2001

Teaching the reading/writing connection in the diverse community college classroom

Claudia Eleanore Wissbeck-Kittel

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons, and the Rhetoric and Composition Commons

Recommended Citation

http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/1992

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
TEACHING THE READING/WRITING CONNECTION IN THE DIVERSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in English Composition

by Claudia Eleanore Wissbeck-Kittel

September 2001
TEACHING THE READING/WRITING CONNECTION IN A DIVERSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

by Claudia Eleanore Wissbeck-Kittel

September 2001

Approved by:
Elinore Partridge, Chair, English Department
DeShea Rushing, English Department
Mary Texeira, Sociology Department
ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that with the racial and ethnic diversity becoming more pronounced in the diverse disciplines of the two-year college we are going to need to adapt a cultural studies pedagogy in the writing class. The research done on all levels, but particularly in the CCC, points in the direction of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic community college classroom. I address writing strategies used when teaching to the diverse classroom from a multicultural standpoint, since the specific teaching strategy can determine success or failure for the student. The students in a culturally diverse setting are struggling, not only to learn to write, but also to generate critical thoughts which will enable them to learn in their discipline. A teacher needs to keep in mind that communication is not meaningful unless the student/teacher power differential is considered.

In my teaching, I use readings that not only generate thought but also discussions and learning, and I also use rhetorical situations that are genuine and interesting. The information in this thesis may help teachers to understand the value of developing a teaching
style suited to the diversity of the members of the class, with a view to increasing productivity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people were instrumental in the writing of this thesis, and here I will list a few of them. Maureen Mathison, of the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, who, along with Peter Goggins, of the University of Arizona, is the co-chair of the Western States Composition Conference was one of them. Carol Golliher, of Victor Valley Community College, my internship mentor for two semesters, helped me immensely with my point of view. Dr. Bill Vincent, of Riverside Community College, the director of the Riverside Community College Faculty Internship Program in which I participated, who made me hang in there when the going was rough, was another great help to me. Last of all, Dr. Dan Whitaker, of California State University, is a man without whom I would not have the patience to do all the research involved with the writing of this thesis. All of these people were of help in designing the pedagogy that this thesis describes.

Special thanks go to Dr. Rong Chen, the graduate coordinator of the English Department at California State University at San Bernardino. I am also grateful for the assistance that has been provided by Dr. Elinore Partridge, and Dr. Deshea Rushing, both of the English Department at the aforementioned University, and Dr. Mary Texeira of the Sociology Department. I will always recognize the valuable
help that they afforded me during the writing of this thesis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. v

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION: WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM AND WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

The Problem ................................................................. 1

The Approach ............................................................. 1

What I Hope to Accomplish in this Study ............ 2

Inquiries and Past Research ................................. 2

Thought Processes ....................................................... 3

Limitations .................................................................. 4

CHAPTER TWO: CULTURAL DIVERSITY, COMPOSITION ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES/THE READING-WRITING CONNECTION

The Need for Change .................................................... 5

Opinions and Teaching Styles ......................... 6

Textbook Formulation ................................................. 7

More Research .......................................................... 8

Another Need ............................................................. 10

How it was Dealt with at Bristol College ........... 11

Two Models of University Training .................... 13

Diversity and the Needs of the Student ............ 14

Why Reading? ............................................................. 14
## Procedures in the Classroom

*Student Reaction* ........................................... 20
*Assignments* ................................................. 21
*The Philosophy Behind This* .............................. 22
*Where Do We Begin?* ........................................ 23
*The Process* .................................................. 25
*Summary* ........................................................ 26

### CHAPTER THREE: TOOLS AND STRATEGIES OF THE CULTURAL STUDIES PEDAGOGY

*The Research of Durst* ..................................... 27
*Application of Durst's Research* ......................... 30
*Tobin* .................................................................. 31
*Strategies Used in K-12* ....................................... 32
*Training Teachers in K-12* .................................. 33
*Application to Students in K-12* ......................... 34
*Perl's Philosophy* ............................................. 35
*What Does Elbow "The Expert" Say?* ..................... 37
*Questioning Theory* .......................................... 38
*One Method in a Remedial Classroom* .................... 39
*Another Method* ............................................... 39
*Anzaldua's Book* .............................................. 41

### CHAPTER FOUR: MY APPROACH

viii
Problems I See ............................................. 43
Some of My Solutions ................................. 44
Language .................................................. 45
My Method ................................................. 47
Why This Works ........................................... 49
Writing Centers .......................................... 50
In the Future .............................................. 50
My Own Personal Experience ......................... 54
Application ................................................ 55
My Teaching of Remedial Classes ..................... 56
Differences in Students ................................. 62
Student Interaction ....................................... 64
A Cultural Approach ...................................... 65
Something That Works for Me ......................... 67
Student Need .............................................. 68

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION: WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO DO AND WHY THEY NEED TO DO IT

Beginning to Solve the Problem ....................... 69
My Experience ............................................ 69

APPENDIX A: RESULTS OF MY TEACHING .................. 71

APPENDIX B: SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS THAT WORK IN THE
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM

AND WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

The Problem

The community college has come a long way from the early 20th century. We have come from an institution which served a student body of middle class whites to one of students crossing both disciplinary boundaries and cultural boundaries. The two-year college must do its best to educate a student population that is as diverse as the area that it serves. We have had to revise the reading and writing connection to serve not only the disciplines, but also the diverse backgrounds of these students. We give the students different kinds of reading to motivate them to write.

The Approach

To accomplish this, one of the ways is to be aware of the "contact zone", a concept coined by Mary Louise Pratt in her article entitled, "Arts and the Contact Zone." The
expression, "contact zone," refers to a historical "atmosphere", such as the events surrounding slavery and how it is connected to the "arts", which refer to the strategies which were used in dealing with this historical "atmosphere" (Herzberg and Bizzell ix). This is the way Herzberg and Bizzell also use the term in their textbook Negotiating Difference. They discuss how, historical events are conceptually reacted to differently by students who are of different backgrounds. Different strategies are used by each group to deal with these events.

What I Hope to Accomplish in this Study.

To best deal with this diverse spectrum of students, a curriculum must be developed which gives each student an equal opportunity to learn. This curriculum provides students who have different backgrounds and different goals with the tools such as critical thinking skills.

Inquiries and past research

Students of different disciplinary boundaries and cultural boundaries can experience the "otherness" provided by diverse students. There have been many authors whose
writing, have influenced this thesis. Howard Tinberg and Kenneth Durst are cited quite a bit, and so is Mariolina Salvatori. Salvatori has made claims about the composition process which are, in turn, influenced by Hans-Georg Gadamer, a philosopher from the early to mid twentieth century. Salvatori has been influenced by Gadamer's ideas about human knowledge. Specifically, this author has been influenced by his thoughts about the making of knowledge. Gadamer has had quite a bit to say on the subject of dialectical hermeneutics and has said that "Texts have to be understood, and that means that one partner in the hermeneutical [interpretive] conversation, the text, is expressed only through the other partner, the interpreter." Salvatori has used his ideology in her theory about composition. It is also relevant in discussing the Cultural Studies Pedagogy, because the philosophy can be applied to students of all cultures.

Thought Processes

The understanding of which Gadamer speaks is what motivates the making of meaning. This means a major revision of the making of meaning. The making of meaning
has to be adapted to a diverse student body and, to do that, we must revise our biases and our whole perspective according to the issues we and our students are facing. In the classroom, it involves the making of meaning, and then the discussion of the way other students make meaning as a group activity. So, in the curriculum I am proposing, a major revision has been made in the making of meaning. It is borne out of a need to be adapted to a diverse student body; to do that, we must revise our biases and our whole perspective according to the issues we and our students are making. Herzberg and Bizzell's negotiating of difference involves understanding how various students make meaning in group activity.

Limitations

The study of this problem and its solutions has been limited to classes that I have taught in community colleges. I taught these classes in 1998 and 1999. This thesis discusses the research that has been done by Tinberg, Durst, and others; I also discuss how I have applied this research.
The Need for Change

Since the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the community college has changed from being an institution which served a student body of middle class whites to one serving students from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. In the 1920s and 1930s, the two-year college was a socializing force for bringing up the reading levels of people using belletristic ideas about what to read. With the open enrollment of the 1960s, this idea had to change from one catering to an elitist population to one that speaks to diversity. The question that administrations and compositionists had to ask, depending on the writing background of a student, was what effect on the process of a writing student would a study of authors from other cultures and eras have? So, the administration and the whole faculties of two year colleges had to basically revamp their entire curriculum (DeGenaro 3).
This was a challenge for the composition teacher as well as other teachers in the two year college who were forced to restructure their thinking about what and how to teach. We have had to revise our notions about both reading and writing to serve not only multiple backgrounds but various disciplines.

Opinions and teaching styles

This restructuring led to conversations and controversies among composition teachers and scholars. In her article, "The Arts of the Contact Zone," Mary Louise Pratt uses the term "contact zones" to refer to "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today." (Pratt 444). She points out that the academy must develop new strategies to deal with issues presented by contact zones which currently exist in our culture and in our institutions of higher education. Teachers must adapt to meet the language and cultures of the students in their classrooms. Pratt emphasizes that institutions must
change to become a place where students from different backgrounds can feel a sense of belonging rather than alienation (444).

Textbook Formulation

Another example of how compositionists are attempting to meet this need can be found in the collection of readings assembled by Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg in their text Negotiating Difference; Cultural Case Studies for Composition published in 1996. In their "Preface for Instructors," the editors state that they have selected and organized these readings around the concept of contact zones to allow students to "understand the historical contexts in which cultural conflicts have taken place (Herzberg and Bizzell v)." They further explain: "Within the zone, the contending groups must negotiate not only their political and social differences but also the very concepts of difference or otherness that each applies to the other." In the classroom, it involves the making of meaning, and then the discussion of the way other students make meaning, as a group activity. In this way, students of different disciplinary boundaries and cultural boundaries
can experience the "otherness" provided by diverse students. Historical events are conceptually reacted to differently by students who are of different backgrounds, and different strategies are used by each group to deal with them (Herzberg and Bizzell xix). Other compositionists have contributed significantly to the concept of dealing with cultural diversity in the classroom.

More research

Mariolina Salvatori, citing Hans-Georg Gadamer, notes the need for understanding and being able to question; that is, a kind of dialectic based upon mutual recognition of the ideas being discussed, as a basis both for conversations between two individuals and the silent "conversations between readers and text (Salvatori "Reading with the Text")."

Howard Tinberg in Border Talk also discusses how teachers in community colleges must attempt to develop a meeting ground with their students in order to have meaningful conversations with them. He and a group of faculty members from Bristol College tried to unify the
thinking of writing teachers across disciplines. Tinberg talks about it in his book.

In the early 1980s, Salvatori read Teaching Composing: A Guide to Teaching Writing as a Self-Creative Process by William E. Coles and thought, at first, that he was arguing against the use of reading material in the composition classroom. It seemed to her that Coles was saying that instructors should remove anything that created a preconceived notion in a student's mind, such as anthologies, novels, plays and poems. To Salvatori, this was a "blanket and arbitrary indictment of the presence of 'reading' in composition classrooms." (Salvatori 4). Salvatori believed that a student's involvement with a text was important, in part, because it generated a response that was not the same with every student (4).

In 1992, Salvatori returned to Coles' text and interpreted it differently. At that point, Salvatori attempted to understand which theoretical forces led to the separating and later the integrating of reading and writing, and she was able to understand that Coles wanted a student to relate introspectively to a text. She realized that Coles was against treating literature as an exercise
for analysis or as a model for writing. Rather, she discovered, he was arguing that the composition teacher should replace anthologies, plays, novels, and poems with "the text of the assignments and of the writing that students did in response to them (4)." Subsequent writers in the discipline such as John Clifford and John Schilb, in their essay "Composition Theory and Literary Theory," have argued for an active reading-writing connection. What kinds of reading one should use in the classroom became the issue as well as what kinds of writing skills needed to be taught (6).

Another Need

In the late 80s, universities were astounded to learn that students were graduating from college and entering the work force without the writing skills necessary to communicate with the public. This led to the development of writing requirements which would be essential for a student to graduate. However, it was discovered that not all students would be amenable to taking an "English" class, so some universities, including California State University, San Bernardino, adapted what is known as "Writing Across the Curriculum" in which there was a
placement of advanced composition classes within each discipline. Much discussion ensued regarding how to make students of other majors comfortable with learning how to write successfully. This was one situation which led to cultural studies pedagogy.

How It was Dealt with at Bristol College

Howard Tinberg, in Border Talk, deals with this issue extensively. In 1995, Tinberg held a discussion with a panel of professors at Bristol College, including instructors from the Math Department, the English Department, the Science Department, and the Nursing Department. These instructors wanted students to succeed in their disciplines. Reading, according to Griffin in the English Department, could be an act of faith. If a student reads a text, in other words, he/she needs to believe it to respond to it. Le Page, a Math teacher, made the statement that if effective communication is to happen, writing must show some sense of audience, a sense of "Rhetorical Situation." In Le Page's eyes, not only the needs of the audience (the teacher) but also the demand of (the form of) the writing and its purpose need to be considered. Griffin says that writing contains voice and personality, which
entails the writer perceiving the needs of the audience (Tinberg 5). The diversity in this case was across disciplines, but the kinds of interdisciplinary communication that Tinberg encouraged can also be applied in a classroom which includes different ethnic groups and, thus, different learning styles. Tinberg asks whether they are the same thing, answering that question by saying that writing is not an act of faith, it is a performance, and the power of words is the outcome of a masterful performance (6). The emotional and intellectual movement draws a favorable response. So we are being told here that writing can be a viable means of expression to the masses. In a classroom with a diverse student population, this is an immense responsibility; teachers must learn to communicate across cultural boundaries and to learn the rhetoric that does that in the best way in order that learning is geared to the diversity of the writing class. By using texts, including different rhetorical approaches and encouraging student feedback using process theory, instructors can encourage inclusion of students from ethnically diverse backgrounds (7).
Two Models of University Training

Isaiah Smithson, in researching cultural studies, came up with the thought that there are two models of training at the university; the first one viewed universities as transmitters of a cultural heritage, "entrusting criticism for elucidation of masterpieces of only one cultural heritage," and the second model viewed universities as sites for the production of knowledge, "envisioning criticism as a source of critical progress or as an innovative means to advance one's understanding of cultural phenomena (Smithson, Isaiah, and Nancy Ruff 1). Smithson basically worked with the second model. He noted a shift from the New Critical concept of the text and reader as separate from each other and their culture to an affirmation that text, writers, readers, and culture are intertwined, simultaneously constituting and reflecting one another (1). Smithson made the statement that "literary text is always cultural text, and readers read differently according to the cultures from which they derive their identities (5). Thus they see themselves as "interrogating cultural phenomena rather than elucidating literary
masterpieces" (5). This type of thinking seems to be influenced by the theory which states that a text is changed when a reader reads it, and each reader puts his or her identity into it over time. With the present-day diverse population, this second model has proved to be the more productive.

Diversity and the Needs of the Student

The evolution of composition theory has brought us to the present day, with its diverse classrooms, ranging from agriculture majors who have special interests to the ethnic diversity we experience within any discipline. We, as teachers, are going to need to teach to students from all groups, to prepare them for function in all types of society. Students need to learn from a cultural studies pedagogy both in the community college setting and the university setting.

Why Reading?

In order to write productively, there needs to be a stimulus to the activity, and this is where reading comes in. The writer reads a piece of text and responds to it.
Herzberg and Bizzell have developed a curriculum based on the history of the American culture. The book they have written expresses their sense that life in the United States has always involved negotiating across cultural boundaries. It aims to provide the knowledge of rhetorical strategies and cultural archives of different groups in America. Examples of such cultural strategies are the following: Contacts between Puritans and Native Americans (Herzberg and Bizzell ix), having both English accounts and Native American accounts, allowing the reader to develop a critical viewpoint, and having heard each side's view of the conflict. These readings describe the rhetorical battles that took place at that time in history (Herzberg and Bizzell I), and clearly can be used as cultural strategies.

Negotiating Difference is "multicultural" for a reason. The authors are not trying to expose students to the experiences of different cultural groups only to spark their interest or evoke their tolerance. Rather, they believe that the United States was a "multicultural society" even before it was a "separate nation." Therefore, life in the United States has always involved knowledge of
the rhetorical strategies and cultural archives of diverse American groups.

Herzberg and Bizzell are guided further in their thinking here by Mary Louise Pratt's concept of cultural "Contact Zones." As Pratt has argued, the "contact zone" concept generates provocative, creative new structures for organizing work in English studies. Herzberg and Bizzell argue that readings from a variety of genres can be grouped around the "contact zone" moment for which they were written. This is the method that they have followed in organizing the units in Negotiating Difference (Introduction v). Although few "multicultural" anthologies take this approach, the editors think that it will not be entirely new to the teacher, particularly a new graduate teaching assistant, who has been pursuing graduate literary study that is congenial to the "contact zone" concept. Herzberg and Bizzell believe that from the moment when the first native inhabitants met the first immigrants from Europe, since the first African slaves were brought here in chains, America has been a "multicultural" land. People from virtually every nation in the world have worked and struggled here, and part of their struggle has been to
communicate across cultural boundaries. They have not only had to communicate, but to argue for rights, to capture cultural territory, and to change the way America was imagined, so that it would include "those who were newer or less powerful" or those who were "spoken about but not listened to." In short, they had to negotiate the differences of culture, race, gender, class, and ideology. "Multiculturalism" and its difficulties are not phenomena only of our own day. They are embedded deeply in the nation's history.

Herzberg and Bizzell also believe that to learn to communicate in the overlapping discourse communities of society, students must understand the historical context in which cultural conflicts have taken place. They must master the rhetorical strategies, or, the way Pratt would say it, the arts of the contact zone. The typical "contact zone" is bounded both historically and geographically. Within the "zone," the contending groups must negotiate not only their political and social differences but also the very concepts of difference or "otherness" that they apply to one another. Each group must develop effective rhetorical strategies for communicating both within and across
cultural boundaries, taking into consideration its position of relative power in the conflict (v).

Herzberg and Bizzell have organized their text around this concept of "contact zones." Each of its six case studies focuses on a historical moment when groups with unequal power have struggled to define some significant part of their lives through which the negotiations took place. This contextualized analysis of first-hand materials has characterized the cultural studies perspective.

Herzberg and Bizzell’s text facilitates such a perspective through the presentation of public discourse in a variety of "genres, memoirs, speeches, sermons, oral history, senate testimony, government documents, and so on" to show how individual and group identifications are shaped by negotiated interpretations of experience. Herzberg and Bizzell also say that, although their book contains much new material, it also meets the traditional needs of the composition course. It is writing intensive in its approach to text study; it calls for personal reflection as well as analysis and arguments, and it suggests projects for further research. The book's focus on "rhetorical
strategies" also encourages the development of critical thinking (v).

At the same time, its historical approach to "multiculturalism" deflects the tensions that often arise in the composition classroom, allowing students to deal with sensitive issues by focusing on the analysis of texts rather than on students' personal lives and reactions. As the United States becomes ever more diverse, educational strategies are being developed to encourage students to communicate across the boundaries of culture, race, class and gender. These strategies grow increasingly crucial, and their negotiation seeks to further that end and ultimately to promote education for citizenship in a "multicultural" democracy. (vi) Herzberg and Bizzell say that it's not only a "matter of finding diverse kinds of texts and providing historical and cultural information about them; one must also adapt the method of analysis to this new rich material (vii)." Therefore, one reason for the new interest in cultural studies in composition is that it seems to promise an approach that allows for the analysis of rhetorical strategies in ideologically charged settings. The editors of Negotiating Difference hope that the apparatus provided
in this book will facilitate this kind of analysis.

They assume that literature encompasses "all kinds of
texts (Herzberg and Bizzell v)" and that literary study is
"already deepening to situate texts in their historical and
cultural contexts" (Forward v).

Procedure in the Classroom

In the classroom, Bizzell and Herzberg suggest that
the instructor use the historical introduction that begins
each unit of this text. This will "create a background in
the mind of the reader," enabling the reader to "comprehend
the text" as a means for further scrutiny and reflection,
inviting "comparison to the time frame that they are living
in today. (3-4)" In this way, the student can build
rhetorical strategies with which to deal with the material.
The authors have provided many comprehension aids in the
text such as headnotes, footnotes, and reading questions.
These comprehension devices give the reader the means of
connecting what he/she read to what he/she knows. These
characteristics help the entire educational experience
(3,4).
Student Reaction

The difficulty of the material is mitigated by the interest of the student in its study. It tells the marginalized student that his or her situation has been that way historically, and is getting better, because of the efforts of the authors (and others) of material contained in the book and others like it. The moral seriousness of the issues engaged in impresses on the student the fact that much thought is being given to these situations. Before such anthologies were published, a teacher wanting to employ these innovative ideas had to struggle with finding the appropriate texts and assembling course packets (v). Negotiating Difference eliminates that need. To facilitate the teaching of their text, the editors have written a teacher's manual to go with the text.

Assignments

The text by Herzberg and Bizzell is only one of the many texts that are available for use in the teaching of writing. When the dynamics of a composition class are combined with inventive assignments, the result is a positive effort on the part of all students in the class to
put forth their very best to produce competent, expressive papers.

The Philosophy Behind This

In speaking of the interconnectedness of reading and writing, Salvatori says that readers should become aware of the "mental moves" that they make when they are reading, see what they produce, and learn to revise or complicate these moves as they return to them in light of their newly constructed awareness of what they did or did not make possible (Salvatori 15). This can be done within Herzberg and Bizzell's text as the student synthesizes the information and tries to revise, for this is the framework that Salvatori used to attempt to imagine strategies that enact what H. Gadamer discusses in his writings as three pivotal and interconnected phases of reading; these are the making of knowledge, the assessment of that knowledge, and the remembering of that knowledge, making revision possible. These three components are basic to writing of any kind (Herzberg and Bizzell 15). This is a method that can be applied to a class containing students of diverse backgrounds to give the students a framework upon which to revise the papers they write. Responses are going to be
different with each student, and an instructor needs to be ready for these differences.

Where Do We begin?

How do we then teach students to write? There needs to be somewhere to start. What examples are the students to use for what they write? Theorists like Salvatori, Herzberg, and Bizzell, Hirsch, and Knight have discussed the issue of why reading should be taught in connection with writing. Salvatori argues that reading is the medium from which ideas are formed. This author theorizes that reading gives voice to writing, and therefore disagrees with those who say that there is no conversation between reading and writing. According to Salvatori, merely knowing about the reading does not necessarily constitute involvement with the text.

Salvatori contends that a true interaction with the text means asking "how" and "why" questions about the knowledge that the text presents, giving the student opportunities for simultaneously experiencing the inside and outside of the text. She believes that when this is done, reading becomes a form of writing, and a student's writing cannot surpass that student's reading ability.
While the student is reading about a historical event, the act of interrogating is being performed, leading to interpretation, and an argument is being framed (17). In a cultural studies context, the students are encouraged to question the actual event itself, asking the same "how" and "why" questions, and arriving at a conclusion (17). What can we assign students to read? Salvatori says that some teachers have a tendency to put great literature on a pedestal saying it is to be interpreted and not criticized and taken apart. On the other hand, reading, according to Salvatori, is an opportunity to investigate knowledge, producing motives for the writing (17).

Mary Louise Pratt suggests an approach which allows the student to describe literary utterance in the same terms used to describe other types of utterances. The hypothesis, a descriptive apparatus which describes the uses of languages outside literature, is able to account for literary discourse as well. Pratt wants the discourse in composition and literature to be the same. In other words, the same types of processes should apply to both reading and writing (Pratt 23).
The Process

What is known in the composition field as "Process Theory" is the concept that the individual is responsible for the pre-writing, the drafting, and the revision of that person's piece of writing. The writer, to get ideas for writing, will pre-write thoughts on paper, and pick out a topic from that. Once the topic has been chosen, research is done to develop it, or the writer may just depend on written thoughts to generate more text. The writer then can move on to develop the thoughts that emerge from this process. Process pedagogy involves the importance that is now being placed on the actual process, which is the "mental moves" that a person makes in the effort to achieve the making of meaning. The pedagogical paradigm for the process movement consists of a student centered environment. These ideas can be applied to a classroom comprised of students of marginalized groups, with students getting into groups and giving feedback at the same time they are learning from one another.

Authors who are most associated with process theory and its resulting pedagogy are Marin, Emig, McCrory, and Elbow. This concept, which emerged in 1975, was thought to
occur when knowledge was formed by a relationship of power with truth. A writer would look behind something valued to see if there existed something else to value. The writer then needed to keep looking until something meaningful would appear, for meaningfulness was necessary and essential. In the search for meaningfulness in the current student-centered environment, we encounter the micro-questions used in our culture such as “How do we understand the diversity of discourse?” Only when understanding is achieved, will we have social equality, enfranchisement, and liberty.

Summary

We have seen, so far, how our two-year college has changed from a job-training facility in the early 1900s catering to mostly white students, to a truly diverse institution in the 60’s with open enrollment. We have also learned about the methods that can be used to deal with the training of these diverse students. However, questions still remain about tools and strategies to use when utilizing the cultural studies pedagogy. I will discuss this in my next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE
TOOLS AND STRATEGIES OF THE
CULTURAL STUDIES
PEDAGOGY

The Research of Durst

In Learning in College Composition, published in 1999, Russell K. Durst explores the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings of classroom conflicts, noting that "students and teachers often have very different—and in many ways opposing—agendas in the composition class, that these different agendas lead to significant conflict and negotiations throughout the course, and that a greater understanding of the nature of these disagreements and how they are or are not resolved can enhance both the theory and practice of composition teaching (Durst 1)." In his study of students and teachers in first-year writing classes, Durst wished "to examine the relationship of [contemporary composition theory] to classroom practice in light of students' attitudes and approaches to composition instruction" (1).

To this end, he asked the following questions: What attitudes did students have toward writing at the beginning
of the course sequence, and what did they hope to learn in College Composition? How did the students approach the first quarter course, which was designed to help learn to take a more analytical stance in writing? How did the students engage with the political and social content of the second quarter course of this experiment, along with the critical thinking and argument aspect of the course? How did students relate their own political views and understandings to those embodied in the textbook, writing assignments, and other aspects of the second-quarter course? How did the teacher view the "official syllabus" (which in some colleges is the apparatus that has been written by the department, and from which a teacher must not divert,) and in what ways did he/she adapt the prescribed curriculum to fit his/her own teaching preference? In what ways did students' approaches to the course conflict with those of the teacher, and how did students attempt to resolve those differences? He also asked these questions about the teacher: How did the teacher attempt to resolve the course conflicts and how did the students react to these efforts? What understandings about literacy and culture did students take away from the
writing classes? What are the implications of this research for the teaching of composition (8)?

Durst observes that the pragmatic orientation of students, who view writing as a useful tool, and the "critical literacy" approaches of many composition teachers are "dramatically at odds" with one another. Such critical literacy approaches are "designed to complicate rather than simplify students' lives," and while the teacher is attempting to encourage development of ideas, self-reflection, and "multi-perspectival" thinking, the student initially does not see the critical literacy issues as being relevant or important. Durst feels that the resulting conflicts produce some of the more interesting moments in the classroom. In Durst's words, the teacher "promotes a pedagogy of interpretation, critique, meta-awareness, and dialectic types of intellectual work that constitute the hallmarks of a critical literacy orientation, while students wish for a simpler, more straightforward, and less conflictual approach" (72).

A movement depicted in much recent scholarship is called the "social turn movement," referring to attempts to open up instruction and theory at a variety of levels to
issues of justice, and oppression, so Durst speaks of the relationship of the social turn to the more traditional concern with the teaching of writing strategies, approaches, and techniques that students can use in producing text. This seems to agree with the cultural studies pedagogy, in the sense that unresolved tension exists between these areas of concern. This tension is shown by the curricula of the teachers who are in favor of change being under question. Questions that are normally posed are pertinent: What are the political implications of writing instruction? Are there any? Should there be any (5)?

Application of Durst’s Research

In writing, there are questions of interpretation and critique of meta-awareness, which is an awareness that begins at the beginning of the learning process and continues on through the process to the climax. This produces a dialectic type of intellectual work and constitutes the hallmark of a critical literacy orientation. These concepts, the dialectic and the orientation, help to broaden the mind of the student, and they involve the student from the beginning. Because of
this, a student is stimulated to write, and there will be much involvement in the subject matter.

Durst feels that while this "social turn" in the composition classroom is healthy and desirable, we also need to consider the students' goals and interests. His goal is "to develop a critical literacy approach that accepts the careerism which so many students bring to the classroom, yet uses that careerism not as an end in itself but rather as a beginning point on which to build greater awareness and sophistication" (6). While encouraging political awareness, the composition teacher must also be aware of the students' more practical interest in learning to write well (6).

Tobin

Another author who speaks of changing practices in the classroom is Lad Tobin. In his book Pedagogy Reclaimed, Tobin tells of the "bad old days" when his teachers demanded three supporting statements for a thesis, but then modified the formula by saying that perhaps two or four might do. While he calls this confusing and unrealistic, he also admits to taking "some strange pleasure from circling student errors in red ink and writing AWK! And
SOURCE? and VAGUE!!! in the margins." He gives examples of the "dark days for teachers" when the 750 word essay on the "vapidities" of summer vacations, of winning the big game and of dearly departed dogs were the standard student products. He then gives a brief history of those who called for a change, as well as those who looked at how and why actual writers write and how context determines content. He points out, as does Durst, how emerging theories have reshaped the student-teacher relationship. Tobin states that process writing also calls for "process reading" from the instructor. Instead of focusing on "errors" in student writing, teachers must learn "freereading" and the recursive, revisionary nature of interpreting student writing (Tobin 27).

Strategies Used in K-12

Some guidelines for "process teaching" are outlined by Sondra Perl in Through Teachers' Eyes, published in 1986. In considering the role of both student and teacher, Perl notes that traditionally teachers help students with their writing after they produce first drafts. Sometimes instructors offer students help before they begin writing.
by working with them on strategies for planning and organization. Only recently have they known how to help our students in the process of writing. The guidelines for composing are designed to direct learning writers through the composing process, from finding a topic worth writing about to discovering what to say about it. They consist of a series of questions that asks writers to look back in order to move forward to question themselves, to search for the right word, and to do what many skilled writers do naturally (Perl 20).

Training Teachers in K-12

In discussing this recursive process, Perl refers to "felt sense," a term coined by Eugene Gendlin, (25) which he describes as the physical sensation that often accompanies barely formed impressions. To Gendlin, a felt sense is always rather murky and puzzling. To explain felt sense, Gendlin gives the example of knowing one has forgotten something but not knowing what it is. For example, something could be nagging at an individual. For example, he asks himself: "What has been forgotten?" One searches the mind and eliminates everything it could be.
The felt sense is still there, but as possibilities are eliminated, it does not go away. All of a sudden it comes to the surface: it is the book this individual promised to return. That's it. It's still sitting on the desk and then one feels a sudden physical relief, and easing inside one has just experienced what Gendlin calls a shift, in the felt sense (35).

Application to Students in K-12

In the student writers, the same uneasy "felt sense" is present; however, as they put words to it, what was formerly incomplete and diffuse comes into form, and now the question becomes: How am I going to say it. As we write, we begin to make discoveries about subjects and to clarify meaning. At times we hit dead ends, uncomfortable, aware that something is missing, but not sure what it is. In these instances, it is the felt sense that often serves as the internal guide. The felt sense is the criterion that helps to judge whether or not one's words capture the intended meaning; when they do, one can experience the shift Gendlin describes. When they do not, the need is to
pause, consult that complex bodily feeling once again and then continue writing (35).

Through Teachers' Eyes provides guidelines for the teacher of writing, both in the K-12 classroom and the community college remedial classroom. For example, it shows ways to instruct students to respond to one another's writing in the workshop setting. The student is advised to read a written piece aloud, twice if necessary, giving time after each reading for audience impressions to become clearer in the minds of the group. It is at this point that the responders begin critiquing the piece. This process cannot be rushed, because the writer may not see what is seen by the others in the group. In other words, the process has begun, and the responder should just listen and take it all in, using an open mind.

Perl's Philosophy

According to Perl, the writer should not be tyrannized by what those in the group say about the piece. The cardinal rule is; "Listen, don't defend." It is the job of the writer to decide what to do next. The writer has the task now of deciding what revisions to make and how to go
about making them. It may take a writer some time just to restructure phrases that may not have been understood by the responders correctly (37).

In an elementary classroom, the teacher can give advice to the responders of the piece, such as telling them that they are to listen actively, as though they are listening to some kind of music that they like. Then the responders can tell what they think the writer is trying to communicate by restating what has been written, either by paraphrasing, summarizing, or using some of the writer's own words. As the piece is being read, the students need to underline words or phrases that catch their attention, and think, “What about those words makes them stand out? How do these parts affect me?” They should be sure to respond to specific sections of the writing and let the writer know if there is anything in the writing that seems confusing, out of place, and/or unclear. They should explain why they are bothered by a particular item. There are certain questions that would be helpful to the writer, and the responder should know what those questions are, for example, they should ask the writer where he/she felt a problem existed, and where that writer had success. In a remedial setting,
this is an important task in order to avoid having one student cause the writer to feel put down, a problem some remedial students have.


In Writing without Teachers, Peter Elbow writes that “traditionalism” in the ‘90’s, is a time of advocates of process pedagogy caught between conservation and contemporary composition critics" (7). He also says that the advocates believe they are beyond the process movement. According to the thinking of these advocates, writing can be taught as a process and can generate as well as record thought. A cultural studies pedagogy, using the process method, can be used to generate revision and make the work better (Elbow 7).

Students write best when they can choose their topic, and good writing is strongly voiced. Premature emphasis on correctness can certainly be counterproductive; however, students eventually need to produce relatively error-free texts. However, if a teacher introduces it in revision, it is not a major concern in writing the first draft. In a classroom of students with differing interests, a
multiplicity of reading material must be explored and discussed to generate viewpoints and interests in writing. Our goal in spurring composition students on in projects should be to provide a variety of topics, thus enabling students to obtain many resources to aid them in formulating their papers.

Questioning Theory

In Brannon's "Toward a Theory of Composition," the statement is made that compositionists come from varying disciplinary vantage points, having conflicting theoretical commitments and valuing composition research methodologies (Brannon 125). This diversity has caused confusion and has led to the question of whether their work constitutes a viable "field" or merely a shared interest. For instance, one of the questions that was asked by these compositionists was: "What is the nature of the composing process?" Another common question is "How does one develop from an inexperienced to a mature writer?" Finally, "How can [teachers in] schools, particularly teachers of writing, assist the development of writers?" is a question that also needs to be looked for answers. Answers to all
these questions are still being formulated by educators (125).

One Method in a Remedial Classroom

Professor Daniel Bahner, of Crafton Hills Community College, advocates the use of Steinbeck's novels to bring social issues to the fore in the remedial setting. What this professor does is to concentrate on sentence structure for the first half of the semester, and then concentrate on the analysis of the novel in the second half. Students of Crafton Hills College are well prepared in the remedial classes; however, I have found that this particular style does not prepare them for writing in the four-year university, because it basically assumes that a student who needs remediation is not going any further than the Community College.

Another Method

Some college instructors look at writing processes as something that begins within the human psyche, and blooms like an artistic ability. Gloria Anzaldúa is one of these. She has written a lot on the issues of both gender bias and ethnic bias and teaches using her own anti-bias method. Having representatives from other ethnicities as well as
socio-economic groups in the classes that she teaches, Anzaldúa has developed a pedagogy that works in situations that develop in her classes. She also has written about this creative writing process, using her own experience. In the fifth chapter of *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa talks about a favorite personal writing process, comparing it to

"a mosaic pattern, to art, to flesh mounted on Bone Structure, only that sometimes the bones do not exist prior to the flesh, but are shaped after a vague and broad shadow of its form is described or uncovered during the beginning, middle, and final stages of writing." She goes on to say that "numerous overlays of paint, rough surfaces, smooth surfaces made [me] realize the existence of a pre-occupation with textures as well" (Anzaldúa 66).

To this author, the writing process is a form of art. She said, "Barely contained color threatens to spill out over the boundaries of the object it represents and into other objects and over the Borders of the frame (66)." The author said at that point, "Metaphors hybridize, ideas pop up here and there, variation and seeming contradiction "(66). This concept is one which would be helpful to a student in writing for an audience. Anzaldúa's abstract thinking is helpful in teaching a student to discover that student's own writing process. Ideally, a student could
learn this process and make application of it in classroom or personal writing. This author has been instrumental in the formation of my interpretation of cultural studies pedagogy as a viable means of classroom teaching (67).

Anzaldua's Book

Anzaldua, in teaching classes at University of California Santa Cruz, found it necessary to create an anthology for the students who complained about having to study the same text for multiple classes. Her anthology contains seven sections, the first one brings out the degradations and horrors that ethnic bias creates. Section two talks about how they combat these biases. The third section discusses love, humor, and optimism; the fourth tells how her fellow Latinas learn to sing their song; the fifth tells about alliance and working communities, and the sixth brings out a description of women of color as writers artists and intellectuals; the seventh discusses women of color as intellectual critics and theorists (5). This textbook is used in Women's Studies classes; however, portions of it can be adapted to a cultural studies pedagogy in a composition class, involving students from
multiple backgrounds. It particularly lends itself to populations of campuses in the colleges of California (68).

Just as Anzaldua has perfected her approach, I have also adopted an approach that I will describe in my next chapter.
The community college writing class has of necessity become a forum for debate, about ideas and issues, and the audience in many instances is the teacher who reads the student papers. However, “audience” has been defined by compositionists as curriculum which goes along with the demographics of the area in which the class is located, according to the need for dealing across cultural boundaries. The necessity to deal in a relativistic way is constant in everyday life. Diverse situations put constraints upon teachers. The thinking that Negotiating Difference encourages has been influenced by the concept of the contact zone (Herzberg and Bizzell 3). When there is a meeting of unequal powers in a classroom, it produces thought which is both critical and productive. It is the responsibility of the teacher to create a curriculum that is both interesting and stimulating.
Some of My Solutions

My pedagogy is one that encompasses the understanding both of cross-cultural problems and interdisciplinary problems, using the knowledge of the "epistemology" of both worlds. Epistemology begins with scrutiny, reflection, and critical thinking. I would use it in the context of test-preparation, as well as scoring other work. We, as community college composition teachers, are border crossers, because we need to help our students connect with other disciplines (Tinberg 50). The way that these relate to each other will be understood as you progress throughout this chapter. The question that cross-cultural and interdisciplinary education brings to mind is "Can we assume that all writing is the same, regardless of the background or discipline of the students in the class?" Writing expresses the way a discipline "Thinks." Should evaluative instruments reflect these differences (53)? The answers to this question, asked in a context of cultural studies pedagogy, can hopefully get students accustomed to writing in any context.

A question I have had to ask myself about my pedagogy is: How do I go about imparting critical language to my
culturally and disciplinarily different students? In Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts, we are told that writing must begin with silence. This leads to the next question: What is this silence, and how is it filled? Freire wrote about the Banking System by which the empty mind is filled with true knowledge (Pedagogy of Hope; Reliving the Pedagogy of the Oppressed). But what is true knowledge? Students must read and be influenced by their reading, which will change their relationship to their surroundings as they respond to what they have read. Remedial courses are designed to fill the need for a student to begin to develop such change. This change has been studied as recently as the 90's.

Language

Bartholomae and Petrosky did some research in the 90’s on the subject of the Reading/Writing Connection, and according to the facts they found, the statement is made that through language we construct alternities of being. So the remedial classroom deals with the struggle between the languages. These languages would be within the
discipline of their study. This research has been influential in my teaching (Bartholomae and Petrosky 45).

It has been my job to assist students in the developing of the ability to appropriate the special discourse that the people use within that context. How much remediation is needed before that development can be approached? There are many answers to that question. Bartholomae and Petrosky's research makes the claim that man since Babel has struggled between languages, and to be able to move from one to the other freely is a real accomplishment. The remedial class is constructed with this goal in mind of going from one discourse to another, but how do we start? It is truly an issue to be studied (Bartholomae and Petrosky 45). This issue can be addressed in a classroom that adapts a cultural studies approach, a method that is productive in the cross-cultural society we live in, the very atmosphere in which we have to teach.

As has already been pointed out, we are living in a time period where there is diversity everywhere, including the universities and community colleges. The composition teacher has students who come from many different backgrounds, who all need to be accommodated, and this
makes necessary the use of more of a variety of readings, to appeal to the students' various backgrounds. These differences will never create equality, however, a teacher of composition must necessarily be open to new kinds of readings, therefore I have chosen to approach writing using this research method.

My Method

The system that I would use in such a class is that of Bizzell and Herzberg, specifically the idea of establishing the common ground on which to meet and discuss, grapple with, issues from the standpoint of each represented group. The atmosphere that Negotiating Difference provides in a classroom is a good stimulator, especially as it gives "exercise" to the mind, (Herzberg and Bizzell 3). My interpretation of the "Contact Zone" is the event in history which began the friction between groups, and the "Arts" are the strategies which are used in helping the students to grapple with the issues.

I would use the ideas of Pratt and Howard Tinberg, who also discussed language use across the curriculum. Both authors have been influential in my teaching. I am of the opinion that a teacher can find many things out there that

47
could be instrumental in producing a cohesive composition program, but nothing I have researched has equaled the work of these authors. I also think that Gadamer has influenced my teaching, because he worked extensively with the idea of truth.

In my teaching, I want to cause the student to question the environment in which he or she lives. I would want the student to have a "dialectic with the text." I think such dialectic could be considered a "conversation with the text." The student is encouraged to read a text and make comments in the margin; a practice which can be seen as "talking" between the reader and the author. When exercising this concept, I, as the instructor, would compare and contrast something on the board to introduce a topic, and then hand out an article that speaks further on the topic. I would then put an essay question on the board and have the students write a one-page essay in class on this. Many of the essays will be on a topic which relates to the question, and some of them may have imaginations which would make their minds go further than simply responding to the topic. Instead, they would use the question as a springboard into other directions that relate
to the topic, thus giving them freedom to explore other ideas. All of this would be to synthesize the information that they had seen me write on the board. Hopefully they would feel comfortable writing about it at this point. It would give them the freedom to write about whatever comes into their minds about the specific topic. In a cultural studies pedagogy, a student learns to become part of the text. This is a method that has worked in classes that I have taught.

Why This Works

When one knows the history of community colleges, and how different it is from the early 1900s, one considers how present technology is seen as a viable means of communication. The possibility of closer relations with the distant parts of the world, makes it obvious that composition classes need to bring students together because of the need to learn to communicate in writing with the world as it stands today. The fact that the community college has gone from serving primarily the white middle class to one of a multiplicity of backgrounds should show us that positive change is occurring. But is progress occurring in the writing centers as well?
Writing Centers

When a teacher encourages students to use a writing center, the writing center needs to be able to tutor students to acquire the ability of production of good writing. If the writing center does not know where that instructor is going with the material being taught, and cannot guarantee good results in his or her coursework, the student will not use the writing center. Each community college instructor has to deal with language barriers of students at the college level, and this most often comes up in a writing center. The writing center often needs to know how to deal with these language barriers as well. This is because the "confusion of error" lies in these language barriers and more understanding could be used to correct that approach. This confusion can be found among and across disciplines, such as the sciences and history, where reading is done and writing must conform to what is read.

In the Future

I would like to develop an approach that allows the student to describe literary utterance in the same terms used to describe other types of utterances. There is in
the composition field an urgent desire to solve problems resulting from the discourse differences across the curriculum in the community college. There needs to be a change in writing center requirements to accommodate other disciplines. This is the whole subject of the research of Tinberg. Understanding and open-mindedness needs to be practiced in all disciplines, whatever the material, whatever the audience (ix). That is why we have to invent hypothetical rhetorical situations in writing classes, to stimulate students' performance.

In my pedagogy, I would use different "rhetorical situations" to stimulate the learning/writing process in a positive way. This involves the idea of audience. If a student writes a paper, is it just for the teacher, or for reading in front of the class? A student would need to write in a different way for each situation. If this same student was writing for the school newspaper, or a professional journal, it would require an entirely different way of writing. Because of the difference in type of audiences, each situation would require the use of different sentence length, the use of different figures of speech, and perhaps also different paragraph structure.
(54). This would require much self-assessment among members of the different groups that are doing the writing. Salvatori and Gadamer found that “Texts have to be understood, and that means that one partner in the hermeneutical [interpretive] conversation, the text, is expressed only through the other partner, the interpreter.” I believe that this view of reading, enables us to imagine a text’s argument not as a position to be won, but rather as a ‘topic’ about which the participators generate critical questions that enable them to reflect on the meaning of knowledge and on different processes of knowledge formation(137). This may be the way the future of the cultural studies pedagogy is to travel; it would be a vehicle for generating critical thought.

In my classes, the dialectic involves not only the reader but the text as well. To promote this, I would encourage the application of critical thought to my practice. That is to say that a teacher has the responsibility to read the student’s arguments, but also the student has the responsibility to write an argument in such a way as to encourage conversation. This would be my application of the theory to my practice. I have learned
that reading can be the medium from which ideas are formed, and it is from this concept that I base my theory of teaching.

When structural training is necessary, how does the instructor move beyond structure in the time allotted to the concept of interacting with text? This question and others like it come to mind because a teacher has to face reality when it comes to the education of students in need of remediation. In speaking with the brain-damaged students who, having the need to retrain for a job due to injury, have gone through programs to remediate the damage that has been done, it has come to my attention that some programs simply do not work, so a teacher approaches many ideas with skepticism. I think about the teachers I work with every day, who make statements such as, "I've tried everything but I can't get some kids to learn!" Therefore, my question is: Should a student learn to interact with text at an earlier level, so that it is not so hard when they get to college? It is done now at an earlier time with the gifted in high school AP classes, but some college students have not had the same training; therefore they
have to be trained from the beginning within a college setting.

My Own Personal Experience

An example of the process of getting involved with text occurred in my community college education. Thirty years before this time, I had started to read a book and stopped reading it, because it affected me in a negative way. When in an English class which required me to read for 15 minutes a day and report on it, I looked for a book to read and report on and came across this same book I had read years ago, and remembered having these negative feelings about it. However, I began reading it again, and could not remember what had caused me to feel negatively about the book. I then read the entire book and appreciated the way the author was using narrative as a descriptive tool in discussing the situations, and it was a lesson on history as well. Thus, having had more of life’s experiences, I was now better able to synthesize what the author had to say. From this example, a generalization that can be made is that a student’s appreciation of a text depends on whatever stage of life that student is in. Different age groups have different reactions to a text.
Application

I was able to apply what I had learned at that point in my life when I taught remedial classes at Crafton Hills College, using a course outline that had been formulated by Dr. Daniel Bahner, an English instructor at that institution. In an essay question, I asked my students to compare conditions in the Depression era to the conditions in our current time period. This was in the final exam and by the end of the semester, students had learned to compare and contrast quite well, and they did this by synthesizing the information that they had absorbed in Cannery Row, and writing the results of such synthesization on paper. This is only one area that I was able to perfect in my teaching, and I was able to adapt it to situations of multiple ethnicities.

In this way, I have been able to apply my knowledge of cultural studies to my own teaching, and I have learned from other teachers more experienced than I to perfect my skills with each new situation.
My Teaching of Remedial Classes

The following are descriptions of other things that worked in my classes. In my first remedial class, I assigned a process analysis essay, having my students describe a process that they regularly performed. Due to the fact that this was my first teaching experience, I didn’t know what to anticipate. The demographics of this class, which was the equivalent to an introduction and remedial class at my university, was primarily of Native American ancestry. Most students were out of high school for a year or more, making them basically re-entry students. Some were recent high school graduates. About 10% of the students dropped the class by mid-semester; these were basically underprepared students.

The textbooks were already chosen by the department; they were Steinbeck’s *Cannery Row*, and Langan’s *Sentence Skills: Form C*. As the class began, I put my students through sentence drills the first few weeks; the rest of the time consisted of the study of paragraph structure and essay writing. They also did analytical descriptions of emotions, such as what they had felt at the death of a friend, sibling, or parent. A great majority genuinely
cared about the learning experiences that they were having. They did very well. In an assigned process-analysis essay, they varied in their responses; some described what they did at work, and some described the steps they would take to get home from class. I also had my students read articles and then write in response to them using a key word such as "sadness" or "joy." Their responses varied, and, as they revised them, they became more intense about how they had felt. They revised them several times, and as they evolved, the students became genuinely proud of their accomplishments.

In my classes, I had my students keep journals, which helped them think of topics to write about; on the other hand, some students did not want to keep journals; a few also felt that keeping a journal and having the teacher read it was an invasion of privacy, so when students had this reaction, I didn't get journals from all my students. I can honestly say that if a student has no interest in the assigned reading, there is no way that this student is going to write even a paragraph. I had this experience when I gave a midterm in which I asked the students to react to one of the readings which they liked. One student
said that he liked none of them, "because I thought they were quite dry reading and I was not interested in any of them." This situation reflects rather accurately David Bartholomae's theory of reciprocity, which says that "What you ask for is what you will get (Bartholomae 7)." It showed me that assigned reading should be meaningful to both the student and the class, and that that meaning should be evident. This was one of my teaching skills that I needed to develop more. I had other experimental practices that I used to determine if they were adaptable to a multicultural class.

I also described and outlined on the board two novels about which I had written a paper in my undergraduate institution. These two novels were written in different time periods, but with some of the same characters; the second novel was connected to the first as a sequel to the other. Jane Eyre had undertones of moral issues of the 1800s, social biases, religious confusion, and Christianization as it existed at that time. Wide Sargasso Sea dealt with Obeah, (which was the black magic, a religious practice of the time,) slave ownership, and issues of fidelity. Having been written in the 1960s, it
described the issues of that time. I drew a chart of similarities and differences. The similarities were, of course, the characterizations, but the differences were the issues that they each dealt with. These were the models I presented to my students, which encouraged them to use critical thought.

The following semester, I taught a class that prepared students for basic writing. The members of that class ranged in age from thirty to about fifty, and were of varying ethnicities. In that class, I was using an excerpt of Mein Kampf, which we discussed in class. At the same time, a TV channel was showing Schindler's List, which I had assigned them to watch at home, and the next day we discussed students' impressions of the film. Then I had them read an excerpt from the Diary of Anne Frank, and I assigned an in-class essay, the results of which were overwhelmingly intense and well thought out. I devoted the rest of the semester to the Holocaust, the situation in Kosovo, and Hitler's attitude. The final exam contained an essay section in which I asked them to write a letter to Milosevich, using examples from the reading.
In the same class, I had also used a reading which discussed what to do when a baby is imminent, and this drew out some responses, both written and verbal, about abortion. Much research was done by the students, and final papers contained some informative stands taken on the issue. Another topic which had stirred members of the class was sports medicine and the use of anabolic steroids, and human growth hormones. I encouraged the students to be as honest as they could be about experiences that they had in regards to this issue, and the papers that resulted were about alternatives to steroids that were being used, the dangers of the currently used drugs, and experiences of friends that they knew who were trying to become strong and how they were doing it, using alternatives to steroids. In this way, a student was offered a variety of topics which enriched the atmosphere of the class, and gave students a variety of topics about which to write, creating an equal footing for students of multiple cultural backgrounds. These experiences I had in my teaching demonstrate how a multi-cultural class can be served in a unified way.

A topic I have not explored yet, but would like to, is "The Gospel of Wealth" to determine if students can
recognize its repercussions and drawbacks. I would have them read "The Gospel of Wealth," then "Ragged Dick" by Horatio Alger (Herzberg and Bizzell 426), written in 1867, in which he discusses the gospel of wealth, and the making of good through courage, frugality, and hard work. Then I would have them read "Critics of the Gospel of Wealth," which contains an opposing viewpoint, and have them write about their reaction to it and how they feel about it, and if they would raise their offspring with either viewpoint. This method has good results when a teacher can make them think about values (Herzberg and Bizzell 257). No matter what a student has experienced in his or her background, he or she can relate to, and draw something from, these readings.

To teach the bare essentials of an essay only is to encourage the production of a well-formed essay that says nothing and goes nowhere. We must give writers the resources to localize themselves within a given text and within the academic culture. In short, an essay needs to be a free flowing transaction with a text. This cannot be taught by workbook exercises that simply instruct in syntax, paragraph structure, and vocabulary.
I use the process method, which requires peer editing, and at least three revisions, in teaching remedial students, simply to get them accustomed to the method that will undoubtedly be used throughout their college careers. This method is rather new, having been initiated within the last decade. I have found that community college remedial students have not been exposed to it. It seems, however, that the Advanced Placement students are well versed in it, since they have had it in their AP classes on the secondary level.

Differences in Students

No two students have like goals. The only thing common among them is that they all need to learn this process in order to become proficient in their discipline. This could either be a content discipline or a performance discipline. Some disciplines require literal recall, which mandates "no misreading of the text," while others, such as psychology or philosophy, need skills which employ figurative recall, allowing for inaccuracy in order to learn to interpret certain things (Tinberg 8). This is a concept that may need to be taught earlier on than college. This is why we have to have our own "epistemology,"
beginning with encouragement, scrutiny, reflection, and
critical thinking. It is in this way that critical
thinking is encouraged. Also it is through this
development of critical thinking skills that the student
can apply this skill to other disciplines (50).

In this way, we can come to the conclusion that all
writing is not the same, across disciplinary boundaries.
Writing across disciplines is dependent on the way a
discipline “thinks”. Can we assume that if a student writes
a paper, the audience of this writing would be simply the
teacher, or what would be the purpose for the creation of
it? Writing is done differently in varied disciplines and
contexts. If the audience consisted of other students or
peers from the social sciences, for example, a whole
different way of writing would be required than for a paper
that would result in a grade, and thus raise or lower his
or her grade point average. The goal that we have as
teachers is to encourage a student to write in a different
context than just for the instructor.
Student Interaction

In a cultural studies pedagogy, students could use different rhetorical situations to teach other students techniques to broaden their minds. I have found that these techniques concern the lexicon, syntax and rhetoric, root metaphors governing paradigms, and old traditions. Somer's article, "Revision Strategies," attempts to answer all these issues. The article offers observations about how student writers' previous schooling had limited their understanding of revision. This article has influenced my teaching, making me understand what happens in the mind of a student during the revision process. To get to the process of revision, it takes motivating the reader/writer to see the need for change, to which we have to apply Freire's line of thinking when he says that curriculum should be grounded in the lives of the students. This is needed because if they are not familiar with what they are writing about, they do not see this need to revise what they have written.

When we consider the varied discipline-specific ways of knowing, we can not assume that our list of primary traits applies to all writing regardless of the discipline.
Writing indeed expresses the way students who study in a discipline think. Reflecting those differences, as well as the different method of inquiry and reporting, we see questions being discussed such as "What does a nurse use in the treatment and reporting on the treatment of a patient?" We find out that it takes, first of all, an assessment; and then, second would be analysis; following with the final step, which is diagnosis. For the purpose of understanding in the remedial classroom, this approach is data driven (Tinberg 50). So it depends on information obtained during the three aforementioned steps. We must, therefore, come to an understanding of all disciplines to facilitate teaching writing to every type of student, in order to capture their interest.

A Cultural Approach

The most interesting curriculum for a remedial class is based on the history of the American Culture, which they can relate to because they have undoubtedly studied history at one time or another in their educational careers. Being in the American Culture, they would be interested in finding out about their heritage. Students need to know that life in the United States has always involved
negotiating across cultural boundaries. To help students with understanding these boundaries, I would use a book that aims to provide the knowledge of rhetorical strategies and cultural archives of different groups in America. An example of such archives would be: "Contacts between Puritans and Native Americans" (Herzberg and Bizzell ix), having both English accounts and Native American accounts. This work allows the reader to develop a critical viewpoint, having heard each side's view of the conflict. In dealing with such conflict, we need to be exposed to all sides and their viewpoints of a discussion in order to fine-tune their critical thinking skills.

In learning about cross-cultural techniques, we encounter the term "other," and we need to know first of all, what is the "other" that is spoken of here? Could it be just different backgrounds, or could it be more? Also, meaning is not the same for every student, be they from an oppressed group or not. In this same context, does the term "knowledge" mean the same for all students? When all these things have been clarified, then reading becomes a form of writing, and writing and reading are on the same level. While the student is reading, the act of interrogating is
being performed, leading to interpretation, and an argument is being framed (Herzberg and Bizzell 137). All of these authors and the research that they have done has influenced my pedagogical style using cultural studies.

Something That Works for Me

The following method is the one I use during a semester-long composition class, using the cultural studies pedagogy. I touch on the issues in a way that brings out a response from the students and helps them in relating to the other students in the class. I accomplish this by beginning the semester with having the students write on 3 by 5 cards what their major is, why they are taking this class, what they expect to get out of this class, and then I have them stand up and tell the class their name, their major, and why they are taking this class. Some students will notice a certain statement that is made like “It’s required for my graduation” or something of that nature, and just repeat that statement, not really putting any thought into what they say. However, generally I am going to get an idea of how the students are going to do in the class, and what help they are going to need. This is helpful to me in other ways as well; for example, I will
I remember half the students' names, and in the following week or so I can learn the rest of them. I begin assigning writing in the first week of class, so that I can obtain a sample of the abilities in the class. In about the second week, they have had at least two reading assignments, and I generally have an idea of what they like to read about. First of all, I may require a page or two of a description of their favorite book. Now I have a rough idea of what I am to deal with, and I can go forward from there. My classes have been semester-long, but there are some community colleges that are on the quarter system, and I feel my pedagogy can be adapted to this system as well.

Student Need

Teachers in community colleges need to be sensitive to the background or backgrounds of students in a class, and give them something that they can relate to and write about with enthusiasm and interest. Students should be given some freedom in expressiveness, and if that is given, they will be able to learn what they are being exposed to. The goal should be to get students comfortable doing what they are doing, and to help them to make progress along the way.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO DO AND WHY THEY NEED TO DO IT.

Beginning to Solve the Problem

We as teachers in community colleges need to be sensitive to the background or backgrounds of students we have in our classes, and give them something that they can relate to and write about with enthusiasm and interest. We should learn to give the student some freedom in expressiveness.

My Experience

The two-year colleges have the goal of addressing the diverse population of the area which they serve, and through constant polling and counting, are figuring out ways of better doing so. My method is one that is attaining toward that goal as well. We need to constantly think about addressing the issue of diversity.
A professor in a class I attended on the community college level used the microtheme as an assessment of student expression regarding the assigned reading. A student used a five by eight card and, using both sides of the card, related a point from the introduction of a section to one of the assigned essays in that section. A microtheme was due every week and it represented ten percent of the final grade. This is the next thing that I will try to emulate in my teaching.

The research of Tinberg and Durst has influenced my teaching of composition not only to a diverse population but also to different needs across the curriculum. Both have been a considerable model to me; Tinberg with his "border" between different crossroads and Durst with his "reflective Instrumentalism." The results have been both good and bad with my method. In the following appendices I will discuss results and some of my specific methods.
APPENDIX A:

RESULTS OF MY TEACHING
Mendez was a good composer who wanted to brush up on the skills that she had, because she felt unconfident, not having been in school for ten years. This student’s papers were weak at the beginning of the semester; she did not organize her information well, but with the feedback from her peers and also from me as the instructor, she learned strategies to improve this. A lot of the improvement that she experienced showed up in her journal. Vanek began the semester simply getting the frustrations out of his system, discussing his basic family problems, however, once his mind was clear of the steam he had to let off, he was free to improve in his writing, and in the end of the semester, his goal of learning to write had been met. Pahe was a full-blooded Native American, and I knew that this group needed to be taught in an uninterrupted style. Pahe did not like to stay in class if it was not interesting, and would come up and express a need to leave class. This student learned to like the class, and at the end of the semester was doing well. Schlegal was serious about the class, and his major was in fire fighting, so he needed to make good progress in the class. However, he did not keep a journal, hence his progress got him a low grade. Chavez was concerned about reading comprehension, but this student’s writing did not show a lack of comprehension. I was impressed with her journal, because it showed creativity and sensitivity. Johnstone’s only problem was the fact that she used a typewriter instead of a computer to type assignments on, and this put the error rate as a detractor which kept her thoughts from coming through. I mentioned this in a student interview, and she was able to use another student’s computer to type her final paper, and she did well. Steffen was not initially enthused about the class, but after beginning to read assigned material on sports and drugs, got really excited about it and
continued to write about it. Hensley, who wrote at first about violence, and gang related things, came through for the final, and his journal was creative and excellent. Brewer, a religious person, seemed to be uninterested in the reading at first, but toward the end of the semester, got interested in the Holocaust, and began to write well about it.

The dynamics of my classes probably did not reflect that of the population surrounding the colleges in which they were taught, but I was able to get some understanding of the abilities of groups within the classroom setting. I put the grades that they had earned so far on their midterms, and most of them were satisfied with knowing what their grade would be, but some were not. So I learned from this that when teaching a diverse population of students, a teacher needs to be aware of the abilities of each student, but it seemed to me that the more seasoned students did better in their writing.

I have given the whole range of grades, from A all the way down to F, and my students have been in the normal range of ability and intelligence. I have had success with everything I’ve done, and am happy I found the Cultural Studies Pedagogy.
APPENDIX B:
SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS THAT
WORK IN THE CLASSROOM
Here are actual readings that I have assigned to my students:

In the book Motives for Writing, they read the following:

1. "Snakes," by Dennis Covington
2. "Life with Father," by Itabari Njeri
3. "As Freezing Persons Recollect the Snow," by Peter Starke
4. "Selway," by Pam Houston
5. "Excerpt from A Woman Warrior," by Maxine Hong Kingston
6. "No Wonder They Call Me a Bitch." By Ann Hodgman.

These were assignments that spurred enthusiasm in Sense of Value.

1. "I’m Sick and I’m Scared" by Lyle Alzado
2. "In NFL’s Fight Against Steroids, Technology Is Half the Battle.” by Mike Freeman.

Technical readings were as follows:

― "Writing to Record a Memory", by Robert Keith Miller.
― "Writing to Explore Information", by Robert Keith Miller.

Another requirement was to write a one page reading response that was due on Monday of every week.

In Week #1, in reaction to “Writing to Record a Memory,” and “Life with Father,” in the first section of Motives for Writing, there were recollections of keeping a journal at one time or another, and “Life with Father,” brought discussions of some of their feelings about the relationship that the man had with his daughter.

The reading of “Snakes” brought responses of personal experiences with animals.

Some pieces drew really curious responses; for example,
“No Wonder They Call Me a Bitch” was about the author’s attempt at eating dog food. The interest that this piece attracted was demonstrated in the midterm essay question which was to write about the reading that they liked the best. Although the eating of the dog food didn’t get much enthusiasm, they could understand the curiosity which the author had about the statements made in advertisements she saw and heard. I felt that the reading was one that induced good critical thinking.

Other pieces that I used were:

Diary of Anne Frank,

Mein Kampf, and the film,

Schindler’s List. It seemed to stir up in them the desire to write about how they felt about each work, which is the trait of truthfulness, as described by Griffin, the English Teacher at Bristol C.C. in Border Talk.
APPENDIX C:

TEACHING TOWARD FURTHER PROGRESS
I have always enjoyed teaching my students a little more than the college requires me to teach them. For example, in the beginner’s composition class, I taught them to summarize an article, which they became proficient at, and in the class which was one step from the transferable, I gave them the following guidelines for writing the argument paper (Rottenberg 490).

1. Decide on a limited topic as the subject for your paper. The most interesting topics, of course, are those that are not so obvious: original interpretations, for example, that arise from a genuine personal response. Don’t be afraid to disagree with a conventional reading of a literary work, but be sure you can find sufficient evidence for your point of view.

2. Before you begin to write, make a brief outline of the points that will support your thesis. You may find that you don’t have enough evidence to make a good case to a skeptical reader. Or, you may find that you have too much for a short paper and that your thesis, therefore, is too broad.

3. The evidence that you provide can be both internal and eternal. Internal evidence is found in the work itself: an action that reveals motives and consequences, statements by the characters about themselves and others, comments by the author about her characters, and interpretation of the language. External evidence comes from outside the work: a comment by a literary critic, information about the historical period or the geographical location of the work, or data about the author’s life and other works he has written. If possible, use more than one kind of evidence. The most important proof, however, will come from a careful selection of material from the work itself.
4. One temptation to avoid is using quotations from the work or from a critic so abundantly that your paper consists of a string of quotation and little else. Remember that the importance of your paper rests on your interpretations of the evidence. Your own analysis should constitute only to support important points.

5. Organize your essay according to the guidelines you have followed for an argumentative essay on a public issue. Two of the organizational plans that work best are defending the main idea and refuting the opposing view—that is, a literary interpretations with which you disagree. In both cases the simplest method is to state your claim—the thesis you are going to defend—in the first paragraph and then line up evidence point by point in order of importance. If you feel comfortable beginning your paper in a different way, you may start with a paragraph of background: the reasons that you have chosen to explore a particular topic or a description of our personal response to the work—for example, where you first saw a play performed, how a story or poem affected you. (H.L. Mencken, the great American social critic, said “discovering Huckleberry Finn was the most stupendous event of my whole life. What a beginning for an essay!”) It is always useful to look at book or movie reviews in good newspapers and magazines for models of organization and development that suggest a wide range of choices for your own paper (490).

The above guidelines proved to inspire much critical thought.
APPENDIX D:
SAMPLE PAPER INSTRUCTIONS
FOR REMEDIAL CLASS
In this page and the next, I have given examples of instructions for papers which were interesting and proved to be expressive for my students:

Paper #1

This will be a two page essay in which you will discuss the answer to this question: What role has sibling rivalry played in your life?

Remember that a "sibling" is your brother or sister. The word "Rivalry" means any conflict that you have with your brother or sister or both. If you come from a large family, there will be more to talk about.

The first draft will be due next Wednesday, and the final draft will be due in two weeks, the Monday of that week. Remember to do your best, because this paper is 20 points toward your grade.

No late papers will be accepted.
Paper #2

For your next paper, I want you to compare/contrast the two readings, "As Freezing Persons Recollect the Snow" and "Selway." Try to imagine in your mind what the author is trying to portray in each writing.

Your paper should be approximately three pages of double-spaced type. The first draft is due next Wednesday. We will have a workshop on that day. Any student not bringing a draft on that day will write it in class instead of participating in the workshop.

Remember the language that I am using here: "compare" means to find the similarities, and "contrast" means to find the differences. The final draft of this paper will be due in two weeks; the Monday of that week. No late papers will be accepted.

This paper is 20 points toward your final grade, so do your best on it.
REFERENCES


Coles, William F. Teaching Composing; A Guide to Teaching Writing as a Self-Creative Process,


Durst, Russell K. Collision Course: Conflict, Negotiation and Learning in College Composition. NCTE 1999.


Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts and the Contact Zone." In Ways of Reading. 1997.


Smith, Philip B. Writing in a Large Class; Stronger motivation—Better Writing College Teaching, 48 no. 1 p. 21 Winter 2000

Smithson, Isaiah, and Nancy Ruff, eds. English


Wolley, Karl, and David Kennering, "Writing as Part of the Team" The Cleaning House, vol. 73, number 4, PP 232-4, April, 2000.