Areas for Reading/Inquiry

Our aspirations and plans for this summer, and the next academic year, are centered on developing a sustainable space in which to research, better understand, and support our department’s overall teaching and assessment of our composition courses, Corequisite 101 and beyond.

In making this initial offering of materials, our primary goal is to give you a glimpse into our own approach to the work ahead. As we hope we will have made clear throughout, our intention is not to have anyone adopt our approach, but rather, to make our approach visible as a starting point for collective conversation and inquiry.

This bibliography is offered in that spirit. We’ve collected a handful of materials that we think will offer some context to our thinking, our concerns, and the drafts of our course that we’ve started and shared.

[An apology – some of the scans we’ve shared are a little wonky. Being off campus, we’ve had some troubles creating reasonable PDFs. We’ll update these with better PDF files ASAP.]

## Some Big Picture Stuff

Cathy Davidson’s [“The Single Most Essential Requirement in Designing a Fall Online Course.”](https://www.hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2020/05/11/single-most-essential-requirement-designing-fall-online-course) (2020)

Davidson opens her short article with the assertion that “if we do not begin from the premise that our students are learning from a place of dislocation, anxiety, anger, and trauma...[and so] are we,” then all our best laid plans for Fall will be for not. While it can seem like the idea that the conditions of past 4 – 6 months have been extraordinary and challenging for most everyone goes without saying, it’s worth continuing to acknowledge and be responsive to the dislocation, anxiety, anger, fear, and trauma that more clearly than ever shapes our current conditions for teaching and learning.

Jeffrey Klausman’s [“That’s an Ugly Quote: Some Thoughts on Fear, Identity, and Indirect Activism.”](https://teacher-scholar-activist.org/2019/02/27/thats-an-ugly-quote-some-thoughts-on-fear-identity-and-indirect-activism/) (2019)

We share Klausman’s piece because it articulates, we think, some of the tensions of the work we are about to undertake. Klausman reflects on arguments he has made about what it means to be a professional in the field of composition, and what role this professional identity plays in the work of teaching composition courses, particularly when many of these courses are taught by 1) faculty from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds within English studies (creative writing and literary studies, for example), and 2) a large number of contingent, adjunct faculty. How do we productively work within and across these differences in discipline, training, and labor status? How can and should “staying current in the field [of composition studies]” shape the work we do in our composition classrooms and in our programmatic development of composition courses?

## On (Courtney’s and Jason’s) Pedagogical Approach

We hope these two readings offer some context and insight into our pedagogical approach to (Corequisite) English 101.

Excerpts from Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's collection -- [*Naming What We Know* (Threshold Concepts for Writing Studies)](https://piercecollege-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/personal/jloan_pierce_ctc_edu/Documents/English%20Coreq%20Faculty%20Planning%20and%20Development/Readings/Naming-What-We-Know_excerpts.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=iluDvy) (2016)

This reading could also be grouped in the “Big Picture” section above. In an early conversation with a group of faculty about how we might approach the work of developing a corequisite English 101, we asked folks to share ideas about what we might call “enduring concepts” for composition. In reviewing the notes from that conversation, at least three enduring, or big, concepts seemed to emerge: *composing is situational*, *composing is a process*, and *composing is social*. This conversation prompted us to turn to Adler-Kassner and Wardle’s *Naming What We Know*, a collaborative work that identifies and explicates a set of 5 [“threshold concepts”](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threshold_knowledge) for writing studies. These are: 1) “Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity”; 2) “Writing Speaks to Situations Through Recognizable Forms”; 3) “Writing Creates and Enacts Identities and Ideologies”; 4) “All Writers Have More to Learn”; and 5) “Writing is (Also Always) a Cognitive Activity.” Again, our goal is not to systematize our pedagogies or develop a canned common curriculum. We do, however, believe that the field of composition studies has developed knowledge about writing that we can use, as Adler-Kassner and Wardle put it , to “*inform* curriculum and assessment” in order to make this disciplinary knowledge about writing both transformative and transferable for students.

(2007).

This chapter provides a terrific overview for teaching genre awareness and how that helps students build transferable composing skills that will help them respond to a variety of situations. Devitt’s pedagogical approach generally resonates with how we have attempted to approach the various iterations of our composition courses. Given our rhetorical and genre-oriented nature of our 101 course outcomes, Devitt’s perspective is a good starting point for thinking about a pedagogical approach.

## Pedagogical Allyship

As we have been drafting materials for teaching Corequisite English 101, we have found phrases in our work like “[x] becomes a conversation between us, rather than something imposed on you, the student,” and other things signaling that at the core of our pedagogies there is a desire to create spaces that are open to a multitude of perspectives, meaning, and experiences.

This prompted us to turn to the area/practice of cultural rhetorics for insight and guidance. These readings reflect that turn. How do we create spaces within our classrooms, our department, and our institution that, as Malea Powell and The Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab, describe as “[allowing] for all the meaning-making practices and their relationships to matter... for multiply-situated subjects to connect to multiple discourses at the same time, as well as for those relationships (among subjects, among discourses, among kinds of connections) to shift and change without holding a subject captive”? We want to be clear, however, that while we have a general familiarity with cultural rhetorics via our graduate training and exposure to the work of Powell and other affiliated scholars, we are by no means experts in this area. Our concerns and aspirations for our pedagogical work have brought us to these initial texts.

Christina V. Cedillo and Phil Bratta's ["Relating Our Experiences: The Practice of Positionality Stories in Student-Centered Pedagogy"](https://piercecollege-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/personal/jloan_pierce_ctc_edu/Documents/Readings/cedillo_bratta_postionality-stories.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=9OaJka) (2019)

Outcome 3 for English 101 asks that students be able to *analyze texts as purposeful responses to a variety of situations and contexts as well as products of social identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class)*. In thinking about how to better approach this outcome we started looking into “positionality stories.” Cedillo and Bratta offer a good introduction to this pedagogical practice, one they argue can “provide students with opportunities to perceive alternatives to dominant narratives about how they might fit into higher education and about teachers as consummate experts rather than as individuals who interpret knowledge in relation to their identities and those of others." In the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, we’ve heard many of our colleagues of color share what might be called positionality stories. How this practice inform our pedagogical approach?

Victor Del Hierro, Daisy Levy, and Margaret Price's ["We Are Here: Negotiating Difference and Alliance in Spaces of Cultural Rhetorics"](http://enculturation.net/we-are-here) (2016)

Del Hierro et al write: “Allyship is not a state to be achieved, but a community-based process of making.” Our aspirations for both our classes and our work with our colleagues is to engage in a “community-based process of making.” So, we share this piece, which is also a compelling and challenging example of cultural rhetorics and positionality stories at work. It’s also worth exploring this [introduction to cultural rhetorics](http://enculturation.net/our-story-begins-here) composed by [The Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab](https://crtheorylab.wordpress.com/). We’re particularly interested in cultural rhetorics scholars’ and practitioners’ use of story as a method.

## Linguistic Diversity

The Corequisite support course (101C) has a new set of outcomes that we need to help each other develop pedagogical approaches to. This includes an outcome related to linguistic diversity:

* *Students will be able to...Describe how linguistic diversity relates to a writer’s rhetorical choices and writing for specific communities and apply this knowledge to a variety of rhetorical situations.*

These readings, in addition to the turn to work in cultural rhetorics, have been starting points for us in this area.

April Baker-Bell's [*Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*](https://piercecollege-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/personal/jloan_pierce_ctc_edu/Documents/English%20Coreq%20Faculty%20Planning%20and%20Development/Readings/Baker-Bell-Linqustic-Justice-CH1.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=iGUyfe) (2020). An excerpt.

Baker-Bell’s book is fairly “hot off the presses,” so admittedly we haven’t yet fully had a chance to engage it. We share the first chapter, “Black Language is Good on Any MLK Boulevard,” because it introduces Baker-Bell's project, what she calls a “teacher-scholar-activist project” of “Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy.” Additionally, in this opening chapter, Baker-Bell introduces terminology like “White Mainstream English” and the rationale for the use this terminology in doing this work. What might an antiracist and linguistically diverse language pedagogy be in the context of (corequisite) English 101?

Vershawn Ashanti Young's ["Should Writers Use They Own English?"](https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1095&context=ijcs) (2010).

Young’s piece is on this list because he calls out the value systems at play in our literacy and language courses. This is a great text to help us consider the implications of using a single standard, or as Young describes, “one prescriptive, foot-long ruler to measure the language of peeps who use a yard stick when they communicate.”

Writing@Bates [Statement of Commitment to Inclusive and Antiracist Writing Instruction](https://www.bates.edu/writing/2020/06/19/statement-of-commitment-to-antiracist-inclusive-writing-instruction/) (2020)

*Sound Writing* (University of Puget Sound). Cody Chun, Kieran O'Neil, Kylie Young, Julie Nelson Christoph. [Chapter 6: Writing With Awareness](https://soundwriting.pugetsound.edu/writing-with-awareness.html) (2019 -) Additionally, *Sound Writing* has a [selection of resources](https://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/academic-resources/cwlt/sound-writing-resources/) to accompany the “Writing With Awareness” section.

## Assessment

As part of this work we are going to talk about assessment and grading. This is a big, complex conversation, and we also appreciate that it can be a very risky one. The readings we offer here, again, hopefully provide you some insight into what informs our own approach which itself continues to evolve with each quarter or class we teach.

Inman and Powell's ["In the Absence of Grades: Dissonance and Desire in Course-Contract Classrooms"](https://piercecollege-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/personal/jloan_pierce_ctc_edu/Documents/English%20Coreq%20Faculty%20Planning%20and%20Development/Readings/inman_powell_absence-of-grades.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=4FAMyV) (2018). Read alongside ["Interchanges"](https://piercecollege-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/personal/jloan_pierce_ctc_edu/Documents/English%20Coreq%20Faculty%20Planning%20and%20Development/Readings/albracht_et_al-response-to-absence-of-grades.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=VG6JkX) -- Albracht et al's response to Inman and Powell.

Inman and Powell’s study of the use of contract grading in their Writing Program – paired with Albracht et al’s response to their work -- has been informative for us because it captures, we think, the very real tension between students’ and teachers’ affective relations to the deeply embedded ways that grades are used in education and the desires by many of us to develop alternative – hopefully more equitable – means of assessment. If you are unfamiliar with contract grading these pieces will feel like entering a conversation already in progress, but hopefully there’s enough here to orient you. We also share these because our experience over the past few years has been that anytime we start talking about assessment, and recommend a text like, say, Asao Inoue’s *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies* (see below)*,* people assume that we are simply advocating that they use contract grading, which has never been the case. While much of our own experiments with different ways of assessment began with contract grading, our approaches continue to evolve. So, we thought it would be interesting to share some readings that start in the space of a critique of contract grading, in the hopes that the main take away is not that there is a particular approach we advocate for, but instead that we advocate for a critical and reflective approach to assessment. Ultimately, we believe that a more equitable assessment ecology can, and should, be intentionally designed.

Jesse Stommel's ["What if We Didn't Grade? A Bibliography"](https://www.jessestommel.com/ungrading-a-bibliography/) (2020)

Stommel has written a handful of [articulations](https://www.jessestommel.com/ungrading-an-faq/) of his thinking on this topic with each often situated within a variety of other takes on the practice of "ungrading." Our Pedagogical Principle #1 – *pedagogy begins with trusting students* – is taken from Stommel. Following the links in this piece is encouraged.

## Readings You Would Recommend – What informs your own approach? What might we take a deeper dive into? [Please add to this list...]

Please add links/info to any materials you’d like to share with the group. These might be things that inform your own approach and/or materials that you would encourage us to take a closer look at and potentially grapple with in our work together. Feel free to offer a short annotation if you wish.

For example, here are some things that we think are worth a read and some conversation:

* Bensimon's ["The Underestimated Significance of Practitioner Knowledge in the Scholarship on Student Success"](https://cue.usc.edu/files/2016/01/Bensimon_The-Underestimated-Significance-of-Practitioner-Knowledge-in-the-Scholarship-on-Student-Success.pdf) (2007) is useful in flipping the script on some of the more common discussions about student success. Instead of focusing on the students’ preparedness and/or what *students should do* to be more successful, Bensimon discusses the role faculty have in shaping a student’s educational experiences.
* Asao Inoue's [Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies](https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/inoue/) (2015). The grading contract stuff looms large when engaging Inoue. Focus on Intro - "Writing Assessment Ecologies” and Chapter 1 - "The Function of Race in Writing Assessments"
* Gilman’s “Are We Whom We Claim to Be? A Case Study of Language Policy in Community College Writing Placement Practices" from *The Journal of Writing Assessment.* Thisfocuses on language ideologies, racism, and inequitable access to college-level composition courses. Gilman focuses on placement as well as how these ideologies extend into classroom assessment practices.
* [Students' Right to Their Own Language (Conference on College Composition and Communication)](https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/srtolsummary) (1974, 2004, 2006, 2014)
* [CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Multilingual Writers](https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/secondlangwriting)