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Justina Rompogren

Identity Positioning in Mainstream and Multilingual First-Year Composition Courses

Justina Rompogren

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2017

Reading Committee:

Juan Guerra, Chair

Priti Sandhu

Anis Bawarshi

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

English

University of Washington

**Abstract**

Identity Positioning in Mainstream and Multilingual First-Year Composition Courses

Justina Rompogren

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:  
Professor Juan Guerra  
American Ethnic Studies

This qualitative study investigates the identity positioning of students and teachers within one mainstream and one multilingual section of English 131 (a first-year composition course) at the University of Washington in order to examine the similarities and differences between the identity positioning of participants in each class. Following a case study approach, data included multiple interviews with four students from each section, as well as interviews with the instructors of each class, student focus group interviews following the culmination of the course, course observations, and curriculum document collection. Important similarities and differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections emerged. Similarities between the two classes largely aligned along student experiences. For example, students from both classes did not seem to position themselves as multilingual or not due to the English 131 section they chose to enroll in. Students from both classes also perceived the term “multilingual” to mean that a multilingual English 131 class would entail increased attention to lower-order concerns (such as grammar

instruction), whereas a mainstream class would focus on higher-order concerns (such as claim development). On the other hand, differences between the two classes largely aligned along teacher experiences – specifically how the two teachers identified their professional roles in the classroom and in the university. For example, the mainstream instructor positioned herself as a “colleague” to her students, whereas the multilingual instructor positioned himself as an “authority.” This differing positioning impacted the ways students were expected to conceptualize their roles in the classroom. However, in the instructor training that both teachers underwent prior to teaching English 131, the mainstream instructor felt herself to be positioned as a “novice” teacher, despite the fact that she was an experienced teacher, while the multilingual instructor felt himself to be positioned as an “expert” due to his prior teaching experience. This appeared to have an impact on the two teachers’ willingness to adopt the English 131 curriculum. Ultimately, the specifically located and enacted identities of the participating students and teachers in the two classes had complex effects as they negotiated their positioning in the classroom, amongst their peers, and within the institution.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Identities in Mainstream and Multilingual First-Year Composition.....	1
Purpose of Study .....	9
Preview of Findings .....	14
Theoretical Framework: Conception of Identity .....	17
Chapter Overview .....	21
Chapter 2. Research on Student and Teacher Identity in Composition and Second Language Studies.....	24
Overview of Composition’s Approach to Difference.....	25
Overview of Second Language Studies’ Conceptualization of Diverse Student Identities.....	33
Bridging Composition and Second Language Studies .....	40
Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology.....	54
Context of Study .....	55
Participants.....	61
Research Design .....	72
Data Collection .....	75
Data Analysis .....	83
Chapter 4. Student Conceptions of “Multilingual” .....	93
Finding 1: Students Did Not Intentionally Position Themselves as Multilingual or Non-Multilingual Via Enrollment.....	94
Finding 2: Students Believed the Multilingual Section Would Involve More Grammar Instruction and Be Taught at a Slower Pace .....	100
Finding 3: Students in Neither of the Two Classes Identify as Multilingual .....	108
Discussion of Findings 1 through 3: Lower- and Higher-Order Concerns in the Mainstream and Multilingual Classes.....	116
Chapter 5. Effects of Teacher Positioning in English 131 .....	130
Contexts for Findings 4 and 5.....	130
Finding 4: In Class, the Mainstream Teacher Positioned Herself as a “Colleague,” While the Multilingual Teacher Positioned Himself as an “Authority” .....	137
Finding 5: The Mainstream Teacher Felt Positioned by the Institution as a “Novice,” While the Multilingual Teacher Felt Positioned as an “Expert” .....	151
Discussion of Findings 4 and 5: Ideological Differences in the Mainstream and Multilingual Teachers’ Pedagogical Approach .....	162
Chapter 6. Implications and Conclusion.....	178
Summary of Findings.....	179
Pedagogical Implications .....	181
Bibliography .....	194

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate .....	210
Appendix B: Student Consent Form .....	211
Appendix C: Instructor Consent Form.....	214
Appendix D: Student Interview Protocol.....	217
Appendix E: Teacher Interview Protocol .....	220
Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Protocol.....	222
Appendix G: Focus Group Interview Handout.....	225
Appendix H: Course Observation Protocol .....	227

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have greatly appreciated the support, guidance, and education I have received from my dissertation committee members – each of them has played an incredibly important role in this educational achievement. I would like to thank Juan Guerra, for always being a practical voice of reason during my research and writing process; Priti Sandhu, for being a consistently kind and supportive mentor as I waded through data analysis; Anis Bawarshi, for his grounded support in helping me address my dissertation concerns; and Maresi Nerad, for sharing her time and feedback with me in support of my exams and dissertation process.

I would also like to thank my participants, without whom this study would not have been possible. They very generously shared their time and perspectives with me, and I enjoyed getting to know each of them during this research project.

I would also like to thank Joscelyn Rompogren, for being my sounding board and empathizer, as we simultaneously dissertated in our respective fields. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Michael and Darlene Rompogren, who have tirelessly advocated for me and my education, and who have instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility and duty, which has motivated me at difficult points in this project. This dissertation would not have been completed without them.

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Michael and Darlene Rompogren, for their endless support and encouragement.

## Chapter 1. IDENTITIES IN MAINSTREAM AND MULTILINGUAL FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

The introductory college composition course has almost always been a site of change and adaptation. Its student-centered focus—based on the fact that who our students are is important to how we teach writing—has required adaptation in composition theory and pedagogy as we account for shifting student populations and the wide range of knowledges, abilities, and identity positions students bring to our classrooms. Because introductory composition also frequently functions as a gatekeeping force in academia (Crowley, 1998), composition instructors teach in some of the most diverse classrooms at the university, since almost every student at the university must pass through a first-year composition course. The unique site of the first-year composition class as a gatekeeper and a space for students’ “initiation into the academic discourse community” (Bizzell, 1992, p. 105) has compelled composition scholars and teachers to learn more about who our students are. This has motivated composition’s prolific research and theory on student identity, at different times conceptualized as “subjectivity” (Crowley, 1998), “self” (Burnham, 2001), and “voice” (Halasek, 1999).

The focus on subjectivities in the classroom has also compelled prolific research and theory on teacher identity, in both composition studies and second language studies. Research has found that teacher identity is often affected by institutional expectations and practices, which in turn impacts student learning. For example, Duff and Uchida (1997) found that teachers’ perceptions of their sociocultural identities were “subject to constant negotiation due to changing contextual elements, such as the classroom/institutional culture, instructional materials, and reactions from students and colleagues” (p. 460). Thus, not only does student identity positioning

impact student opportunities for learning, but teacher identity positioning affects and is affected by curriculum constraints, student and institutional expectations, and classroom practices.

Research into teacher identity in composition and second language studies has focused on teacher training (Alsup, 2006; Rice, 2011); teacher professionalization (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000), and teachers' impact on student learning (Yoon, 2008; Reeves, 2009; Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010).

The recent increase in the number of second language speakers in composition courses has also added a level of complexity to our understanding of difference and identity in the composition classroom (Zamel & Spack, 2004; *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, 2011; Miller-Cochran, 2010; Jordan, 2012; Matsuda, 2012; Kerschbaum, 2014). Second language studies, having produced prolific research into the ways student identity and positioning may impact learning, informs much of what we know and practice in composition regarding multilingual students. Student identity affects the types of resources students use or have access to in the university (Braine, 1996), the motivation or investment students have in learning (Norton, 2013), the type of feedback they receive on their written work (Ferris, Brown, Liu, & Stine, 2011), and the way they are socialized into the academic community (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). In other words, student and teacher identity positioning can facilitate or inhibit student access to academic, social, cultural, and material opportunities for learning and socializing.

In light of our acknowledgment that identity positioning, as it is enacted via course labeling and student and teacher expectations, can and does affect student learning in the first-year writing classroom, some institutions now offer specialized versions of introductory composition. A common practice employed to distinguish some writing classes from

“mainstream” composition (Braine, 1996; Costino & Hyon, 2007) is to label them “ESL” composition (Braine, 1996) or “multilingual” (MLL) composition (Costino & Hyon, 2007).<sup>1</sup> While these classes tend to have similar goals—both courses instruct students on the fundamentals of academic writing—the classroom culture tends to vary significantly between ESL and mainstream writing classes. Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995), for example, suggest that ESL writing classes and mainstream writing classes are based on different underlying theories and expectations about the purpose of academic writing, what constitutes good academic writing, and how to teach academic writing skills. They argue that mainstream composition tends to focus on the development of critical thinking and self-expression, whereas ESL composition tends to focus on developing fundamental skills to communicate effectively in writing (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995). This ideological difference likely emerges from the different disciplinary histories that inform composition studies and second language studies (Santos, 1992). Applied linguistics, based largely on an empiricist, scientific perspective, forms the foundation for second language studies, while the social turn in composition studies shifted the field away from positivist pedagogies and toward critical, sociocultural perspectives on language and writing.

Not only do multilingual and mainstream composition classes appear to be based in different pedagogical cultures, but the argumentation style and mechanics of native English speaker (NES) writing differs from that of ESL students (Silva, 1997). In a review of the research on differences between ESL and NES writing, Silva (1997) determines that not only do there tend to be “more errors overall” in ESL writing than in NES writing (p. 210), but textual patterns vary between NES and ESL students, according to cultural preferences (for example,

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I refer to second language students at different times as ESL, L2, second language, multilingual (MLL), or NES (non-native English speaker), depending on the terminology used in the contexts I reference. Similarly, I refer to American, English-speaking students as L1, native English speaker (NES), or mainstream.

native English speakers tend to prefer linear organizational patterns, whereas native Chinese speakers tend to prefer centrifugal organizational patterns) (Norment, 1984, as cited in Silva, 1997). These differences may influence the way teachers address ESL student writing in comparison to native speaker writing. For example, Ferris, Brown, Liu, and Stine (2011) found that instructors tend to provide more “language-focused feedback” to ESL students (p. 218) and are more likely to refer their ESL students to writing resources outside the classroom (i.e., tutoring at a writing center) (p. 218).

Finally, a teacher’s response to L1 versus L2 student writing may also be informed by prevailing myths about second language writers in composition classes. These myths include the common assumptions that ESL students are easy to identify in the classroom, that they are a small minority in composition classes, or that they simply need more grammar instruction (Miller-Cochran, 2010). Not only do these myths essentialize second language speakers in problematic ways, but the shifting demographic of students at many colleges and universities nationwide, especially in the past couple of decades, highlights the inaccuracy of these assumptions. The body of work on generation 1.5 students (a common term for U.S. resident second language speakers) (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Schwartz, 2010) demonstrates the complexity of student linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The growing literature within composition and second language research that emphasizes the importance of cultural and situational genre awareness also suggests that the presence of second language writers in composition classes cannot be addressed simply by providing more grammar instruction. These realities have likely spurred the proliferation of composition classes for multilingual students in higher education.

In response to the proliferation of separate composition classes for mainstream and multilingual students, more researchers are trying to understand how or why students enroll in such classes. Braine (1996) was one of the first to study ESL students in first-year writing classes, in particular looking at student tracking into these classes. He found that enrollment in ESL versus mainstream composition classes was based on specific student preferences. Students who chose to enroll in an ESL composition class likely wanted to join a community of students facing potentially similar challenges, whereas students who enrolled in mainstream composition courses likely wanted to take on the “challenge” of the mainstream class (Braine, 1996, p. 99). Whatever students’ motivation, Braine’s (1996) research concluded that students should be able to choose their class and not be assigned or tracked into it by the university.

However, while allowing students the choice to enroll in a mainstream or multilingual writing class is important, Ferris (2009) raises a compelling concern about the way in which students might be divided into such classes: mainly, that some students may inadvertently be excluded in the dichotomy between ESL and mainstream classes. She divides student language ability broadly into three categories (high proficiency, middle proficiency, and low proficiency), suggesting that top-performing students are served by mainstream composition classes and bottom-performing students are served by second language writing instructors, but there is an “invisible and underserved middle” population of L2 learners in college writing and composition (Ferris, 2009, p. 123). These middle students are those that

may be orally fluent and able to compose academic essays of adequate length, but they may have a variety of language and literacy issues...that hold them back from being truly successful. They have gaps and they have problems, but their issues are not as apparent

and pressing as those of the bottom layer of students, nor are they as able to be as self-sufficient and successful as those in the top layer. (Ferris, 2009, p. 124)

These are the students who end up divided between mainstream and ESL or MLL composition, but may feel that they do not fully belong in either group. Also, the typical mainstream composition class itself enrolls a range of students (high, medium, and low proficiency English writers) with a variety of differing needs. Thus, there is a need to develop composition and second language pedagogical strategies that address the gap represented by these middle students. There is also a need to ensure that teachers of writing are aware of the challenges that multilingual students may face in first-year writing courses, and that teachers are well-equipped to help students address and overcome these challenges.

Despite the differences in ideology and practice between composition theory and pedagogy and second language theory and pedagogy, there is a substantial overlapping body of research in these fields. A major point of similarity between composition and second language studies is the oft-researched and argued belief that the way teachers identify and position second language learners in class can and does affect student learning. This is an especially prevalent issue in light of the growing diversity of the American population (with higher representations of immigrants, bilinguals, non-native English speaking residents, and generation 1.5 students) that also happens to be reflected in student enrollment. Institutional categories such as “ESL,” “ELL” (English Language Learner), or “multilingual” impact the resources students have access to in an institution. For example, it has been shown that some students avoid taking classes labeled “ESL” due to the negative assumptions that come along with the label (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Harklau, 2011; Chiang & Schmida, 1999). Likewise, identity categories such as native speaker and non-native speaker can affect how students view themselves and how instructors view their

students. For example, as Canagarajah (1999) argues, the “native speaker” label idealizes nativeness and holds native fluency as an impossible standard for language learners—an assumption that, according to Block (2003), essentializes linguistic competence as learners are assumed to possess complete competence in their first language and incomplete competence in a second language (p. 36). Cook (1999) attempts to dismantle such essentialist assumptions, proposing instead the idea of multicompetence, which conceptualizes linguistic competence as a complete system which contains both the first language and second language.

Cook (1999) also proposes that language teaching move away from focusing on the native English speaker and instead focus on the second language user (by purposely using students’ first language in language teaching activities), rather than setting up the native speaker ideal as an unattainable goal for students (p. 185). Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) have also contributed to the conversation of relabeling, using terms such as “language expertise” or “language affiliation” (rather than native or nonnative) to talk about English language learners’ linguistic capacities and knowledge. While we know that identity labels can affect student self-perception, interaction with peers, and movement within academic institutions, research into the reasons behind the choices that students make to position themselves is lacking. Also, while research has been done on student identity and institutional labels, there has been little research on teacher perceptions of their own identity positioning in multilingual or mainstream teaching contexts. More exploration into student and teacher perceptions of institutional categories and the ways students and teachers position themselves (or feel themselves to be positioned) in the classroom and the institution could prove productive in the context of research into student and teacher identity in composition and second language writing studies. As Kerschbaum (2014) notes, “what is [further] needed is a flexible means for examining and re-examining the interplay

between identity categories and the communicative performances and contexts in which those categories become meaningful” (p. 4). I argue, in addition to this, that what is needed is a concrete understanding of the interplay between identity categories as they are enacted in differently labeled (and positioned) composition courses.

Fortunately, we already have many of the tools we need, from extensive and valuable research in both second language studies and the field of composition, to be able to develop theories of writing applicable to both mainstream and multilingual writing contexts. But while research in composition and second language studies has been exploring student and teacher identity and learning (as well as student and teacher perspectives on such) for two decades, scholars in both fields have yet to suggest a practical, concrete framework for teachers to utilize as they address the needs of students who come from a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Likewise, while second language studies in particular have explored the ways in which student and teacher identity positioning may impact opportunities for writing practice, learning, and socialization, more research is needed to explore the resulting effects of such identity positioning as institutions attempt to acknowledge particular, complex identities in writing classrooms – particularly as they attempt to acknowledge complex identities by establishing different learning contexts.

This study focuses on identity positioning in the classroom, looking specifically at how student and teacher identity positioning may be different in a multilingual as opposed to a mainstream composition course. My goal for this study is to look for ways to merge theory and pedagogy in composition and second language studies, as there are undoubtedly concrete practices utilized and employed in the multilingual composition classroom that can be effectively and successfully applied in the mainstream classroom, and vice versa. In suggesting that we

merge the practices of both composition and second language studies research and pedagogy, I am adding to the research already conducted by Santos, 1992; Silva, 1994 (as cited in Matsuda, Saenkhum, & Accardi, 2013); Silva & Leki, 2004; Baker, 2008; Cox, Jordan, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Schwartz, 2010; Horner, Lu, & Matsuda, 2010; and Costino & Hyon, 2007, 2011. It is my hope that this study will contribute to the development of pedagogical practices specifically designed to improve the teaching of writing for mainstream and multilingual students alike.

### PURPOSE OF STUDY

There is much research in composition and second language studies that explores the integration of second language students and multilingual or multicultural students into mainstream composition courses. However, there is still research to be done that explores the results of positioning multilingual students differently from their mainstream peers, as well as teacher influence on such positioning. In recognizing that there are indeed differences in the ways that multilingual and mainstream students are positioned by their teachers and the institution, this study aims to examine the effects of student and teacher identity positioning in the first-year writing course. This study thus examines student identity positioning by looking at how students position themselves in their writing classroom, or are positioned by their peers, instructor or the institution; and examines teacher identity positioning by looking at how instructors position themselves within the classroom and the institution, as well as how they are positioned by the institution. The purpose of this study is to understand how student and teacher identity positioning is differently enacted in each class and to uncover some of the fundamental differences and similarities between a mainstream and a multilingual composition class at one institution.

The institution under study is the Expository Writing Program (EWP) housed within the English Department at the University of Washington. The courses under study are two sections of the introductory composition course English 131 offered by the EWP: one is a mainstream section of English 131, while the other is a multilingual section. The study focuses on two groups of students: a group of four each from the chosen mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131 (eight students in total). The study also focuses on the instructors of both of those groups (two instructors in total). The research consists of student and teacher interviews, as well as course observations and the analysis of course materials from both classes. It is my belief that English 131 constitutes a productive research site due to the diversity of the students who enroll in it: many incoming freshman students each year are international, for example, but it is common also for second language learners, generation 1.5 students, and other students with complex linguistic backgrounds to enroll as well. As the study aims to explore a phenomenon that is common to any college or university that teaches writing to multilingual students, the University of Washington's English 131 course is an especially productive research site, since it shares similarities in student populations and first-year composition goals with a wide range of two-year and four-year colleges.

Initially, the objective of this research project comprised three parts: to examine student identity positioning, teacher identity positioning, and the learning affordances offered and/or taken up by students based on their own identity positioning and that of their teacher. I conceptualized affordances as learning "resources" (Canagarajah, 2015, p. 125) or "opportunities" (Hanuscin, Cheng, Rebello, Sinha, & Muslu, 2014, p. 207). Affordances thus constituted, for example, access to campus resources, access to knowledge of specific strategies or skills for writing, or access to peers and/or cultural inclusion. The study was initially intended

to look closely at student and teacher interaction (as it was described in participant interviews and as it was demonstrated in the classroom) to determine how students might take or be denied opportunities for learning. For that reason, the initial set of questions that guided this study included:

- How might student identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, or institution) impact opportunities for academic, social or cultural affordances? How do students orient themselves within the classroom and in relation to their peers and instructor? How might such positioning impact students' opportunities for learning? How might the teacher-imposed positioning of students influence the affordances students secure, take up or reject?
- How might teacher identity positioning in the classroom impact student opportunities for academic, social, or cultural affordances? How might the way a teacher positions him- or herself in class impact student learning opportunities? How might the institutional positioning of the teacher affect his or her identity positioning within the classroom?
- Does the mainstream section of English 131 allow or impede certain affordances for students differently from a multilingual section of English 131 section (or vice versa)? If so, what affordances might students hope to secure in a mainstream English 131 versus a multilingual English 131?

As I had initially intended to closely examine academic, social, and cultural affordances in the two composition classes under study, I intended that the major focus of the study would be on student identity positioning, with a brief look at teacher identity positioning only as a supplement to my analysis of student learning affordances. However, the data that emerged

during the study led me to look more closely at teacher identity positioning – specifically how the two teachers’ identity positioning in different institutional contexts played out in how they approached their students. This meant that the study ended up focusing equally on student and teacher identity positioning in the composition classroom. Due to the change in my research direction midway through the study, I was also forced to revise my research objectives and research questions to account for what I interpreted to be the effects of the differences between the two teachers’ identity positioning. Thus, the revised research questions that guide this study are as follows:

1. How might student identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, or institution) impact opportunities for learning? How do students orient themselves within the classroom and in relation to their peers and instructor? How might the positioning of students influence student learning?
2. How might teacher identity positioning (on the part of the teacher, students, or institution) impact the pedagogical approaches a teacher employs, or vice versa? How might the way a teacher positions him- or herself in class impact student learning opportunities? How might the institutional positioning of the teacher affect his or her identity positioning within the classroom?
3. What are the key differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131?

This study not only examines the ways in which students discursively and socially position themselves or are positioned in the classroom or by the institution (via institutional labeling), but also looks at the ways teachers are discursively or socially positioned in the classroom and institutionally (via teacher training). This study also examines the impacts of such positioning. In

examining student and teacher identity positioning and the results of such identity positioning, this study aims to determine concrete similarities and differences between the mainstream and multilingual composition courses at the University of Washington. This research project also aims to add to the research on how to best address the diverse range of student needs in first-year composition.

The research questions evolved from my interest in how student identity labels (and related assumptions about student identity) might impact the way that students perceive themselves or are perceived by their instructor. In examining those perceptions, I wanted to understand the effects such assumptions or labeling had on student learning. While my focus on student identity positioning was the initial driving force behind my research, as explained above, I also found that teacher identity positioning played an important role in how students positioned themselves (or were positioned) in the classroom. Lastly, in the broad scope of my study, I was ultimately interested in what, essentially, were the differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131. That a multilingual section of English 131 even existed, clearly separated from mainstream sections, indicated that there must be some fundamental differences—enough, in fact, for the institution to create the multilingual composition space. However, the only clear difference between the two courses that I could discern before embarking on this project was that the two courses seemed to enroll different student populations. The students expected to enroll in the multilingual section were assumed to be “multilingual,” but there was little institutional description of the term “multilingual.” Thus, it was my goal to understand how the “multilingual” term was conceptualized by students and teachers, and to ultimately uncover concrete differences between the two classes via student and teacher perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of each.

## PREVIEW OF FINDINGS

There are five major findings in this study. Findings 1 through 3 describe student identity positioning in the classroom and student perspectives on the term “multilingual.” These three findings, centered around student perspectives, also happen to constitute the similarities between the mainstream and multilingual classes. Findings 1 through 3 are as follows:

*Finding 1:* Students in both classes did not intentionally position themselves as multilingual or non-multilingual via enrollment.

*Finding 2:* Students in both classes believed the multilingual section would involve more grammar instruction and be taught at a slower pace.

*Finding 3:* Students in both classes did not identify as multilingual.

One of the most surprising results of the study was discovering that students did not seem to intentionally self-select into the mainstream or multilingual course. As a matter of fact, all eight students in this study explained that they selected their English 131 section due to its timing. None of the students in this study noticed the institutional labeling of the multilingual section as “multilingual” before they enrolled in their classes; nor did any of the students have a complex understanding of the “multilingual” label before this study. It thus did not appear that the institutional and teacher-assigned positioning of students according to their linguistic identities affected student perceptions of identity in an identifiably impactful way – or, at least, that the methods for this study did not find conclusive or significant evidence that students felt positioned as “multilingual” or “mainstream” by the institution, nor self-identified with those labels. Instead, the students’ experiences in each course appeared to be simply the result of the complex entanglement of identities and positionings in each class.

Findings 4 and 5, on the other hand, describe teacher identity positioning in the classroom and the institution. These final two findings, centered around teacher perspectives, happen to constitute the major differences between the two classes. Findings 4 and 5 are as follows:

*Finding 4:* The first major difference between the two classes was that the mainstream teacher positioned herself as a “colleague” in the classroom, while the multilingual teacher positioned himself as an “authority.”

*Finding 5:* The second major difference between the two classes was that the mainstream teacher felt positioned by the institution as a “novice” teacher in the English 131 instructor training, while the multilingual teacher felt positioned as an “expert.”

I found that the way the two teachers were positioned by the institution (the Expository Writing Program) affected their approach to the class and the implementation of the course. For example, the mainstream English 131 instructor, Katie, felt positioned by the institution as a novice during the EWP English 131 training (which all instructors must take before teaching English 131 at the university). Katie resisted her positioning as a novice teacher, in part because she had five years of prior experience teaching composition at the university level at another institution. She also resisted some of the ideological and pedagogical positioning that the teacher administrators established during the training. Because she did not want to take up the identity positioning imposed upon her by the EWP, she resisted fully taking up the EWP-designed English 131 curriculum. This tension showed up in her syllabus and course construction—as well as in the confusion her students experienced in class during the quarter. On the other hand, the multilingual English 131 instructor, Matthew, felt positioned as an expert by other instructors and colleagues during the EWP training because of his prior experience teaching English as a Second Language. He felt himself to be somewhat of an expert teacher by the time he went

through his English 131 training, and this positioning was uncontested by his colleagues and the institution. For that reason, Matthew found flexibility to adapt his prior teaching knowledge and practices to the English 131 space. His success in doing so was demonstrated by the consistency of his curriculum and teaching practices.

The institutionally-imposed teacher identity positioning not only seemed to affect the two instructors' approaches to their English 131 class, but the two teachers' positioning of themselves also seemed to be informed by their disciplinary backgrounds, another factor that highlighted key differences between the two classes. For example, Katie, the mainstream English 131 instructor, positioned her students as colleagues and expert writers. Because she designed much of her class to be student-led, the bulk of time in the mainstream English 131 class was spent on student activities and discussion rather than on lecturing or teacher-led discussion. Katie's pedagogical approach and practices seemed to be informed by the composition discipline's critical stance. She heavily referenced this stance in her interview with me, as she explained the reasoning behind her teaching practices.

On the other hand, Matthew, the multilingual English 131 instructor, positioned his students as learners and himself as the expert in the class. He designed his class so that the majority of time was spent on teacher-led activities, such as lecturing or teacher-led discussion—although he also provided time for student-led activities such as group work and student presentations. Matthew's position as the expert in the classroom seemed to influence him to outline clear, firm expectations and provide a lot of guidance for students in class. Matthew's stance also aligned very closely with the pragmatic (yet also critical) pedagogical stance of applied linguistics, which heavily informs the study of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). As a scholar of TESOL with plenty of experience teaching English to

second language speakers, Matthew's pedagogical approach and practices were likely influenced by this field. It was my understanding, therefore, that the two teachers' positioning in the classroom (as it was affected by their own sense of self and by the way they felt to be positioned by the institution) constituted a key difference in learning outcomes between the mainstream and multilingual classes. Students in the mainstream class were afforded a lot of independence to explore the course topic, which in turn obligated them to lean on one another to understand course readings and activities. On the other hand, students in the multilingual class were afforded a lot of explicit instruction to guide their writing practice and learning.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONCEPTION OF IDENTITY

In exploring student and teacher identity positioning, it is important to conceptualize identity. The concept of identity positioning, rooted in the field of psychology, emerges from the "more static concept of role" and attempts to theorize the complexity and instability of identity construction (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 14). Early identity research held identity to be a "project of the self," although the research eventually shifted to understanding the importance of social context in identity construction and positioning (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 17). In particular, Lave and Wenger's theory of "communities of practice" (as cited in Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 27), which conceptualized identity as a consequence of interaction, and Hall's "identification" (as cited in Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 32), which offered tools for narrative analysis and positioning theory, were important foundational theories. Kerschbaum (2014) defines identification as "made not only by those who ascribe identities onto people but also by individuals themselves as they realize how they are identified by others" (p. 5).

Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) extend the conversation about identity in talk. They write that "for a person to 'have an identity'—whether he or she is the person speaking, being spoken

to, or being spoken about— is to be cast into a *category with associated characteristics or features*” (p. 3, emphasis in original). The impact of identity is in the consequences that result from identity positioning in interaction (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998, p. 3). Benwell and Stokoe (2006) expand on this definition, suggesting that identity is “a public phenomenon, a performance or construction that is interpreted by other people” (p. 4). They also suggest that “rather than being *reflected* in discourse, identity is actively, ongoingly, dynamically *constituted* in discourse” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 4, emphasis in original).

This study takes a social constructionist approach to identity, which assumes that “identity is neither a given nor a product. Rather, identity is a process that (1) takes place in concrete and specific interactional occasions, (2) yields constellations of identities instead of individual monolithic constructs, [and] (3) does not simply emanate from the individual, but results from processes of negotiation...that are eminently social” (De Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006, p. 2). De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg (2006) suggest that not only do historical and sociocultural forces (such as “dominant discourses” or “master narratives”) “position speakers in their situated practices and construct who they are without their agentive involvement,” but “speakers position themselves as constructive and interactive agents and choose the means by which they construct their identities vis-à-vis others as well as vis-à-vis dominant discourses and master narratives” (p. 7).

Emerging from identity research is Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) positioning theory. The theory is framed by social constructionism and discourse analysis paradigms; social constructionism’s basic principle holds that “what people do, publicly and privately, is intentional... and normatively constrained” and “what people are, to themselves and to others, is a product of a lifetime of interpersonal interactions” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 2). They

also suggest that “the social recognition, or lack thereof, of a given persona will have profound effects upon the ways in which the person’s behavior is viewed and the ways in which the person is then treated by others” (p. 8).

Benwell & Stokoe (2006) also discuss institutional identities, suggesting that institutions are “intrinsically bound up with *power*, and are often seen to serve the interests of powerful groups” (p. 88). Agar (as cited in Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) suggests that “institutions produce binary and asymmetrical roles: the ‘expert’ (or institutional representative) who is invested with institutional authority, and the ‘non-expert’ (usually the ‘client’) who must accommodate to the institutional norms” (p. 88). This is important in my study of multilingual and mainstream identity, because it brings up questions about the institutional norms being imposed on students and teachers according to the identity categories they are assumed to fit into. These norms can be problematic if students (or teachers) feel they do not fit into those norms, or are otherwise forced to navigate an educational institution that does not understand them.

Caraballo’s (2011) “identities-in-practice” theory provides a potentially productive method for critically examining institutional identity positioning as well. Drawing on Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) for her identities-in-practice theory, Caraballo (2011) proposes this framework to understand the navigation of identity positioning in academic contexts and argues for a deeper exploration into “identity construction, experiences of curriculum, and the academic achievement of minoritized students in the interest of social justice in education” (p. 158). This is important because students “may assume or be ascribed positionalities that may, in turn, influence the ways in which they participate in class, respond to teacher requests, or interact with peers” (p. 166-167). Caraballo (2011) also suggests that

[a]n analysis of students' construction of multiple identities must...engage not only with the particularities of individual experience, but also examine the ways in which the production of cultural worlds shapes how students construct themselves. These identity negotiations, in turn, have an impact on how students experience the curriculum they are supposed to "master" in order to achieve academic success. (p. 168)

Caraballo emphasizes student agency in identity construction, but recognizes that not only does students' construction of identity shape their individual experiences, but the social world likewise impacts students' construction of their own identities.

In the present study, I use aspects of the various conceptions of identity to formulate a comprehensive frame of reference that provides me with a way to understand how fluid identities can become fixed and fixed identities can become fluid. For example, Davies and Harré (1990) argue that an understanding of identity positioning as dynamic and co-constructed with others is critical because identity emerges via interaction with others. I therefore utilize Davies and Harré's (1990) concept of reflexive positioning in order to understand how students and teachers identified themselves and perceived themselves to be identified by others. I utilize Davies and Harré's (1990) concept of interactive positioning to understand how students were identified by the institution and their teacher (i.e. by exploring the implications of being labeled "multilingual" or not), as well as to understand how the two teachers understood themselves to be positioned by the institution (i.e. by talking with them about their experience in the EWP training).

While identity positioning emerged as an attempt to destabilize the fixed notion of 'roles', it is still important to recognize that certain labels (and the stereotypes that come with them) are frequently utilized in educational institutions in order to help categorize students into classes that best serve them. For that reason, I utilize the conception of roles in order to

understand the fixed categories within which students and teachers were institutionally positioned. However, in understanding how students and teachers navigated those roles, I utilize the more flexible concept of identity positioning in my analysis. I utilize Davies & Harré's (1990) theories of reflexive and interactive positioning to conceptualize how students and teachers not only position themselves (reflexively), but position or are positioned by others (interactively). Likewise, I utilize Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) five principles for conceptualizing identity positioning to analyze how student and teacher identities emerged through self-references.

In my analysis of student positioning, I focus on the “multilingual” and ‘mainstream’ labels, in order to understand how students understood this role, how willing they were to take it up, and how it affected their learning or their perception of themselves. In my analysis of teacher positioning, I initially aimed to understand how they understood the “multilingual” label and whether they positioned their students in particular ways according to their understanding of the role of a multilingual student (in the classroom or in the institution). However, the teachers ended up highlighting a few unexpected roles (including positions such as “novice” or “expert” teacher), in regards to the role they took up in the classroom and the roles they felt the institution to be assigning them, so this entered my analysis as well.

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

While there has been a lot of productive and extremely valuable work done to determine how we might foster success for multilingual students in college composition, the knowledge gained from this work is not being used to its fullest potential; the vast majority of multilingual composition and L2 writing research, theory, and pedagogy can be effectively applied in composition classes for all students. In other words, there do not need to be completely separate

pedagogies for second language learners or multilingual groups. This study thus synthesizes theory and research from the fields of both L1 and L2 composition in regards to language learner identity and writing pedagogy (Silva, 1994 (as cited in Matsuda, Saenkhum, Accardi (2013); Cox, Jordan, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Schwartz, 2010; (Braine, 1994, 1996; Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Costino & Hyon, 2007; Baker, 2008; Horner, Lu, & Matsuda, 2010; Norton, 2013). I work under the assumption that there is a need to merge the research in the two disciplines in order to have a clearer and more productive conversation between them (Severino, 2001). Such synthesis aids in the development of pedagogical practices that reflect a deeper and more complex understanding of who our students and teachers are, what they bring to the composition classroom, and how we might deepen our understanding of writing in the academic and social realms.

As Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, and Ortmeier-Hooper (2011) explain, the first-year composition course is no longer the monolingual space it used to be as a consequence of demographic shifts and institutional efforts to increase diversity. Composition classrooms are seeing more variation in students' ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, and the increase in the number of second-language writers in composition has spurred larger pedagogical and research trends in the study of student identity, multilingualism, interaction, and learning. Research in both composition and second language studies has contributed to the growing understanding of writing and identity as complex and fluid. This study's research into the way students and teachers position themselves or are positioned by the institution was conducted to improve our understanding of how student and teacher identities affect writing education and practice, with the goal of adding to the development of pedagogical practices that seek to facilitate productive identity positioning for both students and teachers.

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on student and teacher identity in composition and second language studies, including a historical overview of composition's approach to student difference and second language studies' conceptualization of diverse student identities, and research contributions to both fields thus far. Chapter 3 describes the study's research design and methodology, as well as offers participant profiles and a discussion of the identity and positioning analytic framework I utilized in my analysis of the data. Chapters 4 and 5 present my findings. Chapter 4 focuses on student conceptions of the term "multilingual," and describes Findings 1 through 3. It attempts to explain why students did not intentionally position themselves as multilingual or non-multilingual via enrollment, why students believed the multilingual section would involve more grammar instruction and be taught at a slower pace, and why students in both the mainstream and multilingual classes did not identify as "multilingual." While Chapter 4 focuses on student identity positioning, Chapter 5 discusses teacher identity positioning and outlines Findings 4 and 5. It attempts to explain the effects of teacher positioning in English 131, including the reasons for and effects of the mainstream teacher positioning herself as a "colleague" and the multilingual teacher positioning himself as an "authority" in the classroom. It also explains why the mainstream teacher felt herself to be positioned by the institution as a "novice" while the multilingual teacher felt himself to be positioned as an "expert," as well as the effects of this perceived positioning. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the impacts of these findings and suggests ways that student and teacher identity can inform the work done in the writing classroom.

## Chapter 2. RESEARCH ON STUDENT AND TEACHER IDENTITY IN COMPOSITION AND SECOND LANGUAGE STUDIES

Because the introductory composition course is often one of the few mandatory courses at the university for most majors, the composition discipline requires an ability to adapt: to tailor writing theory and pedagogy in ways that reach an incredibly diverse range of students. Over the course of its development, composition has thus held a unique position in the university. Also, because it grew out of the rhetorical tradition, which has historically been labeled “art” rather than “science” (Brereton, 1995, p. 10), the discipline has evolved a robust theoretical and pedagogical basis.<sup>2</sup> Also, because writing studies must take into account theoretical and practical implications related to the complex nature of language use and language learning, composition is often on the forefront of recognizing and implementing theories and practices that attend to identity, with all the complexity it entails. Second language studies also deals closely with the complex nature of language use and language learning, which inevitably requires the study of identity, specifically of learners and teachers. While second language studies grew from second language acquisition research, which is very different from the teaching of writing to native speakers of English (as in composition), it is my belief that the extensive research in second language studies on student identity and resources can also greatly inform composition’s scholarly base.

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<sup>2</sup> As Brereton (1995) explains, composition in the 1880s “did not have a research agenda of its own” because the “principles of teaching writing were not in questions” at that time (p. 10). In addition, many rhetoric texts in the late 1800s argued that rhetoric was an art, rather than a science, which, according to Brereton (1995), was a “devastating stance,” as “art was often related to skills that could be inculcated, while science was connected to knowledge, to research, in short to the new disciplines that were embarked on expansion” (p. 10). Thus, “to argue that rhetoric was not a science, not a way of knowing, was to consign it to training, to an introductory level of college, to pedagogy” (p. 10).

In an effort to establish a productive conversation between the two fields, this review attempts to wed research and theory from the fields of composition studies and second language studies. The purpose of this review is to provide contextual information about the identity work that has been produced in writing studies—particularly second language writing and first-year composition. Such a review provides a foundation for my own research, which closely examines student and teacher identity positioning in a mainstream and a multilingual section of a composition course, each of which was informed by separate disciplinary beliefs and practices (the mainstream class by composition frameworks and the multilingual class by second language frameworks). This chapter first provides an overview of composition's approach to difference, contextualizing its move toward valuing and understanding multilingual student identities in the writing classroom. It then gives an overview of second language studies' contribution to understanding the multilingual turn, to show how second language studies overlaps with composition studies. Lastly, it discusses the contributions both fields have made in their mutual effort to produce research on identity in the writing classroom.

#### OVERVIEW OF COMPOSITION'S APPROACH TO DIFFERENCE

To understand the importance of identity work in the writing classroom, it is necessary to first recognize composition's historical place in the university and its goals as a discipline. The eventual valuing of difference in composition studies (and the movement toward accommodating student difference) created fertile opportunities for designing composition pedagogies and theories that attend to first language and second language writers in various learning contexts.

Although composition and literature courses were a major component of post-secondary academic studies by 1900, the relegation of English literature and writing to the practice of art, rather than science, pushed composition studies toward a proliferation of pedagogical theories on

how to teach students how to write (Brereton, 1995). Grounded in a positivist epistemology, current-traditional rhetoric (the field's first major theory and pedagogy) imposed a narrow linguistic standard on writing practices at the university, representing a tradition of "conceptualizing the elements of correct and successful writing" (Connors, 1997, p. 7).

However, as social and political evolutions occurred in the United States, so did evolutions in the field of composition. The current-traditional rhetoric that dominated college composition was eventually superseded by approaches that celebrated the individual's contributions to the writing process and emphasized the social nature of the human experience (Berlin, 1987). A clear direction toward multiculturalism and recognizing student multilingualism has thus been developing for the past forty years in composition studies, in part initiated by *College Composition and Communication's* 1974 statement on Students' Right to their Own Language. This movement toward more flexible and complex understandings of difference in writing fostered theoretical foundations for the study of identity in the writing classroom.

While composition began as a field that primarily taught uncontested notions of Standard English mechanics, a variety of beliefs and developments over time shifted composition away from the current-traditional rhetoric. The basic writing program, for example, developed as universities opened their doors to increasing numbers of students and more diverse student populations in the 1960s and 1970s (Brereton, 1995; Mutnick & Lamos, 2014). The central goal of basic writing was to democratize education, offering the economic advantage of a college education to students who may not have previously had the opportunity (Mutnick & Lamos, 2014). Thus, students in basic writing courses tended to be those who were not by traditional standards ready for college, students whose identities, writing practices, and knowledges were frequently different from those which the university imposed upon them.

The basic writing agenda was one of the first composition curricula in the university to recognize student difference and develop a pedagogy that attempted to work with that difference. Shaughnessy (1977), a pioneer of the basic writing agenda, believed that it was the writing teacher's preconceptions about errors that were frequently at the center of their misconceptions of basic writing students. She thus advocated for teachers to change their ways of viewing basic writing students, suggesting that composition teachers instead look at student error in a way that "does not ignore the linguistic sophistication of the students" or underestimate "the complexity of the task they face as they set about learning to write for college" (Shaughnessy, 1977). Shaughnessy (1977) called for understanding the experience of basic writing students, arguing that much of the time error is seen as a trap for basic writers and students often resent and resist their vulnerabilities as writers. A tenet of the basic writing tradition thus advocated for understanding diverse student experiences and subjectivities in writing learning and development. This movement helped to propel the recognition of variation in linguistic practices that students often employ in writing classes, which truly set the stage for the social turn in composition studies, providing an important and necessary setting for the development of composition pedagogies that value student difference in writing practice.

However, according to Lu (2009), despite the attempt to value student subjectivities and linguistic or sociocultural difference, early basic writing theories nonetheless perpetuated an essentialist assumption about language: that it is a neutral vehicle for communication and that meaning is an essence which writers carry in their minds prior to writing, rather than something that is negotiated and constructed through language (p. 772). Lu (2009) argues that to truly benefit from Shaughnessy's basic writing legacy, compositionists must take such an essentialist view to task. She suggests that this be done by recognizing that, through the elements of one's

identity, “each individual gains access to a range of competing discourses which offer competing views of oneself, the world, and one’s relation to the world” (Lu, 2009, p. 773). In other words, when we acknowledge that language users have already at their disposal a range of ways of speaking, which they then draw on in each writing situation, essentialist views of language become obsolete. The basic writing program, though not entirely flawless in its initial conceptions of difference in writing practice, nonetheless provided an important theoretical foundation on which to theorize further conceptualizations of identity and language and variations in both.

At around the same time as or closely following the emergence of basic writing in composition, one of the biggest movements in the composition discipline hit a tipping point in the “social turn” (Durst, 2006, p. 79). A movement in the field that reflected a genuine shift toward sociocultural paradigms of writing theory and pedagogy, the social turn significantly impacted the ideological framework of the discipline, fostering a commitment to social justice, critique of power hierarchies, and an emphasis on understanding and valuing difference.

The seeds of composition’s shift to social conceptions of language use could first be seen in the 1980s, as the notion of the dialogic nature of language became prevalent (Halasek, 1999). Bakhtin’s (as cited in Chapman, 2006) concept of dialogism in relation to speech genres helped to truly initiate the expansion of the social turn as it suggested that people’s “understandings of words and how to use them are shaped by and developed through interaction with others” (p. 18). In other words, the social, interactional function of language (including writing) became an important concept in understanding meaning-making contexts. Part of interaction requires mediating difference between speakers, and meaning-making is very much impacted by the subjective identities of language users. With a developed understanding of writing within the

context of the social, writing came to be seen not as a skill but as a more complex discursive process (Bizzell, 1992).<sup>3</sup> Dialogism's view of the important nature of interaction in language use ultimately contributed to frameworks of identity and writing practice as another seed theory for recognizing how difference in social interaction constructs and informs identity in writing. The recognition that meaning in language use (including writing) is shaped within the social context requires a recognition of how differences between interlocutors may also impact that interaction (or written product).

Another moment in composition's history that highlighted the evolution of the social turn, and which contributed to composition's development of theories of difference, was the rise of critical studies in the 1990s. Critical or cultural studies, related to Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, emphasizes the goal of writing instruction as liberating students from dominant discourses, rather than simply improving writing skills (Fulkerson, 2005). Such a view takes as its foundation the belief that social inequality is propagated through cultural practices and institutions; it also contends that an understanding of inequality requires an understanding of difference, power and privilege reflected in classroom practices and student identities. This is especially relevant to writing studies, as one of the hallmarks of the composition discipline is its focus on students and their identities. As Crowley (1998) writes, students' subjectivities are "the very materials with which they and their teachers are expected to work" (p. 216), whereas in other disciplines, a body of knowledge usually precedes students' entry into the discipline. As Cazden (2001) also suggests, spoken language is an important part of the identities of all participants in the classroom, because "differences in how something is said, and even when,

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<sup>3</sup> The social turn was also heavily impacted by Vygotskian activity theory (as cited in Chapman, 2006), a theory based in the field of second language acquisition which suggests that sign systems (i.e. languages) influence how people think and interact, and positions the mind in society rather than in isolation.

can...seriously impair effective teaching and accurate evaluation” (p. 3). It is within the composition course that this is particularly true, considering its role in acclimating students to the academic discourse community. However, composition studies’ regard for critical perspectives and social constructs, developed largely through its social, critical turn, has helped the discipline to become more conscious and critical of unjust evaluations of student linguistic identities and difference, as well as the politics they engender or are engendered by. The critical knowledge produced at the social turn thus helped to further develop our understanding of the ways identities play into purposes for writing and the varying writing choices students may make on the page.

Just as the social turn gave rise to a significant shift in composition research, a new movement in writing research and pedagogy evolved in the last decade or two of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the multilingual turn. This body of research is where composition studies and second language studies most productively merge. Developed in response to increasingly diverse student populations in the university and arising from interdisciplinary sources such as applied linguistics and TESOL, the multilingual turn in composition has grown as the “myth of linguistic homogeneity in the United States” has become recognized for what it is – a myth (Matsuda 2010, 2012). The multilingual approach in composition has explicitly attempted to address language difference in the writing classroom by acknowledging that linguistically diverse students are fully capable of bridging differences between local and academic language rather than being deficient communicators (Cox, Jordan, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Schwartz, 2010, p. xviii). Besides being informed by a critical understanding of difference in issues of power and privilege, the multilingual turn has also been informed by American social conceptions of multiculturalism as well as second language learning’s theory of first language influences on second language—both

important concepts for understanding and approaching linguistic variety in the composition classroom.

Multiculturalism found its way into composition theory and pedagogy as multiculturalism developed in the American social, cultural, and political landscape (Severino, Guerra, & Butler, 1997). As Severino, Guerra, and Butler (1997) write, multicultural rhetorics, competences, and education developed in parallel with society's effort to "encourage citizens of the United States to embrace the racial, ethnic, class, gender, religious, age, and physical-ability differences in our population" (p. 1). Multiculturalism can be defined as a liberal stance that includes open-mindedness and non-prejudiced attitudes in interacting with people of diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds (Norton & Toohey, 2004, p. 30). The multicultural approach to literacy education and composition advocates for autobiographical writing, which places high value on writer subjectivities and experiences, as well as a critical approach to writing that teaches students how to investigate discourses and their relations to power (Hesford, 1997). As a consequence, identity became an essential part of writing theory and research, especially with the recognition that student subjectivities are important to writing because they shape "the linguistic and discursive resources" that students draw on and learn to employ as writers (Bawarshi, 2010, p. 197). In a similar vein, Canagarajah's multilingual orientation to writing instruction (as cited in Miller-Cochran, 2010, p. 218) stresses teachers' awareness that second language writers have agency and can make deliberate choices about texts and languages.

Emerging from the multicultural conversation is the newest conception of language learners as multilingual. Multilingual students are conceptualized as students who come to the classroom with diverse linguistic resources. In other words, the "position of *multilingual language-user*...transcend[s] monolingual notions of language expertise" (Martin-Beltran, 2013,

p. 156, emphasis in original). Multilingualism theory draws on a view of writing practice as unfixed, destabilized, and constantly emerging. In the literature regarding multilingual student populations in writing classes, the issue of labels consistently arises (see Chapter 1), especially as the growing diversity of the American population (with higher representations of immigrants, bilinguals, non-native English speaking residents, and generation 1.5 students) is reflected in student enrollment at educational institutions. Although labeling students is arguably problematic in that it may perpetuate the stereotypes or expectations we wish to dispel about our students, the contestation of student labels demonstrates a clear attempt to understand who our students are so that we may understand how to best teach them writing.<sup>4</sup>

Directly growing out of the multilingual, multicultural turn, several other recent approaches to writing theory and pedagogy have developed that purposely and explicitly attempt to acknowledge and respect linguistic diversity in writing. The translingual approach, for example, sees difference as a means of producing meaning, and suggests that acknowledging the “fluidity of language” through acceptance of linguistic difference allows for a “pursuit of new knowledge and new ways of knowing” (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011, p. 307). In other words, it is an approach that emphasizes linguistic difference as a site for productivity, not as a feature that needs to be filtered and erased in writing practice. Translingualism has also given rise to the theory of translanguaging, a somewhat similar approach that theorizes language use (including writing) as a fluid practice (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Thus, the mastery of a single set of language practices (such as those that comprise the standards of academic English) should be discarded in favor of the principle that language categories are not fixed, just as student

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<sup>4</sup> Halasek (1999), for example, suggests that composition critique its own practice of identifying students as “writers,” arguing that a more productive assessment for first-year writing students may be instead to have them examine the voices that populate their speaking, writing, and thinking. Here he attempts to move composition away from identity labels (i.e. “writer”) and toward voice (p. 50).

subjectivities and identities are not static but constantly constructed and re-constructed through social interaction within varying social contexts (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011). Other compelling proposals for new variations of composition pedagogy that address linguistic diversity in the classroom, introduced by recent scholars in the field, include Jordan's (2012) intercultural composition pedagogy, which advocates for moving from a comp-as-writing conceptualization to a theory of composing relationships (p. 118) and Nero's (2005) Language Identity, Awareness, and Development (LIAD) approach, a pedagogical framework that encourages student investment in language as it correlates with their identities (p. 202).<sup>5</sup>

Ultimately, the discussion of difference in composition studies has fostered a better understanding of our students and better practices for teaching them writing. Current multilingual and translingual approaches to composition research and pedagogy (evolving out of the social turn) have encouraged writing teachers to understand students as possessing valuable linguistic resources that expand our conceptions of good writing and proper communication. These approaches to difference in composition contribute to the wider social goal of recognizing value in diversity and incorporating diverse and potentially nonmainstream ways of thinking in the American academic and cultural landscape.

## OVERVIEW OF SECOND LANGUAGE STUDIES' CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DIVERSE STUDENT IDENTITIES

Having briefly summarized the evolution of composition's approach to linguistic diversity, I now turn to a brief description of the field of second language (L2) studies to provide context for an examination of its impact on the field of composition and a sense of where we are

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<sup>5</sup> Like Halasek (1999), Jordan (2012) also suggests a new term for students. He proposes "intercultural speaker" in place of native speaker, in order to dismantle the essentializing of native speaker identity (p. 122).

today regarding identity work and research in both disciplines. After providing a brief grounding of second language acquisition (SLA), a field which profoundly impacts second language studies, this section discusses sociocultural perspectives that theorize language learner identity, explaining how these perspectives have shaped our understanding of second language learning and writing.

Like composition, the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been one marked by constant shifts due to the proliferation of various theories and increasing acceptance of sociocultural, sociolinguistic perspectives on language learning. After the shift to socially-oriented research into language learning and development, the study of identity in learning contexts began to impact the field in significant ways, mainly because identity plays an important role in how students learn language. As learning is often a collaborative, dialogic, social practice, it is impossible to separate who we are from how we fit into our social learning communities. Thus, sites of learning are likewise sites of social and personal identity construction in personal as well as public ways. Part of that identity construction can be attributed to the institutional labels we use to talk about certain populations of students, which in turn can affect student motivation and investment in learning (Norton, 2013). Such labels can undoubtedly also impact the perceptions or pre-conceived notions that teachers have about their students (Ferris, Brown, Liu, & Stine, 2011; Matsuda, Saenkhum, & Accardi, 2013).

The shifting nature of second language acquisition research can in part be explained by its largely interdisciplinary nature; it has historically drawn theories and research from a variety of fields, including psychology and applied linguistics. Second language learning can be defined as the learning of language (at any level) that takes place following the acquisition of a first language (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013, p. 19). The field of SLA was initially rooted in a

cognitivist perspective as a consequence of its emphasis on language learning. The cognition of the individual learner was the focus of the language acquisition process, and formalist linguistics (which adopted a structuralist or Chomskyan theory of language as comprising a set of elements combined by a series of rules or procedures) ruled the day (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). This was in part due to early studies on first language (L1) acquisition which attempted to define the process of learning via stages (i.e. order of acquisition) and models (i.e. processing or computer models) (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). However, a major break from cognitivist approaches began with the publication of Firth & Wagner's (1997) groundbreaking article on communicative competence, which set the stage for a sociolinguistic perspective. Overall, current views of language learning include three perspectives: the linguistic or psycholinguistic perspective, concerned with theorizing universal mental processes within the mind; the social psychological perspective, concerned with theorizing differences among individual language learners and their implications for eventual success (i.e. language aptitude, learning strategies, attitudes, motivation, self-confidence); and the sociocultural perspective, concerned with learners as social beings and members of social networks (within which multilingual identity comes into play as a range of socially constructed dimensions of a language user's identity that shapes their language learning) (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). It is the sociocultural perspective on language learning that has most productively merged with composition studies. Within the sociolinguistic perspective, the identity of the learner and his or her language knowledge are assumed to be collaboratively constructed and reconstructed during interaction (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013).

The sociocultural perspective on language, which views the language learning process as inherently social, holds language users to be first and foremost members of social groups

(Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011). Within this social framework, a language user's identity or subjectivity is understood in relational terms; that is, in relation to the social context and the identities of other participants in the social act (Weedon, as cited in Norton, 2013, p. 3). One of the theoretical underpinnings of the sociocultural perspective comes from research that suggests that children's early language learning arises from the process of meaning-making collaborative activities with other members in a community (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). Language development is thus not an individual, cognitive act, but a process that requires interaction with other language users. Not only is language learning collaborative, but language knowledge and cultural knowledge are together socially constructed through interaction (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). The tie between language and culture provides a basis for viewing identity as an integral part of language learning, with social identity defined as the sense of belonging to a particular (cultural or social) group, "whether defined by ethnicity, gender, social class, nationality, language, or any other means" (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013, p. 278). While early identity research contributed important theory linkages between identity, culture, and social interaction, current identity research has developed a perspective on identity that criticizes static notions of ethnicity or gender, in favor of poststructuralist conceptions of identity's flexibility and negotiability. Along with the negotiability of identity, agency has become recognized as an important element in the individual's choosing or negotiating their own identity through social and linguistic practices (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013, p. 276).

Because identity theory in language learning is heavily influenced by poststructuralism (which holds that language is not only a linguistic system of signs and symbols, but a complex social practice through which relationships are defined, negotiated and resisted), individual

subjects in SLA are viewed as diverse, contradictory, dynamic, and changing over time and social space (Norton, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011). The poststructuralist approach to language theories holds that “language learning engages the identities of learners because language itself is not only a linguistic system of signs and symbols but also a complex social practice through which relationships are defined, negotiated, and resisted” (Norton & McKinney, 2011). Subjectivity is thus conceived of as multiple rather than unitary, and decentered rather than centered (Norton, 2013, p. 162). Such a definition of subjectivity lends itself to understanding the multiple positions from which language learners can speak (Norton, 2013). Integral to understanding identity positions, as well, is an understanding of how relations of power in the social world affect a learner’s access to linguistic resources and the target language community (Norton, 2013). Every time a learner speaks, he or she is negotiating and renegotiating a sense of self in relation to that community and the larger world (Norton & McKinney, 2011, p. 73). All of this is important to language learning, since a student’s identity position (how he or she constructs, represents, or is perceived by others) can greatly influence his or her motivation and investment in learning (Norton, 2013).

While second language learning theory and pedagogy is clearly informed by interdisciplinary research, the field of second language writing draws the bulk of its theories and concepts from the field of composition. For example, the critical approach to second language writing falls along lines similar to critical approaches in composition studies. As I explained above, the postmodern view holds that language and identity are decentered, destabilized, and fragmented; a poststructuralist view on discourse views language as a way of constructing and organizing knowledge, meaning, and identity (Norton, 2013, p. 162). Critical perspectives in composition also take into consideration how power and privilege function in social institutions

and social norms. This critical understanding undoubtedly encourages the proliferation of research into multilingual student identities in order to explore the ways issues of power, privilege, and place factor into student behavior and learning in the classroom.

While second language writing (at times referred to as ESL composition) parallels mainstream composition in many ways, theories and pedagogies have been adapted that consider the specific location and identities of second language learners (Silva, 1990). Such adaptation produced a compelling and necessary body of research and literature on multilingualism and plurilingualism. Composition classrooms are seeing more variation in students' ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, and the increasing number of second-language writers in composition has spurred larger pedagogical and research trends in the study of multiculturalism, plurality, alternative rhetorics, and hybridized discourses (Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, & Ortmeier-Hooper, 2011, p. 1). The CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers was also updated in 2009, demonstrating a commitment at the disciplinary level to meeting multilingual student needs in the composition classroom.

The recent focus on multilingualism—and with it the understanding of different ways of thinking, acting and writing—has helped to foster the idea of choice in writing studies and pedagogy. Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau (2009) define this choice as “rhetorical flexibility” (p. 204), suggesting that the learning of genres can help students assess academic situations or contexts in order to write appropriately and successfully in the genre that the situation entails. In other words, by recognizing that there are myriad ways to conduct writing according to purpose, context, and audience, students learn that they have a choice in how and what they write – this includes drawing on various dialects, languages, discourses, or other speech forms (Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009). In this way, the recognition of and respect for diverse identities in

second language writing theory has in part cultivated an understanding that students, being often multilingual or plurilingual, are fully capable of making their own choices as they become flexible, educated, and experienced writers. However, despite this progressive framing of multilingual writers in the classroom, it is necessary to acknowledge Kubota's (2014) critique of the multi/plural turn in writing studies research. While it is extremely important and potentially liberating to value notions of fluidity and multiplicity in identity research, language learning, and writing pedagogy, insufficient critical reflection may encourage educators to be complicit with "neoliberal multiculturalism that evades racism and other injustices" (p. 17). Thus, we must continue to focus a critical lens on the multilingualism we wish to theorize and encourage in our students as we continue to conduct research in these complex, culturally and politically entrenched subjects.

Ultimately, conceptualizing the fluidity of language has been closely tied to recognizing the fluidity of student and teacher identity and writing practice. However, considering the lengthy history of the field of second language acquisition, the primacy of spoken language in second language studies has only recently become superseded by reading and writing research (Matsuda, 2011). Perhaps because much research on second language learning has been influenced by research and theory tailored to oral and auditory linguistic speech development, the second language writing field has drawn much from composition literature as an existing body of research that provided useful theoretical tools for conceptualizing second language writing and learner identity. As the field continues to develop, a particularly fruitful direction is to more clearly synthesize the disciplines of second language acquisition and second language studies with composition studies, since both disciplines study language learner and teacher identity and writing pedagogy.

## BRIDGING COMPOSITION AND SECOND LANGUAGE STUDIES

As second language learners increasingly enroll in composition courses, a need has emerged for composition to develop a strong conceptual and pedagogical basis for addressing second language writer needs. This has likewise spurred a need for understanding how teachers navigate the increasingly linguistically diverse classroom space. This section describes the research and theories produced in both composition and second language studies that can be productively shared across both fields in order to support a deeper understanding of student and teacher identity positioning in the writing class.

### **Student Identity**

Several volumes have been published regarding second language writers in composition (Kroll, 1990; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Matsuda & Silva, 2005; Paltridge, 2009; Horner, Lu, & Matsuda, 2010; Cox, Jordan, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Schwartz, 2010; Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, & Ortmeier-Hooper, 2011). Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, and Ortmeier-Hooper's (2011) *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook* constitutes one of the more recent and thorough collections on the subject. Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, and Ortmeier-Hooper (2011) address a common issue regarding second language students in composition classes, suggesting that there is a growing presence of second-language writers who many instructors feel are unprepared to teach effectively (p. 2). Furthermore, the definition of what it means to be an ESL writer can vary greatly, depending on institutional definitions and student experiences with the term (p. 2). Thus, many studies have been conducted to explore student identity labels in the institution in order to understand how such labels might impact student learning.

Harklau (2011) found that identity categories are “locally understood and constantly remade in social relationships”; thus, the meaning of identity labels are constantly negotiated by participants in specific, local communities (p. 110). It cannot be assumed, then, that a label such as ESL or ELL will be widely understood by new or existing members in an academic community. However, Harklau (2011) argues that the “representation” implied by certain identity labels can and does become somewhat stabilized and homogenized, and it is these representations that “have consequences for students’ classroom behavior and ultimately for students’ motivation...in English and academic learning” (p. 111). Chiang and Schmida (2011) contribute to this conversation in their study of U.S.-born children of immigrants with complex linguistic identities. They found that the ESL label is tied to a stereotype or assumption that “because English is their second language, students are assumed to have difficulties with the language” (Chiang & Schmida, 2011, p. 106). Chiang and Schmida (2011) also found that the “language minority” label groups and homogenizes “language learners of non-English background,” with the assumption that such learners do not speak English as a primary language (p. 105). Assumptions and stigmatizations like this are problematic because of the numerous assumptions that then follow, and we cannot assume that ESL is a “monolithic, universal code word that explains everything we need to know about a student” (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008, p. 414). Not only that, but terms such as ESL are often stigmatized in popular usage, and many students and teachers take it to mean someone who does not speak English well. In other words, the label “serves the function of locating deficit” in English language ability (Waterstone, 2008, p. 54). Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) demonstrates the kinds of questions students may ask themselves when asked whether they are ESL or not: “Will the instructor expect less of [me]? Hold [me] to

lower standards? Separate [me] from [my] peers? Be on the lookout for markers of nonnative proficiency?” (p. 413-414).

That said, there are also moments where identity markers such as ESL can help students identify populations of students (or classes) that they want to join or feel that they belong to. Braine (1996), for example, found that the majority of second language students that he studied preferred to enroll in ESL composition classes, with other students like them. On the other hand, Chiang and Schmida (2011) found that generation 1.5 students (U.S. born second language writers) often rejected the ESL identity label. Alternatively, Nero (1997) found, in her study of the writing of Caribbean college students who considered themselves native speakers of English, that some students (like the Anglophone Caribbean students in his study) “should be treated as neither native speakers of English nor ESL students” (p. 591), and that her study reinforced the view that “language both reflects and reinforces identities and that identities are constructed out of sociohistorical, educational, and personal circumstances” (p. 591). For that reason, Costino and Hyon (2007) conclude, like Braine (1996), that students should be given the choice to enroll in ESL or mainstream composition classes, as they can determine for themselves what ESL means and whether it is a relevant identity marker for them.

Beyond the significant research regarding linguistic identity labels, several other compelling studies have contributed to our understanding of the importance of identity in second language studies – and these, too, can be productively engaged within composition studies. For example, Martin-Beltran (2013) specifically studied affordances and student identity. In her study on “[d]iscursive positioning among adolescents becoming multilingual,” she analyzed interaction between “language-minority and language-majority youth” to identify “discursive positioning patterns that afford and constrain opportunities for language learning” (p. 152). In

coding her analysis, she determined a variety of positions, including that of “expert” and “learner,” and she analyzed these positions in regards to how participants positioned themselves and others. She found, in contrast to previous studies (such as Yoon, 2008), that “language-minority students played a central role in the learning that occurred” in the program (p. 155). This was because the language-minority students held language expertise (p. 156). Martin-Beltran (2013) also found that “positioning oneself as *learner* could transform interactions into rich zones of collaboration and learning for *all* participants” (p. 156). Thus, the students’ positioning of themselves as learners allowed them the opportunity to make mistakes and repairs, which “opened space for others to participate in their mutual learning and language development” (p. 160). Martin-Beltran (2013) argues for the value of educational practices that recognize all students as potential “multilingual language-users” (p. 160). This is similar to Jordan’s (2012) stance that we redesign composition to assume that “multilingualism is a daily reality for all students” (p. 1).

Menard-Warwick’s (2008) research on identity in the second language learning classroom also found that ESL curricula (and teachers) position students in particular ways, specifically as “aspirants to low-skill employment” (p. 284). She argues that although “vocational ESL instructors may see themselves as ‘empowering’ students to enter the workforce, their classroom materials and activities often tend ironically to reproduce these (disempowering) societal tendencies” (p. 284). For that reason, it is important to recognize the social positioning of students and teachers. Menard-Warwick (2008) proposes a “socialization paradigm” that “calls attention to the ways that learners are constrained by powerful discourses, which construct identities, relationships, and knowledge...[and] points to the ways that learners

are active agents in appropriating linguistic and cultural practices in new cultural settings” (p. 285).

Likewise, Canagarajah (2015) suggests implications for a pedagogy of voice, arguing that such a pedagogical approach facilitated awareness of their writing identities and choices in students (p. 122). He adopts a four-prong heuristic (centered around identity, role, subjectivity, and awareness) for understanding how student identity affects voice construction in writing practices (p. 123). By adopting this heuristic, “teachers can explore how students may negotiate constraint and agency, determinism and autonomy, and ascribed and acquired identities” (p. 125). He argues that while teachers “cannot pinpoint which resources enable voice construction” for students, “they can provide balanced affordances” (p. 137). Thus, teachers should position themselves as “facilitators,” not “models or authorities” (p. 137). Lastly, Canagarajah argues that “teachers should choose course materials that provide models of multilinguals with critical voice, but also those which introduce the dominant norms to acquaint students with the established discourses” (p. 137).

As explained in Chapter 1, much of the theoretical conception of student identity in composition studies has focused on voice and writerly identity. Halasek (1999) redefines the student writer, arguing that composition studies should examine and critique its own practice of defining students in writing classes as “writers” (p. 27). She suggests that

Naming our students as writers in the classroom protects our own self-interest, our own privileged position in the academy and the privileged position accorded the writer in academe. A much more productive assessment for first-year writing students might ask them not to imagine themselves as writers but to examine the voices that populate their speaking, writing, and thinking. (p. 50)

In other words, in asking students to explore their various speaking subjectivities, composition teachers can introduce students to the tensions and complexities of establishing and implementing voice in writing (p. 50).

Finally, Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011) have extended the conversation on language difference in writing, proposing a translingual approach in their groundbreaking “Opinion: Language Difference in Writing – Toward a Translingual Approach.” According to Horner et al. (2011), the translingual approach to writing “acknowledges that deviations from dominant expectations need not be errors; that conformity need not be automatically advisable; and that writers’ purposes and readers’ conventional expectations are neither fixed nor unified” (304). This stance attempts to reframe error-driven feedback on essays into revision feedback. The translingual approach sees difference as a means of production (p. 303) and suggests that acknowledging the “fluidity of language” through an acceptance of language difference allows for “a pursuit of new knowledge, new ways of knowing, and more peaceful relations” (307). In other words, awareness and acceptance of difference allows for deeper, more meaningful communication. Horner et al. (2011) believe that the mastery of a single set of language practices (i.e. standard academic English) is “inappropriate” because it teaches students that language categories and genres are fixed, when in reality they are subject to change (just as all language is constantly subject to change) (p. 307). Thus, instead of evaluating students’ abilities to adopt a set of language practices and standards, teachers should measure student writing by “the range of practices they can draw on; their ability to use these creatively; and their ability to produce meaning out of a wide range of practice in their writing” (p. 208). While this is a crucial stance for a writing pedagogy that deeply values and celebrates language difference, it is still unclear what this acceptance looks like in practice.

Ultimately, much research in composition and second language studies has focused on generation 1.5, ESL, bilingual, or non-native English speaking students and the ways that teachers can best address the needs of these students. However, the more recent multilingual trend now attempts to encompass *all* student identities, even those of students who perceive themselves to be monolingual (Jordan, 2012). A popular argument in composition and second language learning is to suggest that all language use is fluid, contested, varied, and multiple, even if a student speaks only one language (Matsuda, 2010; Jordan, 2012).

### **Teacher Identity**

Along with student identity research, there is also a significant body of research on teacher identity in second language classrooms, which I believe can also be applied to the composition space. Alsup (2006) discusses teacher identity as it is enacted in negotiating personal and professional spaces. She argues that university teacher education programs should help new teachers develop a professional identity in addition to providing knowledge about learning theories and pedagogical approaches (p. 4). She suggests that “in order to become successful teachers, university students must develop a holistic understanding of their personal and professional identities and the intersections and contradictions among them” (p. 15). While Alsup focuses specifically on undergraduate teacher education, this argument could very effectively be applied to training sessions in universities for teaching associates and graduate instructors (as in the EWP at UW).

Alsup (2006) suggests an approach to identity development for teachers anchored in “borderland discourse,” which “facilitates the critical interrogation of conflicting subject positions or expressions of self” (p. 15). She suggests that “ideally, [teachers’] goal is not to minimize or erase these borders, but instead to learn to occupy the space between them” (p. 15).

In other words, “the borderland is no longer defined as a gap or an absence of identity, but rather as a space in which to experience a richer, fuller, and more complex understanding of self and other” (p. 15). Alsop conducted a study of several student teachers, and outlined several compelling findings, including that:

- 1) Nonunitary subjectivities are essential for holistic identity formation (p. 181)
- 2) Tension between discordant subjectivities and associated ideologies lessens the chance of developing a satisfying professional identity (p. 183)
- 3) Educational discourse is political, ergo teacher education must also be political (p. 184)
- 4) The telling of positive stories about teaching and learning seems to result in more positive educational experiences (p. 184)
- 5) Developing teacher identity involves embodying the discourse of the teacher (p. 185)
- 6) Students must have the opportunity to *speak* as teachers and discuss their developing professional identities with informed and interested others (p. 187)

These findings provide an essential framework for the theories and practices employed in teacher education.

Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) also identify a gap in the research on teachers’ professional identity. They suggest that more attention be paid “to the relationship between relevant concepts like ‘self’ and ‘identity,’ [and] the role of the context in professional identity formation” (p. 107). In addition, Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000) studied teachers’ professional identity, dividing teacher identity roles into three categories: “subject matter expert,” “pedagogical expert,” and “didactic expert” (p. 750). The subject matter expert “bases his/her profession on subject matter knowledge and skills” (p. 754); the didactical expert “bases

his/her profession on knowledge and skills regarding the planning, execution, and evaluation of teaching and learning processes” (p. 754); and the pedagogical expert “bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills to support students’ social, emotional, and moral development” (p. 754). According to the authors, most teachers in their study saw themselves as a combination of all three types (p. 761). In their study of four EFL teachers in Japan, Duff and Uchida (1997) discovered that “the teachers’ perceptions of their sociocultural identities were found to be deeply rooted in their personal histories, based on past educational, professional, and (cross-) cultural experiences” (p. 460). There were also a number of contexts and situations that required constant negotiation of identity, including the “classroom/institutional culture, instructional materials, and reactions from students and colleagues” (p. 460).

Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, and Mosley (2010) argue that teachers and schools “often ascribe identities to students, such as good reader or poor writer, based on their understanding of what each identity entails” (p. 234). The article describes three studies researched by different authors of the article. In the first study, Juzwik found that “teachers can use language to position themselves in classrooms and develop their identities with their students. However, teachers can also use language to position students, suggest what identities are available to them, and influence their current and developing identities” (p. 238). The authors conclude that

while teachers and students use language to position themselves and each other, they also use language to promote specific types of engagement with literacy practices and encourage or marginalize involvement with literacy in and outside of school.

Collectively, these studies suggest that teachers do not construct identities for themselves and their students haphazardly; it is with intent that identities are created. (p. 241)

While the context of this study was literacy practices in secondary schools, the same concept can still be applied to teacher and student identity positioning within the composition classroom at the postsecondary level.

A number of studies specifically explore teacher identity in TESOL and second language acquisition. Pavlenko (2003), for example, argues that a discursive analysis of TESOL student positioning in the autobiographies they wrote suggests that “the traditional discourse of linguistic competence positions students as members of one of two communities: native speakers or non-native speakers/L2 learners” (p. 251). Pavlenko (2003) also draws on Cook’s theory of multicompetence to transcend that binary. Pavlenko (2003) found that “students’ view of themselves...differed depending on what community they decided to invest in” (p. 256), but many of the students “exhibited evidence of repositioning that took place in response to classroom readings” (p. 261). In other words, students were able to reposition themselves as multilingual or “as members of the multilingual community” after reading course texts such as Cook’s. Thus, educating students (and potentially teachers) about issues related to multilingualism in education helps people to reconceptualize their understanding of linguistic difference and identity.

Reeves (2009) explores teacher and learner identity in the multilingual classroom. She writes that “the dilemma of ELL inclusion is not only instructional; it is also one of teacher identity” (p. 35) because teachers are required to shift between being teachers of content and being teachers of language (p. 34-35). She writes that “the newly multilingual classroom, in which ELLs enroll in traditionally monolingual spaces, provides a fruitful arena for the study of teacher identity negotiation because the inclusion of students with limited English commonly interrupts the everyday flow of a classroom in which all parties previously shared a common

language” (p. 35). Reeves (2009) cites Yoon (2008) in explaining that as teachers repositioned themselves, they also changed their pedagogical approaches to correspond to the new identity (Reeves, 2009, p. 35). Reeves (2009) also discusses a gap in the research: the ways teachers “negotiate identity in relation to *students* and in relation to ELLs in particular, has not been considered in any depth in educational research” (p. 35). She attempts to address this gap by providing a student case study. Reeves concludes that “positioning ELLs (and other students) as particular types of learners provides teachers with a necessary mechanism for reasoning through the complex task of teaching and making sense of how to instruct large numbers of students with varied needs and backgrounds within a classroom” (p. 39). Drawing on Kubota, Reeves (2009) also explains that “in positioning ELLs as like any other student, ELLs’ linguistic (as well as cultural and other) differences are denied saliency” (p. 390). That said, “while positioning ELLs as like every other student is problematic, so too, could be the positioning of them as dramatically different from other students...positioning ELLs as dramatically different from other students could overplay ELLs’ differences and encourage teachers to lower academic expectations for ELLs” (p. 39). Perhaps this is one of the justifications for a multilingual section of English 131: it is taught by instructors who are experienced with ELL and MLL learners who will likely not lower their expectations. Reeves thus ultimately suggests that “teacher education ought to be responsive to how identity may affect teacher learning and change” (p. 40).

Similar to research by Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000) on teachers’ professional identities, Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2014) also identify and describe three teacher positionings, as a result of their research (which focused on teacher educators, not just teachers): the teacher educator of “pedagogues,” the teacher educator of “reflective teachers,” and the teacher educator of “subject teachers” (p. 120-121). The authors argue that “each positioning

referred to a coherent pattern of normative beliefs about good teaching and teacher education...and valuable approaches and strategies to enact these assumptions in practice” (p. 125). The authors conclude that these three positionings “contribute to a more grounded and differentiated conceptualization of teacher educator professionalism as it shows in their practice” and can be used “as powerful tools for professional development, as they can help teacher educators to critically examine their actual practices” (p. 126). The study also indicated that it may be worthwhile to “explore the consequences of (in)congruence between teacher educators’ and student teachers’ self-positioning” (p. 126). However, more in-depth research into this phenomenon would be useful.

Finally, Yoon (2008) published a very useful study titled “Uninvited guests: The influence of teachers’ roles and pedagogies on the positioning of English language learners in the regular classroom.” In this study, she merges the discussions on student teacher and identity. She found that the English language arts secondary school teachers she studied viewed their roles differently based on their positioning of themselves as a teacher for all students, a teacher for “regular education” students, or a teacher for a single subject (p. 495). For example, Mrs. Young, one of the teachers in Yoon’s (2008) study, believed it was her responsibility to be a teacher of all children, including English language learners. Her perception of her role was “general and inclusive” (p. 505), and it appeared that she acknowledged and attended to difference in her classroom, actively encouraging her English language learner students to participate in class. Mr. Brown, on the other hand, never saw himself as an ESL teacher and did not alter his teaching practices for English language learners (p. 508). He apparently also used American cultural references in class that unintentionally “disengaged” the English language learners in his classroom (p. 510). Lastly, Mrs. Taylor positioned herself as an English teacher, not an ESL

teacher; thus, she did not view the teaching of English language learners to be her responsibility (p. 512).

All three of these stances undoubtedly have a profound impact on student learning, not only on the part of the English language learners, but on the part of the native speaker students as well – in particular, because the native students tended to follow the teachers’ models in how to interact with ELL students (p. 517). As Yoon (2008) concludes:

In order to facilitate ELLs’ active participation in learning, the findings of the three teachers’ cases suggest that teachers should pay more scrupulous attention to the students’ acceptance and interactions by viewing the students as complex, cultural, social beings, more than simply language learners. (p. 516)

This is important because “students’ actions such as participating or withdrawing are connected to whether or not the teachers implemented the concept of cultural inclusivity in their approach” (p. 517). Yoon (2008) points out that even Mr. Brown’s class, which was a “very interactive and student-centered classroom,” held “hidden power relations [that] unintentionally positioned the ELLs as isolated and powerless” (p. 517). Thus, what is needed, along with effective teaching methods, is “teachers who care and are sensitive to [students’] cultural differences and needs” (p. 517). She argues that teachers must utilize “teaching approaches that invite – rather than distance – the students” (p. 517). She also argues that much of the research on ELLs focuses on students’ linguistic needs, but “this linguistic-only focus is limiting since it may overlook that ELLs are ‘learners,’ as are all other students, who need access to many different learning opportunities” (p. 496). Yoon’s (2008) argument attempts to recognize the importance of both student and teacher identity positioning, and the interplay between them, for developing a deeper understanding of the classroom space.

What we can learn from these studies, is that, as Kerschbaum (2014) writes, “how teachers understand difference matters to the way they teach writing” (p. 2). She advocates for more fully understanding how broad identity categories matter when teachers stand in front of the classroom, interact with students, and respond to student writing, arguing that “what is needed is a flexible means for examining and re-examining the interplay between identity categories and the communicative performances and contexts in which those categories become meaningful” (p. 4). However, we must also keep in mind Crowley’s (1998) compelling critique of Maxine Hairston’s optimistic belief that we can create a culturally inclusive curriculum in our composition classes by focusing on student experiences (p. 226). Crowley (1998) suggests that

no matter how nurturant the teacher, the so-called community of the classroom is rife with ideological differences that students and teachers bring with them to class. These differences will inevitably be put on the table, as they might not be in a history or biology class, because liberal composition pedagogy insists that students’ identities *are* the subject of composition. (p. 227)

Because identity is so much a part of teaching composition, it is all the more necessary to delve deeper into our understanding of how differently positioned identities impact or are impacted by the complex interactions in the university writing classroom.

## Chapter 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study is to explore the effects of student and teacher identity positioning, as well as the differences between two different versions of a first-year composition course at the University of Washington (UW): a multilingual section and a mainstream section of English 131.

The research questions that guide this study are:

1. How might student identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, or institution) impact opportunities for learning? How do students orient themselves within the classroom and in relation to their peers and instructor? How might the positioning of students influence student learning?
2. How might teacher identity positioning (on the part of the teacher, students, or institution) impact the pedagogical approaches a teacher employs, or vice versa? How might the way a teacher positions him- or herself in class impact student learning opportunities? How might the institutional positioning of the teacher affect his or her identity positioning within the classroom?
3. What are the key differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131?

These questions essentially aim to examine the different assumptions and practices that inform the overall positioning of the multilingual versus mainstream classes within the institution of the University of Washington's Expository Writing Program (EWP), and by extension, the positioning of the students and instructors involved in these classes. By comparing the positioning of students and teachers in a multilingual and mainstream section of English 131, I aim to uncover key differences between the two sections within the UW Expository Writing Program context. It is my hope that this research will also be productive for other institutions that

have established or are in the process of developing introductory composition classes for multilingual student populations.

In this chapter, I present an overview of the context, participants, and the methods I used in this study. I first discuss the context of the study, including a brief description of a previous study that informed the current research, which I conducted in 2013 with a co-researcher. As part of the contextual information provided in this chapter, I also explain key similarities and differences between the mainstream and “multilingual” sections of English 131 offered by the Expository Writing Program. I then describe the student and teacher participants of the study, before moving into a discussion of the qualitative research design that framed the project. I also describe the methods I used for data collection, including participant interviews, course observations, and analysis of curricular documents. Lastly, I describe my analytic approach, which draws on Davies and Harré’s (1990) positioning theory and Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) analytic framework for identity analysis.

## **CONTEXT OF STUDY**

This study takes as its research site two introductory composition courses at the University of Washington: one mainstream section and one multilingual section of English 131. The multilingual English 131 course offering is part of an ongoing effort by the UW’s Expository Writing Program (housed within the English Department) to address the needs of international and multilingual students and their teachers. Other multilingual student resources offered by the University of Washington include Multilingual (MLL) Writing Links (offered through the Interdisciplinary Writing Program, or IWP), including “MLL English 198” and “MLL English 199” (composition courses that are linked with lecture courses), and “MLL

Studios” (offered through the EWP), also known as English 115 (a two-credit supplementary writing class for students taking composition).

English 131 is one of several composition course options in the EWP; the course has several other counterparts (English 109/110, English 111, and English 121) that focus on the teaching of writing from varied perspectives. Because English 131 is the most widely offered class, instructors of English 131 typically assign readings that focus on academic discourse from a variety of disciplines and contexts. Where English 111 typically focuses on literary texts, English 121 focuses on service learning and social issues. English 109/110, a ‘stretch’ version of English 131 that takes place over two quarters instead of just one, is specifically designed to address the writing needs of students in the UW’s Educational Opportunity Program. All four composition courses fulfill the university’s composition requirement, and all share a common curriculum and the same set of learning outcomes. During Autumn Quarter 2015 when the present study was conducted, the EWP offered 43 sections of English 131, two of which were multilingual sections.

Composition courses at the UW are almost exclusively taught by graduate student Teaching Associates (or TAs) as part of their funding package.<sup>6</sup> All TAs are assigned to teach English 131 for their first full year of teaching in the English Department, but can be assigned to teach other classes (i.e., English 111, English 121, or other higher-level English courses) after that first year. That means that every TA in the EWP teaches a minimum of three English 131 courses before they teach any other writing course in the program. Also, regardless of their previous teaching experience, all EWP TAs must attend an extensive instructor training session, which takes place in September before the start of Fall Quarter. At this approximately 40-hour

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<sup>6</sup> I use the terms “instructor,” “teacher,” and “TA” interchangeably in this dissertation, in reference to the graduate student teaching associates who teach English 131.

training, new TAs learn about the EWP composition curriculum and design their own teaching materials for the first sequence of their English 131 classes. The training is led by the EWP Director and three EWP Assistant Directors (ADs), who are themselves graduate student TAs in the English Department, who have taught English 131 for at least one year. During the training, there are also panels, presentations, and workshops led by other experienced graduate student TAs, as well as English Department professors and administrators. Following the training, in the fall, every TA also enrolls in a graduate-level practicum course designed to provide them with a historical overview of composition studies and theoretical background on effective teaching pedagogies for first-year writing. The practicum course also offers a space for teachers to further design class assignments, seek support, and collaborate with one another.

The EWP composition curriculum comprises several standardized features. All composition classes center around four Course Outcomes, which specify that students will learn:

- to demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts;
- to read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully to generate and support writing;
- to produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts; and
- to develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.

The curriculum also comprises two writing sequences, each of which includes two to three assigned short papers leading up to one assigned major paper. This means that in each composition class, students can expect to write a total of four to six short papers and two major papers. These essays are not graded individually as they are completed. Instead, students receive feedback on their writing from their instructor throughout the quarter, and at the end of the

course, students submit a portfolio that is graded on the basis of their revised work and a reflective piece that describes their progress and their effectiveness in addressing the Course Outcomes in their writing.

Reading content in English 131 typically focuses on scholarly texts and articles (of the instructor's choosing), and while all first-year composition instructors employ the same writing textbook (the university-designed and -published *Contexts for Inquiry*), instructors are free to choose how to use it. Topics, themes, and writing assignments, as well as homework load, class activities, and content, may differ from teacher to teacher, according to what TAs expect their students to be able to accomplish or enjoy. Due to the balance between a standardized core curriculum and instructor agency in curriculum design, English 131 constitutes an interesting and diverse site for research into student and teacher positioning and the differing learning opportunities they may allow.

Enrollment in English 131 is open to all students, but the timing of registration is dependent on a student's academic status: freshmen and sophomores generally register during the later registration periods, while juniors and seniors register during earlier enrollment periods each quarter. While some English 131 sections are limited only to Freshman Interest Groups (or FIGs, where students enroll in a group of pre-determined courses during the quarter), most sections are open to all students. That said, English 131 does not exclusively enroll freshmen; it is therefore not uncommon for sophomores (or even juniors) to enroll in the class.

### **Mainstream versus Multilingual English 131**

While English 131 has been an established part of the Expository Writing Program at the UW for decades, the multilingual section of English 131 is a newer development. The department began offering the multilingual section of English 131 several years ago as an

ongoing effort to address multilingual student needs in composition. Though the nomenclature of the multilingual English 131 sections has changed several times since its inception, they are now officially labeled as multilingual course sections and are designated as being for “multilingual students only” on the official UW Course Time Schedule. Students have always been able to self-enroll into the multilingual sections of English 131; there are no administrative benchmarks, such as a placement test, to guide or restrict student enrollment in them. Earlier in their development, the multilingual sections used to require an add code which students had to acquire from the TA teaching the course. This requirement differed from that of the mainstream English 131 sections, which did not require an instructor-administered add code for registration. However, Autumn Quarter 2015 was the first quarter in which the multilingual English 131 sections no longer required an add code, meaning the course was open to enrollment without requiring that students contact the instructor first. It is important to note, as well, that the other major difference between the multilingual and mainstream sections of the course, besides the “multilingual” label, is the fact that the multilingual sections are capped at 18 students, while the mainstream sections are capped at 23.

### **Preliminary Research**

The current study was informed by research that I conducted with a co-investigator and fellow graduate student in Spring Quarter 2013, a year and a half prior to this study. That study, titled “Identities within the Composition Classroom: Evaluating Student Access and Attitudes toward Support Resources in the Composition Curriculum,” was conceptualized and carried out within a ten-week period as part of a graduate-level TESOL course on qualitative research methods. My co-researcher and I were interested in how composition instructors at the University of Washington advertised or encouraged their students to utilize writing resources

beyond the classroom. In particular, we focused on the difference in resource-advertising for students in mainstream sections versus “ESL” sections of English 131 (at that time, the multilingual section that the current study focuses on was called the “ESL” section). In our study, we aimed to explore how student identity and labeling in the composition classroom might impact student access to writing support resources.

My co-researcher and I initially hypothesized that student identity (in other words, how students identified themselves as language speakers, and how teachers identified their students as language speakers) played a role in the type (and/or amount) of writing resources students had access to. Specifically, we hypothesized that students who self-identified as non-native English speakers might be more likely to seek support beyond their writing teacher and classroom, while students who self-identified as native speakers of English may be less likely to seek out extra writing support. Ultimately, we found that most non-native English speaking students who responded to the survey categorized themselves as “international students” rather than choosing a label that denoted their linguistic identity. We also found that international students overwhelmingly used word of mouth to learn about resources on campus. Friends and acquaintances (who tended to often be international students themselves) were thus a major resource for many international students as they often asked their friends which classes they should take, which tutors they should visit, and so on.

Lastly, we found that the way TAs identified their roles as teachers (as well as the way they identified their students as language speakers) seemed likely to affect whether their students would know about and use certain writing resources. It appeared that the “ESL” English 131 TAs at the time did indeed provide more information about writing support resources to their students and put more effort and time into articulating the value of using such resources than mainstream

English 131 TAs, though further research on this topic would be needed to confirm this conclusion.

The current study aims to expand on the research my co-investigator and I conducted in 2013. This study continues to look at student and teacher identity positioning by conducting a comparative analysis of mainstream versus multilingual English 131 courses.<sup>7</sup> My research questions also shifted toward looking at the learning opportunities secured by students in each class due to their positioning in class or by the institution, as well as the effects of (and reasons for) teacher positioning in the classroom space. That said, my interest in the difference between mainstream and multilingual student resources, as well as the reflexive and interactional positioning of participants in both classes, still very much informs the current study.

## PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study included eight students and two instructors from two sections of English 131: a mainstream section and a multilingual section. The student participants in this study consisted of four students enrolled in a mainstream English 131 class and four students enrolled in a multilingual English 131 class. The participating instructors consisted of the two teachers of these students (the teacher of the mainstream section and the teacher of the multilingual section). Because the mainstream English 131 class in this study enrolled 23 students and the multilingual English 131 class enrolled 18, the maximum pool of students who were invited to participate was 41 students. Of the 17 students that provided contact information for the study (five from the mainstream section and 12 from the multilingual section), 11 students scheduled an interview with me (four from the mainstream section and

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting, again, that by the time I began conducting research for this study in 2015, the “ESL” English 131 class in Spring 2013 had been re-titled as Multilingual or ‘MLL’ English 131.

seven from the multilingual section). Out of the 11 student participants who agreed to be interviewed, only 10 students—four from the mainstream section and six from the multilingual section—stayed on to complete the research with me. This means that those ten students completed all three individual interviews with me as well as a focus group interview with me and their classmates after their classes had ended. I also conducted participant interviews with both teachers, and received portfolios from nine of the students.

I also conducted focus group interviews with all ten students; however, due to time constraints on the part of two of the (multilingual section) students, I ended up conducting three focus group interviews at the end of the study, instead of just two, as I had originally intended. Those focus groups constituted:

Focus Group 1: all four mainstream students

Focus Group 2: two of the six multilingual students

Focus Group 3: four of the six multilingual students

Ultimately, I chose to focus my analysis on the students from Focus Group 1 and Focus Group 3, eliminating data from the two students in Focus Group 2. I made this decision for the sake of concision and symmetry in my data. Focus Groups 1 and 3 both contained four students each from the mainstream and multilingual sections, and both groups contained a diverse range of students that I felt sufficiently represented the two courses. Thus, although ten students participated in this study, I chose to focus my analysis on only eight (four from the mainstream section and four from the multilingual section). Out of the eight students who comprise the student population of this study, seven submitted their final portfolios to me for analysis at the end of the study, while one (mainstream student) did not.

Both English 131 instructors were graduate student Teaching Associates (TAs) with prior experience teaching English in other institutions; the mainstream instructor had previously taught first-year composition and the multilingual instructor had previously taught English as a second language. Both TAs were also graduate students in the English Department, seeking their doctoral degrees. However, the TA for the multilingual section had taught English 131 several times by the time of the study (and so was very familiar with the EWP curriculum), while the TA for the mainstream course was teaching English 131 for the first time at the UW at the time of this study. Nevertheless, she did have some familiarity with the English 131 textbook, as she had used it to teach a high school composition course during the preceding year. Ideally, the instructors for this study would have been teaching associates who had at least one quarter of experience teaching in the UW EWP program to ensure that they were familiar with the curriculum and had already evolved standard teaching practices in their own classroom. While my intention prior to the study was to invite only experienced EWP TAs to participate, this proved somewhat difficult as English 131 is largely taught by instructors new to the course. As the study was conducted in Fall 2015, this meant that many of the instructors in the participant pool were teaching English 131 for the first time, including the mainstream instructor participant in this study.

### **Mainstream English 131 Participants**

The four students from the mainstream section of English 131 represented a typical range of students in an introductory composition course at the UW. Three were American domestic students and one was a Chinese international student. They were chosen solely due to their interest in participating in the study, and in fact, these four students were the only four students

from the mainstream section who volunteered to be part of this research. The four mainstream students, identified by pseudonyms below, included:

*Table 3.1: Mainstream Student Participant Demographic Information*

<b>English 131 Section</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Class Standing</b>	<b>Tentative Major</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Nationality</b>
Mainstream	Eva	F	U.S.	Freshman	Environmental Studies	Chinese	American
Mainstream	Chris	M	China	Freshman	Computer Science and Physics	Chinese	Chinese
Mainstream	Donna	F	U.S.	Freshman	Computer Science	Mexican	American
Mainstream	Zoe	F	U.S.	Freshman	Psychology	Japanese/ Caucasian	American

**Eva:** Eva was a freshman who had arrived at the University of Washington directly from high school. She grew up and attended school in the Seattle area and was the daughter of Chinese immigrant parents. She spoke English as her “main language,” but spoke Cantonese at home with her parents. Eva also took several years of German in high school and was, at the time of the study, also trying to teach herself French. In her interviews with me, Eva consistently reflected the attitude of an expert student writer, one who was bored with standard academic writing due to her extensive experience with the formulaic and uncreative persuasive essays that she had been writing since middle school. She explained early in our interviews that she did not like writing and did not plan on taking any English classes in the future (after her required English 131 class), although she did intend to write throughout her college career, as her desired major, environmental studies, required it. Despite this, she used her teacher, and her peers especially, as a resource (not for grammar revision, but for pointing out flaws in her arguments or essay structure). Though Eva often positioned herself as a bored writing expert, she was also extremely willing to learn from her teacher and her peers, and viewed them as a resource for

achieving success in her writing in class. Thus, even though she did not seem to feel that she needed it, Eva still took her teacher's and her classmate's feedback on her writing seriously in the class.

**Chris:** At the time of this study, Chris was in the midst of his first quarter as a freshman student at the University of Washington. In fact, he had arrived in the United States just weeks prior to the start of class. He was a Chinese international student who spoke Mandarin and English, as well as a little Japanese, and he was an extremely motivated student who planned to double major in computer science and physics. While Chris initially found the work in his English 131 class to be challenging due to the fact that it was largely “activity-based” rather than lecture-based, he took ownership of his learning with confidence and quickly adapted to his teacher's expectations. Although he was initially unfamiliar with the style and format of a typical American English composition course, he seemed to take a very logical approach to understanding the purpose behind class activities, and quickly recognized the value of the open-discussion format of the class (since it allowed him to hear diverse perspectives from other students). While he described English writing as “hard” and believed that he was “not even really good in writing Chinese argumentative papers,” his final English 131 portfolio demonstrated an outstanding command of English academic writing (including complex argumentation, high academic register, and excellent grammar and sentence construction).

**Donna:** Donna was a freshman who had grown up in Seattle. She was a bilingual English and Spanish speaker, as her parents were Mexican immigrants. She typically spoke Spanish at home, but almost never read Spanish language books or material. She also believed her language ability to be equal in both English and Spanish; as she explained it, “there's words I don't know in Spanish and words I don't know in English,” so she struggled sometimes because she was

unable to “explain [herself] either way.” Donna had also taken French language classes for five years in school. Donna was a first-generation college student with a strong drive to succeed, and she hoped to major in computer science since she liked to think logically. She also told me that she liked to challenge herself and not underestimate her ability to succeed in college, defining herself as a “good student” who tried hard not to procrastinate. Although she considered herself to be a good writer because she found writing to be easy for her when she enjoyed the topic, Donna felt her vocabulary was not “very big” and believed that her writing sounded “high school-ish” due to her struggle with vocabulary. She also noted that she sometimes struggled with pronunciation in both English and Spanish. Donna found the teacher of her English 131 section (Katie) to be “really supportive” of her writing and generally exuded a very positive presence in the classroom.

**Zoe:** Zoe, like the other three American students in the mainstream section, was also raised in the Seattle area. She was the child of an American father and a Japanese mother. While she had apparently been able to speak Japanese fluently as a child, she lost the ability to speak it once she entered school. For this reason, she considered herself a monolingual English speaker. However, at the time of the study she was learning Vietnamese because her boyfriend spoke it, and she wanted to be able to speak the language with his parents. She had also taken some Spanish in high school. Zoe wanted to major in psychology and was taking a psychology class (as well as Vietnamese) along with English 131 that fall. As she was paying her way through college and did not want to take out loans, she worked part time on campus and also ran a side business of her own. Zoe told me she liked to write stories for fun and had even had one of her stories published online, but then asked the publishers to take down the story because they had edited it too heavily without consulting her. She explained that she was a “strong, independent

woman” who was “very passionate about a lot of things,” but also “very indecisive.” However, she also said that she tends to be the leader in group work, and in class, she “need[s] concrete, hard directions and explanations” from her teacher. Zoe believed herself to be a good writer because it was “really easy” for her to “pump out a really quick paper” that was also “really good” quality. That said, she admitted that she sometimes turned in assignments late and sometimes skipped class. She also explained that she did not read much of the course textbook (and she forgot to bring her book to class “like every single day”) because she found it “kind of boring” and “dense” and it “[was] not really catching [her] attention.” This seems to fit with her self-assessment during our interview, where she stated that she thought she “got a little bit lazy” and “may have skipped a few classes” despite generally working “pretty hard.”

**Katie:** Katie was the instructor of the mainstream section of English 131. At the time of the study, she was a new EWP TA, so she was teaching English 131 for the first time that quarter. She had attended the EWP training a week or so before the start of her English 131 course and was enrolled in the practicum course required for all new English 131 TAs at the same time that she was teaching English 131. She was an experienced teacher with five years of teaching experience at a different university on the West Coast. Despite being new to the EWP, she had some experience with the English 131 textbook (*Contexts for Inquiry*) as she had taught the book in a college-preparation writing course the year before. By the time of the study, Katie was in her second year of the English doctorate program. She had a very positive attitude in class and in our interview, and it was clear that she was very invested in the work she was doing in her program and in her teaching. As she told me, she was “so excited about genre all the time” and was very enthusiastic about having the opportunity to teach genre as the topic of her English 131 class. Lastly, she was very interested and involved in writing program administration and

planned to pursue a career in composition teaching and administration once she completed her degree.

### **Multilingual English 131 Participants**

The four students from the multilingual section also represented a typical range of students enrolled in multilingual sections of English 131 at the UW. Three were Chinese international students and one was an American domestic student. These students were chosen for analysis because all four participated in a focus group interview together at the end of the study, and they sufficiently represented the student population of the class. The four multilingual students, identified by pseudonyms below, included:

*Table 3.2: Multilingual Student Participant Demographic Information*

<b>English 131 Section</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Class Standing</b>	<b>Tentative Major</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Nationality</b>
MLL	Toby	M	China	Freshman	Business	Chinese	Chinese
MLL	Nora	F	U.S.	Freshman	Aerospace Engineering	Japanese	American
MLL	Rita	F	China	Freshman	Architectural Design	Chinese	Chinese
MLL	Jennifer	F	China	Freshman	Business	Chinese	Chinese

**Toby:** Toby was a Chinese international student who had arrived in the United States a few weeks prior to the start of his English 131 class. He appeared to be a very fearful English student; he mentioned fear or nervousness about speaking English or taking English 131 on several occasions in our interviews. He also mentioned his dislike of writing several times, as well as the fact that English was very difficult for him. However, he seemed to have an extremely high linguistic awareness, as evidenced by his surface-level knowledge of many different languages. For example, when I mentioned to him that my father is Thai, Toby said

'hello' in Thai; and when we were talking briefly about accented English, he mimicked an Australian teacher's pronunciation. Toby also articulated a strong desire to fit in culturally with his American peers and demonstrated an awareness of moments when he was unfamiliar with cultural habits but wanted to learn. Although he explained in the critical reflection of his portfolio that he believed English to be challenging for international students like him, Toby also appeared to be very motivated to challenge himself so that he could earn a good grade and be accepted into the business program at the UW. By the second interview, his fear of failing shifted to wanting a "higher" score in the class. This was corroborated by his portfolio reflection in which he explained that he was worried about the difficulty of the class at the beginning of the quarter but that his confidence in English writing grew by the end of the class. His desire to challenge himself was also demonstrated by his pushing himself to speak in class. At the second interview, for example, he explained that speaking in class made him nervous, but by the third interview he talked about how he often raised his hand to speak.

**Nora:** Nora was an American child of Japanese parents. She grew up in California, but spent four years in middle school in Japan. She found herself in the multilingual English 131 class because it fit into her time schedule. In the first week of class, she realized most of her classmates were international students and emailed her teacher to find out if she belonged there. She also seemed to be very aware of her gender identity, mentioning that one of the reasons she wanted to participate in the study was so that I had a female participant. She also told me that she had participated in a program that summer that specifically supported women in science and engineering. Nora wanted to major in aerospace engineering and at the time of our interview was enrolled in chemistry, pre-calculus, and a military science class. Interestingly, she viewed herself as multilingual but also as a native speaker of English, and seemed self-conscious or concerned

about the fact that she was in a class with many international students, possibly due to her concern about belonging. There seemed to be a contradiction in her relationship to English writing: early on, she mentioned that she was not a strong writer, but then later explained that English was not that hard for her. Nora also seemed to have some insight into the difficulties international students might face in class due to her own experience attending middle school in Japan.

**Rita:** Rita was a Chinese international student who had arrived in the U.S. a few weeks before the start of Fall Quarter. She was taking an economics and an architecture class that fall, along with her multilingual English 131 course; she hoped to major in architectural design. She spoke Mandarin fluently and considered English to be her second language, but was also studying Japanese as a beginner. Rita was a very serious student who considered herself a good writer in Chinese, but who also needed more practice to get better in English. She said that she felt she was more “expressive” in Chinese, but she still needed practice with the “basic things” in English writing, such as sentence structure and vocabulary. That said, she did seem to be quite confident in her writing ability, noting that once she picks up the template or structure of essays (for example, for science reports or narratives), she can write a good paper. She also seemed to be used to the discussion-based style of her English 131 class, perhaps due to the fact that she went to an international high school in China. As she explained to me, she often liked to be the first person to start the conversation in her English 131 class discussions because, as she stated “everyone will hesitate if they need to speak or not. And I don’t want to waste time on [silence].” She also explained that she likes to listen to her classmates’ ideas, and found value in that; again, this was something she said she learned in her high school classes at her international high school in China.

**Jennifer:** Jennifer was also a Chinese international student in the multilingual section of English 131 who had arrived to the U.S. a few weeks prior to the start of Fall Quarter, although she had visited the United States for one summer during high school. In our interviews, she was very friendly and open, and provided a lot of information about herself in a conversational and laidback manner. While she was obviously a fluent English speaker, she sometimes seemed to have trouble understanding questions I asked in our interview, and at times seemed confused about what I was asking her. She explained to me that she was interested in majoring in business, but she loved fashion and wanted to learn French because of it. She seemed like a very confident student in that she did not express concern or nervousness about her English class (or any other classes). For example, at one point in one of our interviews, I asked her the topic of her grammar presentation, which was coming up in a week or two, and she laughed, telling me she could not remember the topic off the top of her head because, as she stated, “I don’t think about it.” She also noted that she was very comfortable talking in groups in class because “it’s just [like] talk in daily life.” Jennifer also stated that she would speak up in class sometimes because she did not want her teacher to be “embarrassed” by silence after he asked questions of the class. She labeled herself a “foreigner” and described herself as someone who was “serious” about her studies. She also seemed open to new experiences and did not seem bound by rules. For example, she told me she once sat in on a communications lecture just to see what it was like. By the end of the study, she told me she wanted to change her major from business to communications, since she believed that communications better suited her personality and interests.

**Matthew:** Matthew was the teacher of the multilingual section of English 131. He had been teaching in the Expository Writing Program for a full year at the time of our interview, and in fact, the course under study was the third multilingual section of English 131 he had taught

(out of four total) at the UW. He explained that as a teacher he overwhelmingly preferred personal communication; he liked having students come in to office hours and frequently had students visit him. He often used student work in class to demonstrate writing skill and strategies. During our interview, he also spent a lot of time talking about the history of the multilingual course, including discussing the add codes and the nomenclature of the class as it had evolved over time. It appeared that he was very involved in the development of multilingual student resources, and he was a part of a small group of core teachers and administrators in the EWP who met regularly to talk through ways in which the program could provide more resources for multilingual students.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

As I am most interested in the experiences of students and instructors as they navigate the first-year writing class, I utilized a qualitative approach for data collection in keeping with much of the existing identity research that studies multilingual students in first-year composition courses (Chiang & Schmida, 2011; Costino & Hyon, 2007; Harklau, 2011; Norton, 2013; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Waterstone, 2008; and Yi, 2013). The qualitative approach is well-suited for promoting a deep understanding of social settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 7), and provides a framework for exploratory research methodologies that allow for the investigation of language and interaction, key elements in identity positioning. Likewise, qualitative methods are well-suited for studying participant experiences (which shape participant identity construction) in social settings and communities. Because qualitative research generally studies social phenomena, qualitative methods tend to be rooted in a constructivist, critical perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 30). As well, qualitative research tends to be “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in people’s lived experiences” (p. 30). Thus, qualitative researchers

view the social world as “holistic and complex,” relying on complex reasoning that shifts between inductive and deductive reasoning strategies (p. 30).

In this qualitative research paradigm, I situate this study within a social constructivist framework because my analysis approaches reality as socially, culturally, and historically constructed. Social constructivist research “attempts to understand social phenomena from a context-specific perspective” (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008, p. 28), under the assumption that individuals bring their subjective experiences to every situation, thus creating the possibility for multiple realities (p. 29). My research examines identity positioning within social contexts and recognizes that identity positioning is situated within contexts made meaningful by participants. Moreover, in utilizing a constructivist framework, my approach to identity and the study of social interaction recognizes that “reality is socially constructed” and that “individuals develop subjective meanings of their own personal experience”; thus, multiple meanings exist at any given time or situation (p. 29).

Due to the flexible and interactive nature of identity positioning—and the many different approaches needed to collect qualitative data on such complex and ever-shifting interactions—this study employs a variety of qualitative research methodologies, including interviews, observation, and analysis of talk and text. These methods are situated within a poststructuralist paradigm due to its conception of language as a complex social practice through which relationships are defined, negotiated and resisted. The poststructuralist paradigm holds that a single truth does not exist; rather, multiple truths can and do exist simultaneously (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, poststructuralist theory views the individual subject as diverse, contradictory, dynamic, and changing over time and social space (Norton, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011). Such a definition of subjectivity lends itself to understanding the multiple positions from which

language learners can speak. Integral to understanding identity positions, as well, is an understanding of how relations of power in the social world affect learners' access to linguistic resources and the target language community (Norton, 2013).

I chose a case study design to frame my research. A case study is the exploration of a “bounded system” or case over a period of time (Creswell, 1998). During the case study, a detailed data collection process gathers rich contextual information from multiple sources (p. 61). The bounded system under study could be a program, an event, an institution, or a social group (Merriam, 2009). In the context of this dissertation, close examination takes place within the bounded system of two composition classrooms that are part of a larger programmatic system (the Expository Writing Program), which in turn is part of a larger institution (the University of Washington). My analysis therefore considers the impact that various connected systems have on the positioning interactions that take place within and beyond the two composition classes under study. It is also worth noting that the context of the composition classroom impacts any meaning that can be taken from the events and interactions that participants experienced. In other words, as Bissex and Bullock (1987) explain, “human beings live and learn in particular contexts, such as families, classrooms, and cultures...[and] these contexts shape our experiences and what those experiences mean to us” (p.11). Not only does qualitative research aim to get at what those experiences mean, functioning within contexts that recognize the “multiple experiences and voices within” (p. 11), but it is my belief that the case study framework, in particular, allows ample space and flexibility to conduct identity positioning research in light of the rich, in-depth data collection it allows.

Bissex and Bullock (1987) describe the usefulness of the case study approach when they explain that such a method can “allow us to use our empathy and intuition while giving us the

distance to look critically” (p. 13). Following this perspective, I attempt to accurately and fairly analyze and describe student identity positioning via an intuitive inquiry process, which acknowledges that “interpretation inevitably arises within a cultural context with implicit values and symbols” (Wertz, 2011, p. 67). In other words, I recognize that, in the process of data collection and analysis, my interpretation of the study’s results is informed by the cultural context of the institution and classroom spaces in which I conducted this case study. The data collection used in this study pulled together a variety of qualitative research methodologies and approaches, including participant interviews, class observation, focus groups, and document analysis, which will be explained in more depth below. Ultimately, this case study attempts to produce a thick description of student and teacher identity positioning in the “bounded system” of the university composition classroom (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

## DATA COLLECTION

The study was submitted to the University of Washington Institutional Review Board in mid-June 2015 and was approved for exempt status two weeks later. Per IRB guidelines, the goal of the study, contextual information about the study, and the study’s research questions were included in consent forms for teachers and students to sign before conducting interviews (see Appendix B and C). Research instruments were also explained in person to all students in both classes before they submitted their contact information (see Appendix A), and all study information was explained to the teacher participants via email in September 2015. The student participant pool was drawn only from classes whose teachers had consented to allow their classes to be researched.

To protect the privacy of the study participants, I audiotaped interviews with participant consent, with the consent form stipulating that if participants wished at any point, they could ask

that a statement made in an interview be erased or not transcribed. I endeavored to protect the identity of all participants by utilizing pseudonyms and identity-obscuring information when necessary in my analysis. As I was not an instructor of the English 131 courses under study, I was not in a position to have any impact, adverse or otherwise, on the grades of the students, nor did participation in this study have any impact, adverse or otherwise, on the participants' status as students or teachers at the University of Washington. After completing the interviews, I uploaded the audio files from the recorder and transcribed them with the aid of a transcription pedal. Observation data were typed during observation, and documents collected during the research process were gathered during course observations or downloaded from the course Canvas pages.

Because triangulating data is essential to the validity and plausibility of qualitative research, this study utilized a variety of data collection methods (Merriam, 2009; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2010). These methods included participant interviews, course observations, and document collection. I collected this data from September 2015 to January 2016. Before class started in September 2015, I emailed several Fall Quarter 2015 instructors of English 131 to ask if they would be willing to participate in the study. I chose teachers based on my personal familiarity with them and the timing of their course (which was available on the University of Washington Course Time Schedule online); I wanted to make sure that the times of the classes I chose to research did not conflict with one another. Out of six teachers I emailed, two were available to participate. Fortunately, of the two TAs who volunteered, one would be teaching a mainstream English 131 and one would be teaching a multilingual English 131 that fall.

I then gathered student participants after visiting each of the two sections on the first day of class to explain my research to the students and hand out an "Invitation to Participate" (see

Appendix A) document on which students could provide their contact information if they were interested in participating. I also passed out flyers with information about the study, as well as a link to an online survey, which asked students for general demographic information about themselves and also offered another avenue through which students could provide contact information if they were interested in participating. Because only five students across both sections completed the survey, I eliminated this survey as part of my data during analysis.

### **Interviews**

As the study aimed to explore the dynamic processes of interaction and identity positioning from the perspective of the research subjects, I conducted interviews as a primary data collection method. I take up Mishler's (1986) view of interviews as speech events, which are jointly constructed by the researcher and participant. Instead of viewing the interview process as a mechanical process of objective information gathering, Mishler (1986) proposes a qualitative interview theory that suggests that: (1) interviews are speech events, (2) the discourse of interviews is jointly constructed, (3) analysis and interpretation are based on a theory of discourse and meaning, and (4) the meanings of questions and answers are contextually grounded (p. ix). These propositions shaped the interviews I conducted with students and teachers in that I sought to acknowledge and grant a certain messiness to the interviews. The interviews I held were conversational in nature, and I strove to develop rapport with my participants by conducting multiple interviews over time so that participants gained familiarity with me as the person asking them questions.

Along with approaching the interview space as contextually grounded, co-constructed speech events, an important part of my interview approach was to allow participants to speak for themselves. I wanted participants to be equal participants in the interview process. For that

reason, I used the semi-structured interview approach, in which interview questions were loosely structured ahead of time, allowing an opportunity during each interview for open conversation and new perspectives to materialize through the co-constructed dialogue between participants and myself (Bailey, 2006). I also adopted Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interview theoretical approach, which adds to Mishler's (1986) interview theory reformulation in that "the active interview does not treat participants as a 'vessel' from which to mine information" (p. 17). Instead, "active interviewers converse with respondents, may suggest linkages between aspects of the participant's experience, or even invite interpretations" (p. 17). Like Mishler's (1986) propositions, Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interview approach recognizes that both the interviewer and the participants are active contributors to how the interview is constructed and experienced. The active interview is thus an interpretive practice that requires the recognition of meaning not as constantly formulated anew but as reflecting enduring local conditions (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p. 16). The meanings produced through interview talk are therefore constructed by the researcher and participant together in the specific location and time of the interview, and those meanings are "neither singular nor fixed" (p. 64). In adopting the active interview approach, I began each interview with a set of questions and topics that I wanted to cover, but at times deviated slightly from the prescribed questions to follow trains of thought or ask alternative questions as participants navigated the interview conversation with me. I also employed a conversational tone and method with my interview participants to allow space for conversation and new perspectives to emerge and to help participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and beliefs with me.

Because interviews constituted the primary mode of data collection in this study, I conducted student interviews three times during the quarter (once at the beginning, middle, and

end of the quarter) (see Appendix D). These three interviews were held one-on-one and ranged from 15 to 60 minutes each. The frequency and pace of the student interviews over the three-month period was done to establish rapport and familiarity with each student. Conducting multiple interviews with each student also allowed space for evolving perspectives on their identity positioning as it potentially changed over time, as well as the opportunity to ask questions and explore salient moments I observed in class throughout the quarter.

To supplement my student interview data, I also conducted one interview with each TA midway through Fall Quarter 2015 (see Appendix E). These two interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. The TA interview was intended to garner responses about how the TAs perceived their students as language users and composition students, what the TAs believe the goals of their class to be, and what they understood their teaching persona or identity to be. As identity positioning is discursively co-constructed and situated within the interview context (Talmy, 2011, p. 27), I recognize that data gathered from interview practices are not uncontested realities or truths. Instead, the meanings and identities enacted in an interview are highly situated, yet still offer valuable insight into how students understand their social, cultural, or linguistic positioning.

### **Focus Groups Interviews**

Besides individual interviews with the students and instructors, I also conducted student focus group interviews at the end of my study, several weeks after the English 131 classes had ended (see Appendix F). As Ho (2006) explains, focus groups, as a form of group interview, can “encourage students to open up and talk freely about what they do in their language classrooms in interactive groups” (p. 05.2) and can also encourage students to “self-disclose spontaneously” (p. 05.2). It was with these purposes in mind that I included focus groups in the data collection

process as a final opportunity to allow my student participants to discuss their English 131 experience in a low-stakes, low-stress environment with peers who were also participating in the study. The focus group interviews were also meant to facilitate and witness interaction amongst participants, thus offering a nuanced and slightly different form of interview data for analysis. As Ho (2006) writes, “participants are encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, exchange anecdotes and comment on one another’s experiences and points of view” (p. 05.2-05.3), and I made this expectation explicit to each group before our interview.

As explained above, I conducted three focus groups for this study. Each focus group was about 60 to 90 minutes. I conducted one focus group for the mainstream section of English 131 (with all four participating students), and two focus groups for the multilingual section of English 131 (with four participating students in one group and two in the other). I would have preferred all six multilingual students to participate in one focus group together, but due to time constraints on the part of the students, I had to divide them. All three focus groups took place in January 2016, several weeks after the end of the English 131 classes. One of the main reasons for the timing of these focus groups was so that I could elicit final perspectives on student identity positioning in the classes. I wanted to offer students the chance to reflect on their experiences after completing the course and getting some distance from it.

Finally, I used a transcription pedal to transcribe the individual and focus group interviews and purposefully recorded pauses, vocal noises, laughs, and gestures, as well as the speed of speech (when it was noticeably fast or slow). The purpose of transcribing these details was to get a sense of the social context in which our conversation was taking place. I wanted to track moments where it seemed that participants showed emotion, as those details often had an important impact on my interpretation of participant attitudes during our interviews.

## Course Observations

To supplement data that emerged in participant interviews, I observed both classes several times (see Appendix I). Ethnographic observation allows for closely examining and interpreting patterns of behavior, practice, and positioning of the students and teaching in the social setting of the classroom (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 32; Creswell, 1998). I approached my class observations with Heath, Street, and Mill's (2008) guiding principles for ethnographic study in mind, which I believe contributed to a strong research stance in the exploration of identity positioning. The first principle holds that changes in habits and beliefs correlate with shifts in structures and uses of language, while a second holds that 'essential' meanings or discourses that are institutionally formalized, authorized, or sanctioned must be open to scrutiny (Heath, Street & Mills 2008, p. 7-8). In other words, different ideologies, stories, and identity positions are taken up via different discursive practices, and we, as researchers, must be able to critically examine the seemingly self-evident meanings of institutionalized discourse. In other words, we must not take for granted the implicit meaning of things. These principles of ethnographic language research can be especially productive in understanding how multilingual learners and writing students whose identities are already situated in varying linguistic forms construct their experiences and position themselves in the classroom.

With the permission of the TAs, course observations occurred at various points throughout the quarter, but days were systematically chosen in order to gather data on a range of classroom activities, including class discussions, group work activities, and peer review. I attended the mainstream class a total of four times and the multilingual class a total of three times. This broke down to 188 total minutes of observation in the mainstream section, and 154 total minutes of observation in the multilingual section. During these course observations, I kept

observational field notes regarding the types of activities that occurred during class, the time spent on activities, the content of the teachers' speech, the types of interactions between teacher and students, the types of interactions between students, and the general environment (such as seating arrangements and mood) of the class. Thus, the focus of observation data collection was on interaction in the classroom, including that which highlighted teacher positioning and the positioning of the participating students.

### **Document Collection**

Finally, along with collecting qualitative data via participant interviews and course observation, I collected the curriculum documents of both classes. Both TAs used the online course platform Canvas in their course, from which I collected the bulk of the course materials from each class. Canvas allowed me to access assignment prompts, class activities, class notes, course syllabi, and course calendars. These documents were valuable in that they allowed me a third avenue for studying the similarities and differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections. The course documents also allowed me to study the type of language that each instructor utilized in class (i.e., the documents allowed me to analyze the teachers' audience awareness), to see the type of paper prompts they felt were appropriate to assign students, and to observe how each instructor conceptualized the course for his or her students. I found the course materials to be valuable in supporting data collected from my interviews and observations, as they tended to reflect key similarities and differences between the two classes.

I also collected seven electronic portfolios from the participating students at the end of the quarter (one of the eight students did not email me the link to hers). These e-portfolios included all papers and drafts produced during the quarter, along with teacher feedback on most of the drafts, and a final student-written critical reflection on the work they completed that

quarter. I had initially imagined that these portfolios (and the critical reflection specifically) would help me to understand how students positioned themselves in class. I also imagined that the teachers' comments on student drafts would help me to understand how the instructors might have positioned the participating students as language learners and writing students. However, the portfolios did not appear to contain significant evidence to support or refute my eventual findings.

## DATA ANALYSIS

My analysis began with choosing the participants I intended to analyze for the study. As I noted above, I had collected data on two classrooms – one mainstream and one multilingual section of English 131. I had conducted interviews with the two teachers of these sections as well as ten students (four from the mainstream section and six from the multilingual section). In returning to my data after the study had officially concluded, I decided, for the sake of consistency, to conduct my analysis on just students who attended two of the focus groups: the mainstream one and the four-person multilingual one. I justify this exclusion with the fact that the four-person multilingual focus group contained students from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds that sufficiently represented the multilingual class.

After determining my data pool, I began memoing all interview transcripts, to develop a thematic system. I noted anything that struck me as interesting about the way the students and teachers in the study talked about their identity, their experience in the classroom, or their experience at the university. I then noted interesting or salient moments within my observation notes, the curriculum documents I had compiled and organized from both classes, and the student portfolios I had collected. Though I had initially intended to develop a coding scheme for my data, I found that the preliminary coding process that I implemented seemed to strip the data

from the social context in which I found it, which Mishler (1986) suggests is one of the central problems with coding. For that reason, I found that memoing and sketching themes was the best approach for my analysis, since I could look closely and contextually at how participants took up or rejected identity positioning at various points in the interview. In particular, I looked for moments within the interview transcripts in which there appeared to be signs of confusion, contradiction, ambiguity, or reluctance, with the understanding that “problematic conversation often signals occasions where meanings are being examined, reconstituted, or resisted” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p. 79).

During the memoing process, I first read through all interview transcripts, noting any moments where it seemed identity positioning was being referenced or enacted by me or by the participant. I then jotted down notes on a separate document that summarized general sketches of the participant, including what was discussed, the mood of the conversation, similarities or differences between participants, and so on. I then read through my observation notes for both the mainstream and multilingual classes, as well as the handouts and course materials I had collected from both, noting themes that seemed to recur. Lastly, I reviewed the student portfolios, looking for ways in which the students’ writing supported or refuted the themes I had collected. In all, several themes emerged from the data. These themes were divided according to the materials from which I gathered them. They are shown in Table 3.3 below. As can be seen in the chart, I attempted to begin making connections between the emerging themes and the study’s discussion questions, which aimed to explore identity positioning (and the results or effects of such positioning) in the mainstream multilingual sections of English 131. For example, I found that several students in the study mentioned during our interviews that they appreciated being able to choose the topics of their essays. I viewed this as a potential affordance that students

secured in class. Likewise, I noted the practice and abstract language within the syllabi of both classes, again believing it to be a potential affordance for students.

*Table 3.3: Memoing Themes*

<p><b>Themes emerging from student interviews and portfolios:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Confidence in language and writing ability (student reflexive positioning) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Related to having advantages vs. disadvantages, i.e. cultural resources or language resources (self-positioning or affordances)</li> </ul> </li> <li>-Student expectations of the course (student positioning of class/teacher)</li> <li>-Discussion of freedom of choice in writing (affordance)</li> <li>-Definition of multilingual (self/other/course positioning)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Themes emerging from teacher interviews:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pedagogical approach (course goals and teaching ideology/persona) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Effort to facilitate community</li> <li>-Effort to destabilize student expectations</li> </ul> </li> <li>-Discussion of the navigation of institutional challenges</li> </ul>
<p><b>Themes emerging from observation notes and curriculum materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Instructional method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teacher-driven vs. student-driven learning</li> <li>-Practical vs. abstract language</li> <li>-Clarity of instructor expectations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **Approach to Identity and the Positioning Framework**

Having described my analytic process, I detail in this section my approach to identity and describe the two major identity theories that frame my research: Davies and Harré's (1990) theory of identity positioning and Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) sociocultural linguistic approach to the study of identity and interaction. These theories work as a foundation for conceptions of identity and positioning and provide a framework for analysis of identity as it is produced via discursive interaction. I take up the view of identity that is prevalent in the field of second language studies: that identity is unfixed, flexible, and constantly shifting. Identity itself, according to Norton & McKinney (2011), refers to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.73). In other words, identity is that which

emerges via interaction, and which is thus constantly being shaped and reshaped. However, I also recognize the fact that simply because “identities are fluid doesn’t mean that society and nations don’t fix certain negative identities on minority students and discriminate against them accordingly” (Canagarajah, 2002, p. 135). While I recognize that identity is in flux given the context of a conversation, a person’s position in a community or institution, and a person’s sense of self, I also recognize that in most social contexts, identities are often conceptualized as stable ‘essences’ about a person. In my analyses in Chapters 4 and 5, I attempt to negotiate this feature of identity by recognizing the variable positionings that participants took up, but by also recognizing the ways that participants were institutionally or socially positioned within the social contexts in which they acted.

### **Positioning Theory**

Davies and Harré’s (1990) identity theory rests on the assumption that identity positioning is largely a conversational phenomenon (p. 45). In other words, meaning is constructed not only by what is said but also by the identity positioning of the speaker. However, the speaker’s ‘self’ or identity is also reified or constituted through the meaning of the discourse that the listener perceives. Therefore, it is mainly in context, rather than words, that meaning is held (p. 57). Not only is meaning shaped by identity positioning, but, within Davies and Harré’s (1990) conceptualization, interaction is also required for identity positioning to emerge, since positioning is a “discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (p. 48). Identity positioning is thus an inherently social and jointly produced construct that emerges through interaction and talk.

Within talk, Davies and Harré (1990) suggest that features such as linguistic choices and social or cultural judgements are means by which we position ourselves conversationally (p. 6). We make sense of who we are and who we are talking to in any conversation by employing (consciously and unconsciously) these attributes. As well, positioning emerges simultaneously in two ways during any interaction: interactively and reflexively. Interactive positioning occurs when what someone says discursively positions another person, while reflexive positioning occurs when what one says positions oneself (p. 48). Again, as is clear, Davies and Harré's (1990) theory of identity positioning rests heavily on the assumption that positioning occurs through interaction and talk, can be purposeful or unconscious, and can be constructed self-reflexively or imposed on others.

Davies and Harré (1990) outline elements of a process that helps to constitute our sense of self or identity through discourse. Those elements include: learning identity categories, participating in discursive practices that allocate meaning to those identity categories, positioning oneself within certain identity categories, recognizing oneself as having characteristics (or not) of certain categories, and recognizing oneself as "historically continuous and unitary" (Davies and Harré, 1990, p. 47). Not only is this process ongoing, so that one's sense of identity becomes reinforced over time, but it demonstrates how identity positioning can be constantly emergent and shifting according to time, place, participants in conversation, and identity categories available, known, or understood. Thus, how someone is positioned in one discursive act or interaction may be very different from the next time they are positioned in a similar discursive act, due to different meanings that can be interpreted by speakers in an interaction.

While Davies and Harré's (1990) conception of identity positioning through talk provides an excellent working framework for conceptualizing identity in interaction, the authors do not

explicitly detail what “counts” as taking a position during conversation and what does not (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 141). For that reason, there is a need for analytic tools to supplement Davies and Harré’s (1990) theory of discursive positioning. Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) analytic framework for studying identity provides these tools.

### **Identity Analysis**

Like Davies and Harré’s (1990) theory of discursive identity positioning, Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) sociocultural linguistic approach to identity and interaction bases a theoretical and practical analytic framework on the notion that identity is produced through linguistic interaction (p. 585). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue for an approach to conceptualizing and researching identity that recognizes identity construction or positioning as a largely social phenomenon, one that happens via interaction and talk rather than “as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories” (p. 586-687). Within this notion of identity constructed through interaction, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) suggest five principles that guide an analysis of identity. These principles include the emergence principle, the positionality principle, the indexicality principle, the relationality principle, and the partialness principle.

The emergence principle draws on Hymes’ theory of emergence (as cited in Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 587) and holds that identities are not pre-conceived, but emerge through interaction or communication. In other words, “identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants,” so one’s identity develops and is shaped by talk (p. 591). These roles and orientations are similar to Davies and Harré’s (1990) positions. An example of this is “cases where speakers’ language use does not conform with the social category to which they are normatively assigned,” such as the case with transgender or cross-gender performances (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588). In an analysis of identity, positions

or roles are those that may be temporarily constructed or reflected in ways of speaking during an interaction or taken up during the telling of stories in conversation (Davies & Harré, 1990).

These emerging positions are not rigid however. As Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) second principle, the positionality principle, asserts, identity is not "simply a collection of broad social categories" but a multitude of positions that people can take up simultaneously (p. 591). In addition, identity not only is partly constructed by larger discourses that shape ways of talking, thinking, and identifying, but also partly shapes larger and smaller discourses themselves. Therefore, although identity positions shape and are shaped by large and small discourses or ways of thinking and behaving, such positioning is nonetheless flexible and constantly shifting, even in contrary or opposing ways. For the analyst of identity positioning in interaction, then, "it is not a matter of choosing one dimension of identity over others, but of considering multiple facets in order to achieve a more complete understanding of how identity works" (p. 593).

The third principle is based on the linguistic concept of indexicality, which suggests that identity is indexed through self-references and/or discursive choices (p. 594). In other words, certain discursive features can point to specific identity categories or positions during interaction. These features could include overt reference to identity categories or labels, assumptions regarding one's own or others' identity position, displayed epistemic orientations, or the use of linguistic structures that are "ideologically associated with specific personas and groups" (p. 594). As Bucholtz and Hall attest, "even in the most fleeting of interactional moves, speakers position themselves and others as particular kinds of people" (p. 595). This kind of positioning might occur when speaking or hearing a dialect or accent. As can probably be inferred, Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) theory suggests that identity is constructed through relationships and communication with others, similar to Davies and Harré's (1990) theory. This fourth element in

their theory they call the relationality principle; as the name suggests, this principle holds that it is only in relation to other identities that identity position can occur (p. 605).

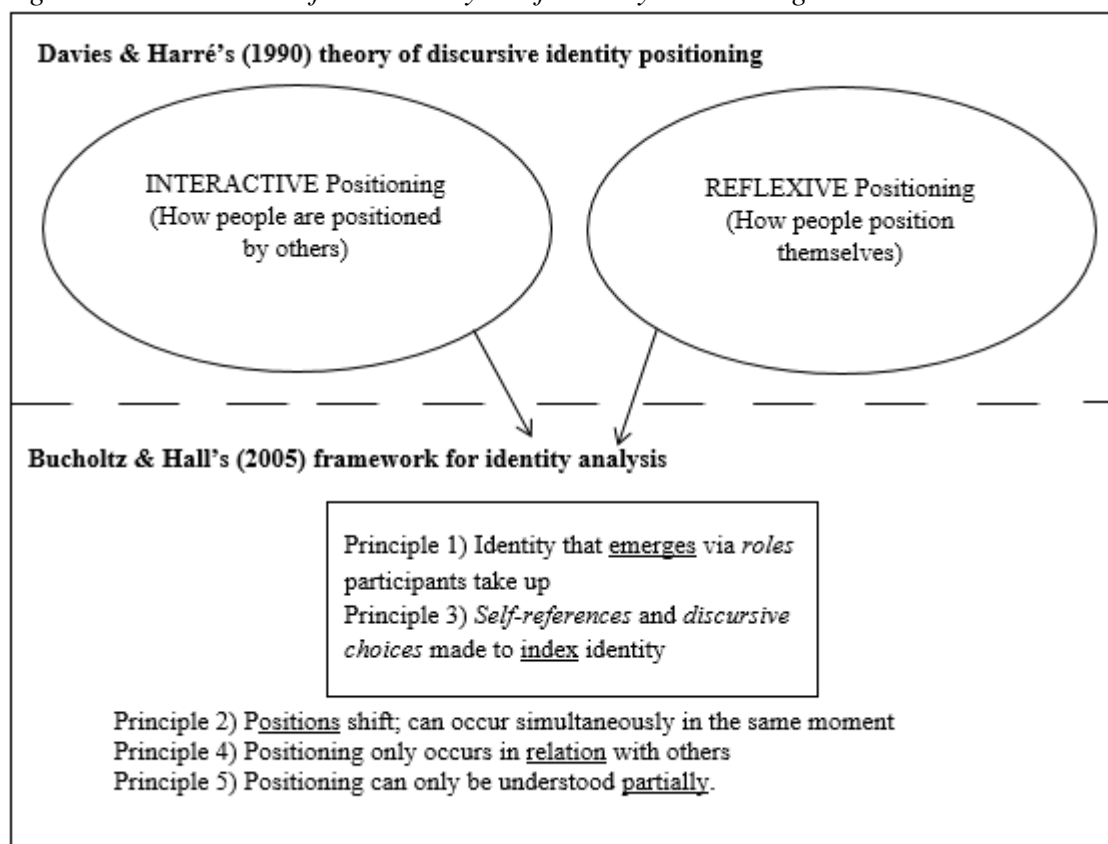
Lastly, Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) fifth principle, partialness, suggests that researchers and theorists can only glean a partial understanding of identity due to the multitude of ways that identity can be re/constructed in different moments of time. Because identity positioning is relational (i.e., it only occurs through relationships, conversation, and interaction among people), it is "constantly shifting" and unfolding across situations, conversations, and contexts (p. 606). Despite the shifting, partial nature of understanding identity construction or positioning at any given time, it is still possible to conduct an analysis of identity positioning as it unfolds in specific interactions, and the authors argue that these principles provide comprehensive and thorough analytic tools. Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) principles of identity can theoretically be applied to any interaction between people, and I utilize these tools in the analysis of positionings taken up and enacted by teacher and student participants during interviews, in course textual documents, and in course observations.

### **A Synthesis of Discursive Identity Positioning and Identity Analysis**

Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) sociocultural linguistic approach to identity positioning adds detailed analytic tools that fit into Davies and Harré's (1990) framework of interactive and reflexive positioning. I synthesize these two theories in my analytic framework by drawing on Davies and Harré's (1990) interactive and reflexive positioning, as well as on Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) Principle 1 and Principle 3, specifically. In other words, my analysis of identity positioning consisted of a close look at how students and teachers positioned themselves (reflexively) and how they were positioned (interactively), via analysis of the roles they took up or rejected (Principle 1) and the discursive choices they made to index their identity in their

conversational interviews with me (Principle 3). In my analysis, I also recognize that multiple positionings can occur simultaneously in the same moment, that positioning occurred contextually in relation with me during interviews, and that the positioning that the students and teachers enacted could be understood only partially. While Davies and Harré (1990) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005) both conceptualize identity positioning as it occurs via conversation, I utilize their frameworks largely within the interview space, drawing on what participants said to me about their experiences related to teaching or enrolling in English 131. I also apply this analytic framework to identity positioning as I saw it being enacted during my course observations and within the textual documents I collected from both classes. My framework is as follows:

*Figure 3.4: Framework for the Analysis of Identity Positioning*



As Figure 3.4 shows, Davies and Harré (1990) conceptualize discursive identity positioning in two ways: as interactive and reflexive. Interactive positioning describes how people are positioned by others, and reflexive positioning describes how people position themselves. The arrows in the chart show that I apply the concept of interactive and reflexive positioning to Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) Principle 1 (that identity emerges via roles that participants take up) and Principle 3 (that self-references and discursive choices index identity). In my analysis, I looked specifically at how participants took up roles and made discursive choices that reflexively positioned themselves or interactively positioned others. Within this analytic framework, I also took as axiomatic Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) other three principles: that positionings shift and can occur simultaneously at the same moment (in other words, they are not static), that positioning can occur only in relation to others, and that positioning can only be understood partially at any given instance.

My analysis of student positioning was based on exploring the institutional labels that students believed to define them or not, as well as student understandings of those institutional labels as they define the linguistic ability of students. I understood the EWP institution to be positioning some students as "multilingual" (the students who enrolled in the multilingual section of English 131, and other students to be positioned as non-multilingual, or mainstream (due to enrolling in the mainstream English of English 131). My analysis of teacher positioning was based on exploring the roles that they tended to take up or reject in the classroom and within the EWP. The roles that teachers positioned themselves in (and perceived themselves to be positioned in) emerged in our interview conversations and in the classroom practices I observed.

## Chapter 4. STUDENT CONCEPTIONS OF “MULTILINGUAL”

As my research intended to explore how students may position themselves differently in the multilingual section of English 131 versus the mainstream section, a key question in my interviews asked students to explain why they chose the section that they did. I hypothesized that students in the multilingual section positioned themselves as linguistically or culturally different from their mainstream peers. I was also interested in finding out how students understood the term multilingual, and whether their understanding of the term impacted (or would impact) their decision to enroll in a course designated for multilingual students. Lastly, I was interested in finding out, ultimately, what the difference was between the mainstream and multilingual versions of English 131. My findings in regards to these questions will be discussed in this chapter and the next.

For the most part, I found that students were not familiar with the term multilingual, and in fact, had not self-selected into the multilingual section of English 131 knowing that it was designated as such. Thus, as a result of my findings, I argue in this dissertation that the mainstream and the multilingual students both appeared to enroll in their sections for similar reasons, and that the presence or absence of the multilingual label did not necessarily ensure that the multilingual class would mostly enroll students who identify as multilingual. This means that both multilingual and mainstream composition classes at the UW generally have the same likelihood of enrolling a range of linguistically and culturally diverse students. While this information may not be considered new or surprising, comparing student enrollment patterns in the multilingual section versus the mainstream section and the student perspectives on what it means to be multilingual, helps to set up my argument in Chapter 5 where I suggest that, although *students* did not seem to position themselves as multilingual via their enrollment in the

sections they chose, the *teachers'* positioning very much influenced the construction and approach to the class.

I begin by presenting Findings 1 through 3, which explore the multilingual course label. These three findings have to do with whether or not students positioned themselves as multilingual and how students perceive the multilingual course label. First, I show that students did not intentionally position themselves as multilingual based on their enrollment in the multilingual course versus the mainstream course. I then show that students believed the multilingual label of the course meant the class would entail more grammar instruction and a slower, easier pace, and that none of the students identified with the term multilingual as the composition field defines it. Finally, I discuss the “best practices” in both classes (a term I borrow from Matthew, the teacher of multilingual English 131 in this study), arguing that Prabhu’s (1990) theory of teachers’ “sense of plausibility” (p. 172) and Canagarajah’s (2002) “postmethod” approach to teaching are productive notions for conceptualizing how teachers of both mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131 can develop and incorporate a repertoire of pedagogical tools that can address a diverse range of student needs.

#### FINDING 1: STUDENTS DID NOT INTENTIONALLY POSITION THEMSELVES AS MULTILINGUAL OR NON-MULTILINGUAL VIA ENROLLMENT

Perhaps the most surprising finding of the study was that none of the students realized that there was a multilingual section of English 131 prior to enrolling in the course, even though half of them were enrolled in a multilingual section. Students therefore did not consciously self-select into the multilingual course; instead, the students I interviewed largely chose their English 131 courses based on how well the meeting time for the class fit their schedule. Because students did not seem to recognize the implicit positioning of their class as either multilingual or

mainstream, it was inconclusive whether their self-positioning in class was influenced in any way by the class they selected.

### **Mainstream Student Perspectives**

When asked in individual interviews whether they had heard of the multilingual version of English 131, three students in the mainstream course said that they had not, and the fourth implied that she had not known about it. Eva, an American child of Chinese immigrants, explained that she did not remember seeing the option for a multilingual English 131 when she signed up for her English class, so she had not even known about the option. Likewise, Chris, a Chinese international student, and Donna, who described herself as a bilingual Spanish and English speaker with Mexican parents, also did not know of the multilingual section. In fact, Donna said she had neither heard of the multilingual section nor seen it on the time schedule when registering for class. Because I did not explicitly ask Zoe if she had known there was a multilingual section of English 131 (as I had for the other three mainstream students), Zoe did not say whether she had known about it, but when I explained that there was such a section, she responded with “oh wow” and “that’s cool,” indicating that the information was new to her.

### **Multilingual Student Perspectives**

More interestingly, the students I interviewed from the multilingual section of English 131 were not aware that they had registered for the multilingual section, which means that these students seemed just as unaware of the multilingual label of their section. For example, when I asked Toby, a Chinese international student, whether he specifically chose to take the multilingual section of English 131, he responded “No? ...I just heard about I have to take a English class so I choose the 131.” After I explained that he was in the multilingual section of English 131, which enrolled mostly international students, he described himself as “lucky” to

have registered for it, suggesting that he was happy to have found himself in a multilingual section with many other international students. In fact, he mentioned during the interview that he had noticed that 12 out of the 18 students in his class were Chinese.

Nora, an American child of Japanese immigrants, had a similar experience of finding out only after attending class that she had enrolled in the multilingual section. In our first interview, I asked her why she had selected Matthew's multilingual section of English 131. She explained she chose because of the days and times the class met and because her "orientation leader said that 131 was a good class to take." I remarked that Matthew's class specifically was one of two classes designated as multilingual sections of English 131. She responded to my remark with "Right..." making it clear that she had already noticed the student population was different than her expectations. I asked her if she already knew that Matthew's class was multilingual, and she responded: "Yeah, I was like 'oh, they're all international students in this class!,' so (laughs)". She also confirmed that she was unaware of that fact until she arrived in class on the first day.

Similarly, Rita, a Chinese international student, did not choose the multilingual section of English 131 due to its label. By the time of our first interview, she was aware that she was enrolled in the multilingual section, but when asked whether she chose the section specifically because it was labeled multilingual, she explained "Mm, no, I choose to enter this class because I think I need to learn the basic skills about composition." It seems that Rita had not known that her section was labeled multilingual either. Also, rather than explain why she took the multilingual section of English 131 specifically, she responded to my question by explaining her reasoning for taking English 131 at all.

Lastly, like the other students in this study, Jennifer, a Chinese international student, also did not know she had chosen a multilingual section of English 131. When I explained in our first

interview that she was registered in one of the two multilingual sections of English 131 that quarter, she responded: “Huh. I don’t know! I just search the class that suit my schedule.” Like Toby, it seems Jennifer also found out about her enrollment in the multilingual section at the point of our interview. Thus, none of the students who participated in the study actively positioned themselves as multilingual by choosing the multilingual English 131 section. In fact, none of the participating students enrolled in the multilingual section had realized at the time of enrolling that their class was any different from a mainstream English 131 class. Likewise, none of the participating students in the mainstream section of English 131 actively positioned themselves as non-multilingual, since none of them had known there were multilingual and mainstream sections to choose from.

### **Student Reasons for Choosing their English 131 Section**

Since students clearly explained in their individual interviews that they had not intentionally chosen the multilingual section nor noticed the multilingual course label, I was curious to find out what factors *had* influenced their decision to enroll in the multilingual section or not. The time schedule on the University of Washington course enrollment website distinguishes the multilingual section of English 131 in two ways. First, as can be seen in the time schedule excerpt below, the course description states that the multilingual section of English 131 is for “MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS ONLY.” Secondly, the enrollment number for the classes shows multilingual sections are capped at 18 students, while all other sections are capped at 23 students.

Figure 4.1: Example of Autumn 2015 Official Course Schedule<sup>8</sup>

Restr	<a href="#">58256</a>	L 5	MW	230-420	<a href="#">SAV</a>	186	BURK, MATTHEW	Closed	18/18
NO AUDITORS NO OVERLOADS OPEN ONLY TO ENTERING FRESHMAN CANNOT BE TAKEN IF STUDENT HAS ALREADY RECEIVED A GRADE OF 2.0 OR HIGHER IN EITHER ENGL 111, 121 OR 131 MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS ONLY TAEMAIL@UW.EDU									
Restr	<a href="#">26093</a>	C 5	MTWTh	930-1020	<a href="#">SMI</a>	410	EVANS, KATIE	Closed	23/ 23
NO OVERLOADS, NO AUDITORS CANNOT BE TAKEN IF STUDENT HAS ALREADY RECEIVED A GRADE OF 2.0 OR HIGHER IN EITHER ENGL 111, 121 OR 131 ENTERING FRESHMAN ONLY									

Since students had not chosen their section on the basis of the “MULTILINGUAL” label, they must have chosen their section for another reason. During the focus group interviews, I pressed the students again on their reasoning for choosing the English 131 section that they did. At the focus group interview, I brought a handout for each student that included my interview questions and a printout of the webpage listing the Fall Quarter 2015 English 131 courses (see Appendix G). I then allowed fifteen minutes of quiet time at the start of the interview for students to read through the questions on the handout and write their answers on the sheet. One of the questions specifically asked students to “Take a look at the Fall Time Schedule I’ve given you. Scan through your options and try to refresh your memory on why you chose the class that you did. What drew you to the class? Feel free to annotate on the schedule as you skim it.” After regrouping, all students essentially confirmed what they had already explained to me in their

<sup>8</sup> Identifying information has been changed.

individual interviews: they had not paid attention to the labeling of the class and did not realize there was a multilingual section of English 131.

Instead, students from the multilingual section tended to choose the class based on two factors: the days and time the class met and on the recommendation of friends. Rita, one of the students enrolled in the multilingual section, wrote on her handout that she “took this class because of my friend’s recommendation of the professor and my time schedule fits this class,” while Toby, also in the multilingual section, wrote “there was only one session left that fit my schedule...I just chose randomly.”<sup>9</sup> Jennifer wrote that she chose the multilingual section of the class because the “time is great” (she did not “have to get up early”) and because her friend recommended the course to her.<sup>10</sup> Nora explained that she had not noticed that the class was designated multilingual but that she did not think she would have registered for a different section anyway because the multilingual one fit into her schedule. She also explained that she partly chose the section because it was not part of a First-Year Interest Group (FIG), which is a cluster of classes that a cohort of students can take together during their first quarter at the University of Washington.

The students in the mainstream section also considered two different factors when choosing their class: the days and time the class met and whether it was part of a FIG or not. In our focus group interview, Eva explained that the “primary reason she chose” her English 131 section was because it “was not a FIG.” Donna and Chris, on the other hand, both explained that

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that, while Rita says she took the multilingual section because her friend recommended the instructor, she had explained to me previously that at the time of enrolling, there was no instructor name at all. Once the instructor names were assigned to the classes, Rita told her friend who her teacher was and found that her friend liked the teacher that Rita had been assigned. Rita’s friend then switched from a different English 131 class to join Matthew’s multilingual section with Rita.

<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to tell whether Jennifer’s friend recommended the multilingual section to her specifically or if Jennifer’s friend merely approved the instructor she ended up having (as with Rita’s case) or whether Jennifer’s friend simply suggested that English 131 generally was a good class to take.

they chose the class on the basis of the days and time. Donna wanted the class because of the “time slot” and Chris said “nothing in particular” drew him to the class but that he “chose this class just because it’s not closed and the schedule worked for me.” Zoe’s reasoning for choosing the class was a combination of both factors: she explained that she chose the class because of the days and time it met and the fact that it was not part of a FIG. The students’ choice of sections of English 131, therefore, did not indicate any explicit or implicit self-positioning as multilingual or non-multilingual. In enrolling in these courses, none of the students seemed aware that there was a choice between multilingual and mainstream sections of English 131; they simply chose the section that either best fit their time schedule, was still open for enrollment, was not part of a FIG, or was recommended to them by friends.

## **FINDING 2: STUDENTS BELIEVED THE MULTILINGUAL SECTION WOULD INVOLVE MORE GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION AND BE TAUGHT AT A SLOWER PACE**

In tandem with asking students why they chose the English 131 section they did, I inquired about what students believed “multilingual” meant and what they believed the multilingual section of English 131 would entail. I also asked students whether they believed multilingual students had different needs than mainstream students. I asked these questions to garner information about how students might position a class labeled multilingual, as well as to find out how they positioned (if at all) the type of student who would take a multilingual class. It seems most of the students believed that the multilingual section of English 131 would involve more grammar instruction and possibly be taught at a slower pace than the mainstream section.

### **Student Perspectives on the Term “Multilingual”**

Approximately half of the participating students in the multilingual section did not know the term “multilingual” and the other half of the participating students defined the term as the

ability to speak multiple languages. For example, when I asked Toby whether he knew his class was a multilingual section of English 131, he responded by asking what multilingual meant. Likewise, Jennifer was unfamiliar with the term. When I asked her why she chose the multilingual section of English 131, she responded with “Uh, what is mul-ti-lin-gual?,” drawing out the term in a way that indicated it was an unfamiliar word to her. Nora, on the other hand, already understood the definition of multilingual to refer to multiple languages. As she explained, “it’s just like, like the word says, um you can speak more than one language.” Rita also defined the term similarly; when asked if she knew what multilingual means, she said “It’s the – um...multi means a variety, right?” Clearly, either the multilingual students did not know the term multilingual or they believed the term multilingual to describe speakers of multiple languages.

The responses were very similar from students in the mainstream class as well. Students either defined multilingual to refer to the ability to speak multiple languages or did not know the term at all. For example, Eva defined the term literally as speaking “more than one language.” When asked if Chris had heard of the multilingual section of English 131, he said “No, I haven’t heard of it” and then asked “What’s it like, multilingual?” Likewise, when I asked Donna if she had heard of the multilingual sections of English 131, she said “No” and asked me what it was. The only student who did not seem to be hesitant about her understanding of the term was Zoe, who, when I explained that there was a multilingual version of English 131, responded with “Oh wow [...] that’s cool.” She seemed to understand the label to mean that the multilingual section of English 131 was for non-native speakers of English, though she did not specifically define the term for me.

### **Mainstream Student Perceptions of a Multilingual Writing Course**

After establishing with the students what they understood multilingual to mean, I asked each of them several questions to elicit more information about their understanding of the multilingual label. These included, at different points in their first interview, questions regarding their thoughts on advantages and disadvantages of enrolling in a multilingual section of English 131, and whether students believed that multilingual students need different writing support than non-multilingual students. Ultimately, when asked what kind of writing instruction students thought the multilingual section would focus on, students across both sections seemed to think that the multilingual label meant the course would focus more on grammar instruction than the mainstream sections did, and that it would be taught at a slower pace.

When I asked Eva, a student in the mainstream section, whether she believed multilingual students needed different writing support or instruction than non-multilingual or mainstream students, she confirmed that she believed they did:

Um, I would say yes if English isn't their first language, since they're just getting used to how English is and English is such a strange language. I think um teachers could take more time to help them with syntax and grammar 'cause those are prob- I think the hardest parts of learning English.

It is important to note that she qualified her answer by suggesting that multilingual students who are non-native speakers of English are students that she imagined would benefit the most from a multilingual writing course, which she believed would focus on English syntax and grammar. She also went on to explain that it might be difficult to understand “what their teacher’s saying” and that a teacher of the multilingual section “could slow down a little or use maybe simpler but equal terms to describe what [they’re] saying.” Eva drew on her experience with her parents to make this assessment, as evidenced from the following exchange:

Justina: That's interesting you say syntax and grammar is the hardest part of writing English.

Eva: Well, my parents, that's what they tell me. When they first came here to learn English they – they still have trouble with their tenses, so I figure that's a common issue and I've seen that in like people's essays that I've read. It's usually just, um, like the way sentence structure is like weird, [or] punctuation, or just tense of verbs.

Justina: Yeah. And are you talking about friends' papers who are non-native speakers or who are native speakers of English?

Eva: They're actually native speakers, I guess there's – they don't teach grammar anymore, so.

As can be seen, Eva positioned multilingual students as similar to her parents: non-native speakers of English who speak English fluently but who have difficulty with grammar and syntax. However, Eva also recognized that there are times when native speakers of English may also benefit from grammar instruction, and commented on the fact that grammar is not often taught to native speakers of English.

Another student in the mainstream section of English 131, Chris, also believed that a section labeled multilingual would entail more writing instruction at the sentence level. When asked if he would have wanted to take the multilingual class had he known about it, Chris said “Yeah, probably.” After I asked him why, he explained:

Well, it's kind of – uh, I mean the regular English 131 is not really what I had expected because what I expected is, it should be like something similar back in China, the English writing courses. I thought it would taught you to, uh, how to write, uh, varied sentences and, uh, maybe something about wording, uh, appropriate word for this context, and uh,

something basic about the English language itself. But it seems now that the English 131 is different; it actually taught you to raise your genre awareness and some rhetorical situations, something like that. It's very different and much difficult, much more difficult. As can be seen here, Chris expected his English 131 class to be similar to the English classes he had taken in China, where he was essentially learning English as a second language. He also suggested that he might have preferred the multilingual section of English 131, under the assumption that it might have been more like those English language classes he had taken back home. In explaining what he specifically imagined might be an advantages of taking the multilingual section of English 131, he said: "Maybe they will put some effort into, uh, like correcting your grammar or something, correcting your wording." Asked if that would be something he would like his English class to focus on, he said "Yeah." However, he also raised an interesting point when I asked what the potential advantages of a multilingual section of English 131 would be. He explained that in a class with a majority of domestic students, he would be able to "learn about English language itself and maybe practice my speaking," which he did not think would be possible in a multilingual section. He further explained that he was interested in getting to know Western culture, so he saw that as a major benefit of taking a mainstream section of English 131. Thus, while he viewed English language instruction as a potential benefit of the multilingual section of English 131, Chris also imagined that the multilingual section would be filled with international students like himself, possibly denying him the opportunity to learn about American culture through his English 131 classmates.

Zoe, another student in the mainstream section, also had an interesting take on what a multilingual section would entail. She seemed to have more awareness of multilingual student needs, possibly because her boyfriend was Vietnamese, a non-native speaker of English who was

also majoring in English and shared an interest with Zoe in creative writing. I asked Zoe what she would think if she had seen the multilingual section of English 131 on the time schedule. She responded that “I feel like they’re catering to the people who are like international students, which is awesome because you know, some of them might not have very good English skills yet. So not only are they taking the class for the content, but like learning English at the same time, [and] how to speak.” When asked if she thought that multilingual students need different writing support than non-multilingual students, she replied “Maybe. Yeah, maybe like grammatically.” However, she also explained that the students in a multilingual section “probably don’t really need help in the way of like good writing” since “they’re [at the University of Washington] because they’re super smart.” She clearly believed a multilingual section of English 131 would focus on grammar, but would also involve the same writing instruction and content that would be provided in a mainstream section of English 131.

Lastly, Donna had the same impression of the multilingual section as the other mainstream students. When asked if she thought there might be any advantages or disadvantages to being in the mainstream class versus a multilingual one, she explained that she “would just think that [the multilingual] class would have a little bit more from like the teacher support on like grammar and like how to [...] structure sentences. I would expect that class to be like a little less hard for students who are bilingual.” While she clearly positions the multilingual section as being for students who are bilingual (or speak more than one language), she later concludes that academic writing resources should “be pushed for multilingual [students]” but also pushed for mainstream students, too, “because you can never stop getting better” regardless of how you identify linguistically.

### **Multilingual Student Perceptions of a Multilingual Writing Course**

Among the students in the multilingual section of English 131, the assessment was largely the same. For example, when I asked Nora whether she thought multilingual students need different writing support or instruction from non-multilingual students, she said she thought they did and that they might need a “slower start.” She also explained that multilingual students might need more instruction than native speakers to “build up the basics,” explaining that mainstream students could be told “Write a thesis about blah blah blah,” but multilingual students would need to be instructed about what a thesis is (“So basically a thesis is, it’s like an argument that you back up with evidence”). In other words, she envisioned that a multilingual section would spend more time explaining concepts, though it would teach the same core writing skills as that of a mainstream section. When I asked her what she thought multilingual students need help with in writing, Rita explained that she thought the “most important part is vocabulary.” She also explained that she hoped to learn “the vocabularies, sentence structure, the grammars correctly” in her multilingual English 131 course, echoing many of the other students in her belief that a multilingual section would at least partially focus on English grammar and sentence construction.

Toby, a student in the multilingual section, responded differently when I asked him if he believed that international students needed more support than American students. He said: “No? But some Chinese student – I don’t know [about] Korean or Japanese, but some Chinese student just don’t want to learn English. They just, uh, came to UW and play with other Chinese guys and after four years they, they speak very excellent [Cantonese] [...] but their English is very poor still [...] so someone need, but someone don’t I think.” In this response, he appears to be suggesting that some students need more instruction on English language skills (i.e. speaking, listening, reading, or writing) but do not seek out support for it. He at first suggests that

international students do not necessarily need more support than American students, but then contradictorily suggests that international students do indeed need more help with English but do not try to secure such support. When I asked him what his needs were specifically, Toby responded, “I think I need – I want to make some more American friends.” His focus in class, like Chris’s from the mainstream section, was on interacting with American classmates to learn more about American culture; however, Toby did not comment on whether he believed this to be an advantage of the mainstream section over the multilingual section of English 131.

Lastly, I did not ask Jennifer if she believed that multilingual students need more support than non-multilingual students, simply because she did not seem to understand the word multilingual during our first interview, though I defined it for her as the ability to “speak multiple languages.” It is worth noting here that I provided this definition for Jennifer to give her a literal definition of the term, since she seemed confused about what the word meant. When asked what she thought were the advantages of being in a multilingual class, she responded, “We can get access to different language and not just English, it’s good for us in future.” It seemed from this response that Jennifer understood a multilingual course to teach multiple languages in class; she also did not seem to recognize that her English 131 class was labeled multilingual or that the label defined the students who were in the class as opposed to the course content. On the other hand, she did appear to believe that English writing would be more difficult for her than for other students, “especially as a foreigner,” as she defined herself.

Ultimately it seems clear that all students, prior to participating in the research, were somewhat unfamiliar with the meaning of the term “multilingual,” meaning the labeling of separate English 131 classes as multilingual was less meaningful to them than other factors of the class, such as scheduling. Also, when asked what students thought a multilingual version of

English 131 would entail, all believed that grammar and sentence-level English writing instruction would be a key component in such a composition class. However, two of the mainstream English 131 students believed that the extra resources potentially offered in a multilingual class could effectively be taught to mainstream students as well. Finally, two of the international Chinese students (one in the mainstream section and one in the multilingual section) believed the benefit of the mainstream sections was having access to American classmates and American academic culture.

### FINDING 3: STUDENTS IN NEITHER OF THE TWO CLASSES IDENTIFY AS MULTILINGUAL

Now that I have discussed the first two findings (that students were unaware of the multilingual sections of English 131, but believed a multilingual class to entail more grammar instruction), I move to the third finding, which specifically looks at how students positioned themselves in the multilingual or non-multilingual (mainstream) space. I found that the students in this study tended not to identify as multilingual, despite the fact that most of them fit into the category that the composition discipline defines as multilingual.<sup>11</sup> For the domestic students in my study, this may have had to do with not identifying as a foreign or international student; for international students, this might have simply been due to an unfamiliarity with academic labels that identify linguistically diverse students.

#### **Mainstream Student Positioning**

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<sup>11</sup> In the field of composition and second language studies, the term multilingual tends to encompass identity categories such as “L2 student,” (Cook, 1999, and others), “ESL student” (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997), “international student” (Baker, 2008), “second-language writer” (“CCCC Statement,” 2009); “non-native speaker” of English (Pavlenko, 2003); or some other variation of a non-monolingual English speaker.

The student participants from the mainstream section of English 131 included three domestic students and one international student. These students came from a range of cultural, ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds. Of the domestic students, Eva was a Chinese American child of Chinese immigrants who could speak English and Cantonese (as well as German, intermediately), though she identified English as her first language. Donna was a Mexican American child of Mexican immigrants and spoke English and Spanish bilingually. Zoe was a half-Japanese child of one immigrant parent and one domestic parent and identified as a native English speaker, though she was also learning to speak Vietnamese to be able to communicate with her long-term Vietnamese boyfriend's family. Lastly, Chris, the sole Chinese international student from the mainstream section who participated in my study, spoke English and Chinese, as well as some Japanese. All four of these students could be considered multilingual students, as the term conceptualizes students who come to the classroom with diverse linguistic resources. Although these mainstream students could just as easily have found themselves in a multilingual section of English 131, none of them identified as multilingual *per se*; instead students chose labels such as "bilingual" to describe their linguistic abilities.

Despite her fluency in two languages, intermediate ability in one language, and her interest in learning a fourth, Eva considered herself bilingual (and not multilingual). I asked Eva if she would have been interested in the multilingual section of her course had she known about it; this was after explaining that international students tended to enroll in the multilingual section of English 131, but that "it could also be [for] domestic students who speak English as a second language or domestic students who speak English as a first language but even have [...] parents who are immigrants and don't speak English natively." She explained "Um, probably not. I wouldn't really identify myself as any of those, um, groups." She then added that she was "fine

with mainstream English so I wouldn't have signed up.” Interestingly, even though Eva is indeed a child of immigrants who speak English non-natively, she positioned herself as not part of the groups I listed (which included children of non-English speaking immigrants). Even after hearing my definition of multilingual, she seemed to have taken the term to mean ‘people who speak English non-natively’ or otherwise need extra help and instruction on English language skills. This may in part have been due to the fact that I included non-native speakers of English and international students in my definition of multilingual. When I asked if Eva considered herself to be a multilingual person she responded “I consider myself bilingual [...] with Chinese and English,” positioning herself as ‘bilingual’ rather than multilingual.

Chris, an international Chinese student in the mainstream section, responded similarly to Eva, in response to my question about whether he identified as a multilingual person. He said “I think I'm bilingual to be exact.” However, prior to my question, when I asked him how he would identify himself as a language learner or language speaker, he said, “I'm a foreign language learner.” His matter-of-fact explanation for this was that “Mandarin is my native language and English is my foreign language, so I think I'm a foreign language learner.” He seems to have taken up terminology that may have been used in his Chinese schooling, where English is taught as a second or foreign language, rather than as a language arts class, the more typical practice in the United States. Chris did not seem to view himself as multilingual, and instead chose a more straightforward identity category to describe his linguistic ability.

Donna also seemed to gently resist the multilingual label. After I asked if Donna would have been interested in taking the multilingual section, she explained it would have interested her. She explained that “I know that English is not my first la—or, it's not my strongest like, like sometimes I need help like pronouncing a word.” However, she also explained that she did not

need as much help with grammar, so the mainstream section she enrolled in provided “the same” instruction that she imagined the multilingual section would offer her. Like Eva and Chris, Donna identified herself as “bilingual” when asked if she considered herself multilingual. She elaborated on her choice of terminology:

Yeah. Not multi. Like I don’t – yeah. But I do see myself as bilingual ‘cause my Spanish isn’t perfect either, just like my English, they’re both at the same level. There’s words I can’t pronounce in English and there’s words I can’t pronounce in Spanish, and there’s words I don’t know in Spanish and words I don’t know in English.

Here she firmly positions herself as bilingual, which she interprets to mean she speaks two languages fluently but imperfectly. Neither one could be considered her first language, as she explained early in our first interview: “Every time people ask me what language I learned first I don’t know the answer to that ‘cause I think I learned them around the same time”. However, in contradiction to this labeling, Donna did seem to position herself as a multilingual student later in our interview. When asked if she believed multilingual students or bilingual students need different writing support or writing instruction than non-multilingual students, she said “Uh, yes. Uh, I do think so, just from personal experience, I – compared to my friends whose English is like their first language, like I definitely need more help on structuring my essay and wording it and, um, than compared to my friends, I think. It’s important for us to have like more support and resources for people who speak two language or more.” She clearly positioned herself as multilingual by responding to my general question about multilingual students from her own point of view and also by referring to herself and other multilingual students as “us.”

Zoe, another domestic student in the mainstream section, did not seem to identify as multilingual in any capacity. Firstly, it seemed she took the multilingual section of English 131

to mean that the class would be taught partially in English and partially in another language. For example, when I asked Zoe what she thought some advantages or disadvantages would be to taking a multilingual section instead of a mainstream section, she replied that “It would be a struggle for me just because I don’t speak other languages fluently, so I would try – I’d be trying to focus on what I’m supposed to be learning plus trying to understand what’s going on.” She compared her perception of the multilingual section to the beginning Vietnamese language class she was taking that quarter: “Like in Vietnamese. It’s really hard for me to understand ‘cause she’ll like explain things in Vietnamese [...] and so I’ll be trying to, like, listen and learn what she’s explaining but I can’t really understand.” It seemed clear during our dialogue that Zoe expected that the teacher and students would be speaking other languages in the multilingual section of English 131 or that, at a minimum, the teacher in the multilingual section would be teaching content as well as language skills, but possibly mixing two or more languages in class during instruction. For this reason, Zoe clearly positioned herself as not a student who would succeed in or benefit from enrolling in the multilingual section of English 131.

### **Multilingual Student Positioning**

The students in the multilingual section of English 131—three Chinese international students and one domestic Japanese-American student—also tended not to identify as multilingual per se. Toby, Rita, and Jennifer were Chinese international students; all three of them had arrived in the United States just a month or so before their classes had started that fall. Nora was a domestic student whose parents were Japanese immigrants, and she herself had spent her middle school years in Japan when her family moved back for a brief period. However, despite these students’ enrollment in the multilingual section of English 131, and despite the fact that all four qualified as multilingual based on the conception put forth by composition and

second language studies, only Nora seemed to actively identify as multilingual although she did not seem to fully accept the positioning that the label imposed on her.

When I initially asked Toby, one of the Chinese international students, whether he viewed himself as multilingual, he did not seem to understand the question. He responded with “Ch-Chinese and English,” seeming to interpret my question to be about what languages he spoke. I pressed a little further, asking if he viewed himself as a non-native speaker of English, to try to find out his understanding of different labels that identify students of varying linguistic abilities. He responded: “Yeah, non-native speaker of English, ‘cause I, I can’t...(mumble) never mind!” He had trouble articulating himself, so I rephrased my question asking, “What would you prefer to be called? Would you prefer to be called an international student? Or non-native speaker of English or multilingual student...or something else?” He responded that he would like to be called “international student, I think.” As evidenced here, he labeled himself according to his student identity positioning in an American university rather than on the basis of his English-speaking ability. It is also apparent that he did not understand the meaning of multilingual as a linguistic identity marker, nor did he seem to understand at this point in our interview that the class was labeled differently and that students with varying linguistic abilities are labeled differently in the institution and in the field.

Jennifer, another of the Chinese international students I interviewed from the multilingual section, also expressed confusion regarding the term multilingual. When asked if she would have chosen the class if she had known it was multilingual, Jennifer said “Mm, I think I will. Because know more language is good.” It seemed clear that she did not quite understand the definition of multilingual in the context of my question, instead believing that a multilingual class would be one in which multiple languages are taught. When I then asked what she thought were some

advantages of being in a multilingual class, she explained that “we can get access to different language and not just English,” but that a disadvantage would be that “maybe you don’t have enough time to focus on one language.” Like Zoe, from the mainstream section, Jennifer seemed to believe that a multilingual course meant that multiple languages would be taught and spoken in class. When asked if she would view herself as multilingual, Jennifer responded “Mm, no (laugh), I think I just, uh, know two language.” When I then followed up by asking what kind of label she thought would best fit her (after briefly explaining that the university has a lot of labels for students, such as international student, or English as a second language student), she responded “Umm...I think English as a second language.” She explained that this was because “Maybe I will learn other language and English is actually my second language. Mm, I never access to other language.” Like several other students in this study, Jennifer interpreted the term multilingual literally. She did not recognize the different contextual meaning it had as a label for a type of class or student population.

Rita, another Chinese international student in the multilingual section of English 131, positioned herself as a non-native speaker (and not multilingual, per se). When I asked her if she believed the multilingual section of English 131 would be different from a non-multilingual section of English 131, she seemed to believe the student population would be the main difference. She explained, about the multilingual section she was enrolled in, that “we are just English learners and, uh, ‘cause most of us are not native speakers so....” I then asked her how she would classify or label the students in her class, including herself, and she said “Mm...oh, English for most of us are the second language so, uh, we – we get some skills from our first language we can just use it in this class. Um...differences?” When she paused, I suggested that she might not believe there were any differences between her multilingual section and a

mainstream section, a reasonable response, I pointed out, since there might not be any differences. After another long pause, she said “Mm [...] I think we also have, um, classmates from not only China but India or some country so we have different cultures and can share different values.” Here, she clearly positions herself as one student of many in a multicultural class, with students from a variety of countries, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic backgrounds. Lastly, when asked if she believed there were advantages or disadvantages to the multilingual section, she said “Oh yeah, if there’s all native speakers in my class and only I’m from another country I may feel more nervous, um, ‘cause they have no [unclear] about English. Um...yeah. And [the multilingual section] is I feel a better atmosphere because I will cooperate with other students ‘cause they also need to learn this second language.” Ultimately, although Rita did not initially seem to be familiar with the multilingual term, she picked up very quickly that it implied a multicultural, multi-national, linguistically diverse mix of students, of which she believed herself to be a part.

Lastly, Nora, a domestic Japanese-American student, was the only student to immediately consider herself multilingual in our interview. When describing her linguistic ability generally, she explained that “my first language is English” but that she mixes Japanese and English in her head sometimes. Though she learned English first, she “picked up” Japanese from her parents at an early age, and then solidified her Japanese language skills in middle school when her family moved to Japan for four years. She also took four years of high school Spanish. When I asked Nora if she identified as multilingual, she explained, “Well, I know I’m multilingual but I don’t really identify myself as like, like a non-native speaker?” Nora seems to have parsed the meaning of multilingual, adopting one position that the label offers (i.e. “someone who speaks two or more languages”), but not another (i.e., “someone who is a non-native speaker of English”). Due

to her specific linguistic positioning (as a multiple-language-speaking American domestic student), she thus positioned herself on the multilingual spectrum, but did not position herself as a non-native speaker.

Ultimately, the students across both the mainstream and the multilingual sections of English 131 largely interpreted “multilingual” to refer to the ability to speak multiple languages. They also tended to position multilingual students (or students who would enroll in the multilingual section) as non-native English speakers or otherwise foreign or international. Interestingly, while students largely identified with terms such as “international student” or “non-native speaker,” many of the students did not readily adopt the multilingual label, thinking it described a person who could speak multiple languages fluently.

#### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 1 THROUGH 3: LOWER- AND HIGHER-ORDER CONCERNS IN THE MAINSTREAM AND MULTILINGUAL CLASSES

In the following section, I discuss Findings 1 through 3, which detail whether students knew of the multilingual section of English 131, how they conceptualized a multilingual English course, and whether they themselves identified as multilingual. I begin by exploring whether the multilingual section of English 131 did entail more grammar instruction than the mainstream section, before discussing how writing scholars and teachers might effectively incorporate best practices from the fields of both composition and second language studies. Because it seems apparent from my findings that the multilingual label has little salience for students and that there were differing beneficial practices employed in both the mainstream and multilingual sections, I argue in this section that multilingual and mainstream students alike can benefit from the practices and ideologies of both classes.

With the knowledge that students seem to believe a multilingual section to be taught at a slower pace or include more grammar and sentence-level instruction, I wanted to look at how accurate this assumption was. For that reason, I looked at the curriculum materials and my observation notes on both classes to see how well the actual practices of each class supported or refuted the students' perception and positioning of each class. The questions that guided my analysis here and in the rest of this chapter include: does the multilingual section of English 131 include more grammar instruction than the mainstream section, as students believed it to? What similarities or differences exist between the two classes? In other words, what constitutes a "multilingual" section of English 131 as different from a mainstream section?

### **Emphasis on Lower-Order Concerns in the Multilingual Class**

To analyze the accuracy of students' assessment of the multilingual class, I closely reviewed Matthew's teaching materials, my observation notes from his class, and his own explanation of his course (via our interview). His class did indeed entail quite a bit of pragmatic, detailed teaching of English writing and composition skills as students seemed to expect. Matthew also frequently employed grammar instruction in his class and provided detailed writing rules and instruction via lectures and handouts.

In his interview, Matthew explained that he provides feedback on lower order concerns (such as grammar and sentence structure) on all his students' essays. However, he usually dedicates only the first paragraph of his feedback to grammar to highlight issues that he notices so that students can read through their papers again later and revise the rest of the grammar on their own. He gave an example of his process, explaining: "When I go through the first paragraph, I'll say 'okay, you know, you're missing an article here' and I, sometimes I even explain in the comment, 'This is why you should use *a* or this is why you should use *the*'."

Matthew also explained that he sometimes explicitly teaches grammar in class (“there’ll be two or three days, usually,” where he will cover “whatever grammar points [...] are coming up, recurring the most”). Grammar points he often discusses in class include pronoun reference, parallel structure, and verb tense.

Matthew also explained that he assigns grammar presentations each quarter. For these presentations, students are divided into groups of three (based on the grammar topic they are most interested in), and must research and present on a grammar topic of their choice. These formal presentations are about 15 minutes long; the one I viewed in class during an observation was done with Prezi and seemed thoroughly researched. In our interview, Matthew also explained that he “maintain[s] executive control” over the topics of the presentations, but that he mainly lets students choose their own topics. He also explained that punctuation issues are a common topic, although he sometimes vetoes punctuation-related topics that are too narrow, such as the semicolon, since “you can write a paper just fine without semicolons.”

Besides the grammar presentations, Matthew’s employment of concrete writing instruction in class was also evidenced in the handouts he provided to students. Handouts from the multilingual section which I collected during the three days I observed included “Using Quotes,” “Works Cited Handout,” and “Working on Putting Topic Sentence in a Strong Order,” in addition to assignment handouts and peer review sheets. Matthew designed these handouts himself, but often drew from other sources for the content of the handouts. For example, the “Works Cited Handout” was adapted from the *Purdue Online Writing Lab* website. It appeared that Matthew utilized a variety of resources to explicitly instruct students on the basics of English academic writing.

Matthew's teaching, however, did not just center around pragmatic, explicit English writing instruction. As Donna and Nora both anticipated, Matthew did indeed also seem to employ pedagogical strategies that helped to reinforce prior student knowledge. I noticed during my course observations that on two separate days that he repeated much of the same content. For example, in my second course observation in late October, Matthew briefly discussed "quote sandwiches," MLA format, and indentation. He specifically instructed students on how to indent a paragraph properly, by writing an example on the board. He also specifically instructed students on how to write a proper parenthetical citation (by using the author's last name and the page number), while also giving reasons why citation is important to academic writing. In my third observation, in mid-November, Matthew repeated this discussion because some students had forgotten to include a works cited page with their essays. On that day, while students were getting set up to do their grammar presentation, Matthew filled the time by reviewing MLA format and explaining what indentation is and how to do it, just as he had in October.

Lastly, Matthew seemed to be very aware of his students' linguistic abilities. In his explanation to me about how he teaches claims, he said: "I had some students making claims like 'Pepsi tastes better than Coke,' you know, which...I can understand kind of how that came about, but at the same time like that's almost precisely what we were talking about in class as not necessarily...right...but sometimes that's the thing is like, in class sometimes they'll forget the 'not' or they'll miss the 'not'." As evidenced from this comment, Mathew recognizes that his students might miss important linguistic clues. He seems to base this on an understanding that many of his students are non-native speakers of English, who might have more difficulty picking up on small grammatical details in spoken English.

### **Emphasis on Higher-Order Concerns in the Mainstream Class**

The mainstream section of English 131 differed quite a bit in regards to grammar instruction. In contrast to Matthew's multilingual section, there was no discussion of grammar by the mainstream teacher in the four class periods that I observed. Katie also did not assign grammar presentations, nor did she assign any homework or activities that related to grammar or sentence-level writing skills. In fact, at one point in our interviews, Donna explained to me that Katie explicitly instructed students not to discuss grammar in-depth during student peer reviews; Katie instead wanted students to focus on the main ideas of the paper. This seems to support Chris's belief that students needed to be "very fluent" in English to be successful in the kind of writing course that Katie taught. Chris elaborated by saying that his teacher sometimes used words that were "not very familiar" to international students, so he had to work "very hard for this course" in order to succeed. Thus, rather than explicit writing skills being emphasized, the content of Katie's mainstream section of English 131 centered on the course theme of genre, through which students practiced writing a range of essays. For example, assignments included a genre scavenger hunt, a close analysis of a genre, and a genre critique. Class activities were very structured, and almost exclusively centered around student small-group discussion and peer review workshops.

Katie employed the same pedagogical strategy that Matthew did in that she often repeated things in class. For example, at the beginning of my first course observation, Katie began the class by asking students if they could recall some of the key words were from the previous class, and she ended class by quizzing students on the evening's homework. Her repetition of key concepts was clearly intended to help remind students about the important takeaways from class, and repeating the homework assignments each day (which was listed not only on the syllabus but on the course Canvas page) was intended to ensure that students knew

exactly what was expected of them. That said, most of her recaps and reviews lasted three minutes or less and did not constitute an in-depth review of material. Consequently, students were largely still expected to be familiar with the majority of the course content each day.

Katie also spent much less time on oral, in-class guided instruction than Matthew; instead, she posted all assignments, class activities, and discussion points on her course website via the Canvas platform. She pointed to these resources each day, and expected students to bring their laptops to class daily so that they would have access to these materials. This teaching practice showed that Katie's class focused on self-guided learning and group work. Students were put into groups every day to conduct class activities, which included reading and responding to discussion questions (which Katie wrote and posted to Canvas), conducting student-guided writing workshops, and peer review. This required students to think through the course content in a somewhat self-guided learning process. Rather than tell students about genre and writing, Katie instead wanted students to explore genre by discussing genres as they experienced them in their everyday lives and coming to their own conclusions about what genre is and how it functions. In fact, Katie explicitly stated as much in our interview: "I won't want to define genre for my students; I want them to define it on their own terms." Eva confirmed this process in our second interview midway through the quarter. When I asked Eva to explain what students were doing in class that week, she mentioned that on a typical day, students would have a reading assigned and the next day Katie would divide students into groups and students would discuss the reading based on questions that Katie posted on Canvas. When I commented that it seemed like Katie moved into textual analysis each day before summarizing the reading's content, Eva confirmed, explaining that they "rarely [had] to summarize" what they read. Eva also explained that, because of the minimal instruction, students often began their group work by

checking in with one another to make sure everybody did the reading, understood it, and understood the task. As is demonstrated through this example, students in Katie's mainstream section took on a lot of responsibility for staying on top of class material, and Katie's daily structuring of the class into groups cultivated a strong sense of community among the students.

Although it was apparent that the students in this study had some conceptions about what a multilingual writing class might entail, they did not have a complex understanding of the term multilingual and in fact, the label had very little salience for students. First, students did not even notice the multilingual label on the course enrollment page; nor did they seem to realize that the multilingual section had a lower enrollment cap than the mainstream sections. Second, when questioned about their perceptions and understanding of the multilingual terminology (as it might be applied to class sections or student populations), students mostly believed that the multilingual classroom entailed more grammar instruction, although a couple students believed that the multilingual label meant that class instruction would be done in multiple languages. While some students did adopt the multilingual terminology by the end of the study, many of the students did not. It is my hope, however, that all students completed the study with a deeper understanding of the varying institutional labels that describe speakers of multiple languages.

These findings support Costino and Hyon's (2007) assessment that "given that students may not understand identity labels in the same way that researchers, administrators, and teachers do, it is difficult to anticipate how a student...will connect with certain labels or within an ESL composition course" (65). Costino and Hyon (2007) argue that, because students may not understand identity labels the same way that administrators and teachers do, students should be allowed to self-place into courses that distinguish between multilingual and mainstream student populations. This is similar to Braine's (1996) argument that students should be allowed the

choice to enroll in “ESL” or “mainstream” classes, especially since students have varying reasons for wanting to take an “ESL” versus a “mainstream” class. While the EWP had, by the time of this study, adopted a self-placement system through which students could choose for themselves whether or not to enroll in a multilingual section of English 131, the minimal multilingual class offerings to some extent impeded students’ ability to self-select into the multilingual course. In Fall 2015 when this study was undertaken, there were just two multilingual sections of English 131 offered out of 43 English 131 classes that quarter.

### **Exploring “Best Practices”**

Despite the limited number of multilingual course offerings, however, I do believe that first-year writing instructors at the University of Washington can meet diverse student needs by exploring and potentially adopting some of the “best practices” of both the multilingual and mainstream classes. In making this argument, I draw on Prabhu’s (1990) conception of teachers’ “sense of plausibility,” as well as on Canagarajah’s (2002) “postmethod” theory. It is my belief that knowing a range of best practices for teaching multilingual and mainstream students can help to increase teachers’ sense of plausibility in their classrooms, and ultimately allow teachers to incorporate diverse teaching practices as their teaching contexts (and student needs) shift weekly, quarterly or yearly.

Prabhu (1990) argues that there is “no best method” for language teaching, as best practices for teaching depend on the teaching context (p. 166). Also, as he explains, it is difficult to conceptualize a best method for teaching since “there is some truth to every method” (p. 166). Instead, Prabhu argues for valuing teachers’ subjective choices in implementing their teaching methods. As he explains, “teachers need to operate with some personal conceptualisation of how their teaching leads to desired learning” (p. 172). The “resulting concept...of how learning takes

place and how teaching causes or supports it,” Prabhu argues, “is what may be called a teacher’s *sense of plausibility* about teaching” (p. 172, emphasis in original). In other words, a teacher’s sense of plausibility informs the pedagogical approaches and practices that a teacher believes to be most effective, given that teacher’s knowledge base, experiences, and strengths.

Like Prabhu (1990), Canagarajah (2002) recognizes that there is no “best method” in second language teaching. Instead, the field ought to adapt to a “postmethod condition” that liberates teachers to conceptualize pedagogical approaches and practices in new ways (p. 135). This postmethod stance can thus empower teachers and students to conduct language learning in a more creative and critical manner (p. 135). In other words, rather than be constrained by standardized or institutionalized teaching practices, instructors should adopt a pedagogical approach that allows for new and innovative practices that emerge from the specific, contextualized locations in which they are teaching, and with the specific, diverse students they face in every new class. In a way, this approach is similar as well to Lantolf’s (1996) suggestion of “letting all the flowers bloom” (p. 713)—in other words, allowing for theory proliferation (and acknowledge the validity of competing theories) within the field because, as Prabhu (1990) suggests, no best method exists.

Each of the teachers in this study employed methods that made the most sense to them as teachers in the writing classroom. Their teaching practices were also very much informed by the teaching context of their particular classes, and the methods that both teachers employed in their classes were justifiable and successful in different ways. For that reason, I feature in this section the best *practices* from both classes, as an observational explication of the practices and pedagogies that both teachers employed differently in their classroom with success. It is my belief that this explication will help to discover the ways that teachers can productively and

knowledgably teach writing to diverse student populations. To draw again on Prabhu (1990), this discussion constitutes an assembly of “ways in which teachers’ and specialists’ pedagogic perceptions can most widely interact with one another, so that teaching can become most widely and maximally real” (p. 176). It is important to understand these varying pedagogic perceptions, as well as their perceived impact in the classroom, can be added to a repertoire of successful teaching practices that address complex and diverse student needs in a variety of ways.

The multilingual section offered a variety of perceived benefits for students. For example, despite being a native speaker of English, Nora believed the slower pace of her multilingual section of English 131 was helpful, since her teacher consistently reviewed the material they had been taught in depth. She also found the perspective of her multilingual classmates (mostly Chinese international students) to be valuable in that they were different from what she might have expected out of a majority native-English speaking class. Meanwhile, Jennifer and Toby both separately mentioned that, at the beginning of the class, their teacher Matthew said he would speak more slowly so that his students (who he assumed to mostly be international students or otherwise non-native or non-monolingual speakers of English) would be able to understand him more easily. Both students found this to be a helpful aspect of the course. It can be assumed, then, that Matthew’s awareness of his students’ linguistic abilities was a benefit to their learning. Toby also believed the content of the multilingual course was one of the most valuable aspects of the multilingual section, pointing out that the commonly abstract topics of the mainstream courses (such as art or poetry) might be more difficult than that of the multilingual class he was in. As Toby explained, the multilingual section focused instead on “simple, basic, and useful” writing skills. Lastly, Rita explained that being enrolled in a class with mostly international students was helpful because they were on “the same level” as she was. Rita

seemed to suggest that being “surrounded by” other international students like herself was one of the benefits of the class because she would have felt more “nervous” in a class with majority native speakers (as she perceived a “mainstream” class to be). Ultimately, all four students perceived a range of benefits to taking the multilingual section, including the slower pace, the teacher’s slower manner of speaking (i.e. his audience awareness, knowing that many of his students were international students), and the comfort and familiarity of being enrolled in a class with other international students like them.

While the multilingual section of English 131 offered a variety of learning opportunities specifically related to that particular classroom context, the mainstream section of English 131 also provided a set of valuable, though slightly different learning opportunities. As several students in the study mentioned, the mainstream class potentially allowed the opportunity for international students to interact and work closely with a more mixed domestic student group. Students in the mainstream section were allowed an opportunity to pick up on American cultural and social norms in the small space that their English 131 class offered. The emphasis on group work in the mainstream class in this study especially emphasized those cultural norms. For example, in our first interview, Chris, a Chinese international student in the mainstream section, specifically remarked on the fact that there was very little lecturing done by his teacher Katie in class. In fact, within the first five minutes of our interview, two weeks after the quarter had started, Chris stated that Katie had not yet given a lecture about genres—and this was about two weeks after the class had started. He also commented that he expected his English 131 class to be like the English writing classes he took in China, which focused more on English language skills than on genre awareness and rhetorical strategies. Although he mentioned that he initially

thought it was “kind of weird” that Katie did not lecture in class, he quickly saw the benefits of group work and conversation with his classmates for generating ideas for writing.

Donna and Eva also commented on the heavy use of group work, specifically mentioning that it was one of the most valuable aspects of the mainstream course in their learning. Eva explained that it was “great” to get feedback from her classmates during whole-class workshops and peer reviews, which took place frequently throughout the quarter. Donna also explained that she really liked how Katie divided students into different groups each day, because it gave her the opportunity to meet and work with different people in class and because she was able to learn more from a diverse range of people’s ideas. That said, Eva did mention that a bit more lecture would have been useful as well; she stated that “as much as I don’t like sitting in lectures for a long time [...] I feel like that would help us a lot in understanding [the material]. And then we could get to group work and discussing whatever we just learned.”

The mainstream course was also perceived to be more rigorous and challenging than the multilingual section. Donna explained that she preferred the mainstream section because she did not like to underestimate herself. She appeared to believe that the mainstream section was more difficult than the multilingual one, and she liked having the opportunity to challenge herself. In fact, both Donna and Eva commented that they learned a lot about genre during the class. Having this complex topic (the kind of abstract topic that Toby believed would have been difficult for him had he enrolled in the mainstream section of English 131) may have challenged them to explore a complex subject in the field of English composition studies that they might not have otherwise encountered during their college career. That said, Katie did mention that the abstract, complex topic may have been difficult for students, and she was considering changing some of her practices the next quarter. She told me that “genre is something that I want to simplify more

for my students. I think a lot of jargon is in my syllabus and kind of in the way that I write the assignments, so I want to make that more accessible [...] and I want to be *really* clear (her emphasis) about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it."

The mainstream class also seemed to put more of the responsibility on students for learning and keeping up with course content and activities. This seemed to encourage students to pick up some of the work of helping each other and acting as resources for one another. For example, Donna explained to me that Katie tended not to address grammar and sentence structure and "little things like that" in her feedback on student papers, so in peer reviews, students tended to take responsibility for addressing those more minor issues in their classmates' papers. However, despite the value in self-guided learning, at least one student mentioned that she would have liked samples of papers but Katie did not provide any.

Ultimately, the mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131 in this study did differ. There did appear to be more grammar instruction in the multilingual class than in the mainstream class. There also appeared to be a slight difference in student population between the two classes, even though students in this study did not seem to intentionally enroll in either class with this knowledge. Also, after discussing the term multilingual, most students did not choose to adopt the label for themselves, since most students took the term to refer to the ability to speak multiple languages. With these facts in mind, especially with the knowledge that students did not consciously self-select into the multilingual section of English 131, I propose (like many others before me in the field of composition and second language studies) that best practices from both the mainstream and the multilingual sections of English 131 should be explored for use in all classrooms to address the range of diverse student needs in every class. I also suggest that some of the grammar instruction taught in the multilingual section of English 131 be utilized more

frequently in mainstream sections of English 131, as doing so may help to address student needs, especially those that teachers are not immediately aware of.

That said, I do not want to suggest that administrators remove the multilingual sections of English 131 and replace them instead with mainstream sections. Having a multilingual course section can be a way of institutionally positioning the course so that teachers can address the needs of the student populations expected to enroll in those classes (as I will explain in the next chapter). However, because so many of our classes at the University of Washington enroll multilingual students, it is important that mainstream and multilingual English 131 teachers alike consider the range of pedagogical approaches and practices so that they can expand their sense of plausibility and build a repertoire of pedagogical tools that can address a diverse range of student needs.

## Chapter 5. EFFECTS OF TEACHER POSITIONING IN ENGLISH 131

While the students in this study largely seemed unaware of the way the institution positioned them on the basis of the section they enrolled in, the teachers themselves were very aware of how they positioned themselves or were positioned in the classroom by the institution. The mainstream teacher approached her classroom with a background in composition theory and pedagogy, while the multilingual teacher approached his classroom with a background in TESOL. In this chapter, I argue that the largely differing ideologies of the teachers' disciplinary training informed the way they positioned themselves and their students, though both teachers established similar course goals. I also argue that the institutional positioning of the instructors, as imposed by the UW's Expository Writing Program which oversees English 131, affected the way the teachers took up their roles as English 131 Teaching Associates (TAs). Where Chapter 4 explored the extent to which *students* positioned themselves in the multilingual and mainstream sections of English 131, this chapter looks at how the two *teachers* positioned themselves and their students in their respective classrooms, as well as how the teachers were positioned by the Expository Writing Program.

### CONTEXTS FOR FINDINGS 4 AND 5

Before explaining the key differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections, which constitute the last two findings of this dissertation, I examine the similarities between the two English 131 classes offered by the EWP. Both teachers had also undergone the extensive training provided to new TAs by the Director and several Assistant Directors of the EWP, who are themselves experienced graduate student TAs in English. During their training, which takes place in late summer, teachers develop and workshop their course materials, before stepping into

the English 131 classroom for the first time. All English 131 instructors also utilize the EWP Course Outcomes to frame the courses. These outcomes stipulate that, in English 131, students will learn: (1) To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts; (2) to read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully to generate and support writing; (3) to produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts; and (4) to develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing. The curriculum also follows a specific structure: two sequences (each with two or three short papers that lead up to one major paper) that culminate in a final portfolio of revised student writing at the end of the course. Both the mainstream and the multilingual teacher of English 131 utilized the EWP Course Outcomes and employed the two-sequence curriculum with a final portfolio due at the end of the quarter.

Beyond sharing the Course Outcomes and curriculum structure across their courses, both teachers expressed similar goals for what they wanted students to learn. In response to my question about her teaching goals for the class, Katie explained that “My hopes are that they learn analytic skills [...] but also how they can use that beyond and outside of the class, um, so [in] a variety of communicative situations.” Katie believed that the purpose of her class was to teach the four Course Outcomes, but she expressed a desire for students to be able to transfer these skills to new writing situations beyond her class. Matthew shared a similar desire. He explained in our interview that “in addition to the four outcomes,” he mostly wanted his students to “start making those connections sort of beyond just [...] the individual assignments”; he also wanted students to feel an investment in their writing. Like Katie, Matthew hoped that students would be able to transfer the skills and knowledge they learned in English 131 to new writing situations and contexts.

Both teachers also actively facilitated a sense of community in the classroom by employing group work frequently in class. Group activities in both classes included peer review, student discussion, and student-led projects (i.e., student grammar presentations in the multilingual section and a genre scavenger hunt in the mainstream section). Both teachers also critically reflected on these choices in their interview with me. Katie, for example, encouraged a collaborative community environment in class by frequently putting students into groups to talk through the course material. Not only did she employ a lot of group work, but she also occasionally had students sit in a large circle during “check-ins” at the beginning of class and during whole-class workshops. Having students sit in groups or circles allowed them to engage one another directly, opening the floor for equal communication amongst students and teacher. Katie also recognized that her students were new to the college environment and tried to help them become more comfortable in that environment. Katie explained that in class, she would often ask students questions like “What’s your favorite place on campus?” because “they’re still learning this whole environment, so that mapping” is important. She explained that “familiarizing” students with “the geography of campus” helps her to help them become more confident in the college atmosphere, and that doing the scavenger hunt as the first assignment in class “helps them get out there” and explore the campus and campus resources.

Matthew also demonstrated an awareness of the importance of community in his class and actively encouraged students to engage one another. Speaking of his experience with English 131 classes, he explained that the class is “the tightest community” that students have on campus, since it is the smallest class that students encounter in their first couple years of college. For that reason, he encouraged community-building in class by putting students into groups, often purposely splitting students up into groups to prevent them from self-segregating. Matthew

also explained that one quarter while he was teaching a different English 131 class, he cooperated with another English 131 TA to throw a barbeque party for both classes at a park; that way, students had a chance to meet new people and establish friendships beyond their individual English 131 space. Because many of his students came from “other parts of the country or other countries,” Matthew found it important for students to form a community outside of class as well as inside it. He also believed the English 131 course to be one of the most productive spaces to do community-building in the university, since students often take the class early in their academic careers.

Lastly, both teachers attempted to destabilize student expectations of the class in some way, although Katie did so more substantially than Matthew. In the mainstream section, Katie attempted to destabilize student expectations of a composition course to allow students the opportunity to re-conceptualize their relationship with academic writing. On the other hand, Matthew assigned an unexpected essay prompt in the first week of class to get to know his students better and to challenge them to think through their responses to the questions he posed.

One way that Katie destabilized student expectations was to change the language of common writing activities. For example, she explained that “I don’t like to say, like – I like to kind of not say peer review (laugh),” because “that’s something they’re really – they will remember from their past.” Instead, she wanted students to rethink peer review, presumably so they could shed any preconceived notions of peer review that they carried from high school. In the process of challenging those preconceived notions, she wanted students to re-conceptualize the value and purpose of peer-reviewed writing. As Katie explained, students “have ideas of what peer review is probably, um, from high school and stuff, so I kind of want to like destabilize those assumptions and have them think about” and strategically utilize the activity.

For that reason, Katie incorporated both “peer review” and “whole-class workshops” in class, which were similar activities. The peer reviews were one-on-one reviews of student writing, whereas the whole-class workshops were essentially group peer reviews, where half the class would read an essay of each student in the group, and then conduct a 15- to 30-minute workshop addressing just one student’s essay at a time in class. In one of the assignments posted on Canvas, students were asked to reflect on a couple of questions: “What types of **peer review** have you done in other classes? How might whole-class workshops be similar [or different]?” These questions demonstrate Katie’s attempt to have students think critically about the purpose and usefulness of peer review in their writing and revision process.

Katie also destabilized student expectations by having students conduct a scavenger hunt in the first week of class to look for genres around them. This attempt to destabilize course expectations was noticed by students, as they remarked on this activity during our focus group interview after the class had ended. Eva and Donna found the scavenger hunt to be one of the most memorable activities in class. Donna explained that she was “shocked” when the class was assigned the scavenger hunt assignment in the first week because she was expecting a “very strict [...] first day of college,” where the teacher would assign their first essay, but instead “[my teacher] comes up with like this scavenger hunt and it just like set like (laugh), like the way I saw that class for the rest of the [quarter].” Donna further explained that encountering the scavenger hunt made her feel that the class would not be “hard” or “strict” after all; instead she began to feel at that point that the class would be “pretty laid back” and “easy.” Eva’s impression was similar in that the scavenger hunt, for her, felt like a “little kid’s assignment” and she did not expect to encounter such an assignment in college. Lastly, Chris said the scavenger hunt was “interesting” since scavenger hunts were not familiar to him (as he explained, they did not do

scavenger hunts in China). That said, while Zoe shared the sentiments of her classmates, she also expressed that “that was like when I first made friends in the class, which I feel [...] is kind of important” because otherwise she would not have been as invested in showing up to class every day. If Katie had intended the slightly unconventional scavenger hunt assignment to ease students’ potential fear of her college writing class, she succeeded. She also succeeded in helping students to begin to establish a sense of community with their classmates by assigning the scavenger hunt. In general, it seemed that Katie actively tried to create a casual and fun environment in her class to encourage students to be interested and motivated to learn, and to destabilize student expectations of a strict and scary writing class.

Matthew also attempted to destabilize student expectations, but perhaps to a lesser extent. For example, Matthew explained that at the beginning of every quarter, his first assignment is a getting-to-know-you paper, in which he asks students their home town, what book they read recently that they enjoyed, and their favorite plant. He explained that he includes “a couple of random, goofy” questions for two reasons: “One, to sort of set the tone of the course – I want it to feel a little bit strange to them [...] but fun and new, not strange like I’m shocked and awed, but strange like ‘oh he wants to know what plant I like, that’s kind of interesting’” and secondly “so students have to think through that process, uh, ‘what *is* my favorite plant?’” Matthew explained that many students end up giving a reason for choosing their favorite plant because “you can’t just give a favorite plant without explaining why.” In this preliminary assignment, Matthew also asked students to answer questions about how long they have been studying English, what other languages they know, how comfortable they are speaking English in class, and how comfortable they are writing 20 or more pages in class, “just to get their feel about how

nervous or excited they are about all that.” Lastly, in the same assignment, he asks students to write a paragraph about their relationship to English.

The unexpected questions on the getting-to-know-you assignment were noticed by students, as evidenced by Toby’s mentioning it in our first interview. Toby explained that the first assignment for the class was a preliminary writing assignment in which he was supposed to introduce himself. He found it “very strange” that one of the questions in the preliminary assignment asked him about his favorite plant. He also explained Matthew’s justification for including the question; Toby said that in class Matthew had explained that “nobody’s thought about what is your favorite plant so you have to think about it.” As this example shows, Matthew wanted students to have fun telling their teacher about themselves. He appeared to have given the getting-to-know-you assignment to help them feel more comfortable with him and to have them begin practicing argumentation and critical thinking without explicitly instructing them to do so. It also seemed that he asked unexpected questions in his first assignment prompt in order to encourage students to stop and think through their responses.

In summary, both the mainstream and the multilingual instructors utilized a variety of similar practices and approaches in their English 131 classes. Despite the important similarities between the two courses, there were also several compelling and impactful differences. These key differences constitute Findings 4 and 5 of this dissertation, and both deal with how the teachers positioned themselves in the classroom or were positioned by the institution, in particular during the EWP TA training.

FINDING 4: IN CLASS, THE MAINSTREAM TEACHER POSITIONED HERSELF AS A “COLLEAGUE,” WHILE THE MULTILINGUAL TEACHER POSITIONED HIMSELF AS AN “AUTHORITY”

The two TAs in the study positioned themselves very differently in class, despite teaching the same course curriculum and sharing similar goals for their classes. Interestingly, the mainstream teacher, Katie, positioned herself as a colleague to her students, and structured her class so that students would foster a close relationship with *each other* via group work and group activities. In doing so, she positioned her students as the best resources for each other in their learning, and often seemed to position herself as either a learner or fellow student. On the other hand, Matthew, the multilingual teacher, fostered a close relationship between his students and *himself* by positioning himself as the authority in the classroom. Through the frequent lectures he conducted, Matthew positioned himself as the most valuable resource in the class and as an expert on the material he was teaching. Ultimately, the teachers positioned themselves or were positioned in two very different and salient ways: as “student” vs “teacher” (reflexively, in the classroom) and as “novice” vs “expert” (interactively, in the institutional training). These roles were in part indexed by self-references and discursive choices expressed by the teachers in our interviews and demonstrated in practice in the classroom. I first discuss Katie’s and Matthew’s roles in their classrooms before before describing their roles in the institution.

**Katie: “My Philosophy [...] is Not to Be the Authority at All Times”**

Katie self-consciously took on a role in the classroom that reflected a resistance on her part to being seen as an authoritative figure. She also took an approach to teaching that emphasized critical thought and exploration, letting students learn about genre and genre theory through guided reading and discussion rather than telling them what to think. As she explained,

“the goals of my class are to teach them an awareness of the ways that genre’s shaped, not only through compliance with features but as a response to the history of its use, the ways that it’s [...] produced, distributed, and the unique ways it’s taken up with readers and users.” Katie also explained that she uses “a genre framework to get at the larger [course] goals, which relate to the outcomes.” As is apparent here, Katie’s course centers around a somewhat abstract, theoretical approach to writing instruction that encourages students to explore genres in the course of learning about writing situations and practices. The language she uses to describe this approach is also quite conceptual. She explains that “teaching students how to think critically about genres in an engaging, fun way can help them transfer what they’re learning to other contexts.” She also contends that the genre framework helps teach students “how to have the agency to recognize and enact possibilities that are not conventional.” While English 131 is a writing class and her course topic is very relevant to the field of composition studies, Katie’s writing pedagogy is designed to help students become active critical thinkers and develop an awareness of standard writing practices so that they can challenge and renegotiate them.

Katie not only expressed this goal to me in our interview, she described it in her syllabus as well. On the first page of her syllabus, she explains her justification for the course topic:

It is often through “correct” genre performance that we must demonstrate our familiarity with a writing ecology in order to establish authority and “enter the conversation”: it is the mode through which we can assert our own influence on both the genre and the ecology as a whole by resisting or introducing what might be “new” or “strange” into our “correct” performances of identity and genre. Thus, our course activities will work towards helping you to deepen your understanding of genre, so that you will be better

able to assess what any given genre is requiring of you and perhaps allow for ways in which you can introduce change to the genre and the ecology in which it is performed. She appears to conceptualize her course as one that is deeply engaged with issues of social justice and critical awareness. Moreover, she wants her students to become agentive in their writing practice; rather than follow institutionalized rules and practices of academic writing, Katie hopes to teach her students to recognize that writing is a “performance” and that the idea of “correct” writing is arbitrary, prescriptive, and implicitly tied to identity politics and dominant ways of thinking.

In our interview, Katie expressed a similarly critical approach to teaching. She explained that she wanted to teach her students to be “questioners” and stated that her approach to the classroom was not to be a consistent figure of authority. In fact, she often tried to level the power hierarchy of the classroom through her use of language and through class activities that heavily emphasized collaboration between students. She explained that her teaching philosophy was a “very Freirean, decentered, multidimensional approach to learning,” so she valued and strove to establish a “hybrid” learning environment. She further explained that because her teaching persona is “rooted in [the Freirean] philosophy,” she tries “to really be at the same level as my students, at the same time without pretending that I *am* (her emphasis) an authority.” Her rationale for attempting to strike this balance was that she had already been granted the authority to serve as the instructor in the classroom; in other words, she recognized that her institutional positioning as the teacher of the class already existed through being ‘named’ the instructor, so she actively attempted to disrupt some of that hierarchy by striking a balance between being the authority and being at the same level as her students.

Katie also explained that she preferred to establish authority in the classroom implicitly, not directly. She said, “There were ways that I established authority without [students knowing it] really – it’s not like, not in a blatant way. So it’s kind of like under the surface.” When questioned about how she established authority in subtle ways, Katie had a hard time coming up with examples to illustrate how she did it. I had, however, noticed that on her syllabus and teaching materials she wrote her name as “Prof. E” (as in Professor Evans).<sup>12</sup> When I suggested that using a professional title on her syllabus and course materials might be a way to subtly establish authority with students, she explained:

Yeah...I did tell them like I’m a PhD student, I’m a student like all of you and we’re in this together and like my role here though is to guide you in these ways toward these outcomes and I’ll be kind of giving you feedback. I talk about rubrics, um, and like my role and my expectations, so I clearly kind of show them they’re being assessed. Aat the same time, this is a place where we can collaborate [...] So. I just think that I establish authority in different ways.

As can be seen here, Katie viewed her role in the classroom as facilitator or “guide.” She believed that establishing rubrics demonstrated to students that she was in a position to assess them, which established her as the implicit authority in the classroom. However, while she considered herself to be the implicit authority in class, she attempted to level that authority by reminding students that she is a student like all of them. This seems to have been important

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<sup>12</sup> She did not address my comment on this observation in her response – instead, she explained that the naming convention was another one of the transitions she was going through as a new TA in the EWP. She explained that she used to have students address her by her professional title (i.e. “Prof. E”) in past teaching environments, but that this was her first experience with having students call her by her first name; thus, she had written “Prof E.” on her syllabus, but had students call her “Katie” in class.

because of her Freirean approach to teaching: she valued disrupting the power hierarchy in her classroom and attempted to do so whenever she could.

Katie also demonstrated and explained this power leveling in her teaching practice. This was evidenced by her description of an incident that occurred on the first day of class. She explains that on that first day, she had students sit in a circle and it was “very stressful for students to get up and to just move their chairs.” As students settled into the large class circle, one student asked her why they were sitting in a circle. Katie told them that she was glad that someone had asked that question. She told them that she believed that “learning to write is a social activity.” She explained, too, that her “particular philosophy of teaching is dialogic. I believe in a multidimensional hybrid approach to learning, and I think that this is a way that we can actively engage all that we bring to the classroom. So it’s a cool way to open up like the class in that way.” It seems from this example that the one student might have resisted Katie’s attempt to level the power hierarchy of the classroom, or otherwise resisted the new type of pedagogy and classroom practice he was being faced with; this is apparent from his question and from Katie’s response (she made a face) during our interview; it seems she took the question to be a critique of her authority. That said, the moment also opened the opportunity for her to explain her approach to the classroom early in the quarter. Her dialogic approach to teaching and learning did not go unnoticed by other students either. In one of my interviews with him, Chris specifically mentioned this aspect of Katie’s teaching that was new, but also enjoyable for him. This is what he had to say in response to my question about whether, looking back on his class, he preferred the lecture-style classroom or the collaborative space: “Well, for writing I would prefer this kind of classes in which there’s, uh, uh, many dialogues instead of monologues. That’s what Katie says.” Chris had clearly adopted Katie’s philosophy for writing instruction and

practice, and in fact, quoted Katie in describing the dialogic approach. Katie's syllabus did clearly state that "This class will center on dialogue rather than monologue (or lectures)."

In my interview with Katie, I pointed out that I had also noticed that she called students "colleagues." Her word choice seemed to suggest to students that their classmates were a cohort of scholars who could function as resources for each other in discussion and class activities.

When I asked her about her reasoning behind that word choice, she explained:

Well, I think that I try to refrain from calling – like because we're all students, but they're also in a professional environment where they're all colleagues, so my purpose is for them to see each other as resources. Like "refer to your colleagues," you know, your colleagues are, I don't want to say like comrades, but like there's a community that we're building actively together and so collegiality is really a factor that determines success in that environment.

In other words, she self-consciously tried to create a collegial atmosphere in the classroom through her use of the term "colleagues." She also explained that she used the term to "show that we're not in a high school environment where you're treated like you don't know anything." She wanted students to recognize that they already had a lot of knowledge and experience that they could use in the classroom, and she wanted to show that she valued that. She also wanted to make it clear to students that they all had something to contribute to the class. She thus explained to her students that, "You are a colleague, you are my colleague, you know, not only are you my student, I understand that, but we're all kind of colleagues here together." Thus, her word choice and labeling positioned students as experts in writing who had as much to contribute to the class as she did as their instructor.

Finally, Katie's attempt to level her power as a teacher was evidenced in the amount of

time she spent leading class versus the amount of time she let students self-lead. The following charts show the time spent on activities in the four class periods I observed during Katie's mainstream section of English 131. I counted teacher-led time as any activity in which the teacher was leading the class or was otherwise the focus of attention. This included time spent outlining the day's agenda, directing students on activities during class, guiding class discussion by asking the class questions and eliciting responses or writing notes on the board, talking through handouts, or discussing homework.

*Table 5.1: Time Allotment for Teacher-Led vs. Student-Led Class Activity in the Mainstream*

*Section of English 131*

<b>Observation 1</b>		
12:31-12:35	Teacher-led	Day's agenda
12:35-12:55	Student-led	Group activity (teacher moves from group to group)
12:56-1:17	Student led	Teacher sits alone, does check ins occasionally
1:17-1:19	Teacher-led	Teacher reviews homework (by quizzing students)
TOTAL teacher-led time: 6 minutes TOTAL student-led time: 42 minutes		

<b>Observation 2</b>		
12:32-12:35	Teacher-led	Day's agenda
12:35-1:17	Student-led	Group activity (teacher moves from group to group)
1:17-1:20	Teacher-led	Teacher reviews homework (by quizzing students)
1:20-1:30ish		Students stay behind to ask questions
TOTAL teacher-led time: 6 minutes TOTAL student-led time: 42 minutes		

<b>Observation 3</b>		
12:30-12:31	Teacher-led	Day's agenda
12:31-12:34	Student-led	Move into groups
12:35-1:20ish	Student-led	Whole-class workshop
TOTAL teacher-led time: 2 minutes TOTAL student-led time: 48 minutes		

<b>Observation 4</b>		
12:31-12:33	Teacher-led	Day's agenda/instructions
12:33-12:52	Student-led	Group work
12:52-1:02	Teacher-led	Groups share out; teacher leads discussion (on board)
1:02-1:13	Student-led	Group work
TOTAL teacher-led time: 13 minutes TOTAL student-led time: 29 minutes		

As this table indicates, it was typical for Katie to spend a few minutes introducing the day's activities at the beginning of class and then opening up the class for group activities for the rest of the 50 minutes. While Katie always went around to each group to listen in on student discussion (and she constantly engaged with students in groups throughout each class), the

amount of time she spent actively leading the class was minimal. Overall, out of 188 total minutes of class time observed, approximately 27 total minutes were spent on teacher-led activities and discussion, and approximately 161 total minutes were spent on student-led activities. This broke down to 14% teacher-led time and 86% student-led time in class.

Ultimately, Katie seemed to view her role in the classroom as a facilitator, colleague, and fellow student. She actively sought to allow her students space to explore, question, challenge, and analyze genre, and she actively avoided simply telling her students what to think or what to know about genre. That said, she did assign readings and discussion questions, so in that way, she still shaped student learning about the topic. However, the students were largely left to their own devices in terms of how they interpreted the readings and how they performed in classroom activities.

#### **Matthew: “I Maintain Executive Control”**

While Katie employed a “decentered” approach to teaching through which she attempted to simultaneously contest and establish her authoritative role as teacher, Matthew took up a skills-based approach to teaching writing and maintained an authoritative role in his classroom. Rather than allowing students to explore the topic (as Katie allowed students to explore genre), Matthew often explicitly instructed students on the habits and practices of good writing and critical thinking. Matthew’s skills-based teaching method was particularly evidenced in his explanation of his goals for the class. He explained in his interview with me that at the end of the quarter he is happiest when he sees “a student who’s not only using the sort of like technical skills” but also when he sees a student “who really has found something in an argument essay that they want to argue.” As this shows, Matthew hopes that his students not only learn the

“technical skills” of writing (such as organization and MLA format), but also develop an investment in their writing by engaging in topics and issues that are important to them.

Matthew also explained that he sometimes addressed minor, practical writing concerns related to grammar and sentence structure in his approach to student writing, but that he also expected his students to seek resources for this kind of help outside of class. When asked how important he feels it is for students to get writing help or support outside of class, he explained that “lower order concerns,” such as “grammar issues” and “sentence structure issues,” are important issues to seek help for outside of class. He also explained that he constantly waives in his opinion regarding the issue of directly addressing grammar issues in student writing because it can be very easy for grammar help to become the focus of student revision. Consequentially, he sometimes avoids pointing out grammatical or syntactical errors in his students’ writing. Thus, while Matthew believes grammar revision and instruction to be important work, his personal philosophy is that the internalizing of grammar knowledge “has to be done agentively” and “occurs slowly.”

That said, what he does expect students to have is “the wherewithal to find the resources to, to approximate whatever target grammar that they’re looking for; so, for example, if they want to write a physics lab or an application for a job, that they know the expectations that they’re likely to face for those sort of writing situations.” For that reason, Matthew emphasizes writing resources outside the classroom such as the Odegaard Writing Center, the Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment (CLUE), and other campus resources where students can “get even more help with those sort of lower order concerns” that may not be targeted as much in class as perhaps some students would like or need in their individual papers. Matthew did admit that he almost always dedicates the first paragraph of student essays to grammar

feedback and correction. He explained, “I’ll say, ‘Okay, you know, you’re missing an article here’ and I – sometimes I even explain in the comment, this is why you should use ‘a’ or this is why you should use ‘the’.” It is clear, then, that Matthew positions himself as a source of knowledge and expertise in the classroom, someone with a knowledge of English syntax and grammar as well as knowledge about what rigorous academic writing requires. While he does not make grammar and sentence-level issues the focus of his writing instruction, he recognizes that students want feedback on these issues, and he provides that feedback for them in small amounts.

Matthew’s recognition of student needs, and his attempt to address student needs in a pragmatic way, is demonstrated in his description of his teaching persona as well. In our interview, Matthew explained that in the classroom, his “idealized teaching persona” is to be “someone who is, you know, strict enough that there’s boundaries and expectations that are very clear and my students are all inspired to work very hard. But relaxed enough that they feel comfortable approaching me if something seems unfair or not quite right or if they’re just confused about something.” He explained that he always wanted his students to feel very comfortable, including feeling comfortable enough to push back against what he teaches— but only at appropriate times. As he stated:

I actually try to have a persona that admits my own fallibility and I want the students to, you know, not every time I make a mistake on the chalkboard, correct me, but when I say something that doesn’t seem to be logically consistent with what I’ve said in the past, I want them to point that out. Um, that’s sort of my ideal is, you know, someone who’s relaxed, who’s, who’s able to work humor into the lessons, to acknowledge the students’ difficulties and their struggles and how much homework I assign.

While this is a somewhat similar stance to Katie's in that he did want his students to speak up and not be afraid to question or challenge him, Matthew recognized that there is a time and place for this, and did not think it should happen all the time. As Matthew explained, he welcomed questions and corrections, but did not want his students to speak up every time he made a mistake on the chalkboard. He instead preferred students to ask questions or request clarification if they noticed larger inconsistencies in his instruction. As well, Matthew attempted to make his classroom feel like an inviting place where students could feel comfortable speaking up if they wanted to. One way he did this, as the above quote hinted, is through humor. Matthew explained that he frequently joked about how much homework he assigned by telling his class, "I know you guys are having great fun this weekend! [...] I know you were worried about having enough homework, so I'm assigning two extra things'." His fun-but-serious approach is reflected in this example: he wanted students to be at ease with him, so he made jokes in class, but he did not fully attempt to dismantle his authority in class and maintained expectations that shaped the students' social interactions with him in class.

Despite maintaining his authority as the instructor in class, Matthew endeavored to establish community in his classroom. Again, this is somewhat similar to how Katie approached her classroom, though Matthew's rationale was different. Whereas Katie attempted to establish collegiality, Matthew tried to establish a shared emotional burden in getting work done. For example, Matthew told me that one of his goals in class is to make the work for the course feel like a "shared difficulty" that students can form a community around. He also explained that he wanted students to understand that he was "involved" in that community of work, too, since "the more homework I give, the more I have to grade and comment on." But even though he attempts to position himself as part of the community of learners, who, to some degree, shares the burden

of learning about writing with his students, Matthew is careful not to completely shed his authoritative positioning in class. As he explained, “Although I’m sort of positioned as the expert in the class, and it would be impossible for me and perhaps undesirable for me to completely shed that hat, um, I think that as much as possible I want to show that, uh, it’s a little bit more leveled hierarchy than in a traditional classroom. And sh – yeah, share with my students and be working *with* them. So that’s sort of my persona.” Again, Matthew attempted to show his students that they were all working toward the same goal in class, but he recognized that it would be “impossible” and even “undesirable” to completely reject his positioning as an “expert” in the classroom or to work against it.

Lastly, Matthew’s positioning in his classroom as an “expert” was demonstrated in the amount of time he spent leading activities in class versus allowing students to lead the activities themselves. The following table shows how the time spent on activities was distributed in the three class periods I observed of Matthew’s multilingual section of English 131. Again, as was true with the mainstream section, I counted teacher-led time as any activity in which the teacher was leading the class or otherwise the focus of attention, and student-led time as any activity in which the students were leading the class through group discussions, student presentations, or student-led workshops.

*Table 5.2 Time Allotment for Teacher-Led vs. Student-Led Class Activity in the Multilingual Section of English 131*

<b>Observation 1</b>		
10:32-10:38	Teacher-led	Handout/lecture
10:38-10:45	Student-led	Groupwork
10:45-10:55	Teacher-led	Discussion
10:55-11:02	Student-led	Groupwork
11:02-11:27	Teacher-led	Discussion, then break
TOTAL teacher-led time: 41 minutes		
TOTAL student-led time: 14 minutes		

<b>Observation 2</b>		
10:30-10:42	Teacher-led	Lecture
10:42-10:54	Student-led	Group work
10:54-11:12	Teacher-led	Discussion
11:12-11:29	Teacher-led	Handouts/lecture
TOTAL teacher-led time: 47 minutes		
TOTAL student-led time: 12 minutes		

<b>Observation 3</b>		
10:30-10:48	Teacher-led	Handout/lecture
10:48-11:00	Student-led	Presentation
11:00-11:10	Teacher-led	Lecture/groupwork prep
TOTAL teacher-led time: 28 minutes		
TOTAL student-led time: 12 minutes		

Table 5.2 shows that the majority of time in the multilingual class was spent with Matthew instructing students, either by talking through handouts about writing skills, leading class discussion by asking questions, or lecturing while writing notes on the board during his lectures. While he encouraged student collaboration via student presentations and group work, Matthew took the lead in class more often than his students. Of a total of 154 minutes of class time that I observed, 116 total minutes were spent on teacher-led activities and discussion, and 38 total minutes were spent on student-led activities. This broke down to 75% teacher-led time and 25% student-led time in class.

Although Matthew consistently exhibited an authoritative role in the classroom, his was an amiable and empathetic authority. He often took the lead in instruction and established pragmatic and practical expectations for students as they learned specific writing skills and habits of mind. But while Matthew and Katie both encouraged student collaboration and group work, and valued and fostered the community space their classes supported, both teachers did so for different reasons. Katie wanted to establish a community of colleagues and scholars, while Matthew wanted to show his students that they all shared the same emotional burden of learning in class. While Matthew spent a lot of time talking in front of the classroom either lecturing, reviewing handouts, or guiding class discussion, Katie spent very little time in front of the classroom, preferring instead to open the classroom floor to her students the majority of the time. These practices seem related to their reflexive positioning: while Katie valued a “decentered” approach to teaching that truly leveled the hierarchy in the classroom, Matthew believed it important to maintain a somewhat authoritative positioning in his classroom.

**FINDING 5: THE MAINSTREAM TEACHER FELT POSITIONED BY THE INSTITUTION AS A “NOVICE,” WHILE THE MULTILINGUAL TEACHER FELT POSITIONED AS AN “EXPERT”**

While the previous finding had to do with how the two teachers positioned themselves in their classroom, the last major finding of this study describes how the instructors perceived themselves to be positioned by the institution in which they were teaching. As evidenced by my discussion with the two teachers during my individual interviews with them, the mainstream instructor felt herself to be positioned by EWP administrators as a “novice,” while the multilingual instructor perceived himself to be positioned as an “expert.”

**Katie: “I Don’t Know How to Use My Expertise”**

Throughout my interview with her, Katie positioned herself as an expert teacher, not only by self-referencing her “expertise” and years of experience, but also by employing the jargon and theoretical language of her field in her discussion of her teaching philosophy. Such positioning occurred early in the interview and continued throughout our discussion of her class and into our discussion of her experience in the EWP training. For example, when describing her course goals early in our interview, Katie described her many years of experience, as well as expressed an independent conception of what she thought a composition class should look like based on that experience. She explained, “I taught first year comp for five years, so I have, like, my vision of what we should be teaching in first year comp, but then I modified that based on the outcomes for this program.” As I have demonstrated, Katie recognized the importance of maintaining the core curriculum of the EWP in her English 131 class, but also exhibited a teaching role that reflected a store of knowledge and several years of experience teaching writing in other university settings.

Despite her own self-reflexive positioning as an “expert” teacher, however, Katie felt herself to be positioned interactively as a “novice” by the institution. In fact, she explained that one of her biggest challenges that quarter was negotiating the difference between her own teaching experience and expertise and what she learned during the EWP training. She explained that not only was she learning a new writing program and institutional practices, but was also dealing with practical elements, such as learning where her office was and how to scaffold instruction within the quarter rather than the semester system. However, she struggled most with reconciling “the type of training” that the EWP provided for her and the other new TAs with her personal “philosophy of teaching” and the way she utilized feedback in her course. She explained that she found her own philosophy of feedback and teaching to be “at odds with the

way feedback was framed in [the] training,” so she was finding it difficult to incorporate policies and advice from the English 131 Assistant Directors when her “philosophy of feedback is not to be the authority at all times.” She also explained that she was working hard to make sure that her students were getting the support they needed to succeed in her English 131 class, while also “inviting other perspectives” than her own in class. This comment suggests that Katie did not see the EWP as an institution that necessarily invited other perspectives in teacher training.

Katie seemed to understand the EWP ADs’ approach to writing instruction to be a stricter and more rule-bound approach than Katie preferred. As she explained, “I think that the – maybe the training of the ADs was something that right off the bat I could see was not...um...as conducive to the goals of the orientation as they could be? I think that I really struggled with, um...stuff... (laughs).” Katie seemed to hesitate at first in her explanation of the struggles she faced. However, she went on to explain that she faced such challenges because she was coming into the program as a researcher of writing program administration and she felt she had “a lot of knowledge and theory,” as well as a lot of experience working in writing programs that she was not encouraged to utilize.

Furthermore, she explained that the EWP ADs did not connect the teaching practices of the program with the theoretical framing of the program during the training sessions. She also thought that the teaching philosophy of the ADs was not transparent. In other words, she believed that the teaching practices promoted by the EWP were decontextualized by the ADs. As she stated,

It was more like ‘here’s what you should do and here’s what you shouldn’t do’, not really, like – yeah, a little bit of why, but not [...] in a way that would allow *us* [her emphasis] to keep developing and evolving our own teaching philosophies? So I

appreciate the modeling, but it – it was more kind of framed as kind of like ‘this is how we do things here’ but that’s just one example.

Here, Katie explains that she saw the training as an opportunity for EWP ADs to simply tell her what she should do in the class. Not only was she told how and what to teach, but, she says, there was also very little discussion about why she should do so or how the teaching philosophy and pedagogy of the EWP could apply to her existing practices and beliefs.

Katie also found the teaching approach modeled by the EWP ADs to be unconvincing. For this reason, she said she would have appreciated more perspective on how to respond to student writing beyond the instructions that they offered her. As an example, Katie explained that at one point during the training, student writing was referred to as “trainwrecks,” which she, understandably, found to be “problematic” because “we’re teaching , and [...] we need to model what it means to be a good teacher, not just model what it means to have a presence in a classroom.” In other words, Katie strongly believed that the teaching approach demonstrated by one of the ADs in that moment created a “learning environment” in the training that “was not productive.” In fact, Katie mentioned that the entire experience was “kind of just stressful.” Her own view was that composition instructors should think and act critically as teachers, reflecting and modeling productive teaching behaviors that support and include students rather than criticize them.

The above example seemed to be a moment in the training where Katie began to feel resistance to the approach and practices she was being taught by the EWP ADs. Clearly, she did not want to take up the teacher positioning that the ADs modeled for her. This sentiment was reinforced when she stated that “I don’t...want...to do what they said (laughs). [...] I want do it my way...so finding room to do that [is what I’m navigating this quarter].” Whether Katie

rejected the EWP's pedagogical approach due to the ADs' comments about student writing, or whether she rejected the approach due to the larger pedagogical framing provided in the training was unclear; however, it was apparent that she resisted adopting what was taught to her in the orientation and favored a teaching approach that she knew had worked for her in the past. That said, Katie did recognize that her job as an EWP instructor was to teach the English 131 curriculum and outcomes, and she took that responsibility seriously. She explicitly told me that she utilized the language of the outcomes in her course because she believed the common English 131 curriculum was "what keeps everyone connected" and "what helps keep the program going." For this reason, she put a lot of effort into ensuring that she had incorporated the curriculum into her class, although she tried very hard to inject her own pedagogical philosophy into her teaching as well.

Not only did Katie resist some of the pedagogical strategies demonstrated for her in the EWP training, she also felt that her expertise was not valued in the administrative space of the English 131 orientation. She explained to me that part of her discomfort with the training was a consequence of not feeling that she had an opportunity to speak up when she disagreed with something. She stated that

It made me feel uncomfortable because [...] I'm here as a resource with more experience in teaching than – [Justina: Almost everybody else.] Yeah, and I felt like I was never permitted to really kind of share that expertise; it was always, we're positioned as, as non-experts.

She further explained that while she understood her institutional positioning as a "non-expert" because she was a "complete novice in this program" at the time of her training, she believed that she still had a valuable perspective to offer. Katie also compared her experience in the EWP

training with her experience teaching composition at another university while earning her master's degree, explaining that in a whole year at her other program, "we never had all of these resources *but* (emphasis hers) we had a lot of [...] space" to contribute "our expertise and exchange it and strengthen our teaching." In the EWP training, on the other hand, "it was kind of like not meeting us where we are, it was kind of positioning us as people who don't know as much as the people who are leading." Thus, while she was excited to learn the pedagogical practices of the EWP, which were actually new to her, she was disappointed in what she considered the institution's failure to value her expertise and experience. This is how Katie summarized the way the TA training shaped her experience with English 131 that quarter:

I just kind of feel like I don't really know my place...here...like how to use my expertise. I kind of still feel like me teaching here, I'm – Yeah, I'm a novice but I wanna like build upon where I'm at in cool ways [...], um, but just – processing, kind of, the training and preparation for teaching 131 has really affected my teaching this quarter and how I've kind of like conceptualized my course [and] even my teacher identity in practice. I come into class, I'm always thinking about kind of like what I learned, how am I going to meet these outcomes, how I'm going to do this...(laugh)."

There is no question that Katie's discomfort during the EWP TA training impacted the extent to which she wanted to adopt the EWP curriculum. She was constantly thinking through her teaching approach and had a genuine desire to improve her teaching practices. Unfortunately, she did not feel that the program that had employed and trained her had allowed sufficient space for her to explore her overall pedagogical approach in productive ways.

Katie's experience in the EWP training seemed to contrast significantly with her experience teaching an English course at a local high school for a pilot program the year prior to

her EWP training and first quarter teaching English 131. This high school English course utilized the EWP English 131 textbook, though it was not an English 131 class. It was during that teaching experience that Katie gained familiarity with this major feature of the EWP first-year composition curriculum. When I asked Katie if she faced any of the same challenges teaching in the high school that she faced teaching English 131 at the university, she responded that she “didn’t really face a lot of challenges” that year because she “basically was hired with a certain expertise.” Because she had been hired as an expert composition instructor, she felt that she “had no restrictions at all” put on her and was able to teach whatever she wanted for the program. She noted that she “really liked” that aspect of the program.

It seems, then, that Katie reflexively positioned herself as an experienced composition instructor on the basis of her many years of experience teaching and studying writing pedagogy. She enjoyed learning about new composition programs and perspectives and felt genuine excitement about being part of the EWP program as an English 131 instructor. However, she did not feel that the EWP ADs positioned her in a way that matched her own perceptions of herself; instead, she felt that she was positioned as a “novice” TA who needed to be told what and how to teach. Katie’s interactive positioning did not match her reflexive positioning, a conflict which caused her to resist the EWP curriculum.

### **Matthew: “We Became a Community of Teachers”**

While Katie found herself institutionally positioned as a “non-expert” in the EWP, Matthew, interestingly, had the exact opposite experience. On the contrary, he found himself to be positioned as an “expert” by the EWP trainers, possibly due to his teaching background in TESOL. Early in our interview when I asked Matthew what he understood the purpose of the multilingual section of English 131 to be, he explained that his teaching experience before

coming to the UW informed his approach to the English 131 section he was teaching that quarter. As Matthew explained it, he originally started teaching “multilingual sections of some sort” at another university in the Pacific Northwest several years ago:

It was called the international student section, so, in that case it wasn't multilingual per se, but it was a similar sort of set up where they wanted a place for people who had different backgrounds, you know, different language capabilities to come and still do what everyone else was doing in the course, but have a place where maybe they felt a little bit more comfortable or, um, where attention could be given to the fact that they might not have the same cultural references, those sort of things. So I borrow a lot on that past experience in sort of conceptualizing the course I'm teaching now.

He seemed to draw heavily on his previous experience and made no mention of institutional practices impeding the way he utilized his expertise in the classroom. In fact, it seemed apparent to him that his previous experience teaching writing to international students was valued by the institution. It was very likely one of the reasons why he was assigned to teach the multilingual section.

Matthew's description of the training was also much less fraught with challenges than Katie's. He explained that he immediately adopted the curriculum during the training: “Right away, I liked the idea of having more short assignments to scaffold the longer papers, and I also liked the idea of the portfolio being graded at the end.” Matthew did not seem to encounter any challenges to his teaching pedagogy; the new teaching practices he was introduced to at the training did not seem to contest his own teaching practices in any way. He then explained that he found the training to be an important community-building experience, and that he fit into that

community as somewhat of an expert due to his previous teaching background. In an e-mail to me about his experience in the EWP training (which he completed several years ago), he stated:

I feel like my comp experience definitely gave me a bit more confidence, and I naturally drew a lot on the work that I had done before. Most of us hadn't really taught comp before, so even though I was "just" a first-year MA TESOL student, I feel like I was positioned as a "bit" of an expert in our group discussions. Which isn't to say that it wasn't still an overwhelming experience! I think the benefit of my past work was at least as much from the fact that I could look around and say: "Hey, here is a room full of people, and we are all trying to work up a course sequence, and I have (sort of) done this before, so if it is tough for me, it must be even tougher for them!" as it was from the fact that I had a reservoir of assignments and activities to draw on. So, yeah, relative to others, I felt like something of an expert.

It is clear from this description that Matthew experienced a very different kind of institutional positioning during his training than Katie did. Like Katie, Matthew entered the EWP training with some experience, though his experience was in teaching international students and speakers of English as a second language while Katie's was in teaching mainstream first-year writing students. Nevertheless, Matthew felt allowed to speak up about his teaching experience during "group discussions" at the training, while Katie stated that during her training there was little to no opportunity for her to speak up. It is notable that Matthew found the EWP training to be an opportunity for him to become part of a community of teachers and to empathize with the struggles that many of the TAs faced in learning a curriculum that was unfamiliar to them.

Besides experiencing the training as a collaborative teaching space in which he was somewhat positioned as an "expert" teacher, Matthew described the orientation as "excellent"

and “grueling” and explained that “seeing how the ADs interpreted the outcomes, participating in the workshops for each assignment, hearing the panelists give us their advice...all this made [the curriculum] more real.” He also wrote that “I definitely felt like my questions and concerns would be taken seriously, but at the same time there was a sort of laid-back atmosphere in the face of a huge pile of work [...] Many of us were just starting our programs, so we were meeting each other for the first time, it was an exciting social event.” He concluded: “So, to kind of sum up, we certainly got a lot of specific, pedagogical advice in the form of panel discussions, workshops, small group activities and large group de-briefings. This was all quite helpful from a technical standpoint,” but, “more importantly, from a social standpoint, we became a community of teachers in that week.” As a matter of fact, “[the orientation] really helped ease anxieties and build confidence to know that there were so many other people in that same boat with us.”

Ultimately, Matthew appeared to position himself as an expert teacher in the EWP training due to his teaching experience, and his positioning as “expert” was uncontested by the ADs at the time of his training. It should be noted, too, that his previous teaching experience—as an instructor with a MATESOL degree who taught international students and second language speakers—was different from what the EWP was training him for as a writing instructor teaching mostly native-English-speaking domestic students. It is possible that because his prior teaching experience was so different from that of the English 131 ADs, they respected his knowledge of a teaching context and student population that they knew less about.

Finally, aside from having his identity positioning uncontested in the TA training, Matthew felt that he fit into a community of instructors in the EWP, which is no doubt why he felt compelled to describe the TA training as an “exciting social event.” Matthew’s positive institutional positioning was also demonstrated in his participation in another teaching

community in the program whose members supported one another and collaborated with one another. This community of instructors constituted the “Multilingual (MLL) Cohort” – a casually organized group of instructors in the EWP that held quarterly meetings during which they would discuss issues related to teaching multilingual student populations. This group also included an administrator in the EWP who was closely involved in the development of multilingual course offerings in English. At the time this study was being conducted, the group had evolved quite a bit since its conception, as had the English program offerings targeting multilingual students. In any case, he was so involved with the group that by Fall Quarter 2015 when the present study took place, Matthew was teaching his third multilingual section of English 131. In fact, in response to one of my interview questions about the ways the multilingual section is different from the mainstream sections of English 131, he referenced discussions from the MLL Cohort meetings, saying that “the way I see it as being different as just – and like what we discussed in the last cohort meeting, was it’s sort of a best practices class.<sup>13</sup> This is where we really try to think about what it is that we’re doing in these classrooms and how we can serve the needs of all students in a way that’s sort of ethically responsible.” Again, Matthew was clearly involved in the EWP teaching community, and his expertise with second language students was highly valued in the institution because it informed his teaching of the multilingual section of English 131. Ultimately, Matthew felt that the institution’s positioning of him aligned with his own self-positioning: not only was he considered a knowledgeable and experienced teacher of multilingual student populations, he was an involved member of the community of EWP teachers and administrators who were developing classes and resources for multilingual students at the University of Washington.

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<sup>13</sup> It is from this quote that I pulled Matthew’s “best practices” term, utilized in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 4 AND 5: IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN THE MAINSTREAM AND MULTILINGUAL TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

There seem to be two ways in which the teachers' reflexive and interactive identity positioning impacted their teaching. First, the teachers' reflexive positioning (the way they positioned themselves in the classroom) appeared to be informed by their disciplinary backgrounds. Katie, the instructor of the mainstream section and a scholar of composition studies, adopted ideologies prevalent in the composition field. She positioned herself as a facilitator of student learning who fostered critical thinking and implemented a largely social constructivist approach to her teaching. On the other hand, Matthew, the instructor of the multilingual section and a scholar of TESOL, adopted ideologies prevalent in the second language teaching field. He employed concrete pedagogical tactics and adopted a pragmatic approach to teaching writing through technical instruction.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, the teachers' interactive positioning (the way they were positioned by the institution) appeared to impact the way each teacher developed his or her class. Katie felt herself to be positioned as a "novice" by the ADs at the EWP English 131 training, a position that she did not identify with. She also did not identify with the pedagogical stance that she felt was put forward in the EWP training by the English 131 ADs. Her rejection of the way she felt herself to be positioned within the institution was reflected in her syllabus and other course materials,

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to note here that critical theories and pedagogies on writing are not only to be found in composition studies and that pragmatic theories and pedagogies on writing are not only to be found in second language studies or TESOL. There are important critical theories in second language studies and pragmatic pedagogies in composition studies; there is work in both fields that is both critical and pragmatic, and on a spectrum in between. However, the conceptual differences between the two fields' approach to writing instruction are rooted in very different histories, which have tended to fall along these lines. In fact, there is a significant body of literature in both fields that describes this (Santos, 1992; Silva, 1997; Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2006; Baker, 2008; and Costino & Hyon, 2011). Though I extend the existing conversation about these ideological differences in this dissertation, I want to emphasize that the purpose of this dissertation is, ultimately, to disrupt these binaries by recognizing the range of different, yet equally effective, philosophies and practices that inform the teaching of writing.

which demonstrated a tension between her preferred teaching practices and the ones she was required to employ as a member of the EWP program. On the other hand, Matthew felt himself positioned as an “expert” during the EWP English 131 training, and it was a position he identified with because of his previous teaching experience. He seemed to readily adopt the English 131 curriculum presented to him during the training. He also found the EWP training itself to be a productive site of community-building with his fellow teachers, which he considered one of the most valuable aspects of the training. His reflexive positioning seemed uncontested by the institution, which allowed him the emotional and conceptual space to seek productive ways to build upon knowledge he already felt he had.

### **The Ideological Differences Behind the Teachers’ Reflexive Positioning in the Classroom**

It seems clear from my analysis of the teacher interviews and course curriculum documents that each teacher employed differing pedagogical practices, despite expressing similar goals for their writing classes. Katie seemed to align very closely with composition studies’ strong critical, sociopolitical ideology, and her teaching practices reflected that position. Matthew, on the other hand, seemed to align closely with second language studies and applied linguistics’ strong pragmatic approach to research and teaching, and his teaching practice reflected this as well.

Katie’s pedagogical approach embodied many of the values held by the composition studies discipline. These values were reflected in the way she blended composition’s critical and expressivist approaches in her teaching. Fulkerson (2005) outlines three major approaches to teaching composition: a critical or cultural approach, an expressivist approach, and a procedural rhetoric approach (p. 655). The critical or cultural studies approach is informed by Freire (1970) and the critical pedagogy branch of composition, where the goal of composition is “not

‘improved writing’ but ‘liberation’ from dominant discourses” (p. 660). This is similar to Berlin’s (1988) social-epistemic rhetoric, which suggests making ideology the center of classroom activities and opening up classroom practices and content to critique. Expressivism, on the other hand, places high value on the writer and his or her development, using free- and reflective writing extensively (Fulkerson, 2005, p. 667). Lastly, procedural rhetoric outlines “minimal standards for what a first-year writing class should accomplish,” including the development of rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, processes, and a knowledge of standard conventions (Fulkerson, 2005, p. 670). Katie seemed to blend all three of these composition approaches in her teaching. Not only did she express a critical approach in her teaching, she also used reflective journaling extensively in class and placed a high value on her students’ development as writers. Not only that, but Katie’s emphasis on having her students socially construct the meaning of genres and the practice of genre analysis also seemed influenced by a postmodern paradigm, which takes on a conception of knowledge in composition studies as socially constructed and rhetorical in nature (Faigley, 1992, p. 15). Katie actively avoided framing her teaching around the instruction of rules or conventions, preferring instead for her students to become agentive beings in their learning process as they explored and wrote about genre.

Katie acknowledged her critical approach to composition pedagogy in our interview.

When asked to describe the goal of the class, Katie explained

I think that...high school rewards students for producing a certain type of writing and for responding to the prompt rather than kind of questioning prompts, and I want them, I want to teach them to be questioners, so I think that, um, first and foremost the skill of

kind of recognizing a rhetorical situation and strategically manipulating it, calibrating it to meet their goals, so that's embedded in my genre approach.

As can be seen, she heavily emphasizes the “critical questioner’s” stance, which is very much informed by the critical stance in composition theory. There is also the cultural assumption here that students will have gone to high school in the United States; critical thinking is something that is commonly taught throughout the humanities classes in high school. Katie also said she wanted to teach students the skill of “being designers, being questioners, and not just responding to things, entering conversation, which is rooted in an ability to recognize different rhetorical dimensions and factors [...] and how they can influence it in a larger community.” Again, as is demonstrated here, she seems to value voice in student writing and learning, wanting her students to feel comfortable entering an academic conversation and staking a claim in that conversation.

The ideological stance taken up by Katie, undoubtedly influenced by her composition studies background, was markedly different from that of Matthew’s, whose ideological stance in teaching was undoubtedly informed by his background in TESOL. Matthew seemed to adopt the scientific, concrete, pragmatic ideology of TESOL as it is informed by applied linguistics research. As Leki, Cumming, and Silva (2006) explain, second language writing instruction was mostly a means of supporting the development of reading and writing via the instruction of language skills. They suggest that writing played a minor role in most foreign language classrooms for many years, since those classes tended to focus on speaking and reading (p. 141). Thus, reading and writing were taught as rule-bound skills – a set of concrete conventions and practices that could be learned in a strategic manner in the English language learning classroom.

Matthew's pragmatic orientation toward writing instruction in the multilingual section of English 131 was demonstrated by his pragmatic teaching in the classroom. He often held a position as "instructor" in class, positioning himself in front of the class as he conducted mini-lectures on claims and argumentation, instructed students on the details of MLA formatting, or explained the standard conventions of quote usage. He conceptualized much of the content of his multilingual writing class as being about learning "technical skills" and "tools," as well as developing a critical knowledge of writing practice and argumentation.

Matthew also seemed to recognize that his students would likely be a mix of non-native and native speakers of English, and assumed that many of the students in his class would not necessarily have American cultural frames of reference. As he explained

I suppose that there is, like, certainly people who are more familiar with MLA if they've been through the American schooling system [than] if they've been through other schooling systems, which might use an entirely different citation method or simply not require citation [...] But my experience has been [that] it's, you know, maybe there are – maybe that sort of idea is useful when you're talking in aggregate about millions of students, but in every individual classroom of course, that information isn't really that useful because [sometimes] individual students – from China or from Saudi Arabia – will know MLA, you know, and individual American students who've gone through the U.S. schooling system will not.

Here Matthew demonstrates his awareness of different culturally-informed writing practices and expectations, and recognizes that the students in his class may have different frames of references based on the country or schooling system they grew up in. It seems that Matthew's approach to teaching was informed in part by the cultural sensitivity he developed though

teaching TESOL, but also by the pragmatic practices of TESOL and second language studies, though he did also seem to merge some of those practices with approaches informed by composition studies.

The different ideological stances that each teacher took up seems to reflect Atkinson's and Ramanathan's (1995) assessment that there are clear differences between the ideologies that inform composition and second language studies. In their article titled "Cultures of Writing: An Ethnographic Comparison of L1 and L2 University Writing/Language Programs," Atkinson & Ramanathan (1995) describe a comparative ethnographic study of a first-year writing program and an English language program at one university, they found that L1 composition and ESL teaching constitute two distinct cultures (p. 540). In other words, Atkinson and Ramanathan found a difference in the cultural knowledge that classes in each program seemed to expect or assume students to know. The first-year writing program seemed to assume cultural knowledge (i.e., it assumed that students knew and valued critical thinking and originality in writing) (p. 558) and "concern[ed] itself substantially with writing development" (p. 559). The authors also found that the composition and rhetoric discipline had a humanities background, with "grand goals" than trying to communicate clearly (p. 562), possibly because the composition discipline was informed by humanism, a move against prescriptivism, and an ethical belief behind writing instruction (p. 562). On the other hand, Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) discovered that the metagoals of the English language program they studied were quite different from that of the first-year writing program. They write that the English language program "appears to emphasize the relatively straightforward teaching of strategies" (p. 559) and that the English language program curriculum was not dependent on American cultural knowledge (p. 558). The English language program aimed to offer "communicatively based language instruction" (p. 551),

including developing fundamental skills, such as note-taking, summarizing, and active reading (p. 551). Second language studies and English language learning, however, are informed by applied linguistics, which emerged from a scientific, descriptive, quantitative background (p. 561) that values a “deductive” approach to writing (p. 562).

That Matthew’s teaching approach was in some ways more pragmatic and concrete than Katie’s aligns with Atkinson’s and Ramamathan’s (1995) assessment of the different ideological frameworks of composition and second language studies. Whereas Katie’s teaching seemed to focus on helping students develop critical thinking and complexity of thought, while exploring academic genre and discourse conventions, Matthew’s teaching approach, though it addressed higher order concerns such as clear communication, linear patterns of argumentation, and the formation of critical arguments, nonetheless also centered around the employment of concrete reading and writing skills, practice, and instruction.

Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) hint at a possible reason why universities (like the University of Washington) have begun to implement multilingual versions of composition classes. They argue that the emphasis in first-year composition on self-expression and voice “does violence” to Asian students’ view on individualism and self (p. 539). They further claim that “if, instead of being available to all freshman writers equally, such ‘commonsense notions’ [of originality, creativity, logic, rationality, voice] are part of a larger ‘mainstream’ American set of social practices, a pedagogy based substantially on them can only serve to disadvantages NNSs” (p. 558-559). It seems likely, then, that the multilingual section of English 131 was developed in part to combat some of the common assumptions that teachers enter the first-year writing class with: creating a multilingual section of English 131 ensures that the teacher of the class frames his or her teaching specifically to address multilingual student needs. The authors

also conclude, however, that “a substantial amount of the difference between these two programs...may be mediated by some instructors in their classrooms” (p. 564), which is something I believe we can teach to all TAs in training so that such mediation becomes the norm across both mainstream and multilingual composition writing classes.

### **The Impact of Teachers Taking Up or Rejecting Interactive Positioning in the Institution**

It seems possible, if not likely, that the way the UW EWP positioned the English 131 teachers affected their approach to the class just as much as the ideological stances behind their pedagogical approaches. The teachers’ navigation of the institution (and simultaneously the way the institution positioned the teachers) seemed to impact each teacher’s conceptualization and implementation of the course. The mainstream teacher was very much in transition during the quarter and in the midst of finding her footing in a new teaching context. Hence, she found herself struggling to find a balance and the unsteady positioning of herself as an instructor (i.e., “authoritarian” versus “colleague”). On the other hand, the multilingual teacher’s expectations of the program and his understanding of his role in it seemed uncontested. This impacted the way each teacher implemented the course.

The way that teachers took up their institutional roles seemed to affect the way they approached the class. The mainstream teacher seemed to face a lot of tension in her TA training and in her navigation of her role in the institution, while the multilingual teacher did not. In other words, the mainstream teacher did not find the training to be a convincing experience and she did not accept the “novice” role imposed on to her by the training. Meanwhile, Matthew did not face any tension between his self-positioning as an expert writing instructor for multilingual students during his training experience, and so he did not resist that positioning.

The tension in the mainstream teacher's experience in the training seemed to play out in her classroom. Katie explained in our interview that she did not want to do what the EWP ADs recommended. In other words, she was not persuaded by the training to adopt the teaching practices and ideologies that it suggested to her. This seemed apparent in her syllabus, which demonstrated the tension between her implementing the EWP curriculum and making the curriculum her own. For example, in her syllabus, she listed not only the EWP course outcomes, but a separate list of course goals that included such areas "genre" ("to increase, your awareness of the ways that a genre is shaped, not only through compliance with established features, but in response to the history of how it's used, the ways it is envisioned, produced, and distributed, and the unique ways it may be taken up by readers/users"), "context" ("to make appropriate writing choices based upon a critical understanding of audience, genre, and rhetorical situation"), and "argument" ("to produce complex and persuasive claims that matter in an academic context"). The course goals that Katie listed in her syllabus drew heavily on the course outcomes but also included objectives not present in the course outcomes, such as the emphasis on increasing genre awareness. Listing two separate sets of course objectives (her own course goals as well as the EWP course outcomes) demonstrates a resistance to fully adopting the EWP curriculum.

In her syllabus, Katie also described the English 131 portfolio assignment in two separate sections. In the first section (on the second page of her syllabus), she explains that the portfolio is "a chance to showcase your most polished work from the course as well as to share a metacognitive articulation of how you achieved the goals of all four course outcomes." She then lists items that student portfolios must include. On a separate page, and in a separate section in her syllabus, she describes the portfolio again. This time she appears to draw from the institutional language for the portfolio description, writing that "Toward the end of the class,

having completed the two sequences, you will be asked to compile and submit a portfolio of your work along with a critical reflection.” This statement is directly copied from the standardized syllabus language that the EWP provides all English 131 instructors. The dual portfolio descriptions in Katie’s syllabus seem to indicate her navigation of her institutional responsibilities: in her first description of the portfolio assignment, she seems to translate the EWP curriculum, so to speak, into her own language. In other words, it is apparent that she attempts to make this project her own. At the same time, however, it does not seem that she is quite confident in her understanding of and employment of the portfolio assignment. For this reason, she copies the institutional description of the portfolio assignment later in her syllabus to ensure that she is employing the curriculum as it should be.

Lastly, there seems to be less instruction in Katie’s syllabus than in Matthew’s. For example, in her section describing academic dishonesty (which must be included in all English 131 syllabi), she writes that

plagiarism is a complex topic with no single universal definition. Throughout the quarter we will explore proper citation methods and techniques which can help you to avoid what most universities consider as the act of intentionally or (un)knowingly representing the words, ideas, or works of another’s as one’s own.

In this example, she seems at first to avoid stating exactly what plagiarism is. Though she does provide a definition in the second sentence, this kind of description of plagiarism might be difficult for a second language speaker to unpack.

As demonstrated by the tension between her own and the institution’s approaches to the teaching of composition in her syllabus and course materials, Katie’s positioning in the institution and in her class that quarter was very much in flux. She also stated in our interview

that she was aware that some aspects of her class were not as successful as she would have liked them to be. She explained that in the future, she would like to make her genre curriculum more transparent for students, possibly eliminating some of the jargon so that the topic would be easier to understand. Katie was also invested in developing her teaching expertise and practice. She explained that “I’ve never really had time to be so engaged with my pedagogy because I was an adjunct and it was just kind of like going through teaching, um, and now it’s kind of like I have time to focus on my pedagogy, so I’m kind of working to modify my persona as a teacher, ‘cause I have the time, the luxury of time to think about it.” Despite the fact that she was an experienced teacher with five years of composition teaching experience at the university level, Katie explains that she had not previously had the opportunity to engage deeply with her teaching persona and approach; it was during her experience at the UW (with the ten-day orientation and English 567, as well as being funded and having to teach only one course per quarter) that she finally felt she was allowed extra time to spend reflecting on her teaching approach and positionality in the classroom. Unfortunately, she did not find the experience to be as productive as she had hoped, explaining that her experience in the training and in teaching English 131 was “just stressful.”

On the other hand, Matthew faced very little trouble in the EWP training. His sense of himself as an expert teacher did not seem to be contested in any kind of impactful way. This was in some ways demonstrated by his easy adoption of the EWP curriculum and the straightforward and clear course expectations and goals he outlined in his syllabus. In response to my question about his experience in the EWP training, Matthew noted that he “had just finished up a couple of years of teaching writing classes” at another university in the area. In that institution, the curriculum required him to teach three major papers and three major revisions of those papers. Thus, when the sequencing and revision aspects of the English 131 curriculum were explained to

him in the EWP training, he “right away...liked the idea” of teaching shorter assignments to scaffold up to a larger paper. Because of his prior experience teaching at another institution prior to the EWP training, he also felt more confident about what he was learning in his training in comparison to the many other novice teachers in the program. He explained that “in our daily workshops during the orientation, when we had to bring ideas for parts of the first sequence and then talk them over, I feel like my comp experience definitely gave me a bit more confidence, and I naturally drew a lot on the work that I had done before.” As one can readily see here, Matthew went into the training as an “expert” teacher because he had experience teaching in the university writing classroom already. He was able to draw on this expertise to contribute to the learning environment in the training and did not appear to feel as if his expertise was being challenged in any way.

Matthew’s teaching materials also demonstrated a straightforward implementation of the English 131 curriculum that he learned during his training. His syllabus briefly and clearly states the sequenced framework of the class, the portfolio assignment, and holistic grading approach. The course outcomes are also listed in full on the last page of his syllabus. He appears to take much of the language of the course and assignment descriptions directly from the standardized syllabus “blurbs” provided to all English 131 instructors during their training and also posted on a webpage for English instructors at the University of Washington. While Matthew does inject some of his own personal requirements, they are minor. For example, in the course assignments section of his syllabus, he states that all assignments that students submit are to be formatted in “12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1.25” Margins, Double-Spaced, Page Numbers with Last Name in header, MLA style citation/Works Cited page.” Directly following these exacting instructions,

he writes, “As always, feel free to ask me as well” to indicate that he is willing to consider any questions from students about how to format their papers or about anything else on the syllabus.

Not only does Matthew seem to draw directly from standardized EWP course materials in his syllabus, but the descriptions and instructions on his syllabus are very clear, brief, and easy to understand. For example, in his course description, Matthew writes that “In this course we are going to focus on developing and refining academic writing skills that will be useful in many situations (not just English classes!).” He also describes the theme of his class, which is “Seeing and Being Seen,” explaining that “we will, through a variety of texts (essays, political propaganda, comics, advertisements, etc.) reveal, examine, compare, and challenge some of the perspectives that we have about the world around us, and, in turn, the perspectives the world may have about us.” He then provides an analogy to illustrate what it means to examine and challenge our perspectives on the world. He writes,

Just as a photographer needs to improve his or her camera lens to better see and capture the world through photos, a writer needs to improve his or her mental ‘lens’ in order to better see what needs to be written. Likewise, if a photographer uses different lenses to respond to different writing situations, so must a writer use different writing techniques to respond to different situations.

As can be seen here, Matthew explains the topic of the class in straightforward language and sentence structure. He also provides an example for students that illustrates in a different way what he means by the course topic.

In a similar effort to clearly articulate the goals, practices, and expectations of the class, Matthew defines important concepts for students in a straightforward manner. For example, in his section regarding academic integrity in class, he writes that “plagiarism, or academic

dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own." His definition is brief and syntactically simple. He also explains what "academic dishonesty" is and equates it to plagiarism. This helps students, especially second language speakers, understand the definition of "academic dishonesty," a term utilized in the EWP to describe plagiarism.

Thus, what I found were two opposing sets of roles that seemed very salient in the way the two teachers positioned themselves and were positioned by the institution. Those roles were "teacher"/"student" and "expert"/"novice." These roles were in part indexed by self-references and discursive choices on the part of the teacher (in our interviews) and demonstrated in practice in the classroom. While the positioning of the mainstream teacher in her classroom did not match the positioning she took up in the training, the multilingual teacher's positioning seemed largely the same in both. It seems the roles offered to and taken up by the teachers in training impacted each teacher's positioning in his or her classroom later on, which in turn impacted the relationships they established with their students and the pedagogical practices they employed in their classroom.

For example, I found that the framing of the class as multilingual helped the multilingual teacher position his practice more effectively. He was well-versed in TESOL theory and pedagogy (having completed a Master's degree in the subject) and had several years of experience teaching English as a second language. This background knowledge helped him to approach his English 131 multilingual section with a blended approach: that is, he was free to draw on his TESOL expertise, but because the class was an introductory composition course, he was also required to teach English writing and rhetorical skills. I thus conclude from this finding that the framing of the class as "multilingual" helped the *teacher* position his practice more effectively. Thus, the ideological differences between the multilingual section and the

mainstream section (akin to the ideological difference between composition studies and second language studies) played an important role in how the two teachers positioned their respective classes and their students. At the same time, the students' lack of awareness that there was a different version of English 131 for multilingual students encouraged students across both sections to approach the class in similar ways.

These different positionings on the part of the teacher seemed to impact the classes in two ways. In the multilingual section of English 131, students had a teacher who was comfortable in his role in the university and in the multilingual English 131 classroom space. Students seemed to appreciate his direct teaching style and pragmatic approach to writing, which was likely influenced in part by his disciplinary background in TESOL. On the other hand, in the mainstream section of English 131, students had a teacher who was uncomfortable with her role in the institution, but comfortable in the classroom, so there was a tension in her navigation of her role in the classroom space. There was also a lot of confusion in her class due to the in-transition nature of the implementation of the class, in part due to the mainstream teacher's resistance of her self-perceived institutional positioning and consequential resistance to the institutionalized English 131 curriculum.

It is partly due to the findings in this study and largely due to my own positioning as a writing instructor that I thus advocate for increasing pragmatic practice in the teaching of writing, for both multilingual and mainstream students. We can do this by productively merging the concrete, yet also socioculturally-based, writing approaches in second language studies with the critical, yet also practical, approaches of composition studies. Nowacek (2011), a researcher in the field of composition, describes the effectiveness of the pragmatic approach in her discussion of the roles that instructors in an interdisciplinary university program took up in their

teaching of interdisciplinary practices. She writes that the professors in her study each had a different preferred “mode of integration” through which their students were invited to understand disciplinary practices (p. 69). These modes included: the “super-student” mode, the “resident expert” mode, and the “interdisciplinary gadfly” mode (p. 69). Nowacek found that the “resident-expert” mode seemed to be the most successful way for teachers to make connections between the disciplines visible for students because it entailed a “clear and authoritative instructor identity” (p. 72). In other words, students seemed to prefer the traditional teacher and student roles whereby a teacher imparts information to a willing audience.<sup>15</sup> Incorporating more such pragmatic teaching practices in the critical teaching of writing can thus prove to be a productive way to meet both mainstream and multilingual student wants and needs in the writing classroom.

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<sup>15</sup> Any approach that was different from this tended to “violate students’ expectations” of the class (Nowacek, 2011). Nowacek (2011) provides a reason for this, explaining that “experience has taught students that they will be tested and held responsible for the facts and content of their courses; quite reasonably, then, that’s what students write down and what they learn to *want* to write down” (95).

## Chapter 6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation has emerged from my interest in and experience with multilingual students in composition—a field I have worked in for the duration of my academic career. I have appreciated the attention paid in the field of composition studies to student difference. In my own teaching practice, I heavily value the knowledge students come to class with and I care deeply about my students. This drives me to constantly think about new ways to reach and teach them – new ways to do my job as an instructor, so that they leave my class feeling confident not only in their writing ability, but also in their ability to develop and expand as writers. Thus, I have very much appreciated composition’s recognition of and engagement with student difference, especially in regards to language ability. During my teaching career, I have also found that teaching writing seems deceptively simple, considering that our students already know how to read and how to get words on paper. However, my six years as a composition instructor have taught me that helping students address the myriad challenges they face in reading course texts and drafting essays is never quite so easy, especially given different student needs, knowledge, and linguistic backgrounds. In my teaching experience, I have also encountered the age-old dilemma of teaching students what they want and think they need, while also teaching students what I (and the field) think is valuable to their writing development. Thus, in my own teaching practice, I often attempt to blend pragmatic pedagogical instruction with theoretical and ideological approaches.

This chapter concludes the dissertation with my assessment of what we can do to improve teaching pedagogy and practice in first-year composition programs that seek to address the needs of multilingual students. The chapter briefly outlines the findings of the study and then discusses the pedagogical implications of these findings. The chapter expands upon important research

provided by advocates for the merging of ideologies and practices in composition studies and second language studies and concludes with a suggestion for how composition and second language educators and scholars might implement the “best practices” (Matthew’s term) of both fields in order to establish a wider and more diverse sense of “plausibility” for instructors of composition responsible for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse student populations (Prabhu, 1990).

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

My first question asked how student identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, or institution) impacts opportunities for learning. I found that although the teachers and the EWP positioned students as either multilingual or not, the students in this study seemed largely unaware of this positioning and emotionally unaffected by their linguistic positioning.<sup>16</sup> The “multilingual” term also seemed to have little salience for students. While all the students were able to identify linguistic markers or labels that they felt they identified with, they did not seem to feel invested in any particular label. This finding was unexpected, considering the research that has been done by Ortmeier-Hooper (2008), who found evidence in her study of students pushing back against the “ESL” label, and research by Harklau (2003), who found that “the positioning of students as English language learners among monolingual speakers of English appeared to have important ramifications both for broad processes of identity formation and for the language and literacy practice into which they were socialized” (p. 86).

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<sup>16</sup> It is important to note here that while this was the case for the particular sample of students who participated in this study, it is quite possible that other students in the multilingual section did position themselves as multilingual and did enroll in the multilingual section purposely due to their identity positioning.

My second research question asked how teacher identity positioning impacts the pedagogical approaches a teacher employs, as well as how such identity positioning in class impacts student learning opportunities. It also sought to explore how the institutional positioning of a teacher impacts his or her identity positioning within the classroom. It seems that the way Katie and Matthew positioned themselves as instructors had a tremendous impact on how they chose to approach their students, which in turn impacted student learning. However, such identity positioning was clearly a consequence of the disciplinary ideologies and practices that each teacher took up. Katie took up a critical approach and heavily emphasized it in her class (likely due to her composition studies background), while Matthew largely took up a pragmatic approach to teaching (like informed in part by second language studies), although he blended some critical and social aspects into his class as well.

While teacher positioning in the classroom was informed by specific approaches and did result in specific, different learning opportunities for students, teacher positioning by the institution had an even greater impact on teachers' (and possibly students') experiences. Katie felt herself to be an "expert" teacher, but did not feel positioned that way by the training. This resulted in her resisting the EWP English 131 curriculum and facing challenges and discomfort in her transition into teaching in this new space. On the other hand, Matthew not only considered himself an "expert" teacher, he also felt positioned as such by the institution through the training he received. He willingly and productively adopted the EWP curriculum and viewed the training as an important educational and social event in his teaching career.

My third and last research question sought to explore the similarities and differences between the mainstream and multilingual sections of English 131, in particular to see if there were any curricular or material differences between the two courses as a consequence of their

different labeling. I found that there were indeed important conceptual differences that informed the way each teacher approached his or her class, which resulted in different teaching practices in the classroom. As I explained when I discussed Finding 2, the mainstream instructor employed a critical approach to her classroom, and her section of English 131 embodied a “decentered” approach to the teaching of writing and required students to explore genre and engaged in genre-based writing practice. On the other hand, the multilingual instructor employed a pragmatic approach to his classroom, and as a consequence, his multilingual English 131 section embodied a more traditional approach to the teaching of writing that included instruction on standard writing conventions.

### PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The overarching goal of this study is to add to the knowledge in composition studies and second language studies about the way multilingual student writers perceive themselves and are perceived by others in first-year composition classes at the university level. While work has been done in the fields of composition and second language studies to advocate for the recognition of multilingual students in composition classes (Baker, 2008; Costino & Hyon, 2011; Matsuda, 2010; Jordan, 2012; Cox, Jordan, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Schwartz, 2010), there has been little research on the results of such advocacy in practice. This study aimed to uncover the ways that multilingual and mainstream student needs are being similarly and differently addressed in introductory composition courses at the University of Washington. In so doing, I also studied how students position themselves (and are positioned by their teachers and the institution), how teachers position themselves and their students (as well as how teachers are positioned by the institution), and how such positioning impacts student learning.

Baker (2008) suggests that

it is no longer only ESL writing teachers who have the experience and empathy needed to help multicultural, multilingual students in their negotiation of the North American academic context. English L1 composition instructors can now be employed to defend the interests of these students and challenge the instructors of other disciplines to re-think their notions of appropriate academic discourse. (p. 151)

Not only do I agree that we should rethink notions of “proper” academic discourse—and do this work with our students in the composition classroom—but I also believe we should recognize the various ideologies, practices, and positionings that contribute to our understanding of best practices for teaching writing and rhetorical knowledge. Composition’s focus on renegotiation and social justice helps us, as composition teachers and scholars, to adopt some of the practices of second language studies. Second language studies’ focus on student needs in turn helps the field adopt practices that best address those needs. It is important to note, as Baker (2008) concedes, that this is not an argument for making composition more like second language studies, or second language studies more like composition. Instead, it is the sharing and bridging of ideas and practices across both fields that has the potential to help us create the most productive pedagogies.

Matsuda (2010) provides one of the most compelling propositions for the integration of composition and second language studies, along with a compelling reason why this merging is so important. He argues that there is a “tacit policy” of English monolingualism that “makes English-only assimilation the only solution for dealing with composition language issues” (p. 81). He further suggests that this conceptualization not only accepts native English ability to be an “ideal,” but also assumes that students are native speakers or near-native speakers by default (p. 81). To complicate the matter, composition instructors have a tendency to relegate

responsibility of second language student needs to ESL teachers and English language specialists rather than attempt to address second language student needs in the composition classroom (p. 82). For this reason, Matsuda (2010) argues that the “myth of linguistic homogeneity” is alive and well not only in the composition classroom but in the university as a whole. He ultimately argues that “we need to resist the popular conclusion that the composition classroom is a monolingual space” (p. 93) and instead re-imagine the composition classroom as a “multilingual space” where the presence of language difference is understood to be the default (p. 93).

Matsuda’s (2010) call to recognize the composition classroom as an inherently multilingual space is also supported by the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s (CCCC) (2009) “Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers,” an update to the CCCC’s (1974) statement on “Students’ Right to Their Own Language.” The statement on “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” examines common misconceptions about language and dialect and asks, “What should schools do about the language habits of students who come from a wide variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds?” (p. 1). The update to the statement, published in 2009, addresses second language writing and writers specifically. The CCCC urges teachers and program administrators to:

- 1) Recognize and take responsibility for the presence of second language writers in the writing classes
- 2) Offer teacher preparation in second language writing theory, research, and instruction
- 3) Offer graduate courses in second-language writing theory, research, and instruction
- 4) Investigate issues surrounding second language writing and writers in the context of writing programs

- 5) Include second language perspectives in developing theories, designing studies, analyzing data, and discussing implications of studies of writing (as cited in Matsuda, (Cox, Jordan, & Ortmeier-Hooper, 2011, p. 11)

This statement is integral in framing both the presence and the needs of second language writers in composition, acknowledging an important issue and facilitating the blend between second language studies and composition studies.

### **Adapting Second Language Pedagogies to Composition**

In support of Matsuda (2010) and Baker (2008), I argue that we should be adapting multilingual pedagogies to composition generally. While it can be useful to create separate multilingual classes, most mainstream classes already enroll a significant number of second language speakers. Matthew explained this point when he told me about his experience teaching the multilingual section of English 131:

I feel like it's not so much that this [multilingual] class really is different, because the goals, you know, in helping international students, or in helping generation 1.5 or whatever the proper nomenclature is now, you know, for that, um...in helping those students, you're just serving students and their individual needs in the ways that would be beneficial for all students, right, because like you certainly can't expect a student who grew up six blocks from the University of Washington to have all of these cultural references that you're making [...] either – you can't expect that from anyone. [...] So I think just, what we do in this class is really what should be done probably in every class. And to be honest, there are classes – like the first class I taught, 131, had 17 non-U.S. passport holders, you know, or whatever you want to call it – international students. Um, and five students who were, I guess, United States citizens, as identified – as they self-

identified in the sort of first assessment things that I put out. [...] So 17 of my students were – and you know this was a *regular*, quote-unquote, class, and so I guess my line of thinking is, is that the student population-wise it's not that much different from the regular classes. There's going to be people—and probably a fairly high percentage of people—who are from other countries or from different linguistic backgrounds.

In other words, it is common and, in fact, likely that any teacher of composition, mainstream or not, will encounter a range of students that come to their class with a range of linguistic backgrounds, cultural knowledges, familiar practices, and so on. For that reason, multilingual classes need not be so different from mainstream ones. Rather than continue to foster the placement of second language learners in multilingual or ESL composition classes (thus relegating them to a space outside of the mythically monolingual mainstream composition space), educators should instead broaden their knowledge of the range of pedagogical ideologies and practices available for them to employ in the writing classroom. Academic administrators can also foster this goal by conducting teacher training that attempts to address a range of pedagogical practices, while also heavily valuing prior knowledge that instructors bring to the training space.

Matthew's experience with diverse student populations in English 131 is similar to that of many other first-year composition instructors' experiences, including Katie's. While the majority of Katie's class seemed to be domestic students who were native speakers of English, there were still a number of non-native English speakers and international students who were left to fend for themselves insofar as navigating the course curriculum and learning standard academic writing practices were concerned. While Katie avoided labeling her students—not wanting to position her students in any particular way lest it do damage to the way they might identify themselves—

she nonetheless recognized the importance of recognizing student differences in her classroom. In response to my question about whether she believed that her multilingual students needed different writing support or writing instruction than her non-multilingual students, Katie responded:

Yeah! Um, well, I would say that for...I feel like everyone...everyone's learning should and can be differentiated, like we can differentiate our teaching and engage a variety of writing styles and backgrounds and incomes, and I think that we shouldn't kind of pinpoint who is a multilingual student, I think that labeling really goes against...it's – I think it does them a disservice, it does all the students a disservice. At the same time, I think that there are students who are coming in without, um...*any* similar preparation as the other students who are coming in from the local community. So I try my best in the beginning to do the preliminary essays about my students and to engage with students who may have dual challenges in transitioning to college in general, based on their particular...lived realities [...] their particular backgrounds [...] and experiences.

It is thus clear that both instructors in this study were aware of their students and the range of student abilities they were going to be working with each quarter. Both teachers also attempted to intervene in their classes to ensure that all their students' needs were being met. For example, Katie described a moment she experienced with Chris, an international student in her class:

Chris was struggling yesterday with kind of trying to articulate what he wanted to say and others were speaking over him and so I had to really direct and bring it back to him – make that space for him [...] so, things that I kind of want to encourage students in particular are, is like how do you kind of stake your place in a conversation? So I give them a template on kind of things that you can say, the timing, and all of that, kind of a

training material. Um, but that's something I would want to work on with [Chris] a little bit more, 'cause I think it's important.

Here we can readily see that Katie is aware of Chris's potential struggles as a Chinese international student who is in a writing class in an American university for the first time. She makes space for him to speak, and encourages him to adapt to the classroom practices of their class (staking a place in the conversation, contributing to discussion, and so on), and she provides "training material" and "templates" for students that need extra instruction and help with learning how to participate in those classroom practices. But Katie also recognizes that her class inevitably requires "standard English" skills and the ideologically-informed classroom practices that come along with that in the composition class. Her course also employed difficult concepts about genre and writing practices that were not readily accessible to second language speakers. Thus, employing knowledge and practices from both composition studies (which Katie was an expert in) and second language studies (which Katie was not as familiar with) might have helped her to more effectively address Chris's writing and learning needs in her composition class.

Lastly, it seemed that in his position as an instructor of multilingual students in English 131, Matthew had access to a specific community of multilingual teachers—a resource that seemed incredibly useful in allowing him an opportunity to collaborate with other instructors and foster his professional and personal teaching development. The MLL Cohort offered a collaborative group that he was able to bounce ideas off of and hear perspectives from. The MLL Cohort also allowed him a space to collaborate with a community of teacher experts and propagated a sense of collaborative professional development. This seems to be the kind of professional space that Katie felt she lacked. For this reason, I see potential in the collaborative

cohort system. If implemented into the EWP, such a system could help to establish small communities of instructors, which could in turn help foster a sense of professional expertise while allowing opportunities for professional teaching development. Such collaborative spaces might also facilitate the merging of composition and second language (and even other) pedagogies, since instructors would be able to directly share and discuss subjective teaching practices that might be informed by their various disciplines.

That said, one way that the EWP has already adopted an important practice is in letting students choose the composition class they want to enroll in. Matthew explained that he did not like the add codes that were initially required for enrollment in a multilingual section of English 131 because they felt restrictive. He explained that it seemed like most of the students that ended up enrolling in his multilingual sections were international students, so other students who might have been interested in the class or would otherwise have benefited from it were not able to enroll. This kind of outcome seems likely because most non-international students automatically positioned themselves as not multilingual, and thus did not attempt to put forth the effort to acquire an add code, especially when they could enroll in any of the other mainstream sections of English 131 with no barriers. Removing the add code requirement from the multilingual section of English 131 therefore seems to increase the chances that mainstream *and* multilingual students would enroll.

Matthew further explained the reasoning behind his dislike of the add codes. Besides the fact that the add codes were “a tremendous burden on the individual instructor” due to the amount of emailing and coordinating required to maintain the add code list, he explained that “the thing I don’t like about [the add codes] is that there are definitely students who, you know, are not international, who have a U.S. passport, but for whatever reason would benefit from a

class that, that doesn't take" an American cultural background for granted. He also pointed out that he thought it was "more possible in a regular class that you would see references made that aren't glossed" in the lecture or that there would be assumptions made about "student backgrounds that aren't always necessarily true." In other words, there is a high likelihood that there are students who might benefit from a multilingual composition course but might be dissuaded from taking one of the multilingual sections of English 131 because of the add code requirement. In addition, Matthew articulates some of the advantages of taking a multilingual composition course, among them that there is a lesser likelihood that the instructor of such a class would make assumptions about students' cultural backgrounds or that there is a higher chance that instructors would be more aware of the possible limitations of student knowledge about certain academic or cultural references.

Matthew also explained the downside of not having add codes and thereby enrolling students into a multilingual section of English 131 who might not need the targeted instruction offered in the course. He explains that with the removal of add codes, "you have the pressure from those students who want to take the course and there's no add code," so "you have students who're like 'well, I took a year of high school Spanish so I'm multilingual' and...and it's not really what the class is designed for. But at the same time, you know, how can we draw that line, like it's so difficult to draw that line and say 'you, yes; you, no'." Here, Matthew articulates the fundamental challenge in delineating a boundary between multilingual and mainstream composition courses. It is difficult to determine which students "belong" and which students do not, or what kinds of writing instruction to focus on or not according to the existing knowledge of the students who happen to enroll in the class.

Ultimately, however, there were elements of each teacher's composition class that seemed very successful. In the mainstream class, Katie's emphasis on student-oriented learning and critical exploration into a course topic was very effective in teaching students to be independent in their learning, as well as to lean on one another as resources in their learning rather than depending on having their teacher tell them what they should know. On the other hand, Matthew's pragmatic teaching of writing skills—and his positioning of his students as *students*—allowed students to take up an identity positioning they were used to and comfortable with.<sup>17</sup>

For all these reasons, it seems clear that composition studies should be further incorporating the practices of second language studies into its pedagogical repertoire. As well, second language studies will benefit from a further complexifying of its incorporation of critical approaches to second language teaching. Santos (as cited in Benesch, 2001) explores the inclusion of the critical perspective in second language writing studies, but critiques the extent of its inclusion (p. 173). He writes that composition studies, influenced by the postmodern tradition, “is seen as decentered, destabilized, fragmented...and open to question (problematization) and challenge (contestation)” (p. 174). He also explains that second language studies has begun adopting this critical stance, although he considers pragmatism “a far more satisfying approach to TESOL, EAP, and L2 writing” (p. 180). Santos considers it “extreme” that everything in critical theory and pedagogy is political and ideological (p. 180), and is seemingly critical of the argument that there is no way to move beyond ideology because there is no such thing as being non-ideological (p. 180). He also argues that from his “centrist and pragmatic perspective, the

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<sup>17</sup> As Fulkerson (2005) writes, citing Durst, what students expect out of writing classes is often different from teachers' goals. Students tend to be “career-oriented pragmatists,” while composition teachers are often interested in teaching critical thinking in the interest of social justice (p. 664).

move in critical theory from the undeniable fact that education and human relations have a political dimension to the assertion that education and human relations are nothing but political is as falsely reductive as any other all-encompassing claim about humans” (p. 181). Santos’ stance is one that takes a strong critique of the move toward critical postmodern ideologies in second language studies, and he pushes back against the overwhelmingly critical direction of composition and English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

While I agree that a pragmatic approach to teaching English composition and writing is important, I do think that Santos takes his criticism too far in suggesting that he is no longer able to converse with colleagues in the field of applied linguistics because they now participate in different ideological conversations. However, I do believe that a blend of pragmatism and critical pedagogy can provide fruitful directions in the teaching of writing. I thus agree with Rice’s (2011) suggestion that “embracing multiple narratives of teaching may hold potential for attending to the range of beliefs, plotlines, and self-positionings that teacher candidates bring to teaching. In turn, these narratives may open windows to more complex understandings about pedagogy” (p. 151). Rice also explains that, after discussing her work with her colleagues, several suggested that “narratives of coming to teach, of becoming a teacher, and of what teaching is represent very different conceptions” (p. 153). I think this is very true, and I would suggest doing more research on how teachers understand these concepts and how they consequently position themselves in the writing classroom, since future research could benefit from this exploration.

Our teacher training, then, should be open to the perspectives of expert teachers and TAs. The way students are positioned by the institution (via enrollment in a class labeled “multilingual” or not) does influence their educational opportunities in that they may end up with

a teacher who is better prepared to serve their linguistic needs as a consequence of the disciplinary practices that inform that particular teacher's scholarship and pedagogy. Our understanding of multilingual and second language writers in teacher training and development should go beyond just accounting for grammatical inconsistencies or linguistic differences. Alternatively, our understanding of multilingual and second language writers should push back against the tendency to ignore grammatical issues in student writing in favor of targeting learning goals. Instead, we should practice empathy with our students and consider the perspectives of other fields to gain experience about critical issues in composition and second language teaching and learning (Baker, 2008).

We also need more productive ways of teaching composition pedagogies to TAs. We need to begin teacher training with individual and subjective reflection on how teachers (novice or experienced) conceptualize their teaching ideology and pedagogical approach. We need to let go of the presumption in writing teacher training that our teaching pedagogies are informed solely by the composition discipline. The composition studies approach alone is too singular in light of the fact that there are other very productive disciplines (i.e., applied linguistics/TESOL) that can help inform everyone's teaching approach. To use a personal example, I am more of a pragmatic teacher, and I have discovered through extensive experience that I do well with students who are international or second language speakers. Once I began to heavily research and explore second language studies (as well as second language acquisition, applied linguistics, and so on) in the course of this study, I realized that I naturally gravitated to the pragmatic instructional approaches offered by those disciplines which I intuitively recognized as a consequence of my prior teaching experience with these student populations. Integrating a second language studies approach into composition teacher training can help teachers to more

readily understand and conceptualize the approaches that they feel are most natural to them, and likewise to more readily adopt composition pedagogies in second language writing instruction. It is my hope that some of the disciplinary ideologies, approaches, and practices across composition studies and second language studies outlined in this dissertation can thus add to the development of pedagogical practices that will improve and complicate our understanding of who our students are and how identity affects writing education and practice.

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## APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

### Invitation to Participate in Research Study: Identity Positioning in Multilingual and Mainstream First-Year Composition Courses

**Purpose:** This study seeks to investigate the ways in which identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, and/or the academic institution) impacts opportunities or affordances for writing practice, learning, and socialization in English 131 courses at the University of Washington. This research contributes to the development of teaching practices with improved understandings of how students learn in the writing classroom.

#### **Procedures:**

1. If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you three times about your experience in English 131. These interviews will be approximately 45 to 60 minutes and will be conducted once at the beginning of the quarter, middle, and end of the quarter. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions in the interviews, you are free not to answer them.
2. I would also like to conduct a focus group interview with you and other students who have chosen to participate. This focus group interview will be held at the start of Winter Quarter, 2016, and will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. At this focus group, I will inform you of the preliminary findings of my research and ask for your perspectives on them.
3. With your permission, I would like to audiotape our interviews to ensure an accurate record of our conversations. If you would like a copy of the interview transcripts, I will gladly provide you one. You may ask at any point that a statement made in an interview be erased or not transcribed.
4. Lastly, I would like to collect a copy of the portfolio that you submit at the end of class, which includes your written work as well as feedback from your instructor on your work. You are free not to include any written work that you wish. You may ask at any point that my copy of your written work be erased from my collection or not included in the data.

If you choose to participate in this study, you'll be given a pseudonym to protect your identity, and your name will not be linked with data during analysis or in any presentations or publications.

**Benefits:** Your participation in this research will help improve scholars' understanding of identity and writing, as well as improve the quality of college writing instruction. More personally, participating in this study can improve your awareness of yourself as a student and how your experiences influence your education.

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ I AM interested in becoming a participant in this study (checking "yes" is *not* a commitment to participate).

\_\_\_\_\_ I AM NOT interested in becoming a participant in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_

- - -

Name

Email

Date

## APPENDIX B: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

University of Washington

### STUDENT CONSENT FORM

#### Information Statement

##### Researcher:

Justina Rompogren, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English

Email: greatsea@uw.edu

##### Faculty advisor:

Juan Guerra, Director of Graduate Programs, Department of English

Email: jguerra@uw.edu

*(Please note that we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information sent by e-mail.)*

##### Researcher's statement:

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or about this form that is unclear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent."

#### Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the ways in which identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, and/or the academic institution) may impact opportunities or affordances for writing practice, learning, and socialization in two English 131 courses (one mainstream section and one multilingual (MLL) section) at the University of Washington. The study aims to analyze how English 131 is understood by students and how students identify themselves and their needs within the English 131 curriculum (mainstream or MLL). The purpose of this research is to contribute to the development of pedagogical practices with improved and complex understandings of student identity positioning and writing resources within first-year composition. I am hoping you will contribute to this research by participating in this study.

#### Procedures

If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you three times about your experience in English 131. These interviews will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes each and will be conducted once toward the beginning of the quarter, once toward the middle of the quarter, and once at the end. I will ask you a variety of open-ended questions about your experience in your English 131 course. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions in the interviews, you are free not to answer them.

If you choose to participate, I would also like to conduct a focus group interview with you and other students from your class who have chosen to participate in the study. This focus group interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes, and will be conducted in the beginning of Winter Quarter, 2016. This focus group will be done at this later date in order to give participating students time to reflect on their English 131 experience, if they wish, and also to accommodate participating students' busy schedules each quarter. At this focus group interview, I will inform you of the preliminary findings of the research and ask for your perspectives on them.

With your permission, I would like to audiotape the interviews and the focus group so that I can have an accurate record of our conversations and interactions. When I create a written transcript of the conversation, I will identify you by pseudonym only. Only I will have access to the recordings, which will be kept in a secure location. If you would like a copy of the interview transcripts, I will gladly provide you with one. If you wish at any point, you may ask that a statement made in an interview be erased or not transcribed.

Lastly, if you choose to participate, I would like to collect your written work for English 131. This can be done simply by emailing me the portfolio that you submit at the end of class, which includes your written work as well as feedback from your instructor on your work. I may also ask you for written work that you conduct in class, if it is available and if you consent to giving it to me. You are free not to include any written work that you wish. Only I will have access to this written work, which I will keep in a secure location. If you wish at any point, you may ask that my copy of your written work be erased from my collection or not included in the data.

### **Risks, Stress or Discomfort**

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I will minimize these risks in a variety of ways. First, being in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this study at any point by emailing me or talking to me in person. Second, your choice to take part in this study, or not be in this study, will not affect your position as a student in the university. There will be no negative consequences whatsoever of withdrawing from the study or of refusing to answer any questions or provide any written work. Nobody except my dissertation committee and I will have access to the data at any time.

If you choose to participate in this study, your identity will be protected throughout. Your name will be separated from the data and your data will be assigned a pseudonym. Your name will not be linked with the data during analysis or in any presentations or publications of my findings. All of the data collected (besides identifying information) will be kept indefinitely.

### **Benefits**

Since the goal of the study is to investigate student identity positioning and affordances, your participation in this research project will give you an opportunity to help improve scholars' understanding of identity and writing, as well as improve the quality of college writing instruction. More personally, participating in the study can potentially raise your awareness of

yourself as a student within the university and how your experiences may influence your academic education.

### **Other Information**

Government and university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy and the study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact the researcher or faculty advisor at the email listed at the top of this form. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Human Subject Division at (206) 543-0098.

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Printed Name

---

Date

### Participant's Statement:

This study has been explained to me and I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions, and if I have questions later on about the researcher, I can ask the researcher listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division, University of Washington, Seattle, at (206) 543-0098.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for this researcher to audiotape my interviews and collect my written work for my English 131 class.

\_\_\_\_\_ I DO NOT give permission for this researcher to audiotape my interviews and collect my written work for my English 131 class.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Printed Name

---

Date

## **APPENDIX C: INSTRUCTOR CONSENT FORM**

University of Washington

### **TA CONSENT FORM**

#### **Information Statement**

Researcher:

Justina Rompogren, Doctoral student, Department of English  
Email: greatsea@uw.edu

Faculty advisor:

Juan Guerra, Director of Graduate Programs, Department of English  
Email: jguerra@uw.edu

*(Please note that we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information sent by e-mail.)*

Researcher's statement:

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or about this form that is unclear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent."

#### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to investigate the ways in which identity positioning (on the part of the student, teacher, and/or academic institution) may impact opportunities or affordances for writing practice, learning, and socialization in two English 131 courses (one mainstream section and one multilingual (MLL) section) at the University of Washington. The study aims to analyze how English 131 is understood by students and how students identify themselves and their needs within the English 131 curriculum (mainstream or MLL). The purpose of this research is to contribute to the development of pedagogical practices with improved and complex understandings of student identity positioning and writing resources within first-year composition. We are hoping you will contribute to this research by participating in this study.

#### **Procedures**

If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you once about your experience in English 131. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. I will ask you a variety of open-ended questions about your English 131 course and how you identify as a TA within the English 131 classroom. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions in the interviews, you are free not to answer them.

With your permission, I would like to audiotape interviews so that I can have an accurate record of our conversations and interactions. When I create a written transcript of the conversation, I will identify you by pseudonym only. Only I will have access to the recording, which will be kept in a secure location. If you would like a copy of the interview transcript, I will gladly provide you with one. If you wish at any point, you may ask that a statement made in an interview be erased or not transcribed.

If you choose to participate, I would also like to observe your class at various points throughout the quarter. I would like to observe the class in order to gather data on a range of classroom activities, such as peer review, class discussion, and group activities. You are free not to be observed on any day. With your permission, I will record field notes on my observations in the classroom. Only I will have access to these notes, which I will keep in a secure location. If you would like a copy of these notes, I will gladly provide you one. If you wish at any point, you may ask to stop the observations or ask that specific observation notes be erased or not included in the data.

### **Risks, Stress or Discomfort**

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I will minimize these risks in a variety of ways. First, being in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this study at any point by emailing me or talking to me in person. Second, your choice to take part in this study, or not be in this study, will not affect your position as a graduate student or TA in the university. There will be no negative consequences whatsoever of withdrawing from the study or of refusing to answer any questions. Nobody except my dissertation committee and I will have access to the data at any time.

If you choose to participate in this study, your identity will be protected throughout. Your name will be separated from the data and your data will be assigned a pseudonym. Your name will not be linked with the data during analysis or in any presentations or publications of our findings. All of the data collected (besides identifying information) will be kept indefinitely.

### **Benefits**

Since the goal of the study is to investigate student identity positioning and affordances, your participation in this research project will give you an opportunity to help improve scholars' understanding of identity and writing, as well as improve the quality of college writing instruction. More personally, participating in the study can potentially raise your awareness of yourself as an instructor and graduate student within the university and how your experiences may influence your education and career.

### **Other Information**

Government and university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy and the study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact the researcher or faculty advisor at the email listed at the top of this form. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Human Subject Division at (206) 543-0098.

---

 Signature of Researcher

---

 Printed Name

---

 Date

Participant's Statement:

This study has been explained to me and I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions, and if I have questions later on about the researcher, I can ask the researcher listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division, University of Washington, Seattle, at (206) 543-0098.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for this researcher to audiotape my interviews and take field notes during class observations.

\_\_\_\_\_ I DO NOT give permission for this researcher to audiotape my interviews and take field notes during class observations.

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 Signature of Participant

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 Printed Name

---

 Date

## **APPENDIX D: STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for STUDENTS**

These individual interviews with students are intended to elicit more in-depth information regarding student perspectives on identity positioning and affordances. Conducting multiple interviews allows space for evolving perspectives on their identity positionings and affordances as it potentially changes over time. Multiple interviews also allows for exploration of moments I have noticed via observation throughout the quarter that I would like to discuss with students individually.

A very important part of this study is to allow participants to speak for themselves. In using the active interview as a methodology, my interview questions will be loosely structured ahead of time, and I will allow space for conversation and new perspectives to emerge through the co-construction of the interview with each participant. Thus, my goal will be to have a set of questions or topics I want to cover, but allow each participant to guide the conversation as well.

Before the first interview begins, I will give each student a consent form for the study and time to review it, ask any questions about it, and sign it. I will provide a copy for them for their records after the interview. I will remind students that the study is entirely voluntary and they may opt-out at any time.

#### **Interview 1: Getting to Know the Student and Perspectives on English 131**

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself – what year are you? What are you interested in studying? Where are you from? How long have you been in the U.S.? Do you speak any languages other than English? What courses are you currently enrolled in?
2. Could you provide a brief description of yourself as a language user?
3. Did you take the Early Fall Start course English 108: Preparing for College Writing?
4. How much writing have you done in your university or high school courses? What kind of writing? What do you hope to learn in your English 131 class?
5. What strategies do you use when you encounter difficulties in reading or writing?
6. Are you enrolled in a mainstream section of English 131 or a multilingual section? Why did you choose to enroll in the section you did? How did you hear about the MLL section? What do you think will be some of the advantages and/or disadvantages of being in [an MLL section] of English 131?
7. What do you understand ‘multilingual’ to mean? Do you view yourself as ‘multilingual’? Why or why not?

8. Do you know about resources on campus for (MLL or mainstream) writing support? How did you become aware of any of these resources? (For example, from friends, your teacher, advisors, or other).
9. How important do you feel it is for students to get writing help/support outside of class?
10. Have you used any of these writing support resources or plan to? If so, which ones? Did they help you achieve your goals? Please explain.
11. Do you believe multilingual students need different writing support and writing instruction than non-multilingual? If so, in what ways?

### **Interview 2: Follow-Up / Check-In**

1. What have you been learning in your English 131 class?
2. How did you feel about working with your classmates in group work and peer review? What role do you tend to take when doing group work?
3. What language (or languages) do you tend to speak in class with your peers?
4. What kind of writing support does your instructor provide you in English 131? How effective has this writing support been for you?
5. What types of teacher comments or feedback have you been getting on your essays so far?
6. If you have opted to use any writing support resources on campus, how is that going for you?
7. How was your participation/performance in this class compared to your other classes at the UW? What factors, if any, do you think affect your level of participation in class?

### **Interview 3: Hindsight Perspectives**

1. How have you been doing in class since the last time we met?
2. What kinds of things are helping you succeed?
3. Are there people you talk to about your assignments?
4. Are there certain students you like working with?
5. What factors do you think positively or negatively affected your experience in English 131?
6. Do you think any of these skills will transfer to your other classes?

7. Would you recommend this class to your friends? Why or why not?
8. What do you think about this class? What do you like/dislike about it? What do you think about the assignments you've been given?
9. What do your peers think of the class?
10. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience or your learning in English 131?

## **APPENDIX E: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for TEACHERS**

These individual interviews with the two English 131 instructors are intended to elicit information regarding how TAs perceive their students as language users and composition students, and what the TAs believe the goals of their class to be. I am also interested in how teachers position themselves in the classroom, what they understand their teaching persona or identity to be, and how they think their identities as TAs might be positioned by the institution in which they teach. Lastly, I would also like to acquire a general sense of how much the TAs know about their student populations, which would hopefully allow a comparison between how students may see themselves and how teachers may position them. I plan to conduct teacher interviews just once.

A very important part of this study is to allow participants to speak for themselves. In using the active interview as a methodology, my interview questions will be loosely structured ahead of time, and I will allow space for conversation and new perspectives to emerge through the co-construction of the interview with each participant. Thus, my goal will be to have a set of questions or topics I want to cover, but allow each participant to guide the conversation as well.

Before the first interview begins, I will give each TA a consent form for the study and time to review it, ask any questions about it, and sign it. I will provide a copy for them for their records after the interview. I will remind the TAs that the study is entirely voluntary and they may opt-out at any time. If the TA agrees to be interviewed and signs the consent form, I will then turn on the recorder and begin the interview. The interview questions and topics are outlined below.

#### **TA Interview Questions**

##### General Questions

1. How many times have you taught English 131?
2. What do you think the purpose or goal of your English 131 course is? What do you hope students learn in your course?
3. Could you provide a brief description of the student population currently enrolled in your class? How many students are enrolled? Where are they from?
4. Describe what writing skills and strategies you focus on when teaching English 131. Additionally, describe some in-class activities you do in order to teach these skills.
5. What challenges have you faced while teaching English 131?
6. What successes have you had while teaching English 131?

### Student Resources

1. Do you let students know about resources on campus for writing support? How do you make students aware of any of these resources? (For example, written on syllabus, announced in class, shared with individual students, or other).
2. Do you require your students to use any of these resources? If yes, which resources are required and why?
3. How important do you feel it is for students to get writing help/support outside of class?
4. What kind of writing support do you offer students in your own class?
5. In what particular areas of writing do you feel your students need the most help?
6. Do you believe multilingual students need different writing support and writing instruction than non-multilingual? If so, in what ways?
7. Do you have any insight into reasons why your students may choose to seek and use MLL writing support resources? Any insight into why your students may NOT choose to seek and use MLL writing support resources?

### Teacher Identity Positioning

1. How would you describe your teaching persona?
2. How do you feel about teaching English 131 as opposed to other English courses that TAs can teach at UW?
3. Do you intend to become a teacher or professor after finishing your degree?
4. How do you think your students see you? What is your relationship with your students like?

## **APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for FOCUS GROUP with STUDENTS**

#### **Student Focus Group Protocol**

This last interview is intended to garner final perspectives on student identity positioning and affordances in English 131, supplemented by peer discussion. I had wanted to discuss potential findings and implications, but they are very elementary at this point. Instead, after looking at my preliminary data, I noticed there are still many questions I have about how you see yourselves and your identity, so this interview will focus on that.

I also want to reiterate that your privacy will be maintained. I will identify you by pseudonym only in my published work. If you would like a copy of the interview transcripts, I will gladly provide you with one. If you wish at any point, you may ask that a statement made in an interview be erased or not transcribed. You are free to withdraw from this study at any point by emailing me or talking to me in person, and there will be no negative consequences whatsoever of withdrawing from the study or of refusing to answer any questions. Lastly, nobody except my dissertation committee and I will have access to the data at any time. Any questions?

Start recorder.

Ask students to introduce themselves (so I can know who's talking on the recorder).

Pass out handouts. We will be going through these questions together. I'd like you to write your name on your handout – this is to supplement the data that I collect on the recording, but it also gives you a chance to briefly think through the questions before we talk about them. I will collect the handouts from you at the end.

Give 10 minutes to fill out handout.

#### **Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. Take a look at the following identity profiles. Which do you think is the most accurate descriptor for yourself and why?

ESL (English as a Second Language)

ELL (English Language Learner)

MLL (Multilingual)

Native speaker

Other:

2. How do you view yourself as a student (i.e. hardworking, serious, laid back, procrastinator, good student/bad student)?

3. Do you consider yourself a good writer? Why or why not?
4. If you were given the following list of classes to choose, which would you choose and why?

Advanced writing  
Intermediate writing  
Basic writing  
ESL Writing

5. Has your image of yourself changed since last quarter? How so or why not?
6. What were the most important things you learned in English 131? List them briefly.
7. What were some memorable moments, assignments, activities from English 131? List them briefly.
8. Did you get the grade you expected or felt you deserved? Explain your reasoning.
9. Take a look at the Fall Time Schedule I've given you. Scan through your options and try to refresh your memory on why you chose the class that you did. What drew you to the class? Feel free to annotate on the schedule as you skim it.
10. Looking at the time schedule now, what pieces of information would you take into consideration in choosing a course? Do you know what all the acronyms mean? Do you read through each category, or do you look for specific words?
11. Take a look at the following list of writing courses and resources. Rate each of them on a scale of 1-5 of how likely you would use each of these (1 being least likely, 5 being most likely).

	<b>Writing Courses &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.	“MLL” English 131, “MLL” English 121, “MLL” English 281	
2.	MLL Writing Links	
3.	Academic Achievement courses	
4.	AEP (Academic English Program) courses	
5.	IELP (International & English Language Programs) courses	
6.	English 115: “MLL Studios”	
7.	Targeted Learning Communities (TLC)	
8.	Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC)	
9.	CLUE Writing Center	
10.	CLUE Conversation Groups	
11.	Disciplinary Writing Centers	
12.	Career Center	
13.	EOP Instructional Center	
14.	Student Athletic Academic Services (SAAS)	
15.	Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)	

16.	Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS)	
17.	“Global Classrooms” resource page	
18.	International Student Services	
19.	The Language Learning Center	
20.	Undergraduate Academic Advising (UAA)	
21.	The College of Arts and Sciences Writing Program’s online guide	

Put a star next to resources have you heard of. Where did you hear about them? Did you use any of these resources – why or why not? How likely are you to use any of these resources in the future?

Other questions - MAINSTREAM:

1. I looked at portfolios and there was a lot of variability which indicated to me that the requirements were not clearly articulated. Do you agree?
2. It appears Mandy gave very little feedback, and if you got feedback from peers, it doesn’t appear that she required you to include those peer-reviewed papers. Is that right?

Other questions - BOTH

3. What are your impressions of your English 131 course now, looking back on last quarter?
4. What are your criteria for whether a class goes well or goes badly?
5. Why did you choose to take English 131 during your first quarter as a freshman?

## APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW HANDOUT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### STUDENT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW HANDOUT

#### Questions

1. Take a look at the following identity profiles. Which do you think is the most accurate descriptor for yourself and why?

ESL (English as a Second Language)

ELL (English Language Learner)

MLL (Multilingual)

Native speaker

Other:

2. How do you view yourself as a student (i.e. hardworking, serious, laid back, procrastinator, good student/bad student)?
3. Do you consider yourself a good writer? Why or why not?
4. If you were given the following list of classes to choose, which would you choose and why?

Advanced writing

Intermediate writing

Basic writing

ESL Writing

5. Has your image of yourself changed since last quarter? How so or why not?
6. What were the most important things you learned in English 131? List them briefly.
7. What were some memorable moments, assignments, activities from English 131? List them briefly.

8. Did you get the grade you expected or felt you deserved? Explain your reasoning.
9. Take a look at the Fall Time Schedule I've given you. Scan through your options and try to refresh your memory on why you chose the class that you did. What drew you to the class? Feel free to annotate on the schedule as you skim it.
10. Looking at the time schedule now, what pieces of information would you take into consideration in choosing a course? Do you know what all the acronyms mean? Do you read through each category, or do you look for specific words?
11. Take a look at the following list of writing courses and resources. Rate each of them on a scale of 1-5 of how likely you would use each of these (1 being least likely, 5 being most likely).

	<b>Writing Courses &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Rating</b>
22.	“MLL” English 131, “MLL” English 121, “MLL” English 281	
23.	MLL Writing Links	
24.	Academic Achievement courses	
25.	AEP (Academic English Program) courses	
26.	IELP (International & English Language Programs) courses	
27.	English 115: “MLL Studios”	
28.	Targeted Learning Communities (TLC)	
29.	Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC)	
30.	CLUE Writing Center	
31.	CLUE Conversation Groups	
32.	Disciplinary Writing Centers	
33.	Career Center	
34.	EOP Instructional Center	
35.	Student Athletic Academic Services (SAAS)	
36.	Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)	
37.	Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS)	
38.	“Global Classrooms” resource page	
39.	International Student Services	
40.	The Language Learning Center	
41.	Undergraduate Academic Advising (UAA)	
42.	The College of Arts and Sciences Writing Program’s online guide	

Put a star next to resources have you heard of. Where did you hear about them? Did you use any of these resources – why or why not? How likely are you to use any of these resources in the future?

## APPENDIX H: COURSE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

### COURSE OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

To supplement data that emerges in participant interviews, this study will also employ class observation as a method of data collection in both the selected mainstream and MLL English 131 courses. Course observations will occur at various points throughout the quarter, but days will be systematically chosen in order to acquire data on a range of classroom activities, including class discussions, group work activities, peer review, and student-teacher conferences.

The focus of observation data collection will be on interaction in the classroom, with an emphasis on teacher positioning and the positioning of the student participants who volunteer to be interviewed. Behaviors to be observed include: body language of students, peers, and teacher, whether students are being silenced or engaged, who speaks and what they say, who secures the ‘final word’ in a conversation or discussion, and so on. If the occasion arises, I may also make use of brief, spontaneous ‘interviews’ (conversations) after class with the teachers if I notice something that caught my eye during the observation.

Field notes under the following criteria will be recorded during each classroom observation:

#### **Classroom Environment:**

1. Draw a layout of the classroom setting, including seating, number of students, and location of students in the room
2. Describe the general atmosphere of the room: are there many people around? Is the environment quiet or loud? Is the setting informal or formal, friendly or serious?
3. Have all students come to class on time or were some late?
4. How does the teacher begin the class? What is on the agenda for the day?
5. How engaged do students seem? Are they taking notes as they listen to the teacher?
6. Have all students finished the assigned homework?
7. What materials are being in class (i.e. readings, handouts, writing, feedback, etc.)?

#### **Student Participants:**

1. What kinds of interactions do the participants have with their peers during class?
2. What kind of interactions do the participants have with their teacher during class?
3. What do the student participants say during class? What is the tone, volume, or speed of what they say?
4. Do student participants interrupt others in the classroom or are they interrupted when speaking?
5. If there is a class discussion or small group activities, what roles the participants take: initiators, recorders, timers, negotiators, etc.?
6. How often have participants volunteered answers or raised hand to ask questions, if any? Are these answers or questions related to reading comprehension, asking for clarification, volunteering information, or something else?
7. How do other students in the class seem to respond to the participants?
8. How comfortable do the student participants seem in class? What kind of emotion does their body language portray (i.e. facial expression, eye movement, body position)?

8. How often did students turn to the materials (such as handouts or the textbook)? For what purpose or in what situations?
9. What tools do the participants use in class?

**Teacher:**

1. What kind of teaching persona or role does the teacher seem to adopt throughout the class?
2. How comfortable does the teacher seem in class? What kind of emotion does his or her body language portray (i.e. facial expression, eye movement, body position)?
3. What does the teacher say during class?
4. Does the teacher interrupt students or are they interrupted when speaking?
5. How does the teacher respond to student questions and responses in class?
6. How does the teacher interact with the class as a whole and also with individual students during activities or group work?
7. Do participants interact with the instructor before, during or after the class? If so, what is the interaction like? For what purpose?
8. How do the students seem to respond to the teacher in class?

## VITA

Justina Rompogren was born in Bremerton, Washington, and grew up in the Tacoma/Seattle area. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and English at the University of Washington, Seattle, in 2010; after which she immediately entered the English doctoral program at the University of Washington, Seattle. Upon completing her Master of Arts degree in English, within the Language and Rhetoric track (focusing on critical pedagogy in composition) in 2012, she spent a year abroad, primarily teaching English language courses at King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, in Bangkok, Thailand. She then returned to Seattle to complete her doctoral degree, focusing on theory and pedagogy in both composition and second language studies. In tandem with teaching first-year composition courses at the University of Washington since 2010, she has also taught adult basic education reading and writing, English as a Second Language (ESL), and first-year international programs, and introductory composition at Tacoma Community College, the UW's International and English Language Programs, and Pacific Lutheran University. During her graduate studies, she also served for two years as a liaison for the UW in the High Schools English program, facilitating the teaching of English 131 in high school across Washington State.