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First-Year Composition and the Common Core: Educating Teachers of Writing Across the High School-College Continuum

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About the Authors

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An effort is now underway in America's public schools to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); these assessment standards seek to align K-12 exit standards with college level entrance requirements, thereby producing high school graduates that are, according to the architects of the CCSS, "College and Career Ready." This article will discuss the implications of the CCSS on the teaching of writing instructors at the college level. I will argue that, with the nationwide adoption of the CCSS, the most effective models of the training of writing teachers in higher education will now include collaboration with educators at the K-12 level; I will also offer a model for this kind of collaborative work, based on an effort I am currently leading as the Director of English Composition at my institution. I will begin with a brief overview of the CCSS, and the shifts in the teaching and learning of English Language Arts at the K-12 level they suggest. I will then suggest a model for teaching teachers of first year composition, based on recent collaborative efforts with high school teachers and administrators involved in my institution's Concurrent Enrollment Program. Specifically, I will discuss how this collaborative model can help us understand the strengths and weaknesses of beginning college writers, from the perspectives of both high school *and* college teachers, and how this understanding should then inform our instruction of first-year composition teachers. Finally, I will suggest that it is essential that the education of secondary and post-secondary writing teachers be grounded in current theories and practices of the field of composition and rhetoric.

The Common Core State Standards and English Language Arts: Background and Shifts

The Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governor's Association jointly initiated the Common Core State Standards, and began work on the standards in 2009 (Common Core Background). A final draft of the CCSS was published in June 2010. According to the official website of the CCSS, sponsored by the CCSSO and the NGA, the CCSS, "define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed" in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs" (About the Standards). The CCSS set standards of "College and Career Readiness" only for English Language Arts and Mathematics, although they establish literacy standards for science, technical subjects and social studies in grades 6-12 (ELA Standards). As of the middle of 2013, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the standards.

The CCSS for ELA suggest several significant shifts in standards for language arts in K-12; these shifts that will impact the way that literacy is taught and learned across the K-16 continuum. As the purpose of this article is not to provide an analysis of these shifts, only a brief discussion of these shifts is necessary, in order to establish context for the discussion. According to Student Achievement Partners, a non-profit founded by the chief architect of the CCSS, David Coleman, these shifts can be reduced to three major changes: 1. "Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction," 2. "Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational," and 3. "Regular practice with complex text and its academic language" (Common Core Shifts). Of these shifts, the move towards the inclusion of a higher percentage of "informational texts" in the K-12 language arts/English classroom has generated the most controversy. The architects of the CCSS, most visibly David Coleman, argue that students need to spend less time reading and writing narratives (or about narratives), and more time reading and writing what the CCSS terms "informational texts." As T*he New York Times* notes, in the newspaper's account of an incident representative of the controversy over this aspect of the CCSS, Coleman himself ignited a storm of criticism when he argued against the use of personal writing in English classes by saying, that, in the business world, no one ever tells an employee, "Johnson, I need a market analysis by Friday, but before that I need a compelling account of your childhood" (Lewin). The *Times* notes that progressive educators reacted strongly to this comment; this upset is part of a generally negative reaction among progressives[1] and some conservatives[2] to the CCSS emphasis on informational texts over literary texts. An understanding of the major shifts brought about by the CCSS for ELA, how these shifts are presented by the backers of the CCSS, and an awareness of the controversies over those shifts, is particularly essential for those teaching writing in K-12. An understanding of these issues is also important to anyone preparing writing teachers at the college level, as these changes will have an impact on what incoming students know, and don't know, about college writing.

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1 See Diane Ravitch's blog, for the progressive perspective on the ELA shifts.
2 See Sandra Stosky's post on the website of the Heritage Institute, for a conservative perspective on the ELA shifts.

A Collaborative Model for Teaching Teachers of Writing Across K-16

As the CCSS are an attempt to improve the effectiveness of K-12 public education by targeting a closer alignment between high school exit standards and college entrance standards, along with an increased emphasis on "college readiness," in order to effectively teach teachers of writing at the college level, it is increasingly essential to connect the theory and practice of teaching college composition with the current theories and practices surrounding writing instruction at the high school level. Specifically, the effective teaching of composition instructors should involve direct collaboration with local K-12 educators; college writing teachers need to learn from the experiences and observations of secondary school English teachers, and vice-versa.

As the Director of Composition at my institution, I recently participated in the College Board's "Affinity Network," as an "English Language Arts Team Member" representing my university in a collaborative, year-long initiative, which brought together educators in my region across the K-16 continuum. This effort focused on the likely implications and shifts brought about by the implementation of the CCSS, just recently underway in the public schools in our region. The Network provided the opportunity for those in higher education to get together with high school teachers, principles, and curriculum developers, for the purpose of identifying likely impacts of CCSS implementation and to collaboratively develop a shared response. This initiative suggested that not only did this kind of collaboration amongst educators across the K-16 continuum have the potential to be powerful and effective, it was going to become increasingly necessary in the midst of a national effort to improve the transition between high school and college. The Affinity Network also offered a model for the kind of collaborative professional development that would be needed for teachers of writing at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Concurrent enrollment programs offer a unique opportunity for this kind of collaborative learning about the teaching of writing to occur. At my institution, we currently employ and prepare local area high school teachers to teach our introductory English Composition course in the high schools. In other words, teachers already employed at local high schools teach our "English 101" curriculum, and students receive college credit and high school credit for this course. This collaborative venture provides an opportunity not only to help teach local high school instructors about the expectations and practices that define college level writing, it also provides an opportunity to learn *from* high school teachers about the practice of teaching high school composition, as well as the weakness and strengths of high school writers.

Over the course of an academic year, I have, as the Director of Composition at my institution, led a series of workshops on composition pedagogy, the CCSS, and writing assessment for both our college instructors, as well as the high school instructors that teach in our Concurrent Enrollment Program. I believe that this series of workshops can serve as a model for other college composition programs to establish professional development programs focused on the CCSS, and based on collaboration across the K-16 continuum. This approach to teacher preparation, as well as the content of the workshops themselves, is grounded in foundational and current college composition theory. Specifically, the preparation is grounded in the theory and practice of the scholars that James Berlin identified with Social Epistemic Rhetoric, a paradigm of rhetoric and writing that continues to inform much of the field of composition and rhetoric. It is also informed by the current scholarship of academic literacies, an approach to the teaching and learning of writing in higher education originally developed by Mary Lea and Brian Street. The sequence of teaching workshops noted below suggest the kind of content that could be covered in this kind of collaborative endeavor:

1. The CCSS for ELA and Student Learning Outcomes for First-Year Composition
2. Defining College Level Writing: The Strengths and Weakness of our Student Writers
3. Minding the Gap: Using Composition Theory to Understand the Differences Between High School and College Writing

I will now provide a brief account of the how these workshops can be run, as well as an account of the preliminary conclusions that can be drawn from these experiences.

CCSS Anchor Standards for Writing and Outcomes for First-Year Composition

This workshop brought together high school English teachers and first-year composition instructors to discuss the CCSS "College and Career Ready Anchor Standards for Writing" in comparison with our own program's Student Learning Outcomes for English Composition 101, our university's first-year composition course. The goals of this workshop were to:

1. Introduce the CCSS to our college level first-year composition instructors and have them apply their understanding of best practices in the assessment of writing to these standards.
2. Introduce and discuss the SLO's of our institution's first-year composition course to our high school instructors and have them relate their experience of teaching high school writing to the outcomes.
3. Have instructors at the college and high school level compare writing standards at the secondary and college level, note similarities and differences, and discuss implications for writing instruction and learning at both levels.

The group consisted of just over twenty college composition instructors, and under ten high school instructors; it met for over two hours.[3] The participants noted a great deal of overlap between the two sets of standards. (See Table 1, below.) Indeed, an examination of the CCSS standards for the assessment of writing ability at the secondary level suggests that there are several

important areas of alignment between CCSS and discipline-approved college level student learning outcomes, such as the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition.[4] Shared terminology and similarity amongst learning targets in the CCSS and first-year composition outcomes can clearly be seen, and, in a collaborative workshop setting are quickly noted by both secondary and post-secondary writing teachers.

A similar focus and comparable language exists in our first-year composition outcomes and the CCSS regarding the writing process, argumentation, and information literacy. For example, regarding the writing process, the College and Career Ready (CCR) anchor standards for writing state that students must be able to, "Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach" (Anchor Standards for Writing). Similarly, our program's composition outcomes state that students must be able to "develop a recursive and collaborative writing process that includes planning, drafting, revising, organizing, editing, and proofreading." Both sets of standards include language about developing arguments and finding and using appropriate evidence to support claims.

An analysis and discussion of this example of post-secondary composition student learning outcomes in *contrast* to CCSS the points up a number of compelling dissimilarities between the two sets of standards.

Table 1
Comparison of Concepts and Terms in Sample College Composition Outcomes Statement and The College and Career Ready Anchor Standards for Writing

Shared Concepts/Terms	Terms Not Included in CCR Anchor Standards for Writing
"Write arguments to support claims" *"analysis of substantive topics or texts"* *"Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources"*	*scholarly* *rhetorical situation* *academic discourse* *implicit/explicit theses*

As is illustrated in the above chart, a comparison of a specific set of first-year composition standards and the CCR Anchor Standards for writing suggest that the CCSS do not include terminology and concepts common, and in many cases central, to the teaching and learning of first-year composition. While some cases of omission of terms from the CCSS may simply be a case of differing terminology, in other instances, the absence of terms central to composition theory and practice may suggest a contrast between the CCSS and expectations for what constitutes a college ready writer held by college writing teachers and administrators. Awareness of and engagement with these contrasts, and the possible gaps between how the CCSS and college instructors describe college ready writers implied by these contrasts, are essential to the successful preparation of writing teachers at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

A collaborative analysis of these standards by high school and college writing teachers suggests that a shared understanding of the terminology of the CCSS in relation to the discourse of first-year composition standards across both levels will be important to the successful training of composition teachers, as well as the success of their students. The CCSS and FYC standards should be compared and discussed as the products of specific discourse communities.[5] Understanding that the two sets of standards have been composed by different communities using differing—though many times similar, or even overlapping—discourses, can help us note areas of shared concern, even if identical terminology has not been used in both sets of standards. An excellent example of this is reflected in the use of the term "claim" in the CCSS, in contrast to the common usage in the composition field of the term "thesis." The CCR anchor standards for writing state that students should be able to, "Write arguments to support *claims* in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence…" (Anchor Standards for Writing). The absence of the term "thesis" in the CCSS does not mean that students will not be expected to develop and support thesis statements if they meet the CCSS writing standards; "thesis statements" are represented as a *type* of claim in the standards. It is important, however, that teachers of writing at both the high school and college level are prepared to communicate this difference in terminology to students. High school teachers need to help make students aware that central claims will often be called thesis statements in college; college writing teachers need to be sure to connect the term "claim" to the use of the term "thesis" in college. Similar instances of concepts that are shared by Common Core and FYC standards, but that have been articulated using different terminology, should be noted and discussed with writing teachers; these instances should subsequently be noted and discussed with students.

The recognition by workshop participants of the absence of the term "thesis" from the CCSS, and the varying reactions to this absence provides an illustration of the benefits of bringing together instructors across the K-16 continuum. Composition instructors, as a group, were very surprised that the term was absent from the standards; some even expressed a level of dismay over this fact. An experienced high school teacher, who had been involved in state-level efforts to refine early drafts of the standards, however, was able to step in and explain the rationale (based, at least on his experience) for leaving the term out of the standards. This provided useful information for the college instructors. On the other hand, the concern expressed by the

college instructors about the absence of the term, made it clear to the high school teachers in attendance that they still needed to use the term "thesis" in their classes, so that students would be familiar with it, when they encountered the term at the college level.

In addition to identifying and discussing terminology that is shared between the CCSS and first-year composition outcomes, the effective teaching of writing teachers should include an effort to identify and discuss any terms common to college composition but absent in the CCSS writing standards. The term—readily identified by the college instructors in our workshop— with the most noteworthy absence in the CCSS anchor standards for writing is a term and concept essential to the field of college writing: "rhetoric." The CCR anchor standards for writing do not include the term rhetoric, or imply its importance as a concept or area of study. The absence of the concept of rhetoric from the CCSS suggests a major gap between the CCSS and the goals and outcomes supported generally by the field of composition and rhetoric. To be fair, the CCSS standards do note that students should be able to produce texts appropriate to task, purpose, and audience, elements of what those in composition and rhetoric might call (at least part of) the rhetorical situation. However, the fact that the term rhetoric itself is absent in the writing standards that will be used to assess and determine a students college readiness is worth noting and discussing with English teachers at the secondary and post secondary level. This kind of collaborative work across the K-16 continuum offers the opportunity for high school and college instructors to discuss the issue of audience in the teaching and learning of writing. In one case, such a collaborative meeting pointed to the gap between what can be reasonably accomplished in the high school writing classroom, versus the college writing classroom. A college instructor who suggested, with a level of distress, that first year college students couldn't create narrow topics targeted towards specific audiences—in other words, her students weren't thinking and writing *rhetorically*— was met with a response from a high school teacher that provided needed perspective. This teacher suggested that while it would be important, at some point, to teach students how to come up with narrow topics, targeted to a specific audience, her current job as a high school English teacher was to *open* up the world of her students. She noted that her students see things very narrowly and have little awareness of the national and global issues that impact them; her work, therefore, is focused on broadening her students' perspectives through writing. The opportunity to discover disconnects between the aims of high school teachers and college writing instructors is another benefit of facilitating collaborative opportunities for ELA educators across the K-16 continuum.

More importantly, perhaps, than the absence of the term rhetoric from the CCR anchor standards for writing, is the absence of values and perspective that rhetoric carries in the field of composition and rhetoric. The notion that every discursive act is situated within a specific material and cultural context is central to our field's conception of rhetoric; this conception can be traced to the classical rhetoric of Isocrates,[6] it is central to formation of the field itself,[7] and it can also be found in more recent work in post-process theory and eco-composition.[8] This formulation of rhetoric and discourse is reflected in the agreed upon outcomes for first-year writing in the field of composition and rhetoric; the Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition of the Council of Writing Program Administrators requires that students "Understand the relationships among knowledge, language, and power." This kind of outcome, as well as any kind of articulation of rhetoric as a socially and ideologically situated practice, is absent from the CCSS. As such, it is essential that this absence, and its implications for the teaching of college level writing to beginning college students be noted and discussed in writing teacher preparation. It may be useful to ask beginning and continuing college composition teachers whether an awareness and basic understanding of the term rhetoric is essential to college readiness. Further, it is worth asking composition teachers at the secondary and post-secondary level at what point students should be introduced to the idea that discourse is socially, culturally and ideologically situated. Should educators wait until students reach college to share this knowledge?

Defining College Ready Writing

The current national implementation of the CCSS, and promotion of these standards as creating "College and Career Ready" students, offers the opportunity to teach writing teachers by collecting information on and discussing how they themselves define "college ready" writing. Such a workshop can, in fact, begin with data collection: secondary and post-secondary teachers can be surveyed on their perceptions of student ability in specific areas of writing competency established by the CCSS. This data collection from educators in a local region can then be used as a starting point for a collaborative workshop focused on defining "college ready writing." While this data cannot necessarily be extrapolated in order to make observations about national perceptions, it does provide insight into perceived college readiness of first-year college writers at the college or university in question; if data is also collected from high school teachers, a better understanding of the *region's* students can be gained. In other words, this data can therefore be used to better understand the students in a given local community, and to therefore better train writing teachers at the high school and college level in that area. As writing teachers, we find ourselves at an important historical moment. Before the CCSS have been fully implemented in the high school classrooms, secondary and post-secondary writing teachers as well as program administrators need to develop a shared understanding of the areas of writing where their local soon-to-be and entering college students are currently falling short of college readiness. This collaboratively developed, shared understanding can then inform the collaborative development and implementation of targeted curricular

6   See Kathleen Welch's *Electric Rhetoric* on the relationship between the classical rhetoric of Isocrates and contemporary rhetorical theory.
7   See Berlin's *Rhetorics, Poetics and Cultures* for a historicized theorization of the field of composition that situates rhetoric within ideology, power and culture.
8   See Thomas Kent's *Post-Process Theory: Beyond the Writing Process Paradigm*, and Dobrin and Weisser's *Natural Discourse: Toward Ecocomposition* for recent articulations of rhetoric as radically contingent and ecologically situated.

changes at the high school and college level, designed to address these areas of low college readiness.

To this end, at my institution, data was collected from both college writing instructors and high school English teachers, primarily through surveys; data was also collected from instructors through focused discussions and writing samples.

Table 1: **Instructor Perceptions of the College Readiness of First-Year Composition Students**

Area of Writing Instructors indicate the level of their student's college readiness in each task below.	**Average of Level of College Readiness** One indicates least college ready, and ten indicates most college ready.
Q1. Write arguments to support claims in analysis of substantive topics	3.53/10
Q2. Write argumentative texts with clear focus	4.2/10
Q3. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience	4/10
Q4 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	4.2/10
Q5. Gather relevant info from multiple sources	4/10

The majority of composition instructors at my institution completed a survey of instructor perceptions of the college readiness of first-year college students in several areas of writing identified by the CCSS. (See Table 1.) Language taken directly from the CCR Anchor Standards for Writing was used in the survey to identify the writing tasks in question. If a student who meets the standards for writing set by the CCSS upon his/her graduation is supposedly "college ready" according to the architects of the standards, it is important to know whether the students now entering college are currently meeting these standards, and if they aren't, how close they are to meeting them. Most importantly, it is essential that teachers of writing identify the areas of writing where students are least college ready, so that new and continuing writing teachers can be better prepared to address—and emphasize—those issues in the secondary and post-secondary writing classroom. The results above suggest that the college writing instructors at my institution believe that our university's first-year students *do not* demonstrate college readiness in a number of writing skills included in the CCSS for writing.

In order to develop a shared understanding of college ready writing, we need to learn whether high school writing teachers and college instructors agree about the strengths and weaknesses of their students as writers. Areas of agreement can lead to targeted intervention, at both levels, via training, curriculum development, and assessment. Areas of disagreement between high school and college writing teachers may point to the need for better communication and continued focused collaboration across the K-16 continuum. For example, both area high school instructors and college instructors were asked, in our workshop on college ready writing, to provide a written response to the question:

*In what area of college composition are students **least** college ready? Briefly explain.*

While the teachers provided a range of responses to this question, different focuses of concern emerged from the two groups. The ability of students to establish and maintain a clear focus in a given piece of writing was the weakness that the highest number of high school teachers identified. In contrast, the highest number of college-level instructors identified *reading* ability as the greatest weakness of beginning college writers. We cannot draw general conclusions about the weaknesses of beginning college writers from these results; however, these responses do help writing administrators and writing teachers in our specific region begin to develop an understanding of the weaknesses of our students, as well as possible disconnects between the perceptions of high school and college teachers. In this case, these results may suggest that *college* instructors believe that their students enter college lacking the functional and/or critical literacy skills necessary to a successful college writer, while *high school* instructors are focused on the weaknesses of their students in performing specific college-level writing skills. It could be said that, in this particular case, the college instructors expressed the most concern about their students' pre-college skills, and the high school teachers focused their concern on specific areas of writing they believed to be most important to successful college-level writing. Regardless of the conclusions that might be drawn from these responses, the feedback, if shared in a workshop environment can certainly provide the basis for a productive, collaborative discussion amongst high school teachers, college teachers, and writing administrators, about the strengths and weaknesses of the beginning college writers with whom we all work.

Impacts on Writing Curriculum at the High School and College Level

Once, through the collaborative dialogue described above, high school and college writing teachers can identify and agree on specific areas of writing where students are commonly falling short of college-readiness, it is essential to continue this collaborative work with the goal of developing curricular responses that address these areas at both the high school and college level. If the first step is defining terms and identifying problems, the second step needs to be an effort to determine appropriate classroom responses at both levels. In other words, the development of a shared understanding of college readiness in writing across the college-high school continuum, should next lead to targeted intervention, at both levels, via curriculum development and assessment according to the CCSS and college level learning outcomes.

One form that such an intervention can take is the recent effort in my region and state to develop a new Grade 12 ELA course targeted towards students who do not pass the Grade 11 Smarter Balance Assessment (which, in my state, will be the standardized assessment of student achievement under the CCSS). In fact, the collaborative development of this course will be the next step taken by area educators at the high school and college level following our participation in the Affinity Network, as well as a statewide initiative "Core to College." At my institution, we will follow the workshop described above, with another collaborative workshop focused on the development of this Grade 12 course; it will be an opportunity to again bring together composition instructors and high school teachers from the local area and work together towards a specific curricular response to the issues of college readiness raised by the workshop described above. Based upon the results of the earlier workshop and the data presented above, it is clear, for example, that such a course will need to include in depth instruction on and the practice of developing focused, thesis driven texts; this area should be addressed in order to respond to the concerns of the local high school teachers represented above. Additionally, in response to the concerns of the area college instructors represented above, it is also clear that instruction on and the practice of critical reading of texts with academic language, be another important focus of such a Grade 12 ELA course. The development of this Grade 12 course is an excellent example of the kind of impactful product that can result from facilitating the collaboration between high school and college English instructors in response to the CCSS. High school teachers can help college level writing instructors better understand the challenges faced by high school writers, as well as their teachers; composition instructors and administrators at the college level can play an invaluable part in the development of ELA curricula that will help to better prepare students who will soon make the transition into their college classrooms. If such efforts are to truly impact student writing ability and strengthen student literacy skills, however, it is essential that this work be informed by current composition theory and practice, as discussed in the following section.

Using Composition Theory to Address Weakness of Beginning College Writers

Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement, by Calkins et al., a book that aims to enthusiastically promote the effective implementation of CCSS by K-12 educators, suggests that starting district-wide across the curriculum writing initiatives is an excellent way to begin the implementation of CCSS. The authors assert that starting CCSS implementation via writing is particularly advantageous because they claim that in "In the field of writing, there are no substantial debates over how best to proceed" as even conservative textbooks support "a writing process approach to the teaching of writing, as do the standards" (16-17). The idea that there "are no serious debates" over how to proceed in the teaching of writing is likely to be dismissed by anyone in composition and rhetoric, familiar with ongoing debates in the field over, for example, the post-process movement, genre studies, or multiliteracies. It is clear, however, that the CCSS have been informed by the research in composition and rhetoric conducted and put into practice in institutions of higher education over the last thirty to forty years. Most in the field certainly *would* agree that writing must be taught as a process of *some* kind, and would strongly support efforts in K-12 education to promote this approach. An analysis of the CCSS does suggest however, that there are certain foundational concerns, central to the theory and practice of composition and rhetoric in higher education, that are either absent or undeveloped in the CCSS. As we prepare both high school and college teachers to work with soon-to-be and/ or beginning college writers, it is essential that we: 1) Ensure that all writing teachers have an understanding of how approaches and practices suggested by the CCSS contrast the theories and practices commonly shared within the field of composition, and 2) Apply the assumptions, theories and practices of composition and rhetoric in higher education to the preparation of writing teachers at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Those who teach writing to students who will soon enter college, should, like college level writing teachers, be prepared to teach writing through the development and application of knowledge in the field of composition and rhetoric. High school teachers must learn to identify what their students will not know about college writing, in terms of familiarity and practice, even after they exited high school, just having met the standards for "college and career" readiness established by the CCSS. College writing teachers must become familiar with the CCSS and establish expectations for what these first-year college students will know and not know about *college composition and rhetoric.*

Some predictions can be made about the what beginning college students will know about and be able to do effectively in the college writing class, based on an analysis of what is, and isn't, included in CCSS themselves. The CCSS do promote the notion of writing as a process— a foundational assumption shared by much of the field of composition and rhetoric. In fact, proponents of the CCSS, such as Calkins et al., recognize this approach as the universally accepted writing pedagogy. Analysis of the CCSS in relation to the theory of "academic literacies" (ACLITS) can help provide a framework, which can be applied during teacher preparation, for exploring the differences and similarities in the treatment of writing process by the CCSS and the field of composition and rhetoric. As noted by Lea and Street, ACLITS approach differentiates between three approaches of writing pedagogy: study skills, socialization and academic literacies. These authors note that the academic literacies model draws from the other two models, but that it is best able to effectively address student writing. Like the paradigm of writing and rhetoric, "social-epistemic rhetoric," promoted by Berlin, an ACLITS approach suggests that writing cannot be reduced to a single, universal or transferrable process. Both theories of writing suggest that writing must be researched and learned in a way that takes into account "institutional practices, power relations and identities" (Russell et al. 400). Both the social-epistemic and academic literacies approaches operate on the epistemological assumption that knowledge and discourse is a social process and that discourse is always ideological. The principles of these two models of writing and writing pedagogy—principles that underlie much of the field of composition and rhetoric and the field's agreed-upon standards for assessment (WPA Outcomes)—

do not appear to have informed the CCSS. The two other common approaches to writing articulated by proponents of ACLITS — the "study skills" and "socialization" model—are, however, reflected in the CCSS.

Discussion of the study skills model and socialization model can be useful for illustrating differences between the CCSS and accepted college composition theory. The study skills model treats writing as an autonomous act, separate from subjective positions, and cultural or material contexts (Lea and Street). Writing is treated as a set of practices that are transferrable from one situation to another; writing is treated as something to be "fixed" and instruction is focused on the mastery of rules and the correctness of surface features. In the model of socialization, writing is a process of engaging in and eventually internalizing the discursive practices of the academic community, or more specifically, the disciplinary community. The CCSS can be understood as an effort to improve student success (at least partially) through an academic socialization model. As noted above, the ELA shifts include a move toward "complex text and academic language" (Common Core Shifts). Further, the CSSS do promote writing as a context specific process and they require students to write in relation a manner appropriate "to audience, purpose, and task." The socialization model, however, can still be criticized on a number of grounds, including, Lea and Street argue, its tendency to treat academic discourse as homogenous and/or transparent and its failure to adequately address the relationship between the development of disciplinary discourses and institutional practices and power. And so, while the CCSS do improve upon the current-traditional or study skill model of writing pedagogy, they fall short in exactly the way that Lea and Street suggest that the socialization model falls short.

The CCSS English Language Standards admirably emphasize the importance of process and audience, they appear to operate off of several assumptions about the nature of writing and writing pedagogy, that have been challenged by the field of composition and rhetoric. While the standards promote writing as a process, this process is represented as universal—applicable to all individuals and situations; this perspective is reflected in the notion promoted by CCSS advocates that a single, universal approach to writing pedagogy has been settled upon. As noted above, absent from the standards for writing however, is any mention of the relationship between language use and power. Nor do the standards articulate a connection between individual student experience, home language use and academic discourse. The CCSS for ELA reinforce a model of competency that takes the ability to complete a range of autonomous, universally-transferrable tasks as evidence of academic or job preparedness, while failing to acknowledge the cultural situatedness of every literacy act as well as the cultural and economic contexts that surround the standards themselves. This acknowledgement of cultural situatedness of every discursive act is foundational to the field of composition and rhetoric. Writing teachers at the secondary and post-secondary level must be aware of this, as well as the fact that new college writers will not have been introduced to this idea, even if they have met the anchor standards established by the Common Core.

Further research must be done to determine the specific ways in which we find students, who have graduated and met the CCSS, excelling and struggling in the college writing classroom. Data are obviously not available on students who have been schooled for any length of time under the CCSS. We now, instead, must gather and share information on how our students are currently excelling and struggling in writing as they transition from high school to college. This will help us identify whether and how the CCSS contribute to a higher level of college readiness in writing. We must now also gather and share information as we prepare writing teachers on the contrasts that will still remain between the teaching of writing at the high school and college level, even after the CCSS have been fully implemented. The kind of collaborative teacher preparation, described above, offers a model for doing both of these tasks. As the Common Core is put into practice across the diverse states that comprise this country, we need to bring together educators who span the K-12 and higher education continuum, but who share a local community, in order to share in the task of teaching those who will teach writing to the kids, young adults, and college students who help make up that community.

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T/W

Re-thinking Personal Narrative in the Pedagogy of Writing Teacher Preparation

Introduction

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The role that personal narrative writing should play in the teaching of English in secondary schools is a question that members of our field have returned to again and again. Further, it is a question that onlookers of our work—both critical and supportive—have argued about. At one extreme, David Coleman, the dominant figure behind the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, has notoriously said about personal writing that "as you grow up in this world you realize people really don't give a shit about what you feel or what you think" (10). Yet multiple voices in the field of English education have drawn out the complex connections between personal and academic writing, making compelling arguments for the importance of the former, both in its own right and as a contributor to developing competence in the latter (see as just a few examples Hillocks, *Narrative*; Fredricksen, Wilhelm, and Smith; Kittle; Smagorinsky, Augustine, and O'Donnell-Allen). We find their arguments compelling. We see personal narrative as one of the many ways people make arguments in the world of discourse in school and beyond; further, we have seen how students engaged in personal narrative writing so often find themselves drawn into experimentation with different approaches in a text, deep revision, and a commitment to precise expression that we see as critical to learning writing.

Our own desire to prepare English language arts teachers to teach personal narrative well stems also from our sense of the socially mediated identity work that written and oral narrative texts accomplish in people's lives. Narrative is one of the primary ways that people understand, experience, and create reality (Bruner). As described by Bakhtin, narrative is dialogic. Any utterance made in speech or in text emerges as a part of an ongoing conversation, begun long before an individual speaks (or writes!) and carrying on long after. In this way, all stories respond to previous stories and anticipate stories that will be told in the future. Our narrations join other narrations in a tangled web of dialogue through which we take up, reject, and re-appropriate the words of others while inviting listeners to do the same with our words. Further, they vary in shape and function according to culture (Cazden). In addition to being dialogic and contextually embedded, narratives are also "intersubjective--belonging to the context as well as to the author," (Daiute 113). In this way, narrative is implicated in self-authoring. Mead suggests that, in part, we author ourselves as a result of our own objective introspection regarding our thoughts and behaviors. In order to accomplish this work, we must become an 'other' to ourselves. That process of self-consciousness, Mead contends, remains social in nature as we human beings take up the position of an "other" to interrogate ourselves (215). Viewing narrative in this manner, as socially and dialogically shaped in the context of culture and instrumental to a process of self-authoring, pushes us to re-consider narrative writing in terms of what it might *do* for students, both in and beyond classrooms.

However, understanding personal narrative in these ways is not the same as teaching it well—or of preparing teachers to do so. As Hillocks reminds us in his introduction to a book for teachers on teaching narrative (*Narrative*), too often we "teach" narrative by reading examples of narratives and then assigning narratives, failing to teach strategies that might result in good narratives. Even more rarely do narrative texts written in school (or any other kinds of texts written in school, for that matter) actually go anywhere beyond the teacher, thus failing to offer students experience in negotiating meanings with readers, working out the versions of self in context that narrative writing can foster. Teaching personal narrative well, in ways that are consistent with our view of personal narrative's value and the identity work it can support, has proven challenging. In the pages that follow, we describe and reflect on one effort to do so in a teacher education setting, in a class-to-class partnership between teacher candidates and first-year college writers. We introduce the example not as a success story or an exemplar, but rather as a problematic case (Bush) causing us to reconsider a) our sense of the purposes and possibilities of personal narrative writing in secondary schools and b) the uses and pedagogies of personal narrative writing in English teacher education.

A Narrative Writing Partnership

The writing partnership discussed here occurred in and across the English education and first year writing programs at a large public university. Mary taught a writing workshop course for secondary English teacher candidates in the English department, and April taught a first year composition course that was a university requirement for undergraduates (most, but not all, were first year students; we call these students "first-year writers" for simplicity). Through narrative writing, Mary wanted the teacher candidates to a) write narratives, b) critically reflect on and expand their own processes as narrative writers and