What and Whom Are We Teaching?

Ideologies, Practices, and Preparation of First-Year Composition Teachers

Zhenzhen He-Weatherford

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Reading Committee:

Suhanthie Motha, Chair

Juan Guerra

Sandra Silberstein

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English

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Abstract

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Zhenzhen He-Weatherford

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Suhanthie Motha
English Department

With not only a rapidly growing number of international students but also historically underrepresented domestic students who grew up in multilingual households, U.S. higher education has become a more and more linguistically and culturally diverse space. New curricular and instructional challenges have been posed to First-Year Composition (FYC) courses that are widely taken by college students from a variety of linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical backgrounds. Second Language Writing (SLW) and Composition Studies unfold for us the complexity of writing as a social process, the inseparability of writing and its social context, and the tension peripheral participants encounter in the process of socializing into unfamiliar discourse communities. Projecting the spotlight on six first-year graduate student teachers of FYC (titled teaching assistants or TAs in the specific institutional context), this study expands upon and deepens our understanding of FYC teachers' academic discursive practices in relation to their diverse student populations.

Working from the premises of teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) and composition as a cultural practice (France, 1994), and taking a translingual approach towards language differences (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011), I tap into FYC TAs' conceptualizations of and positionalities towards academic discursive practices and diversity, as well as professional and personal resources that helped facilitate their conceptualizations, positionalities, responses, and practices. This close examination unpacks the complexities composition teachers have to navigate in thinking about what academic writing looks like in the particular institutional and their own classroom context, issues around diversity such as identities of students and teachers that are more or less visible, and the absence of power in institutional discursive constructions around diversity. Drawing from the frameworks of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) and Nexus of Multimembership (Canagarajah, 2012; Wenger, 1998), my study proposes important implications for individual teachers and teacher training programs, such as carefully examining assumptions about teaching, the teaching of writing, and teacher training; and more productive use of contact zones across the disciplinary, professional, and personal as a way of facilitating praxis and transformative teaching.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

论文致辞

致我敬爱的父亲何国满、母亲戴赛芬。没有他们的辛勤工作和无私付出，我不可能成为家里的第一个大学生，更何况获得现在的博士学位。

致**Greg Weatherford**，我风趣的工作伙伴、忠实的朋友、亲爱的丈夫。

DEDICATION

To my loving parents Guoman He and Saifen Dai, without whose hard work and sacrifice it would be impossible for me to become the first college graduate in the family, let alone receiving a Ph.D. degree.

To Greg Weatherford, who shared this journey with me as a fun work companion, loyal friend, and dear husband.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 An Autoethnography to Be Continued

I grew up speaking Zhoushanese - a variety of Wu dialect that has long lost its writing system and is spoken in a city with a population of over a million in Eastern China. It is one of my first languages, or what others might call my mother tongue and perceived as gentle and sweet-sounding by the rest of the country (‘吴侬软语’). Mandarin is another language I grew up speaking, and the national Chinese language that I used to acquire literacy and most of the time to interact with my peers and teachers in school. I first encountered English in junior high school back in late 1990s China and always loved learning the language and different cultures through it. It has also become my primary academic and professional language ever since I moved to the U.S. Pacific Northwest for my graduate study in 2012.

My pains and gains as a student writer. Despite my love for all the languages at my disposal, in the academic setting, translating my thoughts from Chinese to English and having the traits of Chinese influence in my English writing always seemed to contain a negative implication. Just like when I spoke English, I also had an accent when I wrote. It meant my English writing was ‘affected’ by my first language, that what I use was ‘Chinglish’ - a hybrid variety of English, if it is regarded as English at all. It was not a sign of good education and mastery of English, but a shame to be avoided and a stigma to be erased. If I had read autobiographies like Jun Liu’s (Belcher & Connor, 2001) reflection on his life as a multiliterate writer and scholar a few years ago, I would have totally been judgmental and suspicious about his validity as a ‘competent’ English writer and a successful scholar, especially when I encountered paragraphs that consist of classic parallel sentences “when…when…when…” (p.

128) and sentences that start with "I remember that…" (p. 123, p. 127) in his writing, an obvious influence from Chinese. These implicit beliefs about English and English writing urged me to ask myself some questions: Why did I feel like Chinglish is not pure or real English? What was I comparing it to? Where was this idea from? What was the English writing pedagogy like in China? How had my past and current writing practices affected these conceptions and had they ever changed?

I mulled over these questions throughout my turbulent journey writing for various academic tasks in graduate school. Call it Stockholm Syndrome or an attempt to tame the beast -- my constant struggle with writing ended up bonding me to writing emotionally and intellectually. One of my "Aha" moments was when I discovered that writing was so closely connected to identity construction and the way it revealed the multifaceted nature of identity - my experience struggling with writing in a second language as a graduate student in a R1 public university of the U.S., the realization of the cause of my struggle as much more than linguistic competence but to some extent the ways my differences (or my 'deviations' from the norms) were conceptualized, as well as a further understanding that the discomfort actually came from entering new discourse communities and the pressure to acculturate as a linguistic minority. My struggle as a graduate student writer in a new educational context with historically mystified expectations of norms, the overwhelming demand of new academic genres in a second language and a particular discourse community, low intellectual self-esteem, internal resistance to writing -- as I reflected on some of my individual experience with the theoretical frameworks provided by scholars in the field of English Composition and English as A Second Language Writing (SLW) Research, it became evident that this experience was not unique to international students, but also immigrant students, and other American students with multilingual background who

usually came from historically and socioeconomically marginalized background. It revealed itself as not purely an issue of second (or third, fourth) language acquisition and performance, but an issue that challenged the current dominant language ideology and social inequality.

Scholars of English as A Second Language (ESL) studies are especially sensitive to the sociocultural aspect of writing such as the relation of writers with the writing community and the complex connection of writing to identity construction (Canagarajah, 2002; Evangelista, 2013; Kells, 2002; Kill, 2006; Zawacki et al., 2010). This sociocultural aspect of writing process, as pointed out by composition scholars like Faigley (1986), becomes even more noticeable when the existence of multilingual students creates apparent linguistic and cultural contact zones (Pratt, 1991) in spaces like college writing classrooms. Situated at the intersection of SLW studies and English composition, my personal and scholarly inquiry to writing and the teaching of writing reflects the social nature of writing that is widely studied in theory but still moving its way up in practice.

On the other side of writing: a perspective shift. As portrayed earlier, my struggle as a graduate student writer in an American research (R1) public university is not so unique among ESL students of higher education institutions in the U.S.. However, both Composition and SLW scholarship shows that the cause of difficulties in writing is not necessarily a matter of linguistic incompetence, but could result from the ways language differences are conceptualized (Horner et al., 2011), the challenges of a novice writer entering new discourse communities (Canagarajah, 2002), and the pressure on linguistic minorities to acculturate to dominant sociocultural norms (Lu, 1987; Hooks, 1995). Since I started teaching First-Year Composition (FYC) in my local university, I witnessed and probably even contributed to similar struggles that some of my students went through, especially those from historically, linguistically and socioeconomically

marginalized groups, such as international students from countries in the expanding circles (Kachru, 1992), African American, Latino, and Asian American students.

As one of the relatively few non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) of composition in the English Department of my university, I was faced with a new painstaking struggle that also helped complicate and illuminate the picture of writing as a practice: my legitimacy as an English composition teacher. Even before I started teaching FYC classes there, I had heard some heart-wrenching stories from a few fellow graduate student colleagues, such as moments when students challenged the teacher in front of the whole class, not because of any demonstration of lack of knowledge or poor pedagogical skills, but because of the teacher's non-native English speaker status. One of my Chinese colleagues told me: "I cried through the first few weeks of class during my first year of teaching. It was so hard." Although it is not uncommon for novice teachers to go through tremendous struggles establishing effective professional practices and identity during their early years of teaching, the challenges my precedent international colleagues went through seem awfully personal, with the core pointing towards something that could not be changed or improved upon, for example, their 'NNEST' status. My failure to be accepted into this composition TA position during the first year of my doctoral program — a common funding source that almost all of my American doctoral peers receive at the beginning of their first year – seemed to also confirm that I was an illegitimate child that showed herself in the wrong place. With this almost horrific prelude, I geared up all my courage and walked into my first composition classroom, but only to find out what a wonderful professional experience it was, at least for the most part.

I of course still went through challenges most new teachers came across: learning to navigate the local teaching context, negotiate pedagogies, manage the classroom, and keep up

with professional development among other teacherly responsibilities. However, there were still moments when I was reminded that I am 'different' or 'incompetent': some of my students (often from Asian cultural background and majoring in natural science, engineering, or business) marveled at my aspiration to be a specialist in the field of English, my consistently below-average teaching evaluation score over the course of several years when I thought I continuously grew and matured as a teacher, or receiving a comment in my teaching evaluation that says: "She doesn't speak English."

During moments like these, I could not help but think: What was it about me as a writer and teacher that triggered these reactions and results? Developing a professional identity and competency as a teacher is certainly an ongoing process, but why did I feel most anxious about how I looked in the eyes of my students (intellectual, authoritarian, professionally dressed) instead of my pedagogical effectiveness and innovation? One of my students with Pacific Islander heritage shared with me that her family cheered at her initial desire to pursue medical school, but remained puzzled and silent at her final decision of choosing English as her major, which she loved. Our two stories put together, I started wondering: What common assumptions are being made on English as a discipline or English writing as a field? Is it a space 'reserved' for some particular racial or ethnic groups other than Asians or maybe other people of color? How does English as a discipline envision itself in a multicultural and multilingual educational space? Are international TAs welcomed here? Are their professional needs being acknowledged and addressed? If I am feeling unwelcomed and odd in my graduate English program, what about some of my undergraduate students? This list of questions, stemming from my own experience as a writer and teacher of composition, continued to grow.

1.2 The Background of My Study

The increasingly diverse student population in U.S. higher education has posed new challenges to curriculum design and classroom instruction. Among this diverse student population, there are not only a rapidly growing number of international students, but also historically underrepresented domestic students whose home languages are not English or a variety of English that conforms to the "standard language ideology"[1] (Lippi-Green, 2004, p. 293). As one of the first essential intellectual and social spaces where students -- both international and domestic -- experience cultural and academic socialization into the educational community, FYC classrooms inevitably become a site where particular ideologies of language and academic discourses operate and are reproduced by the practices and pedagogies of the discipline.

Second Language Writing (SLW) and Composition Studies unfold for us the complexity of writing as a social process, the inseparability of writing and its social context (such as disciplines, professions, institutions), and the tension peripheral participants encounter in the process of socializing into unfamiliar discourse communities. While some findings and recommendations from these studies might be useful in fostering a more inclusive culture inside writing programs and providing more resources for teacher training, it is far from enough to build a comprehensive understanding of where FYC teachers are in relation to compositional studies and to their diverse student population. Targeting graduate student teachers (referred to as teaching assistants or TAs) who are usually at their early stage of professionalization, Reid et al.'s (2012) quantitative and qualitative study also indicates that the impact of one-time, short-

[1] Lippi-Green (2004) frames the "standard language ideology" as "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, non-varying spoken language that is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions". The author of this study argues that this notion can also be applied to other aspects of language use. In other words, a uniform language, including in speech and writing, is an impossibility because of varied linguistic and cultural experiences, and/or disciplinary and professional discursive needs.

term writing pedagogy education for TAs and the integration into their classes might not be as much as we hoped. There is a lack of composition TAs' voices in the literature tracing the impact of the evolution of composition theories and practices. Ideologies such as an uncritical, neutral view of English language (Motha, 2014) and the dominant perceptions of academic discourse that imposes "its own orientation to knowledge on other communities" (Canagarajah, 2002) impact the ways knowledge is constructed and framed (Banks, 1993). Lack of awareness of these ideologies and conceptions could not only lead to unpreparedness of the TAs while working with a diverse student population and make them victims of 'barrier creators' in terms of academic accessibility and success, but also poses challenges to a positive teacher identity construction. For example, the pressure I felt walking into a composition classroom as a non-native English speaker teacher (NNEST) reveals an assumed norm or ideal of English composition teachers that I was not prepared for and did not have time to process beforehand. Therefore, this study calls for real-time scholarly attention to composition classrooms, to composition TAs' orientation to ongoing institutional and theoretical changes to the field of composition, and to the impact of TAs' ideological stances on curriculum and pedagogies. As an attempt to contribute to a better understanding of the aforementioned issues, this study explored how FYC TAs conceptualized and positioned themselves in relation to academic discursive practices and their students**.**

1.3 Chapter Overview

The first chapter is an introductory chapter that sets background for my research study and situates my readers. It includes a brief autoethnography that traces the origin of this research idea and the interconnected personal and professional stakes of this study.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the second chapter dives into the literature of TESOL and Composition Studies, weaving a historical and sociopolitical account of the nativeness

ideologies imbedded in theories and practices of TESOL as well as Composition, how these two strands of research help inform each other, and the conceptualizations of teacher education in the background of a positivist and a constructivist paradigm. This chapter also reveals some research gaps through active engagement with the existing literature and lays out specific questions that this study will be focusing on in order to participate in and contribute to the conversation of composition teacher cognition and education.

The methodology chapter, which is the third chapter of this dissertation, introduces the participants and context of the data collection site and my data analysis approach. Following the methodology, Chapters Four (*Findings and Discussion Part 1: Academic Writing*), and five (*Findings and Discussions Part 2: The Myth of Diversity*) present a descriptive, intertextual, and analytical account of some research findings that are centered around my three research questions described in Chapter Two. Each of these two chapters starts with a miniature literature review that helps contextualize my observation and analysis of teachers' perceptions of their class and pedagogical practices. I also end every chapter with a discussion section that helps bring the analysis to a deeper level.

As a concluding chapter, Chapter Six "*Conclusions and Implications*" dives deeper into the theoretical development and practical application of FYC and connects it with program management in terms of writing program administration (WPA) and writing teacher education, with an emphasis on making suggestions for supporting TAs' transformative power in their teaching. This chapter also calls for future exploration of research regarding writing teacher education and further development of research methods in this particular field.

Chapter 2. Literature Review: A Historical and Interdisciplinary Account

With the goal of facilitating more conversations and collaborations between Second Language Writing (SLW) and Composition Studies, Matsuda (1999) warns us about the danger of the "disciplinary division of labor" (p. 700) that could lead to the scholarly neglect of a large student population (L2 students) in Composition Studies and prescription of a rigid professional identity. He and his colleagues argue about the transformative power of interdisciplinary collaboration (Matsuda & Jablonski, 2000) and its manifestation in the college composition curriculum (Matsuda & Silva, 1999). I would like to further argue that given the historical trajectories of SLW and Composition Studies, as well as the current increasingly linguistically and culturally complex dynamics in U.S. higher education, an interdisciplinary framework is not only invaluable but also inevitable, so that neither discipline "become[s] an end in itself" (Colton, in Matsuda 1999).

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of my work, this research study is built upon the intersection of two primary lines of inquiry -- TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Composition in the context of higher education. However, due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of TESOL, fields of studies that have influenced my line of inquiry can not be neatly categorized with these two labels. Scholarship that comes from these two traditions of inquiry does not only complement each other by illuminating each other's blind spots, but also illustrates a more comprehensive picture for both SLW and Composition scholars. As Matsuda (1999) points out, the consequences of drawing rigid disciplinary boundaries are two-fold: for SLW, it can limit teaching of writing to the superficial issues such as grammar drills at the sentence level; for Composition scholars, it leads to the confusion and a misunderstanding that

the ‘extra’ burden of researching the needs of ESL students should be given to ESL scholars, instead of encouraging further research on the sociocultural nuances of composition. A prescriptive emphasis on nativeness, the shift from a monolingual, deficit model of English language education to the multilingual model, and the sociocultural movement in Composition Studies that changed our view of writing from a homogeneous notion of a standard writing to a more diverse view of writing are some more examples to start with.

2.1 English as a second or foreign language: long-established ideologies about nativeness

The work of the influential linguist Noam Chomsky is often taken up by scholars of Second Language (L2) Studies but not necessarily always in productive ways. The long-established and still prevalent ideologies about nativeness in the field of L2 learning and teaching can be found in some of his linguistic concepts that privilege the “native speaker” (NS) and regard them as the authority on the language thus the ideal informant (Canagarajah, 1999). The deficit model in which L2 learners need to be ‘saved’ from the influence of their first language (L1)-- the “monolingual fallacy”, as Robert Phillipson (1992) calls it in *Linguistic Imperialism* - and work diligently towards the unattainable goal of nativeness, however it is defined, assumes a utopian construction of a homogeneous speech community where there is only one standard language variety without any contact with other languages of other communities. This monolingual orientation and assumption have long been imbedded in English language education and taken for granted.

The term “native-speaker fallacy” was first coined by Phillipson (1992) and further confronted by Canagarajah (1999), who demystified the professional dilemma non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) encounter in the job market by pointing out that teacher

training programs of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) were setting their NNEST students up for failure because those novice NNESTs did not fit the image of the 'ideal English instructor' defined in the field. He moved on with how bankrupted the term "native speaker" is, posing questions about this term by drawing our attention to the native speakers in the postcolonial context and balanced bilingual speakers. The uncritical use of NS and its reproduction has since been captured, decoded, and critiqued in various contexts of English language education at the theoretical level, despite its persistent influence on practice.

Language ownership, identity, and some dilemmas.

Perceiving the English language and its users from a hegemonic lens, any English speaker who does not fit in the traditionally defined category 'native speaker', no matter what his/her mother tongue is and how many languages they speak, is deprived of ownership of English. This open conversation on Native Speaker Fallacy (NSF) stirred up a great interest among scholars in language authenticity and language ownership. One of the questions investigated in this line of inquiry is: "What gives a language legitimacy?" For example, what is the difference between a language and a dialect? The interrogation on NSF shows us that the ownership of English is not necessarily tied to a geographical location, such as the U.S. or the U.K. The stereotypical notion of natives from specific areas is challenged by the increasing mobility of speakers and the degree of globalization. Max Weinreich's (1945) famous quote "a language is a dialect that has an army and navy" also fleshes out the power at play in terms of defining authenticity and legitimacy.

If we define ownership of a language as "to bend it to your will, to turn it to your advantage, to assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form" (Widdowson, 1994, p. 384), we can see the strength but also the limitation of this approach to examining language, identity, and proficiency, as it quickly shifts the attention to people – living beings that

can cast power on objects – from the language itself, thus leans towards a position where power is assumed to be easily self-ascribed. Norton (1997) has argued for a more autonomous, empowering way of claiming ownership that can help learners establish an identity as legitimate speakers of English thus more invested in their learning, but this argument does not explicitly include differential power relations in the picture that could make this idea of ownership fragile or unrealistic epistemologically and pedagogically. Kubota and Lehner's (2004) piece on a critical approach towards intercultural differences in writing makes an argument that helps illustrate this point: "…in fact power or cultural capital (Bourdieu, Passeron, & Martin, 1994) is contingent upon cultural, ideological, and economic conditions. Thus, for instance, access to power may be hindered by a lack of economic resources to obtain education in the first place or by institutionalized racism." (p. 14)

Some scholarly exploration on English varieties unveils the political aspect of English language. Teaching and learning English are not neutral mechanical endeavors that are free of manipulation or pose no influence on the participants. Instead, these are social processes that are heavily shaped and constructed by those who are involved -- the policy makers, administrators, textbook writers, teachers, as well as the students themselves. Not only is English proficiency highly racialized (Kubota & Lin, 2009; Michael-Luna, 2008; Motha 2006b, 2014; Ruecker 2011), the issue of ownership also leads directly to questions about who has the power and can be heard. One good example of ownership being a limited approach to learning and productive identity construction is demonstrated in the case of language policy in Singapore, where ownership of English was easily blocked by the government policy because of the political need to maintain inter-racial harmony and a unifying local identity (Wee, 2002). Besides the difficulty of coming to an agreed definition of ownership and its fragility, the notion of ownership also

tends to maintain a static dichotomy, with a continuous focus on NS/NNS and dividing English users by inner/outer circles (Higgins, 2003). Furthermore, the colonial history of English also complicates this picture and creates pedagogical dilemmas by challenging the legitimacy of different varieties of English (Chan, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Lin & Luke, 2006).

From NS/NNS and language ownership to a more global view of English education.

Informed by a postcolonialist/neocolonialist orientation towards English language education and the poststructuralist perspective of language, and dissatisfied with the limitations of an NS/NNS dichotomy and the theoretical framework of ownership, L2 scholars started seeking alternative ways of addressing the problems English learners and teachers encounter.

English as an international language/global English? The global spread of English, together with a new phase of globalization that comes with information technology, has silently engraved the idea of English being the language for global communication in the minds of many people -- a phenomenon that many scholars have acknowledged or written about (Lu, 2004; Matsuda, 2003; Rajagopalan, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2005). As a language that carries memories of political, economic, and cultural oppression that comes with its colonial history, the power of English in the globe has been maintained, if not enhanced by the structural force of global economy and intertwined political relations (Peirce, 1989; Wee, 2002). As Phillipson (1992) portrayed in *Linguistic Imperialism* more than two decades ago, “English is now entrenched worldwide, as a result of British colonialism, international interdependence, ‘revolutions’ in technology, transport, communications and commerce, and because English is the language of the USA, a major economic, political, and military force in the contemporary world. It is not

only Britain which has gravitated towards linguistic homogeneity, but a significant portion of the entire world." (p. 24)

This uneasiness towards English as an international language (EIL) lays out a complex picture of inequality and asymmetrical power penetrated through socioeconomic class divisions, differential access to language of power, and renewed power because of these divisions. The innocent view of English as an international language causes a lot of dilemmas faced by ESL/EFL professions. There comes a need to examine what this 'global English' really means and to whom. Arguing against the notion of non-dominant varieties of English as contaminated forms of more privileged forms like British English and American English, Chisanga and Alu (1997) quoted Romaine "this is the price English has to pay on the linguistic market for being a world language. It is a phenomenon that some have called 'the empire strikes back'" (p. 91). The decolonization and empowerment underneath this humorous analogy takes off the innocent mask of stereotypically defined global English, taking a progressive step towards the pendulum of English and its various users. This theoretical orientation towards English, however, does not take into consideration local variations of a language and portrays a similarly hegemonic picture within a region or a country. In her discussion of language ideology and language prejudice, sociolinguist Lippi-Green (2004) cautions us of this "standard language ideology" -- "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, non-varying spoken language that is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions".

World English/World Englishes. Since the demystification of 'native speakers' and the collapsed illusion of one Standard English 'owned' by "members of a rather exclusive club" (Widdowson, 1994), the interest of many L2 scholars has shifted to exploring a more dynamic role of English in international communication. The notion of World Englishes (WE) moves

beyond the constraints of a native gatekeeper and puts more emphasis on English language as a property dominated by none but shared by everyone in the world. Discussing the debate between Sir Randolph Quirk and Professor Braj Kachru on “who owns English”, Rajagopalan (2004) observes that, "the very idea of World English (henceforward, WE) makes the whole question of the 'ownership' of English problematic" (p. 111) and “English has no native speakers” (p. 112). He also emphasizes that WE challenges the assumption that a natural language is typically used by a community of native speakers with some exceptional or marginal cases of being used also by non-natives, “making it more easily amenable to critical inspection” (p. 113). The notion of “imagined communities” (Anderson, 2006) that blurs the boundaries between nation-state and global communities and emphasizes language contact can also be used to think about the formation and legitimacy of WE.

What makes this approach valuable but also vulnerable to critical examination is its theoretical foundation, Kachru’s Three Circles model of World Englishes (Kachru, 1992). Starting as an important fight back against the purist school’s conception of “deficit linguistics” (in Rajagopalan, 2004), this model recognizes the different functions English plays in the Inner Circle countries (e.g. the U.S., the U.K., New Zealand, Australia, Canada), the Outer Circle countries (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia, India), and the Expanding Circle countries (e.g. South Korea, Japan, China), and provides a conceptual framework and more vocabulary for discussing the intertwined relations between English and the broader socioeconomic environment (Park & Wee, 2012). With the productivity of this model in mind, our next step is to go further in capturing the language dynamics within these English communities by using a more flexible framework that allows countries to move from one circle to another. In the meantime, the “need to distinguish WE from more familiar varieties of English” (Rajagopalan, 2004, p. 112) still puts

English varieties associated with economically and politically less powerful regions at the margin, and thus perpetuates the dichotomy it aims to combat. For example, Matsuda (2003) points out that the Inner-circle Englishes are still privileged by Japanese learners of English, despite the incorporation of World Englishes into teaching English as an international language.

English as a Lingua Franca. As one of the recently emerged approaches towards English and sometimes regarded as part of the more general phenomenon of English as an International Language or World Englishes, scholars' arguments for English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are based on the global reality that speakers whose L1 is not English, whose existence is not as well felt especially in the Western countries, actually occupy a bigger population than those whose L1 is English. Therefore, English "as a consequence, is being shaped, in its international uses, at least as much by its nonnative speakers as its native speakers", and "the language is used more and more for practical purposes by people with very varied norms and scopes of proficiency" (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 339). This expanded conception of the ownership of English is reflected in Kirkpatrick's (2006) explicit statement that English has become the property of all.

ELF challenges the hegemonic view of English as being a singular entity and empowers those 'NNSs' by recognizing the legitimacy of the English varieties they use. Thus ELF speakers "can no longer be assumed to be deficient where their English use departs from ENL [English as a native language]" and "the ability to accommodate to interlocutors with other first languages than one's own… is a far more important skill than the ability to imitate the English of a native speaker" (Jenkins, 2000). ELF is rich in its theoretical contribution and pedagogical implication, because it expands our perspectives on students' communicative needs from only linguistic or linguistic plus pragmatics and cultural knowledge, to other aspects and modes of communication, such as verbal negotiation strategies and gestures.

Despite the space ELF opened up for challenging hegemony and intervening inequities in the NS model of English, it also falls into the very dichotomy it aims to problematize. As can be seen from the quotes by some key ELF scholars above, NS is still very prevalent in the ideological foundation of this approach. What has also been controversial is the ELF research project, which aims at identifying and systemizing linguistic features core to the intelligibility of communication in English, in order to teach ELF in the classroom (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2005). Problems that come with this attempt, as Park and Wee (2012) summarize, include questions about "the nature of intelligibility, definitions of a community, relationship of power inherent in the notion of nativeness". Interpreting Gramsci's study on children and language learning, Ives (2006) also notes that "language can not be properly understood by making its communicative aspect primary" (p. 132), fleshing out the limitation of an exclusively linguistic view of language and communication. In her explanation of some key concepts in ELF, Seidlhofer (2005) also quoted Widdowson and stressed that "linguistic descriptions alone cannot, of course, determine what needs to be taught and learnt for particular purposes and in particular settings—they provide necessary but not sufficient guidance for what will always be pedagogical decisions" (p. 340).

A more socioculturally and sociopolitically nuanced view of English language education. In spite of the limitations of these approaches, English as an International/Global Language, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca still blow up the monolingual assumption and open up the epistemological possibility of looking at English or language in general, in a more heterogeneous way and from a more dynamic angle. This is a meaningful step towards a more socioculturally and sociopolitically sensitive relationship with English for L2 professionals. It

also echoes philosophies of the sociocultural movement in Composition Studies that will be discussed in the later part of this chapter.

Multilingualism in the ESL context and beyond.

In the opening chapter of *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching,* a book that promotes a critical approach toward teaching and learning of English in light of its colonial history*,* Canagarajah quoted a powerful poem by Derek Walcott, *A Far Cry from Africa*:

I who am poisoned with the blood of both,

Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?

I who have cursed

The drunken officer of British rule, how choose

Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?

Betray them both, or give back what they give?

The poem voiced the frustration experienced by many users of multiple languages, including L2 English users and those whose mother tongue is (or mother tongues include) a variety of English: *how shall I deal with the 'competition' of these languages in me? If I choose the language of symbolic capital in one context over another, what if the circumstances change, and who can I be, or who shall I be in this world? Are there separate selves within me?* The trajectory of L2 research on issues of legitimacy, identity, proficiency has broken down the NS/NNS dichotomy of treating "native speakers" as gatekeepers, shifting our attention to English language and its relations with the social, political, economic environment. However, there does not seem to be a theoretically and methodologically satisfying approach to policy making, curriculum transformation, and daily teaching and learning, or simply helping some English speakers to be in "the oppressor's language" (hooks, 1995). Taking a step back, is it possible that these seemingly competing languages can exist in relative harmony within one person?

Taking a sociocultural and poststructuralist approach, Blackledge and Creese (2010) define multilingualism as "the appropriation and incorporation for meaning-making of any and all linguistic resources which come to hand". Multilingualism in this sense is not only a move away from the deficit model and the hegemonic view of English, but also from the psycholinguistic perception of separate language entities or competence of separate languages within one person. This approach is not too concerned about helping students make decisions on which language (therefore culture) they should be aligning themselves with, building their sense of identity on, but rather, celebrating all the richness that comes with languages (likely with relatively balanced or varying degrees of competence) at their disposal. It breaks the irreconcilable misconception that one has to choose one language to be in themselves and in relation to other, which creates great tension and contradiction. What is to be noted is that this notion of multilingual students includes but is not limited to international students, new immigrant students, and other historically marginalized students in the U.S. who regard themselves as not only knowing one language, but having a linguistic repertoire that might involve multiple languages, language varieties, dialects, and even different styles of communication in particular social contexts. This more nuanced notion of one's linguistic repertoire can also be applied to our thinking of identity in a more dynamic and multiplicity way – instead of having to choose a singular, rigid identity to box ourselves in, we can be and as a matter of fact always have been, multi-faceted social beings in relation to others and this world.

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, as more and more American universities and colleges become increasingly diverse linguistically, culturally, and socioeconomically, this sense of multilingualism no longer only applies to ESL but almost all classrooms in the U.S. and has transformed them into complex and rich intercultural spaces. A movement towards a multilingual, culturally sensitive approach of teaching is not unique to the ESL field, but is also

happening in the field of Composition (DeLuca, 2002; Gentil, 2011; Lu & Horner, 2013; Lunsford & Ouzgane, 2014; Zamel & Spack, 2004).

2.2 Nativeness ideology in composition

The conception of nativeness exists not only in L2 research and practice, but also in L1 composition. What they share in common is the role power plays in what is regarded as appropriate or legitimate in writing and it only takes on a slightly different coat in the context of L1 composition. Advocating for a translingual approach towards language difference in writing, Horner et al.'s (2011) critiqued the traditional approaches to writing in the U.S. that take linguistic homogeneity as norm. Not only writers but also speakers and readers are expected to use "Standard English or Edited American English – imagined ideally as uniform—to the exclusion of other languages and language variations", which leads to the long-lasting, prevalent goal of traditional writing instruction to reduce "interference" from another language or variety of English (p. 303). As they argued in this innovative piece, this monolingual perception no longer matches the multilingual reality of our classrooms and communities, nor of the nation and the world. I hereby offer to trace the historical roots of this monolingual illusion, scholarship on a more multilingual understanding of writing in Composition Studies, and its intersection with L2 studies.

L1 composition research and the monolingual illusion: a historical account.

When postsecondary education institutions came about in the U.S., the sociopolitical structure endorsed higher education as a luxury exclusive to the elite class. Students were socialized in their own upper-class household in a culture that closely resembles that which they encountered on campus and shared intellectual and religious discourses with their faculty.

Difference was either not prevalent or very well suppressed. Similarity was the norm. As Russell (2002) illustrated in *Writing in the Academic Disciplines: A Curricular History*, oratorical culture that emphasized public speech and a hegemonic discourse in higher education cast its shadow on writing, which was simply treated as the written form of speech, nothing more than another mode of talking.

With the emergence of new professions, a revolution in print technology, and specialization in disciplines during the late 19th century, writing also started becoming a way of constructing new knowledge and organizing professional activities -- it was seen more and more as "a way of thinking, not just a way of preserving thinking for speech" (Miller, in Russell 2002). The very first structured FYC course was started in Harvard in 1972, marking the first important step "in moving away from the emphasis on classical languages and towards an elective, fully specialized curriculum" (Russell, in Smagorinsky 2006). Despite the ideological change and the emergence of more general composition classes driven by professional and disciplinary needs, some persistent misconceptions of writing, together with the struggle of composition as a discipline to acquire an identity separate from literature, were still contributing to the marginalization of writing programs and the way faculty perceive students' competency of writing. There started "a 120-year tradition of complaint about student writing" and a crisis in student writing in the higher education system in the U.S. (Russell, 2002, p. 6).

Research and pedagogy: progress through challenges.

The deficit model. In the emerging stage of general composition courses and a more progressive view of writing as a way of thinking, theories around composition were still limited in many ways, such as their automatic operation on a monolingual, unified cultural assumption. Despite the founding of an organization for college composition in 1949, Conference on College

Composition and Communication (CCCC), composition did not enter its era of professionalization until the late 1970s. At the same time, research in composition was also caught up in the complexities created by multiplying and destabilized literacies and discourses in higher education, due to the shifting classroom demographics from an elite education model into mass education (Russell, 2002). With the rise of a middle class in academia and professions, a new discourse of power has been instilled and normalized in the process of professional training and establishment of disciplinary boundaries. The deficit model that is based on a renewed form of monolingualism can be seen from the general composition classes that emerged during this period, most of which took an elementary training or remediation stance towards writing (Russell, 2002), and in which students are to be taught knowledge about "appropriate" writing (Russell, in Smagorinsky 2006). Interpreting Helmers' argument, Durst (Smagorinsky, 2006) points out that "composition specialists mainly define students in terms of their shortcomings", in other words, their academic, linguistic, or literary "incompetence".

Writing Across the Curriculum. The increasing linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and national diversity in U.S. higher education brings many challenges that cannot be addressed by the deficit model alone. In the meantime, Russell (2002) also warns us about a naïve view of language that results from an emerging positivism in academia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, treating writing as making records of thoughts or reality and limiting writing into the mechanical level. A crisis was spreading in higher education, due to students' lack of socialization into increasingly diverse and fragmented academic discourses, as well as many faculty's neglect and resistance to the realization of different discourses that operate in isolated universes of disciplines. The timely emergence of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement during the 1970s responded to this literacy crisis in public colleges and universities. With influence

from the U.K., it promoted the need for equity and inclusiveness of a new student population, and the value of writing to learn. The CCCC and NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) held conference sessions on WAC, and a lot of journal articles were published on writing and development and writing and learning (Russell, 2002), which formed a theoretical foundation and pushed the development of new composition pedagogies. However, the change brought about by WAC is restricted because of its exclusive focus on changing teaching and learning of writing without problematizing more systemic issues such as the curriculum itself.

A lot of qualitative research in the 1990s showcased "the many and often messy paths students take to gain agency, authority, and identity through writing in the specialized ways that mediate specialized activity in a field" (Russell, 2002). Studies also show a discrepancy in terms of student and teacher expectations. This discrepancy obviously does not apply only to the increasingly diverse domestic student groups, but also to a big international student population that faculty in modern American higher education institutions are apparently not prepared for. A lot of work has been put into addressing these challenges -- there has been an increasing number of writing-intensive courses since the 1990s, on-campus writing centers started forming partnerships with writing programs, and efforts have also been made to assess student performance in writing (and learning) across curriculum. However, these efforts cannot diminish the limitation of WAC programs or respond well to the theoretical gap of systematic and effective ways of writing and writing pedagogy.

SLW research and instruction: a recursive convergence and divergence with L1 composition.

As a developing and highly interdisciplinary area of research in TESOL, SLW theory and practice piggybacked a lot from Composition Studies. Assumed and observed similarities

between L1 and L2 writing also led L2 professionals to the uncritical adoption of L1-oriented composition pedagogy, in which L1 writing norms and standards were directly imposed on L2 student (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). The deficit model seemed to perfectly fit into this context of writing, because of students' linguistic and rhetorical deviation from the 'standard' academic writing. One common pedagogical approach came from a product-oriented tradition and the haunting oratorical culture in L1 rhetoric and composition (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). For example, L2 writing from the audiolingual approach used writing simply as a way of reinforcing oral patterns. Writing tasks from this approach focused a lot on the production of well-formed sentences that was aimed at giving students practice on certain syntactic or lexical forms (Matsuda, 1999; Kroll, 1990). The process movement of writing that was highly influential between the 1960s and the 1980s in L1 composition pedagogy also informed L2 instruction with expressionism (a focus on the writer as the idea generator) and cognitivism (writing as problem-solving, which had a greater impact on L2 theory construction and de-emphasized the authority of instructors).

These composition theories laid a foundation for L2 writing to grow as an individual field as the gradual professionalization of ESL since the establishment of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 1966. Due to the inevitable focus of general L2 research on the social, cultural ties to the linguistic systems of a language, there has been some consistent attention to sociopolitical issues of writing that raises questions about such issues as writer identity and academic discourse communities, signaling a social turn in L1 and L2 composition research. Studies such as Casanave's (2003) study, which focuses on not only the product but also the process of writing and writer identity, set out to seek a 'post-process' approach towards the teaching and learning of writing. Meanwhile, there are also dangers for L2

writing to uncritically converge with L1 composition because there is some uniqueness in the challenges faced by L2 student writers. For example, de-emphasizing the product of writing to L2 writers could possibly be damaging, while they are still in the process of being socialized into a particular process of writing in English (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 7). The promotion of voice in L1 is also problematic, since it is difficult if not impossible for L2 writers to instantly gain a sense of ownership and who they are in the new discourse community. Instilling this notion in L2 students would only demonstrate a simplistic view of identity in writing and a neglect of the socially nuanced aspect of writing.

Tremendous efforts have been made to find some new path to a more inclusive and theoretically powerful framework for the context of L2 writing. One of the fruitful ones is contrastive rhetoric -- "[C]ontrastive rhetoric maintains that language and writing are cultural phenomena. As a result, each language has rhetorical conventions unique to it. Furthermore, the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the first language interfere with writing in the second language" (Connor, 1996). Marked by Kaplan's (1966) pioneering work and followed by a considerable amount of empirical work, contrastive rhetoric not only recognizes the differences between the writings from L2 students' home countries and the "Anglo-American rhetorical paradigms" (Hinkel, 2002) and leads to discussions on the possible influence of students' L1 influence on their L2 writing, but also unpacks how their education experience might impact the construction of their written texts (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Despite its contribution, contrastive rhetoric is critiqued for pitfalls like essentializing the Western culture and stereotyping thus othering other cultures, putting rigid boundaries around languages and cultures, and its foundation in a deficit model that takes an approach of tolerance rather than respect leading to understanding and acceptance (Kachru, 1995; Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Leki, 1997;

Scollon, 1997; Zamel, 1997). It also assumes acculturation and assimilation that became the center of critical examination in the later L1 and L2 composition scholarship. Critical contrastive rhetoric broadens this conversation by challenging the essentialism imbedded in traditional contrastive rhetoric, and reconceptualizing "cultural difference in rhetoric from such perspectives as relations of power, discursive construction of knowledge, colonial construction of cultural dichotomies, and rhetorical plurality brought about by diaspora and cultural hybridity" (Kubota & Lehner, 2004, p. 7).

Standing at a few decades of rigorous exploration and experimenting, L1 and L2 Composition Studies unfold for us the complexity of writing as a social process, the inseparability of writing and its social context (such as disciplines and professions), and the tension new participants experience in entering discourse communities.

Re-envisioning differences in the contexts of L1 and L2 writing: multilingualism, writer identity, and translingualism.

Used in slightly different ways by L1 compositionists, L2 researchers, and applied linguists, the term multilingualism could appear a little vague and carry infinite linguistic, cultural, and political burden. The approach I would like to use here is "a social orientation to the study of linguistic practices and their meanings" (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). Multilingualism in their definition is "the appropriation and incorporation for meaning-making of any and all linguistic resources which come to hand". Therefore, it's not multilingualism in the traditional sense of bilingualism as "double monolingualism" (Heller, in Blackledge & Creese 2010). My preferred notion of multilingualism is productive in the sense that 1) it facilitates a poststructuralist view of language instead of a static, pre-existent one; 2) it implies more modes of communication than

solely the traditional linguistic mode; and 3) it opens up space for discussing student writer identity under a critical framework of difference.

Re-positioning L2 students and their L1s. This perspective of languages and language users supports a more fluid, relational view of identity. In line with that, cultures and differences are also perceived and start to be theorized in a less rigid, stereotypical way that facilitates more productive scholarly conversation on multilingual student issues and classroom implications (Kubota, 2004). These are also supported by the notion of contact zones (Pratt, 1991) often portrayed in translingualism scholarship (Canagarajah, 2013; hooks, 1995; Lu, 1987; Pennycook, 2008; Soliday, 1994). In light of multilingualism, L1 is no longer an interference or problem that needs to be avoided or fixed, but a resource to be taken advantage of (Canagarajah, 2006, 2009). The dichotomy between NS and NNS or 'us' and 'the other' is also torn down. As Anzaldúa writes passionately and persuasively in *Borderlands*:

> But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence. (p. 100)

In a similar vein, Pratt (1991) gives us another way of looking at a multilingual being and conceptualizing differences. She writes about contact zones as "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". These social spaces are therefore not necessarily restricted to a nation state, or social dimensions tied to official languages that enjoy a status in the socioeconomic hierarchy. As mentioned earlier, multilingual students in the context of American higher education could

include international students, new immigrant students, and historically marginalized students in the U.S. who regard themselves as not only knowing one language, but have a linguistic repertoire that might involve multiple languages, language varieties, or dialects. Scholars such as Pratt (1991), Anzaldúa (1999), and Guerra (2016) also point out the role power plays in the intellectual and personal development of multilingual beings.

Implications for L1 and L2 composition research and practice. As can be seen from the historical trajectory of L1 and L2 composition theory and practice, multilingual students have come a long way from being invisible, to being seen but put in an othering position in relation to the 'mainstream' students due to their differences. Where can they go from here? How can we, as writing scholars and teaching professionals orient ourselves within all these tensions and what can we do about the tensions? One of the essential theoretical and ideological moves is to completely shatter the prevalent and stubborn monolingual assumption in the multilingual educational space. Informed by a poststructuralist approach of language that treats language as much more than a linguistic system that pre-exists and is to be passively acquired, but rather, as an epistemological and ontological social practice that involves meaning making, a way of being, positioning one's self in relation to others and the world, the use of multilingualism in the exploration of L1 and L2 composition research is a liberating move away from the deficit model that's based on "the monolingual and monocultural bias" (Pavlenko, 2002). Interpreting what Joseph (2006) refers to as "a figment of the imagination", Blackledge and Creese (2010) point out that monolingual communities are "demanding the marginalization or outright ignoring of anyone who speaks something other than the majority language, or speaks the majority language in a way that diverges from the general norm, or both".

Multilingualism is especially constructive in providing a new angle for looking at the construction and reproduction of social difference, which used to be dominated by essentialism. This angle is meaningful to researchers, who can be epistemologically and theoretically informed to resist this essentialized positioning in relation to the Western professional training they receive and their multilingual participants, and also for teachers, who could be empowered by multilingualism to encourage multilingual students to use various resources within their linguistic repertoire, instead of painstakingly struggling with their 'L1 interference', including but not limited to English language, a variety of English, or a style of communicating in particular social contexts.

Translingualism. In the context of U.S. higher education, if multilingualism gives us a very socially and culturally nuanced way of thinking generally about languages and their users, translingualism then provides transformative conceptualizations more directly related to the practices, teaching, and research of writing. In their groundbreaking piece "Language Difference in Writing: Towards A Translingual Approach", Horner et al. (2011) promote the idea that a translingual approach "asks of writing not whether its language is standard, but what the writers are doing with language and why" (p. 305). As briefly mentioned in the earlier part of this literature review chapter, this translingual approach "insists on viewing language differences and fluidities as resources to be preserved, developed, and utilized", instead of responding to language differences "only in terms of rights" (p. 304). This theoretical framework pushed the attention of composition researchers and practitioners into a completely different direction: instead of trying to 'fix' our students, how can we better prepare ourselves, theoretically and pedagogically, to uncover the rich resources student writers bring with them and utilize these resources at the advantage of their further development as writers?

2.3 Composition teacher training in motion: from theory and practice to praxis

If the goal of the two sections above is to set a cross-disciplinary context for thinking generally about language learning and then more specifically about writing, this part of my literature review is aimed at examining the conceptualization of the teaching of writing and writing classrooms, as well as its impact on teacher training. Arguing about a reconceptualization of the knowledge base of TESOL teacher education, Freeman and Johnson (1998) broke down this complicated picture of teaching for us with their "new knowledge-base" model that focuses on: 1) the activity of teaching itself, 2) the teacher who does it, 3) the context in which it is done, 4) the pedagogy by which it is done. They also emphasized that "this knowledge-base should include forms of knowledge representation that document teacher learning within the social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which it occurs" (p. 397). If we treat teaching as a system, this model allows a closer examination by breaking down four different living elements involved in this system: the activity, one of the major actors (teacher), the place (not only limited to geographical spaces), and philosophies of running the activity. However, this model is certainly not built on the assumption that these elements are totally separated and not in dynamic dialogues with each other. Since the earlier part of this chapter has looked into literature on writing pedagogies, the following section will focus on the conceptualization of the activity of teaching itself, research on teacher and teacher cognition, analysis of the context with a main focus on the writing classroom, and composition teacher education.

Conceptualizing the act of teaching: the sociocultural turn.

Learning to teach is not just about learning a body of knowledge and techniques; it is also about learning to work in a complex sociopolitical and cultural political space (see Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Pennycook, 2000) and negotiating ways of doing this with our past histories, fears, and

> desires; our own knowledges and cultures; our students' wishes and preferences; and the institutional constraints and collaborations (p. 333).
>
> – Pennycook (2004)

The quote above is an observation Pennycook made on language education that derived from some critical moments in a TESOL praxicum course. It points out the complexities of the act of teaching itself and thus teacher professionalization: the process of making conscious and unconscious decisions about what to do and how to run day-to-day activities in class is influenced by various factors -- our 'internal' knowledge and histories as teachers interacting with 'external' environment of the teaching context and other participants, such as our students and institutional stakeholders. Therefore, to become effective with teaching, teachers not only need to acquire knowledge on the subject matter, but also skills to analyze and contextualize their teaching tasks.

In the field of L2 education, this highly sociocultural and localized nature of teaching is reflected through some severe 'transplant shocks' of certain Western language teaching methods to some Asian countries -- such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that is highly promoted and regarded as innovative and effective in Western countries, but experienced extreme pushback in the face of more traditional methods, such as grammar-translation and audiolingual methods that suit the normative ways of teaching and learning and available language skills of the students afforded by the local context such as Korea (Kim, 2005; Li, 1998). As Canagarajah (2012) observed, more relevant stories had also been published in *TESOL Quarterly* (TQ) with a focus on other countries, such as Argentina (Zappa-Hollman, 2007), China (Hu, 2007; Yu, 2001), Cuba (Martin, 2007), Djibouti (Dudzik, 2007), Japan (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008), Uzbekistan (Hasanova & Shadieva, 2008), and the whole Southeast Asian

region (Nunan, 2003). Some might question the relevance of the aforementioned examples, given the scope of my research study on the teaching of college writing/composition in the context of the U.S. However, varying needs of the students and the sociocultural, sociopolitical affordances of a local composition classroom do not only appear across geographical nation states, but also different regions of the U.S. or even across institutions in the same area, such as composition classrooms in relatively prestigious R1 universities versus those in more accessible community and technical colleges. If these regional, institutional complexities are not fully explored in teacher education research and practice, the burden is solely on practitioners -- the teachers to figure it all out.

Research on teacher and teacher cognition.

As I argued in the first half of this chapter, scholarship continuously emerged from different disciplines and informed our ways of researching, teaching, and learning about writing; there is also an increasing number of studies that gave voice to multilingual student writers, in order for researchers and teaching professionals to better understand their learning experience in composition classrooms (Canagarajah, 2002; McCarthy, 1987; Zamel, 1997). However, scholarship on composition practitioners and their professional preparation in this rapidly changing educational environment seems to have just started. Very limited work has been done to reveal how composition teachers, especially graduate student teachers from various disciplines and often not composition, orient themselves towards the theoretical and pedagogical shifts of composition, either through teacher training programs or disciplinary exposure, and to what extent they integrate theories and pedagogical practices informed by these shifts into their own classrooms.

Teachers' perception of their students. A relatively recent case study carried out by Matsuda et al. (2013) uses surveys to reveal teachers' perception of the presence of L2 multilingual student writers and their needs in a particular institutional context. This study shows that composition teachers are at various places with, for example, awareness of the presence of L2 multilingual students, perception of their needs, pedagogical responses to perceived similarities or differences of those needs in comparison to L1 students, and dilemmas they face because of professional underpreparedness working especially with multilingual writers. However, the study is based on the NS/NNS framework that assumes a relatively clear line between the needs of L2 and L1 multilingual students, which seems incomplete and questionable if we take a broader definition of multilingual beings, as in the definition given by Blackledge and Creese (2010). Issues uncovered from the surveys can be used to illuminate not only L2 multilingual writer problems but some historically marginalized groups among American students, since English proficiency is not necessarily the obstacle to good writing, and the singular view of "the dominant variety of English" (Matsuda et al., 2013, p. 78) is a problematic illusion.

This similar limitation can also be found in Matsuda and Silva's (1999) exploration of cross-cultural composition, which is built on the NS/NNS model, implying that there is or are several varieties of writing that pre-exist thus can be acquired through structured instruction, just like the unattainable goal of 'nativeness' in ESL literature that was prevalent a few decades ago. This study also seems to oversimplify issues of writing that students in marginalized groups encounter -- although the rationale in the study gives students agency in choosing which section to attend, it needs to go further in uncovering the power issues in normalized composition

practices and problematizing structural issues such as institutional reproductions of certain privileged discourses that composition scholars including Inoue (2015) write about.

There are also studies that present the philosophies and practices behind teachers' responses to L2 students in college writing class (Ferris et al., 2011), or include some perspectives and experiences of researchers, students, and teachers across curriculums (Zamel, 1997; Zamel & Spack, 2004). Although these studies provided only snapshots of some college composition classes and used *multilingual students* mostly as an equivalent term of L2 students as opposed to so-called "native speakers" (Canagarajah, 1999), they did illustrate the common struggles some historically underrepresented students encounter due to certain expectations of language proficiency and conceptions of academic writing. The studies also brought to our attention the unpreparedness of composition teachers towards the needs of multilingual students, and the lack of training and resources for them to take up more responsibility in order to adjust to those needs.

Teacher cognition. While some findings and recommendations from the aforementioned studies might be useful in fostering a more inclusive culture inside writing programs and providing more resources for teacher training, it is far from enough to build a comprehensive understanding of where those teachers are in relation to compositional studies and to their diverse student population in their classroom. Reid et al.'s (2012) quantitative and qualitative study also indicates that the impact of one-time, short-term writing pedagogy education for graduate teaching assistants and the integration into their classes might not be as optimistic as we hoped. Graduate student teacher voice is lacking in tracing the impact of the evolution of composition theories and practices, which might become valuable information on how to better support teachers in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

With a sociocultural understanding of the activity of teaching itself and the current state of research on teachers, let us zoom out and take a look at an overview Johnson (2006) gave on how teacher cognition has been historically conceptualized and impacted teacher training accordingly, which is summarized in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1

Conceptualizations of Teacher Cognition

Time period	**Educational research**	**Impact on teacher training**
Mid-1970s	Focused on teaching behaviors and the student learning outcomes teachers produced (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974)	Centered on ensuring that teachers had mastered the **content** they were expected to teach and could deliver it through efficient methods that led to greater gains in student achievement (Hunter, 1982)
Mid-1980s	Shifted to questions about what teachers actually know, how they use that knowledge, and what impact their decisions have on their instructional practices (Shavelson & Stern, 1981)	Continued to focus on content knowledge and teaching practices, but teachers were conceptualized as **decision makers** and were expected to benefit from making their tacit knowledge and decisions explicit (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Freeman, 1991; Johnson, 1992)
1990s and to be continued	Began to uncover the complexities of teachers' mental lives (Walberg, 1977; also see Freeman, 2002)	A shift from **a positivist paradigm** (positioned teachers as conduits to students and their learning) to **an interpretative or situated paradigm**, taking into consideration teachers' prior experiences, their interpretations of the activities they engage in, and the contexts within which they work

Table 2.1 illustrates the evolution of education theories and their impact on teacher training within L2 that also reflects a larger epistemological shift -- a sociocultural turn in human sciences. The act of teaching that used to be conceptualized as simply 'transferring' content from teachers to students, is further complicated and more situated in its sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical contexts. Under this interpretative or situated paradigm of teacher cognition, teachers are no longer conceptualized as empty vessels that need to be filled with content

knowledge and/or technical pedagogical skills through teacher education programs, but active decision makers who engage in, interpret, and take up teacher education activities in complex ways that are informed by their prior knowledge and experiences.

Theories of learning and teacher education.

Interpreting a sociocultural approach towards human consciousness in relation to social activities, Johnson (2006) summarized the conceptualization of human learning with the following framework:

> Learning, therefore, is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal mediational control by individual learners, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity. (p. 238)

As Johnson further describes in the context of L2, teacher learning is "socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting" (p. 239). It is not clear, however, to what degree research has looked into the process of teachers, as "users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge", making pedagogical decisions that seem fit to the needs of their students "within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts" (p. 239).

Canagarajah (2012) has also asked similar questions on what makes teachers who they are, such as the formation of their teaching persona and pedagogical choices. Reflecting upon his own experience ("apprenticeship") learning to teach from teaching and being pedagogically engaged with his colleagues as a TESOL professional in Sri Lanka, he pointed out that Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) "have greatly

influenced scholars to adopt a practice-based and social constructionist orientation to teacher development". Such approach to teacher development is certainly not only limited to TESOL. Through the framework of Communities of Practice, Canagarajah's TESOL-situated autoethnography also helps us to think about not only how 'external' sources interact with composition teachers' development, but how the process of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) play a role in their professionalization process.

A false dichotomy in teacher education: moving from theory/practice to praxis.

Canagarajah (2012) calls for the legitimization of teachers' ways of knowing and demonstrates its power in teachers' continuous professionalization through an engaging account of how this has played out in his own career in TESOL. Johnson (2006) has also summarized for us how various movements have helped push it theoretically and practically, such as "[t]he reflective teaching movement (Lockhart & Richards, 1994; Schön,1983; 1987; Zeichner & Liston, 1996), action research (Edge, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Somekh, 1993; Wallace, 1998), and the teacher research movement (Burns, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Edge & Richards, 1993; Freeman, 1998)" (p. 241). On top of that, Johnson (2006) points out that there is a problematic dichotomy between theory and practice, which is often implied in teacher education programs. As she puts it:

> the construct of praxis (Freire, 1970) is more suitable for the preparation of teachers because it captures how theory and practice inform one another and how this transformative process informs teachers' work (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Edge & Richards,1998; Simon, 1992) (p. 240)

The challenge here is, how do teachers themselves, teacher education programs, writing program administrations, and other stakeholders better understand this dynamic, transformative

process and therefore create spaces to make visible how composition teachers "make sense of and use the disciplinary knowledge that has informed and will continue to inform" teacher education (Johnson, 2006, p. 241).

2.4 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

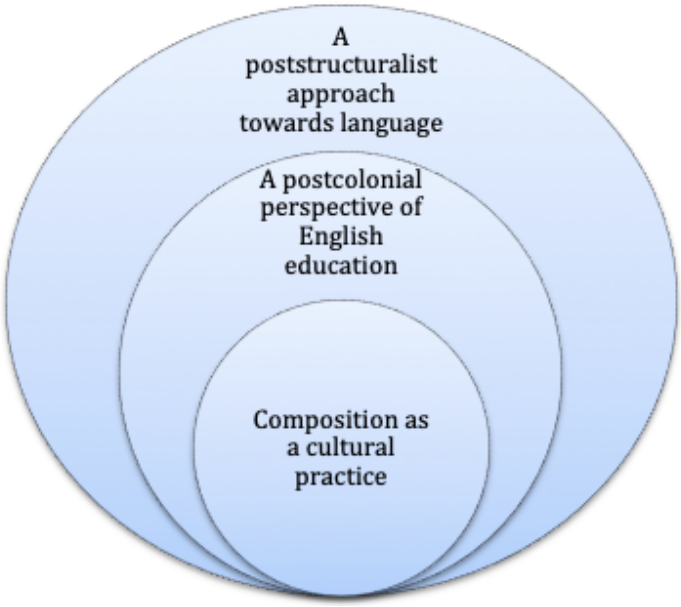
This research study is built on two overarching assumptions: 1) a **poststructuralist approach of language** that treats language as much more than a system of phonetics, syntax, pragmatics that pre-exists and is to be passively acquired, but rather as an epistemological and ontological social practice that involves meaning making, a way of being, positioning one's self in relation to others and the world - often times a site of clashing, struggles, and negotiation; in another sense, it is also a move away from "the monolingual and monocultural bias", as Pavlenko (2002) calls it; 2) a **postcolonial perspective of English education** that acknowledges the colonial history of this language, its ongoing association with race as well as economic and political power, and the view that language is not a neutral entity that can be learned and taught without affecting the users and the environment. Summarizing Spivak's suggestion of using the term *neocolonial* in replacement of the term *postcolonial,* Motha (2014) points out that "rather than having moved past ideologies of colonialism, we are simply seeing them take on new forms" (p. 30). Due to the more widely spread familiarity with and recognition of the term, I am going to keep using the term *postcolonial* with the acknowledgement of its limitation.

When applied to the particular context of writing/composition, these two theoretical lenses allow us to see writing not as a technical skill or a system of rules to be taken and practiced as it is, but a complex social process to be made sense of, negotiated, and integrated into a larger organic system of individuals' identities, worldviews or values, and ideologies (Duff, in Hornberger & McKay 2010).

I therefore use these two major theoretical assumptions to approach **composition as a cultural practice** that operates on increasingly diverse and competing ideologies (France, 1994). The following graph (Figure 2.1) helps illustrate my conceptualization of the relationship amongst these foundational concepts:

Figure 2.1

Foundational Conceptualizations of My Research Study

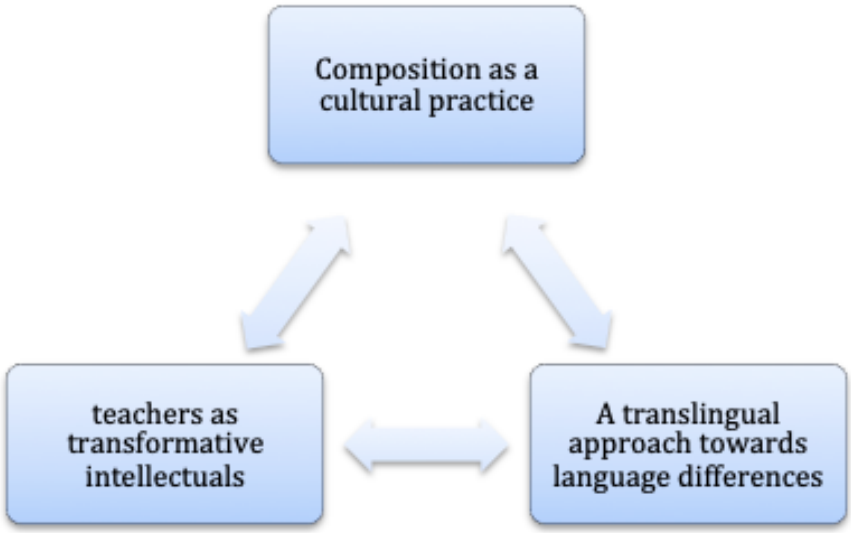


In the meantime, differences in student compositional performance are interpreted through **a translingual lens** that regards differences as the norm, instead of deviations from particular standards of writing that need to be fixed. TAs are conceptualized as **"transformative intellectuals"** (Giroux, 1988) who are not merely at the passive receiving end of technical skills and teaching resources. Instead, I emphasize the agency of teachers to negotiate or even co-construct resources from teacher trainings through the lens of their own lived experiences -- the "organic intellectuals" portrayed as individuals who are able to utilize local knowledge for

transformative practices (Gramsci's, 1971). I conceptualize the relationship of these concepts in the following figure.

Figure 2.2

Composition, Teachers, and A Translingual Approach



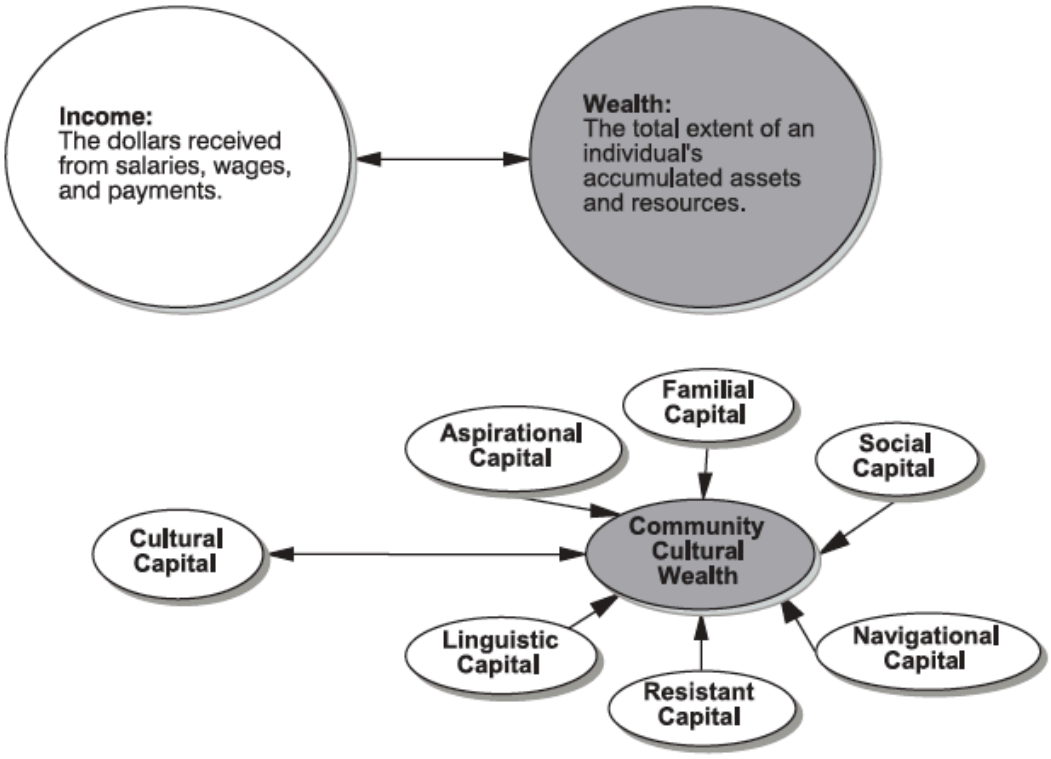
A multidimensional theoretical framework.

When we dive into the focus of this study – teacher learning, training, and decision-making in the socially, culturally, and politically complex environment, I use a combined framework of **Community Cultural Wealth** (Yosso, 2005) and **Nexus of Multimembership** (Canagarajah, 2012; Wenger, 1998). Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) is originally developed through Critical Race Theory (CRT) and derived from research on communities of color. However, it can also be effectively applied into examining other socially neglected and/or marginalized groups and as a move away from the assumed deficit view of the groups. A model of CCW focuses on individuals and groups as in possession of "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77), summarized in Figure 2.3 (for more details, see Yosso 2005). Under this

framework, teachers, a group that is not as visible and historically portrayed with a deficit view in the research tradition of SLW and Composition Studies, possess knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts that need to be fleshed out in further research and applied to institutional infrastructure such as the designing and conduction of teacher education programs.

Figure 2.3

A Model of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005)

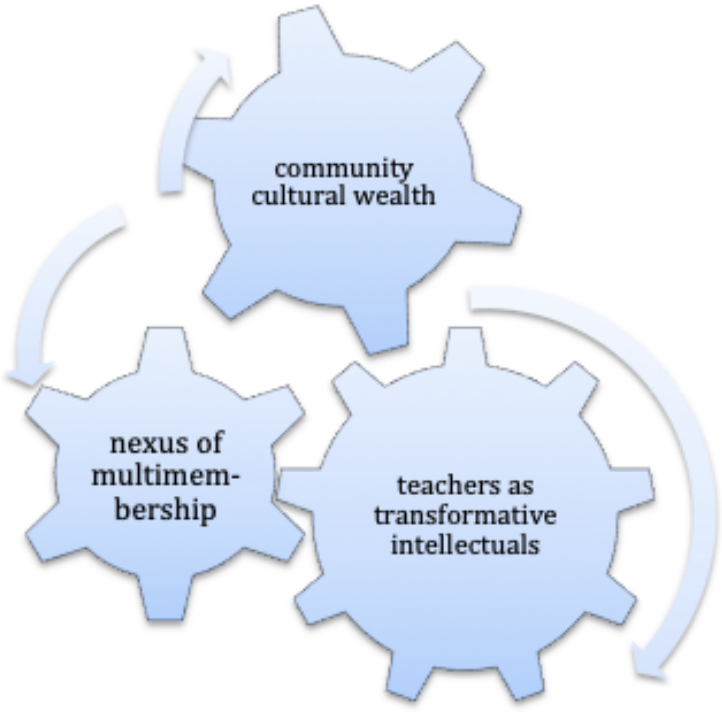


If CCW creates an epistemological segway for examining the complexities of the learning, teaching, and pedagogical decision-making process of composition, the notion of nexus of multimembership -- a concept from Wenger's (1998) groundbreaking *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* -- then adds geographical, cultural, political, professional, and

economic dimensions. Canagarajah (2012) used this framework of multimembership to critically examine his outsider status within the Western (and mostly White) TESOL community and developed a renewed understanding of utilizing his other memberships "to gain a critical edge" in his profession (p. 269-270). According to Wenger (1998), this identification and utilization of multimemberships are only productive when negotiability is in the picture: "Identification without negotiability is powerlessness—vulnerability, narrowness, marginality" (p. 208). The term negotiation is also intended "to convey a flavor of continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-take" (p. 53). My overall theoretical framework can be illustrated by the following figure.

Figure 2.4

My Multidimensional Theoretical Framework



Research questions.

Informed by the historical trajectory and theoretical intersection of L1 composition and L2 studies, and drawing theories from education (Banks, 1993; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Garcia & Wei, 2013; Hornberger & McKay, 2010; Lillis et al., 2015), sociolinguistic studies (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Kubota, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Pennycook, 2008), translation studies (Evangelista, 2013; Horner et al., 2011; Lee & Jenks, 2016; Simon, 1999), and critical studies (Inoue, 2015; Kobuta 2004; Michael-Luna, 2008), this study takes an interpretative approach of inquiry (Glesne, 2011, p. 8) that seeks to unpack composition TAs' experiences, interpretations, and negotiations of the departmental training, impact of their own disciplinary trainings, and that of other professional or personal experiences on classroom pedagogies. Informed by the post-structural/post-colonial approach (Glesne, 2011, p. 12), this research study is also aimed at further de-stabilizing and reconstructing some dominant conceptions of academic discourses under the influence of a monocultural, monolingual assumption.

As observed in my literature review chapter, due to the historical influence of the positivist paradigm, teacher training programs in general are more concerned about teaching novice teachers what to do, but not as concerned about facilitating conversations around the knowledge and skills they already have and helping them make connections between their incoming knowledge and teaching (Johnson, 2006). There is an urgent need for epistemological shift and theoretical grounding in order to activate teachers' "funds of knowledge" (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 313); for example, to better integrate teacher incomes (such as teacher training, disciplinary knowledge, professional and life experiences) in the teacher training programs and facilitate productive use of teachers' multimembership in professional terrains and their engaged communities. Therefore, the main goal of this study is not to measure the effectiveness of the teacher education program in a particular context, but to examine

composition teachers' interpretations of and interactions with theoretical and pedagogical resources from the teacher training program (such as one-week composition teacher orientation, quarter-long composition TA seminar, other classroom support from the program, exposure from their own disciplines, other professional or personal experience) within the overall institutional environment and their own classroom. The specific research questions I am asking are:

- How do TAs conceptualize academic writing? How do they orient themselves towards academic writing or academic discursive practices? What helped facilitate these conceptions and orientations?
- How do TAs conceptualize diversity in the classroom? What impacts these conceptualizations? How do TAs respond to differences in their students, in terms of students' linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds, and compositional performance? What helped facilitate these responses and practices?

Chapter 3. Methodology

This study takes a first-year composition (FYC) course with high enrollment as its research site; the FYC course is organized and run by the Expository Writing Program (EWP) of a public R1 university. The purpose of my research is to understand the experiences of the TA participants, but not to assess the TA trainings offered by the writing program. Among the five FYC courses offered by the EWP, this one is most popular and was taken by over 3,000 students just during the academic year of 2016-2017 alone (including summer). Since the goal of the study is to privilege FYC TAs' voices in order to unpack the ideological and pedagogical impact of various trainings, qualitative research becomes a natural choice for methodology. A qualitative inquiry to research is interested not in a single, absolute truth or to-be-tested hypothesis, but the dynamic, lived experiences of individuals and its effectiveness in unfolding the complexities and depth of those experiences. Therefore, my study is not focused on looking for a single fixed answer, but rich accounts of TAs' various perspectives of and attitudes towards the teaching of composition and what this richness illuminates for us to better move forward as an individual teacher, a writing program, and a field as a whole. The data collection process is also influenced by an ethnographic approach which Emerson et al. (2011) describes as an "interpretive-interactionist understanding of ethnography" that honors "indigenous meanings and concerns of people studied" (p. 20). In other words, I am not so concerned about using TAs' accounts to piece together my own picture of composition teaching, but much more interested in learning about it in more depth from the eyes of those motivated teachers and experts in their own disciplines.

3.1 Settings and Participants

Context of the study.

The research study focuses on six graduate student teachers (referred to as TAs) at an expository writing program (EWP) in the English Department of a public R1 university in the Pacific Northwest. The first-year composition course they all teach is a widely taken undergraduate course that is capped at 23 students. Throughout the quarter (10 to 11 weeks), TAs and students meet in class for about four hours every week (on a two-day or four-day class schedule). TAs also provide a substantial amount of feedback on student writing and hold two writing conferences with individual students or small student groups. Students enrolled in this course come from various backgrounds, regarding their major, home culture, socioeconomic status, and language repertoire. This course is one of the first campus spaces where undergraduate students with various identities, worldviews or values, and ideologies are socialized into the academic community (Duff, in Hornberger & McKay 2010), negotiating and internalizing norms and practices, whether English is their first or additional language. On the welcome page of the writing program website, FYC courses are described as follows: "All 100-level writing courses in the Expository Writing Program are designed around and help students meet a shared set of outcomes. These outcomes are intended to prepare students for writing in a variety of academic contexts."

The whole study took place during a six-month period. Five of the six TAs taught the course during Winter 2017 (January to March), and one TA during Spring 2017 (March to June). At the time of data collection, all TAs had at least taught for one quarter at the writing program, therefore were familiar with the required program outcomes, and had already established their own curriculum and teaching practices in the classroom. TA participants were recruited through

an online teacher survey sent out early Winter 2017, through direct emails, or in person by me, the researcher. Three American TAs and three international TAs were recruited for contrasts of various language repertoire, life experiences, and cultural ideologies. TAs were not selected based on their age or gender, but all TAs (one male and five females) were at their mid-twenties or early thirties. Students of those TAs were not regarded as the main participants but were involved in the anonymous, voluntary whole-class student survey that provides some information of class demographics. In addition to TAs, other participants included previous and current writing program directors, assistant directors (ADs), and a professor that had taught the first-year TA seminar. All directors had also taught the first-year-TA seminar at least once.

Participants: Teacher Portraits.

The following Table 3.1 provides a snapshot of TAs' background information, including their pseudonyms, undergraduate and postgraduate training, gender, length of teaching within the writing program, nationality, and linguistic repertoire.

Table 3.1

Background Information of All TA Participants

	Disciplinary Background (Undergraduate/Master/Ph.D.)	Gender and year of teaching[2]	Nationality	Self-reported Language Repertoire
Cat	- Linguistics - Rhetoric/Composition - Rhetoric/Composition	Female 6th year	U.S.	English
Clara	- Literature - Literature (also did coursework in GWESS and CHID)	Female 1st year	U.S.	Visaya, Boholano, Tagalog/Filipino, Korean, Spanish, English (since 11 years old; moved to the U.S. 24 years ago from

[2] Teaching experience does not include experiences outside the writing program, if there's any.

				Philippines)
Evelyn	- International Studies, Literature (minor) - Rhetoric/Composition - Rhetoric/Composition	Female 1st year	U.S.	"Usually just English but occasionally Spanish or Mandarin"
Maria	- Literature and Linguistics - Literature and Linguistics - Literature (Indigenous Studies)	Female 2nd year	Europe	Dutch, English, Spanish (2.5 years in the U.S.)
Mary	- Literature (Simultaneous Interpretation) - Comparative Literature - Comparative Literature (specialization: early 20th century films; changed program later)	Female 2nd year *Participated in both 2014 and 2016 TA orientation	China	Chinese, Cantonese, English (4 years in the U.S.)
Steven	- Literature - English Linguistics, TESOL - TESOL/Applied Linguistics (self-reported, in the same program of Rhetoric/ Composition)	Male 1st year (participated in the Fall 2016 TA orientation)	Middle East	Arabic and English (4 years in the U.S.)

In the following section, I also provide a slightly more detailed narrative of the teachers and my brief impression about them, to familiarize my readers with my participants.

Cat is an advanced doctoral student in the English Department, specializing in Rhetoric and Comp. She majored in Linguistics during her undergraduate years in the same university. At the time of this study, she was writing her doctoral dissertation and had taught composition in the university for over five years. Born and raised in the U.S., Cat self-reported English as her main language and mentioned in the interview that she spoke English pretty "monolingually". She did not specifically talk about her race and ethnicity during the whole research process, nor did I probe into it. However, she mentioned that her father is Thai but she spoke English pretty "monolingually" (from interview transcripts).

Clara is an Asian American graduate student who immigrated from the Philippines at age of eleven. Although she did Literature during her undergraduate degree and was working on her literature degree at the time of study, her coursework is very interdisciplinary, spanning across Literature, Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies, Diversity Studies, and Comparative History of Ideas. Languages she knows and uses on a regular basis include Visaya, Boholano, Tagalog/Filipino, Korean, Spanish, and English. She taught English as a second language in Korea for two years and studied Korean there conversationally. A passionate teacher and curious learner, she takes the most risks in her teaching amongst all six teacher participants, as will be further illustrated in my analysis later.

Evelyn majored in International Studies with a Literature minor during undergraduate, and was a first-year doctoral student in Rhetoric and Composition at the time of study. She is a White American student in the English Department and spent two years in China during high school. In the teacher survey she said she spoke usually "just English but occasionally Spanish or Mandarin" (from interview transcripts).

Maria is a second-year international doctoral student specializing in (American) Indigenous Studies, and this is her first year teaching composition. Coming from Europe, she speaks Dutch, English, and Spanish fluently. She did her undergraduate and master's degree in Literature and Linguistics (one major) in Europe, and had been in the U.S. for two and half years. She had also lived in seven countries (Belgium, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, Holland, Nicaragua, United States,) and worked in various jobs, such as arts administration in Washington D.C. and assistant management at a commercial store in Canada. If I can describe Cat's teaching persona as slightly on the formal side and representative of a middle-class teacher, Maria's is more laid back and

"grassroots style". Maria is a White female teacher who verbally acknowledged her race as being White and talked about herself as growing up in "lower class" (from interview transcripts).

Mary, another international graduate student in this study, is from China, specializing in Comparative Literature for her doctorate and majoring in Literature (Simultaneous Interpretation) during undergraduate. She was at the exam stage in her doctoral program at the time of the study and later switched to a field outside the Humanities. She speaks Chinese, Cantonese, and English, and had been in the U.S. for four years.

Steven[3] is the third international graduate student in this study and comes from Saudi Arabia. Like Cat and Evelyn, he is in the Language and Rhetoric program of the English Department, but self-reported his disciplinary background as TESOL/Applied Linguistics. He speaks Arabic and English and had been in the U.S. for four years. This was his first year teaching composition and he is also the only male teacher among six teacher participants in this study. He was a Literature major in his undergraduate years.

3.2 Data Collection

The whole data collection process involved three interviews and three class observations with individual TAs, a one-time individual interview with two former directors and the current director of the writing program (all of whom had also taught the first-year TA seminar), a group interview with the current three assistant directors, an individual interview with an English professor who had just taught the first-year TA seminar, and document collection. Although all data are important in helping me understand the overall context of my study, interviews with TA participants serve as the focal point of my analysis and the foundation of my findings.

[3] When I asked the two non-Anglophone international graduate student teachers for their preferred pseudonyms, both Mary and Steven gave me an Anglophone name without being prompted to do so. I thought it would be an intriguing decision to record and make available for my readers' own interpretation.

Interviews.

Two one-hour long individual interviews were conducted with each TA. Interviews were audio recorded as one of the main sources of data, but brief field notes were also taken from all interviews. The first interview conducted at the beginning of the quarter helped me better understand the TAs' educational, professional, and personal experiences, as well as collect some information on their experience in the writing program training. The second interview was conducted towards the end of the quarter, and posed more questions directly related to TAs' pedagogical practices that TAs had mentioned before and I noticed in the class observations.

Using a combined method of interviewing (Patton, p. 441), I included both conversational and structured interview questions in the TA interviews (See Appendix A and B for the first and second TA interview protocols). Those interviews usually started with more descriptive questions (Spradley, 1979, p. 85) and then moved onto questions that invite the interviewees to make evaluations or judgements of their experiences and/or perceptions. More 'probing' or follow-up questions (Patton, p. 465) are often added to deepen the conversations and co-construct a more detailed picture of their experiences and perceptions. An open-ended question was also used at the end of each interview to provide more space for TAs to initiate topics of conversations that are essential to them in relation to their teaching. The protocol used for the second TA interview contained both general questions that were the same for all TAs and specific questions I prepared for each TA, derived from particular activities or ideas that came up during class observations or the first interview that I had questions about or wanted to explore further.

In order to understand the context, content, and implementation of the TA trainings provided by the writing program, two former directors and the current director were also interviewed (See Appendix C for the interview protocol for writing program directors). Apart from the individual

interviews with the directors, a group interview was conducted with the three ADs for more effective data collection and a variety of perspectives (Patton, p. 476) on the training of new composition TAs (See Appendix D for the interview protocol for ADs). Three ADs, who were interviewed in the same group for about an hour, included two ADs involved in the 2016 new-TA orientation, and a senior AD who was involved in both the 2015 and 2016 orientations. This mixed cohort of ADs help flesh out differences in the two orientations that could map out changes that have happened with the program training and the rationale behind the changes.

Class Observations.

With the goal of observing TAs' pedagogical practices and generating deeper interview questions that could bring out the theoretical and ideological stances of TAs in relation to composition, I visited each TA's 50-minute class session three times - one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one towards the end of the quarter. Although I tried to take as detailed and comprehensive notes as possible, the observations were mostly aimed at capturing tasks the TAs did with their students, how they framed and facilitated the tasks, and the tools they used. Contextual information was also noted as indicators of each class, such as the number of students present in class that day, classroom size, equipment, student seating, things on the walls or the doors.

When I first started the class observation in Winter 2017, I used the approach of observer as participant (Glesne, 2011, p. 64). This decision was made due to the goal of the research, which was not to directly change or improve curriculum or classroom pedagogies, but to understand and interpret what the teachers are doing in their classroom and what informs those practices. Therefore, I tried to 'interfere' as little as possible so that the lessons would be as 'organic' and 'authentic' as they would have been without me. However, I was aware from the very beginning

that zero influence on the class was impossible even if this so-called 'objective' observer role was taken. Simple things like my notification to be in class could affect teachers' decisions on activities to do on that particular day. The presence of me and my voice recorder (although small and not very noticeable) could impact the amount of student talking in the whole class or even their seating location.

My participant-observer role also changed during different times of the data collection process. In the early stage of the quarter, I was very much an outsider. I would sit in the back corner of the classroom, have my voice recorder on, and take notes quietly. There was a brief interaction initiated by two international students at the end of one class session. The students shared the same first language with me and probably felt comfortable socializing with me in their first language. During the second class observations, some TAs and students appeared more comfortable with my presence in the class. One student invited me to join their group discussion, thinking that I was one of the students in class; one student passed the sticker notes to me, a tool shared around the class for the purpose of a class activity; one teacher even invited me to join a small group discussion when there was a group that needed more participants. Struggling with those invitations at first, I eventually embraced my slightly changed role in the class, and treated them as another productive way of understanding the class by engaging in their daily activities. This decision also reflects the ethnographic approach towards data collection that influenced this study.

The modern ethnography methodologies do not assume an absolute truth or a singular description of the world that can be accurately captured given an 'objective' or distant position of the researcher. Instead, it takes an emic approach that embraces subjectivities of the researcher and seeks to, for instance, capture individual perspectives or experiences that lead to questions

such as what causes the similarities or differences in these perspectives or experiences. Dynamic, naturalistic methodologies like this works well with the fluid, relational aspects of language, language interactions, and identity that account for complexity of the target of study, as well as the evolving nature of research itself. It also provides space for ideological implications to emerge from examining language in the social context (Athanases and Heath, 1995; Morgan, 2007; Pavlenko, 2002; Peirce, 1995).

The context of this study also allows me to take on this slightly shifted participant-as-observer role. Although each teacher comes up with their own curriculum, I have also taught the course before and am quite familiar with the course and the same course outcomes. Therefore, I am an outsider of the class with some insider knowledge of the course. The teachers are colleagues of mine, with whom I have either already worked or interacted before. Meanwhile, since the theoretical perspective that guides this study is an interpretative approach towards what is happening in the classroom and seeks to understand the pedagogical decisions teachers made and what informed these decisions, I still strived to limit my interference in the class by being a "passive" participant and not participate in class interactions unless I am invited to.

Document collection.

Besides the field notes from the interviews and class observations, pictures of notes on the classroom whiteboard, activity handouts, course syllabi, and other teaching artifacts were also collected throughout the quarter. New-TA training materials, including orientation materials from the one-week orientation, the syllabi and readings from the new-TA seminar course, teaching portfolios, and other supplemental materials relevant to the training were collected from the directors, ADs, and TAs. Table 3.2 provides an overview of all data and sources.

Table 3.2

Data Sources

Participants	**Data Sources**	**Length of recordings**
6 FYC Composition TAs	2 individual interviews with each TA (audio recordings and field notes)	12 hours
	3 class observations with each TA (audio recordings and field notes)	18 hours
	Collected teaching and training materials	
3 Writing Program Directors (former and current)	Individual interviews (audio recordings and field notes)	3 hours
	Collected training materials	
3 Writing program assistant directors	1 Group interview (audio recording and field notes)	1 hour
	Collected training materials	

3.3 Data Analysis

Since I want to privilege teachers' voices in tracing their conceptualizations of and positionalities, the central data of analysis are TA interview audios, class observation audios and field notes, together with teaching artifacts collected from the TAs. Interviews with directors and ADs, as well as training materials collected from them serve as supplemental data that help me better understand the context of the writing program and first-year TA training--one of the various sources that help facilitate TAs' perceptions, curriculum decisions, and pedagogical practices.

In the first phase of data analysis, I analyzed the result of teacher and student surveys to gain an initial understanding of the background of participant teachers and the student demographics

of their current class. This phase of data analysis also involves transcribing and open-coding all audio-recorded interviews of teacher participants line by line. As the interview transcripts are closely examined, a tentative coding scheme is developed for the more structured second round of coding (see Table 3.3 below).

Table 3.3

A Tentative Coding Scheme

Type of Code	**Code (TAs)**	**Note/definition**
Contextual Information	General background	Nationality, cultural background, language repertoire, etc.
	Disciplinary background	Ph.D., Master, Undergraduate
	Teaching experience	Inside and outside of the University Inside and outside of U.S.
	Other professional experience	
Perceptions and Conceptualizations	**academic writing**	definition/perception/conceptualization of academic writing
	Diversity	class diversity or student differences; such as nationality, race, gender, linguistic and cultural background, major
	MLL students	Multilingual students--a subcode that might bring out more theoretical and ideological stuff
	Translingualism	If applicable, how translingualism has become part of T's thinking
	student income (competency/capability)	Expectations of students' writing skills, social and cultural knowledge, etc.
	class or student outcome	Expectations of class or student outcome
Orientations and Practices	**orientation**	orientation/attitude towards their defined academic discursive

		practices (might be hard to be separated from code “academic writing"
	Approach/response to student differences/diversity	Approach or response to student differences or diversity, such as differences in linguistic, cultural backgrounds, compositional performance, etc.
	Teaching approach/focus	The main goal/focus of their teaching, or what they think as important to the course and students
	curriculum/class activities	curriculum decisions that shape the course, materials and how they are used, class activities, etc.
	Grammar	Attitude towards grammar; ways of dealing with grammatical issues
	metacognition and/or transfer	Something that came up in the coding process
What informed the TAs’ orientations and practices	**EWP departmental training**	Writing program orientation, TA seminar, mentoring- including practices of translation, negotiation, agency, and change of trainings overtime
	disciplinary training	undergraduate/master/PhD trainings and scholarly interest
	professional experiences	Including but not limited to teaching experiences inside and outside UW
	personal experiences	Any personal experience TAs brought up that is impactful to them or influenced some decisions they made in class
Other	**Support and/or resources**	Types of support and/or resources TAs need for their teaching

In the second phase of analysis, I used individual codes developed from the first phase to search for any patterns or themes that might help answer the research questions, this time not

only in the interview transcripts, but also class observation field notes and teaching artifacts collected from the TAs. Sometimes I also used contextual information gathered from interviews with the program directors, assistant directors, and the TA seminar professor, in order to clarify departmental expectations of the writing course, references TAs made to the departmental trainings, and so on. Later on in this stage, potential themes and connections between the themes were evaluated based on their possible implications to research questions.

Both stages of coding and analysis were carried out in a recursive manner. This constant comparative method of data analysis from a flexible design of grounded theory (Glaser, 1992) allowed me to look at what themes emerge from the acquired data and compare them with data for constant refining and development. Taking a constructivist lens (Charmaz, 1999, 2000), my role as the researcher, such as the decisions made based on certain values and beliefs, was also considered in the coding process. Interpretation and theories that emerged from data collection and analysis were shared with the participants for any potential revision, reflecting the collaborative relations of the researcher and research participants.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussions Part 1: Academic Writing

4.1 Academic writing: what are we really talking about?

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. **These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing**. (bolding added)

-- Explanation for outcome 2 "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing", WPA Outcome Statement for First-year Composition (2014)

To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts

-- Outcome 3 for 100-level composition courses, Expository Writing Program (2015)

Discourses around academic writing or writing in the academic disciplines have long been around and prevalent at the individual, programmatic, and institutional level. The most recent *WPA Outcome Statement for First-Year Composition* (approved July 17, 2014) frames the objectives of FYC in four categories: Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes; and Knowledge of Conventions. In explaining the second outcome "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing" (as quoted above), WPA (Council of Writing Program Administrators), a national association that supports college and university faculty and staff invested in writing programs, assumes practices related to critical thinking as foundational for "advanced academic writing", while the second quote from the expository writing program

(EWP) in my study makes a slightly vague reference to an argumentative notion of writing that is regarded as important in the academic setting. Both quotes refer to the idea of writing in the academic setting as if it is a fixed, singular, self-evident entity -- "advanced academic writing" or "[argumentative writings] that matter in academic contexts". However, when we interrogate this particular language more closely, many questions arise: Is there a 'basic academic writing' in contrast to 'advanced academic writing'? What is writing that 'matters in academic contexts'? To whom and to what standard? What does academic writing possibly mean to different people? This sense of ambiguity urges us to look across time and disciplines for the various conceptualizations of this construct – academic writing.

Understanding composition in relation to English.

When the notion of academic writing comes up, one of the most common perceptions is a relatively rigid, standardized way of writing that enjoys a privileged status in the academic setting and reflects certain institutional expectations. I have explained in my literature review chapter how the needs for and development of composition is driven by the professionalization of disciplines that emerged from the industrialization period (see Chapter 2 for details). Theories and practices around writing, therefore, are heavily influenced by ideologies around English language. That is also why composition as a field nowadays is going through a "de-colonization" process (Kubota & Lehner, 2004), due to the colonial history of English language in the broader global context (Pennycook, 1998; Philipson, 1992; Rajagopalan, 2004).

Using a concept that is rooted in sophist tradition[4] for his analysis, Shepley (2016) explains that *nomoi* are "rules created by people to guide or control human behavior in a specific location", and "as neosophistic rhetorical theorists emphasize, rules for language use itself fall

[4] Here I refer to sophism, a method of teaching using the techniques of philosophy and rhetoric rooted in ancient Greece.

into this category" (p. 26). Although Shepley emphasizes that “[a]s social constructs, nomoi can be changed", institutional endorsement such as what is regarded as good student writing or a preferred approach to (academic) writing does hold immense power, and “institutional expectations persist in guidance that specifies the kind of thinker and social agent that each student is urged to become” (p. 126). Shepley’s analysis prompts us to not only think about students’ interactions and negotiations with institutional expectations, but also the role teachers play in reinforcing or destabilizing them through “(institutionally informed) teaching goals and the writing environments that they cultivate in classes and in other areas of student life” (p. 49).

Writing as discourse.

Scholarship from Discourse Analysis (DA) is widely used to understand writing by situating it in its social context, such as the concept of discourse community (Swales, 1987). Shepley (2016) notes that a widely accepted definition of discourse is “language as it is imbued with the ideology (or in Foucauldian terms, power) of a community or culture.” While this lens is productive in various ways, there also has been some critique especially in its applications. In discussing some common misconceptions of FYC, Downs and Wardle (2007) call the conception of academic writing as a discourse "a category mistake". They also warn us that under this conceptualization approach "FYC teachers are thus forced to define academic discourse for themselves (usually unconsciously) before they can teach it". Because of the common disciplines FYC teachers come from, one of the consequences brought about by this usually unconscious and limited notion of academic writing is that FYC becomes very "Humanities-based" or "more specifically English studies-based" (p. 556). Interdisciplinary tensions like this remind us that constructs like academic writing are better used as a tool (means instead of the end), rather than studying it as a fixed or totally stabilized entity. Nonetheless the idea of discourse is still a useful

threshold concept for analyzing and understanding various phenomena of writing practices and epistemologies behind those practices. One telling example is Lillis et al.'s (2015) study that reveals students' resistance to academic discourses that are expected but not what "they wanted to use, to mean, *to be"* (p. 6), which helps unpack the complex relations between discursive practices and identities.

Writing as rhetoric.

By the 1960s, Composition had grown to be a field of Rhetoric and Composition in the U.S., despite it still being interdisciplinary in nature. As Shepley (2016) describes it: "A broad definition of rhetoric, since Kenneth Burke and his intellectual successors, is the strategic use of symbols, especially alphabetic symbols, to persuade, create new identifications, or otherwise make a point" (p. 120). Although not writing directly about the rhetorical tradition of composition but a historical overview of composition as a discipline, Weisser (2002) makes a comparison between American and British views of English that illuminates the unique position taken by writing scholars in the U.S.:

> the Americans defining it as a thing to be studied--literature, criticism, theory, rhetoric--and the British defining it much more loosely as a way of engaging with the work of the classroom and the roles of teacher and student. (p. 5)

This more 'objectification' approach (in comparison to a more situational approach represented by but not limited to British literary studies) towards English language can be seen through certain movements or sub-fields of study in Rhetoric and Composition, such as genre studies, writing-across-the-curriculum movement, a call to focus on the writing process. However, over the past two decades, studies in Rhetoric and Composition in the U.S. context have also started

conversations on some situational aspects of writing, such as examining the intersection of power and academic literacies (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Mayes, 2010), expanding our understanding of writing by delving deeper into fluidity, modes, and spaces (Guerra, 2016; Kress, 2010; Smith et al., 2018), and studying writing programs as whole ecologies instead of only as individual components (Inoue, 2015; Reiff et al., 2015). As Wargo and De Costa (2017) describe in their recent article: “Unable to be defined solely as the tracing of practices, rote skills, and/or knowledge, academic literacies begs to be studied as the terrain of lived experiences.” (p. 101)

Writing as literacy.

As mentioned above, a literacy framework approaches writing in the academic context as “the terrain of lived experiences” (Wargo & De Costa, 2017). This conceptualization of writing has its root in British literary studies and was also taken up by American scholars. Shepley (2016) defines literacy in the context of Rhetoric and Composition as “a process of interpreting and using information in a social context (Brandt 3-4)”. Lilies et al. (2015) take a similar approach in their edited book *Working With Academic Literacies: Case Studies Towards Transformative Teaching.* Drawing on experiences from teacher-researchers across disciplines and institutions as well as dialogues between scholars from different traditions and geolocations, they refer to Academic Literacies as "a critical approach to the researching and teaching of writing and literacy and to the role and potential of these activities for individual meaning making and academic knowledge construction in higher education" (p. 4). They argue about the importance for researchers and teachers to adopt “socially situated accounts of writing and text production”, and prompt us to pay attention “to the ways in which power and identity (at the levels of student, teacher, institution, discipline) are inscribed in literacy practices”.

Lea and Street (2006) draw a clear picture for us by discussing the nature of academic writing from the perspective of both student writers and teachers, and described three overlapping perspectives or models of describing student writing in the academy:

- **Study skills model** that takes a more individual and cognitive approach to writing and emphasizes mastery of surface features of texts;
- **Academic socialization model** that presumes disciplinary discourses as relatively stable and centers around "the acculturation of students into the discourses and genres of particular disciplines as an essential prerequisite for becoming a successful writer";
- **Academic literacies model** that “is concerned with meaning making, identity, power, and authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context".

The first model reflects a standardized ideology that has long dominated higher education, which has been imbedded in the deficit model and discussed in my literature review chapter. The academic socialization model can also be seen through the lens of DA. The academic literacies model, although not totally exclusive of the first two models, does take more into account “the nature of student writing in relation to institutional practices, power relations and identities, therefore offering a lens on meaning making that the other two models failed to provide" (Lea & Street, 2006).

Categories blended: writing as a literacy practice, a discursive strategy, and a rhetorical act.

This brief review on academic writing is not a sole assessment or competition of these individual frameworks. After examining the frameworks presented above, Shepley (2016) proposes a broader and pluralistic conceptualization of student writing:

> If focused with conceptual tools that embrace situational fluidity, a blending of categories lets us see student writing relating to others in ideologically managed social and physical places where information is used to further communally understood meaning-making practices—student writing as a literacy practice, a discursive strategy, and a rhetorical act. (p. 123)

In their discussion of three models of student writing and literacy, Lea and Street (2006) also promote a similar idea -- these three models of student writing are not exclusive of each other, but help provide more flexible and comprehensive frameworks for both researchers and educators in various academic contexts.

4.2 What does academic writing mean to practitioners?

With a brief review of various conceptualizations of academic writing, this section intends to illustrate some preliminary findings and targets more specifically the first set of research questions: *How do TAs conceptualize academic writing? How do they orient themselves towards academic writing or academic discursive practices?* This part of my analysis also starts to tap into the question: *What helped facilitate these conception(s) and orientation(s)?*

At the beginning stage of the research study, I invited all teacher participants to fill in an online Web-Q survey with the goal of gathering some general information about them as teachers and graduate students. Thirteen questions in the survey asked about the current class they were teaching, their background (such as educational, teaching experiences, linguistic repertoire), general teaching philosophies (expectations of students), and so on. One specific question in the survey "What's your definition of 'academic writing'?" was to prompt the teachers' thinking on academic writing (AW) and ask them to put it into writing. During the first

interview that happened before all the class observations, I asked them to explain the written definition and clarify certain wordings. After three class observations that spread out throughout the whole quarter, I had a second interview with each teacher participant and asked them follow-up questions regarding AW. The second interview was conducted for the purpose of further clarification, a deeper understanding on their thinking of AW in relation to certain activities or ideas I noticed in the class observations, and figuring out whether there was any shift in how they thought about AW after a quarter of teaching. The following are individual snapshots of TAs' conceptualizations of and orientations towards AW.

Maria: unlearning academic writing.

Maria wrote in the online teacher survey that AW to her means "critical writing informed by evidence and critical thought". She reiterated this definition of AW while describing her teaching focus with this composition course being "really about critical thinking, critical reading, critical writing" (p. 12, Interview 1). During the first interview, while being asked to define AW, Maria offered another definition: "the more formal writing as what's expected by the U.S. university". In response to a follow-up question that I asked during our second interview, she elaborated what this more formal writing looked like:

> A style that you wouldn't be able to speak out loud. If you would read it out loud, the sentences would be too long. You would run out of breath before your sentence is over. You wouldn't be able to pronounce all the words that you were using. Kind of like that. It's meant to be a written language, not really a spoken language. (p. 26, Interview 2)

Although she did not explicitly describe this definition as being mutually exclusive of or contradictory to the one she gave in the online survey, she did make a comment that "academic writing shouldn't be that formal and inaccessible" (p. 8, Interview 1). Sharing about a Facebook post assignment she gave to her students, she said: "So that's one of the things that, in order to

get that stuff out of their minds, and to unlearn some of the stuff they learned, and to be able to learn how to write academic writing, so the first sequence is very open" (p. 8, Interview 1). Maria's portrait of this formal, inaccessible academic writing that she assumed her students to be already familiar with reminds us of Shepley's (2016) notion of how "institutional expectations persist in guidance that specifies that kind of thinker and social agent that each student is urged to become" (p. 126), whether these expectations come from the current college environment or students' previous schooling (for example, high school). In response to what she perceived as institutionally endorsed 'good' student writing, Maria took a resistant approach. Her comment implies that the "stuff" she is trying to "get out of" students' minds has something to do with the "formal, inaccessible" type of AW and she made intentional decisions in her curriculum to destabilize this perception and discursive practice of AW. She described her rationale for doing this in the following comment:

> It's just a class thing, I guess an English supremacy thing, to require certain writing to be a certain way, not to say that other ways of writing are as good. Just as a person who studies other ethnic, so-called ethnic literatures, it just makes sense to me. (p. 9, Interview 1)

Maria explained how this approach towards "the more formal writing as what's expected by the U.S. university" was connected to the work she does in her discipline Indigenous Studies (of Native Americans). The quote above also points out that there is a particular way of writing that is associated with or heavily influenced by a social class and an ideology that holds particular types of English in a superior status. Not only did she try to destabilize this to her problematic notion of AW through writing tasks such as the Facebook assignment, she also demonstrated it in her teaching persona: "I talk about things being chill or not chill in the classroom, because I don't value academic English, the formal language as much as... like a better way of communicating or whatever." (p. 16, Interview 1) She is very vocal about her resistance to what she described as

formal and inaccessible academic writing, and the quote above is an example of her resistance in the classroom.

Struggles with two registers of academic writing. As we can see from the analysis above, Maria explicitly talked about two conceptual streams of academic writing throughout the whole interview process: 1) "the more formal writing as what's expected by the U.S. university", and 2) the version that she initially wrote down in the online survey "critical writing informed by evidence and critical thought". The first notion of academic writing involves a formal register in English that has a lot to do with use of complex vocabulary ("complicated words"; "meant to be a written language"), structure ("has conclusions"), grammar ("no contractions"), and authorial stance of the writer ("everything is third person, it's removed… very distant"). The second notion of academic writing, on the other hand, does not necessarily value students' ability to only "emulate the form" and is more demanding on being able to "say something about something" and that students should know "how to make an actual claim, and how to actually support it with evidence".

Being an international TA, Maria openly talked about her struggle with the first type of academic writing featured by the use of formal language. According to her observation, "being a second language writer or speaker" herself, the English she speaks is "from interacting with people, and from TV" and also from the readings and writings she has to do. Therefore, she does not regard herself as having "two registers in English" ("non-formal and formal" registers). In the meantime, she also pointed out that not understanding certain vocabulary or concepts related to academic writing is not necessarily a language competency issue. As she said,

> It's just an academic language thing. Like it's not like you don't speak English. Just you don't speak this English, and plenty of people who are native English speakers also don't speak this English. (p. 12, Interview 1)

This comment reflects a discursive approach towards English language. For example, the type of English used in daily household conversational exchanges and the one used for reading and writing tasks in a college context demonstrate the different discursive needs of a community or culture, but not the conversationalists' mastery of English language in general. Maria's comment also signals some extra pressure on the international students or students associated with the label of non-native speakers – their perceived non-native speaker status positions them at an even more complicated place with English where they are more prone to criticism when their discursive performance does not meet expectations.

Strategic assimilation: doing and talking about academic writing with students. Drawing on Yosso (2005)'s framework of *community cultural wealth*, Oropeza, Varghese, and Kanno (2010) closely examine how four linguistic minority students negotiate multiple identities in higher education, through six forms of capital: aspirational, navigational, social, resistant, familial, and linguistic. Besides the students' struggles with stigma associated with certain labels (such as ESL students), they also portray student agency in negotiating and advocating for themselves. With this specific focus on higher education as illustrated in Oropeza et al. (2010), I adapt this idea of *strategic assimilation* (Lacy, 2004; Meghji, 2017) to conceptualize students as agentive actors who have the potential to actively negotiate or strategically (or partially) assimilate in order to achieve personal and academic goals. Regarding the learning of her students, Maria's approach towards the first type of academic writing can be summarized as providing space for strategic assimilation. She described how she tried to prepare students "for the expectation" and noted that "in order to be able to critique it,

you first have to know what it is, and how it works". Based on this rationale, she allowed students to make their own decisions but emphasized that students had to be cognizant about the decisions they were making:

> So in this class I'm teaching you how to do it, and then if you don't want to do it that's cool, but then at least you know how it is and you can make an informed decision to not participate in that, as opposed to just not know how to do it and then get called out by people, like you are not writing academically. (p. 8, Interview 1)

This strategic assimilation approach and the space she gave students to make "an informed decision" seem to be well manifested in both theory and practice. In the second interview, Maria mentioned an example of a student writing a research paper in the format that was slightly different from other students and feeling insecure about it. Although Maria described the student paper as "a scientific research paper", pointing out to me that it had different sections marked out by subtitles which is "the way that they would do scientific work" and different from an "English paper", she still said:

> Yeah, but because she wrote in her writer's memo why she did it, and the way that the strategies informed everything, I was just like, "Okay." I just gave feedback on pushing her argument the same way with everyone else. I didn't tell her that the format was wrong. I was like, "I am down with this format, if this is a format that you explain to me why and how you did it." (p. 11, Interview 2)

Maria made an intentional decision to allow her students to make choices in their writing that might differ from her expectations and to consciously justify these choices. This decision demonstrates her awareness of the role power plays (at the level of student, teacher, institution, discipline) in shaping literacy practices – these literacy practices could be how an article is laid out format-wise, the way knowledge is organized, or as complex as how meanings are made and knowledge is constructed. On the other hand, Maria's perception on the particular format this student chose (different sections marked out by subtitles) also makes me wonder: Why is this format "wrong" in Maria's

perspective? Was she expecting her students to write an "English paper" (p. 11, Interview 2) for this particular assignment or the whole course? What does Maria's perceived differences between an "English paper" and a "scientific research paper" say about her assumptions about writing in different disciplines? What also seems slightly contradicting is her desire to cautiously show her students "how to do it" if certain expectations need to be met, and her drive to help students "unlearn stuff". So, what exactly does she want her students to unlearn and what expectations is she preparing her students for?

Priority on "Critical thinking". Throughout our conversation around AW, there was a shift from focusing on the more pragmatic or formal side of writing to a more metacognitive, analytical aspect of writing. In the other definition of AW that Maria gave in the written response ("critical writing informed by evidence and critical thought"), the word "critical" appeared twice. While describing students who are "really good writers" or "good creative writers" and can "emulate the form" but "don't actually say anything", she gave a glimpse of what she might mean by "critical":

> So even students that write a paper that does look like a paper, a lot of feedback is about how to make an actual claim, and how to actually support it with evidence. (p. 16, Interview 1)

In the second interview, she gave an example of an analysis activity she had students do in one class session. One group of students evaluated an online article about the evacuation of Standing Rock camps and concluded that the article, written by the oil company Dakota Access "would have been more credible if it would have involved the indigenous point of view" (p. 3, Interview 2). Maria used it as an example of achieving the course outcomes, a lot of which were related to including multiple perspectives, audience awareness, and use of evidence that she seemed to

include in her definition of "critical thinking". Maria also showed an explicit teaching focus on critical thinking, which is reflected through her grading priority:

> I think my focus would be more on their critical thinking aspect, so like, are they able to think about their own writing, are they able to think about their own thinking, like the metacognition part. And like, does their paper do that, or does their paper ask real questions, offer real answers. You know, is there intertextuality, is that complex in that kind of way? If I can understand what's going on, then that's fine. Like I have given 4.0s to paper that doesn't have perfect grammar. But that like do all the stuff, they do all the complex thinking work, writing work. (p. 15, Interview 1)

It is not surprising that certain ideas around critical thinking (such as evaluating sources, including multiple perspectives, audience awareness, use of evidence) are so forefront in Maria's description of AW. Similar language can be found in the course outcomes statement released by the writing program, around which the FYC courses, the course textbook, and annual TA orientations are usually organized. Meanwhile, Maria's notion of critical thinking reflects a strong influence from the Western traditions of literacy criticism and works by scholars that focus on developing critical approaches to language, literacy, and education, as described by Alastair Pennycook (2008):

> Critical thinking is used to describe a way of bringing more rigorous analysis to problem solving or textual understanding**,** a way of developing more "critical distance" as it is sometimes called. (p. 795)

This notion of critical thinking gained currency in fields such as Applied Linguistics and pedagogical spaces such as FYC classrooms because it helps break down an abstract idea of textual engagement into a concrete set of thinking skills, "a set of rules for thinking that can be taught to students" (Pennycook, 2008). The idea of critical reading also aligns with literacy criticism that emphasizes "an aesthetic dimension of 'textual appreciation'", which attempts to create "the same sort of 'critical distance' by developing 'objective' methods of textual analysis"

(Pennycook, 2008, p. 795). According to Romero (2016), this notion of critical thinking and assumptions around it, due to its root in Western humanistic traditions, has been critiqued for "its individualistic ideology that does not easily translate to non-Western contexts and identities (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 2011)" (p. 208).

Evelyn: I don't like the term academic writing at all.

The similarities and differences in Evelyn's conceptualization of AW prompt us to ask more questions about what would be a productive way for teachers to approach the conceptualization of AW as well as to articulate it to their students. In the online teacher survey, she wrote down two separate definitions without being prompted to do so: "Writing written in a school context is one definition I use. Another is writing that is in the style of a journal article" – like those highly specialized academic articles graduate students read in their graduate seminars. The second definition is the one she used when she had to articulate AW to students. However, she explicitly said in the interview that she did not "like the term academic writing at all" (p. 13, Interview 1), and she seemed quite resistant to thinking and talking about "writing you [students] do in school" with this term. While being pushed to think about how she might respond if her students asked her what AW was, she described that when "a lot of people say it", AW "resembles something that might be in a journal" and added:

> Yeah, and it's not like quite a journal article, if it's written for a class, but it's like researched and it's structured in a particular way and it's really like an expanded five paragraph essay, right? It has some kind of central claim/, and it's, like, there are definitely sources and it's research, and my students last quarter, at least, had a really wide variety of experience with research, and some of them were like, "Oh yeah, no problem. I did lots of research in high school." And some of them went: "Yeah, I've never researched anything in my life." which of course they've researched things informally, like, they all Google things, I hope. (p. 13, Interview 1)

Evelyn explained that she did not like thinking about writing in the academic context only in terms of something that is "like an expanded five paragraph essay" and structured "in a particular

way". Her dislike of the term AW also demonstrates her belief in the use of this term AW as being restrictive instead of productive. Evelyn put it this way:

> I think it's kind of narrow minded to only think about composition in terms of academic writing, whatever that means, cause...but yeah, I want to prepare them [students] for their majors, and that's really important, but I also want their majors to prepare them for their jobs. (p. 14, Interview 1)

From this quote we can tell that Evelyn took quite a student-centered approach towards the composition course she was teaching and the way she thinks about AW at least in the context of her class. She seemed fairly conscious about conceptualizing writing and the course in general around the needs of her students. She rejected the ideologies imbedded in this particular pragmatic construct of Academic Writing by rejecting the use of this term in her classroom context, because of its association with a rigid way of writing ("five paragraph essay").

Practical academic English. Instead of limiting writing to a particular style, Evelyn says that "I like to think about writing as useful outside of school too". She seemed to take a 'practical' approach towards writing. Her teaching of writing also seemed to take a more skill-based approach rather than trying to train students to reproduce a certain style or genre. For example, while some TAs in the EWP teacher orientation showed hesitation towards using multimodality because of some possible scaffolding or assessment challenges, Evelyn expressed her strong interest in using multimodality in the composition classroom, and commented that multimodal composition projects such as a website was something that students were interested in and "something they can use in real life, too". She also mentioned the student discussion on a genre analysis paper that she overheard in her class, and expressed her excitement that "one [student] wants to analyze tattoos" and "some want to think about the conventions of tabletop, like Dungeons and Dragons type games", saying, "This is so cool. I'm really excited about

these." This more 'practical' approach can also be reflected in the ways she described her goals for students. Her comment here shows that this practical, skill-based approach is also a very student-centered approach:

> I guess my goals for them other than generally speaking in outcomes, are to be able to understand, ways they use writing in their lives, like on a daily basis and how they can be more intentional about it, and also how they can, use writing to their advantage, in their major or in a job market. So those are kind of my goals for them, is for them to have writing as a practical, technical skill. (p. 16, Interview 1)

I don't need to teach the formula because they are already very good at that. While explaining what informed her resistant attitude towards thinking about writing only in terms of AW, Evelyn said:

> Well, I think that academic writing is often tied to a standard dominant language ideology that can be kind of harmful. It's like how academic writing is traditionally conceived of, seems like it promotes writing in a very specific type of way. I don't really think that actually invites students to use those different diversities that they have. It tells them you have to follow this specific formula which is what they learned in high school already. Most of them know how to write a five paragraph essay. I don't need to teach them how to follow a formula because they're already very good at that. (p. 24, Interview 2)

While listening to this comment, several questions arose in my head: Who are the students that Evelyn had in mind while saying this? Is it implied that since students made it into this relatively privileged higher education institution, they did it by completely assimilating to its expectations thus mastering the formulas in writings, such as their applications materials, and ways of performing in writing tasks on some gatekeeping tests such as SAT? Although it is arguable whether every student actually learned "how to write a five paragraph essay", "a formula", or the same formula when they entered a FYC classroom, this quote provides a clear rationale for her choice of not using the term AW and the possible positive impact of this practice such as more productive use of student incomes and a broader understanding of writing. Evelyn re-emphasized her point here: thinking about writing only in terms of AW is not helpful.

Clara: I've only experienced it from my mostly English background.

Similar with Evelyn, without being prompted to do so in the teacher survey, Clara gave in her own words a "narrow" definition of AW ("essays that conform to academic essay and its conventions"), and the "more general" one ("any type of writing that is required of students within academia"). During our interview, Clara tried to start her description of AW with her general understanding of writing: "Writing in general, it's difficult because it's ideas in your head that you're trying to materialize and capture in words." (p. 8, Interview 1), making the point that (written) words are representations of thoughts and this process of translation is difficult. This line of thinking resembles Vygotsky's idea of inner speech, the complex relationship between thoughts and words. Clara went on and said:

> That's what I keep telling my students, from my own experience, I keep stressing to them, writing is not just writing. This writing assignment is a thinking, reading, researching, and writing assignment. Don't be fooled by these writing prompts. We call it writing prompts for short, but you're doing a ton of stuff before this whole thing even come. (p. 8-9, Interview 1)

Here she was portraying writing as a practice that involves a complex set of expansive literacy skills, which also echoes Shepley's (2016) definition of literacy in the context of Rhetoric and Composition as "a process of interpreting and using information in a social context (Brandt 3-4)" (p. 123).

The internal tension with different conceptualizations of AW. The conversations we had in our two interviews show that Clara was wrestling with these different notions of AW herself. She used the narrow definition when she articulated AW to her students: "The narrow one, I was just talking about maybe for my prompts that I give to my class. I stress conventions a lot with the academic essay. Then I put the more broad definition there [in the teacher survey] because I've written different types of essays and I've been successful and less successful in writing different types of essays in different classes." (p. 9, Interview 1) She used a more "broad" or "general"

notion of AW to help herself process what it meant to her as a graduate student and a composition teacher, because she had "only experienced it [academic writing] from" her "mostly English background" (p. 24, Interview 2). She described her academic writing in her "English experience" as follows:

> a claim, well, research, stressing out about transitions and evidence. It looks more like what my English teachers in high school/ always warned me, or prepared me, college writing would be like. Like, "Oh. This is how to structure it. Look at the template." Like, the five paragraph essay. Obviously, I kind of modified that in my own ... To fit in my own, whatever situation/. But, that's kind of what it's been. It's been really kind of rigid. (p. 24, Interview 2)

This "rigid" practice and more internalized perception of AW posed challenges in her attempt to broaden her definition of AW. When I asked whether "emails to professors" were included in her description of "any writing you do in the university", she seemed slightly surprised by that example and said: "I would argue that that should also be professional. There's like a different genre and everything. I don't think people are understanding that." She then continued to explain that AW in the context of this description is "writing prompts, literacy texts that are assigned by professors", making a point that in this specific conversational context she focused on writing tasks initiated by professors and it explained her earlier surprise when she was not thinking about writings initiated by the students. It was here when she more explicitly acknowledged the tension she was experiencing with AW, because she added: "But then, I'm not sure if academic writing ... I've only experienced it from my mostly English background." (p. 24, Interview 2).

A constantly shifting understanding of AW? As illustrated above, although Clara's conceptualization of AW shares a lot in common with Evelyn's, her position towards AW is slightly different in the sense that there is more tension in her thinking of AW. She was aware of the possible limitations of her "English experience" because of her more recent interdisciplinary

coursework that challenged her understanding of AW, which she tried to redefine with a more "general" approach ("any type of writing that is required of students within academia"). For example, she described that in her "earlier years", more specifically earlier in her undergraduate years, academic writing she did "was the kind of writing that didn't have the 'I' mostly, or the personal experience was not part of it". In graduate school, particularly in her CHID (Comparative History of Ideas[5]) classes, she was exposed to "other types of writing" such as autoethnography and political activist blog through course texts and her peers' final projects. With a sense of surprise or "shock", she noted how she "had a really low estimation" of some "alternative" ways of writing in the academic setting like the ones mentioned above. She reflected on her reaction this way:

> I didn't think it was academic because I had been trained in English. Basically, I was interdisciplinary, but resistant in my ways. Like, "No. That is not academic." Probably what I was saying was:"That is not proper English papers.'" Obviously, that's also controversial, or arguable. But, being exposed to the CHID way ... They ask you to make the political personal. They're more overt about that. I was already doing that in English/ but I was like, "Oh my gosh. Here, it's just common practice." (p. 27, Interview 2)

During this part of our conversation, Clara constantly expressed her surprise as well as excitement about more legitimized varieties of academic discursive practices in an interdisciplinary program context. She also reflected upon her resistance towards these "other types of writing" and attributed it to the fact that she was less familiar with them as someone from an English background. Besides, Clara's self-reflection on the influence of the English-specific disciplinary training on her conceptualization of AW also helps us think about Maria's perception of "an English paper" that she originally expected from her students, which also seems relatively rigid. Clara's seemingly paradoxical attitude points us to a deeper cause of her

[5] A degree program that "draws on a wide variety of disciplines within the College of Arts and Sciences to examine the interplay of ideas and their cultural, historical, and political contexts" (description from the program web page).

resistance towards these 'unconventional' forms of AW, which can be illuminated through the political activist blog example she shared:

> They were trying to make a blog for their final project. I was like, "Oh my gosh. I love blogging." But, I didn't know that was an option. So then, I would get really ... I would just have this reaction like, "Okay. Why didn't you tell us …" The professor. Like, "Why didn't you tell us this was an option? Why didn't you assure us more that if we go this way, we're not going to be punished?" Cause I associate it with, "Oh my gosh. It's a risk." You can get punished if you get it wrong, or if they don't know what you're going for. (p. 27, Interview 2)

Her fear of being "punished" came from the strong influence of a particular style of AW that was instilled in her over the years of schooling. In the meantime, her exposure to the 'unconventional' academic writing not only created an ideological shift as she said "I'm still trying to make sense of it, but it broadened my understanding", but also had a material impact on her curriculum and teaching practices -- she had writing tasks for her students with different target audiences: an academic audience, *The Daily* (a student newspaper on campus), mom, best friend. She put it frankly: "It's really complicated and it's not yet settled for me. But, I encourage my students to think about it in this way as well. Like, 'Hey. Your transcript with your mom. That is now a course text.'" (p. 27-28, Interview2) All these shifts in her conceptualization of AW, assignment design, and pedagogical framing stemmed directly from the more interdisciplinary trainings she had been receiving around that time.

Steven: It has now been problematized... I don't necessarily do it.

The definition of AW that Steven provided in the online teacher survey is: "The type of writing that is characterized by specialized language, multifaceted ideas and complex sentence structure. Additionally, it is argumentative and is in conformity with conventions that are general (such as tone, grammar, and spelling) and discipline-specific." While explaining this definition in the interview, he started off with a comment that "the term academic writing is not clearly

defined", and then went on and talked about the definition that he aligned the most with: "So academic writing is basically a conversation where you try to argue a point, make a case, and then you do it in a thoughtful manner. That's what makes it different from a normal conversation…" (p. 20, Interview 1). Both the written definition and the one he described in the interview seemed to focus on argumentative or persuasive writing, as the wordings such as "argue a point" and "argumentative" suggested.

When I asked what he meant by "complex sentence structure", which appeared in his written definition of the online survey, he made a comparison to further explain it: "The idea of complexity and structure is also what makes academic writing a bit different from say casual writing or journalistic writing." He then made a quick shift by pointing out that "It [this understanding of AW] has now been problematized. I understand, so people [in the field] don't want that type of structure to be associated with academic writing anymore." According to his description here, the "idea of complexity and structure" had been "problematized" in the field of Composition Studies -- the one with "a specific structure" and done "purposefully for the purpose of sounding more sophisticated, more complicated"(p. 20, Interview 1). The way Steven described AW here, at least the way he had perceived it historically, shares some similarities with the "more formal writing" Maria described and the more "rigid" one as Clara put it. Steven's understanding was that "everyone is now calling people to write in a manner that's relatable to the public" (p. 21, Interview 1), although he didn't "necessarily do it". Steven did not explicitly say whether he agreed or did not agree with this problematization. However, regarding academic writing "more relatable to the public", he did say: "I don't like doing it but that's my understanding of it." It is not clear whether he did not "like doing it" because he was only trained to write in one particular way thus more used to doing it, or because he thought that writing in a

less ‘sophisticated-sounding’ manner was not productive or prone to criticism. What this comment does illuminate for us is that a singular, fixed approach towards AW or writing in the academic context creates barriers for not only students, but teachers to imagine what writing in the academic writing setting could look like.

Steven also specifically talked about the differences and similarities of AW in various disciplines with a consistent focus on argumentative/persuasive writing:

> so the idea that it should be argumentative with a complex structure and all that, if you notice this applies to all disciplines. **There isn't any discipline that doesn't write academic writing that's argumentative**, so basically this applies across the board. But when I say discipline specific then I mean of course with different assumptions, different knowledge base, different backgrounds, so each discipline in that case is different and unique and distinct from other disciplines. **So what unifies them is not really the knowledge and assumptions but the conventions in terms of structure, complexity and the nature of the argument.** (p. 21, Interview 1) (bolding added)

Steven’s emphasis on “all academic writing is argumentative” posed a question about his understanding of AW: to him, is creative writing such as fiction writing also argumentative? If so (or if not), what does it say about his conceptualization of AW?

A resistant stance towards “standardized English” and preparation for “the reality of the academy”. During our second interview, I asked Steven to explain the comment he made about the problematization of AW featured by “complex sentence structure” and where his sense of this problematization came from. He talked about assignments and readings in his own class curriculum that “challenge the idea of standardized English” and that his view towards “the standard English and the normal type of English is clear now to every student”. He then said:

> and yet, I keep in mind the fact that once we're done with the course where they have to do serious work when it comes to their chosen field, academic writing. Nothing that they could... break the rules or make grammatical mistakes and no one would pay attention to. I point that out actually. In that sense to me, once they're done with this class, once they're in their field, they're expected to write something that's free of any mistakes as we all know. That's the reality of the academy. (p. 22-23, Interview 2)

There seems to be a contradiction in what Steven believed about English language in general (multiple and fluid instead of singular and fixed or "standardized") and his own choice of writing in a historically accepted way (complex, sophisticated-sounding), together with how he had this desire to prepare his students for "the reality of the academy". Shall we interpret this contradiction as a conservative or passive resistant approach, as in 'I tell you that is possible, but don't do it just to be safe?' Is it why Steven knew about the call in his field to write in more varied ways but did not like doing it? Did he actually write in his own notion of "standardized English" as a strategy to navigate graduate school as a doctoral student?

Steven's stance towards "standardized English" is to some degree similar to Maria's attitude towards the "formal and inaccessible" notion of AW, in the sense that they both problematized a relatively stable and maybe privileged style of discursive practice from a theoretical and ideological level -- they both talked about it with their students and incorporated this idea in some of the assignments or readings. Their orientation slightly differed because Maria talked about wanting to help students "make an informed decision to not participate" in this particular discursive practice, while Steven seemed to be mostly pointing out "the reality of the academy" to his students. Steven's interpretation of alternative types of AW also seemed to be more limited at the pragmatic level ("break the rules or make grammatical mistakes"), at least according to the way he talked about it in the interview. What is also worth noticing is a comment Steven added following his talking of "reality of the academy":

> When I say problematize, I only know that people are not a fan anymore of how strict academic writing is, and how usually it tries to distinguish between people outside their academy and inside that. That's entirely ... I think something that everyone knows in the literature of second language writing, and even the composition theory. (p. 23, Interview 2)

Here Steven was describing the "strict" AW as a gatekeeping or boundary-keeping practice to distinguish "people in the academy and outside the academy". Again, for the most part he was

describing this theoretical and ideological shift in the field without articulating his stance on it; for example, how he chose to participate in this disciplinary conversation and to what degree this shift was impacting his own writing.

Similarities between international students learning English and native speakers learning academic English. That is not to say that Steven was necessarily less radical than Maria in terms of challenging the status quo -- whatever it meant to them. Another interesting coincidence between these two teachers is how they both made a comment on learning a specific type of AW being the equivalent of learning a foreign language. Maria made a comment when she was talking about some struggles of her international students: "It's just an academic language thing. Like it's not like you don't speak English. Just you don't speak this English, and plenty of people who are native English speakers also don't speak this English" (p. 12, Interview 1). Similarly, Steven mentioned that there are "a lot of similarities" between international students learning "English or the standard form of it" and "native speakers learning academic English", and confirmed it when I summarized "it's almost like they're learning two languages" (p. 23, Interview 2). Although it did not seem very clear where Steven was trying to go from here, it did show that it was something under his radar that he constantly thought about. The way the two of them talked about an extra layer of complexity for international students or students associated with a non-native speaker status echoes the discursive view of writing. On one hand, discursive practices that help organize activities in a particular discourse community offer some degree of clarity and efficiency; on the other hand, because these particular practices are valued by members in the community and grant newcomers legitimate status to be accepted into the community, they might also create barriers to newcomers that are not perceived as 'their kind' because of certain markers such as verbal or written 'accent'.

In general, Steven's stance towards AW seems a little vague, however AW was defined. He talked about scholarly works done in the field of Composition Studies that problematized "standardized English" with enthusiasm; in the meantime, he specified that he did not necessarily do it. He incorporated readings and assignments that challenged the notion of "standardized English", while he mostly focused on informing his students of "reality of the academy".

Cat: I think of it as a shish kebab model.

As someone who had taught for the longest time in the writing program among the six teacher participants and a relatively advanced doctoral student (she was a Ph.D. candidate at the time and was finishing up her dissertation), Cat did not talk very explicitly about multiple definitions of AW. In the teacher survey and our two interviews, she very consistently defined AW as: "Writing that expresses a clear thought, follows an orderly trajectory, and is syntactically well-structured and complex." To unpack this definition, she explained: "the students should be able to have a clear thought, make a stance, right? In a linear way, because that's the standard of academic genre in the U.S." (p. 13, Interview 1). She also explained that "a clear thought" to her meant "a singular idea that they can focus on throughout the length of a paper, and you might bring in other ideas to support it, or other ideas that are related to it, but ultimately there needs to be that one skewer. I think of it as a shish kebab model, which I think is in the *They Say I Say* book." (p. 13-14, Interview 1). Although her explicit description of AW appeared as singular, there were still multiple notions of AW implied. For example, she talked about basics first, then creativity:

> I would say my strong point as a teacher is instructing students who are less confident and familiar with English academic writing. That's why I did really well with English 109. I would do really well in basic writing. I like that kind of structural stuff, because I think after you learn that structure, then you can go on to be more creative and you can break the rules. You know what I mean? It's like painting. They say you can't just start painting like Picasso. You have to learn the basics first. It's the same thing. (p. 18, Interview 2)

As shown above, Cat's written definition and her explanation demonstrated a focus on singularity and linearity of idea and organization. While talking about her "cultural awareness" of "different types of writing styles" in the interview, she mentioned that "some non-Western forms of writing are much more circular". Following this comment, she emphasized that the expectation of academic writing in the U.S. is linear and used the shish kebab model from a writing textbook *They Say I Say* to illustrate her point:

> But if you think about a paper like a shish kebab, like it has that spear in the middle, and that you've got meat, vegetables, whatever on the spear, and then they're connected and then like, that thread is still throughout the paper. … It's a very linear thing. Right. One at a time. (p. 13, Interview 1)

The distinction between basic writing and more advanced writing. Cat's perception of academic writing operated on two separate streams of "basic writing" and "more advanced" writing, as she said:

> I might draw more on the book *They Say I Say*, simply because it's a more concrete, basic writing kind of book. If they seem like they're already pretty confident in their writing and pretty advanced in their writing skills, then I might focus more on *Context for Inquiry* and the more abstract writing knowledge. (p. 16, Interview 2)

These two conceptual streams of academic writing are reflected in her heavy emphasis on "basics" of writing and the seemingly conflicted notion of critical thinking. One example of the "basic writing" framework is her clear expectation of word choices in her student's paper. In the interview, she described an English-Spanish bilingual student writer who would use "much more complex, fancier-sounding word[s] that didn't really make sense semantically in the context of the sentence". Out of frustration and puzzlement, she addressed the issue with the student in a writing conference and discovered that in the same quarter the student was also taking an advanced Spanish class that involved writing. Hearing from the student that it was expected in

good Spanish writing to use "the most fancy, difficult words" and resolving the confusion she had regarding that particular student's writing, she noted that "in English [academic] writing, it's kind of the opposite. The simpler the better. Because it's more clear, to us." She later was satisfied to find that after the writing conference, the student's "writing got a lot more clear. … he slowly changed" and he managed to "revise his writing style, and make it a little bit stronger as far as English academic writing".

Although not explicitly expressed in either her written definition or explanation of her definition, Cat's emphasis on simple word choice signaled her expectation of it being part of what academic writing should look like, or at least in "basic" academic writing. This very particular intervention that she made in student writing makes me wonder: How reliable is it to generalize writing patterns across two languages by comparing an introductory English composition course with an advanced Spanish course? Part of Cat's cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding of writing makes me think about Kubota and Lehner's (2004) article on critical contrastive rhetoric, in which they critiqued the static binary between English and other languages perpetuated by traditional contrastive rhetoric, as well as its problematic application in pedagogies. It is also not very clear whether these two writing courses are situated in similar or different disciplinary contexts that might ask for similar or differing pragmatic choices.

While word choice might be relatively easy to manipulate and negotiate, the boundary she built around overarching aspects of academic writing, such as the idea structure (the shish kebab model), seemed less penetrable even for a more advanced and "creative" writer. Her explanation of academic writing ("that's the standard of academic genre in the U.S.") also suggested that she applied this model to her overall understanding of academic writing, not only "basic writing". In the meantime, her conceptualization of "strong" academic writing did switch in between the two

notions of "basic writing" and the more advanced one. While describing something that fell short of "academic level", she gave a summary example that "it's not fully articulating their (students') thoughts. Not accurately expressing their thoughts. Using really vapid, abstract, cliché language to describe their thinking". During the interview, she also gave a weak claim example written by a student from the previous quarter:

> Let's say there's a claim where they say technology is ruining our ability to connect with people. That's a weak claim, right? It's a bit vapid. It's not specific. It's not true. It's not ruining… or like, they'll say technology is ruining society. Right? Society is so abstract and vague. What is it that technology is affecting? That's an example of a weak claim that falls short of my expectations. (p. 16, Interview 2)

As she commented on this example: "Just no critical thinking there. My first question to that would be, what exactly is ruining, and is it really ruining or is it just changing some things about what we're used to?" Cat later provided a description of claim that appeared more "critical" to her: "I would say a more critical claim would be probably about two sentences long. It would probably explain some context...It's a lot more detailed. It draws on a conversation that's already existing." This description of a strong claim does not appear to be the "basic level" language or word choice issue, but an expectation of students' ability to complicate issues in the writing process. As also implied in the last quote, Cat appeared to have some expectation of students having or working on the more "abstract knowledge", whether they are "relatively competent" or "basic" writers or not. The contrast of these two quotes also signals a possibility of a singular "academic writing" model she had in mind as the end goal, while the "basic writing" she kept talking about could be the means to achieve the goal.

Too much focus on critical thinking. Cat made several comments related to critical thinking that seem contradictory. While describing the "fall short" summary example, she complained that there was "no critical thinking here" (which could mean something slightly

different from the critical thinking below). She also appeared resistant to a heavy focus on "critical thinking":

> Our composition class is so much focused on critical thinking. We need to teach them how to make an argument, think critically, ask questions. That's really important, but I think sometimes that concrete stuff gets pushed by the wayside. (p. 20, Interview 2)

While this comment certainly should not be treated as evidence of Cat's complete disapproval of critical thinking instruction in the classroom, it did come across as implications of Cat's perceived pressure to teach a lot of critical thinking and lack of more "concrete" instruction in the writing program overall. What this left me to wonder is whether Cat's critical thinking is the same as Maria's critical thinking, and what similarities or differences in their notion of critical thinking might say about their understanding of writing and the teaching of writing.

Mary: composition vs. writing.

Coming from a Comparative Literature background and specializing in Early 20th-Century Film, Mary's description of AW sounded much broader than the others' when she used terms and explanations such as "clear writing" and "it really depends on what context". However, her thinking process is very specific in the sense that it is solely focused on academic writing in Humanities. While explaining her definition of AW, she demonstrated a similar focus on argumentative or persuasive writing, which was shown by her use of the phrase "a complex argument". She then continued to describe how she would articulate it to her current students, a lot of whom are from engineering background:

> I just simply tell them [my students from engineering background] that Humanities, especially academic writing Humanities are different. We're not trying to solve problems. We're trying to realize how difficult these problems are and it's probably impossible to solve them. We are probably complicating problems rather than trying to solve the problem, so this is, so short answer would be to articulate the complicated agencies in the specific issue. (p. 13, Interview 1)

She also made a clear distinction between composition and writing that came from taking a publication seminar in the English department and observing the writing of her students:

> Composition, cause it's like rhetorical choice, when you're drawing or when you're designing and when you're engineering, you choose to put specific parts at the beginning of your paper, instead of later, right? I want them to be aware of the effect of switching different parts of your paper so that they can realize it's not really just language, and I really want them to ignore or to some extent downplay the effects of language. The composition is not just about language. It's a choice. You choose to put something, some ideas here rather than there. (p. 13, Interview 1)

This stance on writing that stresses rhetorical situations and audience awareness shows influence from the rhetoric tradition of writing, as explained at the beginning of this chapter. This type of language is also fairly common and even central in TA orientations and first-year TA seminar, which are either organized or taught by professors in the Language and Rhetoric program. Mary's differentiation of writing and composition puts an emphasis on composition not being "just about language". I illustrate Mary's formula of "writing verses composition" in the following table.

Table 4.1

Mary's Differentiation Between Writing and Composition

Writing =	composition with a singular or strong focus on using literary or formal language
Composition =	thinking about audience + creative ideas or understanding + others (road mapping, literary/formal language, bibliography, etc.) = a holistic thing

Nuances in writing. In our second interview, Mary also made a case of "writing as a culture" instead of a problem-solving process or tool (p. 5, Interview 2). During the third class observation that quarter, I noticed that she used a quote from Foucault to explain one of the

course outcomes -- line of inquiry. Mary used the example of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* to show students what she called the "nuances" in writing. She explained that the goal of qualitative research like Foucault's is not to improve people's sex life or to be practically helpful; instead, it was a line of inquiry that might end with an inquiry-- there might not be conclusion or solution but we keep asking questions (how-questions and why-questions) towards a direction in order to think more in depth.

Upon my request, Mary explained what she meant by "nuances", a term that she originally brought up while talking about the "Humanities writing" that requires "reading text with nuances". Using two articles (*Driverless Car* and *Is Google Making Us Stupid*) as examples, she said that even with the same source, our understanding and perspective could be different and in her words "we all have our own takes". Mary connected this back to AW:

> T5: 因为我们尤其是在写 academic writing 的时候,我们怎么样证明我们是写的新的东西呢,不要老生常谈。其实都是一样的东西。我 觉得自己的写作就经常是这样子,就很容易偷懒,然后说前任已经说过的。但是我为什么要写呢?既然前任已经说过了。
>
> [6]*Especially when we do academic writing, how can we prove that we are writing something new/authentic, not something that's already been said? After all they are all the same things. I think my writing is oftentimes like this; there's a tendency to be lazy and just repeat what's already been said, but why do I bother to write about it then, if it's already been said by something before me?*
>
> ZZ: 对的。没错。就是我们所说的对这个 topic 和 field 的 contribution。
>
> *That's right. This is what we say about contribution to the topic and field.*
>
> T5: 对对。但是他们大一可能很有限,可能不能 contribute,但是 ta 至少努力。ta 可能不一 定写得很深,但是 ta 要有自己的 original 的观点。就说这个 nuance 是 ta 区分于别人的能力。(p. 4, Interview 2)
>
> *Right right. However, they are freshman so they might be limited in some way in terms of contribution, but at least they can try. They might not be able to write in a very deep way, but they should at least have their own original opinion. Nuance is something that*

[6] The second interview was conducted mostly in Mandarin, one of T5's first languages. The italicized portion of the conversation excerpt is the English translation, done by the author.

can be used to differentiate people's abilities. (p. 4, Interview 2)

This "deep way" of writing and her emphasis of "original opinion" seem to align with her line of thinking on AW in Humanities-- asking *how* and *why* questions, complicating issues, deepening our thinking instead of seeking an immediate solution or solving a problem. It also helps explain her specific instruction to students on deleting all the adverbs and explaining all the adjectives, which appeared several times during the two interviews. She explained the reason why she gave this very specific instruction to students:

> 就 strongly, evidence strongly supports...就怎么 support，哪里 strongly; powerfully...就完全没有意义，根本就是一个很虚张声势的东西。就是因为你的解释不够，所以你才用 adverbs 来填充。这种 adverbs 实际上是一种错觉。就好像他们这些句子很 powerful，其实根本没有。删掉也是一样的。就是因为他们自己解释得不够，没有 power，所以才用那些 adverbs。(p. 6, Interview 2)
> *"Strongly", "evidence strongly supports"...how does it support, how strongly, powerfully? Totally meaningless, and totally bluffing. Because there is not enough explanation, so you use adverbs to fill it in/supplement it. This use of adverbs is creating an illusion, as if these sentences are powerful. As a matter of fact, not powerful at all. If you delete the adverbs, it stays the same. Because they (students) don't explain enough, not powerfully, so they use those adverbs.* (p. 6, Interview 2)

Although this comment seems to only focus on the pragmatic aspect of writing (over- or misuse of adverbs), it actually points to something deeper than vocabulary moves: rhetorical choices students make by using a blanketing adverb instead of explaining an idea in more clear details. To Mary this is not a very good rhetorical move, because it lacks substance and power to convince the readers.

Student engagement with sources. During our interviews, Mary showed fairly explicit attention to how students engage with sources and integrate evidence in their writing. She gave one example of students "misusing" evidence:

> 比如他们用 evidence 的时候,他们就是 these screenshots demonstrate how

> technologies...就是这样子,反正我就不知道他在说什么。就是或者 so how..他们就是 how...而且他就根本就不是一个问句, 就 demonstrate how, 然后我就放一个重重的 mark, how 啊? (p. 6, Interview 2)
> *For example, when they use evidence, they sometimes would be like "these screenshots demonstrate how technologies…" -- just like this, and I have no idea what they are talking about, or just "so how…"; they are just like "how…", and it's not even a question, just "demonstrate how". [In these cases,] I would put down a big question mark, asking them "how then?" (p. 6, Interview 2)*

This example illustrates a case when students used evidence to back up a point they were making without clearly pointing out or explaining the connection between the evidence and their point. Throughout our conversation, Mary explicitly said that her focus on "nuances" in writing, her policies with adverbs and adjectives, and attention to sources mostly came from experience with her committee, a publication seminar she took in the English Department, and her father who was a Chinese major. Another source-related example came up when she was explaining the impact of these experiences on her teaching of writing -- she said that she was "more demanding" of especially Chinese students regarding their use of sources (p. 14-15, interview 2). For example, because of her engagement with Chinese sources and research community as a Comparative Literature scholar, she made the observation that there was a lack of attention in tracing and acknowledging the origins of popular sources such as pictures, which could lead to plagiarism. To her this overall research and media environment had a negative impact on her Chinese students, and she was particularly careful to point out that they should not only give credit to the popular sources (such as pictures) they were using, but also provide the context.

4.3 Diving Deeper Into the Individual Cases

The analysis above reveals a wide variety of TAs' focuses in thinking about AW, choices in ways of articulating AW to their students, as well as different ways these conceptualizations and

choices impact the teaching of writing in their own classrooms. The following is a visual display of how TAs think about AW themselves, how they articulate it to students, and what helps facilitate these conceptualizations and articulations (bolding added).

Table 4.2

TAs' Articulations of AW and What Help Facilitate These Ideas

	How TAs think about AW themselves	How TAs articulate AW to their students	What helps facilitate these ideas (included but not limited to)
Maria	**Online survey**: "critical writing informed by evidence and critical thought" **Interview**: 1) same with the one in the survey, 2) "the more formal writing as what's expected by the U.S. university"; it is "an English supremacy thing to require certain writing to be a certain way, not to say that other ways of writing are as good"	"this class is supposed to prepare you for **U.S. University academic writing**" "you can **make an informed decision to not participate in that**"	Her discipline (Native American Indigenous Studies) TA orientation and seminar
Evelyn	**Online survey:** "Writing written in a school context is one definition I use. Another is writing that is in the style of a journal article." **Interview**: "I don't like the term academic writing at all", "I pretty much never use it"	"The only time I can remember using it is when we were talking about **genres**, when I use that as, like, an example of genre for an activity, but it was an activity where it meant whatever it meant to them [students], and it didn't really matter what it meant to me."	Graduate seminars in her discipline (Language and Rhetoric)
Clara	**Online survey**: "Narrowly - essays that conform to academic essay and its conventions. More generally - any type of writing that is required of students within academia" **Interview**: "I've only experienced it from my mostly English background."; "It [my understanding of AW] shifted a little bit."	A **holistic** thing ("This writing assignment is a thinking, reading, researching, and writing assignment.")	Coursework in her disciplines (English Literature, CHID, Diversity Studies)

Steven	**Online survey**: ‘‘The type of writing that is characterized by specialized language, multifaceted ideas and complex sentence structure. Additionally, it is argumentative and is in conformity with conventions that are general (e.g. tone, grammar, spelling, etc.) and discipline-specific. conventions Argument” **Interview**: a thoughtful conversation, argumentative, complexity and structure (“it has been problematized...but I don’t necessarily do it”)	‘‘I think my view towards the standard English [“challenge the idea of standardized English”] and the normal type of English is clear now to every student, and yet, I keep in mind the fact that **once we're done with the course where they have to do serious work when it comes to their chosen field, academic writing**. Nothing that they could... break the rules or make grammatical mistakes and no one would pay attention to. I point that out actually.”	His discipline (TESOL, Language and Rhetoric) TA orientation and seminar
Mary	**Online survey**: “Clear writing” **Interview**: depends on the context, academic writing in Humanities, not a writing class but a composition class, a holistic thing	“Ask [students] to **think about audience first**” and “by practice use less adjectives [and adverbs]”, roadmap, nuances, proper use of sources	Her discipline (Comparative Literature; a graduate course taken in the English Department about writing)
Cat	**Online survey**: Writing that expresses a clear thought, follows an orderly trajectory, and is syntactically well-structured and complex. **Interview**: linear, “the standard of academic genre in the U.S.”, a shish kebab model	**[regarding vocabulary] “the simpler the better”**	Her discipline (Language and Rhetoric) Teaching experience (basic writing)

As shown in Table 4.2 above, Maria made a distinction between “the more formal writing as what’s expected by the U.S. university” and “critical writing informed by evidence and critical thought”. Her disciplinary training in Native American Indigenous Studies prompted her to caution against the first notion of AW as the only way or the only good way to write in the academic context. Therefore, although she told her students that this composition course “is supposed to prepare you for U.S. university academic writing” and she would teach students that, she also intentionally made space in her class for students to “make an informed decision not to

participate in that". Evelyn made a similar reference to this formal or traditionally privileged AW by mentioning "writing that is in the style of a journal article", while the first definition she gave was actually more context or space oriented -- "writing written in a school context". Some of the graduate seminars from Evelyn's discipline of Language and Rhetoric engaged her in anti-racist theories and pedagogies that led to her reluctance of using the term AW that might reproduce and reinforce a rigid ideology of AW. She avoided using the term AW and maintained some distance even when she had to use it in an in-class genre activity -- "where it meant whatever it meant to them [students], and it didn't really matter what it meant to me". While Maria and Evelyn perceived AW from a dichotomy of the traditional/privileged versus the non-traditional/marginalized, Clara seemed to be on a more fluid, multi-faceted spectrum. Her highly interdisciplinary coursework (English Literature, Comparative History of Ideas, Diversity Studies) pushed her to think about AW beyond her "mostly English experience" and her understanding of AW "shifted a bit".

Steven and Mary described AW in a relatively specific manner with Steven focusing on argumentative writing and Mary focusing on Humanities writing. Steven engaged students with class readings that encouraged a move away from the norm of a standardized English ideology (Lippi-Green, 2004), but nonetheless in practice chose to only focus on assimilation. As he said: "once we are done with the course where they have to do serious work when it comes to their chosen field, academic writing. Nothing that they could…break the rules or make grammatical mistakes". Besides Mary's self-awareness of focusing on writing in the Humanities, she made a point of AW being holistic, similar with Clara. Mary's graduate training was to some degree interdisciplinary in nature (Comparative Literature), and working with students from disciplines far from hers also seemed to facilitate a bird eye view of AW. Cat is the most consistent among

the six TAs, actively talking about and teaching linear writing "that expresses a clear thought, follows an orderly trajectory, and is syntactically well-structured and complex", "the standard of academic genre in the U.S.".

As we can see throughout this whole chapter, TAs have varying teaching philosophies, pedagogies, and practices, my analysis is not trying to force them into boxes or simplified labels, but rather to help us see the potential range of ideological influences across TAs and its implications to teachers and teacher education. To help us further visualize the analysis above, I created Table 4.3 that listed one core quote from each TA that captured either their orientation towards certain discursive practices in the academic context or their own conceptualization of AW (bolding added).

Table 4.3

TA's Key Quotes on AW

Maria	**It's just** a class thing**, I guess** an English supremacy thing**, to require certain writing to be a certain way, not to say that other ways of writing are as good. Just as a person who studies other ethnic, so-called ethnic literatures, it just makes sense to me.** (p. 9, Interview 1)
Evelyn	Well, **I think that academic writing is often tied to a standard dominant language ideology that can be kind of harmful**. It's like how academic writing is traditionally conceived of, seems like it promotes writing in a very specific type of way. I don't really think that actually invites students to use those different diversities that they have. It tells them you have to follow this specific formula which is what they learned in high school already. Most of them know how to write a five-paragraph essay. I don't need to teach them how to follow a formula because they're already very good at that. (p. 24, Interview 2)
Clara	I've only experienced it [academic writing] from my mostly English background. (p. 24, Interview 2)
Steven	"So the idea that it should be argumentative with a complex structure and all that, if you notice this applies to all disciplines. **There isn't any discipline that doesn't write academic writing that's argumentative**, so basically this applies across the board. But when I say discipline specific then I mean of course with different assumptions, different knowledge base, different backgrounds, so each discipline in that case is different and unique and distinct from other disciplines. **So what unifies them is not really the knowledge and assumptions but the conventions in terms**

	of structure, complexity and the nature of the argument." (p. 21, Interview 1)
Cat	Writing that expresses a clear thought, follows an orderly trajectory, and is syntactically well structured and complex. [...] the students should be able to have a clear thought, make a stance, right? **In a linear way, because that's the standard of academic genre in the U.S.** [...] a singular idea that they can focus on throughout the length of a paper, and you might bring in other ideas to support it, or other ideas that are related to it, but ultimately there needs to be that one skewer. **I think of it as a shish kebab model**, which I think is in the They Say I Say book. (p. 13-14, Interview 1)
Mary	**I just simply tell them [my students from engineering background] that Humanities, especially academic writing Humanities are different. We're not trying to solve problems.** We're trying to realize how difficult these problems are and it's probably impossible to solve them. We are probably complicating problems rather than trying to solve the problem, so this is, so short answer would be to articulate the complicated agencies in the specific issue. (p. 13, Interview 1)

From Table 4.2 and Table 4.3, we can tell that various ideologies about writing were operating in TAs' conceptualizations of and stances towards AW. A lot of times there is also a distinction between how TAs think about AW and how they strategize ways of articulating it to their students. For example, when Clara wrestled with the notion of AW, she talked about AW "narrowly" as essays that conform to "academic conventions" but also that her understanding of it "shifted a little bit" due to her interdisciplinary exposure to various academic discursive practices. Her articulation of AW to students, on the other hand, took a more skill-focused, holistic perspective that emphasized a writing assignment as "a thinking, reading, researching, and writing assignment". Evelyn gave one broad definition of AW as writing "written in a school context" and another definition of writing "in the style of a journal article". She made a clear point of her preference not to use the term AW, and in the rare occasion of an in-class genre activity where the term AW was used, "it meant whatever it meant to them [the students], and it didn't really matter what it meant to me [her]". If some of these clear distinctions between TAs' conceptualizations of AW and their articulations to students are unconscious performances, there is certainly a need to prompt teachers to be more reflective on what led to these decisions and the

potential consequences. If these distinctions are deliberately or consciously made, they raise the question of what these performances or articulations mean to writing classrooms and how moves like this serve the TAs pedagogically.

As a figure of power in the classroom, teachers' explicit and implicit beliefs about AW inform the ways they set up a writing curriculum, run daily class activities, signal ideas of what is valued (or not valued) to the students. Although I do not intend for the term *ideology* to necessarily carry a negative connotation, the powerful ways that ideologies work in the classroom and create material consequences have been well acknowledged and researched in Linguistics (Lippi-Green, 2004; Pennycook, 2004, 2012) and Writing Studies (Guerra, 2016; Lu and Horner, 2013; Mayes, 2010; Shepley, 2016). Therefore, composition teachers need to be constantly reflecting on the ideologies of AW or writing that informs their stances and practices of writing, and also conscious of the impact these ideologies and stances have on their pedagogical decisions and students. In the meantime, teacher education programs such as new TA orientation and seminar also become an essential space that can encourage teachers to flesh out these ideologies and proactively reflect on the material implications to their classroom. The following sections highlight several instances that could benefit from further reflection individually and also collectively as a field, together with some initial implications for institutional support, for the purpose of teacher professional development and student learning.

Is the teaching of writing a delicate dance of the conflict between critical thinking and basic writing?

The contrast between Cat and Maria's thinking on AW -- their different emphasis on "basic writing" (p. 18, Cat Interview 2) and "critical thinking" (p. 8, Maria Interview 2), draws our attention to some difficult decision's TAs have to make in their curriculum. Several TAs also

approach AW with a more holistic view, such as Clara's view of writing being a set of literacy skills, and Mary's explanation of composition being a holistic combination of things such as thinking about audience and creative ideas or understanding. Although we do not necessarily have to take Cat's emphasis on basic writing as pushing back on critical thinking, this contrast between her and Maria does raise the question of how to balance the focus on facilitating intellectual development and fundamental writing techniques in the context of FYC classes, where we shall draw the lines between being 'more creative' and getting the 'basic stuff', or whether it would be productive to draw such lines. Besides this, what are the possible advantages and limitations of a more focused view of AW and a more holistic view of writing in general? Is a holistic approach asking too much of the teachers? How can we support teachers in their decision-making?

Although these questions cannot be immediately answered with the data and analysis presented in this chapter, asking these questions does push us to think about the consequences for students if we go one way of another -- are we training students to be parrots who are able to imitate and emulate to adapt to their new disciplinary and/or professional identities, or are we facilitating problem-solving and critical engagement skills through writing? If we want both for the students, how do we equip or position ourselves to be up for a challenge like this? This seeming dichotomy between critical thinking and basic writing also reflects the need in the field to research writing not only in its micro-level individual rhetorical spaces, but also to situate it in the larger sociocultural and sociopolitical environment.

Need for fixity?

Most TAs' thinking about AW is dynamic in a way that they do not necessarily have one fixed or stable enough definition for it, and when they have several definitions, they are usually

(to some extent) in dialogue with each other. This tension also plays out in their teaching, like Clara portrayed in the following quote:

> Wherever I am in this continuum of, I think highly, I don't think very highly of these other conventional things, I am actually now practicing based on that when I tell students, "Okay. You have an academic audience. Go." "Okay. Your audience is *The Daily*." Or, *The Daily*'s audience. "Go." And then, "Okay. Your audience is your mom. Produce an artifact." Your audience is your best friend." "Your non-academic community." In students, I see the same anxiety that I experienced. Like, "But, I don't want to choose option A.", which is more creative and not academic. "But, I don't know about politics." Especially international students. They're like, "I don't know what's going on in this country so I'm going to choose A." But, it seems really risky because, what is appropriate for this major paper? It's a major paper too. Like, "Oh my God." So they're freaking out and I'm like, "Everyone calm down. I know what you're feeling. Is this academic writing? Yes because we're in a class and I'm asking you." The prompt specifically asked you to make these moves. It is. So I'm contradictory. It's really complicated and it's not yet settled for me. But, I encourage my students to think about it in this way as well. Like, "Hey. Your transcript with your mom. That is now a course text." (p. 27-28, Interview 2)

As Clara described in the quote above, her students experienced this moment of panic when they were given the freedom to be “more creative and not academic”. This anxiety could come from students’ skepticism of how sincere their teacher was about giving them the space to produce ‘non-conventional’ texts, which might lead to the fear of being punished -- the exact fear that Clara had or still has as a student herself. The response from Clara’s international students also points out that even when students are emotionally ready to take up the offer to be “more creative and not academic”, selection of topics and available scaffoldings around the topics might be another possible barrier; for example, when some international students feel like they “don’t know about politics” or “don’t know what’s going on in this country”. On the surface, these responses might lead us into thinking that teaching one singular, relatively stable, fixed type of writing might be the solution to anxiety and confusion of these students. However, it has much more to do with how teachers frame different types of writing in relation to the students

and with each other, as well as the scaffolding teachers provide to help students travel across these genre and cultural boundaries.

Composition classroom as an exciting and nurturing generative space.

From comments such as "I've only experienced it from my mostly English background" (Clara) and "writing in Humanities" (Mary), we can tell that many TAs might have arrived in the composition classroom without enough support to think explicitly about what AW is so they rely heavily on their disciplinary knowledge. From the ways Mary talked about Humanities writing, Cat talked about teaching "concrete stuff", and Maria talked about "critical thinking", there also arises a tension between TAs' expertise and varied student needs. However, this tension does not have to be detrimental to the classroom space but instead can be constructive in the learning of students and professional development of teachers. Composition classroom can be an essential space for such generative power, where teachers co-construct meaning and understanding of disciplinary knowledge with the students. For example, when explaining where this idea of writing verses composition came from, Mary mentioned the influence of her students and expressed that "I learned a lot of new things from my students of other...not literature students, other backgrounds, like they have really a lot of cool ideas" (p. 14, Interview 1). During the interview, Mary also talked about how "to reflect on our writing is a way to help the students improve their writing" (p. 19, Interview 1).

Taking this approach of the composition classroom as a collaborative generative space allows us to ask questions such as the advantages of such generative nature of this space, and what encourages or hinders it. This leads us to several further questions: How do TAs negotiate this border crossing (moving from their own disciplinary realm to the FYW classroom)? Where can the language they need to think and talk about AW come from? What's the intersection of

power between disciplinary and departmental training? How can writing programs support the generative nature of this space?

Academic writing under investigation: influences and back to literature.

As illustrated earlier, my analysis shows that TAs take various, divergent approaches towards their thinking of academic writing – from a relatively singular and fixed notion of a privileged academic discourse (such as Cat) to a combined approach that operates across different categories of discourse, rhetoric, and literacy (such as Maria and Clara). TAs such as Maria and Evelyn articulate explicit resistance to the normalized way of writing that is traditionally privileged. For example, Maria's decision to help her students "unlearn" this particular type of AW ("formal and inaccessible") is influenced by her doctoral work that focuses on Indigenous Studies of American Indians, as well as her own experience as a non-native speaker of English who is only familiar with, in her own words, one (informal) register in English but still able to do complex doctoral work. Her background coming from a "low class" (working class) also provides her with personal knowledge that gives some framing for understanding her students and taking certain actions to destabilize middle or upper class assumptions in the college classroom. Maria's other emphasis of critical thinking in her own classroom space stems from a concept that originates in Western humanistic traditions that heavily influenced literary studies, which also shows to us that teachers often pick up knowledge from their own disciplinary trainings to make sense of the act of writing and its applications to pedagogies. This tendency is also confirmed by Evelyn's more rhetorical approach towards thinking about her student writing "as useful outside school too" and something that can prepare students for "their majors" that will "prepare them for their jobs".

Despite aligning themselves more closely with historically privileged AW in terms of teaching, other TAs exhibit various types and degrees of agency in reflecting on academic discursive practices and making their own curriculum and pedagogical decisions. For instance, Clara, while struggling with her imagination of what AW might look like due to her increasing exposure to different academic genres, turns this tension into critical reflection on her own resistance and limited experience as an English major, as well as opportunities and renovations in her curriculum. Steven acknowledges the problematization of the type of academic writing with "complex sentence structure" while carefully training his students to meet "the reality of the academy". Cat is mostly concerned about preparing her students with the linear, shish kebab model, "the standard of academic genre in the U.S.", which she believes is the concrete stuff that her students need; she also complained about too much focus (on the writing program's side) on critical thinking, which might be due to her doctoral training in Language and Rhetoric and her history of teaching introductory, or in her words, "basic" college writing. Mary, who seems to define AW in the most vague terms among the six teachers, makes a decision to talk about AW with her students with a sole focus on writing in the Humanities – this is partially due to the need to unpack the various goals of writing with a particular class population (a lot of students are from engineering background) and partially due to her knowledge in Humanities that provides convenient options for assignments and class readings.

The various conceptualizations of and positions TAs take towards AW also help illuminate the affordances of different approaches towards writing. Within the discourse framework, TAs have to decide for themselves what AW means in their own classroom contexts, relying heavily on their own particular experiences with academic discursive practices. For instance, writing could become very Humanities-based or English-studies-based, as can be seen in Maria's

understanding of an "English paper" and Mary's explicit teaching of "writings in the Humanities". On the flip side, due to her interdisciplinary exposure to various types of academic discursive practices, Clara turned the limitation of her "English background" into a productive tension at the disciplinary boundaries that led to awareness of the possible consequences of her conceptualizations and attempts to broaden the understanding of AW for both her students and herself. The rhetoric framework is heavily imbedded in the TA orientation and seminar. Concepts from rhetoric traditions were picked up by TAs (such as rhetorical situation, audience awareness, genre, metacognition) and helped create more space for the students to practice transferrable skills across writing tasks and contexts. However, this approach is not without its challenges. For example, Wardle (2009) problematizes the assumption of the goal of FYC as teaching students "general" and "transferrable" skills to write in the university:

> This goal and its underlying assumption, however, are complicated by the fact that the activity system of FYC is radically different from other academic activity systems in its use of writing as the object of primary attention rather than as a tool for acting on other objects of attention. Because of this difference in primary focus, the rhetorical situations of FYC courses around the country do not mirror the multiple, diverse, and complex rhetorical situations found across the university in even the most basic ways. Transfer to such varied situations is not easily accomplished. (p. 776)

The complexity of writing in various disciplinary and institutional contexts poses challenges to the ideal of helping students practice 'general skills' in FYC and training them to adapt these skills to accomplish new and more specific writing tasks beyond their writing classroom. Socioculturally and mechanically responsive composition skills take time to foster, and when

students move into a particular disciplinary space, it might still be an overwhelming task for students to try to make sense of and negotiate with more specific discursive needs of a new community with general, still-developing skills and strategies.

On the other hand, the literacy framework is not as prevalent in TAs' thinking of AW-- none of them explicitly touched on it as a way of framing their thinking of writing classrooms or pedagogy. Lillis et al. (2015) describe academic literacies as drawing attention "to the importance, for research and pedagogy, of adopting socially situated accounts of writing and text production" and also "to the ways in which power and identity (at the levels of student, teacher, institution, discipline) are inscribed in literacy practices" (p. 4). This silence around power unraveled in my study urges us to integrate frameworks such as this literacy approach into our scholarly and pedagogical inquiry, so that we can be more reflective on meaning making and how power and identity "are inscribed in literacy practices" (Lillis et al., 2015, p. 4). As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a broader and pluralistic conceptualization of student writing might create more space in this regard: "If focused with conceptual tools that embrace situational fluidity, a blending of categories lets us see student writing relating to others in ideologically managed social and physical places where information is used to further communally understood meaning-making practices — student writing as a literacy practice, a discursive strategy, and a rhetorical act." (Shepley, 2016, p. 123)

Chapter 5. Findings and Discussions Part 2: The Myth of Diversity

Over the years, diversity has been defined in terms of categorical representations of historically marginalized persons (Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005). Yet it is becoming evident that the idea and the reality of a diverse society are nuanced and involve complicated processes around difference, group relations and social hierarchies; in fact, scholars now assert that diversity is indeed more than representative numbers of a variety of demographic groups.

-- Hannah Oliha (2010)
Discourses of diversity: Negotiating the boundaries for equity, inclusion, and identity through the discourse of socially situated subjects

Examining what academic writing means to different TA participants and how they approach the learning and teaching of writing is an attempt to tap into what the end goal or product of a FYC class looks like to them. In the meantime, if we work from the assumption that teachers are intellectuals who interpret, plan, and organize their teaching practices according to their local context, it is also important to understand how they make sense of nuances in their teaching context, including but not limited to student identities present in the classroom, who the students are in relation to each other and to the teachers themselves, and what these dynamic factors mean to the classroom space. To achieve this goal, this chapter will explore TAs' conceptualizations of diversity and their perceptions of MLL students – two concepts that I believe will help bring out who TAs think their students are and through which lens they make sense of the people they are working with and the space they are working in.

Problematizing the monolingualism ideology in the ELT profession under the framework of semiodiversity (diversity of meanings) and glossodiversity (diversity of languages), Pennycook (2008) cautions us about a defensive stance that further perpetuates this ideology in the context of Europe: "while an argument for diversity through greater emphasis on European languages other than English may on one level take us beyond the threat of English monolingualism, it may

also reinforce the same language ideologies if it does no more than pluralize the object from within the same epistemology." (p. 38). Pennycook's comment describes an epistemological trap in this particular setting that simply replaces a monolingual approach towards English with one towards European languages, and it also helps us think about how in any educational space, promoting diversity is not simply about allowing or multiplying languages, but about acknowledging and pointing students to the potential of various languages in constructing and processing meanings – this translingual approach towards student differences (Horner et al., 2011). What does it mean then for us to think about diversity in an English composition class, since English is the implied official or at least the primary mediating language for learning in U.S. composition classrooms? Does it mean it is a monolingual *and* monocultural space? How do we understand and pursue diversity in the face of English, whose dominance in the education space is often not only linguistic but also semiotic, and how can educators facilitate what Pennycook (2004) calls "multiplicity of meanings as well as multiplicity of languages" in the face of this dominance? My hope is to start seeking answers to these questions by looking closely at the perceptions of diversity held by composition teachers and what we can learn from these perceptions as individual teachers, WPAs, and a field as a whole.

5.1 What is Diversity? Is Your Class Diverse?

This chapter attempts to answer this set of research questions:

- *How do TAs conceptualize diversity in the classroom – more specifically, what factors do TAs consciously or unconsciously think about or notice regarding student demographics?*
- *How do TAs define diversity in their own terms, and what is the relationship between teachers' meaning of diversity and their identities and pedagogies?*

- *How do TAs respond to the differences in their students, in terms of students' linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds, and compositional performance?*
- *What helped facilitate these responses and practices?*
- *What role might TAs' political or ideological stances play in these responses and practices?*
- *What role might power play?*

To facilitate answers to the aforementioned research questions, I use two epistemologically differing but interrelated terms – *demographics* and *diversity*. The term 'demographics' is often used in popular discourses and government documents to refer to certain biological, geographical, and/or sociopolitical identity traits such as age, gender, race, and nationality, which is sometimes called demographic diversity or surface-level diversity. Discourses around diversity, on the other hand, are deeply imbedded in competing ideologies of identity and power. After examining diversity management of four organizations in the service sector, Janssens and Zanoni (2005) proposed an understanding of diversity "as an organizational product imbedded in organizational power relations" (p. 312). This move away from the sociodemographic notion of diversity helps us see diversity as situational and in dialogue with its specific context. In the conclusion of their study, they point out the relation between the understanding of diversity and agency which points to power. In other words, collective organizations' and individual people's varying stances on certain demographic traits such as race and sexual orientation, their political ideals, and power relations make it a challenge to neatly define diversity. It is not my intention to claim it as a problem in itself, but an acknowledgement and awareness that it is not a politically neutral conversation to have with my teacher participants. In the meantime, this political nature serves as a catalyst to probe teachers' perceptions and values, as well as how their thinking

interacts with the broader institutional environment, such as the various trainings they are part of. In order to ease our way into the more complex and politically laden discussion of diversity, I used a more commonly used and ostensibly apolitical term *demographics* to ask about the class the TAs teach and students they work with, using it as a proxy to tap into the aspects of student identities that teachers consciously or unconsciously notice and take into consideration while working with them.

An instrumental approach to diversity.

During our first interview around the first few weeks of the quarter, I asked each teacher participant the question "What is your impression of your class demographics?" Towards the end of the quarter during our second in-depth interview, I re-visited this same question and asked each teacher to describe their class demographics after teaching their class for about a quarter. TA participants offered responses that seemed to fall along a spectrum of an instrumental approach to a diversity-as-pedagogy approach. While describing the initial observation of her class demographics that quarter, Cat mentioned nationality ("international students", "Chinese"), language ("speak English as a second language", "non-native English speakers"), and ethnicity ("Asian", "non-Asian students"). She also concluded that it was a "pretty diverse" class, "a mixed group". When I asked Cat to more explicitly describe in what ways she thought her student population was diverse, she focused on two main aspects -- "linguistic capabilities" and "cultural background". After teaching that class for almost a quarter, besides nationality and language, Cat also brought up student major as a part of her narrative of student demographics. When I asked her to explicitly define the term *diversity*, there was a

consistent focus on the same characteristics -- certain identities such as race, gender, religion remained out of her description, as shown in the following quote:

> Yeah I would say it's diverse…… I would define diversity… I look at it linguistically, and nationality, interests…..like majors. That's basically about it. That's the main thing. (p. 15, Interview 2)

Steven's observation of his student demographics shared a lot in common with Cat, with a strong focus on nationality and language ("multilingual [students]", "Americans", "international students", "a good number of languages"). Besides that, he mentioned that a lot of his American students had different cultural experiences overseas at a young age, to his surprise. He also briefly mentioned academic and ethnic background. While defining the term diversity, Steven included major besides "nationality, ethnic makeup, the language they [students] speak, their academic background". His idea of a "diverse class" is described in the following quote:

> I do [think my current class is diverse] because this is the largest percentage of international students, or multilingual, however you want to describe them. And then also the Americans were for some reason born elsewhere. (p. 14, Interview 1)

Cat and Steven take what Jessens and Zanoni (2005) would call an instrumental approach to diversity, an approach towards the research and thinking of diversity that treats identity as pre-given and fixed, and focuses on one particular sociodemographic category as the defining character, neglecting the multiplicity of identities and the complexity of what makes a person (as some examples given in their article, 'women', 'the low-educated', the migrant worker'). For instance, both Cat and Steven put a heavy emphasis on student linguistic background or capabilities, while other sociodemographic traits, such as race and gender, do not seem as relevant or at least present as the others. Although this focus might be explained by their shared disciplinary background and

professional interest in Language and Rhetoric and the focus of the course, it still makes me wonder: Does it mean that these two teachers do not see their students as men or women, or people with European or Asian heritage? Do these identities of their students really not matter to their pedagogical thinking and practices? I doubt that is the case with these two teachers. From my researcher's perspective, characteristics of their students such as race and ethnicity could be harder for the teachers to talk about because of the historical trauma these sociodemographic traits could stir up and the political weight they carry. Given the co-constructive nature of our interviews and the disciplinary background I share with them in Language and Rhetoric, their emphasis on student linguistic and cultural background could also result from their perception of what I would be interested or expecting to hear from them.

When Cat did mention race, she used the language of "Asian" and "non-Asian students" – her attention to these two general categories could be due to the evident presence of Asian students in her classroom and her professional attention in catering to the needs of those students. In the meantime, it also seems to imply a mentality of norm that Asian students are being compared to. So how could this contrast impact the way Cat prepares for her class and what does it mean to students' learning process?

When race and gender are more present.

When Maria first started describing her class demographics that quarter, she thought of nationality ("American", "international students"). When I followed up with the question of "do you think it's a somewhat diverse class?", she responded with a question: "Race-wise? Or ethnicity-wise?" (p. 9, Interview 1). The contrasting reactions to the term of demographics and to diversity signal that to Maria conceptualization of

diversity is more related to race than demographics. My invitation to freely describe diversity opened up our conversation a little more. Maria brought up more aspects such as race and ethnicity ("White", "one Chinese person", "one black person") and gender ("half half gender-wise", "one trans girl"). After teaching her class for almost a quarter, she also mentioned in our second in-depth interview characteristics such as religion ("super religious"), political stance ("conservative", "feminist", "not a third-wave feminist"), viewpoints, life experiences, and language ("speak multiple languages"). Compared to Cat and Steven, she also seemed to have a more particular standard for diversity, which is based on a racial lens of "White" and "other", because she said:

> …a lot of White people would be like, as soon as half the class is White, and the other half is the other race and ethnicity, 'this is a pretty diverse classroom', but there's still a lot of White people in there. (Laugh.) (p. 9, Interview 1)

Although used as an example of her relative view of diversity ("it's kind of like depends on how you qualify that [diversity]… I don't really know how to qualify that"), an implicit belief she described as being held by "a lot of White people" is this *White* and *other* dichotomy (implying historically racially dominant and marginalized groups respectively) that somewhat overlaps with Cat's view of "Asian" and "non-Asian students". Within this dichotomy, an essentialized norm is usually used to be compared against and to make sense of people and social activities around it. Consciously or unconsciously, constructing dominant culture as the norm and the dominated as the 'other' as a way of suppression and power maintenance is well researched in language and cultural studies (Welch et al., 1997; Young & Braziel, 2006). Writing scholars have also argued about the symbolic and material consequences of a White norm and 'othering' discourses when it plays out in the composition classroom (hooks, 2005).

The diversity-as-norm approach.

When I first asked "what's your general impression of your class demographics this quarter?", Evelyn immediately responded with a question: "In terms of?", showing a caution for more clarity in what I meant by "demographics". I gave her examples of "student's educational, linguistic and cultural background" but also left it open by emphasizing that it can be "a lot of things". She listed nationality and immigration status while comparing her current class with last quarter ("immigrants from Eastern Asia", "weren't international students", "international students"), race and ethnicity ("a lot of Asian students" last quarter, "East Asia descent", "Southeast Asia and South Asia", "White students", "two Latino students", "one Black student"), and majors (last quarter: "business majors", "STEM students"; this quarter: "STEM students", "a lot of biology students", "some are social sciences", "some Humanities, but very rare"). Our conversation moved gradually from student demographics to Evelyn's teaching experience with a diverse student population (in her definition). At this point, she made a comment that seems foundational to her thinking of diversity: **"I think any group is going to be diverse in some way or another."** (p. 9, Interview 1) Following this comment, she talked about language and cultural background ("their heritage and their languages"), residency ("from Seattle", "from Washington State", "from Spokane and Yakima"), experiences, and interests ("study biology", "way more interested in political and social issues", "global warming") -- some of the characteristics she already mentioned in her thinking of student demographics.

In our second interview, I asked Evelyn a follow-up question inquiring about what she meant by "any group is going to be diverse in some way or another". She explained by using examples of culture ("cultural identities"), race, gender, sexual orientation, views and values

("politics or their religious values or various things"), and investment ("what they're involved in and what they care about", "Greek life", "sororities", "being involved in sports"). She concluded by saying: "it's pretty impossible not to have any type of diversity", resonating with the comment she made earlier when she began her explanation "unless people are identical clones then they're going to have some type of variation". At this moment and in the particular context of our interview, Evelyn articulated that certain differences in students, such as their nationality, linguistic and cultural background, racial affiliation, sexual identification, world views and values, and interests, were to be expected; in other words, she anticipated differences and equally treated them as a norm in the class.

Throwing the kitchen sink at diversity. In her dissertation study *Intersectionality in the Language and Writing Classroom*, Yasmine Romero (2016) describes a "tolerance-stance" towards diversity, problematizing "blanket[ing] difference as sameness or commonality" and emphasizing that "a consequence of this perspective is that issues of privilege, power, and essentialization are obfuscated" (p. 204). For example, to an educator working in an American R1 higher education institution, working with a student of color from a working-class background poses different challenges from working with a middle-class White American student who is part of a fraternity house, if we take into consideration the different socioeconomic and racial privileges and how these privileges (or disadvantages) interact with the existing institutional environment. A tolerance-stance towards diversity normalizes social differences in a way that neglects the tension certain identities encounter in the current environment of social inequality. Critiquing liberal multiculturalism in the context of language classroom, Kubota (2004) calls this focus on tokenized commonality as "political correctness with little substance" (p. 31) and "reinforcing color (difference)-blindness" (p. 32). What I want

to highlight here is that teachers like Evelyn could be immersed in widely circulated discourses described by Romero (2016) and Kubota (2004) above. It is easy to fall into familiar discourses and therefore be lured into a mentality of 'throwing the kitchen sink at diversity' for even a well-intentioned educator. This oversimplified, generalized approach does not allow us to see the complexities of dealing with intersections of identities and related power differentials in the composition classroom let alone giving teachers space to make intentional moves to make their classroom an equally accessible space for all students.

Diversity as pedagogy.

As someone who minored in diversity studies during undergraduate and whose academic training is highly interdisciplinary, Clara seemed to have thought a lot about diversity. In her description of student demographics this quarter, she mentioned gender ("I'm very pleased because there are a lot of guys", "half and half"), nationality ("a handful of international students"), race and ethnicity ("Asian students", "African-American students", "Latino students", "obviously White students"), and language (the language profile assignment) – covering almost all characteristics that the other teacher participants mentioned in their description of student demographics. Similar with Maria, Clara poked a hole in the assumed White norm by pointing out that there are "obviously White students" in her class. What is slightly different is that she does not only think a lot about various identities of the students or aspects of diversity, but she also integrates issues of diversity into her pedagogy and actively talks about it with her students in class. For example, she narrated to me the following conversation that she had with her students while discussing some readings (Tan, Baldwin, Abbud, St. James) in class:

> Then I also pointed out that, hey, what kind of diversity do you see here? They [students] were like, "Oh, linguistic, cultural, phenotypic, basically."

> I was like, "Great, great. When I say the word diversity, are those the definitions that come to mind?"
>
> They're like, "Yeah, basically."
>
> Only one group out of five groups mentioned diversity in experiences, in perspective, in attitudes, in worldview, in ideology. I was like, "Interesting, interesting. The majority of you think of diversity as superficial, things that are marked." ……
>
> "Some of you, diversity is more hidden. The way we think, the way we believe, the things that we aspire to, things like that. The way we live our lives." I wanted to run their understanding of diversity, because that is a word that they will encounter over and over and that I encountered over and over.
>
> (p. 19, Interview 1)

Different kinds of diversity. Clara later pointed out that to her there were two levels of understanding diversity. The first is what she called "superficial diversity" or "things that are marked", which most of her students pointed out in discussing the class readings above and is also highly stressed by many of the academic programs that she herself went through as a racially and socioeconomically minority student. Although Clara seemed to focus more on the other level of diversity (explained in the following paragraph), she did not seem to imply that the more noticeable markers, or the "superficial diversity" as she described it, cannot be used critically and productively. As a matter of fact, her own reflection on her experience of struggling in a graduate seminar demonstrates that she was well aware that diversity was not to be taken for granted, and there were in-group variations that had to be engaged with within their particular social context. Opposite to the surface meaning of "superficial diversity", Clara was not saying that these markers are superficial, but can be used to make assumptions that led to superficiality.

The second level or type of diversity, according to Clara, is "the different kinds of diversity", "especially the ideological" (p. 19, Interview 1). She emphasized this ideological diversity by bringing it up again at the end of our first interview, asking a series of questions:

> We're in a liberal university with mostly liberal TAs. How do you honor a variety of perspectives if that is basically the default?.....How can you honestly say that you're gonna honor different viewpoints/ in your classroom, discussions, papers, one on one, even in your private thoughts that nobody has to see? How do you honor different perspectives if you are leaning one way? What practices do you actually put forth? What strategies do you even allow your students to share? Have you ever been in a position where you were in a minority in ways of thinking? Have you ever thought about being the only one who couldn't really quite nod their head or raise their hand or laugh with everyone else because you either didn't understand what the heck was going on or you were the butt of the joke? How do you deal with those kind of things? (p. 25, Interview 1)

Clara's questions reflect a lot of her own experience as a student: child of a single parent household, a woman of color in the American education system, an immigrant second language learner, and her religious association with Christianity, which is usually equated with political conservativeness, especially in a public, liberal higher education institution. As a researcher, I do not mean to associate Clara with what these labels might suggest, especially her religious association or spiritual affinity. I want to simply point out for my readers to consider, for example, how Clara might be perceived and how her experience as a Christian graduate student in a liberal higher education environment might have influenced some of her views on diversity and the questions she is asking here. In the context of these questions that Clara raised here, I can recall a moment in my observation of her teaching that triggered me to consider the intersection between Clara's various identity markers and her thinking of diversity: During a series of homework and in-class tasks to prompt students to examine multiple perspectives of an issue, Clara had students do several written assignments that first asked them to express their opinions on the topic of abortion ("pro-life or pro-choice"), then engaged them in their opposition position on this topic with a follow-up written assignment, and as a last step she organized an in-class debate in which students argued from a position

opposite of their original stance. As an experienced teacher, Clara managed to handle this controversial or even emotional topic well enough that the debate proceeded in an organized and productive fashion for about half an hour, and her students all seemed fairly engaged in the debate. From this sequence of assignments and class activities, it seems as if Clara was trying to create a space to demonstrate in her classroom what "honor[ing] different perspectives" could look like, which also seems to reveal her approach towards the "ideological diversity" she was talking about earlier.

These experiences as a student and a teacher became an integral part of Clara's knowledge that helps inform the way she thinks about issues of identity and differences in the classroom. Following this line of thinking, I captured her explicit definition of diversity during our second interview: **"So diversity for me is definitely holistic…...Like, encompassing experience and ideology, and perspectives, different things that make up students."** (p. 18, Interview 2) The way Clara described diversity seems to echo Jessens and Zanoni's (2005) view of diversity as dynamic and contextually constructed to the extent that each classroom can be a little ecology, in which unique power dynamics facilitate a network of values that led to particular activities and relationships among the participants. In the meantime, this holistic view of diversity signals to us that when this terminology is used to conceptualize who our students are as a group and as individuals, there could be so many layers that our perceptions of diversity should not be taken for granted and the consequences of these perceptions also should not be taken lightly.

The limitation of labels: in-group variations.

During our first interview, Mary mostly focused on what Clara might call "superficial diversity" or identity markers in her thinking of student demographics. With the help of student photos, names, accents, and the first assignment ("How Do You Represent Yourself in Social Media"), she identified nationality ("four Chinese students", "one Japanese student", "a British guy", "one from India", "one from Dubai"), race and ethnicity ("others are all White", "Asian Americans"), and language ("half native English speakers and half non-native English speakers"). When we re-visited the question of student demographics during the second interview, she continued to focus on nationality ("four Chinese, one British, others are Americans", "maybe second- or third- generation immigrants"). However, when Mary mentioned a female student from Minnesota who participated in the local Women's March, she said that her current class was pretty "politically diverse" in her opinion. She started describing this ideological diversity among her students, giving examples of intense in-class discussions and students' different opinions surrounding issues such as homeless camps and Donald Trump, who was just elected President of the U.S. that year (November 2016) (p. 10-11, Interview 2).

Internal diversity. In our second interview, during which we dominantly spoke Mandarin – a first language that we share, Mary also brought up something that I translated as "internal diversity" (p. 10-11, Interview 2). She described a debate class activity (homeless camp) she did with her students regarding concession, and said concepts such concession or counterargument are useful in dealing with ideological diversity in her class. She also emphasized that if students only agree with or stick to their own ideas, it would be hard for them to hear other voices and viewpoints and led to

a tendency to impose their own views on other people. She then used another example from the previous quarter:

> 我用了一个 Seattle Times misquote Trump 的一个人的例子,就是 ta 用了一种很 opinionated 的 voice 去批判了 trump。我说并不是说我不支持 Trump 我就会认同这种观点。 diveristy 也不是...就是我让他们意识到,有时候说起来你们可能都是不支持 Trump 的,然 后或者被归判到统一的阵营,然后我会有一个明显的区分我跟这个人不是一个人。我不会 用这种诋毁别人的方式,人身攻击的方式来这个...其实 diversity 也发生在内部也有很多。 **所以为什么说没有 binary 去想事情,因为不是说所有 Trump 阵营的人和我们想的就是完全 不一样的事情, 可能我们只是角度不一样; 或者所有反对 Trump 的人,我们跟他们也并不 是站在同一站线上。**(p. 11, Interview 2; bolding added)
>
> *I used an example of someone misquoting Trump in Seattle Times. That author used a very opinionated voice to criticize Trump. I am not saying that I would support this opinion just because I also don't support Trump. Diversity is not just… I would like them [my students] to realize that sometimes you might be regarded as being in the same 'camp' of not supporting Trump and then there will be this differentiation that I am not same with this person. I am not going to use this way of slander or personal attack to… As a matter of fact diversity happens a lot internally too.* ***Therefore we can't use this binary thinking, because not all Trump supporters think about entirely different things from us; we might just have different perspectives. It is also not necessarily true that everyone who doesn't support Trump all agree on the same things.*** (p. 11, Interview 2; translation; bolding added)

From the quote above, we can tell that Mary was resisting a hegemonic view of ideological diversity and encouraging heterogeneity in her teaching practices. For example, to her it is very problematic to simplify people's political stance with labels or categories such as "pro-Trump" vs. "anti-Trump" and assume that people who are put into these two camps are naturally in the opposing sides with everything. She also acknowledged and emphasized the diversity of individual viewpoints within the same political camp as well as the importance of thinking from different or even opposite perspectives. In the context of this study, Mary contributes to our collective thinking of diversity by adding the political aspect into this conversation. She was cautious about the danger of simplified categories that tend to flatten people into merely labels and

emphasized individual variation within groups that share certain labels (such as “pro-Trump”, “anti-Trump”).

Thinking intertextually.

Although it is very likely that some related questions I asked TAs in the first interview prompted some of them to reflect more on their own perception of diversity, the example above still shows that teachers’ view of diversity can evolve overtime. In Mary’s case, a more simplistic view of diversity was complicated and deepened as she worked more closely with her students, addressing various tensions that arose in her classroom space because of different ideologies students brought with them. Besides a continuously evolving view of diversity, TAs might also use different parameters to ‘measure’ diversity, depending on the lens they use or their experience with the concept. For example, to Steven, having four or five international students makes a diverse class because he was comparing his current class to the previous ones, which almost exclusively consisted of American students; to Maria, it is problematic to call a class diverse or be satisfied with the fact that half the class are White and the other half are non-White students, being someone who works a lot with issues of race in her discipline of Native American Indigenous Studies.

What is the relationship between demographic diversity and ideological diversity? Although not intended in any part of my interview questions, two of my teacher participants (Clara, Mary) started talking about ideological diversity in the classroom alongside their student demographics. However, to the extent of our conversation, they talked about these two concepts without making any connection. Does it mean they are two separate entities in themselves? Crenshaw’s (1999) concept

of intersectionality helps us see that various identities, socially constructed and representative of who a person is, cannot be seen and studied as isolated, but rather, need to be understood in relation to each other. Therefore, a student's upbringing and lived experiences that stem from his/her demography cannot be separated from our understanding of his/her, for instance, political leaning or ideological positioning on gender issues.

Identity and power. Romero's (2016) intersectional or variable-with-variable approach towards social difference assumes that identities are never singular or static, thus calls for the need to focus on the relationships between the variables instead of variables themselves. Wherever there is relationship involved, power dynamics inevitably have to be considered as part of the picture. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue, power is dynamically constructed as social identities are constructed through social actions. It is noticeable then, in my conversations with all my teacher participants around difference, identity, and diversity, power never explicitly came up as relevant to the topic. For instance, if we approach examples of identities Evelyn gave (such as being part of a Greek house, Eastern Washington resident, business major, student athletes, immigrants from East Asia) through the tolerance lens of "any group is going to be diverse in some way or another" (p. 19, Interview 2), there is a tendency to treat identities as relatively fixed, not interacting with and/or not differential from each other, and separated from power.

There were several moments when some TAs implicitly or marginally touched on power. For example, while describing her attitude towards this traditionally privileged notion of academic writing in the context of U.S. higher education, Maria mentioned White supremacy as a way of conceptualizing ways of writing and thinking that are

legitimized and privileged. In another example, Evelyn shared about a sociolinguistic class she was taking and its influence on her pedagogical thinking:

> I don't explicitly make them talk about any of those things in my class this quarter. But I will next quarter more with my new assignment that I'm developing for it…...It's [anti-racist pedagogy] more of an exploration of identity and whether that means **amplifying marginalized voices or like examining someone's own privilege**. I mean, it's obviously going to depend on the individual student, right? Like the intersections of their individual identity…...a lot of the reading I did in the sociolinguistic class was about **silences around race and Whiteness in particular**. I think that it's useful to not have the silences……. Students aren't necessarily thinking about those things. I'm not necessarily thinking about those in ways I should be. If we're not actually openly talking about them. I feel like those are issues that are relevant and are going to come up because of all the political things that are happening. Just because they're happening anyway but they're happening more on a policy level now too. So yeah. (p. 20, Interview 2) (bolding added)

Even when these two teachers did touch on power, they still seemed to be limited in the degree to which they explicitly address the privileges, oppression, and inequality involved in the power dynamics, which might reflect the extent to which they are intellectually engaged with these concepts or their comfort level of vocal expression. Maria is the only one among the three White participants that named her status as a White person, thus signaling an awareness of privileges and willingness to verbally acknowledge them. The other three teacher participants of color (Clara, Mary, Steven) also remained relatively quiet on this very aspect related to diversity – there was no explicit talk on their own race, privileges and/or privileges associated with their race and ethnicity, or power dynamics in relation to the class and students they were teaching.

Discourses around the ideology of diversity. Although this vocabulary of diversity has been around for several decades in the individual and collective thinking spheres in the U.S., discourses around diversity are not very well researched. Besides lenses from TAs' own disciplinary training that allow (or do not allow) them to see diversity, the

ways TAs talk about diversity also make me wonder about the influence of the cultural and political environment of the department and the training program they are part of. In the 2015 TA orientation that Maria and Mary participated in, there was very minimal training on diversity — a doctoral student working on a related topic gave a 20 to 30-minute presentation on diversity towards the end of the whole 10-day training. In the 2016 TA orientation that Clara, Evelyn, and Steven were part of, a particular conceptual framework of differences – translingualism was being introduced to all TAs on the first day of the training and more integrated into various aspects of the whole-quarter first-year TA seminar. This change in TA training reflects a departmental attempt to intervene in TAs' thinking on differences. However, it is still unclear how departmental efforts like this can combat the power-evasive discourses that TAs might pick up from the bigger institutional environment and what more can be done to steer us away from the discursive shift to avert issues such as power. We need to continue to mull over these different conceptualizations of diversity and their implications in the classroom space, which I am hoping to further explore in the following section.

5.2 Who (or What) Are MLL Students: "Did you ever hear the word 'multilingual' in a positive sense?"

As portrayed in my literature review, multilingual (MLL) or multilingualism is proposed by U.S. education scholars as a conceptual framework that recognizes the rich linguistic and cultural repertoire and a move away from the deficit view of not only international and immigrant students who acquire English as a second language, but also other American students who use English as one of their first languages. However, this term is closely associated with the stigmatized label ESL, despite its attempt (usually at

the theoretical and institutional level) to empower students. The water gets even muddier when researchers and practitioners take up this term and use it in different ways without carefully examining the assumptions they are making. For example, scholars such as Matsuda and Duran (2013) have problematized the use of MLL as an equivalent term to international students in the U.S. context, since it perpetuates the idea of all Americans being monolingual and excludes American students who might grow up using a language other than English in the household, acquiring several languages at the same time, or even acquiring English as a second language in school. MLL students in this category are often connected with certain marginalized social statuses, such as immigrant or working-class families of color. Although MLL students or TAs' experience working with MLL students are not the main focus of this study, because of the linguistic, cultural, racial implications loaded in this term, it is helpful to unpack TAs' thinking on MLL students in order to push our analysis further. This section is aimed at answering the following two questions: (1) what does the term 'multilingual students' mean to the TAs? (2) Does it tell us anything about TAs' thinking on diversity and student differences and how so? I am going to first talk about Cat, Evelyn, and Steven's conceptualization of MLL students and their attitude towards this term, as they were all in the Language and Rhetoric doctoral program and had a longer history of engagement with the term because of their disciplinary training. I will then talk about Maria, Clara, and Mary's ideas about MLL students to the extent that they have thought about this category.

The implied 'us' and the 'other' that needs to be understood.

Cat gave a fairly clear definition of multilingual students: (1) at least bilingual, or (2) raised in a family that doesn't speak English 100% of the time, or (3) international students. After giving this definition, she quickly added that she did not consider the "American-born, native English speaking students typically to be multilingual" (p. 12, Interview 1). Although she acknowledged the push in her field (Composition) that encouraged researchers and teachers to consider all students to be multilingual, she emphasized that she did not consider the aforementioned "native English speaking students" to be multilingual, just as how she did not self-identify as multilingual, because she spoke English "pretty monolingually" and was "raised in an English speaking home". What is worth noticing in her comment about those "native English speaking students" is that this category is not necessarily exclusive of the categories given in her definition of multilingual students. In other words, an "American-born, native English speaking" student can also be bilingual, "raised in a family that doesn't speak English 100% of the time", or even an international student from other English-speaking countries such as India or the U.K. Her image of a multilingual student seems to be more nuanced than just the language they use on a regular basis. She did not make any explicit connection herself, but while explaining her definition of MLL students, she also mentioned that she was aware that "multilingual has a lot of cultural and racial implications as well, or tends to".

Mulling over these nuances in connection to her self-identification as a monolingual person, I am reminded of Oliha's (2010) study on discourses of diversity, in which she observed that sometimes White individuals "discursively constructed international and racial difference as needing to be 'understood,' the way they created an 'us' and 'them'

(White and international or racially different)" (p. 60). Although it is not my intention to figure out whether Cat's description of "native English speaking students" is highly racialized or whether it mostly refers to White American students, it is evident that her thinking of multilingual students is based on a comparison with an implied norm of student body, likely White, monolingual, native English speaking, American students. Connecting it back to the last chapter on AW, this likelihood could have various implications: What is the possible connection with this implied norm and Cat's conceptualization of the linear AW – "the standard of academic genre in the U.S." (p. 13, Interview 1)? While talking about her experience helping an English-Spanish bilingual student writer use more simple vocabulary in his English writing, whom might she have in mind when she made comments such as "it's more clear, to us"? How does it impact the way Cat approaches some writing practices of students, both international and domestic, whose first language is a variety of English other than American English?

A contextualized and fragmented understanding of MLL.

In the meantime, a lot of Cat's thinking on MLL students seems to be connected with her thinking on MLL courses in this particular institutional context. For example, when she talked about the push in the field (recognizing that all students are multilingual) being not very helpful because it's not "being realistic", she expressed a logistical concern for using the term *multilingual* to differentiate MLL and mainstream sections of composition class: "if that were the case, that all students are multilingual, and anybody can join the multilingual class because that's the case, right?" This concern comes from the fact that MLL composition courses at her local school are open to all students but limited in number of sessions offered, and it has led to the challenge on the

teachers' side to reserve the sessions for students who need the class the most. Cat also pointed out that this way of using the term MLL is problematic because "people are trying to make it seem like there's not really a difference between multilingual students and a 'non-multilingual'... but there is, and nobody wants to say what it is exactly". When I asked her to talk about the difference(s) she saw between multilingual students and "non-multilingual" students, Cat focused on grammar and student expectations of academic culture (for instance, feeling uncomfortable speaking up in class).

From the first interview I had the impression that Cat disagreed with or was at least hesitant about the push in the field to conceptualize all students as multilingual. However, she changed or adjusted the way she talked about it during the second interview when we re-visited this particular topic. Cat said: **"I actually completely agree with the notion behind it [all students are multilingual].... I just think the terminology isn't the best choice…. Recognizing that everybody comes with different incomes is important…. I think that the term multilingual ends up flattening that in some way because it does sound exclusive…"** (p. 22, Interview 2) According to this quote her skepticism is not so much about this way of conceptualizing students but the terminology itself. This can be further explained by our conversation on stigma of the term *MLL*, which touched on the stigmatization and negative association this term carries historically:

> ZZ: Okay. I see. Hearing your description of students' reaction to this term [multilingual] and how they don't want to be associated with multilingual sections of the class give me a sense that the term multilingual, at least to those students, is slightly stigmatized. That signal they're less competent in writing. Is that the-
> T1: Yeah, I would say so. I would then ask students; after we talked about what multilingual meant, I would say, "Do you think multilingual students have different writing needs than mainstream students?" All of them said yeah, or I would ask them, "What do you imagine the writing instruction would be like in the multilingual section of English

> 131?" I asked them those questions. All of them said, "I imagine you'll be focusing more on grammar. It'll be a slower pace, maybe it'll be a little easier."
> ZZ: Interesting.
> T1: At least two students said, "It seems like it'd be harder because we'd be learning multiple languages at the same time," blah blah blah. They clearly didn't understand what multilingual English 131 meant.
> (p. 23, Interview 2)

A fluid approach toward the use of MLL.

While being asked to define the term *multilingual students*, Evelyn gave two definitions upfront: (1) students who self-identify as speaking more than one distinct language ("the most basic definition"), (2) different dialects or discourses that students engage in ("the most complicated definition"). She also emphasized that MLL is hard to define and its definition depends on whom she was talking to. Her definitions of MLL focused heavily on the language(s) students use on a regular basis, although she expressed that "that's kind of hard because it depends on how they [students] define languages too". In the meantime, not only that she "wouldn't define a language for someone else" but she also didn't think "it's productive to have an answer for it [what is a language]".

Although Evelyn didn't feel the need to use the term MLL with her students, she did come across the term from time to time in the graduate seminars that she participated in. She described her approach towards the use of this term this way: "**I use it in context where it's already being used. I think it takes on whatever definition it's around.**" (p. 21, Interview 2) She particularly pointed out that in those graduate seminars MLL students usually referred to those whose L1 is not English, but not those whose L1 is English and speak multiple languages. This comment implies that to her the terminology *MLL students* is meant to include both L1 and L2 English speakers of multiple languages but often used in a way that does not. As she put it, **"really it often refers to**

international students" and that's why she didn't think this term is "that useful" (p. 22, Interview 22).

Did you ever hear the term in a positive sense?

From the very beginning of our conversation, Steven very consistently used nationality to conceptualize multilingual students. The first time he mentioned this term in our interview, he was comparing his "four or five multilingual students" to his American students. When I asked him to further clarify what he meant by MLL students, he said: "By that I mean people who are basically classified as international students. I have actually three or four, I think five who said in their first assignment…. this is their first year in America, so in that sense, they're multilingual. They learned English elsewhere, not here." (p. 12, Interview 1) What is implied in this comment is that Steven used this term to refer to international students, who came from and usually learned English in a country other than the U.S. Although according to part of his disciplinary training ("the literature of second language writing" in his words), the term MLL students not only includes international students, but is also "used to refer to anyone who speaks more than one language" (p. 16, Interview 2), he made the observation that in his academic context, *MLL students* was often used to refer to international students. He gave an example of the course materials developed for an MLL writing studio course (mostly targeted at Chinese students who are majority among international students) and the biggest student population who usually signed up for the course (international students).

It is interesting though, Steven later pointed out that he uses the term *international students* more than *MLL students* because he himself identifies as international and there

is not "any shame in being an international student", while "**multilingual usually includes… there's always this idea of less proficiency on the part of the students…**" (p. 17, Interview 2) Similar with Cat, to him *MLL students* is a stigmatized term and he even asked me: **"Did you ever hear the word 'multilingual' in a positive sense?"** He also described to me that some of his students spoke to this same idea, except with the term *bilingual* -- a label that they did not like "at one point in their childhood" because "it would signal to them that there's less proficiency in their case"; this is also a label that those students "were ashamed of it at one point, but not anymore" (p. 18, Interview 2). As pointed out at the beginning of this section (5.2), because of its association with ESL or a non-native speaker identity, the label *MLL* carries a stigma that reflects a deficit mentality towards people who acquire English as a second language or even one of their first languages (Marshall, 2010).

TAs with limited engagement.

As someone in Native American Indigenous Studies, Maria's primary exposure to the term *MLL* is from the EWP orientation. To her **MLL students = multi-language learners = L2 students or international students**. However, she added in the interview **"there are American[s] that grew up here also speaking other languages"** (p. 10, Interview 1). Her comment pointed out to us that no matter how or whether TAs use *MLL* in their own practice, this term is complicated and often stirs up various layers of meaning. Similar with Steven, Clara used *MLL students* to refer to international students. She is the only American TA in this study that immigrated to the U.S. as a child, at age 11, and considered herself a multilingual.

Like many of the TA participants in this study, Mary did not voluntarily bring up the term MLL or actively talk about it during our two interviews. I brought up *multilingual* ("a multilingual section") and *multilingual students* ("your multilingual students") first and most of the time. However, a similar term that she used nine times in interviews is **"multi-language students"**, a term she used to refer to students who speak languages other than English, as well as varieties of English other than American English, such as "British English, Australian English, Indian English" (p. 11, Interview 2), and "African American English" (p. 12, Interview 2). This explicit inclusion of different Englishes seems to echo Evelyn's comment that how languages are defined impacts the way we think about multilingual students. In addition to that, Mary also showed her resistance towards using the label of *multilingual students* to generalize students and treat them as a homogeneous group, reflected in the following conversation regarding grammatical issues in her student writing:

> ZZ: Do you think that your native speaker students, they have grammatical issues in their writing because they don't work hard enough? They don't kind of-
> T5: They're careless. And I'm not saying all of them are like this, but there are some students who just type so fast that they didn't really realize what happened. That's my impression.
> ZZ: I see.
> T5: They know. They just don't care.
> ZZ: Then what about with your multilingual students?
> T5: I would say some of them are; it really depends. **It's unfair to just generalize them as multilingual students as a whole,** but some students, they're so careful about the grammars that they can point out grammar mistakes of native English speakers.
> (p. 16, Interview 1; bolding added)

Some emerging themes.

To bring my readers back to the bigger picture, the following is a table of key quotes that capture the essence of TAs' conceptualizations and perceptions of MLL students.

Table 5.1 *TAs' Key Quotes on MLL Students*

	Key quote that captures the essence of TA's perception of MLL students
Cat	- Stigma of the term MLL; - "I actually completely agree with the notion behind it [all students are multilingual].....I just think the terminology isn't the best choice…Recognizing that everybody comes with different incomes is important… I think that the term multilingual ends up flattening that in some way because it does sound exclusive… I think 5 out of 6 of them would certainly be considered multilingual based on our understanding of the term and the way the term is used in the discipline. But they all said, 'I'm not multilingual. I'm bilingual.' Or, 'I'm a native speaker.'" (p. 22, Interview 2)
Steven	- Uses the term international students more than MLL students; - "multilingual usually includes… there's always this idea of less proficiency on the part of the students…" (p. 17, Interview 2)
Maria	- MLL students= multi-language learners= L2 students or international students; - "there are American[s] that grew up here also speaking other languages" (p. 10, Interview 1)
Evelyn	"I use it in context where it's already being used. I think it takes on whatever definition it's around…really it often refers to international students, which is why I think this term is not that useful." (p. 21-22, Interview 22).
Clara	MLL students = international students
Mary	- MLL students = "multi-language students" (including different varieties of English, such as Indian English, Chinglish, Japanese English) - "It's unfair to just generalize them as multilingual students as a whole"

MLL as an epistemology: theoretical push in the face of conflation. Although not necessarily the case with every single TA participant in this study, one of the themes that emerged from my analysis, summarized in Table 5.1 above, is that *MLL* as an epistemology – a way of conceptualizing students — led to both opportunities and challenges. Understanding and use of the term *MLL* by many TA participants, especially those not in the field of Composition Studies and Education, helps illustrate what Matsuda and Duran (2013) call the "conflation of multilingual and ESL". In other words, although there are well-intentioned disciplinary efforts to push the use of the term MLL as an epistemological move away from a deficit view of students who have multiple languages at their disposal, the uncritical use of MLL as an equivalent term of students whose L1 is not English continues to perpetuate the idea that Americans are

English monolinguals, leading to the further marginalization of multilingual Americans; it also creates barriers policy-wise and practice-wise for individual multilingualism to further develop and flourish (Matsuda & Duran, 2013). Given its epistemological and material consequences, it is a matter of urgency to ask how composition teachers, especially those outside the field of Composition Studies and Education, can be supported to better navigate the contradiction of the use of MLL students as equivalent to international NNES students and the theoretical push of MLL students as users of various discourses in their social contexts, to use this terminology productively to complicate issues around English speakers of multiple languages or discourses, and to push themselves to pay attention to not only international MLL students but also domestic students who might come from a marginalized linguistic and cultural community.

Including affect and emotions in the picture. If most TAs unconsciously picked up the use and formed their perceptions of MLL from the overall institutional environment, the fact that this contradiction also seems to be fairly prevalent among TAs whose scholarly and professional identities are close to or associated with Composition or L2 Studies is worth some extra attention. For people like Steven, *MLL* seems to carry so much historical weight and negative memories that he even went as far as asking me: "Did you ever hear the word *multilingual* in a positive sense?" Resulting from his perception of stigmatization with *MLL*, he made the decision to avoid using this term and replacing it with an alternative (but not equivalent) term *international students*. Steven's caution against the term *MLL* is not merely a speculation. In a two-year mixed-method study of the foundational literacy development of multilingual university

students, Marshall (2010) portrayed how multilingual students, some of whose first language is actually English but are perceived as ESL students because of their appearance or accent, "re-become ESL" and have to negotiate with this "remedial deficit identity" (p. 46) before they can be acknowledged as legitimate university students. MLL in this regard is not only stigmatized due to its association with ESL, but also highly racialized.

This contradiction seems to be playing out in the overall institutional context where this study took place. Through an intentional language shift (to *MLL*) in TA orientations and departmental support, the composition program tried to use the term *MLL* in order to recognize various linguistic and cultural assets students brought into the classroom and raise the awareness of teachers and students that every student was multilingual to some extent. However, to many students and teachers, the term *MLL* signaled something so problematic that had to be avoided. For instance, Cat -- a relatively advanced doctoral student in the Language and Rhetoric program and whose dissertation is on multilingual students -- made a case that although she was in support of the conception behind *MLL*, she observed in her research process that this term was somehow still exclusive and frowned upon by students who self-identify as "a native speaker" or would rather be called *bilingual* instead of *multilingual* (p. 22, Interview 2). Evelyn made the most strategic yet ambiguous move to let the term take up "whatever definition it's around" (p. 21-22, Interview 22). Although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the impact of these different approaches on composition pedagogies and student learning, it does point to the necessity of research and teacher education to pay more attention to the affect aspect of this multilingual movement, and provoke our thinking around what

resources teachers might need to navigate this not only political but also emotional epistemological shift.

Something wrong with the term or the field? These teachers' indifference or struggles with the term *MLL* push us to look beyond the efforts to search for the perfect terminology and zooms us out to look at a problem with the field itself, as Motha (2018) powerfully summarized in a paper presented at a 2018 regional TESOL conference:

> The word "multilingual" is not perfect. The challenge to find ideal language to describe language minority students is arising not because we are incapable of identifying the right words, but because our institutional arrangements and in fact the entire sociohistorical terrain we're embedded in mean that ideal descriptors are simply not available. We have constructed a norm that excludes language minority students, and we have constructed educational systems whose mainstream practices are not responsive to—or frequently don't even acknowledge—language minority students, so we are forced to create an Other category to slot them into, a category that by necessity reinforces Otherness. Our reality is shaped by an ontology, a way of conceptualizing the world, that has emerged from its history. It is crucial that throughout our practice, that we remember and understand the roots of these ideologies. (Motha, 2018)

According to Motha (2018), what is imbedded in TAs' dis-satisfaction or avoidance of the term *MLL* might be the confliction they feel while trying to navigate or make sense of this problematic terrain that slots linguistic, cultural, and/or racial minority students into the Other category against the norm, and against this backdrop there is no surprise that *MLL* is not an adequate term to them.

Superficial Diversity? Is There Ever A Not-Diverse Class? To start connecting this discussion of MLL students with our thinking of diversity, the following table presents a summary of TAs' conceptualizations of diversity and various dimensions or factors that these TAs consider while thinking about diversity[7].

Table 5.2

TAs' Key Quotes on Diversity and Factors They Consider While Thinking About Diversity

	Key quote that captures the essence of TA's conceptualization of diversity	**Dimensions/Factors that TAs consider while thinking about diversity**
Cat	"I look at it linguistically, and nationality, interests…like majors. That's basically about it. That's the main thing." (p. 15, Interview 2)	nationality, language, ethnicity, linguistic capabilities, cultural background, major
Steven	"I do [think my current class is diverse] because this is the largest percentage of international students, or multilingual, however you want to describe them. And then also the Americans were for some reason born elsewhere." (p. 14, Interview 1)	nationality, language, academic and ethnic background
Maria	"…a lot of White people would be like, as soon as half the class is White, and the other half is the other race and ethnicity, 'this is a pretty diverse classroom', but there's still a lot of White people in there. (Laugh.)" (p. 9, Interview 1)	nationality, gender, race, religion, political stance, viewpoints, life experiences, language
Evelyn	Normalizing diversity (differences): "I think any group is going to be diverse in some way or another." (p. 9, Interview 1)	nationality and immigration status, race and ethnicity, major, linguistic and cultural background, residency, experiences, gender, sexual orientation, views and values, investment (such as sororities, sports)
Clara	The tension between "superficial diversity" and a more holistic one: "So diversity for me is definitely holistic…Like,	gender, nationality, race and ethnicity, experience and ideology, perspectives

[7] Order of the dimensions reflects the order in which they came up in the conversation.

	encompassing experience and ideology, and perspectives, different things that make up students." (p. 18, Interview 2)	
Mary	An evolving perception of diversity-- from marked traits to ideologies: "所以为什么说没有 binary 去想事情, 因为不是说所有 Trump 阵营的人和我们想的就是完全 不一样的事情, 可能我们只是角度不一样; 或者所有反对 Trump 的人,我们跟他们也并不 是站在同一站线上"(p. 11, Interview 2) "Therefore we can't use this binary thinking, because not all Trump supporters think about entirely different things from us; we might just have different perspectives. It is also not necessarily true that everyone who doesn't support Trump all agrees on the same things." (p. 11, Interview 2; translation)	nationality, race and ethnicity, language, ideological/political stance

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, various categories are used by the TAs to see who their students are to different extents: nationality, linguistic and cultural background, gender, race and ethnicity, interests (such as major), ideological or political stance, religion, and so on. In comparing their conceptualization of diversity and their continuous thinking on it, there is a tension rising between 'superficial diversity' and 'more holistic diversity', as Clara put it. More easily noticeable markers such as someone's appearance and accent are indeed useful in helping teachers to identify the possible income of their students thus assist in their pedagogical decisions; however, making assumptions about more hidden aspects of the students such as their ideological positioning might lead to counter-productive teaching practices and create a classroom environment that hinders the achievements of their teaching goals.

Another phenomenon worth noticing is that for most TAs, there is a differentiation of a class being 'diverse' or 'not very diverse' and they have their own frameworks of identifying it. The way some related interview questions are framed is certainly responsible for the establishment of this dichotomy. For example, I asked each TA

participant whether they thought their class was diverse. However, even within this dichotomous implication, Evelyn firmly pointed out that "any group is going to be diverse in some way or another" (p. 9, Interview 1), normalizing diversity instead of treating it as 'abnormal' or something rare. Mary's notion of "internal diversity" spoke to a similar idea. At first glance, it seems that Mary focused only on some obvious markers in her thinking of diversity, such as student appearance and accents. As her perception evolved over the course of our interviews, she emphasized that ideological diversity is a norm in her class and even people within the so-called same political camp vary in their stance on different issues (p. 11, Interview 2). Furthermore, when Mary was talking about multilingual students, she noted "It's unfair to just generalize them as multilingual students as a whole" – resisting hegemony and embracing heterogeneity is on the rise in at least some TAs' wrestle with the concept of diversity and differences.

5.3 Approach/Response to Differences: Synthesizing Conceptualizing in Relation to Practices

This part of the chapter makes a gradual transition from describing TAs' perceptions and conceptualizations of their students and teaching of writing to what they do in practice (at least as they described it and what I observed from the collected documents), as well as what impacted these pedagogical decisions. I am going to make my arguments with more comparing and contrasting instead of presenting individual cases, through discussing several themes that emerged.

Differences that teachers focus on.

Different levels of student writers (Cat and Steven). As discussed earlier, TAs conceptualize diversity and perceive their students in various ways. To Cat and Steven, there is a heavy focus

on different levels of student writing and their different approaches towards students at "different levels". Cat framed this type of difference with this idea of students on "the lower end of capable writers", who (using summary as an example) would be "not fully articulating their thoughts", "[n]ot accurately expressing their thoughts", and "[u]sing really vapid, abstract, cliché language to describe their thinking" (p. 16, Interview). With these students, she would use "a more concrete, basic writing kind of book" (*They Say I Say*) and "would do a lot more concrete practice and lecturing and telling them what to do", "[l]ike, telling them this is what a summary is, here are some examples of summaries, let's write a summary" (following the model of lecturing, modeling, and practicing). With students that seem "pretty confident in their writing and pretty advanced in their writing skills", Cat would "focus more on Context for Inquiry and the more abstract writing knowledge". This approach of "basic writing" versus more advanced writing comes from her experience teaching what she called "a basic writing class" in the writing program, in which *They Say I Say* was used as textbook, while the other textbook *Context for Inquiry* was used in the mainstream FYW class that this study is focusing on. There are two general strategies that Cat used to address different levels of student writing: (1) addressing individual differences in writing through her feedback, and getting to know student writing over the course of the class and noticing patterns over their essays; (2) looking holistically for trends in her whole class; teaching and having students practice skills that a lot of them struggle with.

Similarly, while describing how he approached student differences, Steven grouped his students into "really advanced students" who in his opinion did not need to be in this FYW class, and "students who learned a lot from the class" and "really improved throughout the quarter". He appreciated this difference in students and called it "enriching" because "for those…who need to learn they can really learn by being in the company of advanced students", "so-called expert

students, expert writers" (p. 15-16, Interview 1). One of the decisions he made regarding this observation is to tell the "really good writers" not to waste time revising their papers (revision is one of the four outcomes for that writing class and a requirement in the final portfolio project). His rationale is: "If the piece is good, it's just good. Everything is outstanding in my rubric. It doesn't have to be revised. It's just good" (p. 17, Interview 1). Instead of focusing on revision with these students, he would encourage them to spend more time "working on the portfolio, the reflection, the critical reflection". Steven perceived the presence of "more advanced" students as an advantage and important learning resource for the other students, something that did not come up in my discussion with Cat. However, this doesn't mean that Cat treated 'advanced' and 'lower level' students as two totally separate entities that do not interact with each other. While Cat used one specific example of writing summaries to describe how she differentiated different "levels" of student writing, it is unclear how Steven quantified these different "levels" and whether these two teachers meant the same thing when they referred to "advanced" students.

Disciplinarity and ideological differences (Maria, Clara). While Cat and Steven focused a lot on student writing levels or skills, however they defined it, other teachers such as Maria and Clara seem to focus on, in Cat's words, the "more abstract writing knowledge". Maria described some of her initial observation of some student differences and how it impacts her teaching:

> Maria: Like so far I just... I did the preliminary essay, so I feel like nothing came out as someone who is like... Well most of them were like STEM students, so that's the thing that influences my teaching way more than anything else.
> ZZ: In what ways?
> Maria: Without a literature background, there's a lot of ways of thinking about the world that you, that no one's ever taught you. You know what I mean? In literature classes, that's a class where you get to think critically, where you get to question things, where you have to, where it's like who is the narrator who is the author what information matters, what information doesn't, what this is teaching us about the world. While biology classes are like these are the rules; learn them by heart. So it's a different way of thinking. And so I feel like

> my students who are mostly STEM majors, there's just a lot more work to get them to question things, and to get them to not just believe everything I say. Students often get frustrated with the way I teach, because I leave things open. I will talk and I'll ask them, and be clear about the fact that I'm not sure about something. It's mostly students who are not used to being in a classroom that have to learn that kind of stuff.
> ZZ: There is not really a standard answer (laugh).
> Maria: Yeah exactly. They are so frustrated when there's no one right answer or something, you know. So I think that influenced my teaching more than you know...
> (p. 10-11, Interview 1)

First of all, Maria pointed out that the majors of her students impact her teaching "more than anything else". Since most of her students that quarter are in STEM majors, she made a series of comments regarding her perceived differences between STEM classes and literature classes, as shown in the following table.

Table 5.3 *Maria's Perceived Differences Between STEM and Literature Classes*

In literature classes	**In STEM classes**
"think critically"	"these are the rules; learn them by heart"
"question things"	
consider different perspectives ("who is the narrator who is the author"	
examine selection of information ("what information matters, what information doesn't")	

Her assumption here is "there's a lot of ways of thinking about the world", which to her are taught in literature classes but not necessarily in STEM classes. Her reaction or response to that is to want to teach her students different ways of thinking, "to get them to question things, and to get them to not just believe everything I say". She expressed this similar idea while explaining the purpose of having her students do writing tasks such as in-class free-writes and peer reviews:

> Because, I want them to be... cause I find metacognition super important in order to be able to transfer what they are learning in other contexts. And I think...I guess part of it is like, in order for them to see how this stuff they are learning and the non-academic stuff, how they can still be useful in the academic writing too, because they are learning a lot of ways of thinking, a lot of ways of asking questions, a lot of ways of writing.
> (p. 11, Interview 1)

While problematizing "superficial diversity" and emphasizing also paying attention to ideological differences as an important part of understanding students, Clara used almost the exact same wording, except that she assumed that students arrived at the classroom already possessing these ideological differences: "like my students expressed today, if you bring in different people from different cultures and different language backgrounds, assume that they're bringing different ideas with them and different ways of thinking". She put this idea at the center of her classroom when she facilitated class readings by asking students to think about the authors' (Amy Tan, James Baldwin) arguments, their underlying assumptions, and counterarguments. According to Clara, by understanding and analyzing these authors' ways of thinking, students look for and become aware of the different ways in which they think and they were encouraged to "[b]ring that to the table". Clara explained that this is not simply a one-time class activity but something she paid a lot of attention to throughout the quarter, because, as she put it: "I don't want a particular ideology to reign in my class, except for the ideology that all ideologies should be welcomed and equal, or as equal as it can get" (p. 20, Interview 1). She made this decision out of her desire to balance the voices in her classroom and encourage different students to speak up. She also designed writing assignment prompts that asked students to reflect on their reactions to and perspectives on various issues. Clara expressed how much she valued ideological and experiential differences by describing this strategy of "capitalizing on your differences", which is one of the strategies that contributed to her own success as a student:

> What I'm trying to share with them [students], in a few kind of en vogue terms is, what has been my practice as a student myself. I feel like one of the successes that I've had, or one of the things that has helped me thrive in academia, until this moment of course, has been capitalizing on how… the different things that I can offer. (p. 18, Interview 2)

Academic background (Steven). While Maria brought up major as a focal point to thinking about different ways of thinking, Steven used a more general term of "academic background" in his description of working with differences in his class:

> Let's stick with diversity on academic background. In the second sequence of the assignment, I make it a self-chosen topic. They basically choose their own topic, the topic they'd like to work on for the rest of the quarter….To me, that's one way to interact with the need, expectations, and interest of the students…. I'm trying to give them an opportunity to invest in something that they're interested in academically. (p. 15, Interview 2)

Native speaker vs. non-native speaker (Mary, Maria, Cat). Although almost all teacher participants mentioned the notion of native speaker versus non-native speaker students at some point, Cat specifically used this differentiation to describe how her teaching content might differ based on the "linguistic positioning" of her students:

> Like, if they are non-native speakers or native speakers. That kind of diversity in my classroom of course I pay attention to, because it affects the kind of things I teach. Like, I might draw more on the book *They Say I Say*, simply because it's a more concrete, basic writing kind of book. If they seem like they're already pretty confident in their writing and pretty advanced in their writing skills, then I might focus more on *Context for Inquiry* and the more abstract writing knowledge. Does it make sense? Basically if they seem like they're very confident and skilled writers, then that will change my approach to teaching them… If they seem to be struggling with writing, and they're kind of on the lower end of... capable writers, then I would do a lot more concrete practice and lecturing and telling them what to do. Like, telling them this is what a summary is, here are some examples of summaries, let's write a summary. (p. 15, Interview 2)

In this quote Cat quickly shifted from explicitly talking about non-native and native speakers to students with varying writing skills -- "confident and skilled writers", "on the lower end of …capable writers", seemingly implying that linguistic positioning of the students correlated with the varying skills and thus led to different content and approaches to teaching ("more abstract writing knowledge", "more practice and lecturing").

In the meantime, although Maria didn't use the exact vocabulary of NS and NNS students a lot in the interview, she showed her awareness of this linguistic positioning through the ways she talked about "international students" and "second language" students. For example, one of the things she "ha[s] to learn" when there are more international students in her class, is "to speak less fast, for people who are less fluent in English" (p. 12, Interview 1). Another thing that came up in her description of a classroom routine, which is to discuss and explain theories in their textbook (*Context for Inquiry*), is that she used activities like this to help "students … who think they don't get it because it's a second language thing" to realize it's "just an academic language thing". She put it this way:

> …it's not like you don't speak English. Just you don't speak this English, and plenty of people who are native English speakers also don't speak this English. (p. 12-13, Interview 1)

This intentional transparency seeks to destabilize the assumption of academic writing as a fixed and singular practice, as well as disassociate it with non-native speaker identity.

In Grading and assessment: perception and practice.

Avoiding differential treatment in grading (Mary). When I asked about different approaches to working with different students (in terms of aspects such as writing skills, majors, linguistic and cultural background), I meant to probe into teachers' different strategies of working with a diverse student population. Mary had a very immediate reaction that took this question into a slightly different but thought-provoking direction:

> I try to avoid that actually. I want to let them know that I basically have the same criteria for all of the students so they can expect a fair grading rubric at the end, so I don't really treat them very differently. (p. 9, Interview 1)

Although my question was intended to focus on the process of the teaching and learning of writing, Mary took it up as an opportunity to express her determination to be consistent in her assessment to be "fair", shifting the focus to the final product of writing.

Is this a typo or a learning opportunity? (Mary, Steven, Evelyn) Mary talked about trying to treat all her students the same in terms of assessment, but she also admitted that she used to have this assumption that, for example, her Chinese international students would have more grammar mistakes than her White students, which to her surprise turned out to be the other way around. This discovery, together with the discouragement from the departmental training on too much focus on student grammar, informs her approach toward grammatical issues in her student writing. While describing a strong student writer who is also an international student, Mary said: "I feel like it's unfair to grade him just based on some of his minor mistakes he makes in language" (p. 14, Interview 1); She also described herself to be "not a fan of grammar" (p. 16, Interview 1). In terms of how it plays out in practice, she mentioned that she would only point out repetitive grammar issues of both 'careless' and 'unintentional' grammar mistakes.

As one of the two examples he used to show his ways "to meet diversity" in his class, Steven described his different approaches of dealing with grammar issues and giving feedback:

> I definitely want to take into account the fact that when a student uses English, natively or secondly... and definitely **make my assessment and feedback accordingly**, so I take that into account when I give feedback and write comments……...There's a mistake in say, a preposition. They use a preposition…..**If it was done by someone who I think is American, I wouldn't really pay much attention to it, because that's basically a typo**, but if it was done by another student, and repeatedly, then I think it's a good opportunity for me to tell them what it should be. (p. 15, Interview 2)

Steven made a clear distinction between what he thought were two completely different scenarios: a typo due to pure carelessness that could be ignored and a reveal of lack of knowledge that should lead to a teaching moment. He also mentioned the use of an indicator

("someone who I think is American") that helped him make the judgement of whether it was a typo or knowledge-based error. Steven's probably subconscious decision reflects the strong influence of a deficit model towards international students who use English as a second language – a model that has long been imbedded not only in TESOL but the overall U.S. education context, assuming that ESL students, whether still in the ESL classroom or already in a college classroom, make mistakes because of their marked language capability or lack of knowledge in certain aspects of writing – interestingly overlaps with Mary's original assumption regarding American students not making grammatical mistakes. This common misconception not only needs to be further undone in the minds of so-called native speaker students and teachers, but also those who bear the lasting consequences of such a misconception, like international TAs Steven and Mary in this study. Evelyn shared a similar differentiation in reading and grading student writing but did not make an explicit association with any particular student group (p. 11, Interview 1). However, she particularly talked about a lot of comments she tended to give in order to ask for clarity on student writing:

> I give them a lot of comments, with all of my students, a lot of comments on clarity. If there's something that's ambiguous, I'm like, "Well, I'm pretty sure they meant this, but it also could be interpreted this way", and I'd like to point it out to them and say... "Did you mean it to mean this or this, 'cause like, we could see it either way, and I think you meant this, but you tell me (laugh). It's not my paper. (p. 11-12, Interview 1)

Through this comment, we can tell that Evelyn intentionally handed over more power to students in order for them to have more control over how their writing is read and interpreted. Writing issues such as grammar are allowed to be reconceptualized as a mutual process of communication and meaning making.

Differences in intersection: student vs. student and teachers vs. students.

TAs' varying approaches to difference and responses to related questions made me think about this question: how do differences of students intersect with those between students and

teachers? So far we have looked extensively into teachers' perceptions of differences in students (writing skills, academic background, linguistic positioning, ideological stance) and decisions teachers made to respond to these differences in various degrees. What about the differences between the teachers and students, for example, ideological or political stance, and the impact these differences might have on the overall classroom ecology? What are possible material consequences of these differences in student learning process? These are questions that this study cannot answer but hopes to raise as catalysts in our continued thinking of diversity and differences.

Wrestling with diversity.

Navigating the complexity. This chapter is aimed at answering the second set of my research questions, which tap into TAs' conceptualizations of and responses to diversity, ideologies and practices that helped facilitate these conceptualizations and responses, the role TAs' political or ideological stances might play, or the role power might play. Exploration of these questions with TAs turned out to be a messy, recursive, and evolving process. A wide array of TAs' responses prove to us that conceptualizations of diversity – who our students are through their differences and sameness -- can not be taken for granted, and the complexity of defining diversity in a culturally, socially, and politically dynamic space such as college composition classroom cannot be underestimated. For example, an instrumental and power-neutral approach to diversity might reduce our students to superficial identity markers represented by some group labels; when we normalize differences without considering varying symbolic and material capitals students carry with various aspects of their identities, we might be promoting a tolerant stance towards differences that does not do much or even creates barriers in mobilizing our students (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Pennycook, 2012; Smith et al., 2018).

The role of power and institutional discursive construction. Although it varies in individual cases, it also appears that TAs with personal experiences of feeling marginal or peripheral tend to talk about diversity in deeper and more complex ways. Taking a relatively extreme example, when Clara's personal knowledge from a linguistically, culturally, economically, and religiously disadvantaged background (at least in the overall institutional context of this study) intersects with a systemic framing from her disciplinary training (such as minoring in diversity, taking courses in CHID), there is immense tension that a composition teacher like her could experience in navigating different imaginations of whom these labels dominantly represent historically and who can pick up those labels in the contemporary setting. For example, in a liberal university setting, labels such as being a Christian often index political conservativeness, Whiteness, upper or middle-class status, evangelism – characteristics of a historically oppressive figure to racially and/or socioeconomically marginalized groups, but not necessarily representative of a more socioeconomically, racially, and politically diverse contemporary Christian reality.

At a slightly different place on the spectrum, coming from a more socioeconomically and culturally privileged position as a White middle-class teacher, Evelyn is exposed to equity and social justice-oriented disciplinary training that helps her think about differences in a relatively progressive way. However, the ways she talks about diversity resemble some widely circulated institutional discourses in the backdrop of the "corporatization of the university" (Ahmed, 2012). As Ahmed (2012) summarizes in her book *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, marketed and branded as of commercial value to the university, "[d]iversity becomes something to be managed and valued as a human resource" that "invokes difference but does not necessarily evoke commitment to action or redistributive justice" (p. 53). Ahmed goes on and notes: "Diversity could be understood as one of the techniques by which liberal

multiculturalism manages differences by managing its more 'troublesome constituents' (Fleras 2011:121). Diversity can thus function as a containment strategy." Evelyn's practice in writing assessment demonstrates her embracement of student differences and commitment to enacting actions that could contribute to educational access and equity. However, she might be unknowingly and unwillingly dragged along by this containment strategy imbedded in the big institutional machine that leads to a view of a diverse classroom that tends to oversimplify racial and class relations and leaves power out of the picture. This power-neutral stance and relative silence around race show to us possible blind spots someone in a position of power and social privileges might have. The challenge for teachers and teacher training programs would be how to undo this fictional neutrality and break the silence underneath the overall institutional climate.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Implications

Opened with an autoethnographic account as a student and teacher of composition and followed by a historical and interdisciplinary review of composition theory and pedagogy development, my dissertation is laid out to look into six FYC TAs' conceptualizations of and positionalities towards academic discursive practices and the diversity of their teaching space. Based on some key findings illustrated in chapters 4 and 5, this chapter provides a further synthesis by discussing the implications of those findings to our understanding of the teaching of composition, composition teachers and teacher-training related stakeholders, and proposals for future research directions.

As I explained in Chapter two, the multidimensional theoretical framework used to make sense of teachers and teacher education is a combined approach of **community cultural wealth** (Yosso, 2005) and **nexus of multimembership** (Canagarajah, 2012; Wenger, 1998). One of the ideas used to build this framework is Giroux's (1988) *teachers as transformative intellectuals* "who combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens" (p. 122). My analysis is done under the assumption that teachers are "reflective practitioners" (p. 125) who are able to utilize various knowledge and skills to make sense and make decisions of the activity of teaching itself, the teacher who does it, the context in which it is done, and the pedagogy by which it is done. This agentive and power-conscious framework not only helps us examine knowledge teachers forge at the borders of their various professional communities, but also opens up space for a more socioculturally and sociopolitically nuanced understanding of writing.

6.1 Conclusions and Discussions

After tapping into teachers' perceptions of AW and diversity, as well as better understanding their orientation towards academic discursive practices and differences in their students, my readers might ask the 'so what' question: Why is it important to unpack these perceptions and orientations? What differences does this study make to our understanding of the teaching of composition and administration of writing programs?

A deepened understanding of complexity in the composition classroom.

The mystified norm of academic discursive practices. Taking AW as a starting point, I make the observation that there are varying and competing assumptions about writing and academic writing that operate within individual composition classrooms. In the meantime, TAs' collective thinking of AW also reveals their understanding of a normalized discursive practice in academia that is historically privileged (linear, argumentative, five-paragraph style, formal language). TAs exhibit varying positions towards this mystified privileged discourse, from mostly embracing it and preparing students for it (as in the case of Cat and Steven) to being ideologically and pedagogically resistant to it (as in the case of Maria). These different orientations show us that even before composition teachers start making decisions about what to teach and how to deliver their course content, they have to make decisions for themselves in terms of what writing is in their institutional context and then deciding what it looks like in their own class context. Consequentially, where teachers are in relation to these foundational ideas helps structure their curriculum and day-to-day classroom practices. How they conceptualize AW as it is constructed in their institution and how they conceptualize it for themselves, as well as their stances towards these conceptualizations also impact how they interpret course outcomes and visualize the end product of their student writing. The implicit, macro-level ideological

foundation poses further influence on the explicit, micro-level material activities of the classroom.

The intersections of student-student and student-teacher identity. Meanwhile, my inquiry into teachers' perceptions and approaches towards diversity unveils teachers' perceptions of student identity, how they make sense of who is present in the classroom and the respective needs of their students. What is worth noticing is the relative invisibility of teacher identity in relation to student identity. Over ten years ago, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argued about the relational and sociocultural nature of identity, which "emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories" (p. 587). In the interview process, my teacher participants actively talked about or at least acknowledged certain aspects of their students' identities in relation to each other (such as Asian, White students, Washington residents, international students). Most of them did not focus much on how their own identities intersected with their students', or at least not in an explicit way. Maria is the only TA that openly talked about her "low [socioeconomic] class" and the conscious decision she made in order to break students' assumption of Ph.D. students or university instructors coming from "high [socioeconomic] class". By using laid-back language in the classroom, she meant to break students' presumption of university teachers coming from mostly socioeconomically prestigious positions.

Implicitly, a few other teachers have also strategically utilized some of their identities for pedagogical purposes -- for instance, Steven and Maria's international student identity for modelling purposes, and Mary's outsider status and mutual 'victim' of the English department for building solidarity with students. Interestingly, Maria, Mary, and Steven are the international TAs amongst my six teacher participants. Although they differ in so many ways, such as their

disciplinary background (Maria in Native American Indigenous Studies, Mary in Comparative Literature, Steven in TESOL/Applied Linguistics) and cultural upbringing (Maria from Belgium, Mary from China, Steven from Saudi Arabia), one of their commonalities is their international and intercultural experiences. Their experience of travelling across national, linguistic, and cultural spaces situate them at a position to be more cognizant about similarities, differences, and what these similarities and differences mean in relation to each other. This strategic use of linguistic and social identities is also well captured in Motha et al.'s (2012) observation of multilingual and transnational teachers in language teacher education.

Relative silence around race and power: intersection between the individual and the institutional. If the analysis of teachers' thinking around AW and diversity helps deepen our understanding of some relatively observable complexities that composition teachers are navigating, the silence around race and power then reveals an elephant in the room that is often missing from the whole picture of composition classroom ecology. Race and power are two integral parts of our thinking about and enacting on diversity; yet ironically discourses around diversity are so often used as evidence of the absence of racism and/or justified neglect of differentiated powers. After providing a working definition of diversity, the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre (ACLRC) glossary page also points out:

> Unfortunately, in discourses of privilege/racism, the recognition of diversity has been used, falsely, as evidence of genuine equality, social justice, and the end of racism. In other words, "diversity training" has, at times, devolved into a simplistic recognition of "differences" with little attention to racism, systemic/institutional racism, unequal distribution of power/authority, and little change in attitudes or actions of the most privileged. (Accessed April 2019.)

Feminist writer and independent scholar Sara Ahmed (2012) has also helped unpack this irony in her illustration of the "arrival" of the term *diversity* in higher education -- despite its wide circulation in higher education because of its commodity value in the phenomenon of "the corporatization of the university", frequent institutional use of the term *diversity* does not necessarily equal commitment to diversity in action (p. 52).

In the particular institutional context of my study, what Ahmed (2012) terms as "official diversity" (p. 54) can be found at highly visible institutional spaces such as the diversity statement of the university website and campus units like the Diversity Council, through which the university discursively expresses appreciation of differences in "experiences and perspectives" and diversity "expressed in various forms", highlighting outcome-oriented phrases such as "welcoming and respectful learning environments", "access", "opportunity and justice for all", and "inclusive and equitable" (accessed April 2019). To get a sense of how this embracement of diversity plays out in the departmental and program level and how it impacts institutional actions, I did a quick search on the News and Announcements page of the writing program website. Among over 35 news and announcements featured between March 2016 and April 2019 that are specific to the writing program, there were a fair number of initiatives (workshops, talks, grants) with wordings such as "equity", "diversity", "inclusion" in the title, with a noticeably increasing number since 2018. However, only one among the over 35 initiatives include wordings such as race in the title (the "Antiracist Pedagogies Workshop series"). Although this quick analysis is not at all meant to be exhaustive, it does reveal a possible gap in the institutional discursive expression and action. If there is an emphasis on "inclusion", then who are excluded? If there is a desire to pursue "justice", then what are some causes of injustice?

At the institutional and individual level, there do not seem to be as many expressions and discussions around the role race and power play that could possibly push our thinking of diversity and action towards equity and inclusion further. Is this the type of discourse that many of my TA participants picked up from the overall institutional climate, that led to the silence around race and power? What obstacles or resistance lie underneath this progressive institutional imagery that is discursively constructed? What are the consequences of capitalizing on diversity discourses as an institution or department without a tangible commitment to action? What does this institutional environment mean to individual teachers' meaning-making and decision-making in their particular classroom space?

Intersections of disciplinary, professional, and personal spaces (nexus of multimembership).

Departmental training. In the coding stage of my data analysis, I worked with a large number of transcripts in which TAs focused on reflecting on the impact of the departmental training (mostly orientation and first-year TA seminar) and ideas or activities that they integrated into their teaching. Some examples are: higher order and lower order concerns related to priorities for revision (Cat), consideration of student incomes in pedagogies (Clara, Evelyn), metacognition and transfer (Maria, Evelyn, Clara), translingualism – a framework towards student differences in language that was highly integrated into the most recent TA training (Steven), and vocabulary taken from the course outcomes shared across all FYC sections (such as the idea of intertextuality). That is to be expected because TA training was designed to provide both theoretical and practical scaffolding for graduate student composition teachers who were either teaching composition in that particular context for the first time or teaching for the

first time ever. It is not surprising that departmental training became the main source of influence, especially for teachers who were teaching for their very first time.

Connecting the professional and personal. What is slightly unexpected is that there is a noticeably larger number of transcripts in which TAs talked about their ideas and practices of composition teaching that stemmed from their undergraduate, master, and/or doctoral trainings, voluntarily or upon my request. For example, Clara drew heavily from her interdisciplinary coursework in her understanding of AW and also explicitly talked about the value of interdisciplinarity with her students; Maria used her Native American Indigenous Studies background to inform her way of thinking about writing in the academic context and also her decisions on certain assignments (such as the Facebook post assignment to help students "unlearn" traditional AW). There is also a large portion of transcripts in which the TAs connected their other professional and personal experiences with decisions they made in teaching composition and ideas that impacted their teaching philosophies -- Cat made a clear reference to her early teaching years, especially a textbook (*They Say I Say*) that shaped her thinking of AW (linear, shish kebab model); similarly with Steven, he reflected back on all the writing courses he had taken in his home country and in the advanced ESL programs affiliated with his current institution, which he attributed his conceptualization of AW as argumentative to. These connections suggest that TAs' prior pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge might be a site of potential exploration and a starting point for the development of pedagogical practices in TA orientations. They could also have important implications towards composition teacher training and support in general.

The value of shuffling across various memberships. There are more informative moments when ideologies and practices from these different spaces or TAs' different "memberships"

(Canagarajah, 2012) intersect with each other. Overlapping experiences or similarities could become affirmation for teachers to make confident or strategic pedagogical decisions. For example, what Clara observed from her own experience as a student and an undergraduate teacher was given a name when she encountered the ideas of metacognition and student income; when what she was doing in practice was confirmed by theories or when she was given a vocabulary from the teacher training, it affirmed her teacher identity and pushed her professional development further. When Mary's experience (or lack thereof) with learning to write intersected with the lack of conversations around writing itself in the TA seminar, she drew on her disciplinary knowledge of working in Comparative Literature (or Humanities, more broadly speaking) in order to organize her course content and class activities.

Besides moments of confirmation, teachers' potential as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) were pushed even further when there were any clashing ideas or practices across different spaces. As illustrated before, Clara's multimembership as a student in the field of English Literature and also across disciplines such as CHID and GWSS created productive tensions through which she reflected more critically on academic discursive practices; her identity as a woman of color and first-generation college student pushed her to think about diversity in a way that was more nuanced than most of her peers in the study. In Steven's case, there were overlapping ideas as well as some inconsistency in Steven's exposure to translingualism in the TA training, his own disciplinary environment (an interaction with a SLW scholar in his field that helped confirm his doubt about the applicability of translingualism in teaching), and his own practice as a graduate student. Although for the moment Steven made a decision to "prepare students for the reality of the academy", wrestling with these tensions engaged him in the process of problem solving and created likelihood for more transformative actions than simply

integrating readings into his curriculum that "shake the normal standardized English" (p. 9, Interview 1).

Consequences of these different narratives.

Analysis in the previous chapters reveals to us that TAs created different narratives around writing, the teaching of writing, and their students, depending on the intersection of departmental trainings, TAs' disciplinary background, and their professional and personal experiences. By using the term *consequences* here, I am not implying a desirable ideal or hegemonic view of writing, AW, or diversity. On the contrary, a diverse view of writing and the act of teaching composition enrich not only our classroom space but also composition scholarship. However, it is essential to examine whether these narratives are constructed with critical awareness, whether writing program stakeholders are aware of these different narratives, and how much space teacher trainings are providing to consciously facilitate the co-construction of these narratives. As composition teachers, we should also be aware of how decisions we make in the classroom impact our students. To give an oversimplified example, the different positions we take as teachers in relation to the mystified, historically privileged discursive practices in academia lead to our respective interpretations of student compositional practices, which in turn impact our interaction with and assessment of student writings. Our pedagogical responses deliver explicit and implicit messages to our students about what we value in the FYC classroom space, about writing, and about who they are as students and people. FYC is a very a socioculturally and sociopolitically complex teaching context to navigate for both teachers and WPAs.

6.2 Implications

Under the spotlight: implications for composition teachers.

Exploring alternatives: from institutionalized teacher education to mutual engagement and communities of practice. In his autoethnography as a TESOL practitioner, Canagarajah (2012) gave an example of what communities of practice could look like in terms of professionalization in any community of practice:

> A colleague with a background in curriculum and instruction gave me some tips on classroom management. A colleague from linguistics suggested alternate ways of explaining grammar. Because I came from literature, my colleagues wanted to know what their textbooks meant when they referred to denouement or onomatopoeia. I soon developed the awareness of a joint enterprise in which we could each contribute the different skills and expertise we brought with us to enrich our professional development. (p. 263)

This imagery of collaborative and communal learning does not only illustrate the power of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998), but also prompts composition teachers to look beyond their institutionalized teacher education for immediate problem-solving and their long-term professional enrichment. Intellectual engagement in institutionalized teacher education programs and practices does not have to be the only source; on the contrary, composition teachers can also draw on the wealth of their peer teacher community, utilizing each other's knowledge, expertise, experiences, and skills as other legitimate ways of knowing and growing as teachers.

Knowledge forged at the borders of CoPs: brokering across multimemberships. Wenger (1998) defines brokering as the "use of multimembership to transfer some elements of one

practice into another" (p. 105). In the case of Canagarajah's professional development, brokering helps manage some conflicts he experienced in the TESOL community as a linguistically and culturally marginalized NNES teacher in a context dominated by Western philosophies and ideologies. As he puts it:

> Rather than striving for insider identities, I resolved to skirt the boundaries of my profession and serve as an effective broker who challenges the dominant assumptions by bringing new thinking, values, and practices from the outside. To perform this role effectively, says Wenger (1998), brokers always "stay at the boundaries of many practices [rather] than move to the core of any one practice"(p. 109). I gradually settled into my role of shuttling between CoPs. (p. 271)

In the case of my study, TAs brought in various assets through their multimemberships. Just to name a few: Cat is a relatively experienced composition teacher, a Language and Rhetoric scholar, and an insider who knows her teaching context well through her experience as an undergraduate and graduate student in the same institution; Maria is a second-year composition teacher and an invested scholar of ethnic studies, as well as an international student from Europe; Clara is a female teacher of color and immigrant student whose identity and disciplinary training sit at the intersection of several historically marginalized groups – person of color, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and English language learner. As illustrated above, Canagarajah's (2012) example of staying "at the boundaries" as praxis for mutual engagement and his professional development in TESOL can serve as a model for composition TAs to imagine how they can position themselves in relation to the teaching of writing and their students, and to better imagine the productive use of their own multimemberships.

Composition teachers, particularly graduate student TAs, should feel empowered to make connections across their personal and professional spaces outside the academy, instead of feeling inferior because of their marginal status caused by historical and structural reasons. Motha et al. (2012) have talked about this notion of strategic use of teacher identities in the context of TESOL teacher education. For instance, an international student, a working-class first-generation college student, and someone trained in a discipline outside the English Department all offer invaluable experiential and professional insights on a more socioculturally and sociopolitically nuanced understanding of writing, the teaching space, and the students. Teachers like Steven and Maria also demonstrate for us how they could use some of their memberships – being an international student and non-native speaker of English – to model for their students what is possible to achieve in the rigorous academic environment. Clara showed us that maintaining a critical distance with one of her memberships in the English department – and constantly shuffling across various disciplinary communities through her interdisciplinary coursework helped facilitate more critical reflection on the academic discursive practices that she is engaged in doing and teaching.

The importance of critical reflection on our own teaching practices AND ideologies/epistemologies that these practices are based in. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the effects of individual TAs' various conceptualizations of AW and diversity are a double-edged sword to their own classroom space, the writing program, and even the whole institution. Research in teacher education has proved to us and keeps pushing our further understanding of the importance of constant critical reflection in teachers' professional development (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Lockhart & Richards, 1994; Schon, 1983, 1987; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). To unpack it for the specific context of FYC

composition, I would like to highlight several example moments when teachers can benefit from more critical engagement with ideologies that some of their thinking is operating on.

While slightly problematizing the writing program's push for critical thinking, Cat repurposed a historically stigmatized notion of *prescriptivism* (teaching the basics, such as grammar and sentence structure) and argued for the necessity of "more concrete instruction" (p. 17-18, Interview 2). However, it is questionable whether explicit instruction necessarily conflicts with teaching, in Cat's words, "the more abstract writing knowledge" (p. 16, Interview 2). This power-neutral approach towards the teaching of writing also seems to exclude questions such as "what are regarded as basics of writing", and "who gets to decide what the basics are".

While Cat's example is a case of teaching philosophies that guide what is to be valued and taught in the classroom, Mary's case is an example of policy in the classroom that regulates student linguistic behavior. In one of her classes with over half of the students being Chinese, Mary made a particular decision in terms of language policy in her teaching -- she said that she did not want her Chinese students to think that they could speak Chinese to her, and she never spoke Chinese with them until she finished teaching the class (p. 9, Interview 1). This implicit 'English only' policy reflects the social and institutional pressures Mary was seeking to counter on behalf of her students and herself -- if the stigma associated with multilingual students is still fairly prevalent (the deficit model that knowing another language signals 'incompetence' in English), Mary was trying to minimize the possible repercussions of her students' multilingual identity for their relations with teachers, peers, and consequently their learning; in the meantime, her decision of not performing her own multilingual identity in the classroom space could result from the similar social and institutional pressures that might treat her multilingual identity as a

professional disadvantage. Although research has proved the deficit model towards students' first language to be counterproductive (Cox et al., 2010; Kells, 2002), my intention is not to critique Mary's use of this particular language policy. Instead, analysis of an example like this is to prompt teachers to consciously assess political decisions like this, asking themselves questions such as: What implicit and multiple institutional and social messages are multilingual TAs receiving about performance of their multilingual identities in the FYC classroom? What is the impact of this implicit 'English only' policy to students, to both English-only speakers' and multilingual speakers' perception of language? How does it influence students' perception of writing, a not just mechanical but cultural practice and also inseparable from practices of language itself?

Just to name one more example related to writing assessment, interestingly both Mary and Steven used to hold a similar assumption that so-called non-native English speaker students make more grammatical mistakes due to lack of knowledge in the English language, while native speaker students, even while sometimes showing grammatical errors in their writing, do so due to carelessness.

Mary: I was assuming that probably my Chinese students would have more grammar mistakes than my white students. (p. 9, Interview 1)

Steven: If it was done by someone who I think is American, I wouldn't really pay much attention to it, because that's basically a typo, but if it was done by another student, and repeatedly, then I think it's a good opportunity for me to tell them what it should be. (p. 15, Interview 2)

In the fields of both L1 and L2 writing, grammar has been a historically notorious and over-rated feature of writing. When a lot of students think about writing, they instantly think about mechanical features such as grammar, instead of the more essential aspects of writing such as

idea development and organization. Grammar is also a nightmare for many L2 writers who get called out a lot on their grammatical errors and consequently develop a very negative image of themselves as writers. In a prescriptive framework, teachers' over-emphasis on grammar also dramatically gets in the way of the construction of a positive student writer identity, especially for L2 English speakers. A composition scholar once experimented on how readers' perception of writer's authority impacts their focus on ideas and surface-level features of the writing such as grammar. He found that most readers ignored the grammatical errors he intentionally planted into the writing, due to his respected and well-established status in the field, and because readers were so focused on the ideas of the article. This experiment shows us how our perception of the writer impacts the distribution of our attention thus our assessment of the writing, and the danger of making overgeneralizations in approaching student writing cannot be overlooked. Mary's perception of who are 'supposed' to make grammatical mistakes is adjusted by her interactions with students and observation of student work, as she learned later on that American students also make grammatical mistakes. Steven still seems to hold on to this overall guideline that helped him interpret the surface level errors students make and make decisions on whether it is a teaching moment in his assessment. It is important for teachers to reflect on how sometimes slightly differential treatments like this are mitigating our energy in feedback, and how our responses impact students' perceptions of themselves as student writers.

Although the examples above seem to focus a lot on international TAs, they could happen to any TA exposed to problematic ideologies or unknowingly participating in reproducing ideas such as the English-only policy and the over-emphasis on grammar in writing. What is to be learned from these instances is teachers should strive to become more active co-constructors of

the teacher training space and be constantly conscious of the role they play in shaping students' perceptions and practices of writing.

Working through constraints: Implications for Teacher Training Programs and Writing Program Administration (WPA).

A snapshot of the local writing program. According to the writing program director at the time of this study, in a typical academic year there were usually about 32 new composition graduate student TAs who participated in the first-year TA orientation and the practicum course, of which seven were in Creative Writing, 3 in Comparative Literature, three to four in Language and Rhetoric, and the rest in Literature and Culture (about half of the whole first-year TA cohort); gender-wise, there were usually slightly more women than men; nationality-wise, over the years the number of international TAs (ITAs) had increased and took up about 20% of the whole new TA cohort now; race and ethnicity-wise, TAs were primarily White – there were very few TAs of color, such as African American, Latino, or Asian TAs; to make things even more complicated, usually about 70 percent of the first-year TAs had never taught before.

Reconciling the tension between theory and practice. This brief snapshot of TA demographics set the backdrop for us to picture the constraints and challenges the local WPA faces in this particular context. Since a lot of TAs have never taught or learned about theories and practices of writing before, the orientation and the practicum course became the sites where the local WPA provides resources to socialize TAs, who are from various disciplines with half of them from Literature, into their new professional identity -- composition teacher. Writing about a composition practicum course in their own writing program context, Guerra and Bawarshi (2005) described it as a site for "continuous articulation and deployment of beliefs and practices about the study and teaching of writing" (p. 44). As one of the former directors in my study

articulated in the interview, the main goals of the composition practicum course are to engage TAs in problem finding and problem solving and to provide tools. Therefore, the overall writing program training, including the orientation and the practicum course, focuses on both theories and practices of composition, instead of just giving new TAs pre-made syllabi and teaching materials, which is a common practice in some departments of the same institution.

However, Mary is not the only TA who complained about this heavy focus of composition theories in the TA training. While making a comment on how the practicum course could be more helpful for her, Mary expressed the desire for opportunities to workshop assignments more and then added: "There are too many readings. Why so many readings?" (p. 5, Interview 1). What she said is very representative of many first-year TAs' stance on the theory-focused materials integrated into the TA practicum course. Although very embracing of new ideas of writing and the teaching of writing, Clara articulated a similar idea while describing the readings in the practicum course: "Things like that that I see already in action, or that I witness myself or experience myself, I gravitate more towards those readings. Like, 'Whoa, this is a real thing.' Less so with readings that are super out there and just hazy and conceptual." When talking about the translingual approach towards the teaching of writing, Steven also pointed out that there seemed to be a big gap between theory and practice, which was confirmed by an established SLW scholar that he conversed with during a professional conference. It is not surprising that first-year TAs, especially those who were teaching for the very first time wanted concrete and practical materials that would help sustain their day-to-day class activities; the burning pressure as a new teacher could hinder their perspective on the more long-term benefits of such a setup with training. While the director and several former directors of the writing program are also

aware of many TAs' reaction to the theory-heavy practicum course, they believe that it is beneficial in the long term for TAs' professional development.

Is there a way to find the intricate balance between theory and practice? Is it really a mission impossible that both the TAs and WPA have to painstakingly struggle with? One implication that emerged from my observation of how TAs flexibly and strategically transferred resources across their multimemberships, is that instead of trying really hard for the WPA to find or strive for the perfect balance between giving TAs 'practical things' and 'critical stuff', it might be more productive to think about various ways of facilitating praxis (Johnson, 2006; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014) in TA trainings and continuous support to their professional development. Some of these facilitations might take the form of TA trainers modeling connecting theories with current teaching practices, or taking a more interdisciplinary approach to organize trainings to make it feel closer to the respective disciplines that TAs are already very invested in. As a first-year composition teacher but a relatively experienced teacher who started teaching in her undergraduate years, Clara was already making student income a part of resources for teaching and utilizing metacognition to help with learning transfer; when she encountered the theories that introduced her to the idea of student income and metacognition, her reaction was: "whatever readings speak to a reality that I already see or a practice that I'm already doing but without name, those are the ones that I tend to remember more" (p. 11, Interview 1). As we can see from Clara's example, the value of confirming TAs' existing knowledge and teaching philosophies is immeasurable.

Discussing the sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education, Johnson (2006) emphasized the importance of facilitating the process of theory/practice to praxis and validating teachers' ways of knowing. Problematizing the false dichotomy between theory

and practice, she reminded us that theory and practice inform each other, and it is essential to help teachers see how this transformative process informs their own work. Johnson (2006) also described the challenge of how teacher education could create public spaces "to make visible how L2 teachers make sense of and use the disciplinary knowledge that has informed and will continue to inform L2 teacher education" (p. 241). The following sections provide some starting ideas to address such challenges.

Constant re-examination of assumptions about teaching, the teaching of writing, and teacher training. Similarly, writing programs could strive to be constantly reflective on their own practices and assumptions in order to make informed and conscious decisions about teacher training and support situated in their particular sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts. What assumptions are made about the action of teaching itself? What do we believe about the teaching of writing as a writing program? How is teacher training approached before top-down training activities are being organized? What is the impact of teacher training on teachers' early career work and how does it carry over into their continuous professional development? When there is adjustment in the theoretical framing of teacher training programs, how do we enact it not only in teachers' heads but also in their practices?

On the other hand, fleshing out assumptions imbedded in the training and other support of local WPAs is not promoting the idea that teachers are passive balls of clay that are waiting to be molded. As emphasized at the beginning of this chapter, teachers are transformative intellectuals who are able to make sense of and make active decisions about classroom practices they are engaged in, if they are given the space and opportunity to. Even when teachers experience moments of clashing ideologies between their current beliefs and those underlying teacher training, these moments are not necessarily counterproductive. On the contrary, they might lead

to valuable moments when they claim an agentive teacher identity through negotiating with the tension of clashing ideologies. For example, instead of teaching and assessing the four course outcomes separately, as the default setup in the training and what most TAs do in their classroom, Maria decided to integrate all the four outcomes and ask students to demonstrate all four outcomes in every paper that they showcased in their final writing portfolio. While explaining why she made this decision, she said:

> Because that's how I see the world. I guess it ties back to what my research interests are. Like I see a lot more... see how those things are integrated, and it doesn't make any sense to me to pull things apart that actually don't function separately in the real world. And so I like teaching more integrated worldview together with the way I teach writing because of that's how I see it. And that class helped me figure that out, and I had a lot of support from xx (Professor of the seminar) to do it that way, even though I was the only person who's doing that way. (p. 7, Interview 1)

We can see here that Maria took up some frameworks from her graduate work in Indigenous Studies (intersectionality and reciprocal worldview) and used them to negotiate with the underlying individualistic assumption in the training that treats four course outcomes as separate. Support from the professor of the practicum course and the intentionality in her decision-making fostered an agentive teacher identity that will take her teaching and her future professional development a long way. However, more built-in scaffolding and space need to be provided in order to facilitate such productive negotiation, so that Maria's case is not one of the rare cases but common practice in teacher training that allow for more opportunities of self-directed learning. Meanwhile, I also wonder what interfered with Steven's ability to find space in the process of teacher training to articulate his hesitation about the practicality of a translingual approach to the teaching of writing. He found an external source -- a professional conference where he exchanged ideas with an established SLW scholar, in order to process his thoughts on translingual teaching. What this implies is that teacher training programs do not have to carry the

sole burden of providing teachers with resources of professional development. Instead, teachers can be encouraged and empowered to look beyond their immediate contexts for support and draw on resources from their broader professional community. At the same time, teacher educators can use these examples to think about what they can do to help create more space and facilitate productive professional dialogues.

Facilitating brokering: exploring more alternatives. Working through institutional, financial, and logistical restrictions in order to achieve the mission impossible requires us to think outside the box and be more imaginative about solutions. Besides the proposal to facilitate the process of theory/practice to praxis and validate teachers' ways of knowing, Johnson (2006) also discussed the possibility of re-drawing the boundaries of professional development. Alongside the top-down model of teacher training (such as the two-week orientation and the quarter-long practicum course in my study), she also called for more space for alternative professional development activities that "allow for self-directed, collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers' classroom lives" (p. 243). Some examples of such alternative professional development activities she gave are teacher inquiry seminars, peer coaching, cooperative development, teacher study groups, narrative inquiry, lesson study groups, and critical friends groups.

Canagarajah's (2012) autoethnography on his own professional development as a teacher gives us some concrete images of what these alternative professional development activities could look like in practice. As a new teacher of ESL in 1980s postcolonial Sri Lanka, he supplemented the limited top-down and Westernized teacher training with active engagement with his senior colleagues who had more experience and knowledge working with the local

context. Through pedagogy conversations, collaborative problem-solving, resource sharing, as well as continuous engagement with scholarship in the field, he established a productive periphery professional identity in TESOL that took advantage of his various identities and community memberships, such as his multilingual identity. In sharing his example, Canagarajah (2012) also demonstrated critical awareness of the recursive relation between the local and the global. As he disclaimed in his autoethnography: "The story of professionalization in this article is based on my background as a periphery professional in TESOL. However, I must guard against claiming an unqualified purity or localness for my narrative. My story is shaped by the global as well as the local, which often permeate each other." (p. 262). As an essential institutional support for the professional development of composition teachers, local WPAs have to re-imagine the boundaries of where their support starts and ends, and provide resources for more "self-directed, collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers' classroom lives" (Johnson, 2006, p. 243). As our higher education institutions become more and more globalized, not only in terms of student and teacher population but also socioculturally and sociopolitically, creating built-in space so that teachers could make more connections between their local and global memberships could possibly increase the efficiency of teacher training by capitalizing more on teacher incomes.

6.3 Reconceptualizing My Research Study

Bloome et al. (2005) describe the concept of *research imagination* as an act that: "reflect[s] and create[s] an image of the classroom [...] recognize[ing] that research is a human process caught up in the complexity of human relationships while also recognizing the importance of being reflective about those complex human relationships." (p. xxii) The emerging and evolving nature of my research led to various moments that reflect this complex, relational process. My

intention of unpacking these moments is not only to make visible to my readers the constraints I worked with, but also opportunities and transformations they brought to my research process.

An autoethnography continued: graduate student peers and teacher colleagues as co-researchers.

I started off this study assuming the implicit role of an 'objective' and 'scientific' researcher. This positionality is heavily influenced by a positivistic approach from the quantitative and experimental research tradition that places the researcher at a role that looks for and records the one absolute truth without consideration of the researcher's own subjectivities, relations with other parties involved, and their impact to the whole research process (Maxwell, 1992). Writing from a feminist research perspective, England (1994) summarizes this research positionality as follows:

> **"**Neopositivist empiricism specifies a strict dichotomy between object and subject as a prerequisite for objectivity. Such an epistemology is supported by methods that position the researcher as an omnipotent expert in control of both passive research subjects and the research process." (p. 81)

As my study progressed, it became more and more evident that instead of this dichotomous, objectivist approach, a reciprocal, constructivist paradigm made more sense with the context and purpose of my qualitative research. Two concepts from the feminist research tradition help illustrate my research process to the fuller – intersubjectivity and reflexivity. According to England (1994), intersubjectivity shifts the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched from an in-control expert and passive subject relationship to a reciprocal relationship "based on empathy and mutual respect" (p. 82). It acknowledges researchers' dependence on the

researched for information and guidance. Meanwhile, "reflexivity is self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher" (p. 82). Under this research epistemology, I consider my study to be co-constructed by me and my participants or whom I will call co-researchers from this point. It is co-constructed not only in the sense that the data (interview recordings, collected documents) under analysis is created or provided by the joint efforts of co-researchers and me, but also that my continuously developing relationship with my teacher participants, conversations with TA seminar professors, the writing program assistant directors, and directors help shape my data collection and analysis process, therefore impact the meanings and knowledge I make out of them.

Acknowledging this intersubjectivity and reflexivity is not to claim power neutrality in the research process. On the contrary, power is an integral force that shaped my relationship with my co-researchers thus my whole research project. Intersections of my identities and my co-researchers' created contact zones that facilitated various opportunities for my research. For instance, being a woman of color, I was at first skeptical of Evelyn's 'progressive-sounding' stance on issues related to differences in writing. Getting to know my White female colleague more as a whole person and working through my own subjectivity or bias (as in the positivist term) towards her as a White teacher created a productive contact zone in which both of us reflected on, pushed further, and co-constructed our understandings on issues in the FYC classrooms. In the meantime, our shared experiences as graduate student teachers in composition and differed experiences as women in varying socially privileged positions helped engage us in conversations that identified some of the perspectives being a person of dominant race could be ascribed to – such as the overall institutional silence around race and power that many of my co-researchers were socialized into or picked up. In the meantime, the evolving relationship

between me and my co-researchers led to a deeper emotional and professional investment in my teacher participants, which could be a 'barrier' to 'objectively' interpret some of their perceptions and what they did in the classroom, but also be opportunities to better contextualize my observations and complicate my analysis. My experience as a researcher also 'triangulated' with that as a student and teacher and give me multiple perspectives on certain interpretations.

Next-steps: gaps and future directions.

More research on teacher and teacher training. I would like to first echo the call from Canagarajah (2012) for more research on "how teachers and CoPs should relate to the professional community" (p. 272). More future research should be dedicated to studying teachers as a part of the professional community instead of only as individuals that operate in their own parallel universes. Reflecting upon his own experience ("apprenticeship") learning to teach from teaching and being pedagogically engaged with his colleagues as a TESOL professional in Sri Lanka, Canagarajah pointed out that Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) "have greatly influenced scholars to adopt a practice-based and social constructionist orientation to teacher development" (p. 264). Such approach to teacher development can certainly be applied to fields outside TESOL. In my future research design on composition teacher education, besides investigating how 'external' sources such as departmental training, professional experiences and histories interact with composition teachers' development, I would like to also consider how the process of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) play a role in their professionalization process. Further research along this direction would be valuable in unpacking the socioculturally rich professional development process of composition teachers. More research on how teacher

education and CoPs can facilitate praxis can also help further dismantle the theory-practice dichotomy and conundrum.

Pushing frameworks and methodologies. As illustrated throughout my findings and conclusions chapters, my study reveals various gaps in our individual and collective thinking on academic discursive practices, diversity, and teacher positionality in relation to students and the classroom space. For example, how do we foster a healthy tension between samenesses and differences in order to have conversations on diversity in a way that promotes change and contributes to social justice? How do we integrate the inquiry line of identity and power into composition classroom ecology? Are we aware of the stakes of missing race and power in our conversations of diversity? One example of such a further step could be opening up more conversations on TAs' silence on their own race and privileges. As researchers we also need more critical reflections on methodologies. My own inquiry into composition teachers' thinking and positionality helped flesh out the necessity to make a further shift towards a feminist epistemology of research, and continue to de-center the 'objective' ontology in qualitative research in tracing influences and trajectories throughout this human endeavor and process of research.

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Appendix A TA First Interview Protocol

Date and Time of interview: _____
Teacher:

1. What school/college/program are you in? What are your areas of specialization?

2. What resources from your disciplinary training do you find helpful for your teaching? (*Have you been exposed to any composition/writing theories or practices studying in your own discipline?)

3. When did you participate in the orientation for new composition TAs? Did you learn anything new? What did you find helpful (or can be improved) in the orientation?

4. When did you participate in the seminar class for new composition TAs? Did you learn anything new? What did you find helpful (or can be improved) in the class?

5. How many students are there in the class you are teaching this quarter? What's your impression of your class demographics? Do you think you have a diverse student population in your class? Why or why not? In what ways?

6. What, if any, do you do differently when you work with different students (such as writing skills, majors, language/culture)?

7. What do you think your (multilingual) students need in order to successfully fulfill the first-year writing requirements?

8. Are there any particular curriculum and pedagogical decisions informed by the various trainings you had? Can you give some examples? Any strategies you used to apply certain theories to your classroom?

9. Is there any other training or life experience (such as living abroad) that you think has impacted your teaching?

10. What resources and support, if any, do you feel you need to work with a diverse student population in your classes more effectively?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about your experience in your classroom?

Appendix B TA Second Interview Protocol

Date and Time of interview: _____
Teacher:

Thank you for having another interview with me! Last time we chatted about your disciplinary background, experience in the EWP training, and how those professional trainings as well as personal experiences inform decisions made in the process of teaching 131. Today I will ask some specific questions about things I saw you do in the class and follow-ups from the last interview. Feel free to share your thoughts honestly, because I am simply trying to better understand your teaching philosophies and practices, and also what influence these practices. All your responses are confidential.

1. What do you think went well (or not very well) in class today/in the last class (last Thursday)? Why?

2. What were your big ideas for this/the last lesson?

3. What did you hear the student talking about today? What do you think your students were talking about? What was their partial understanding about the big ideas?

4. Since I am not in your class for the whole quarter, can you tell me about the lessons that come before this lesson and the lessons that will follow it?
   - Some follow-up questions on particular class activities from the past two class observations:

5. What did you try this quarter that seemed successful? Why would you call it successful? Why were you excited to see xxx happen? Is there something that you would have liked to have seen that didn't happen?

6. After teaching your students for almost a quarter, what's your current observation of student demographics?
   - How do you perceive or interpret diversity in your class?
   - What do you do with it?

7. What's your understanding/definition of the term multilingual students? (Some follow-up questions.)

8. Questions for the specific teacher (follow-up questions from last interview or questions emerged from the class observations).

9. Is there anything else about the EWP training that you would like to mention?

10. What do you think about the support you receive from the department (EWP or English Department)?

Appendix C Interview Protocols: Writing Program Director and/or First-Year TA Seminar Professor

EWP Director Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me. As you know, I am interested in learning more about TAs' experience in the EWP new-TA training and their teaching in a diverse classroom. I am especially interested in understanding what they gain from the EWP training, their own disciplinary training, personal experiences, and how they integrate certain resources from those trainings into their teaching practices. Gaining a more solid knowledge on how work at EWP is carried out and how the TA training is designed will help me better understand the transfer process and what more support can be provided to the TAs to work effectively with their diverse student population. I will be really grateful if you can share something "behind-the-scenes", since I've only seen and experienced the work of EWP from the perspective of a teacher. *All responses are confidential. *

1. How long have you been with the English Department? How long have you worked/did you work as the EWP director?

2. What are some of your responsibilities as the director?

3. Can you describe the history of the EWP program for me? (For example, when and how it started, what was it like before, what changes have taken place)

4. Were/Are there any fundamental guidelines/principles/rationales at EWP? Can you describe them?

5. What are the goals of TA training (outcomes)?

6. Who are usually involved in designing, organizing, and implementing the training? What is the overall training design like (structure, materials, etc.)?

7. What are some of the important decisions you had to make in designing the training?

8. Is there any particular part of training or mentoring that is targeted at meeting the needs of multilingual students (other than the introductory courses/multilingual student sections)/a diverse student population? Please describe it.

9. How are classes usually assigned to graduate student teachers? And why?

10. Can you give me some examples of follow-up work/mentorship provided to the TAs after the orientation?

11. What advice would you give/have you given to the new TAs?

12. What advice would you give/have you given to the current director?

13. If there's one thing you can keep about EWP, what would that be?

14. If there's one thing you can change about EWP, what would that be?

15. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?

First-Year Composition TA Seminar Professor Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me. As you know, I am interested in learning more about TAs' experience in the EWP new-TA training and their teaching in a diverse classroom. I am especially interested in understanding what they gain from the EWP training, their own disciplinary training, personal experiences, and how they integrate certain resources from those trainings into their teaching practices. Gaining a more solid knowledge on how the TA seminar is designed and taught will help me better understand the transfer process and what more support can be provided to the TAs to work effectively with their diverse student population. I will be really grateful if you can share something "behind-the-scenes", since I've only seen and experienced the seminar from the perspective of a new TA and student. *All responses are confidential. *

1. How long have you taught ENGL 567 (the new TA seminar)? How are professors usually scheduled/assigned to teach this course?

2. How would you describe 567 to people unfamiliar with the course (such as people outside the department)?

3. What are the goals of this course (outcomes/objectives)?

4. What's the overall course design like (course structure, materials included and why, etc.)?

5. What are some important decisions you had to make in designing the course?

6. What do you think is the most essential part of this course?

7. What is your observation of the class demographics (such as linguistic and cultural background, nationalities, fields/specialization of the TAs, etc.)?

8. Are there any class materials or activities in the course that specifically target at teaching multilingual students/a diverse student population? Please describe them.

9. What advice would you give to future new TAs taking this course?
10. What advice would you give to future professors teaching this course?
11. If there's one thing you can keep about this course, what would that be?
12. If there's one thing you can change about this course, what would that be?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?

Appendix D Group Interview Protocol with EWP Assistant Directors

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me. As you know, I am interested in learning more about TAs' experience in the EWP new-TA training and their teaching in a diverse classroom. I am especially interested in understanding what they gain from the EWP training, their own disciplinary training, personal experiences, and how they integrate certain resources from those trainings into their teaching practices. Gaining a more solid knowledge on how work at EWP is carried out and how the TA training is designed will help me better understand the transfer process and what more support can be provided to the TAs to work effectively with their diverse student population. I will be really grateful if you can share things "behind-the-scenes", since I've only seen and experienced the work of EWP from the perspective of a teacher. Please feel free to expand on or add anything that you think is relevant to the questions I ask. Also feel free to ask each other questions, bounce ideas off each other, since it's a collaborative intellectual space where I am learning things from all of you. *All responses are confidential. *

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself (educational background, research fields, timeline in the program, etc.)?

2. How long have you worked/did you work as the EWP assistant director (AD)? What made you interested in becoming an AD?

3. What are some of your responsibilities as the AD?

4. Can you describe your first day as the AD? - What was it like? What did you do? How did you feel?

5. What are the main goals of TA training (outcomes)?

6. Who are usually involved in designing, organizing, and implementing the training? How do you coordinate with each other?

7. What is the overall training design like (schedule, structure, materials included and why, etc.) for 2016?

8. Is there any difference in the 2016 training compared to the last one (2015)? If so, what caused these changes?

9. What are some of the important decisions you had to make in the process of preparing for the training?

10. Is there any particular part of training or mentoring that is targeted at meeting the needs of a diverse student population (other than the studio course/multilingual student sections)? Please describe it.

11. How are classes usually assigned to graduate student teachers? And why?

12. What is your observation of the TA orientation demographics (such as linguistic and cultural background, nationalities, fields/specialization of the TAs)?

13. Have you noticed any differences in the needs (or support) of TAs from different background?

14. What do you usually do after orientation to follow up with the new TAs? Can you give me some examples?

15. What advice would you give/have you given to the new TAs?

16. If there's one thing about EWP that you can keep (or change), what would that be?

17. What suggestion(s) would you give/have you given to the EWP director?

18. What advice would you give/have you given to future ADs?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?