, 1999), and particularly a multicultural context (Freire, 1968/1990; hooks, 1994). James Banks (1994, 1997) suggested the following dimensions of multicultural education to guide educators in creating welcoming spaces: (a) integration of multicultural content in the curriculum; (b) recognition of how knowledge is socially constructed; (c) reduction of prejudice through intentional acts; (d) provision of equity pedagogy; and (e) empowerment of students through empowering school cultures and social structures. These dimensions provide the foundation for both *Diversity Within Unity* and MAP IT.

Founded upon this theoretical framework, MAP IT offers 10 guiding principles for higher education, as follow:

Institutional Governance, Organization, and Equity

1. The educational institution should articulate a commitment to supporting access to higher education for a diverse group of students, thus providing the opportunity for all students to benefit from a multicultural learning environment.
2. The educational institution's organizational structure should ensure that decision making is shared appropriately and that members of the educational community learn to collaborate in creating a supportive environment for students, staff, and faculty.

Faculty and Staff Development

3. Professional development programs should be made available to help staff and faculty understand the ways in which social group identifications such as race, ethnicity, home language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, and disability influence all individuals and institutions.

Student Development

4. Educational institutions should equally enable all students to learn and excel.
5. Educational institutions should help students understand how knowledge and personal experiences are shaped by contexts (social, political, economic, historical, etc.) in which we live and work, and how their voices and ways of knowing can shape the academy.

6. Educational institutions should help students acquire the social skills needed to interact effectively within a multicultural educational community.

7. Educational institutions should enable all students to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enhance academic participation and foster positive relationships within a multicultural educational community.

8. Educational institutions should provide support services that promote all students' intellectual and interpersonal development.

Intergroup Relations

9. Educational institutions should teach all members of the educational community about the ways that ideas like justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion, and charity are valued by many cultures.

Assessment

10. Educational institutions should encourage educators to use multiple culturally sensitive techniques to assess student learning.

The questionnaire items for this research were categorized according to their relevance to these guiding principles.

Method

The questionnaire used for this pilot research was designed to assess how students evaluate multicultural aspects of their collegiate experience. When responding to the survey items, students were asked to think broadly and inclusively about such terms as "multicultural" and "diverse groups" (i.e., to include race, religion, gender, ethnicity, culture, home language, social class, sexual orientation, age, and disability). The Likert-type response scale provided options of 1 to 4 for which 1 was defined as "never or almost never," 2 indicated "occasionally," 3 signified "often," and 4 represented "almost always or always." In addition, students could select "not applicable" (NA) if they thought that the item did not apply to them, or "don't know" (DK) if they thought that they had inadequate information to choose another response. At the end of each set of items, students also had the opportunity to provide comments or clarify their answers.

Because this was a pilot of a new survey instrument, the questionnaire was longer than normally would have been desired. The pilot data would later be used to determine which items to retain in the final version of the MAP IT Student Questionnaire (Miksch, Higbee, et al., 2003). Items from the instrument are included in the presentation of the results.

The population for this pilot study was made up of all students enrolled in GC 1281: General Psychology during spring semester 2003. This course meets a general social science requirement throughout the university, and was selected because it enrolls a representative sample of all GC students; enrollment in GC 1281 generally mirrors the demographics of the General College as a whole. No demographic information was sought during this pilot study because of the small sample size; we were concerned that students might become identifiable based on their answers to a series of demographic questions about gender, race and ethnicity, home language, and disability.

The course is taught in a computer classroom. During the final 3 weeks of the semester, the instructors introduced the MAP IT project and asked students to log on to a Web site and complete the questionnaire. The Web site provided additional information about MAP IT as well as notification of implied consent, meaning that when the student submitted the completed questionnaire online, he or she was consenting to participation in this research. An incentive of two extra-credit points was provided to encourage students to respond to the questionnaire. Thus, students were required to provide their university ID number to receive credit. However, the ID numbers were stripped from the data file, so the researchers could not trace answers back to individual students. The response rate for this research can be calculated in two different ways. Out of the 241 students who enrolled in the course, 82 responded to the survey, for a response rate of 34%. However, 20 students withdrew from the course, and an additional 30 students “disappeared” without completing this self-paced, computer-assisted course. So for the 191 students who completed the course and would still have been participating in the course at the point in the semester when the opportunity to participate in this research was made available, the response rate was 43%.

Results

The results of the pilot study are presented as they relate to each of MAP IT’s 10 guiding principles. We have not corrected spelling and grammatical errors in students’ comments.

Commitment to Access

Excluding the data for the 12% of the respondents who either did not know (six students) or considered the item “not applicable” (four students), the mean for the first item, “As you understand the mission of the University of Minnesota General College (GC), does that mission make a commitment to access for diverse students?” was 3.45 ($Mdn = 4$, $SD = 0.672$, $n = 71$). Students also believed that GC “support[s] higher education for students from all cul-

tural groups" ($M = 3.63$, $Mdn = 4$, $SD = 0.538$, $n = 76$), "attempt[s] to recruit and retain a diverse student body" ($M = 3.55$, $Mdn = 4$, $SD = 0.580$, $n = 71$), and "operate[s] in a manner that values a multicultural learning environment in which all students will learn" ($M = 3.42$, $Mdn = 4$, $SD = 0.676$, $n = 77$). One student wrote, "I think that professors are equally helpful towards students of all cultures." Another said, "I enjoy seeing a multicultural college, where lots of cultures are under one roof, all here to learn and be successful." But one student commented, "GC is very diverse and it has not come together yet. Everyone is scattered around [and] there is no unity."

During the admissions process, GC students for the most part felt welcomed ($M = 3.27$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.812$, $n = 79$). One student replied, "[F]rom the moment I got here I felt welcome and not once did I feel isolated or singled out as better or worse than my fellow classmates." GC students generally believed that they are valued members of the GC educational community ($M = 3.19$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.783$, $n = 75$) and thought that it is beneficial to be part of a multicultural learning environment ($M = 3.49$, $Mdn = 4$, $SD = 0.681$, $n = 77$). Sample student comments included:

"GC looks to achieve diversity, and it does so in a way that is beneficial to everyone."

"I love the diversity of this school. Gives me a better understanding of the real world life experience."

"I think GC is very diverse. I see a lot of things going on in the student lounge such as the salsa day, when everyone brought a different salsa from their culture."

"There is no place like GC to explore different cultures and enjoy it all."

Organizational Structures and Decision Making

The second set of items addresses students' roles in decision making. Although the means for these items were not as high as those for questions related to access, that was to be expected. When asked, "Are students involved in the decisions made at GC that affect the learning environment?" 43 of the 63 students (68%) who provided a response on the 4-point scale responded "often" or "almost always or always" ($M = 2.86$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.780$). Sixteen students replied "don't know." One student commented on the "very good diverse cultures in the student boards and groups." Although students thought that they had "the opportunity to participate in planning and/or decision making at GC" ($M = 2.94$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.906$, $n = 69$), they did not necessarily take advantage of that opportunity. The mode for the item that queried, "Through student organizations, campus-wide committees, or other participation in college life, do you personally play a role in decision making?" was 1 ($M = 2.24$, $Mdn = 2$, $SD = 1.125$, $n = 75$). Despite this lack of par-

ticipation, students generally believed that “GC promote[s] cooperation between students, faculty, and staff” ($M = 3.13$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.723$, $n = 75$) and “operate[s] in a manner that values diverse views and experiences” ($M = 3.33$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.729$, $n = 79$), and that “the educational community of GC is a supportive environment” ($M = 3.30$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.701$, $n = 80$). They thought that “administrators, faculty, and staff (e.g., advisors) [were] invested in [their] success as a student” ($M = 3.27$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.775$, $n = 81$; the mode for this item was 4). The following student comments are representative of the views expressed:

“The advisors seem to be more close-knit with the GC student body than in other colleges [of the University of Minnesota]. The teachers are also more understanding if circumstantial occurrences come up.”

“This is my first year at GC and I can definitely see that I am able to express my diverse views and be taken seriously by the professors and fellow students in my class. This is a very positive atmosphere.”

Interactions With Faculty and Staff

The mean was 3.33 ($SD = 0.689$, $n = 80$) for the first item in this set: “Through your interactions with administrators, faculty, and staff at GC, do you believe that they understand the ways in which factors (such as race, ethnicity, home language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, and disability) influence all individuals and institutions?” However it should be noted that although the median for this item was 3, the mode was 4. One student wrote, “They know that people have different cultures and followings. They respect it and aren’t bias[ed] on the situation.” Another added, “Although they need to be more aware of it and know more of people’s background and culture.” In general, students thought that GC administrators, faculty, and staff “demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of diverse groups” ($M = 3.35$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.658$, $n = 80$) and “seem aware of their own personal attitudes toward people from diverse groups” ($M = 3.22$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.793$, $n = 76$; the mode for this item was 4). Of the students who responded on the 4-point scale, 71% replied that their GC “teachers seem interested in understanding [their] background as it relates to learning” ($M = 2.95$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.861$, $n = 79$), and 88% thought that “teachers know how to effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds” ($M = 3.22$, $Mdn = 3$, $SD = 0.697$, $n = 72$) “often” or “almost always or always.” A student wrote, “My teachers have been really creative so far in involving students from all backgrounds and tying us all together.” Another explained,

Not everyone can tell I am an immigrant simply because I am white. Certain professors who find out this about me treat me with special respect or curiosity. This shows how people adjust accordingly to their perceptions of others.

Equal Educational Opportunity

Means for the following items ranged from 3.06 to 3.54:

1. Does GC equally enable all students to learn and excel?
2. Do you have the same opportunity to achieve your academic goals as any other student here at GC?
3. Do your teachers provide the help you need to be successful at GC?
4. Do the teaching strategies used by faculty at GC accommodate diverse student interests and learning styles?
5. Do you have opportunities to interact with appropriate role models on campus?
6. Are you treated with respect by staff and faculty?

The students' comments regarding equal opportunity were very consistent: "Everyone is treated equal in this school."

The other two items in this set dealt with issues of grave concern. The first asked, "At GC have you or any student you know been discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, home language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, disability, or any other group identification?" Unfortunately, this item did not easily lend itself to a 4-point scale; 56% responded "never or almost never," and both the median and mode for this item were 1, but the mean was 1.91 ($SD = 1.281$, $n = 78$). The other item asked, "Are you concerned about your safety on campus?" Although the mode for this item was 1, and 42% of the responding students answered "never or almost never," 11% responded "almost always or always" ($M = 2.01$, $Mdn = 2$, $SD = 1.055$, $n = 81$). Several students made comments about safety:

"GC seems really open to a lot of things. I feel safe there."

"Sometimes I wonder, but I mostly feel safe on and around campus."

Knowledge Construction

Responses to the following items were very consistent, with means ranging from 2.95 to 3.33, means and modes of 3 for all 10 items, and no more than three students responding "don't know" or "not applicable" to any item:

1. Have the courses you have taken at GC helped you understand historical, social, and/or political events from diverse perspectives?
2. Do your courses or teachers present the idea that how a person sees the world is influenced by her or his personal, political, and/or economic experience?
3. Have the instructional materials such as textbooks, supplementary readings, computer applications, or videos described historical, social, and/or political events from diverse perspectives?
4. Do your teachers present different theories or points of view about topics discussed in class?

5. When an idea or theory is presented, do you learn about the person or group from which it came?

6. Are the references or examples presented in your classes drawn from different cultural groups?

7. Has your cultural group been portrayed accurately and respectfully in the courses you have taken?

8. Have the courses you have taken provided opportunities for civic engagement (community involvement), such as service learning?

9. Have opportunities for multicultural learning experiences outside the classroom been made available to you?

10. Are opportunities available to you to study in diverse cultural environments, whether within or outside the U.S.?

The mean for the final item under this guiding principle, "Is a course that explores multicultural perspectives a degree requirement at the University of Minnesota?" was 3.45, with a median and mode of 4, but 5 of the 82 students (6%) responded "not applicable," and 22 (27%) did not know.

Acquisition of Social and Communication Skills

The responses to this data set were also very consistent, with means ranging from 2.77 to 3.27; means and modes for all 8 items were 3, and no more than five students responded "don't know" or "not applicable" to any item:

1. Have your courses at GC included learning that "normal" is defined differently for different groups of people?

2. Has developing an understanding between people of different cultures been a goal in the courses you have taken?

3. Has the importance of communication skills been presented in the courses you have taken?

4. In the courses you have taken, have safe ground rules been set for engaging in meaningful discussions about multicultural issues?

5. Have your experiences at GC increased your ability or comfort in interacting with people from different cultures or groups?

6. Do administrators, faculty, and staff such as counselors and advisors talk openly and constructively with you about multicultural issues?

7. Have they provided you with factual information that contradicts misconceptions and stereotypes?

8. Have you had the opportunity to participate in simulations, role playing, writing as though you experienced something from another person's perspective, or other activities that enable you to gain insights into the impact of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination?

9. Have your courses required you to discuss cultural differences?

One student summed up the GC experience, "I am getting several different perspectives here at GC that have given me a better understanding of different racial groups."

Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

Overall, this set of items yielded the lowest means (2.42 to 3.26) across the entire pilot study. Of the responding students, 11% thought that they never or almost never had "the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities that enable [them] to develop positive relationships with people from diverse backgrounds," and 23% responded "occasionally." Meanwhile, 32% responded "often" and 42% replied "almost always or always" to the question, "Are activities or organizations available that encourage students' expression of identity and cultural differences (e.g., African American Student Association, Gay and Lesbian Alliance)?" When asked if they personally had "participated in college or university activities outside of class that promote multicultural understanding," 34% of the students answered, "never or almost never." One student explained, "I like how they have all the different groups that you can join but because I don't live on campus I don't ever get a chance join any of the groups." Another student wrote that it is "hard to find more information about activities."

Research (Astin, 1985) has indicated that "Frequent interaction with faculty members is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic" (p. 149). Only 10% of the responding students said that they had never or almost never had the opportunity to interact with faculty members outside the classroom.

Student Services

For the following items, means ranged from 3.30 to 3.51, and 4 was both the mode and the median:

1. Are support services such as counseling, advising, career planning and placement, tutoring, and computer labs equally accessible to all students?
2. Are support services available at times that accommodate diverse student needs?
3. Are you able to get the help you need outside of class to be successful at GC?
4. Are you comfortable asking a faculty member or staff person for help when you need it?

Except for a few remarks about the availability of parking, "if parking is considered a student service," the majority of student comments about the services offered were very favorable: "I like how they have the math center,

writing and computer lab. These things help me a lot. My advisor is a good person to talk to about class schedules.” However, one student wrote, “GC advising needs some help, a lot of the advisors don’t know what they are doing and they are not as motivating as they should be. They are to help students not to discourage them.”

Intergroup Relations

To the question, “In the courses you have taken in GC, have you learned about the ways that ideas like justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion, and charity are valued by many cultures?” 77% of the students who answered on the 4-point scale ($n = 78$) indicated either “often” or “almost always or always,” and 71% ($n = 79$) responded likewise to “Have you interacted with people from different cultures who share these values?” To “Do faculty use teaching strategies, such as collaborative groups, to model these values?” only 4% indicated “never or almost never,” 24% responded “occasionally,” 38% answered “often,” and 33% replied “almost always or always” ($n = 78$). Sixty-four percent of the students said that they almost always or always and another 23% said they often “find that [they] are less likely to stereotype people once [they] get to know them,” ($n = 78$).

Classroom Assessments

The medians and modes for both “In the courses you have taken in GC, have you had the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in multiple ways, such as through discussion, oral presentations, essays, creative projects, and portfolios, as well as quizzes and tests?” ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.756$, $n = 82$) and “. . . have a variety of types (e.g., multiple choice, essay) of tests and quizzes been offered?” ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.800$, $n = 82$) were 4. Meanwhile, the mode for “Have the tests that you have taken included culturally-specific references that were unfamiliar to you and were not taught as part of the course content?” was 1, but the median was 2, and the mean was 2.54 ($SD = 1.440$; $n = 80$).

General Comments From Students

A number of students wrote concluding comments about their experience in the General College. Several of the messages addressed the sense of stigma (Pedelty, 2001) that often accompanies participation in a developmental education program:

“Students in GC usually don’t want to be there, because they feel the need that they are part of a lower class at the university and this sometimes affects their decision making and knowledge of everything.”

“GC is good academically, although many students get discouraged like

myself who come to GC, by seeing you are part of the group that everyone is looking down on.”

Other students focused their parting comments on what they appreciated about the academic preparation they received in the General College. One student wrote,

I am glad that I started my college career at GC because I felt welcomed. There were a lot of resources available for me to improve my chances of becoming successful. I have used them to become a better student.

Another stated,

I believe that GC is a good starting foundation for many students. Ever since I've been here the knowledge that I've obtained has been more than I ever expected. Not only are the classes taught differently but in ways where it can somehow relate.

Finally, several specifically addressed multicultural aspects of GC, like this student: “I really enjoyed being a student in GC. The diverse atmosphere was really one that I had to get used to at first, but once I was comfortable with everyone around me, I really loved being a student here.”

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study, beyond piloting a new assessment tool, was to assess the multicultural experiences of students in the General College at the University of Minnesota. The General College may best be characterized as a diverse developmental education learning community. There is significant research (Akey & Bobilya, 2003; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) that demonstrates that being part of this kind of learning situation is helpful in making the transition to college life. Thus, it is not too surprising that the results of this pilot study generally indicate that students have a positive attitude toward their GC experience. For example, the results suggest that GC students are very aware of GC's mission to provide access to diverse students, and students also indicate that they feel supported in GC. In addition, the results indicate that students are paying close attention to the college's efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body and that GC students believe that the college operates in a manner that values a multicultural learning environment and shows a commitment to providing a place where all can learn (e.g., “everyone is treated equal in this school”).

Interactions With Faculty and Staff

With regard to the quality of student multicultural interactions with faculty and staff, this research suggests that students for the most part consider it positive. Although the responding students indicated that the GC faculty and staff demonstrated knowledge and understanding of diverse groups, some students thought that more can be done to understand where they are coming from as it relates to learning (e.g., “although they need to be more aware of it and know more of people’s background and culture”). The first step in creating a welcoming space according to Banks (1997) is the integration of multicultural content in the curriculum. Even though most students thought that efforts were being made to take their background and culture into the learning equation, these results suggest that some students thought that more could be done to include their diverse perspectives in the construction of the learning process.

Discrimination and Safety

Potentially the most disturbing part of the survey results addresses issues of discrimination and safety. Although most students consistently reported that they believed that they were being treated equally in GC, not all reported feeling that way. For example, although 56% of the students reported never or almost never witnessing acts of discrimination against themselves or others, 44% of the students’ responses indicate that some instances of discriminatory behavior had been observed on the basis race, ethnicity, gender, age, home language, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. With a mean of 1.91 (where 2 = occasionally) and standard deviation of 1.281, the interpretation of the responses to this question could signal trouble and should be taken seriously. Although the median and mode are both 1 (i.e., never or almost never), the frequency of other responses merits attention. In this case, any negative response is unacceptable. The institution is not likely to retain students who have experienced discrimination. Furthermore, the potential consequences of discriminatory behavior could be very problematic to the GC mission of establishing and sustaining a healthy multicultural learning environment. Banks (1994, 1997) suggested that to encourage a viable multicultural learning environment, intentional action is needed to reduce prejudice.

Safety was the other big issue of concern for students. Although students commented that they felt safe in GC, that level of confidence did not extend to the campus as a whole. With 58% of the responding students expressing a varying degree of concern for their safety on campus and 11% reporting that they always or almost always were concerned about their safety on campus, some institutional measures to reduce the level of anxiety related to campus security seem warranted. Students’ safety needs must be addressed before

students can be expected to flourish in developing intellectually and making progress toward self-actualization (Maslow, 1968, 1970).

It might be hypothesized that because of the diversity that exists in GC students would feel less safe there, and yet students indicated that they felt more safe in the General College than elsewhere on campus (e.g., "GC seems really open to a lot of things. I feel safe there"). One of the benefits of the kind of intimate multicultural learning environment provided by GC is that students get to know one another on a personal level; this may increase student's sense of safety.

Because the pilot sample size was relatively small, we cannot make widespread generalizations about students' perceptions about discriminatory behaviors and safety on campus. Furthermore, it was because of the small sample size that we could not explore whether differences in perceptions existed among different demographic groups. Nevertheless, this study suggests that perceived prejudicial behavior and safety needs are problematic and warrant further attention.

Knowledge Construction and Content Integration

Showing how knowledge is socially constructed and offering diverse points of view are considered important components of a multicultural classroom (Banks, 1997). The pilot data suggest that GC students often are exposed to different points of view with regard to how knowledge is constructed. These results may indicate that the students felt included in the curriculum, thus stimulating social integration within and outside of the classroom. This finding agrees with much of the research that has argued that it is critical for academic institutions to consider ways to increase social adjustment (Fisher, 1985).

With regard to the university's course requirement on multicultural perspectives, there seems to be a problem in getting the word out, according to the results of this study. Instituting a multicultural course requirement and communicating that policy effectively can send a signal to all constituents within the University community that the institution is committed to multicultural education. The results of this study indicate that both the University and the General College need to do a better job of communicating the multicultural perspectives course requirement to students.

An integration of multicultural content into the curriculum invites students to be part of the learning community and provides bridges for interaction (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, & Ghery, 2004). Responses to whether students' course work has broadened their perception and understanding of those who are different yielded a consistent positive response from the students. Students often believed that the course work supported their learning about others.

Extracurricular Activities

The findings related to extracurricular activities were not as positive as those for in-class experiences. For example, most students responded that it was difficult for them to participate in extracurricular or co-curricular activities. There were various reasons put forth, but the reality is that opportunities to develop positive relationships outside the classroom are being missed. Out-of-class interactions with peers and faculty have been shown to provide many benefits, including enhancing learning and academic performance, encouraging risk-taking in class, and increasing feelings of empowerment (Akey & Bobilya, 2003).

Testing

Students' lukewarm responses to the question regarding testing suggest that different cultural perspectives have not been represented. Currently there is much controversy in academia regarding cultural bias in testing (Miksch, 2003). The results of this study indicate that this is still perceived as a hot issue by many of the respondents in this study. If it is important that there be a social context for learning (Lundell & Collins, 1999), and particularly a multicultural context (hooks, 1994), it is certainly as important to have multiple perspectives appear in the assessment phase of the learning process. Failure to do so has the potential effect of undermining all other efforts to promote and sustain an atmosphere of acceptance and respect for differing points of view. A thorough examination of this issue as it pertains to multicultural education needs to take place in the future.

Response to the Instrument Itself

Lastly, this student pilot study seems to have overcome the primary criticism of its predecessor (i.e., the 2002 GC faculty and staff multicultural assessment pilot study mentioned earlier), which found that respondents thought that too many of the questions simply did not apply to all faculty and staff members' roles in GC (Higbee et al., 2004). In this revised study, the high student participation in answering the individual questions and the lack of comments regarding inapplicability seem to indicate that the applicability of the items was not an issue with this instrument. The length of the MAP IT student questionnaire continues to be an issue. However, one of the purposes of this pilot study was to test the validity of the questions and determine which items would be used in future research.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the questionnaire was very helpful. Students' comments in response to the questionnaire allowed for a fuller or more complete assessment of the data provided by the quantitative analysis. For example, comments such as "GC is very

diverse and it has not come together yet. Everyone is scattered around [and] there is no unity” would not have been captured if only quantitative methods were used to collect data. In this case, it seems that the student is aware that GC is a diverse environment; however, the comment expands on this piece of data by indicating that students may find it more difficult to come together or find a common ground. The student may be asking the question, “So what does all this diversity mean?”

In summary, overall students in GC seemed to think that what they are learning in GC about other cultures is helping them understand their common values, such as justice, freedom, peace, and compassion for others. The data also suggest that association with others who are different can promote open-mindedness and acceptance of individual differences. It is particularly worth noting that 87% of the students stated that they were less likely to stereotype once they got to know people from other backgrounds. It will be interesting to see whether an expanded study with a larger sample size corroborates this pilot study’s results.

Limitations

This pilot research had four primary limitations, all of which were related to the fact that one of the purposes of the study was to evaluate the usefulness of proposed MAP IT Student Questionnaire items. As a result, the questionnaire was longer than desired, which reduced the response rate. Several students commented on the number of items and the perceived repetition among some items. Second, the items were previously untested with students, and in some cases questions arose pertaining to how to interpret student responses, particularly for items that did not really fit the 1 to 4 response scale provided. Third, because this was a pilot, the sample for the study was intentionally small. And finally, because of the small sample size, no demographic information was collected. This research has since been replicated (Higbee, Siaka, & Bruch, 2005) within the General College using the revised student questionnaire (Miksch, Higbee, et al., 2003) with a larger sample.

Conclusion

The small number of participants in this study makes it difficult at best to make generalizations. However, from the analysis of this data set what we can say is that the consistent theme seems to be that students are attuned to and have a positive attitude, for the most part, toward being a member of the multicultural learning environment that GC provides. More research is needed to gain a clearer assessment of multicultural perspectives in GC. Even

so, research has found that students who hold a positive attitude toward their college experience are more likely to have a high level of institutional commitment and therefore are more likely to continue in their college career (Napoli & Wortman, 1998; Tinto, 1993). Furthermore, other studies examining cross-cultural environments have also found that supportive learning environments improve cross-cultural understanding, create positive perceptions of the college learning environment, and encourage student retention (Dale & Zych, 1996; Turner & Berry, 2000). We believe that although there is certainly room for improvement, the General College should be commended both for its attention to multicultural education and for its willingness to do this type of assessment and report openly on the results.

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Creating Spheres of Freedom: Connecting Developmental Education, Multicultural Education, and Student Experience

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ABSTRACT

This chapter argues that developmental educators must continually examine the historical context in which we make decisions and how external institutional forces influence our choices. Without this reflection, we may find ourselves handcuffed to ideals about supporting students that may not see students as partners in educational solutions for success. I propose that by integrating multicultural education and developmental education ideals, educators may assist students in creating safe spaces or “spheres of freedom” (Collins, 1990) in which students successfully negotiate their educational careers. Finally, I observe ways that General College is creating safe spaces to insure stronger student partnerships.

In the 2003 Seeking Educational Equality and Diversity (SEED) summit, Peggy McIntosh stated that the greatest stride in multicultural education in the last 20 years could be seen in students’ and teachers’ ability to link the individual and the social structure. There are two ways this statement captures the progress of our understanding about multicultural education as socially-just educational opportunities for all students, but especially for those who are constantly challenged by social forces. First, the statement centers on both teacher and student learning. Second, it captures a way in which to “grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society” (Mills, 1959, p. 6). In this statement, C. Wright Mills defined what he termed the “sociological imagination,” a way in which to notice the connection between the individual and the social structure. The crucial feature of the sociological imagination is what Mills discussed as a way in which the individual may look beyond “personal troubles” to see the “social issues” operating in the larger society (p. 8). Mills argued that we live in an age and environment in which understanding the world around us as well as what is

happening within us as individuals is dominated by an overwhelming amount of information. The sociological imagination may help us deal with this information by enabling its possessor

to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals . . .

The first fruit of this imagination . . . is the idea that the individual can understand his [*sic*] own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. (Mills, p. 5)

Although the use of masculine pronouns referenced in a historical time when scholars were not sensitive to gender inclusivity may indicate otherwise, this concept is very useful in our approach to developmental education. Mills' statements were based in his belief that people tend to attack all problems by looking to the individual. By looking to external or social forces, and at the experiences of other people who have similar historical and social circumstances, we open ourselves to new resources for problem solving. As developmental educators, we work to support the educational needs of the individual student. However, some educational issues that affect the experiences and fate of some students are external to the individual because they arise from institutional practices that privilege some and disadvantage others. The sociological imagination provides an innovative framework through which we may view the influences of institutional forces as well as individual participation. For example, successful students are often noted for their individual characteristics that indicate motivation. Observing a variety of behaviors such as attending class, being on time, and completing reading or assignments in a timely way are traditional measures of motivation. However, motivation to behave as previously described may be affected by larger institutional issues such as experiencing overt or subtle racism as the only African American living in a college dormitory, or as a first-generation college student who does not have the cultural capital to navigate the bureaucracy of a large institution and has to put in considerable amounts of time and emotional labor to contend with these issues.

In practical terms, one way we as educators can use our sociological imaginations to assuage some of these issues for students is to integrate multicultural education, the process of seeking socially-just educational opportunities for all students, and developmental education, a discipline that promotes cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners at all levels of the learning continuum (National Association for Developmental Education, 1995). Such a framework considers who we educate, how we educate, and the larger social issues that affect how we practice. Ultimately, we need to acknowl-

edge that at the same time, students negotiate their personal educational troubles along with larger institutional issues on a daily basis.

In this process, students often create safe spaces in which to construct and maintain positive images and self-understanding. Collins (1990) referred to these spaces as “spheres of freedom” (p. 103). My research (Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2004) found that student spheres of freedom are functional or practical in nature because they are concrete strategies for dealing with institutional issues in their educational careers. Strategies include and most often involve informal strategies such as informal study groups, taking classes together, or just talking to other students who have similar backgrounds about problems they face in school. Some strategies do take advantage of formal programs such as student cultural centers, mentor programs, and involvement in community service learning. The concrete nature of learning to connect personal troubles and social issues, particularly in informal situations, is often not taken as a serious strategy for carrying out successful educational careers. This may be because student spheres of freedom are also symbolic in that they represent students’ understanding of the individual-institutional link, something that is not often identified as an important partnership with us, the “educators.”

Developmental Education and the “Golden Handcuffs” of Dichotomous Paradigms

I have often heard colleagues from the business world talk about their jobs and the economic remuneration they receive as “golden handcuffs.” The reference defines a situation in which the work situation or work itself is not what these individuals want to be doing, but the pay is such that they allow themselves to be prisoners of the job. Being developmental educators often presents us with a golden handcuffs situation, but of a very different sort. As developmental educators we work to support increased student learning opportunities in a variety of ways. Unlike our business colleagues, the golden part of our dichotomous equation is the job itself—we love what we do and are rewarded by the nature of the work more often than the paycheck. The handcuffs part of the dichotomy lies in the assumptions we make about notions of inclusion and support for diverse student populations. We handcuff ourselves in unintentional or even unnoticed ways in our theory, classroom methods, and research.

Observed through the sociological imagination, Mills (1959) might have concluded that we forget to consider the institutional forces external to the individual that influence our choices and the historical context in which we make decisions. In addition, we may be handcuffed to the notion that stu-

dents do not themselves own a sociological imagination and therefore do not see a link between the individual and the institution. More specific to educational practices, these handcuffs exist because as hooks (1994) observed, “most of us were taught in classrooms where styles of teaching reflected the notion of a single norm of thought and experience” (p. 35). The effect of this experience may be seen most patently in professors who “remain unwilling to be involved with any pedagogical practices that emphasize mutual participation between teacher and student” (p. 204). hooks’ discussion is about classroom practice that ignores student experience and the possibility that students understand their historical location in the institution. However, the idea is also valuable in reference to various kinds of educational practices.

I believe that observed through hooks’ (1994) notion of mutual participation, we as developmental educators often tend to think and practice from a top-down organizational level. For example, we may be horrified at the prospect of actually using the banking model, defined by hooks as a system of education that is “based on the assumption that memorizing information and regurgitating it represented gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored and used at a later date” (p. 5) to support student learning. However, we may tend to hang our developmental intentions on the same kind of organizational hat rack. That is to say, we may understand the impact of the institution on student success. We may even make considerable attempts to assuage the issue. But what we may actually be doing is imposing support in ways that may or may not be effective from the standpoint of how students are driving their own educational processes. By doing so, we may be increasing students’ burdens simply because we do not work to make changes within the space of the classroom or institution, or create spaces that allow us to meet students in their process rather than imposing or assuming our process to be the most valuable. In other words, just like educational practices, student involvement in education is a dynamic process changed by exposure to and experience with our attempts to support student success in new and better ways.

Several developmental educators have noted how our best intentions in creating what many see as nontraditional practices often wield the same outcomes as traditional educational practices. Particularly for diverse students, we tend to be handcuffed to ideas that at one time showed promise in theory but may need to be reconsidered in practice. For example, Johnson (1998) stated that critical race theory, linguistic theory, and cognitive theory all promote the use of personal narrative, and developmental educators utilize personal narrative in writing classes as a rhetorical strategy that helps students find a “voice” (p. 30) in early college writing. The problem with using narrative as a rhetorical strategy and a way to encourage students to write is that

narrative is “rarely treated as a serious rhetorical device” and is too soon replaced with the “academic voice” (p. 30). Even when developmental educators invoke new practices to engage students such as narrative writing, an engagement that meets them rather than imposes on them, we abandon narrative as soon as possible in favor of more traditional academic work. Johnson referred to this process as a “trick” that creates a “chasm across which student and instructor often encounter one another” (p. 30). Moreover, well-intentioned practices such as this are often not critiqued simply because they were originally constructed as a nontraditional approach to meet the needs of marginalized student groups. As Johnson indicated in her work, our intent is golden, but our outcome continues to create educational handcuffs for both students and instructors. The reason for this does not lie in the actual definition of what is considered developmental education. Rather, it is a construction of our taken-for-granted position as student-centered educators. The problem is forgetting to examine and critique what sociologists would call the unintended functions of such practices.

Mason (1994) provided another excellent example by examining taken-for-granted assumptions about power in the classroom. Mason pinned down a problem with the discussion of power in the classroom by identifying the dichotomous relationship assigned to teacher-centered power as bad and the absence of such power as good. She disrupted this notion by questioning how the absence of teacher authority actually works for developmental students and particularly for students “from backgrounds other than the dominant culture” (p. 38). The argument is that power has been critiqued as a part of what feminists define as a male-centered, hierarchical structure in mainstream classrooms. In other words, all the power in the classroom, and therefore all the knowledge, lies with the instructor. Feminists also believe this kind of power structure in the classroom should be eliminated so that multiple voices command the classroom, the teacher’s voice numbered among many. Mason argued that this assumes the students in the classroom are part of the mainstream power structure and have the cultural and social capital to benefit from the total leveling of power in the classroom. Instead, she suggested that power may be imagined as persuasive rather than coercive. Furthermore, the total elimination of a persuasive power, that is the power with the “genuine intent . . . to push and goad her students to learn” (p. 39) is considered unproductive for many diverse student groups. In my experience, persuasive power is often about giving students permission to be seen as actively involved in learning. As other research has pointed out, economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and females have been treated with contempt for being actively engaged in the educational conversation. Although this may not be what students experience in our classrooms, it is likely what they have his-

torically experienced, or what is occurring in other classrooms. It may be that before we can actually level teacher power, we need to utilize that power not as a punitive practice, but as an informed tool to support students.

This critique of leveling teacher power in favor of a multi-voiced, dialogic, and collaborative approach has something in common with other critiques of what is thought to be student-centered practice. That is, we sometimes forget to revisit who we teach and how we teach them. In order to meet students where they are in their educational process we need to consider if we are imposing our own ideas about what supports their learning experience. We tend to be handcuffed to nontraditional paradigms that may produce the effects of traditional paradigms; that is, paradigms that are sometimes measured without considering the needs of historically marginalized groups, or even paradigms that we think apply to all marginalized groups, as is the case with a total leveling of power in the classroom. Unless we are willing to critique these paradigms, we are not truly considering who we teach and how we teach them. I suggest performing such critiques and creating new paradigms for practice through a multicultural lens supported by a sociological imagination.

Promoting a Multicultural Milieu

Part of the problem in promoting a multiculturally alive paradigm lies in how we approach multicultural issues in developmental education. Previously, I briefly defined multiculturalism as seeking socially-just educational opportunities for all students. My approach to multiculturalism tends to center on issues of race because, as Sleeter (1994) argued, an anti-racist approach is a necessary component of the multicultural framework. In addition, my primary work as a sociologist focuses on race and education. Although I view multiculturalism as inclusive of multiple issues of access and support, my approach does focus on issues surrounding race. I find that one assumption that contributes to problems with our approach to developmental education as a multicultural venture is the dichotomous thinking we have about race, particularly the effects of race on privileged groups and disadvantaged ones. We need to apply the sociological imagination in order to critique our assumptions concerning how U.S. society tends to assign race to individuals and groups of color, meaning all skin pigmentation variations other than White. Tatum (1992) noted that race, in the context of U.S. society, is a system that

like other forms of oppression, hurts members of the privileged group as well as those targeted by racism. While the impact of racism on Whites is clearly dif-

ferent from its impact on people of color, racism has negative ramifications for everyone. (p. 3)

Tatum's work counters the taken-for-granted assumption that race and racism are about groups of color. Mills (1959), Johnson (1998), and Mason (1994) have provided good examples of noticing how our intent, based in a common-sense notion of what works, does not necessarily get us to our desired outcome. Tatum's observation exposes a common-sense assumption about race, a notion that affects our intent versus our desired outcome and is connected to our thinking about who we teach and how we teach them. Developmental education is intimately involved in improving the educational opportunities for underrepresented groups, groups usually noted as educationally disadvantaged because of class, gender, race, disability, home language, and age. Yet, we need to consider whether or not we tend to use developmental as a label we pronounce on the heads of individuals or groups, such as "developmental students," rather than as an alternative to educational access (i.e. "developmental programs and practices"). Why? The answer is because we as developmental educators walk a fine line between being handcuffed to normative and often invisible assumptions, such as the assumptions pointed out by Johnson, Mason, and Tatum, or seeking a way to shift into multicultural educational practices.

Creating a Shift in the General College Model

A shift in support of developmental educational practices begins by noticing what aspects of the General College model center the experiences of marginalized students in the discussion and then working to apply what we learn from marginalized students' experiences to a more universal approach for mainstream students. In order to do this, I have been working from a theoretical framework that defines educational organizations as "White spaces," a theory emerging from the examination of marginalized student experience. The qualitative research data from my research (Barajas, 2000; Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2004) as well as other research (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996) indicate that students of color consistently refer to secondary and postsecondary educational institutions as "White" or "White space." Sociologists have long studied the interplay between social structures such as educational institutions and social agents such as students (Bourdieu, 1990; Coleman, 1986; Giddens, 1979; Sewell, 1992). Rather than focus on the macro-level analyses that many of these studies take, I examine how individuals and organizations influence one another by focusing on the *space* that mediates the relationship between educational organizations and individuals

participating in the organization. Furthermore, I concentrate on how that relationship constructs thinking and behavior about race that, unless examined, may be a way in which many of us are handcuffed to taken-for-granted ideas about these relationships.

To begin, we need to understand that all of us have “common-sense” understandings about race. Omi and Winant (1994) observed that when people think common sense is responsible for how we interpret ideas about race, we also connect our thinking and behavior to common sense, rather to historical and social facts concerning race. In addition, common-sense meanings connect the ways “social structures and everyday experiences are racially organized” (p. 55). Put another way, common-sense notions that organize how individuals categorize people, and organize behaviors between people, also organize social structures such as educational institutions (Barajas, 2000; Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2004; Doane, 1997). What is important for developmental educators is the critique these ideas extend to educational institutions. What may seem like race-neutral practices are actually constructed by common-sense interpretations of what is the “other” *and* what is White. That is, the space in school that is defined as race neutral or “color blind” is actually a White space. More specifically, when a space is considered a race-neutral or color-blind space, that is to say the space where practices or policy occurs, what is actually present is White space.

There are transparent examples of students identifying a space as a White space in my research, but also in my everyday experiences as an educator in General College, that may help explain these abstract ideas. One example of students negotiating the school as a White space is about physical space and accepted forms of behavior in that space. General College students often have the majority of their classes meet in one building, and often have some of the same students in more than one class. This situation provides an opportunity for students to network with one another in both socially and academically beneficial ways. Because they have the opportunity to create these networks, students tend to congregate on the front steps, around the outside of the building, as well as on benches in the hallways, rather than moving to public spaces in the larger university. Although students do often mix in diverse groups, they also gather in groups with others like themselves. This was the case with one group of African American students who congregated in one particular area of the building that happened to be in a hallway with a bench. A problem arose not from the fact that a group of African Americans were congregating in the building on a regular basis; General College personnel were accustomed to that. The tumult on the part of a group of primarily White faculty and staff arose over the language and volume of the group gathering. The issue presented by this group of faculty and staff was that the

student group conversation was too loud. Students who gathered should do so in appropriate voices. In addition, the language was inappropriate for a college building—the faculty and staff certainly would never use language like that. The problem from a sociological imagination perspective is that a mainstream group was evaluating the volume and language of the African American students as inappropriate. This is not to say the mainstream group should not identify that they had a problem with the noise level. The issue was that this group defined “appropriate” as something they were entitled to define because they represented a neutral understanding of what is appropriate. The behavior of the group actually did the opposite of identifying the space as neutral. They made it quite clear that the hallway is a White space.

Another example of students identifying schools as White spaces that occurs frequently centers on the classroom. Multiple times each semester students of color, most often female students of color, come to my office trying to understand why their course curricula only address mainstream concerns. For example, one student taking a course on marriage and the family showed me a syllabus where the majority of the research articles only use or primarily use White, middle-class, and educated respondents. The research acknowledges this fact, but the student asked the obvious question, “If all the readings make the same disclaimer, and that somehow makes it OK, how is this course about me?” The student makes a point worth considering. Consider if the majority of the research in a given course is about African Americans, would the course be billed as one on “marriage and the family,” or would the institution and our own common-sense view this as an African American studies course on marriage and the family? This by no means suggests that we should not have courses specific to racial and ethnic groups. The point is why do we see a course that addresses primarily White populations as a neutral representation of a given topic?

Key work on Whiteness has demonstrated how neutral or color-blind perceptions operate in institutional spaces. One explanation comes to us from the idea of an invisible or hidden ethnicity, that is a lack of awareness of an ethnic identity, an identity that is not normally asserted in intergroup interaction (Doane, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Gans, 1979; Waters, 1990). As the mainstream group, White ethnic groups generally own invisible or hidden ethnicity. Doane defined a hidden ethnicity as having three important aspects: (a) ethnicity does not generally intrude upon day-to-day experience, (b) the privileges of group membership are taken-for-granted, and (c) ethnic identity can be asserted when dominant group interests are threatened by challenges from subordinate groups. Hidden ethnicity is often made visible when employed by individuals within the organization space of educational institutions. The visibility is most prominent when observed as the neutraliz-

ing process of Whiteness and of the power and privilege in that space that exists by creating a neutral category. What is really employed is an asserted group identity that is defined as neutral but gives power and therefore privilege to what appears to be neutral—Whiteness.

The problem with appropriating a perspective of schools as racially-neutral spaces is that it tends to hide ways that race is involved in school practices. When this occurs, we consider the intended but not unintended consequences of our practices and are then likely to diminish how issues of race can inform us. This occurs because racializing educational spaces as neutral diminishes the impact of race on the organization itself and generally focuses race on abstract ideas or on individuals as a part of identity politics (Feagin, 2001). In turn, a focus on abstract ideas and individuals allows us to dismiss claims that White space exists and therefore dismiss rather than learn from the experiences of students of color. Alternatively, observing the following may identify how the organizational spaces of schools function as White spaces and how our practices are affected:

1. Question how relationships in educational spaces are shaped, who shapes them, and according to what taken-for-granted and symbolic meanings.
2. Consider that a relationship exists between what is defined as White and what is defined as non-White.
3. Consider that what often constructs the relationship between what is White and what is non-White is the connection between White, middle-class assumptions about what characteristics and values are highly regarded and valued in school spaces, but which are accepted as neutral, color-blind values.
4. Understand that all students negotiate White space, but diverse students are required to negotiate that space differently.

All of these points help us recognize and critique what we do as developmental educators through a multicultural lens. The lens is presented through examples specific to race but could be incorporated into various kinds of diverse issues. Thinking about the last point in particular helps educators understand the importance of meeting students in their own negotiating process.

From Handcuffs to Spheres of Freedom

From here, the theoretical impetus of Collins' (1990) work is useful because only one part of my argument is that we should be developing our own sociological imaginations. The equally important part of the argument requires educators to acknowledge that students have a sociological imagination that helps them negotiate the educational process. Collins not only recognized that race, class, and gender are interacting and intersecting aspects of social

life, but she also recognized the possibilities for collective resistance. In our case, resistance is defined as a successful negotiation of White space. Collins' work regarded the assignment of a racialized identity—that is, an identity that is based in common-sense notions of race—as one that is structurally imposed. However, she assumed that social actors, in our case students, have more agency than some may consider. Her research suggested that through a self-valuing identity Black women might resist rather than conform to negative images or ideas. To resist such images and ideas, a self-valuing identity is created in what she called a sphere of freedom, a safe space where Black women learn ways to deconstruct assumptions that may intentionally or unintentionally emerge from common-sense notions of race, and create more positive identities and self-understandings. Other researchers have observed the agency of various marginalized student social actors as proactive in creating safe spaces as a response to educational organizational assumptions (de Anda, 1984; Pope, 2000).

I have also observed marginalized student actors being proactive in constructing as well as deconstructing self-images while participating in the educational organization (Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2004). In fact, I found this activity to be essential for many marginalized students. For example, the General College Multicultural Concerns Committee recently had the opportunity to talk informally with a group of Somali students, all who had successfully transferred from General College into other colleges in the University of Minnesota and some who were graduating that semester. When asked what is the one thing other students could do to insure that they would have a better chance of graduating, the students discussed the importance of connecting with other students who are like them, either through formal student organizations or through informal study groups. Students also commented that having faculty and staff who understood that not all Somali students have the same history, and therefore had different educational needs, was imperative to their success. Like Collins' (1990) work found in the case of Black women, these students also identified or created spheres of freedom that helped them negotiate their educational careers successfully. In addition, students noted understanding the connection between personal history and the institution as well as suggesting that we as educators need to recognize that students come with this knowledge rather than make assumptions about the group as a whole.

In developmental education, a successful negotiation of White space is about multiple kinds of identity discovery on the part of students who participate in our programs, classrooms, and institutions as a whole. Collins' (1990) work is beneficial if we acknowledge and build on the idea that students are in an active negotiation process as they interact in educational organizations.

Student creation of spheres of freedom is functional because it is a path through which they successfully negotiate multiple kinds of assumptions on the part of the organization. Moreover, student-created spheres of freedom are symbolic in that they represent student understanding of the individual-structural link in which they are often unidentified partners in various aspects of the educational process. In addition, the informal formation of spheres of freedom on the part of students represents an uncanny use of the sociological imagination. Considered through this frame, the place and use of student experience and student knowledge about developmental issues takes on a new and possibly concrete dimension developmental educators have not yet fully tapped. In order to do so, we need to consider giving up our golden handcuffs by seeking student spheres of freedom and meeting them in that negotiation. At the least, this gives us possible insight into better classroom practices, such as those suggested by Johnson (1998), Mason (1994), and Tatum (1992). Meeting students in the process may also make us better partners in creating institutional change. In particular, partnership with students acknowledges that a successful negotiation of White space is about multiple kinds of identity discovery on the part of students who participate in our programs, classrooms, and institutions as a whole.

Drawing a Mental Picture

Burawoy's (1991) work suggested that expanding our knowledge rather than attempting to toss out all aspects of a theory in order to explain what we observe better utilizes theory. Burawoy argued that we extend the case, beginning with what we observe is useful in a given theory and extending its usefulness with new ideas. I argue this is what we need to do as multicultural developmental educators. Along with student assessment, we should continually be assessing institutional processes, be willing to change, and begin by a making a shift in our thinking about how multicultural and developmental education inform us regarding how students are negotiating their educational careers. What would a shift like this look like? By using the research observations discussed this far, and particularly Collins' (1990) and de Anda's (1984) work, we can draw a picture that will help us visualize how student process and institutional support can meet.

Understanding process is often thought of as a picture that depicts steps or movement toward a goal. Observing the lived experience of social actors and institutions is dynamic and fluid in some respect. This is true of movement as replication of the status quo or of attempts to change that process. It is important to note that students, when presented with various circumstances in need of negotiation, do not necessarily move stepwise through stages. Each

negotiation depends on the circumstance, the student's history, and relationship to the educational organization. Students may find that they enter the process in different places at different times and even skip back and forth among the different stages to accomplish what they need. The purpose of mentally visualizing the process is to establish cues for understanding and documenting the interactions of students, educators, and the organization. An exercise such as this works only if both the social actors and the educational organizations are taken into consideration when assessing whether organizational practices are meeting student negotiations or imposing supports on students. For that reason, we begin by centering on the student process. Clearly, developmental education has always been student centered because we utilize student assessment to measure academic preparedness. However, measuring acquired skills is one piece of a complex process of negotiation. Therefore, our mental visualization needs to begin with the student perspective.

Three Stages of Negotiation

We begin with the notion "negotiation," a recognition that students and sometimes groups overall are continually negotiating their educational process in order to be successful. Negotiation, then, is a process that is engaged when students are looking for a way to succeed because the assumption or problem placed before them is that they somehow do not fit the organizational norm. Enfolded within the negotiation process are three stages of negotiation: recognition, translation and mediation, and accommodation.

Recognition

Recognition indicates that for a negotiation to take place, the individual must first recognize that an issue exists that can be or is in need of negotiation. For example, recognizing the need for a self-valuing identity in order to resist negative images or ideas that are structurally imposed occurs at different times and in different circumstances for individuals. The key is in understanding that recognition on the part of the individual or group does not always occur simultaneously with images or ideas that are imposed on the individual by the institution. This is particularly true in view of mainstream belief in meritocracy that rewards are dispersed according to the amount of work or effort put forth. For example, a student who has successfully negotiated the educational process well enough to enter a postsecondary institution may first face the recognition stage when labeled a "developmental student" by the organization. Or, a male African American student may face the recognition stage when he must negotiate the assumption he is in a postsec-

ondary institution because he is an athlete. Race, class, and gender, as well as other kinds of statuses such as “developmental student,” affect when and how a student recognizes the need for negotiation.

Translation and Mediation

The second of the three stages, translation and mediation, is the stage in which individuals seek out others who act as key informants to assist in successful negotiation. De Anda's (1984) work is especially helpful in explaining this stage. Although her observations were specific to ethnic and cultural populations outside of the mainstream, they remain helpful in looking at a variety of diverse student processes, particularly if culture is broadly defined as including immigrant status, socioeconomic class, age, sexual orientation, and disability. De Anda argued that key informants from both the ethnic or cultural background of the student and individuals in the mainstream culture are necessary for students to successfully negotiate educational organizations. However, she identified the most successful kind of key informant as a “translator,” an individual from the person's own ethnic or cultural group who has undergone the process with considerable success. A translator is

able to share his or her own experiences, provide information that facilitates understanding of the values and perceptions of the majority culture, and convey ways to meet the behavioral demands made on the minority members . . . without compromising ethnic values and norms . . . increasing success of each successive generation in dealing with mainstream culture depends not so much on the degree of assimilation as on an increase in the number of translators available. (p. 104)

In my research (Barajas, 2000; Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2004) translators were often students who had more experience or specific experiences that informed their relationship with the educational organization. Sometimes translators are older siblings or friends, translators with whom students informally created spheres of freedom. Translators are also mentors, individuals who have successfully negotiated educational careers without compromising ethnic or cultural values and norms such as instructors, professors, and academic advisors.

In addition to translators, de Anda (1984) suggested that mainstream individuals, either by example or because of their access to or control over resources, help mediate the differences nonmainstream individuals face in their relationships with educational organizations. Her argument was that in order for nonmainstream individuals to negotiate the dissimilarities between their lived experiences and the mainstream assumptions of the educational organization mediation by mainstream individuals provides “valuable instructive information about areas that the minority individual might not

have ready access to on his or her own, might misinterpret, or might have to learn about by painful trial and error” (p. 104). There is another difference between mediators and translators besides owning mainstream membership. Mediators, unlike translators, are not often directly involved in the construction of spheres of freedom, but may support the idea as one that helps nonmainstream students to negotiate more successfully. Mediators assist in what Thorne (1994) referred to as successful border crossing, which is gaining access to mainstream activities by negotiating the junctures of social interaction.

Accommodation

Translators and mediators help students function successfully in the educational organization. However, they also serve to legitimate students' interpretations of their experience in the organization. By doing so, students find ways to accommodate organizational expectations and behaviors. Accommodation, the next stage to place in our visualization, is most often thought of as a process through which the organization manages the nonmainstream individual or group. In our picture, however, the accommodation stage reflects the way in which nonmainstream individuals or groups manage the organization. The accommodation stage recognizes the legitimized student experience and often finds students informally creating spheres of freedom while participating in the educational organization. Students informally create these spaces by choices they make such as performing community service learning in sites that are like their original home community (Barajas, 2002), seeking out other students who are like them to form study groups or social ties, or highlighting their ethnic or cultural identity by maintaining or sometimes increasing the use of traditional language, dress, food, and music. Sometimes informal activities become formal attempts to create spheres of freedom, such as joining culturally-specific fraternities or sororities. In my research, students actually organized and institutionalized a Latino fraternity and Latina sorority as a formal outcome of informal behaviors (Barajas & Pierce, 2001). Accommodation is a stage in which students modify what is offered by the educational organization by finding spaces within the White space of the organization to gain educational success while maintaining ethnic or cultural values and beliefs.

Just as White space mediates the relationship between educational organizations and individuals participating in the organization by neutralizing race, space created by students through the accommodation stage mediates that relationship by acknowledging race. Rather than be handcuffed to taken-for-granted ideas about educational spaces, developmental educators can actively look for spheres of freedom that students accomplish in their negoti-

ation process, highlight their accommodations, and allow their knowledge to provide us with crossroads for the organization to meet students. The purpose of meeting students is symbolic in that we further legitimate their experience, but also functional in that by meeting them, we support their existing accommodations and then may also contribute to creating spheres of freedom.

Finding the Fit: General College and Spheres of Freedom

General College is a unique educational organization. The mission of General College is specific and challenging in the expectations to provide access and education to a variety of student populations and conduct developmental education research in a multidisciplinary setting. The work of General College by instructors and student support services staff is informed by the established best practices for developmental students. However, like many educators, what we do is also intuitive. Indeed, because our concern is with students as well as dissemination of research, understanding and measuring the real outcomes of our work means purposely creating opportunities for documenting and discussing how what we do works and does not work. The visual shift discussed in the last section emerged from research, some conducted by observing students participating in developmental programs and some data gathered by observing mainstream experiences. How General College specifically meets students in spheres of freedom has not been documented. The following applications represent observations of a number of ways in which General College meets students in the accommodation stage of their negotiation process. These observations are not an exhaustive list nor are they complete descriptions. Many of the formal and informal examples are fully explained in various parts of this book and so will be cited rather than fully explained. The intent of this chapter is to document the actions of like-minded people who tend to work intuitively toward the common goal of multicultural developmental education. These examples also tend to recognize educational practices that consider the link between individual troubles and social issues (i. e., the sociological imagination), if not in those words with that intent. Finally, these examples consistently reconsider and attempt to measure where students are in the negotiation process and attempt to reconsider how to engage students in the process.

The institutionalized action that first speaks to meeting students in their negotiation process is the mission statement. General College consists of both formal and informal activities that are informed by and in turn cultivate the General College mission. The General College mission (2000)

is to provide access to the University of Minnesota for highly motivated students from the broadest range of socio-economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds who evidence an ability to succeed in the University's rigorous baccalaureate programs. . . the General College acknowledges a special role in the University's realization of the egalitarian principles that sustain its vitality as an urban, land grant, research institution.

The existence of this mission statement clearly outlines the core importance serving a diverse student population has in a postsecondary research institution. The statement leaves no room to question if a research institution should serve a diverse population, but rather indicates the necessity to provide a means for that to happen. In other words, the mission statement reveals that the link between individuals and the social institution requires negotiation. What may be unique about the General College mission is the dynamic treatment of the mission statement as an institutionalized practice among General College faculty, staff, and administrators in other formal and informal activities. Formal activities include programs that have institutionalized meeting the needs of particular students. One transparent example includes the General College Commanding English Program (see Chapter 9). This program works with University students and in partnership with several high schools in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The goal of this program is to meet students in the process of negotiating a home language that is different from the academic literacy in English required by both elementary-secondary (K-12) schools and the University of Minnesota. Commanding English offers a sphere in which talented high school and college students have the same opportunity for the college preparation, information, mentoring, and support as other high achieving students but specific to second language issues. For University students, this means a two-semester sequence of credit-bearing courses open to other GC freshmen that allows all students to work on academic English skills. The Commanding English Program has a high retention rate in both the first and second year, I believe, in part because they meet students and work together to create many spheres of freedom in classroom activities, support activities, and advising.

Another institutionalized program that supports the mission of GC and meets students in their negotiation process is the TRIO (2004) program. Three TRIO programs are jointly funded by General College and the U.S. Department of Education: (a) the Ronald E. McNair Program, which prepares low-income, first-generation college students for graduate study; (b) the Student Support Services (SSS) program, which provides comprehensive academic support such as supplemental student groups, learning communities, and specific academic counseling; and (c) Upward Bound, a college preparatory program for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged high

school students. Like the Commanding English program, the TRIO design provides safe spaces for students to be who they are while learning to engage in high school and university educational literacy demands. What TRIO and Commanding English also provide is access to both mediators and translators, something not often found in one opportunity.

In addition, formalized activities include less obvious but parallel levels of institutionalized support for student negotiation. An organization that supports the student voice in GC work is the General College Student Board (2004). An elected group of General College students, the Student Board represents all GC students both on GC committees and in the larger university student governing groups. The Student Parent HELP (high education for low-income people) Center (2004) offers programs designed for students who are parents. The HELP Center offers a literal sphere of freedom, which is a physical space where college student parents may have their children with them while they meet together as groups or individuals to receive assistance addressing multiple issues that affect academic success.

Some formalized activities that support student success are not directly for students. A unique but formalized activity is the Multicultural Concerns Committee (MCC), a group that has “achieved significant changes within the General College and the University of Minnesota” (Ghere, 2003b, p. 56). Although offered standing committee status by General College, MCC remains a volunteer committee. In recent discussions about the mission and purpose of MCC, pieces of the discussion indicated only a voluntary committee could retain its unique identity as a place where multiple issues and standpoints could be brought to the table for open discussion. In other words, the space created for direct conversation about difficult multicultural issues faced by an educational organization needed to be a safe space—a sphere of freedom for those dedicated to working through institutional barriers for students, faculty, and staff. Like MCC, the Curriculum Transformation and Disability initiative (CTAD, 2003) was designed to support students through faculty and staff training opportunities. CTAD provided workshops to postsecondary instructors in the use of Universal Instructional Design, a specific curriculum design that provides access to multiple groups of students while making coursework more accessible to students with disabilities (see Chapter 21). The whole idea behind Universal Instructional Design is to provide a sphere in which students may make the most of what they bring to the classroom. Finally, the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (2004) embodies vital research and dissemination opportunities for General College as well as other developmental education faculty and staff to push the current thought about who and what is developmental.

Informal levels of activity also represent ways in which General College approaches developmental education as a multicultural venture meeting students in their negotiation process. Such activities are defined as informal because they are often person dependent rather than institutional. Falling in this category are pedagogies practiced in individual classrooms that may inform others, promote discussions and alterations in others' teaching practices, but remain specific to individual rather than institutional practice. For example, service learning, considered innovative classroom pedagogy, pushes the pedagogical envelope in two cases in General College. One English composition course (see Chapter 11) frames composition as social justice, recognizing the individual link to the larger social world through participating in the community and producing writing about that experience. My own sociology course (see Chapter 18) teaches students to observe their own social statuses and how those statuses are related to individual choices and larger social issues by having students volunteer as tutors and mentors in a community organization assisting disadvantaged children. Using sociological concepts, students learn to read, speak, and write according to the disciplinary demands of critical sociology. In addition, students often reflect on their own negotiation process. Students, regardless of mainstream or nonmainstream status, observe such a process.

Another example of pedagogy through which the organization meets student negotiation is the use of simulations in a history course (Ghere, 2003a). This course creates historical scenarios in which students must understand the goals and attitudes of particular groups in making policy decisions. Students, by taking on various roles and interacting in groups with other role players, are able to see themselves in relationship to larger social ideas and institutions. The last example is a general art course (see Chapter 13) where students learn how creative thinking, self-expression, and academic thinking work together through multiple kinds of creative expression. The pedagogy of this course creates a sphere in which students benefit from the best of both worlds in terms of coming to the curriculum from their own negotiation space while being supported by the knowledge and experience of the instructor. Activities help students work through an understanding of art as creative but also as a way to engage in critical thinking and action.

In all cases, students are presented with opportunities to create spheres of freedom, places where they have others to support the deconstruction and reconstruction of self-identity, and assistance in negotiation of the White spaces of the educational organization. Each of these courses also addresses Tatum's (1992) concern that the issue of race in the United States has consequences for both mainstream and nonmainstream individuals and groups. The approach to this occurs directly through course materials

or indirectly through self-reflection but is in all cases supported by students working together in small groups. And, because of the General College mission to serve a diverse population, the groups or the class as a whole tend to be a diverse student population. As noted in Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) in support of affirmative action in the Michigan Supreme Court case, all students benefit from having a diverse student population in the classroom. Each course also addresses Johnson's (1998) concern about the value of personal narrative because narrative is linked to rather than separated from developing discipline-specific skills. Finally, each of these courses offers students the opportunity to understand power in White spaces. Mason's (1994) concern that the students in the classroom are assumed to be part of the mainstream power structure and have the cultural and social capital to benefit from the total leveling of power in the classroom is disrupted. Allowing students to recognize and work with the link between the individual and the larger social world also permits persuasive power on the part of both the instructor and other students "to push and goad students to learn" (p. 39).

Considering the Argument: Shift, Don't Shrug

In an article about reconsidering the application of service learning in the classroom, I ended with the sentence, "Shift, don't shrug" (Barajas, 2002). There are two reasons why this comment is important to this chapter. First, understanding that General College is a particular model of developmental education requires looking at a wide variety of projects and approaches. This is a large undertaking for those participating in and documenting the development of General College as well as for those reading about it. Sometimes such a large undertaking is easy to shrug away as unnecessary. Second, in many cases, developmental educators and higher education professionals in general need to consider that the link between an educational institution's intent and the actual effectiveness for students may be two different things (Astin, 1989). A shift in thinking rather than a shrug of indifference requires more focus on what is actually happening in a student's educational process as opposed to assuming what is happening. Once again, we must push the education envelope by noticing how we as professionals in institutions tend to operate under the assumptions of deficit models and normative socialization by not engaging in multicultural theory and practice. This is the purpose of looking at practice through a theoretical lens and of creating mental models. Theory and models help us visually observe what we do and recognize what kinds of assumptions continually creep into our best intentions and handcuff us to comply rather than free us to act.

Gurin et al. (2002) found that developmental theorists emphasize that discontinuity and discrepancy spur cognitive growth in students. The same is true for educational professionals and organizations. We spur growth by emphasizing the discontinuity and discrepancy in our thinking and practice, placing what we do inside theory and models, and shifting when needed. We can shift by using our sociological imaginations. We can shift by valuing student awareness of education as a White space. We can shift by considering how all students negotiate White space regardless of majority or nonmajority status. We can shift by placing our institutions, our organizations, our practices, and ourselves in a multicultural, developmental education model and reflecting on, then acting on, and hopefully expanding on what we find.

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Building Voice and Developing Academic Literacy for Multilingual Students: The Commanding English Model

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ABSTRACT

Commanding English (CE) is a model program for multilingual students who lack fluency in academic English but may not fit well into traditional ESL programs. CE situates language development within the academic content of first-year coursework, placing students into the college curriculum and allowing them to earn the credit of the freshman year. Faculty, staff, and advisors collaborate to support students as they build voice and competence within the context of a multicultural curriculum that acknowledges the strengths of these students. This chapter describes a comprehensive program for second-language students in the General College.

The fall term has begun, and among the crowd of nervous and excited first-year students is Ifrah. A young woman of Somali heritage, Ifrah came to the United States 4 years ago, after having spent the previous 5 years living in a refugee camp in Kenya. Ifrah recently graduated from a local high school, where she earned above-average grades. She enjoyed being involved in the school's Somali Student Association, and she also participated in the school's Education and Public Service small learning community. Through this program, she served as a volunteer tutor to younger Somali students. Although Ifrah is proud of her accomplishments, she continues to find the demands of academic English challenging. While she feels confident using English with customers at her cashiering job at the Mall of America, she had a hard time taking the ACT, which was required for her admission to the University. She struggled to read the questions within the time limit, and she was disappointed with her ACT test results. As Ifrah begins her freshman year, she wonders how she will get through the stack of textbooks in her backpack. She

wonders how well she will understand and take notes on the lectures in her anthropology class and how she will write the seemingly endless number of essays her courses require. Yet Ifrah knows that she must persevere through all of these challenges in order to realize her goal of becoming a nurse.

The Commanding English (CE) Program at the University of Minnesota was designed for students like Ifrah. This program was founded in the late 1970s in response to increasing numbers of Southeast Asian immigrant students in the General College (GC) who were underprepared for full academic coursework, yet unable, with their limited financial aid, to afford the higher tuition rates of the noncredit English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for international students on campus. Now, a quarter of a century later, the program continues to serve Southeast Asians, as well as other immigrant and refugee communities, including students from various countries in West and East Africa, Eastern Europe, Tibet, and Central and South America. Unlike traditional stand-alone ESL programs for international students, which focus on precollege language skills, the Commanding English program builds language support and academic orientation into an entire freshman curriculum of courses so that students can acquire a richer, more contextualized academic literacy, find support and connections through the first year of college, and do the academic work of the freshman year. In the process of addressing the real academic needs of the freshman year, the Commanding English program fosters small learning communities, encourages collaboration among students and staff, promotes multiculturalism through the content of the curriculum, and supports students' development of voice.

Our goal in this chapter is to situate the Commanding English program within a theoretical framework of best practices in the intersections of developmental education, literacy and learning communities, and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) pedagogy. We describe the practical application of these best practices in the Commanding English program through an overview of the CE curriculum. We share evaluation data from the program to demonstrate not only the successes of the program but also the challenges. Finally, we conclude with some thoughts on implementing a CE-type curriculum in other educational contexts.

“Generation 1.5” Students

The number of second language students graduating from U.S. high schools has been growing since immigration policy changed in the 1970s; in fact, second language students are the fastest growing student population (Short, 2000). For example, according to last year's statistics from the Minnesota Department of Education (2003), nine high schools in Minneapolis and St.

Paul designate over one third of their students as “Limited English Proficient.” In New York, according to 1997 data collected in the City University of New York (CUNY) system, 48% of the first-year students had been born abroad (Bailey & Weininger, 2002, p. 363). This U.S. resident student coming from a home language other than English has been given a variety of labels: “Generation 1.5” (Harklau, Siegal, & Losey, 1999); multilingual (Zamel, 2004); Limited-English Proficient (LEP); English Language Learner (ELL); ESL; bilingual. Equally varied are the students’ educational experiences and backgrounds, from a fully educated, multilingual Bosnian refugee to a Sudanese adolescent who has had no formal schooling before arriving in the United States.

ESL Language Programs Versus Academic Literacy

When Generation 1.5 students enter U.S. colleges, their scores on English language placement tests may cause them to be designated as ESL once again, even when they have been in the U.S. for years or possibly were even born here. The academic language that students are expected to deal with at the college level, the discourse patterns, terminology, and embedded sentence structures are not part of daily-life English (Swales, 1990). For students who have not done much academic reading in their own language because they switched over to schools in the U.S., this difficulty is compounded. Oral fluency in English can be developed relatively quickly in the high school setting, but academic English skills take much longer to build (Cummins, 1981; Thomas & Collier, 1997). The college placement creates tensions, particularly if the ESL designation places students into noncredit skills-based courses designed for international students.

How well prepared a student is likely to be for the rigors of college will depend on the student’s previous education, the amount of mentoring and connections available, the kinds of support offered in college, how familiar the family is with higher education, or financial aid available; this list can go on and on. Research points to a number of important considerations:

1. Age of entry to the U.S. and U.S. schools impacts literacy in the native language as well as in English, and where there is a lack of literacy in the first language, second language skills take much longer to acquire (Thomas & Collier, 1997). A student who has graduated from high school in the native country will have a stronger literacy background than a student who switches countries in the middle of junior high.

2. Changing to a new language of instruction in and of itself can cause interrupted education if there are no solid bilingual programs in place. It can take 6 to 10 years to reach grade-level parity in a second language (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

3. Interruptions in education or simply having an educational background from outside of the U.S. can mean gaps in the cultural and academic knowledge expected of college students (Spack, 2004).

4. Students receiving ESL services in school are often tracked in ways that impede strong academic preparation for college (Roberge, 2002; Smoke, 2001).

5. Oral fluency may mask difficulties with academic English (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000).

6. Issues of identity are complicated; for some students, being “American” rather than “ESL” or “foreign” is important. There may also be cultural conflicts between the worlds of school or college and home or family (Blanton, 1999; Leki, 1999).

7. There may be heavy family or economic responsibilities and pressures, especially for students who are supporting family members in the home country or serving as the primary culture-brokers and interpreters for families in the U.S. (Detzner, Xiong, & Eliason, 1999).

This list predicts a number of difficulties that students may find as they transition into higher education. Balancing these difficulties are strong family values, motivation and investment in higher education, a maturity that comes from being bilingual and bicultural, community support, and a willingness to seek assistance from writing centers and other sources of tutorial help. Nevertheless, the need for a supportive academic climate is clear, and this need extends beyond “learning English” as a discrete set of skills.

Acquiring Academic Language and Literacy Skills

One problem with stand-alone skills classes is that they focus on language learning rather than the development of academic literacy. Gee (2004) claimed that reading outside of a discourse is empty decoding. “Literacy is mastered through acquisition, not learning; that is, it requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful, and functional settings” (p. 57). If academic literacy is something that is acquired through practice, not learned in discrete lessons, then it is important to design a program that incorporates real academic work. From a language acquisition point of view, language is best learned in authentic, naturalistic environments where it can be acquired together with content-area knowledge (Krashen, 1982; Zamel, 2004). Vygotsky (1978) and his proponents (Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; McCafferty, 1994) held that language ability develops together with the learner’s understanding of the world, and that the development of language and the development of knowledge in a given subject matter are mutually facilitative. It is not enough to work on English because language proficiency

is only part of what is needed; just as important are study skills, time management, critical thinking, and the acquisition of content-area knowledge. Students need to know how to shape an academic argument, how to synthesize opposing viewpoints in historical documents, and how to evaluate and cite sources, just to name a few of the academic skills that are necessary for success. Learning to do this takes time; the “process of acquisition is slow-paced and continues to evolve with exposure, immersion, and involvement . . . learning is responsive to situations in which students are invited to participate in the construction of meaning and knowledge” (Zamel, 2004, p. 13).

Content-based instruction in a curriculum that integrates language skills and content knowledge enables immigrants and refugees to acquire this college-level academic literacy in a way that engages students and supports retention (Adamson, 1993; Harklau et al., 1999; Kaspar, 2000; Murie & Thomson, 2001; Spack, 2004; Zamel, 1998). Situating the CE program within the content of the freshman year allows students to read and write extensively and with sustained content in ways that a stand-alone ESL curriculum would not. Figure 1 outlines some of the contrasts between a traditional ESL program for international students, with its focus on language, and a content-based integrated program like Commanding English.

Finding Place and Voice in College

As permanent residents and graduates of U.S. high schools, multilingual students are expected to face the same academic challenges as the mainstream college population. University students are expected to participate actively and often cooperatively in class; read articles and textbooks that are written in formal, academic language; synthesize information and form opinions; produce papers; and know how to communicate effectively and appropriately with professors. The various demands of the university setting can be difficult for any first-generation college student, particularly if the student’s home language is not English. First-year students must acquire “insider knowledge of the rhetorical communities [they] wish to enter” (Soter, 1992, p. 31). This insider knowledge is inevitably less accessible to multilingual students than to native English speakers, because it is implicit and culturally based. Collins (2001) observed that immigrant and refugee students may feel like outsiders in the university setting. One of our goals in the CE program is to reduce this sense of alienation among students who must overcome both linguistic and cultural barriers in order to succeed. There are various aspects of the program that help to create a space in which multilingual students can find place and develop voice during the freshman year, including small class sizes, learning communities, our close collaboration with advisors and with the writing cen-

	TRADITIONAL ESL MODEL	COMMANDING ENGLISH MODEL
Program Goal	Acquiring language	Acquiring academic literacy
Level of Instruction	Pre-college	College level
College Credits	Primarily non-credit bearing	Credit bearing courses
Pedagogical Focus	<p><i>Skills-based courses in:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading (shorter) reading passages reading skills, strategies); 2. Writing (“process approach,” essay topics created by instructor); 3. Listening (strategies for comprehension of native speaker vernacular); 4. Grammar (mastery of grammar rules of English). 	<p><i>Content-based courses in:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Different content/discipline areas (e.g., biology, sociology, literature, writing anthropology, arts); 2. Sustained reading in a discipline area connected to college content courses; 3. Using language and study strategies for reading 2 chapters a week; 4. Studying for college course tests (e.g., anatomy, biology, etc.); 5. Writing college-level academic/research papers in discipline areas such as anthropology and literature; 6. Acquiring grammar competence that is connected to developing editing strategies for writing.
Advising Focus	Visa regulation, ESL requirements	Course selection, transfer planning, choosing majors
Target Population	International students who are fully literate, comfortable reading and writing in their first language	A complex composition of resident students who brings diverse language and literacy experiences to the first year of college

Figure 1. A comparison of traditional ESL models and the Commanding English model.

ter's undergraduate peer tutors, process-based composition pedagogy, and the multicultural content of the Commanding English curriculum.

The Specifics of the CE Curriculum

The Commanding English program is a mandatory program for U.S. resident students admitted to the University of Minnesota who have been in the U.S. for only part of their schooling (currently defined at 8 years or fewer), whose home language is not English, and whose test scores indicate a need for English support as they enter the University. An ACT reading or English part score below 18 triggers a request for a Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score, as a better measure of English language proficiency than the ACT for the UMN Admissions Office. Students who score between 145 and 207 on the TOEFL or between 65 and 79 on the MELAB are placed into Commanding English for their freshman year.

Students enroll in the program full time for the entire academic year, earning 12 to 15 credits per semester. In the fall, to build a strong learning community and for ease of registration, courses are grouped together in sets, so that the same students will take basic writing, the grammar workshop, oral communication, and sociology, for example, together with the accompanying adjunct reading course. In the spring students choose their own sections of courses, based on schedule preference or, for the second writing course, on their preference of research topic. Second semester course offerings include immigration literature, research writing, and a second content course with its paired reading course. Students in the sciences typically add a math course this semester as well. At the end of the year, then, a CE student has filled the following college requirements: first-year writing, speech, literature, and two courses that fulfill a requirement in social science, humanities, or a science with a lab (see Figure 2).

As discussed earlier, acknowledging this interdependency of content knowledge and language learning, the CE curriculum builds language support into typical first-year courses so that students study the content and earn the credit of the freshman year. The language support is constructed in several ways. Where communication is central (e.g., writing, speech, grammar workshop), there are separate CE-designated sections, allowing for attention to second-language concerns and creating an environment in which students are less likely to be silenced by others in the classroom who have the advantages of full fluency in English. Where content is central (e.g., biology, anthropology, sociology, arts), CE students enroll in sections with other students in the college but have the benefit of a two-credit adjunct reading class for CE students

COURSES IN THE COMMANDING ENGLISH PROGRAM

Fall Semester 2003

- GC 1041 DEVELOPING COLLEGE READING 2 credits
Comprehension and study strategies necessary for college textbook reading. This course uses the textbook from one of the content courses below. Previewing the textbook for content and organization, underlining and making marginal notes, outlining, anticipating test questions, and technical vocabulary.
- Content courses: Choose one (These all fill requirements at the U of M)
- GC 1211 PEOPLE AND PROBLEMS (sociology) 4 credits
GC 1311 GENERAL ART 3 credits
GC 1131 PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE 4 credits
- GC 1051 INTRO TO COLLEGE WRITING: WORKSHOP 2 credits
This is a grammar workshop that focuses on developing editing skills and accuracy in written English through practice with grammar trouble-spots, editing strategies, and sentence combining.
- GC 1421 WRITING LABORATORY I 3 credits
This is the first of a two-semester writing sequence required at the University. Focus is on reading and writing expository/analytical texts centered on the topic of education.
- GC 1461 ORAL COMMUNICATION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE 3 credits
Through discussion, prepared speeches, and debates, students develop strategies for effective oral communication. Theories of communication, ethics, citizenship, persuasion, language use.
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Spring Semester 2004

- GC 1042 READING IN THE CONTENT AREAS 2 credits
Taken in conjunction with an academic content course; additional practice with reading and study strategies specific to reading in a particular content area.
- Content courses: Choose one
- GC 1285 CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY 4 credits
GC 1135 BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE: THE HUMAN BODY 4 credits
GC 1311 GENERAL ART 3 credits
- GC 1422 WRITING LABORATORY II 3 credits
Academic, research-based writing. Readings, essay assignments explore a topic of contemporary interest. Summaries, analysis, and research writing. Fills 1st year writing requirement.
- GC 1364 LITERATURE OF THE AMERICAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE 3 credits
Exploration of American immigrant experiences, both historical and contemporary, through readings in fiction, expository prose, biography, and oral history. Course includes substantial reading, discussion, journal writing, essays, and a class project.
- Some students add courses such as Math, Career Planning, Physical Education in the spring semester, based on program approval.
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Figure 2. Courses in the Commanding English Program.

only that uses the textbooks from the linked content course. Figure 2 lists the courses currently offered through Commanding English. All of the courses are credit bearing, and most fulfill specific requirements at the University.

Developing Academic Writing

Like all first-year students in the college, Commanding English students have two semester-long writing classes that are held in networked computer classrooms, allowing for a workshop setting in the writing classes where students type or research while the instructor circulates and responds to writing in progress. The overarching goal of the two basic writing courses is to build writing proficiency and confidence with academic writing: having a point to make that communicates importance, backing that point up with discussion, taking a stance in writing, and using a variety of sources (e.g., self, others in class, articles, library research, interviews). The first writing course begins with a literacy narrative, in which the writer explores an aspect of his or her education, and then progresses to more source-based writing, building to a focused research paper of six to eight pages. The second writing course centers around a particular theme, and students work up to a 10 to 15 page research project. This includes tasks such as writing position statements, creating annotated bibliographies, summarizing articles, and critically analyzing citation sources. By the end of the year in Commanding English, students will have written at least eight papers in the CE writing classes alone, two involving fairly extensive research.

CE sections of the two writing courses adhere closely to the standards and underlying principles of all of the writing courses in the General College. Students work on remarkably similar writing problems: developing a stance toward a topic, being organized, supporting general statements with specific examples, citing sources in American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) format, and approximating academic tone. Commanding English sections of the writing courses do acknowledge the constraints of writing in a second language and differ from the other writing sections in basically four ways:

1. There is less graded in-class writing where students are asked to produce a short paper during class time, acknowledging the time that students need to formulate and write in a second language.

2. Readings and assignments are chosen mindful of topics for which students may have limited background information or of readings where the vocabulary load or length is not justified in a course where the focus is on writing.

3. Major papers go through three drafts, with the second draft specifically for purposes of attending to language and style, because the constraints of

second-language writing make it more likely that writers will struggle more with word choice and grammar.

4. There is a writing consultant, an undergraduate peer tutor from the GC Writing Center, present in the classroom, increasing students' access to one-on-one consultation about writing as they work, and strengthening ties with the Writing Center so that students are more likely to use it as a resource outside of class.

In all other aspects, these CE sections are similar to the other sections of the course in terms of the number of papers, amount of reading, goals of the course, credits earned, and so on.

Developing Grammatical Accuracy

During fall semester, in addition to the writing class, CE students enroll in a linked grammar editing workshop, where the focus is on building language editing strategies, overviewing the kinds of language troublespots that English causes (e.g., verb tense, agreement, soft -ed endings, sentence boundaries), and examining the kinds of errors marked by the writing teacher in the editing drafts of the papers from the basic writing course. This combination of explicit language information, practice with editing strategies, and attention to one's individual grammar errors reaches a wide range of students, from those who have studied English formally as a language and are familiar with intricacies of grammar rules, to students who have learned English more informally and may have a strong sense of idiom without knowing grammar terminology in much detail.

As an example, a student writer who has difficulty with past tense versus present tense consistency in writing may need (a) strategies for slowing down the proofreading process to make it more deliberate, (b) some knowledge and guidelines about using the present tense to signal general truth in contrast to simple past tense for past time events, or (c) practice differentiating between past and present tense verb forms. By working on grammar within the context of the student's own writing from this three-pronged approach (strategies, knowledge, practice), there is a better chance of effective learning than a student would get from simply having errors circled on a paper or being told to "go to the writing lab." The focus on editing is also continued in all of the writing classes at the final draft stage of paper writing.

Developing Academic Voice

Although accuracy is a feature of academic writing, writing instruction that moves beyond error correction to the wider development of academic voice is critical for multilingual students. CE writing instructors are well aware of what Shaughnessy (1977) called the "damage that has been done to students

in the name of correct writing” (p. 9) and the loss of confidence these learners have often experienced through aggressive error correction of their writing. The focus on grammar error in writing instruction for multilingual students, although obviously necessary for the full development of academic literacy, often tends to be disproportionate, and it becomes, in effect, a focus on deficit. Zamel (1998) recommended that we should look for evidence of students’ intelligence, and if necessary reread students’ attempts as coherent efforts once we have overcome the tendency to be distracted by sentence-level errors. In short, she said, “value—don’t just evaluate” (p. 263). The multi-draft approach that we use in CE writing assignments gives us the opportunity to show students that we value what they write. Students receive extensive feedback on first drafts both from instructors and from each other, and the feedback at this stage is exclusively on ideas and content. In the writing classes, then, we offer what Zamel (2004) called “multiple opportunities to use language and write-to-learn . . . classroom exchanges and assignments that promote the acquisition of unfamiliar language, concepts and approaches to inquiry” (p. 14).

In the attempt to encourage voice by reading beyond our students’ errors, we do not seek to nurture student personal voice at the expense of academic voice. As Johns (1999) pointed out, personal identity or expressivist approaches to teaching are inward looking and can fail to prepare students for success in the larger environment of the academy. Although we focus strongly on the development of voice, we certainly do not limit the focus of student writing to personal experience. On the contrary, only one graded assignment in the writing courses, which is the first one of the year, is based on students’ own life experience; they then begin to incorporate textual sources and to practice the “experience of remembering others’ work, referencing it, pulling it in at just the right place in one’s own emerging text, transforming it to serve one’s own ends, and giving it space without privileging it over one’s own words” (Blanton, 1999, p. 137).

For those students who are struggling with pronunciation or who might otherwise feel inhibited by their English, being in basic writing classes and in the editing workshop, which are offered exclusively for multilingual students, can make participation in class discussions and peer review sessions more comfortable. These CE classes validate and support the needs of some for a place to ask questions and work on skills related to language without fear of judgment by native-speaker students who may not understand those needs. Although the importance of this “safe” place is paramount for some students, others are more eager to be in mainstream classes alongside U.S. American freshmen. In fact, most cohorts include a few students who, at least in the beginning of the academic year, resent what they see as their “segrega-

tion” from the mainstream. These students regard Commanding English as a synonym for ESL, a label with which they are understandably tired of being identified. Such students tend to “feel strongly that they should not be placed differently from other U.S. high school graduates” (Blanton, 1999, p. 123). We are sensitive to this issue, and in addition to having our students take mainstream content classes in General College, we have also begun to offer seats in one of our own courses, GC 1364 Literature of American Immigrant Experience, discussed in more detail later in this chapter, to students from outside the CE program. As Kutz, Groden, and Zamel (1993) asserted, validation of student voice and nurturing of student confidence should be a priority during the freshman year, but our experience shows that there is no “one size fits all” way to honor that priority.

Developing Oral Communication Skills

Because most CE students have been in the U.S. for 1 to 8 years and have graduated from U.S. high schools, there is less need for the listening and speaking components of a traditional ESL program designed for recently-arrived international students. CE students do not need to learn conversational English expression. Although speech may be accented and some students may still be uncomfortable speaking in class discussions on academic content, there is a general competence in conversational English. Rather than a traditional ESL speaking class, the CE program offers its own sections of college speech where students work on formal academic presentation skills and researching and organizing informative and persuasive speeches on a variety of current topics. Students discuss strategies for compensating for accented speech, such as using visual aids, paraphrasing, checking for comprehension, and slowing the rate of speech. On an individual basis, some accent reduction work is available, but this is not a formal component of the class. Students comment frequently that the speech course makes a difference in their confidence in speaking in front of a class. In the reading adjunct courses students also prepare small group presentations of course information, building on the strategies learned in the speech course.

Developing Academic Reading Proficiency

All of the courses in the CE curriculum demand significant amounts of reading. Students analyze articles assigned in the writing courses; they read and research for their speeches, and all of the classes use college-level textbooks. A typical third week of spring semester might include 37 pages of anatomy, two chapters covering the skeletal system and genetic engineering and cloning, 115 pages of literature from Anzia Yezierska’s (1925/1975) immigrant novel *Bread Givers*, and 10 pages of reading in the human rights research writing course,

including a *Newsweek* (Levin, 1982) article on building a case for torture as well as numerous Web sites that the class is evaluating. Where we deliberately focus on reading proficiency in the curriculum is in the reading adjunct courses and the three-credit college literature course, *Literature of the American Immigrant Experience*. In the literature course, students build fluency through extensive reading (50 to 70 pages per night), at the same time that they are studying literature. In the reading adjuncts the focus is on academic reading.

Following the TRIO model of providing small seminar-style support courses linked to discipline-specific content courses, we have developed reading adjunct courses that combine the supplemental support with focused reading instruction (see Chapter 19 for a discussion of the TRIO program and Supplemental Instruction). Current choices of linked content courses in *Commanding English* are Cultural Anthropology, *People and Problems* (sociology), General Art (humanities), and two biology courses: General Biology and Human Anatomy. Students register for both the “content” course and the paired reading adjunct course, using the same textbooks for both classes. The adjunct courses emphasize reading skills within the context of their particular content areas, offering students extra time to study course material, a safe place to ask questions, an opportunity to review notes together with peers, and so on.

All the reading adjuncts courses work with students on developing their academic vocabulary, reading and note-taking strategies, study skills, critical thinking, and metacognitive awareness. Reading instructors facilitate review of the content course material, provide students with time to share lecture notes, clarify content course assignments and concepts mentioned in the content class, and mediate discussion on how to process and analyze the content area knowledge and how to study for course exams and quizzes. The reading adjunct courses help the students build academic vocabulary in ways that allow them to participate actively in the learning process, for example, through predicting or choosing the vocabulary to study for tests, designing mock quizzes, and presenting review sessions for each other. By taking ownership of part of the course curriculum such as negotiating vocabulary learning standards and designing quizzes, the students not only become more autonomous and successful learners, but also build metacognitive awareness of the learning experience that can be applied to future academic work.

The reading courses all have different focuses, because reading in social science, for example, is different from reading in biology. The human anatomy reading course places emphasis on helping students understand and memorize discipline-specific terminology, including affixes commonly used

in the health sciences. Unlike other reading adjunct courses that can focus more on global concepts and critical reading, the human anatomy reading course assists students with strategies for memorizing terms and concepts, reading anatomy charts, and studying for difficult multiple choice tests. In contrast, the adjunct courses for sociology and general art explicitly teach reading strategies, such as Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R; Robinson, 1961, described in Pauk, 1993) and reading skills such as highlighting important sentences of a paragraph, paraphrasing, paying attention to pronoun references (e.g., she, he, they, it, these, that) in the text, differentiating reader opinion and the author's point of view, and reading for implied meaning. One focus of the anthropology adjunct draws the students' attention to the rhetorical structure of academic articles in anthropology. This reading adjunct course also tries to establish a link between the textbook and the students' lives through accurate understanding of course material, critical thinking, and a four-step response process involving: (a) personal response to the reading; (b) literal response to the reading; (c) interpretation of the reading; and (d) application to self, life, or a given context through experiential learning such as role-play and short simulations. The general biology adjunct course not only focuses on discipline-specific terminology learning, but also leads the students to compare the rhetorical differences between academic scientific and popular science writings in terms of audience, sentence structure, essay organization, and accuracy of information and sources. Students choose specific topics from the biology class in order to carry out this comparison and then create poster presentations of their findings both on the topics and the differences between the sources they used. All these focuses on different aspects of the reading process by different adjunct courses work together to assist the students in becoming not only competent but also critical readers of particular academic genres.

A close connection between the content course and the reading adjunct course is essential. The CE instructor designs the reading course to follow the goals and schedule of the connected lecture course. In the sociology pair, for example, the sociology syllabus lists the following goals: (a) we will learn to read social science texts, including summarizing articles and analyzing the author's main point; (b) after practicing the skill to summarize theoretical arguments and critique them in class orally, we will learn to write a social science paper, including how to compare and contrast our own ideas from the articles read in class; and (c) ultimately, our goal is to be able to back up our own points of view on various issues after a thoughtful exploration of the topic.

The sociology reading adjunct syllabus responds directly to these goals through its own objectives. Objectives for academic reading skills include:

1. Preview a book and chapter for content and organization.
 2. Form questions about previewed material and read to answer these questions.
 3. Highlight or underline main ideas and key supporting details, take notes on reading, and summarize.
 4. Organize information into maps, outlines, or study cards.
 5. Identify possible test items for review.
- Objectives for reading analysis include:
1. Determine the author's purpose and point of view.
 2. Distinguish between fact and opinion.
 3. Recognize two sides of an argument and the evidence given for each.
 4. Make inferences.

These reading objectives not only echo the general goals of the sociology class but also lay out the specific reading strategies to achieve these general goals (Zhang, 2002).

Besides reading skills and strategies, the reading courses also teach students a wide range of language, academic, and study skills. These include self-regulatory strategies such as time management, procedural skills such as understanding the routine of college classes, and strategic skills in the institution such as how to seek help from professors and teaching assistants. All of this is situated within the context of an academic discipline.

This close connection between the content-area college course and the adjunct reading course has led to consistently higher performance by the CE students compared with their native English speaker peers in the same class. For example, the average final grades earned by CE students during the last three semesters in the GC 1135 Human Anatomy course were consistently a full letter grade higher than final grades for non-CE students. In GC 1131 Principles of Biological Science, the same pattern of grades has been observed. The final grades for CE students in the fall 2003 section of GC 1131 averaged an A-, at least one full letter grade higher than the average final grade for non-CE students (Moore & Christensen, 2005). These successful, measurable outcomes are a result of accountability and motivation on the part of instructors and students alike.

Collaborative Nature of the Program

One of the strengths of Commanding English is the collaboration that a small, integrated program allows among teachers, advisors, and students. The small class size of 15 to 17 students provides opportunities for individual attention from the instructor, closer relationships and bonds with fellow students, and an easier environment in which to ask questions and voice opin-

ions. The connected courses in the curriculum and the close work with program advisors all contribute to the success of the program.

Creating Learning Communities

Mlynarczyk and Babbit (2002) described the strengths of learning communities in academic programs for academic progress and retention. By situating learning within a structure in which students take courses together and teachers and advisors collaborate to support student success, students have a place to belong on campus. For fall semester Commanding English students enroll in “sets” of classes together as a cohort, where they collaborate and lead class discussions and participate in small-group presentations and projects, all of which help build a sense of academic community. The diversity of students, the comfort level students gain in classes together, and high academic motivation all work to set a tone that encourages academic performance in the program.

Students develop relationships with each other and with the program that may last throughout their university experience. Students often report that they have developed study groups outside of class and maintained connections with each other long after their year in the Commanding English program. Later on, students return to Commanding English to share their struggles as well as their successes. At the end of the year, a handful of CE “alumni” are brought in as graduating seniors to talk to students in the program about their experiences at the University: how they chose a major, how they survived difficult courses, what internships or other programs they have found; and what advice they would pass on to the “graduating freshmen” as they move out of CE into the sophomore year. The importance of having a place to belong on campus cannot be underestimated.

A Connected Curriculum

In the curriculum itself there is close connection between courses, and this close connection fosters both collaboration among instructors and a coherence of instruction for students. The most obvious connection is found in the reading courses that are paired with content courses. The reading courses, in addition to providing students with the kinds of reading and language support described earlier in this chapter, also provide the content professors with an ESL colleague with whom to consult on questions of course material and pedagogy for the CE students in their classes. The reading instructors also collaborate with each other to ensure that a variety of reading skills and strategies is offered in the different reading courses, so that no two reading adjuncts are alike. A second clear link in the CE curriculum is between the grammar class and the first-semester writing course. Students apply editing

strategies learned in the grammar class to the drafts they are working on in the writing course, forging an important link between grammar study and application. This also creates collaboration between the two instructors and the Writing Center consultant who are working with that group of students.

Specialized Advising

Commanding English advisors work closely and collaboratively with staff and students in the program. They answer questions about college policies, course and major selection, and respond to the special concerns of refugee and immigrant students, such as the strain of working to support family members while managing full-time education. When a student appears to be having academic or personal difficulty, the advisor is notified through an academic alert system. Here it is important that the program has advisors who are sensitive to cross-cultural communication and who know how to listen between the lines. The advisor also works intensively with the students on making connections beyond CE: planning transfer to a degree-granting college of the University, choosing a major, looking for student groups to join, participating in mentorship programs, and exploring job opportunities.

The very nature of the program, with small classes, paired courses, special advisors, and a small teaching staff, encourages connections and opportunities for students to collaborate and learn from each other. Some students may resent the closeness at times, but it provides an environment in which they can develop a confident voice. At the end of the academic year, students tend to leave CE in groups and continue to benefit from the mutually supportive community formed during their freshman year in the program. As Tinto (1998) pointed out, this kind of shared learning through connection to the learning community increases student motivation, and this subsequently contributes positively to student persistence, which will be discussed in further detail at the end of this chapter.

Multiculturalism in the Curriculum

In addition to developing a learning community within the safe space of the program, Commanding English offers a multicultural curriculum in keeping not only with its own program goals but also the mission of General College overall. Multicultural education is defined in the General College community as being far more than an attempt to acknowledge diversity. Indeed, according to Miksch, Bruch, Higbee, Jehangir, and Lundell (2003), who piloted a *Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation* (MAP IT; Miksch, Higbee, et al., 2003) within GC, diversity itself “includes a wider variety of social groups than race and ethnicity alone . . . such as home language,

religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, and disability” (p. 5). Also, for education to be truly multicultural, it must do more than provide students with the opportunity to celebrate their own social groups and perspectives. Rather, it is an orientation within the college that goes beyond merely inserting units of multicultural study into the main curriculum, moving towards a “transformative agenda” that “better serves the interests of all groups, especially those groups who historically have been marginalized” (Miksch, Bruch, et al., 2003, p. 7). The multicultural content of the CE classes seeks to offset some of the marginalization and the sense of cultural isolation to which many minority students attest (Collins, 2001).

One example in the CE curriculum of a course that gives students the opportunity (but not the obligation) to position themselves as the bicultural, bilingual experts they are, is the Life Histories or Ethnographic Research class offered as one of the sections of the research writing course in the spring semester. In the class, students are trained to interview an elder (three interviews for a total of 5 to 6 hours), to research events in that elder’s life, and to write a 20- to 25-page ethnographic life history of the interviewee. Students are free to choose whether to interview an elder from their own or another community, but the majority of students do choose someone from within their own immigrant group. The elders frequently tell their stories in their native languages, and in these cases, the students must not only collect but also translate the material, as well as organize it into chronological sections that also contain textual research of background events. It is a complex task, but it is one that is built on the foundations of the considerable cultural and linguistic expertise that students already have, an expertise that is seldom recognized or rewarded in mainstream classes (Murie, Collins, & Detzner, 2004). The process exemplifies what Johns (1999) called the development of “socioliteracy,” through which students apply their knowledge to “analysis and critique of known and new texts” (p. 163). As they construct the life history papers, students are expected to combine textual research (new texts) with the material gathered from interviews, which, while not necessarily “known,” is more likely to be familiar and accessible in terms of background knowledge and culture when students interview elders from their own community. By its very nature, the course validates the identities of the elders and of the students who interview them. Such validation of identity is extremely important for encouraging confidence and voice for some students. This course also creates a place in the curriculum for the students’ own histories.

Again, we do not assume that all students need this particular kind of validation. As previously mentioned, they are not *required* to interview elders within their own communities; to do so would be exploitative. The class itself is just one offering among several sections of basic research writing from

which students choose according to their own preference. Spring 2004 choices included a section that was designed to dovetail with the sociology course and lead to research on topics of race, class, and gender within the United States. One strength of this topic choice for students is that the readings and assignments of the writing course and those of the sociology course complement each other in such a way that students have the opportunity to focus on social problems in greater depth than they might otherwise do, and therefore they are able to discuss and write about certain topics with a greater sense of competence. For those with an interest in social problems beyond the U.S., a good choice frequently offered for the spring research writing course is the topic of international human rights. This subject matter acknowledges the experiences CE students themselves may have had and validates an international focus. Research topics chosen by students in recent years have included the connection between the caste system and poverty in India and the extent to which the United Nations (UN) *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1981) has been effective in protecting women's rights in two of its signatory nations. Another topic choice for basic research writing focuses on issues of biomedical ethics and genetic engineering. This is a demanding but popular topic for many current CE students who have a high level of interest in health science careers.

Another example of multicultural content in the program curriculum is the three-credit course we designed: Literature of the American Immigrant Experience (GC 1364). This course is part of the spring curriculum in CE. As previously mentioned, it was originally offered exclusively to our own students, but over the past 2 years we have opened seats to any undergraduates at the University. This literature course explores the common themes of U.S. immigration history through literature written by and about immigrants. Texts for the course typically include four novels. In the year 2004, for example, the list included *Thousand Pieces of Gold* (McCunn, 1981), *Bread Givers* (Yeziarska, 1925/1975), *No-No Boy* (Okada, 1976), and *Odyssey to the North* (Bencastro, 1998). As an alternative, the students can choose three novels and an anthology of short stories, including *Imagining America* edited by Brown and Ling (2002), or *Hungry Hearts* by Yeziarska (1920/1996). Texts also include poetry and supplemental readings relating historical or current events or contexts to the literature being studied. Although students often find the reading load of approximately 50 to 100 pages per class period challenging at first, they tend to warm to the task as they begin to recognize that many of the themes discussed have relevance to their own lives or the lives of those around them. Collins (2001) reported that students "saw themselves as part of a larger group of people who had made their way from another country to make their home in the United States" (p. 16). Moreover, the study revealed

that students' motivation to learn and succeed was positively connected to the relevance of the curriculum to their experiences.

It is important to reiterate at this point that the program fully acknowledges that some of our students may not wish to identify as immigrants or refugees, and in keeping with this, we are careful in designing discussions and assignments never to pressure them to self-disclose, although the opportunity is often there for students who wish to do so. In keeping with this effort not to position students in certain cultural identities, we have also attempted to avoid choosing texts for the course that reflect the specific nationalities of our student population. Given the diversity of students' origins, however—in spring 2004, for example, one section of 26 students identified themselves as having 13 different first languages and 16 different ethnicities—and the impossibility of predicting the cultural backgrounds of all, it is difficult to ensure that text choices are “culture neutral,” so to speak. And, again, just as the safety of CE-only classes is as important to some as the integration of mixed classes is to others, so too the multicultural nature of the curriculum allows space both for students who wish to position themselves as immigrants and for those who do not.

Curriculum From the Student Perspective

Thus far, we have provided a general overview of the Commanding English curriculum, and we would like to consider how the various threads of the curriculum we have described might weave together into the students' experience over the freshman year. Between September and May, students have read five novels, three textbooks (e.g., speech, biology, and sociology), and numerous shorter academic articles. They have written a total of at least 10 papers, including two major research papers with annotated bibliographies. They have given four speeches, several of them based on research, and three to six class presentations. These students have earned 25 to 30 credits and are well positioned for the sophomore year.

Looking more closely at one individual student's experience, we return to the example of Ifrah, the young woman from East Africa introduced at the beginning of this chapter. Well into her freshman year, we see that during her fall semester writing class, she read *The Color of Water* (McBride, 1996), the autobiography of an African American man whose Jewish mother raised a large family in poverty during the 1960s, various articles on aspects of education including the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988), multiculturalism, and how history is taught in U.S. schools (Levine, Lowe, Peterson, & Tenorio, 1995), reflecting on her own educational experiences in relation to these texts. For her research paper, she examined the ESL curriculum in high school and

the extent to which it has proven effective in serving immigrant students. Ifrah used a combination of textual research and interviews to support her findings in this paper, and she went on to share some of it in a persuasive letter to the principal of her former high school, asking that he pay more attention to the needs of the increasing immigrant population of that district. In the editing workshop, Ifrah looked at several of the recurring grammar errors in her own writing, including singular-plural agreement, verb tense, and sentence structure problems, and she learned some rules and techniques for self-correction. In anthropology she read several studies in an anthology by Spradley and McCurdy (2003) about the hidden elements of culture and the difficulties anthropologists experience in truly understanding the cultures they study. Using her new knowledge of anthropology, Ifrah also created a design for an anthropological study of a real-life problem in her own community. In her speech class, Ifrah gave an informative speech on “Capital Punishment: The Death Penalty in the United States” and two persuasive speeches about the abuses of sweatshops and the effects of second-hand smoke on children.

During the second semester, Ifrah, who hopes to major in health sciences, took a human anatomy course in which she struggled with the terminology-laden textbook and the multiple-choice exam format. In the reading adjunct course, she learned how to memorize and study scientific material, and although she failed the first anatomy exam, by the end of the class she had earned a low B, a full grade above the average for the mainstream human anatomy students. In literature, Ifrah resonated with the struggles of Sarah, a young Jewish immigrant in the novel *Bread Givers* (Yeziarska, 1925/1975), and while she enjoyed the contemporary relevance of *Odyssey to the North* (Bencastro, 1998), she found its literary style, with its multiple story and time lines, quite challenging. She took three exams and wrote three essays on literature, and for a final project in that class she collaborated with two classmates to write a fictional Somali immigrant story which, when previewed in class, prompted requests from several other students for copies of the final 25-page project. In her writing class, Ifrah continued to struggle with the frustrations of academic research, and she ended the semester with a nine-page paper on the way Africa is portrayed in U.S. media. She used textual research to show the tendency for biased and incomplete reporting of news about African countries by the Cable News Network (CNN) news Web site, as well as to explore some of the possible reasons for the problem. It was a difficult topic, and disappointed by her grade on that paper, she abandoned her plan to write and send out a persuasive letter to the news editor on the topic. Finally, Ifrah has met with her advisor and worked out a transfer plan for the end of the sophomore year.

Looking ahead, Ifrah has registered for her sophomore fall courses and will begin the chemistry and math sequences that she needs for her major. She has filled the requirements for nursing majors for freshman writing, speech, a literature course with a multicultural focus, one social science, and one science with a lab. She has made numerous friends in the program with whom she plans to keep in touch next year.

Evaluation

Anecdotally, we know that the Commanding English program works for students like Ifrah when we are able to watch their transformation over the freshman year, but we also have more than 25 years of evidence that the program works. The Commanding English Program evaluates itself in a number of ways. As a small program of approximately 60 students, 9 instructors, and one or two advisors, it is not difficult to keep track of how the year is progressing. Two meetings per semester are devoted to discussions of student progress; advisors meet with students around topics of registration and transfer planning, and when an issue appears in the program, we communicate with each other, consult with students, and if possible, make necessary changes. Twice a year students are asked to fill out program evaluations, anonymously, asking for numerical ratings of courses and other aspects of the program as well as narrative answers to such questions as “Did your feeling about the CE program change during the time you were in the program?” The final question asks students to offer suggestions for improving the CE program. On the basis of responses to this question, the program has changed. In the early 1990s, the curriculum had a noncredit reading course during the fall term that used an ESL reading textbook. Students frequently commented that the course lacked interest and that they resented the noncredit status. This course was transformed into the three-credit immigrant literature course now in the curriculum. When we later considered the move to open up seats in the literature course to non-CE students, we polled the current students in the program that year, getting their input, and continued to monitor the change for the next 2 years. Last year, in response to comments about wanting more choice in the curriculum, we added a second biology course, so that students have a science option both semesters.

Student Satisfaction

In addition, Commanding English uses these program evaluations to measure student satisfaction. In these semiannual surveys, we look to measure satisfaction in the responses to the following two questions:

1. Think about your experiences in the CE program during fall and spring

semester. Overall, what do you feel was most important, useful or successful about your experiences in the CE program this year?

2. Overall, what do you feel was least important, useful or successful about your experience in the CE program this year?

Positive comments consistently outweighed negative comments. In the spring of 2004, students wrote 34 positive comments and 12 negative comments. In the fall of 2003, students wrote 49 positive comments and 23 negative comments. In the spring of 2003, students wrote 48 positive comments and 34 negative comments. Positive comments are generally about specific courses, in particular the writing classes, the teachers, the preparation the program offered, the friendly staff, small classes, and opportunities for encouragement. To quote from a few students:

“The CE Program helped me prepare more and gives me a sense of how the life in the U. would be. Most important part is the diversity.”

“Smaller class size helped more one on one contact between the instructors and students. Good support for freshman.”

“Gave me the confidence to move on! Very helpful.”

“I guess spring was more complex and a bit harder than the fall. But, after all I feel good and I gained a lot of knowledge.”

Negative comments usually center around two issues: the lack of course choices and general dissatisfaction with the grammar and reading adjunct courses, in particular because they do not fulfill particular University requirements. A few students also express a desire to be more integrated with other UMN students. A sampling of typical comments follow:

“I did not need reading courses which were not helpful to me. It was extra work for me.”

“Could not choose or take what I wanted.”

“Not knowing other kids outside of CE.”

Typically the spring ratings are higher than the fall, suggesting increased satisfaction with the program. In year-end evaluations, students reported feeling more positive about being in the program. In 2003, 28 students reported feeling more positive about being in the program, 11 students reported feeling neutral, and 6 reported feeling more negative. In 2004, 18 students said they felt more positive about being in the program, 3 reported neutral feelings, and 2 said they felt more negative.

A number of students wrote that they were unsure when they began the program but felt more satisfied at the end. To quote from one response to this question: “At first I thought it was basically like ESL or something, but now I know . . . it’s not ESL, it’s much like the same as a regular program.” Three students commented in the spring 2003 evaluations that they felt more positive now because they believed the program was listening to what students

want. This was the semester when we decided to explore adding another course into the curriculum, in part in response to negative comments in the fall evaluations about the lack of choice in the program. We involved students in choosing which courses to look at, examining textbooks, and ultimately it was a panel of students who made the choice to add the general biology course. Evaluations the following year were higher, perhaps in part because this additional course added another science option in the curriculum.

Retention and Graduation

The more formal way in which we evaluate program outcomes is through gathering retention and graduation data. Roughly every 2 years, the GC Office of Research and Evaluation compiles this data for us. “Commanding English students still show very high retention rates . . . indeed, they are higher than those for GC cohorts as a whole” (Hatfield, 2004). After 5 or 6 years, 49% to 65% of the students who began in Commanding English have either graduated or are in good standing at the University. These statistics are well above the average for the General College, in spite of the fact that CE students are studying in a second or third language, without many of the resources that native-born U.S. students have.

Need for Further Evaluation

We have not conducted systematic longitudinal studies of what students face after they exit Commanding English. Are they able to pursue the majors they had wanted? What is the climate of the university for language-minority students? What factors enable a student to persist? The students who succeed tend to be the ones who keep in touch with us, and so we hear the success stories: (a) the Vietnamese woman who became the commencement speaker at the University of Minnesota’s Institute of Technology graduation; (b) the first Somali cohort of six students who entered the program in 1999, five of whom are now graduated or about to graduate with majors in criminal justice, global studies, public health, biology, and human ecology; (c) the students who went on to graduate school; (d) the students who are now working as computer scientists; (e) the students who have graduated from the business school; or (f) the student who just got accepted into the highly competitive school of nursing on campus. We are less likely to hear from those who did not persist or meet whatever expectations they had set for themselves here at the University. A focused study that looks at the lives of a cohort of students as they go through their 4 or 5 years at the University of Minnesota would be a valuable project.

MODELS OF CONTENT-BASED LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Programs directly modeled after the GC Commanding English Program

University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire

COMMANDING ENGLISH

Serves primarily Hmong students with ACT reading or English part scores below 17. One-year program includes writing, intro to psychology, reading, library skills, critical thinking, academic reading and writing, and human geography. (<http://www.uwec.edu/cep/overview.html>)

Minnesota State University–Mankato

LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Pilot program (2004) to improve academic support for and retention of first-year students whose home language is not English. ESL writing/reading course connected with a social science course (fall) chemistry (spring), two basic writing courses, and a first-year experience seminar. Students work as a cohort, or learning community, receiving special advising and mentoring from the program coordinator.

Other content-based first-year programs

Kingsborough Community College

INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

Content-based ESL learning communities: students enroll in ESL courses paired with a social science or history course, speech, and two student development courses. The pass rate for students in this model surpassed the pass rate for students in the more traditional ESL courses 76% to 58%. For more information see Mlynarczyk and Babbit (2002).

Suffolk University

SHELTERED ESL PROGRAM

For students with minimum TOEFL score of 173. Students enroll in U.S. History, Integrated Studies, Rhetorical Communications, with linked ESL reading and ESL writing courses. Students have the advantage of being in a learning community and having their ESL instruction relate directly to the academic courses they are taking. (<http://sls.suffolk.edu>)

University of California–Berkeley

STUDENT LEARNING CENTER SUPPORT SERVICE

Wide range of academic support services to build academic support into the college curriculum: adjunct courses, workshops, study groups, small-group tutorials, as well as individual tutoring. Some of this adjunct support is targeted toward second-language students, although not labeled directly as such. The aim is to support students with the challenges of rigorous assignments and exams on campus. (Margi Wald, TESOL 2003 presentation: “Building Academic Literacy for College Success,” <http://slc.berkeley.edu/nns/nns.htm>)

Figure 3. Models of Content-Based Language Programs.

Conclusion

What we do know is that Ifrah is now a sophomore. She has stronger writing skills, a sense of reading both in the social sciences and in the health sciences, she has articulated strong opinions on topics that are relevant to her own experiences, and made some lasting friends. Commanding English can point to 25 years of success with students like Ifrah. This model of integrated academic and language work offers a path for students to survive the first year of college; build the academic literacy needed for introductory courses in anthropology, sociology, biology, literature, and writing; and to do so in a way that allows students to have a voice and a place on campus. Because the program extends through the entire first year, students have time to develop their academic writing and reading proficiency in significant ways that allow them to gain confidence with the challenges of a college curriculum.

In describing the Commanding English model, we are mindful that a content-embedded, academic skills program is a specialized English language program, not a replacement for stand-alone ESL programs that may be useful in other contexts. (See Figure 3 for ways that the Commanding English model has been adapted in other settings.) However, we maintain that students like Ifrah do not need continued preparation for the freshman year; rather, Generation 1.5 students need to be engaged in the learning of the freshman year while also developing reading and writing proficiency. Through engagement during the freshman year in the small learning community of Commanding English, students are able to learn academic content, build academic skills, develop academic voice, and make lasting friendships—all leading to their persistence and graduation from the university. In looking back on the last 25 years, we are confident that the Commanding English program has been a successful model for the development of academic literacy for multilingual students. As we look to the future, we are hopeful that more students like Ifrah will have access to the opportunity for higher education through programs that address the real academic needs of the freshman year for Generation 1.5 students.

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Multicultural Mathematics: A Social Issues Perspective in Lesson Planning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines an approach to introducing the slope formula and rates of change in an introductory developmental algebra class through the context of the epidemiology of global infectious diseases. Although only 29 minutes out of 48 hours of class time were allocated to purely social discussions, students surveyed found this unit to be the single most memorable topic that they studied in the class. Furthermore, over 96% of the students found it to be relevant to their learning of mathematics. Contextualizing mathematics applications with discussions of social issues is an equity pedagogy that can transform students' experience of mathematics.

Successful researchers in applied mathematics and science often describe their work in terms of subjective purpose rather than technical process. McClintock, for example, asserted that her advances in genetics reflected “a feeling for the organism,” as the title of Keller’s 1983 biography put it. Undergraduate mathematics classes, however, offer little opportunity or support for students to develop subjective, value-based purposes for mathematical study. The radical objectivity of mathematics is a powerful mechanism of exclusion for both developmental and mainstream mathematics students.

The General College mathematics faculty has initiated a teaching experiment designed to help students link their full sense of social awareness to mathematics through discussions of social issues associated with algebra applications. The project is designed to make gains in student engagement by dedicating small phases of class time to the context of mathematics, material that lies just outside of algebraic procedures—geographical and demographic information, policy debates, and perspectives on substantial social issues—all topics that are associated with, but not fully defined by, math applications. In our current project, public health and economic issues associated with worldwide infectious diseases serve as the enriched context of standard algebra topics like the slope formula and exponential growth. As a cultural

anthropologist with field experience in malaria-plagued, indigenous communities in Guyana, I developed the unit to draw attention to the long-term personal and economic devastation caused by malaria. When planned carefully, socially-contextualized mathematics discussions can make a strong, positive impression on students and offer opportunities to support basic skills and mathematical thinking.

This social issues approach to mathematics instruction is inspired by the ethnomathematics and mathematics for social justice movements. Ethnomathematics involves understanding the mathematical principles underlying a variety of non-Western and non-academic activities (Ascher, 1991, 2002; Eglash, 2002; Selin, 2000; Zaslavsky, 1973). Although much of the work in ethnomathematics, notably essays contributed by Ascher, does develop the social and cultural context of mathematical activities quite thoroughly, the context serves primarily as an orienting background for the mathematics rather than as a springboard for deeper discussion. Ethnomathematics treatments of the Andean accounting textiles known as quipus, for example, usually do not fully examine their use in Incan statecraft or as indigenous women's resistance to Spanish colonialism (Silverblatt, 1987). Quipus are of interest to mathematicians primarily as mathematical artifacts rather than tools of local social action. This example suggests that the social grounding of a mathematics application can be an opportunity for active intellectual exploration of issues of gender, race, and resistance even when these ideas are not the object of direct computation. In the mathematics for social justice approach (Frankenstein, 1997; Gutstein, 2003), students use mathematics as a tool to uncover evidence of differential privilege within society. Although the epidemiological data sets of the current project certainly raise student awareness of global disparities in health care and consequent economic underdevelopment, instructors need not stop at data analysis in our attempts to engage students in mathematics. Students' discussion of their subjective, humanistic reactions to the context of an application will enhance their experience of it. Embedding social issues efficiently in a mathematics class may well draw a much broader range of students into heightened engagement with mathematics.

Dedicating modest amounts of class time to discussions of the social relevance of mathematics applications contributes to the General College mission of providing access to higher education through transformative developmental studies. Success in algebra often means the removal of one's personality and subjective perspective in preference for an objective, abstract mode of thinking that is both unfamiliar and dehumanizing for many students. The General College pedagogical experiment seeks to support students' self-transformation by allowing them to draw upon a full sense of their selves as they negotiate a developmental algebra class. The multicultural perspec-

tives that are embedded in most General College classes support this transformation as well, and this project unfolds along a particular pathway within the array of pedagogical opportunities offered by multicultural education. Developing mathematical sophistication based on life experience is a recognized and effective means of engaging students in mathematics (Gutstein, 2003; Moses & Cobb, 2001). However, by the time a person reaches young adulthood, personal experience is not only a history of lived habits or practical knowledge, but also social awareness and reflection on values and action within the world. At General College, students from many heritages and personal histories come together in our algebra classes so that the experiences and perspectives are rich and diverse. By focusing on social issues associated with mathematics applications rather than simply contextual description, students are able to find points of contact between their own experiences and those of people whose lives seem very different from their own. For example, a student who has some knowledge of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the United States may then develop an appreciation of the serious consequences of malaria for people in parts of Latin America, a connection drawn by using similar mathematics to investigate both situations.

This chapter describes a series of classroom discussions of the slope formula and rates of change that were presented through the social context of the epidemiology of infectious diseases in an introductory developmental algebra class. A general outline of the unit is presented along with assessments of the time allocated for primarily social and for primarily mathematical discussions. Survey results suggest that students found the treatment of social issues in algebra class to be both memorable and relevant. I argue that the relatively modest amount of time spent on purely social discussions compared to the favorable student response positions socially-contextualized mathematics as a potentially transformative pedagogy. Because the most successful applications of issues-oriented mathematics will occur when instructors develop curricula that are meaningful to themselves and their students (epidemiology, for example, might not be the most appropriate choice for all instructors), the chapter focuses on exemplifying the approach and outlining effective classroom methods for implementing the lessons, especially through recommendations for leading discussions on social issues and for embedding skill practice within those discussions.

Mathematics Engagement Through Social Science Perspectives

Undergraduate mathematics classes may well lose efficacy through extreme efficiency: their vertical organization sets them apart from nearly all other treatments of knowledge in the U.S. undergraduate curriculum. A literature

class, for example, often moves well outside the covers of a book to discuss the historical context, the architecture and music, the mores of gender prevalent in a novel's time period—in short, any laterally-connected knowledge that enhances student understanding and engagement. In contrast, when mathematics deals with “real-world applications,” students usually engage only those aspects of the context that allow them to model the situation mathematically without regard to the social purposes that inspire experts to devote their professional lives to the application.

Opening the door to social purpose in algebra addresses documented student interest in interdisciplinary knowledge. In the first place, many first-year students value and have a significant interest in both mathematics and social science. There is, however, little support in the undergraduate curriculum for students who enter college with this sort of intellectual openness, and many discard their idealism by terminating their studies of mathematics and science early in their undergraduate careers. This is the case for both developmental and mainstream mathematics students. A comprehensive study of decisions that students make about changing their majors found that high-ability freshmen of all ethnicities who declare mathematics, science, and engineering (SME) majors frequently switch to majors in the social sciences at consistent rates in public and private universities of various sizes (Seymour & Hewitt, 1997). Almost a quarter of the students switching out of the physical sciences chose majors in the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts; social sciences was the destination major for the greatest portion of this group at 14.4% (Seymour & Hewitt, p. 17). Indicators changing majors and graduation rates demonstrate the ethnic achievement gap in higher education. In 1992, by the third year of college, 65% of students of color studying math or science had switched majors compared to 37% of White students (Culotta, 1992, p. 1209; Seymour & Hewitt, p. 319).

The choices that General College students make reveal a similar trend, although there is evidence that some students discover an interest in SME majors after entering GC as well. Of the fall 2000 cohort, for example, only 25% of the first-year students who entered with SME interests transferred with a declared SME major to a degree-granting college within the University of Minnesota. On the other hand, students who entered GC with a non-SME pre-major or with an undeclared pre-major transferred with a declared SME major at a rate of 8.3% (Office of Research and Evaluation, 2004). Experimental interventions tested within General College may well be relevant for both developmental and mainstream students nationally.

Students in Seymour and Hewitt's (1997) study reported that their classroom experiences were especially important in the decision to switch majors; many noted that the social sciences offer more engaging curricula and ped-

agogies, as well as a way to develop a sense of one's purpose within the world. Loss of interest in SME subjects was cited by 59.6% of all switchers, and disappointment with math and science pedagogy was cited by 36.1% (Seymour & Hewitt, p. 177)—of particular concern was the “disappointment with the perceived narrowness of their SME majors as an educational experience” (Seymour & Hewitt, p. 180). Seymour and Hewitt's study demonstrated that even students who have strong abilities in mathematics and sciences have a deep curiosity about social science and humanities issues that is not satisfied in the undergraduate curriculum—a disappointment that is strong enough to influence their career decisions. These results suggest that widening the content and pedagogies available in mathematics classes can support student interest in the subject, particularly if models are drawn from the social sciences. An undergraduate mathematics curriculum that harnesses the transformational capacity of the social sciences will likely improve access and equity within higher education.

The Slope Formula: International Perspectives Through Epidemiology

Many General College students take a two-semester sequence of zero-credit algebra classes—Introductory and Intermediate Algebra—in order to prepare for credit-bearing mathematics classes. Starting in the 2003–2004 academic year, the mathematics division of General College introduced epidemiological applications of the slope formula in introductory algebra to all lecture and discussion sections of Introductory Algebra. Intermediate Algebra students used exponential growth models to assess the economic burden of infectious diseases on household income in developing countries. These units are intended to bring international perspectives into the algebra classes to foster interest, engagement, and purpose in mathematics students. An important outcome of this teaching experiment thus far is that including discussions of social situations and social issues in a mathematics class can generate substantial student interest and engagement without displacing traditional mathematics topics. To illustrate this point, I will outline classroom discussions on epidemiology and rates of change in my introductory algebra classes in fall 2003 with attention to the time allocated to both social and mathematical discussions.

The unifying theme of the unit was the United Nations Global Fund, which organizes funding and intervention efforts against the three most damaging infectious diseases in the world today: HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. The major goal for the mathematical experience was to use realistic data from online sources (e.g., World Health Organization and United Nations Web sites) to introduce the concepts of slope and rates of change and to

extend students' use of slopes to nonlinear graphs. Because several of the six faculty members adopting the unit preferred to work with examples that were strictly linear, I modified published data accordingly in order to develop sample problems that were comfortable for all of the teaching styles represented in our department. In any case, all of the sample problems presented students with data of plausible magnitude for the places and scenarios discussed.

The unit was handled predominantly through constructivist pedagogy for both mathematics and social discussions using small group discussions and full-class guided, "Socratic" discussions (e.g., Brissenden, 1988, p. 181). To introduce the social context of infectious diseases in a constructivist manner, I prepared a series of questions to allow students to open the topic with recollections of their own international experience, their knowledge of geography, and global health issues. In this way I was able to provide the minimum necessary level of didactic presentation. For example, many students knew that malaria is transmitted by mosquito bites, but none was familiar with the fundamental cause, infection by the plasmodium parasite that has life cycle phases in both insect and human hosts. Similarly, no student was aware of the severity of malaria as a global health and economic problem. Overshadowed by the stunning devastation of the HIV crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa, malaria as a long-term cause of underdevelopment is poorly recognized in the United States. Still, prominent development economist Jeffrey Sachs called malaria "the single greatest shaper of wealth and poverty in the world" (Appell, 2003, p. 37). While I prepared this commentary before class, I interjected it as responses to student statements rather than presenting it in lecture format to preserve the interactive, constructivist organization of the class. The unit was handled in "spiral" fashion, so that we returned to the topic for portions of several classes rather than covering it in consecutive class meetings.

The agenda for mathematics content was to introduce material on slopes and rates of change using realistic data on HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis from Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Students' first opportunity to discover the concept of slope was based on their analysis of data on malaria incidence in Guyana. They used rates of change to develop an understanding of positive and negative slopes and to predict future values of disease incidence. Students also extended their knowledge of slopes to graph nonlinear trajectories of epidemics through Euler's method for approximating the solution of first-degree differential equations as in

$$\frac{\text{new infections}}{\text{year}} = 0.2002x(200-x), x_0 = 25.$$

Euler's method is typically presented in second-semester calculus textbooks (e.g., Smith & Minton, 2002) even though the topic is accessible at less advanced levels. This means that in a community of 200 people, initially 25 are infected, and at any given time, a total of x people are infected. The resulting graph is the S-shaped curve known as the logistic equation. The epidemiology unit supported student investigation of core introductory algebra topics along with mastery of an advanced method that is usually introduced in the second semester of calculus. This was a reorganization of traditional curricula for developmental students to include material that is new to all students and both challenging and significant.

I selected a handful of social topics to introduce for class discussion: the difference between infectious and noninfectious diseases, the geographic distribution of the three major infectious diseases, the association between disease and poverty, and the debate over treatment or prevention for HIV in Africa. I wanted students to appreciate the magnitude of the HIV crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa without contributing to negative stereotypes of Africa—the commonplace beliefs that all dangerous diseases originate in Africa, that Africans lack reason, and are that they are motivated by unreflexive cultural beliefs.

As students moved into the final phase of the unit, working with Euler's method to predict the trajectory of an epidemic, they spent a class period in a computer lab researching an epidemiological issue of their choice and collecting relevant data. For their write-up, students analyzed their data using class methods. Many students calculated rates of changes in disease incidence based on tables and graphs that they found online, interpreting the results in terms of linearity and increasing and decreasing disease incidence. A few students developed differential equation models of the global HIV epidemic by substituting world population data and estimates of global HIV incidence into Euler's method homework problems.

Social Discussions on Infectious Diseases in Introductory Algebra

In the comments below, I summarize the flow of the major discussions on epidemiology paying special attention to time allocation during class days when students engaged in discussions of social issues. Several other class days included discussion of homework problems on epidemiological rates of change and small group work on Euler's method to generate a logistic equation model of an epidemic, but those class days are not summarized here because they did not generate a great deal of social discussion. At the end of each discussion phase, I have indicated whether the discussion covered pri-

marily social or mathematical topics, or both, and the time spent on the discussion in minutes:seconds format. Tape recordings, ethnographic notes, and other data were collected.

Day 1: September 25, 2003

I introduced the epidemiology unit just after students had learned to graph linear functions using tables of values; slopes had not been introduced yet. We began the discussion with a map of South America. Students shared their knowledge of South American countries and their international travel experiences. I described the mode of transmission and methods of diagnosis of malaria. I introduced a data set on positive malaria blood tests in Guyana for the years 1980 to 1995 and asked the students if the data was linear (social, 5:55). Students worked in small groups to determine whether the data was linear. Many groups graphed the data, and a few calculated differences in the dependent variable, a movement towards discovering the slope formula (math, 4:23). As a transition back into full class discussion, I drew three increasing functions on the board as possible shapes for the data set: one concave up, one concave down, and one linear. A strong majority of the students correctly identified the first function as the worst scenario for the malaria example and the second one as the best, although still undesirable, scenario. Members of the class volunteered “exponential” and “doubling” as possible descriptions of the data. The class developed an appropriate scale and graphed the data (math, 6:17). I transitioned out of the topic through a discussion of languages spoken in South America (social, 0:35).

Day 2: October 3, 2003

The next major phase of social discussion developed from a review of a test question for which students calculated a rate of change of women testing positive for HIV in a rural Kenyan neonatal clinic and used it to predict HIV incidence 12 years after the last data point. A student explained her correct prediction of 31.5% (math, 2:21). I asked the students whether they thought this percentage was possible. Several students commented affirmatively and offered supporting data (math and social, 2:59). I asked students if they believed more funding should be allocated for treatment or prevention of HIV in Africa; a lively debate followed. Most students, including several Somali women, spoke in favor of funding prevention over treatment. An African American Latina woman vigorously disagreed, calling upon her classmates’ sense of compassion and fairness:

I think it should be fairly equal because . . . I mean, you know, you aren’t going to sit here—help the people that is [*sic*] already sick! It wasn’t their fault. Most

of the time, 9 times out of 10 it probably wasn't their fault that they got sick in the first place. You know they could have just been born with AIDS because their parents were not knowledgeable of it and then conceived a child with AIDS. You know half the time it is not their fault.

She related a news report that she had heard of a cultural belief that intercourse with a young girl would cure an HIV infection. A Somali woman, speaking for the first time since the class began, countered that the news story represented an incorrect stereotype and that she believed HIV infections were lower in Somalia than elsewhere. The first speaker responded that she did not believe that this practice happened everywhere (social, 4:30).

Day 3: October 21, 2003

I asked students to comment on the use of rates of change in analyzing health crises. We discussed what units characterize a rate of change and the interpretation of positive and negative slopes. Students had a short group discussion on the relationship between poverty and disease with the aim of understanding that poverty is the result as well as a cause of disease. Students identified this as an example of direct variation (a topic from their textbook); one offered the term "positive correlation." Students continued their discussion of treatment and prevention policy for infectious diseases (primarily social; some math discussion. Due to a tape recording error, times for this day are based on ethnographic notes, 15:00). Students discussed solutions for homework problems on epidemiological rates of change and began to work on Euler's method for solving differential equations in small groups (math, 20:00).

Day 4: October 23, 2003

Students spent the class period in a computer lab locating data on HIV, malaria, or tuberculosis for a writing assignment in which they were required to analyze the data using class methods. They consulted with the instructor on social topics and approaches to math analysis as needed (social and math, 50:00).

Summary of Unit

Overall, the unit covered a lot of ground. In the first place, it was the initial or primary means of developing understanding on several introductory algebra topics: (a) calculating slopes, (b) rates of change, (c) positive and negative slopes, (d) increasing and decreasing functions, and (e) nonlinear functions. The unit also supported student involvement in mathematics topics that are

usually not included in introductory developmental algebra, specifically (a) concavity, (b) the logistic equation, and (c) approximate solutions of differential equations. In addition, several topics were reviewed, supported, or linked to the discussion based on mathematical perspectives that students volunteered independently: (a) ratios, (b) percents, (c) positive correlation, (d) exponential graphs, (e) direct variation, and (f) carrying capacity. Social topics that students discussed were (a) major infectious diseases, modes of transmission, diagnosis and treatment; (b) uneven geographic distribution of infectious diseases; (c) poverty exacerbates the effects of disease; (d) disease creates poverty; (e) allocation of funding for treatment and prevention programs; (f) stereotypes of Africa; and (g) social diversity in Africa.

As exit interviews showed, a majority of students found this unit to be both memorable and relevant. Students were asked which math discussions were most memorable for them. Of students ($N = 25$) interviewed in three introductory algebra classes during the 2003–2004 academic year, 48% thought that the epidemiology unit was the most memorable topic in the class, and 60% believed that one of the socially-contextualized math topics presented (epidemiology, global differences in resource use, and population growth units combined) was most memorable. Over 96% ($N = 28$) found socially-based discussions to be relevant to their study of mathematics. Even the single “dissenting” student had a somewhat positive view of the topic: “I think it’s good, but sometimes not math, just material we talked about.”

Not counting small group activities or online research, the class spent about the same amount of time on social and mathematical discussions during these particular days. Leaving out the online research day, classroom discussions that were listed as primarily social or social and mathematical required 28 minutes and 59 seconds. Discussions of mathematical topics during these days lasted 28 minutes and 38 seconds. It can be appreciated, then, that these 29 minutes of social discussion, out of just over 48 hours of classroom instruction during the semester, did not displace any topics that are typically offered in the course. A very modest reallocation of class time resulted in a strong, positive impact on students’ impression of the class.

Supporting Discussions in Mathematics Classes

During the second day of discussion (i.e., 10/2/03), just under 3 minutes was spent in discussion that was strongly balanced between social and mathematical topics. This interaction between social thinking and mathematical thinking is likely the best target for this sort of curriculum and offers strong opportunities to develop math skills. The discussion also illustrates the major

obstacle for teachers who may wish to develop socially-contextualized math lessons. As mathematics teachers, we are accustomed to knowing the answer to essentially all the questions that students ask us, but when we open the discussion to social topics, it is easy for students to bring out data and ideas that we cannot evaluate fully.

This dilemma can be addressed easily by attention to discussion techniques along with a reevaluation of traditional ideas of what constitutes a successful classroom exchange. When I asked students if they believed it was possible that 31.5% of women visiting a neonatal clinic could test positive for HIV, responses included:

“It is possible.”

“Well, it is way higher in Africa. It is higher. I don’t know how much it is but it is higher.”

“Isn’t it like 25 children die every day?”

“In China . . . for people who have AIDS or related things.”

“Here actually, that is the number of Black women. 30% of the people who have AIDS in this country are African American women.”

“I heard somewhere that in Mozambique, like 5 to 1 ratio.”

Although the question, “is 35.1% possible?” contains numerical data, answering it calls for factual, geographical information and evaluative thinking as much as algebraic understanding. It is notable, then, that most students responded by offering data as evidence of their opinion, even though this was not specifically requested. Socially-contextualized mathematics discussions do not sacrifice opportunities to build math knowledge. On the contrary, speakers in this phase of the conversation displayed their mathematical imagination and opened the door for skill-building questions. Readers will no doubt find it easy to create questions that can clarify student thinking in developmental mathematics, along the lines of:

1. Which of these figures is a rate of change?
2. Can we use this figure to make a prediction?
3. Why do you believe that China is at risk for HIV?
4. What data would be necessary to evaluate your idea?
5. Can we compare our 30% figure from the U.S. with our 31.5% figure from Kenya?
6. What does your 5 to 1 ratio mean? In how many different forms can you write it? Is it the same as a rate of change?

Data-rich statements (e.g., the incidence of HIV in Mozambique) that an instructor may not be able to evaluate factually are nonetheless teaching opportunities to link student knowledge, indeed, student experience as intellectual beings, to skills review and to math questions that are novel for the student. Mathematics instructors who do not spend much, if any, time in

social science and humanities classrooms may not realize that discussions can productively terminate in a list of questions or perspectives on issues, not only in a completed procedural problem. Those who desire a strong sense of topic closure or more precise mathematical expression may wish to offer individualized follow-up assignments like the online research assignment that these students completed. In any case, developing a set of focused questions and perspectives is a sound achievement for socially-contextualized mathematics discussions.

Besides inserting clarifying mathematics questions and summarizing discussion perspectives, several other approaches to planning and leading discussions may prove useful to instructors who wish to experiment with socially-contextualized mathematics lessons. In the first place, social issues discussions can be planned just as one prepares a math presentation: determining the order of topics, developing the format for engaging students, and predicting the types of misconceptions students may have. The social issues approach may be most effective when the instructor chooses a small number of social questions of unquestionable importance to introduce during the course. This will help students maintain a sense of relevance, and it helps the teacher work as a constructivist with student social understanding. Preparing for and moderating a discussion is easier if the instructor has in mind a small set of key social ideas to be connected to unpredictable student comments.

Instructors can create more engaging and powerful classroom discussions by controlling the organization of classroom discourse. The instructor's style of speaking is a controllable teaching resource fully as powerful as any mediation of learning through technology. In full class discussions, the "default" format for conversation is the pattern of teacher initiation, student response and teacher evaluation, known variously as the IRE sequence (Cazden, 1988, p. 29), the IRF sequence (i.e. teacher initiation, student response, and teacher follow-up and feedback [Wells, 1993]), and the Triadic Dialogue (Lemke, 1990). This discursive organization centers the teacher as the authority, and therefore the person responsible for doing most of the intellectual work. To displace more responsibility for mathematical imagining and evaluating onto students, Brissenden (1988, pp. 191–193) recommended deflecting the evaluation segment onto other students, introducing comparisons between different students, and offering positive but nonevaluative responses, among other well-recognized techniques. Cazden suggested that pauses of at least three seconds are rarely used but powerful methods of encouraging student-to-student talk (p. 60). Suggestions from educational psychologist Judith Puncochar (2003) are particularly useful to mathematics instructors who may have little experience leading social issues discussions that are very open ended: do not insist on agreement, and support the minority viewpoint. This

approach fosters the broadest degree of participation and helps students encounter and respond to the broadest set of perspectives.

Conclusion

Broader attention to social meaning within the context of mathematics applications is a relatively untested means of connecting mathematics to other curriculum areas (Coxford, 1995). In fact, infusing mathematics classes with discussion of significant social issues is a timely experiment in a movement toward broad curricular diversification in higher education. In a survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, over 67% of the respondents were trying to improve and increase cultural diversity experiences in general education courses: "(m)any campus leaders now believe . . . that diversity needs to be addressed in more sophisticated and increasingly interdisciplinary ways and in more places throughout a student's college career" (Humphreys, 2002, p. 127). Interdisciplinary approaches to mathematics have usually attempted to inject quantitative reasoning into other subject areas, as in "Math Across the Curriculum" projects, but it is conversely possible to infuse the engaging content and pedagogies of other subject areas, particularly the social sciences, into developmental and mainstream mathematics classes without displacing traditional topics. Socially-contextualized mathematics lessons can make powerful contributions to the transformative multicultural educational experience that General College offers. During an exit interview, I asked a Somali woman to reflect on why she believed that discussions of epidemiological issues were relevant to mathematics: "Would it be just as good if we did those applications but we didn't talk about any issues . . . if we just did the math?" She answered:

I don't think so. I think the issues [*sic*] is what makes it more real, what makes a person more interested or what makes them want to learn more about math or to achieve more, not in just math but in life . . . because when you solve a problem in your math class about a real life issue, then you feel like you've solved more, other things in your personal life or in other people's lives or you might want to make a change. So I think that's very important.

This student has expressed eloquently the goal of transformative developmental education: "you might want to make a change . . ." if classes, even mathematics classes, permit the voice of social awareness to be heard.

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Multicultural Writing Instruction at the General College: A Dialogical Approach

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical discourses of multicultural education have a great deal to offer developmental educators. In this chapter we clarify specific theoretical insights from multicultural education theory that inform our program design and approach to developmental writing instruction. After that, we explore the implications of these insights for our practices. Specifically, we discuss the ways in which a dialogical understanding of writing grounded in multicultural education theory informs the General College writing program's work with its teachers and students.

Writing programs within institutions of higher education have long faced the challenge of working with students who are labeled as “developmental” or “remedial” writers in the admissions process (Boylan, 1988). Although many have assumed that this group of students has always been defined by the number of errors they make in writing, research in the field of basic writing has demonstrated the impact of cultural politics, social group power, and privilege as decisive forces in distinguishing students marked as basic, developmental, or remedial, from students left unmarked (Adler-Kassner & Harrington, 2002; Fox, 1999; Gallego & Hollingsworth, 2000; Horner & Lu, 1999; Shor, 1997). Accordingly, current approaches to basic writing instruction now deemphasize the old view of learning writing as learning to accommodate and use an unchanging standard, instead viewing writing as a process and emphasizing practice, drafting, increasing familiarity, and developing fluency (Curtis & Herrington, 2003; Sternglass, 1997). Concentrating on process has enabled teachers to provide meaningful support to students undertaking the difficult task of learning an unfamiliar and often threatening academic discourse. On the other hand, process approaches too often remain silent regarding the individual- and group-level dynamics of power and privilege that student writers are navigating as they write.

This chapter describes how the writing program in the General College moves beyond the limitations of a strictly process approach through what can be called a dialogical approach to writing instruction. Dialogical writing instruction encourages students to treat writing as an opportunity to shape people's understandings of writing at the same time that the conventions of academic writing shape them. Such an approach foregrounds the give and take of literacy—that people's actions can and do inform, as they are informed by, rules, conventions, and institutionalized expectations (Bartholomae, 1985; Farmer, 1998; Soliday, 2002). Writing, in this view, is an activity through which students can “take on” conventions in two senses—both adopting and challenging the forms of writing valued in the academy. Rose's (1989) book *Lives on the Boundary* described such an encounter with literacy as he succeeded by both critically examining and, in the act of writing his book, actively transforming how literacy is understood. In what follows, we will discuss how such a view of writing instruction operationalizes key insights from multicultural education theory in ways that help our students succeed. We then describe how a dialogical understanding of writing is implemented in our developmental writing program's curriculum and administration.

Theoretical Foundations

The General College writing program provides instruction to approximately 800 students each semester. All of these students are marked by the university as underprepared and developmental. But, of course, these univocal labels actually mask enormous diversity within our student group. Responding to this diversity, our work with and for these students is necessarily multilayered and complex, but can be understood as implementing a dialogical approach to knowledge making that translates insights from multicultural education theory into practice. Multicultural education theory invites a dialogical approach to developmental writing instruction through its emphasis on the relationship between knowledge and power, the importance of critical participation, and the transformative character of educational and social progress (Giroux, 1988; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). In this section of this chapter we begin to clarify the meaning of the term “dialogical approach” by explaining how these emphases in multicultural education theory support a dialogical understanding of and approach to the teaching of writing.

Knowledge and Power

The dominant, common-sense approach to education views schooling as a gateway that provides each individual access to a better life. In this view

“knowledge” grants individuals power in a straightforward way. Drawing on the experiences of social groups that have persistently been less able to realize this democratic promise of education, multicultural education theory has complicated the traditional understanding of the knowledge-power relationship. First, multicultural education theorists have emphasized the partiality of institutionally-valued knowledge. Berlin (1987) phrased this insight in terms of its implications for writing instruction when he pointed out that “the ability to read, write, and speak in accordance with the code sanctioned by a culture’s ruling class is the main work of education, and this is true whether we are discussing ancient Athens or modern Detroit” (p. 52). As Berlin highlighted, in addition to being partial in the sense of being incomplete, the knowledge valued in schools has historically been partial to those in power. In other words, valued knowledge about history, or good writing, or even science, presents a version of the truth sanctioned by a “ruling class.” Here, in addition to possibly providing some access to power, knowledge *exercises* power, teaching people to see a particular version of knowledge as “real” or “true,” and thus teaching people to see the social relations of a culture as “natural” and not alterable results of struggles over the truth. In contrast to providing neutral, universally enabling equipment for democratic social life, this view recognizes that institutionally-sanctioned knowledge tends to reproduce social inequalities that schooling tries to help people overcome. As a result, multicultural education theory leads many practitioners to think of knowledge dialogically—as a social construction properly involving participation as members of the knowledge-making community.

Critical Participation

Of course, the versions of truth sanctioned by a culture’s ruling class never completely dominate people’s views and perspectives to the point where we robotronically reproduce our own domination. Instead, real life involves constant official and unofficial struggles over what versions of the truth will receive what sorts of institutional recognition. For this reason, multicultural education theory has highlighted the importance of *critical* participation (Giroux, 1988; Goldberg, 1994; Kanpol & McLaren, 1995). To cite just one example, as long as most people accepted dominant versions of the truth about women’s natural disinclination towards traditionally male-dominated activities like sports or politics (to name only two), the history of male domination in these fields perpetuated itself as if it were really natural. Institutionally sanctioned knowledge about history, politics, biology, psychology, and others reflected this bias (Young, 1990). In more recent times, more and more people have questioned older versions of the truth, and more and more women and girls have demonstrated aptitude and interest in traditionally

male-dominated areas of life. The accepted truths about male domination have changed, and that domination itself has become problematic in ways it previously was not. This type of situation has led multicultural education theorists to an appreciation of the importance of participation. In both the old days and in present days, the versions of the truth that exercise power do so through the actions of people that validate those truths by giving them recognition and withholding recognition from others. Accordingly multicultural education theorists have concentrated on the significance of participation that is critical, that involves reflection, and that seeks intentionally to improve social life by participating in creating truths that sustain and enrich democratic life.

Transformation

Drawing from the related insights into knowledge, power, and participation, multicultural education theory envisions educational progress in terms of the democratic transformation of individuals and society. Just as dialogue is never one sided, educational progress is not a matter of thoughtlessly endorsing established truths, nor is it a matter of wholesale resistance. Instead, progress involves interpreting where truths come from, whose interests and perspectives they reflect, and whose interests, perspectives, and experiences they leave unrecognized or misrecognized. Applying in the classroom this emphasis on investigating the consequences of the versions of the truth that are currently valued leads us to emphasize dialogue for two reasons. First, if we assume that the power relations implicit in knowledge are most often not the result of diabolical intentions on the part of privileged people to justify their unearned advantages, but instead are unintended blindspots, then dialogue understood in its most literal sense provides an important potential antidote to misperception and lack of perception. Hearing from those who feel themselves to be devalued or misrecognized by valued knowledge provides an obvious potential first step toward creating more democratically enabling truths (Young, 1997). Secondly, dialogue is important because multicultural education is a project of improving the society, and that project requires deliberation concerning what aspects of current social life should be changed and in what ways.

Practicing Multicultural Theory Through Dialogical Writing Instruction

As it puts these theoretical emphases into practice, the General College writing program can be described as “dialogical” on several levels. As we have discussed previously (Reynolds & Bruch, 2002), our curriculum combines a practical focus on process with attention to the social contexts in which processes are inhabited by real people living in relationships of power. In this

sense our program places process theory in dialogue with critical theories of education. Translating this theoretical dialogue into pedagogy means helping students see and write about the ways that they are, in effect, dialoguing with conventions and expectations and thereby navigating power relations through their writing. Pointing towards the need for teachers to pay attention to social contexts, Lundell and Collins (1999) have theorized developmental education as a process in which students transform the “primary discourses” or ways of being that are learned before college in home cultures. As they become participants in the academy, developmental education students assume new discourses and come to inhabit new identities. As highlighted by the critical theories of multicultural education discussed above, this transformation takes place within a context of power relations and struggles. By formulating the content of writing courses as studying the back and forth, or dialogical, work of shaping and being shaped by academic and other discourses, writing courses can help universities and students themselves recognize students’ primary discourses and home cultures as valid foundations for acquiring, and also contributing to and transforming, the secondary discourses of their academic studies.

In this, our approach extends Lundell and Collins’ important insight explicitly to students. Because students marked as developmental are often made to feel ashamed of the language skills and knowledge they bring to school, it is especially valuable for students themselves, in addition to their teachers, to reflect on the ways that their work enacts a dialogue between home and institutional cultures. As we will describe further in the next section of this chapter, by thinking with students about how writing always works to locate one in a discourse and also provides opportunities for influencing that discourse, the General College writing courses give students the opportunity to navigate and discuss their college transition in a way that is reciprocally respectful.

Through its emphasis on knowledge and power, the importance of participation, and the transformative purpose of education, multicultural education theory provides useful foundations for theorizing writing as a dialogue. Just as our theory recognizes the significance of student involvement, it is useful to remind ourselves of the importance of practitioner involvement. Our theory inflects our interpretation of, rather than answers, the difficult questions that come up as we go about the complicated task of teaching writing. It thus positions teachers and students as intellectuals who meaningfully contribute to determining their own actions. We think that this is desirable, even though it can be frustrating to work without knowing ahead of time all the answers. As Smitherman (1977) has pointed out, “the material conditions of educational practice are so infinite and varied that a theory of

pedagogy cannot lay out a day-to-day how-to, what-to, and why” (p. 206). Instead, the best route from theory to practice is always best mapped by local practitioners. In what follows, then, we offer examples of classroom practices and then program administration as one set of local negotiations that may be suggestive for others.

Classroom Practices

In our classrooms we strive to implement a dialogical approach that centralizes the key insights described in the previous section. Specifically, course materials, assignments, and assessments can be designed to involve students in using their writing dialogically. Here, critical dialogue becomes a metaphor for how we hope students will consider past experiences with writing and for how they will complete current writing. Past experiences that have positioned writing as a matter of correctness have often been experienced by students as stifling their creativity, true feelings, and authentic voice. But at the same time, many of our students come into our classes wanting to master the “rules” and conventions of correctness that have been used against them in the past. In our classroom practices we seek to strike a delicate balance with such pressures, a balance that affirms the desire to be heard through being correct while also affirming the impulse to resist the power of conventions to stifle creativity and voice. As writers enacting a dialogue between correctness and individuality, students are neither naïvely overconfident that writing provides a sphere of pure freedom and authentic individual expression nor cynically paralyzed by a belief that writing is a tool of oppression that completely dominates and homogenizes. Instead, dialogue is a middle road recognizing that “literacy simultaneously works on people by encouraging writers to conform to an accepted set of parameters and is put to work by people to influence peers and society and to shape expectations of language” (Reynolds & Bruch, 2002, p. 12). We pursue this teaching agenda through all aspects of classroom practice including course materials, assignments, and assessments.

Course Materials

The syllabus is a key aspect of classroom practice through which a dialogical understanding of writing can be established. Terence Collins (1997), a General College colleague, has written about the importance of a syllabus that invites and encourages students to see themselves as capable and informed participants who bring strengths to class that they can build on. Syllabi can establish a productive dialogical framework for the class by describing the project of learning college-level writing as a matter of reflectively practicing and ex-

tending skills we all use with some proficiency on a daily basis. For example, the following passage from the syllabus of one section of first-semester writing in GC models this approach:

In this class we will be doing two things. We will write, and we will think about writing and the consequences of writing in the ways we are expected to and in the ways we do. This approach seeks to build on what we already know and do—we already interpret texts and make decisions about the consequences of different ways of communicating.

To put this another way, we already know how to interpret and create (read and write) texts that set us in relations with others, as, say, students-teachers, bosses-employees, experts-novices, customers-suppliers, women-men, adults-children. To use language is to be a person, to use language in *certain* ways is to be a *certain* kind of person, a person who sees the world and inhabits it in *certain* ways. In our class we will work towards using the language that marks and shapes those in the academy, and at the same time we will be thinking about what the language of the academy wants from us—who it wants us to be, what it wants us to see or not see, and how we might try to change what it means to use school writing as we use it.

This description of the course lays a foundation for classroom work that builds on the theoretical foundations described previously. Accepted truths about what constitutes good writing are not denied or ignored, nor uncritically celebrated, but engaged as an invitation to participate with the goal of constructive dialogue concerning truth-making and power relations. The passage explicitly recognizes that students already have some expertise as communicators navigating a dialogical relationship with conventions and expectations—responding to others' expectations and at the same time, in other ways, perhaps resisting those expectations. The description thus pursues a dialogical understanding of writing by inviting students to see their writing as a way that they can help shape the meaning of writing in our classes and more generally. As one student phrased this insight in a paper for class: "By me writing this paper in this way, I'm communicating my thoughts about communication to you, but yet a lot of people may not see it this way at first." Through a syllabus that encourages students to recognize their proficiency as communicators and the significance of the communicating they do, a dialogical understanding of writing is set in motion. Students are encouraged to become aware of their writing as an opportunity to actively dialogue with accepted conventions and the relations of knowledge and power those conventions embody.

Writing Assignments

This dialogical approach can infuse writing assignments as well. One common initial assignment asks students to construct a literacy autobiography that attempts to use their own experiences with learning writing to help readers appreciate something about writing that they may not have appreciated or understood before (see Figure 1). As the first assignment of the semester, students typically respond in one of two ways: either they focus on correctness and marginalize their own experiences, feelings, and interpretations, or they focus on their experiences and marginalize any effort to fulfill the academic convention of helping readers see the point of examples used in writing. Exemplary of the first tendency, one student wrote a paper that assumed a universal voice reminiscent of an encyclopedia entry:

Literacy is more than just reading and writing, it's a means to gain access—to the people, places and knowledge we all want to know, visit, and have. Literacy can also restrict access to people based on the kind of literacy they possess. We're going to explore three particular kinds of literacy, academic, ebonic, and slang. Benefits and restrictive qualities more desirable, less desirable.

Academic literacy is the standard that a society sets as the control, for all variations to be compared against. Having adeptness in this literacy makes one a more desirable member of society, as one can now teach others literary correctness. Also, by learning academic literacy, one will possess the language of the business and professional world which leads one to greater economic success.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is ebonics. Depending on who you ask, ebonics or African American Vernacular English is either a language all its own, or a variation of common English, either way, it is loosely modeled after academic English. . . The establishment of ebonics seeks to cater to those that read and write it, rather than to teach them to obey the literacy rules of academia, the proven key to success in the literate world. Furthermore, the support of ebonic literacy, marginalizes African Americans, further separating them from traditional society.

In many ways, this piece of student writing is a success. It shows that the student has developed a certain command of conventions of paragraphs, thesis statements, and organization. But despite its strengths it is not dialogical. Instead of providing a means of active participation in which the author works to shape conventional academic discourse as it gives shape to him or her, this passage demonstrates writing as a ritual of conformity to conventions.

Another student from the same class went equally as far in the opposite direction. Writing in response to the same assignment, this student concentrated exclusively on his experience, refusing the academic convention of using examples only to substantiate an explicitly stated general point. Instead

ESSAY 1

In the first part of the term, we'll be thinking and writing about something we all have extensive experience with—learning to read and write. Your first formal essay will look critically at literacy using your own experiences as examples that show something or some things about literacy in general. Your paper should try to use your experiences to give others new ways to think about their own.

The question behind this paper might be: When we learn literacy, what are we really learning? What have your literacy experiences been? What specific experiences, people, and environments shaped the ways that you've encountered writing? What ways of using language have been most important to you and why? What are literacy's promises, and what are its perils? What does your language want from you?

Frederick Douglass, as we'll see, valued literacy as a way to overcome his condition of slavery. Meanwhile, the ruling class of the slave-holding society he lived in used literacy to maintain its position of domination over slaves. I'd like you to think about how literacy in school and/or out of school, has helped you to be free or has been used by others against you, or both.

As you get a draft of this piece going, you'll start looking for a main idea to hold it together. You might be able to state, for example, that "Literacy has freed me to consider other people's viewpoints fairly" or "literacy has freed me to develop myself in a number of directions." Then, the writing in the paper—the examples and experiences—can flesh out of this main idea, complete with specific details and explanation of how your examples show what you mean by your main idea. Your teachers, families, friends, backgrounds and interests are all fair game for discussion. Obviously, part of doing this paper well will be drawing especially important details and trends from the many at your disposal.

Figure 1. Assignment for Essay 1.

of setting up the example with general statements and context, his paper oriented readers to the following paragraph with the line “Example: Write about a meal your [*sic*] having, describe it to the best of your ability.” The paper went on:

A sandwich, with fresh moist oat bran bread. The roast beef is plentiful and piled almost as a reward or apology. The meat however is unevenly wadded so that the sandwich bulges in the middle. There is a very thin layer of crisp lettuce and some slices of red tomato. The sandwich is cut in a very neat diagonal line; none of the contents of the sandwich jut out. Next to the sandwich are old looking corn chips, you can smell the salt, feel it on your fingers as you touch it, the texture is falliable. A tall glass of milk lies to the left of the plate, the glass is cold and it feels smooth, stable; a glass you could trust, not like all those other bastard glasses. The milk is white like a pearl; it doesn't look like it would talk about you behind your back. Not like the chips, the chips appear questionable, for they bend both ways carrying an edge of good and evil. Did that sandwich move? You swore it did. Did the milk come from a cow that fed from the grass of a desecrated Indian burial ground? You think to yourself a glass of milk like that could kill your brother; best go out and find another. The milk could be haunted, perhaps working in league with the sandwich. The deceptive sandwich, so plump, so juicy, but when you least expect it bam! A shiv in the back, you think to yourself a glass of milk like that could kill your brother; best go out and find another. There is also a mother near the meal, at the table, staring at you, wondering . . . Why hasn't he-she eaten this meal? she's pausing, eating her salad with a fork, you wouldn't want to anger her for she has a fork and you have a whole lot of cursed finger food.

I remember writing this and reading it, thinking to myself, yes, it's that “Moxy” that makes my writing and feeling quite good about it too.

Like the previous example, this student writing exhibits some important strengths. It is original and compelling. At the same time, its success as a piece of school writing is compromised by its categorical distance from conventions of presenting and developing ideas. Rather than seeing his writing as a means of dialogue between himself and conventions such as paragraphing, incorporation of examples, and explicit articulation of ideas, the writer simply ignores the power of convention to shape his writing. In such a case, conventions exercise power from outside of the text, marking the text as a radical departure that, while possibly interesting, fails to fulfill the assignment.

This early assignment attempts to ground students' introduction to a dialogical understanding of writing in a reexamination of their own experiences. Building on this foundation, later assignments for the class invite students to read and respond to historical and contemporary writers who model self-conscious dialogue with conventions and conventionalized knowledge through their writing. Students read and write about Blight's (1993) edition of

ESSAY 2

The assignment:

In this paper, I'd like you to do a careful analysis of Frederick Douglass's story of education. Specifically, discuss three or four especially important experiences of his in light of a thesis that you form about the power of education. Your main idea or thesis will be your answer to the question, "what does Douglass's book show about the power of education?" and the body of your essay will be a discussion of the ways that the book shows what you say it does about education.

In forming your thesis, you'll have to think about the ways that Douglass's book shows education to be powerful. Does his education liberate him from beliefs that would hold him down? Does it enable him to overcome some kinds of (personal, physical, psychological) obstacles? Does his book show the power of education to change others? What does Douglass seem to think education is for (individual success? social change?) and how does his book show that. Lots of possibilities present themselves through the story he tells.

How to go about writing the assignment:

I'd suggest that you spend some time skimming through the book, looking for exact sections that you may want to treat in the paper. Make marks in the book about what you might want to use in your paper, and what different sections seem to you to say about education. It might be helpful to type out or write out some quotes from different parts of the book, with page numbers, so you can see them all in one place and think about how they can be related to each other.

Then write a draft of the paper. As you are drafting your discussions of different parts of the book, concentrate on doing two things—describing to readers what happens and explaining what the example or experience shows about education.

After you have a draft that has examples and discussions of what the example show about the power of education, you can concentrate on your thesis statement or main idea—when you put all of the examples together, what do they show about the power of education?

Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave* (see Figure 2), as well as essays by recent critics of power dynamics in education.

In the final assignments for the class, students take on the role of more independent knowledge makers, finding and critically dialoguing with texts, and addressing issues they find significant (see Figure 3). Of course, assignments do not, in and of themselves, teach students to see writing dialogically. Instead, they invite students to write and create opportunities for teachers and peers to respond in ways that count toward meaningful revision and that also count as graded writing for the class.

Assessment

As is indicated by the examples of student writing quoted previously, a dialogical approach to developmental writing instruction requires individualized feedback and attention. A dialogical understanding of writing is so foreign to most students that course materials and assignments will not be enough. Instead writing dialogically is a learning process that can be facili-

ESSAY 5

Background:

Over the course of the term you have read and written about education from a variety of perspectives. You have reflected on your experiences in school, examined education historically, read current critics of education, and looked at the ways that people are “educated” outside of school. Your last paper gives you an opportunity to explore through research and writing your sense of good educational work in our society.

Your assignment:

In your fifth paper, I will ask that you describe, analyze, and evaluate an educator at work today or in the past. An educator can be a person, place, or thing—a text, an organization, or a genre (like hip hop music). The questions that your paper should answer is what is this “educator” teaching people and how? in what ways is this good and/or bad education? I expect that you will do some background research to gather materials for your paper.

Figure 3. Assignment for final essay.

tated through assessments that help students build on strengths to address shortcomings in their writing. In this sphere, a dialogical approach reminds students that the goal in writing is both to hear and be heard, to listen to the expectations of the audience, and to share with the audience in ways it might not have expected. For each of these students, one important kind of assessment came from their teacher's recognition of strengths in their papers and encouragement to pay more attention to that side of the balance that they are currently ignoring. As Gay (1998) has pointed out, the dialogue between teacher and student need not end with the teacher's comment. She has drawn attention to the potential value of having students formally respond to feedback they receive from teachers. In addition, the notion of dialogue provides a useful framework for peer responses to this kind of writing. One need not be an expert to find the first example well organized but too impersonal or cold sounding and the second interesting and fun but too hard to relate to the point. It is important to point out, in addition, the value of multiple types of assessment, so that all of a student's grade does not depend on performance on only one aspect of the work of the class, in this case the construction of finished writing. In writing classes, points can be awarded for all aspects and activities of the writing process including obvious parts like drafting, providing peer review, and revising, but also less obvious efforts like developing skills in finding useful constructive feedback, reflecting on process, and experimenting with new techniques.

Classroom practices such as these oriented towards a dialogical understanding of writing can be supported by a conversational approach to teaching, but conversation can be a part of many different ways of thinking about writing. Instead, the hallmark of a dialogical approach to classroom practices is that they invite students to see and practice writing as an opportunity to join the broad public conversations that shape the conditions of their lives and put pressure on institutional expectations of what and how they will write. They translate into the classroom a dialogical understanding that writing is not a single stable practice, but is, instead, an interaction between institutionalized conventions and peoples' real uses of language to accomplish goals in particular circumstances. Dialogical classroom practices help students learn writing by learning to reflectively participate in these interactions.

Administrative Practices

Because teaching takes place within institutional boundaries, we direct our writing program with an eye to institutional practices and traditions that have defined how that teaching gets understood and carried out. We encourage teachers to question and place under scrutiny the seemingly natural way

of working within the University of Minnesota and General College in order to work toward more effective instruction of students and just working conditions for themselves. Here, we discuss the areas of teacher training, teacher performance, and our own roles as administrators of a writing program within a large research university by highlighting in each case some of the recent projects that attempt to bring a dialogic approach to administration.

Professional Development

Teachers in our program are a collection of tenured and tenure-track faculty, teaching specialists hired full time with renewable contracts, and one or two graduate assistants. We recognize and value the particular perspectives that each group brings to the project of teaching our students by holding regular training sessions that review what we know about our best practices for teaching the particular group of writing students in General College while at the same time questioning those practices so that new perspectives find their way into the mix (Reynolds, 2001). Efforts to include the voices and perspectives of all teachers apply multicultural education theory to our program's administration. Here, rather than conceptualizing professional development as "training" in which those without knowledge or skills are taught, we understand professional development as a continuous, recursive, dialogical process.

One of the challenges of holding formal professional development sessions is to get teachers of different ranks to work together in ways that recognize but do not reinforce power and privilege markers set by the institution. Getting wide input into the meetings' agendas, making sure that everyone gets a chance to speak and be heard, and including our common concern, the students, in the meetings has helped to make such meetings more democratic than if they were run strictly from above by the tenured experts in composition. Honoring the expertise of the teaching specialists, whose full-time job is to teach our classes, as well as the apprentice status of the graduate students, who also have fresh perspectives, has become a way to give the program even, highly invested instruction. We have also invited to our meetings experts from other institutions to gain new approaches and help understand what we already do in a new light. Through these approaches we have worked to focus our formal program development sessions around a dialogical understanding of writing that is informed by the multiple views and perspectives of stakeholders who work in the program.

In addition to formal meetings, we hold smaller ongoing informal group meetings convened around teachers' particular teaching interests. Recent groups have organized around reading, technology uses, multicultural theory, and the teaching of particular writing forms in our classes. Such groups typically discuss their topics from the ground up, noting what was thought to

have been possible in the past, what is currently the case now, and what might be in the future. In the case of technology use, for example, an effort at making good use of computer technology and online writing opportunities available to students in our classrooms stemmed from a workshop put on by basic writing expert Tom Fox (1999), followed by summer meetings among a subgroup of teachers to work out how Fox's approach might be adapted to our particular computer resources and course demands, and discussed more informally during the implementation in small groups. Such practices implement a dialogical approach to writing instruction by recognizing the significance of our practices for what writing instruction means on our campus and more generally. In addition, they centralize a dialogical approach by recognizing through ongoing meetings and conversations that outcomes and understandings evolve over time as students and teachers interact and cannot be predetermined.

Of course, opening up the writing program to new ideas and instructional approaches does not guarantee that teacher input and commitment will be strengthened. In fact differences in working conditions and power held within the institution can play a decisive factor in making a collaborative effort one that merely replicates past inequities (Aschauer, 1989; Horner, 2000). In the preceding example, implementing newer uses of technology entails new learning on the part of teachers, a commitment that is quite different depending on one's institutional rank. Teaching specialists teach twice as many students during the semester as do tenure-track teachers with research obligations. Committing time and effort to learning new technology may not be as possible for some teaching specialists whose teaching time falls during available technology training hours. Working with students once the technology is implemented presents another challenge; anyone who has worked with such technology knows it can be time-consuming when working out the bugs with students. Devoting time and energy in one direction involves, at times, taking it away from another activity, a serious work issue for any teacher, but all the more so for those with large numbers of students. Recognizing the realities of different groups of instructors, arguing for what is just and fair, and acting on what is discussed puts into practice the very difficult notion of directing a writing program with a dialogical approach at its core.

Program Assessment

Setting common goals and expectations for the writing classes has helped us to act as a group with common interests. Making process as relevant as the final end goals, an inclusive group of tenured and tenure-track faculty members, teaching specialists, and administrators recently formed a committee to review and revise the goals of our courses (Reynolds & Fillipi, 2003). Our

discussion helped to remind us all that student learning was the goal of all of our jobs, and that our work can be guided by, if not defined in the context of, what is stated in the document. The document itself details the curricular approach that we are describing here as dialogical.

The statement of goals has also provided us a tool in effectively assessing teaching in our writing program. Teachers understand that their work should be understood within the discussion of the program's goals and expectations. Newer ideas such as the online magazine project inspired by Fox are discussed within the parameters set out in the goals document. We agree to develop our teaching practices within an understanding that we will, for example, "affirm each student's basic linguistic competence" (Reynolds & Filippi, 2003, p. 21). It is not so much a sacred text to be followed line by line; however, the ideas expressed in it provide a way for teachers with new ideas to participate in what is an ongoing dialogue about what the program should be. If individual teachers want to try something new, and it does not seem to fit exactly with what is in the document, then we get together and discuss its implications and how the program needs to change or the individual effort might be made to fit more neatly within the already stated goals.

Putting the Program in Dialogue With the University

We operate our program within a large institution, and the writing program administrators advocate for the program within the larger institution. At the college level, we hold voting membership on standing committees and councils, and at the level of the university, we work on task forces organized to maintain quality of writing instruction on campus and in programs aimed at improving quality of teaching more generally. Maintaining visibility and letting people know that we are doing good work are goals we carry to this kind of work. Here too we make arguments for smaller classes, well-trained teachers, and other resources necessary to the work of our program. We also find opportunity to discuss with people in various power positions some of the dominant cultural and societal assumptions about writing that stigmatize our students and ourselves as teachers. In a recent review of University-wide goals for first-year writing instruction, for example, we were able to discuss with central administrators the need for students to understand, in addition to features of academic writing, some of the cultural functions of literacy.

Conclusion

Multicultural education theory challenges practitioners in all disciplines to rethink the educational enterprise. In terms of writing instruction, theories of multicultural education challenge the credibility of traditional approaches that seek only to distribute and not to question and change the forms of writ-

ing that are valued in schools. But these theories do not tell practitioners how to implement the necessary critical transformations of practice. In this chapter, we have described our program's efforts to operationalize the critical insights of multiculturalism through an approach to classroom practice and program administration that seeks to make writing a means for engaging and transforming relations of power. Although practitioners must design approaches that fit the contexts of their practice, we hope that the descriptions of classroom and administrative practice we have offered will be suggestive of the rich potential that lies in the application of multicultural theories to the field of developmental writing.

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