



THE POINT

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- National Council of Teachers of English, Nov. 19-24
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- Feminisms and Rhetorics, Oct. 7-10, Michigan State U
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- Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 11-14, 2, San Francisco, CA

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Writing Faculty Scholarship

Geoffrey Bateman, Eliana Schonberg, and John Tiedemann -- Received a grant from the Center of Community Engagement and Service Learning.

[More of Geoffrey Bateman's accomplishments . . .](#)

Richard Colby and Rebekah Shultz Colby -- "A Pedagogy

of Play: Integrating Computer Games into the Writing Classroom." *Computers and Composition* 25.2 (2008).

-- Guest editors for "[Reading Games.](#)" *Computers and Composition Online*, Fall 2008.

David Daniels, Richard Colby, and Rebekah Shultz Colby -- "Fluidity, Reflexivity, and Pet Squirrels: Rethinking

Research and Writing in the Disciplines, CCCC, March 2009.

Jeff Ludwig -- "Negotiating Our Competing Responsibilities

as Rhetorical Citizens and Educators," *Rhetoric Society c America*, May, 2008.

-- A contributing editor for *New Voices in an Emerging Genre:*

New Voices in English Studies, Parlor Press, May 2009.

Carol Samson -- "After Tea: Editing Virginia Woolf's A Writer's Diary for Stage Performance," *The Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, June, 2009.

--- "The Dialogue of Text and Image in Jed Perl's Antoine Alphabet," Popular Culture Conference, New Orleans, April 2009.

Rebekah Shultz Colby -- "[Review of Viz.](#)" *Kairos*, Fall 2008.

Student Profile



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How Do Students Develop and Transfer Writing Abilities?: A Campus Symposium

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A Conversation with Angela Krauss
Rebekah Shultz Colby

As a prose author, Angela Krauss' topics range from life in the GDR and post-Wall identity to explorations of the USA, Russia, and Trieste. In 1988, she received the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize. The published version of poetic lectures she gave at the University of Frankfurt (Die Gesamtliebe und die Einzelliebe) was honored with the Kammweg Literary Prize in 2006. She was also awarded the 2007 Hermann Lenz prize for her novella, Wie Weiter?

On the afternoon of Tuesday, October 28, a group of Writing Program faculty members, English graduate students, and faculty from creative writing and German gathered in Penrose's Chan Family Room to hear Angela Krauss talk about her writing. Largely facilitated by Doug Hesse, this is the conversation that followed.

Doug Hesse: Do you enjoy writing?

Angela Krauss: Yes.

Hesse: Do you talk differently about writing to non-creative writers?

Krauss: It's very boring to talk to authors about writing. They already know about the difficulties of writing so everyone agrees. Writing is not easy, but we do it.

Hesse: What are you writing now?

Krauss: That's the only question I do not like. I don't know what I do when I write.

Hesse: Tell us about your book.

Krauss: True literature begins when you can no longer summarize it. The book centers on a question about life. I was very aware of this question when I wrote. How do we go on? The book is unified around this question, not a plot. The question unifies the book.

The book also centers around change and transformation. Change is a way to repeat. Without this repetition, we couldn't recognize a text as a text. This repetition is in all kinds of art. Repetition and variation is a rhythm within a text.

I feel the whole book when I start to write. Sometimes, though, the book is a mystery to me at first. Sometimes I dream the book before I start to write. Once I dreamed about a pleated shoe. This pleated shoe became the whole structure for one of my books. Starting the book is the most horrible time. I know what I want to write but not how.



Hesse: How does living in Germany compare to living in the US for a writer?

Krauss: Germans are living in paradise still, but we still need to decide if we want money or we want to write a book. However, there are many romantic Germans who live lives based on their ideals. It is possible to live as a writer on grants, fellowships, and stipends without taking a teaching position or finding another type of separate job.

Herman Hesse is still a hugely popular author in Germany, selling 3000 to 5000 books a year, probably because he asks about a sense of life. He asks the question, "Who am I?" Each generation asks that question.

Hesse: In German, writers can create compound words to more accurately represent what they are trying to say. In English, writers have to select just the right word to use, which can be exhausting because there are so many. In German, though, it is not selection but creation. How do you feel about using compound words in your writing?

Krauss: I prefer to find the right, exact word. I see myself as a poet. What matters is the aura around a word. The aura only exists with words that already exist and that others have already used. I strive for clear, exact expression in my writing.



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Interview with Matthew Taylor Kamila Kinyon

Matthew Taylor is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Denver. He has been conducting research in Guatemala for the last 15 years. Taylor's research and publications include studies on the impacts of rural electrification on firewood consumption, how migration to the United States changes land use practices and ownership patterns on Guatemala's frontiers, how 40 years of civil war impacted the environment, how social capital influences resource use, the interplay of human population dynamics and biodiversity, long-term human modification of the environment in highland Guatemala, and water resource management on evolving frontiers. Taylor also involves undergraduate students in community-based research in rural Guatemalan communities.

Kamila Kinyon: I would like to find out about the type of writing that you do, and that your students do. For example, I've been reading about the water projects that you and your students do in Guatemala, and I'm curious about the writing that has emerged from this.

Matthew Taylor: Part of my philosophy is that my classes are very reading intensive, and by nature my classes are writing intensive. For example, my First-Year Seminar is a class about revolution and revolutionaries in Latin America. I make them read about five books throughout the quarter, such as *Comandante Che* and *Carlos Fonseca*. These are first-year students who are reading these books and I don't expect them to respond in one go in the form of a formal book review, but every time they come to class, they turn in just a brief response to what they read. So it's not a repetition of what's in the book. The first few sentences may be a summary, but the rest is their response. I limit it to 300 to 400 words because I believe it is harder to write something short than waffling on for three or four pages. So in the course of a quarter, these students hand in 20 to 25 pages, which is not bad, and they get comments back from me.

I focus not so much on the grammar because I don't see that as my role, but, for example, for the class I teach in Guatemala, I have them read several books that are a background to Guatemala, such as *A Beauty That Hurts: Life and Death in Guatemala*, *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village*, and *Silence on the Mountain*. They are a bit gory — stories of terror, betrayal, and forgetting in Guatemala — and then, to make sure they read the books, I make them write formal book reviews. I give them several that I have written, and it gives them an idea for how to write a book review. For each book they read, I expect them to write a book review, and, at the end of the class, I ask them to write an essay putting everything they have seen and experienced into context. When they come back, they can write a thematic essay, for example, about poverty in Guatemala, and they will tell me what they saw, bringing the readings into the essay, just contextualizing it. I do that even if the class is more of a service class because in my view it is pointless to go to a country and do service if you don't have the larger context of the background of the country and of why you are doing the service.

Revision based on feedback is something I expect of students too about writing. It is normal to get feedback and

to get constructive criticism. I show them, for example, a manuscript I have been working on and the comments reviewers have put on it; I show them the editors' comments, and then I show them how I changed it. I explain to students that it is a compliment that people have taken the time to do all of this work. I try to involve students in my writing process, so it is not just an example of my finished research. Before going into the field, in addition to the books, I give them a packet with a compilation of articles, and lots of the articles are mine, so they feel a connection between what they are doing and my connection to the place.

What is your own writing process like, for example, the process of writing for different audiences? In your public good essay on your website, you discuss how you have written both for esoteric journals and for popular audiences.

I think that all scholars should have a dual role. The first is to write for the discipline, for the other 27 people who read it. Second is the civic responsibility that we have to write publicly, whether it be for newspaper or invited editorial, regardless of our area of expertise. I think this is our responsibility. Sometimes it can be hard to think of that more general public audience, and one of the best classes I ever took as an undergraduate was taught by Alcock and Brown. Alcock writes really well; he is a biologist at Arizona State University. He takes evolutionary biology, complex ideas, and writes them for a general audience, and Brown also does the same thing. He is a biologist who specializes in jaguars. He takes complex ideas and makes them readable for a general audience. The class I took with Alcock and Brown was challenging. They would give us a topic, and often it would be just two words, such as "elephant tree," and they would say: "Off you go. Get across complex scientific ideas in 300 words." By the end, the reader had to feel satisfied in knowing what was going on about, for example, the elephant tree or the saguaro cactus. That was one of the most challenging classes I took. They had a good method — get essays from one week, blank out the names, and then redistribute them among the students. It was really good. You could see if you learned something from the essay, look at the writing style, and say whatever you want. It was the idea of double blind review. And, after that, I always recommend that students read an article: "The Science of Scientific Writing," which is a great article explaining how the brain reads and therefore how we should write.

That must have been a great class. What are some of the methods you use with your students here at DU?

For the First-Year Seminar, and every class I teach, I take that approach of a gradual assessment of people's ideas. It is a lot more work for me. For the Core class, "Human and Environmental Change," I make them read *Lawn People*, about chemicals, and *Earth Odyssey*, a journalist's journey about our environmental future. And with thirty students in a class, two essays a week, granted one page long, that's a lot of reading to do. However, I don't give midterms or final exams because it's not how I learned, and I don't agree with that as a mode of assessment. And, as you know, you get familiar with a writing style and know where the student is. I like to give feedback, continual feedback, to students. Often they get into the practice of writing because when you get out of the habit of writing, then it becomes difficult. But, once you start, you can't stop, and that's what I notice with students, that their voices really come out as the quarter progresses. At first, very stilted, almost a repetition of what they read, but when I give the right sort of feedback, let's move beyond that, or maybe have the reading and context, they can focus on the structure of the reading, how the author gets things across, because that's a way to start getting at the material. For instance, they can note that the author jumps around here, and it gets a little complicated because of reasons A, B, and C, and they can get the message across by doing this. In a core class, there are a number of business students who aren't necessarily interested in the material, which is why I try to give them interesting books to read, including a book by the owner and founder of Patagonia, *Let My People Go Surfing: The Education of a Reluctant Businessman*. The business was founded on good social principles right from the beginning, using organic cotton. Now it's more common to use organic cotton in clothes. He thinks, "if we make a loss, we make a loss," but it turns out that doing the right thing was a benefit to the community.

My challenge is to get students reading and writing, finding material that the business students are interested in. It used to be that teaching the same class, I had a syllabus that I called the "doom-and-gloom" syllabus because it was a bunch of scientific articles from geography and science journals that were all the time banging you over the head: "Humans have done this; we're bad; we've messed up the world with global warming." People are much more aware now. They are aware of pollution. They are aware of global warming because of automobiles. Especially with films like Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*, I would argue that there is much more awareness now of environmental problems. So I don't need to bang them over the head. Let's make that assumption. There are environmental problems that have been caused by humans. What can we do to try and address those problems? The books I give are examples of how we can improve our actions. I get them to read, and they love it. Alan Weisman, you can call him a science writer, wrote a book called *Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World*, based on a real community. It is really optimistic, and they love it. That is their last book review for the quarter. That is one thing I have found with writing from students. If there is something you can get them excited about, you can get good responses, and you get really good essays. Alan Weisman just wrote a book that reaches a popular audience. If you can see it at airport bookstores, that is my guideline for whether it reaches a popular audience. This book is

called *The World Without Us*. Tomorrow there are no humans, so how long does it take nature to break down what man has done? It is incredible the information he got from interviewing dozens of scientists. It is a good book to get students thinking about human impact but in reverse. So every one of my classes I structure the same way, and I give detailed instructions of how to write.

What are some of your research directions right now?

Several. I just applied for sabbatical leave and applied for funding agencies to fund work in Guatemala and Nicaragua. In Guatemala, this will be on the science side of water issues, using tree ring records to reconstruct past droughts. We know from Mayan history or from Spanish records if there were droughts. The tree rings can corroborate, and this is important with growing populations in the Guatemalan highlands. If we see a cyclicity in these droughts, when can we expect the next drought? How severe will the drought be based on the tree ring records? The whole idea of this research, for which we submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation, is to really involve the locals in the research and the school kids, so they can understand the hydrologic cycle, the significance of water, and where it comes from. The whole hydrologic cycle but also preserving the landscapes and the water supplies slightly down the slope. So that's one project.

Another project is in Nicaragua. It is a more vague project, discussing the dilemmas of development and globalization. There has been a big recent foreign investment and tourism along Nicaragua's coast. As foreign investors see Nicaragua as safe to invest in, there is a second ownership by foreign investors. It is no longer the Nicaraguan image of the person with the gun on his back and the rocket launcher. Rather, Nicaragua is seen as safe. In 1990, at the end of the Sandinista revolution, it was possible for individuals to sell land for ridiculously cheap prices to foreigners. It is only now that people have started building resorts and second homes on the land. In the meantime, people have sold their land and spent the money, the little money they got, and now they are back. There they are still trying to eke out a living by living in those resorts — changing sheets, cleaning toilets, working as cooks, as security guards, etc.

The project we have in mind, in collaboration with a local university, would be, first of all, to assess who owns what along the coast. By using satellite imagery and just driving along the coast asking questions, asking the surveyor's office, finding who owns what, we can construct a live map that will go on the web. The people will help to make this map, so that they find out who they are and what they need to do in the future. It will also be a simple fact-gathering exercise, so we can make statements about foreign investment, what has happened, land ownership to land cover as well. For example, by 2008, we can say 70% of the trees have been removed in lots purchased by outsiders. We also want to do a case study of communities along the coast, of the indigenous people of those communities, to see how they have been impacted by tourism. It will take a couple of years. Both my wife and I have been working in Guatemala since 1990. We just started working in Nicaragua in 2006. This is just the beginning of a long relationship there.

In Nicaragua, we have purchased a small piece of communally owned land and are going to experiment with alternative sustainable livelihoods. We say: "Look, this is the reality, you've sold most of the land, you're fishing, some of you work as security guards" — this is called *guardia*, a sort of glorified security guard, to make sure nobody comes. So we did a survey, what would be best for people to lift themselves up in education and gain access to education. The way they have to get to the secondary school is to walk five miles, which adds up to at least four hours a day getting there and back. One of the solutions was to buy transport, through a mini-loan for transport busses. The second thing was agriculture, horticulture, ways they could grow crops and participate in the tourist economy. One of the needs was good, locally produced food. Everything that is not fish now comes from Managua. So what we do is use submersible water pumps.

This November, I am going with students to Nicaragua. We will drill a well, going in about 50 feet, and connected to a solar panel, and connected to a big water tank. Quite simply, during the day, when there are eight hours of sunlight, this produces a couple of gallons a minute, and then we do agriculture on this flat piece of land. This place, of two or three acres, would be a place of experimentation. It would be a collaborative process, bringing expertise. Both sides would get something from that. The whole idea was to involve interdisciplinary teams of students, so they could come up with plans together with the community about what would be best to do. It would be a collaborative process. So, for example, the business student might explain how to grow vegetables, offering a micro-business plan. It is happening through my efforts in taking students there. We work with locals and slowly get things done: solar panels, worm composting, selling worm-created compost to other places that want to grow vegetables. And the whole idea, especially in Latin America where it is a male-dominated society, is horticulture. People can create household gardens around the house that all family members (except males, who are out fishing or drinking away the family income) can participate in. If we can show them an easy way, this will increase female ability to earn money. But they don't necessarily have time or information about how to start this. We can show them an easy way to do vegetables. "Why don't you do vegetables?" They will look at us like we are idiots and say "Well, don't you see the pigs?" So you have to find a way to overcome that.

This will, of course, involve writing -- writing proposals for example. I have done several undergraduate research projects. I talk to students, and they want to come back and do research, so they come back with academic references about tourism. I tell them to write a proposal based on questions we discussed. I edit it, and we submit it. And they can get money. Students can \$1500 to go to Guatemala or Nicaragua to do research. So those are future research directions. Both of them are of a very applied nature. It tends towards two camps. One is the academic camp, lots of questions about tree ring chronology, but then the other is of a very applied nature — future droughts and the cyclicity of these droughts and what that means to people.



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**Students Want to Know:
Can I Use My Laptop in Class?**

Heather Martin

Of course you can! But, just so you know, this time is our time to work and discuss, so I'll be interrupting your Facebook and IM time; that will wait until after class is over.

-- Jeff Ludwig

Yes, we can often use our laptops in class, and sometimes I prefer that we use them to complete in-class writing. But when we move to discussing issues or a particular reading assignment, it's important for us to close our laptops, so we can converse face-to-face, without our computers distracting us. Ultimately, it depends on what we are doing in class whether or not it's appropriate to use our laptops.

-- Geoffrey Bateman

I expect my students to bring their laptops every day, and we use them quite a bit for in-class writing, research, and document sharing. I think that it is generally more effective to take notes with pen and paper, however, and it is far easier to carry on a group conversation when the laptops are closed. I know that many people think of themselves as multitaskers, but we just can't process new material, respond to our peers thoughtfully, and Facebook at the same time. BTW, professors can almost always tell when students are using their laptops for something other than classwork and, yes, we do find it annoying. :)

-- Jennifer Campbell

Yes, you may use them; indeed, I insist that you bring them, so that we can write and revise in class. But please: no Internet surfing, emailing, Facebooking, etc.

-- John Tiedemann

Yes and no. We will use them in class from time to time, for in-class writing, draft workshops, and the like. But I prefer closed laptops at all other times. This is not because I don't trust my students or because I don't see the value of technology in the classroom. I do it because I understand how difficult it can be to stay focused on a task when faced with the temptation of new emails, invitations to chat, and status updates from friends. I will admit that I have fallen victim to such temptation in my own work life. It makes sense to me to avoid these enticements when possible, with the hope that my students will get the most out of our class time.

-- Heather Martin





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Best Practices for Teaching Writing to ESL Students

David Daniels, Kamila Kinyon, and Casey Rountree

Since DU has a significant population of international students, it is important to identify how teachers in courses across the disciplines can best help English as a Second Language (ESL) students with writing. While grammatical errors can cause significant difficulties, this is by no means the only important issue to address in responding to ESL writing. International students enter DU classes with a different set of cultural expectations than native speakers of English. Both rhetorical conventions and assumptions about originality differ across cultures. Following are some best practice guidelines for responding to ESL students at DU. Much of the information synthesized below is taken from articles included in the collection *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*, edited by Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth. For those seeking further information about how to best address ESL students' writing, the following articles offer a good starting point: " 'Earth Aches by Midnight': Helping ESL Writers Clarify Their Intended Meaning" by Amy Jo Minett; "Editing Line by Line" by Cynthia Linville; and "Raising Questions About Plagiarism" by Kurt Bouman.

I. Cultural Differences in Rhetorical Conventions

Be aware of varying methods in essay development across cultures:

A. Each language and culture has rhetorical conventions unique to it. According to Robert Kaplan and based on an analysis of 600 texts written by ESL students, we can see several cultural generalizations:

1. Asian students who have been taught according to the rhetoric of their cultures approach a topic from a variety of viewpoints in order to examine it indirectly. This may be seen by American professors as lack of focus or indecisiveness, since academic papers in the US favor deductive reasoning. Papers are expected to have a thesis statement, linear development, and a summing up conclusion.
2. Kaplan describes speakers of French and Spanish as having "much greater freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material." To a US professor, this might seem like going off the topic.
3. Arabic writing tends to be less direct than writing in English. Rather than getting to a point, Arabic speakers might open up a topic and talk around a point.

B. Cultural differences may be manifested in some of the following ways:

1. In a paper's organization (such as inductive or deductive reasoning patterns)
2. In a preference for a particular sentence style
3. In the forms of address or register (issues of formality)
4. In apparent lack of cohesive ties
5. In the amount and type of information that is included (such as the balance between general points and supporting information)

II. Guidelines for Reading ESL Papers

A. Begin with higher order concerns: focus, development, organization. Leave lower order concerns (grammar and word choice) for later.

B. Read the paper in full, to see how it is organized on its own terms.

C. Reader may be disoriented by lack of meta-discourse or signposts. Try to identify and piece together the logic.

D. Make note of unexpected features and unique perspectives in order to encourage the student.

III. Editing (Sentence Structure, Grammar, and Spelling)

A. Six common error types:

1. Subject-verb agreement
2. Verb tense
3. Verb form
4. Singular/plural noun endings
5. Word form
6. Sentence structure

B. Ask ESL students to fix their own mistakes. Do not correct all the errors in a paper. Rather, identify the common grammatical problems or patterns of grammatical problems that the student has, and give one or two examples from the paper. Then ask the student to locate and correct other examples of the same problem.

C. If the paper has multiple errors, prioritize feedback to the student. Make sure to focus on those errors that most interfere with meaning. For example, sentence structure is central for making the meaning clear to a reader. The student should learn how to make these corrections first, before moving on to such issues as article usage.

D. Look for problems with particular words. According to Hinkel, the following are important to address with ESL students:

1. Qualifying hedges such as “apparently,” “ostensibly,” “most likely”
2. Modal verbs like “may,” “might,” “should,” “could”

IV. Plagiarism and Culture:

A. In the United States, ideas about plagiarism are driven by a particular understanding of what it means to write — including a value on individuality, independence, and notions of “authentic voice.” Originality is another important concept in Western education systems.

B. Other traditions, as in China, emphasize close allegiance to a few acknowledged authorities, leading to convergence of perspective and social harmony.

C. According to David Bartholomae, paraphrasing is one of the most difficult skills to develop. Mary Dossin states that this requires that a writer “master his sources and break his connection to their language and structure.”

D. How to consult students about using sources:

1. It is useful to look at a student's sources side by side with her papers.
2. See if the writer has done the following:
 - a. Does the writer do a good job of weaving source information into the paper?
 - b. Does she vary the way that she uses sources, drawing on summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation?
 - c. Does he choose appropriate times to use direct quotes in his paper, or does he overuse them, failing to make an original argument in the paper?

V. In-Class Writing and In-Class Essay Exams

ESL students naturally need more time than native speakers for completing in-class writing and in-class exams. Essay exams may pose a particular problem. Do what you can to accommodate ESL students' needs. For example, you may choose to give extra time to ESL students on in-class exams.

VI. ESL Students as Speakers (Differences in Speech Styles)

It is important to realize that ESL students may have different speech styles than native speakers and that their class participation may affect the classroom dynamic. For example, Nancy Sakamoto's article "Conversational Ballgames" compares American speech styles to tennis and Japanese speech styles to bowling. A typical conversational interchange in Japan is based on longer explications of a subject, in a non-confrontational style, rather than the short argumentative exchanges typical in the United States. Whatever culture your ESL students come from, be aware that speech styles differ, and take this into account when engaging ESL students in classroom discussions.



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Community Writing Center Pilot Project
Geoffrey Bateman with Eliana Schonberg

It's Tuesday morning, 10:15 am to be exact, and I'm sitting in the dining room of [The Gathering Place](#) (TGP), a day shelter for women and children who are experiencing homelessness or poverty. A few women linger over their coffee from breakfast; others are wiping down tables and sweeping the floor, doing their chores for the day as a way to give a little back to an organization that has obviously given them so much.

I've been coming here about once a week since the middle of June, meeting with clients or staff members to help them with any number of writing tasks. Some days I've been joined by Dani Rado, a second-year graduate student in DU's doctoral program in English. We've met with a range of writers working on a number of different pieces — letters to judges, resumes, an artist statement that will accompany a public mural, essays for a writing contest for young women who are struggling to make it. Some women just stop by, wanting to talk about their stories and tell me about the books they hope to write about their lives. With staff members, we've consulted on press releases, letters to major donors soliciting support, PowerPoint presentations, monthly program reports, and most recently a book project.

This work is part of a larger project developed with Eliana Schonberg, the director of DU's Writing Center, and John Tiedemann, a faculty member in DU's Writing Program. Eager to find ways to develop the Writing Center's and Writing Program's public presence and to build an engaged component to our work on campus, the three of us applied for and were awarded a Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning Public Good Grant.

During the summer of 2008, we used the Public Good Grant to pilot a community-based writing center. For six weeks, Tiedemann was joined by Chris Newton, one of our undergraduate Writing Center consultants, at the St. Francis Center (SFC), another Denver day shelter that services individuals, mostly men, experiencing homelessness. While Tiedemann and Newton were holding twice-weekly drop-in hours at the SFC, Rado and I worked primarily at TGP. Each team, along with Schonberg, averaged about two to three consultations a week, and our weekly presence laid the beginning of a foundation for community partnerships that has become the bedrock of our evolving work in the community. Over the summer, we also developed three workshops for staff members. At TGP, two of the workshops gave employees the chance to fine tune their email communication and develop their skills in using personal narratives in their writing. At SFC we held a similar workshop, helping staff writers with their skills in writing objective case notes.

At the end of the summer, the work had proved so satisfying for both us and our community partners that we decided to continue holding drop-in hours in the fall while applying for funding to continue the project. Since September, Tiedemann and Newton have continued to meet with clients and staff members for a few hours on Friday afternoons at SFC, while Rado, Schonberg, and I have done similar work on Tuesday mornings at TGP.

We've learned a lot. As one can imagine, working at these sites can be both profoundly humbling and very rewarding. Both clients and staff bring an investment to their writing projects more pronounced than we see with many of our students, with the exception of some dissertation students. In addition to a greater investment, however, there is often also a greater sense of urgency.



The pressures these writers face are daunting. Listening to their stories and the experiences that precede and deeply inform their writing can be moving, sometimes disturbing. Attending to these stories also provides a complex and exciting application of our rhetorical skills, as well as a much-welcomed moment of validation for the writers. We give these clients moments of reflective clarity, and even if these moments fail to resolve their immediate material needs, it's hard not to feel as if they've made one small step in finding their voices as writers and ultimately, a bit more agency.

Like our writers on campus, these writers do not leave any particular consultation with quick fixes or immediate, sudden transformations. Writing doesn't work that way. Nor does finding a way out of poverty or homelessness, drug addiction or domestic violence. But our work in the past six months has reinforced our sense that attending to the writing needs of these people may work as one small piece of a much larger puzzle that will help them on this path.



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David Daniels Featured in Yellow Pine Reading Series

Linda Tate

On Wednesday, September 24, David Daniels, faculty member in the University Writing Program, read from *Clean*, his manuscript-in-progress. Daniels was one of four featured readers in the Yellow Pine Reading Series in North Boulder.

Among the manuscript poems Daniels shared were "HE," "Litany," "Clean," "Mere Hours After the Drag Show," and "Miracle Tortilla." Daniels's poetry fuses wry observations on popular culture and contemporary life with long-standing religious symbols. Indeed, he describes *Clean* as a book of poems that "examine Christ incarnate via Mommie Dearest." Daniels' poems are packed with his unique brand of humor and, at the same moment, are concerned with the fragility of human life. The poems in *Clean*, Daniels says, look at "Christ as a continual presence along with my queer longings about AIDS and other swappings of bodily fluids."

A former Stadler Fellow for Younger Poets at Bucknell University, Daniels holds a BA in Literature and Creative Writing from Tulane University and earned his MFA in Poetry and his MA in Literature at Indiana University. Daniels's poetry has been published in literary journals such as *River Styx*, *Pleiades*, *Gulf Coast*, *Many Mountains Moving*, *Third Coast*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *CutBank*. David was editor of *Indiana Review* and is now a poetry editor for the experimental literary journal [*Born Magazine*](#), which features multimedia, collaborative projects in poetry and image.

Organized by Boulder writer Ellen Orleans, the Yellow Pine Reading Series is a "quarterly mix of town, gown, regional, visiting, experienced, and emerging writers. Poets, memoir writers, essayists, fiction writers, and those who blur definitions come together at this growing series."

Writers interested in presenting at Yellow Pine should email a writing sample (five pages of prose or three of poetry) to eorleans@earthlink.net or to Ellen Orleans, P.O. Box 1348, Boulder, CO 80306.





THE POINT

Winter 2009



Geoffrey Bateman

- On Friday, October 28, Eliana Schonberg and I co-facilitated a day-long workshop at the International Writing Center Association conference. The workshop was entitled “Mapping Routes to Writing Center/Community Partnerships.” We led the workshop with six other staff members from four other writing centers.
- Eliana Schonberg, John Tiedemann, and I received a mini-grant from DU's Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning (CCESL) to hold a mini-retreat with our community partners (the St. Francis Center and The Gathering Place) to create a longer-term strategic plan/vision for our community-based writing center work in November or December.
- I applied for and was accepted to be a part of the Community-Based Writing Group sponsored by CCESL for faculty who are working on research related to community engagement and service-learning.



Introduction to Reading Games: Composition, Literacy, and Video Gaming

The computer and video gaming industry has come to have a significant impact on our culture and economy. As we consider the multiple ways that games presented via the screen have influenced how we interface with the world, it becomes useful to consider how these games might influence our literacy practices. Furthermore, these games also ask us to consider our practices as teachers of literacy as well. One important work that addresses these questions is James Gee's *What Video Games Have to Teach us about Learning and Literacy*. Gee offers a critique of traditional teaching while considering the ways that games teach, and the types of things they teach. For instance, he explores ways in which game simulations situate students in concrete contexts that they can then actively learn from in embodied ways through playing with this simulated world. In other ways, however, traditional schooling is also replicated in some games through rote memorization, repetition of exercises, and the importance of following the rules.

In looking at composition, literacy, and video gaming, we might imagine all manner of intersections, especially for those who have played games for some time. Early text-based games in which finding the right word or means of saying something allowed you to progress in a game seems to have a clear analog to writing outside of the game world. Later, graphic intensive games haven't seemed to have the same overt connections. However, later games, such as massive multiplayer online role-playing games, have collaborative elements and require means of cooperation and communication (written and otherwise) not needed by those earlier games. At a more conceptual level, as games have become more complex, so have the players. From the social contracts that have developed in Second Life to the social debates necessary in order to collaboratively function within larger guilds in World of Warcraft, games have progressed to include more complex civic, rhetorical, and learning connections.

As we consider the contemporary landscape of games as well as the contemporary technologies that play host to these games, we cannot help but also consider what has been lost and what has been gained. For many students, learning has become connected with fun, just as it was for the ancient Greeks where oratory was often perceived as a type of game (Huizinga, 1947, pp. 147-149); for others, learning represents hard work and diligence, and is not particularly associated with play. Just as debates continue over the so-called "serious" games versus those more ludic in nature, or specific educational games versus commercial off the shelf games, teachers of writing are at the center of these discussions. Within these discussions are questions about the nature of gaming, play, learning and literacy. In what ways can games change how we learn as well as how we learn games? Along with this, we might also ask, what makes games different at teaching some things rather than others? Or more precisely, what makes games better at teaching and learning? How does game design and curriculum design intersect? What theories of gaming interface with teaching and learning?

This special issue represents current theory, critique, and pedagogy concerning the use of games in the writing classroom. We hope these works generate discussion, ideas, and a new way at looking at how games, literacy and teaching interact.

Theory into Practice

This section begins with Shawn Apostel's "[Thinking through Persuasive Play: Encouraging a Reflective Gaming Experience](#)." Apostel uses Donald Norman's theory of brain activity to consider the ways we process information. Adding another level to Norman's schema, Apostel discusses how composition instructors might use this and other multimodal theories to discuss the U.S.'s use of America's Army, a video game used for military recruitment.

In "[Gaming as Writing, or, World of Warcraft as World of Wordcraft](#)," Edmond Y. Chang discusses the numerous connections between writing and gaming, looking at how language, expression, narrative, rhetorical context, and play are part of rhetorical processes and texts worthy of critical analysis. Using World of Warcraft, Chang brings these features of writing and gaming together, looking at the connections between the processes of play and writing and then

examining how World of Warcraft rhetorically constructs race.

Ryan M. Moeller and Kim White chart the development from theory into practice of Bedford/St. Martin's composition game, Peer Factory. "[Enter the Game Factor: Putting Theory into Practice in the Design of Peer Factor](#)" is an interesting webtext that discusses the politics, practicality, and pedagogy behind the design of this game designed to teach peer review.

This section ends with "[Starter Cities: Simulation, Game Design, and the Writing Classroom](#)" by Mark Mullen. Mullen maps out the MMORPG starter city as a way to consider simulation in the writing classroom. He also draws provocative connections between learning structures embedded within the gameplay of starter cities and better practices for teaching writing.

Virtual Classroom

The Virtual Classroom section starts with J. James Bono discussing pedagogical uses of alternate reality games (ARGs) in "[Alternate Reality Games: Composition, Collaboration, and Real Community Play](#)." Bono shares how the ARG World Without Oil can be used in a writing classroom, allowing students to rhetorically bridge the gap between the "magic circle" and "reality."

Craig McKenney's "[Building the Labyrinth: Adapting Video Game Design Concepts for Writing Course Design](#)" looks at some useful parallels between game design and course design, sharing multiple projects that integrate games, civic rhetoric, and the writing classroom.

Finally, Stephanie Vie discusses the promises and pitfalls of Second Life in "[Are We Truly Worlds apart?: Building Bridges between Second Life and Secondary Education](#)." Vie presents a number of arguments as to how we can be more critical and pedagogically aware of using Second Life in a writing classroom, looking especially at the way that Second Life residents, especially teachers, deal with conflicts within this social space.

Professional Development

Our Professional Development section begins with a short piece entitled, "[Computer Games and the Writing Classroom: Four Perspectives](#)." We share four outlooks on learning, gaming, and the writing classroom from theorists and game designers.

We also have included "[Remapping Rhetorical Peaks: A Video Game for First-year Writing](#)," in which Matt King updates the status of Rhetorical Peaks, a project originally began as a modification of Neverwinter Nights, but that now has begun development as a standalone game useful for teaching rhetorical appeals through an adventure style murder mystery game.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we did reviewing the proposals and working with each of these authors. We would like to thank Mathew S. S. Johnson and Pilar Lacasa, special editors of the print edition of *Computers and Composition*. We would also like to offer a special thanks to Kristine Blair, editor of *Computers and Composition Online*. And finally, we want to thank all of the contributors for their innovative work.

[Richard Colby](#), University of Denver

[Rebekah Shultz Colby](#), University of Denver

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A Review of Viz.

Rhetoric Visual Culture Pedagogy

Reviewed by Rebekah Shultz Colby
University of Denver

Introduction

Viz., <http://viz.cwrl.utexas.edu>, is a blog dedicated to visual rhetoric. Created and maintained by the Computer Writing and Research Lab (CWRL) of The University of Texas at Austin and powered by Drupal, the site's goal is to examine "the ways in which rhetoric, visual culture, and pedagogy interact with and inform each other. In keeping with this mission, the [viz. blog](#) is a forum for exploring the visual through identifying the connections between theory, rhetorical practice, popular culture, and the classroom." And the site achieves this purpose well. While offering an historical and theoretical background of the visual, *Viz* also includes multiple entries that comment on the many ways that visual rhetoric is defined and used in contemporary culture. The site showcases artists, teachers, and those around the web who use visual rhetoric in multiple ways. Most notably, though, the site offers examples of pedagogical strategies for creating classroom forums for students to critically discuss and analyze various types of visual argument. It even offers a few assignments for students to rhetorically analyze visual texts as well as several assignments that ask students to create their own visual arguments.

In fact, *Viz* seems to be a natural continuation of one of the first visual rhetoric sites in composition: David Blakesley's [Visual rhetoric](#). Blakesley originally designed the website for a visual rhetoric course he taught in 1999. The site includes a [course description](#), [syllabus](#), and [abstracts of student projects](#). However, the site has lived on largely because of its exhaustive links to other sites on visual rhetoric, even though some of them are long since dead. Even now though, the site could still be considered a visual rhetoric portal which includes everything from a website on [dadaism](#) to an [Alfred Hitchcock gallery](#) webpage and [The Museum of Modern Art](#). Unfortunately, the Blakesley site does not include a blog or any way for others to interact by uploading articles, assignments, or links to other websites. *Viz*, however, does just that, not only serving as a portal to other visual rhetoric sites but also, as a blog, sustaining a dynamic scholarly community interested in sharing assignments, YouTube videos, and commentary on the intersections between popular culture and the visual.



Figure 1. Viz menu

Besides the obligatory contact and about pages, the site menu (see Figure 1) is separated into four main sections: Theory, Assignments, Bibliography, and Blog. The Blog, the highlight of the site and the frontpage for visitors, is robust, offering sixteen pages of entries since February 2007. The Theory section has entries written by John Jones and Vessela Valiavitcharska, each discussing the application of classical rhetoric to visual analysis and the image as argument. The Assignment section is split into class-length, unit-length, and semester-length assignments. The contents consist mostly of student-directed assignment sheets, most of which are by unnamed authors. The Bibliography consists of three online journals and six book links.

The *Viz* [theory page](#) gives the historical and theoretical background of visual rhetoric. It includes a page on the basics of semiotic theory, including Peirce, Saussure, and Barthes; explores how the rise of photography in the 19th century led to an increased interest in and awareness of the visual, especially among the middle class; and, most importantly, applies a rhetorical Aristotelian lens in analyzing the visual, arguing that logos, ethos, and pathos are all part of the construction of visual arguments. A particularly fascinating theory page discusses *ekphrasis*, "the rhetorically charged description of anything that can be perceived visually or evoked mentally." Finally, the theory section ends with a discussion of how contemporary surveillance becomes a form of visual rhetoric. In particular, it discusses how [Google Earth](#) can create effective visual arguments for marginalized political groups. For instance, with the satellite footage from Google Earth, Bahrain's land-deprived populace can not only see how much land the ruling family uses to build lavishly rambling palaces, they can now construct visual arguments against this power disparity. Overall, the theory pages were well balanced between history, semiotic theory, and ancient rhetorical theory. The discussion of [surveillance](#) as visual rhetoric was an effective application of all three of these aspects of visual rhetorical theory.



Figure 2. Campaign Posters for Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton

The *Viz* blog is an invaluable resource for giving teachers ideas on how to generate class discussion on visual rhetoric. The site takes full advantage of the multimodality of the web and uses YouTube videos, pictures, and clips from off-site blogs to generate a discussion around visual rhetoric that most students would find appealing. With only a little imagination on the teacher's part, any of these blog entries, pictures, or YouTube selections could instantly become intriguing classroom discussion fodder. For instance, [John Jones's blog](#) discussing the visual differences between Bush-Cheney's and Obama's use of visual rhetoric while on the campaign trail could easily lead to classroom discussion of how campaigns use and sometimes abuse the visual. The blog also hints at how the two campaigns use and have used ethos and pathos, which could lead to further classroom discussion. Students could then compare and contrast Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's use of visual rhetoric, arguing for which was most effective (Figure 2).

The [bibliography](#) section includes three online journals: [Enculturation](#), a "refereed journal devoted to contemporary theorizations of rhetoric, writing, and culture," [Journal of Visual Literacy](#), which explores "empirical, theoretical, practical, or applied aspects of visual literacy and communication," and [Invisible Culture](#), an investigation of "the material and political dimensions of cultural practices: the means by which cultural objects and communities are produced, the historical contexts in which they emerge, and the regimes of knowledge or modes of social interaction to which they contribute." The visual rhetoric and composition section includes both books on the theory of visual rhetoric as well as a few textbooks on how to teach it. While both the theory books and textbooks are not exhaustive of the field, they are good representations of some of the current work being done within composition. For instance, Carolyn Handa's (2004) edited collection of visual rhetoric within composition, *Visual rhetoric in a digital world: A critical sourcebook*, is included alongside Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's (2006) [Reading images: The grammar of visual design](#), a book which has helped composition conceptualize writing as design. The bibliography compensates for not being exhaustive by including links to other online visual rhetoric bibliographies which further discuss the history and theory behind the visual—Rebecca Moore Howard's (2007) thorough visual rhetoric bibliography, [Visual rhetoric: Some sources](#), and Wake Forest University's (2003) visual rhetoric

bibliography, [Sources in visual rhetoric](#). However, the bibliography would be easier to peruse if it included separate sections for the textbooks and theory. Right now both are mixed in with each other. Also, from a pedagogical perspective, it would be helpful if there were an outside link or two for a more exhaustive list of textbooks. For instance, while Lester Faigley and Diana George's (2004) textbook *Picturing texts* is included, *Seeing and writing 3* by Donald and Christine McQuade (2006) is not.

Kairos Logo

[Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy](#)

- [Issue 13.1 Contents](#)

Colby, Rebekah Shultz. (2008). A review of Viz. - Rhetoric, Visual Culture, Pedagogy. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 13(1). Retrieved April 26, 2013, from <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/13.1/reviews/colby/index.htm>



THE POINT*Winter 2009***The Write Stuff: Kelley Ritz***Heather Martin*

Walking around campus this fall, a person could almost feel something different in the air. The campus climate was different -- invigorated, electric. With more than a dozen events centering on the 2008 election, the campus was buzzing with conversation about the possibilities for our future. Student political interest and involvement was at an all-time high.

But many students, often first-time voters, were unsure, not about their preferred candidates, but how to vote for their candidates. Confusion over absentee ballots, identification requirements, and polling locations are all too common barriers to electoral participation among college students.

Kelley Ritz and her dedicated team at [GO VOTE](#) were determined to make the voices of DU students heard in the 2008 election. The student organization Getting Out the Voices of the Youth in Elections, or GO VOTE, was founded in 2007 with the hope of increasing student participation in the political process at the national, local, and campus levels. The brainchild of five students enrolled in the Pioneer Leadership Program and the result of a 30-page community change initiative, GO VOTE successfully registered over 200 DU students and provided countless others with essential information about polling places, ID requirements, and other FAQs.

I met with Kelley Ritz, the bright and energetic founder and president of GO VOTE, just a week after the presidential election; amazingly, she was still energized and ready to move on to the next project.

"GO VOTE is a great way to give back to a community that has given me so much," Ritz tells me as we chat on the grass in front of Penrose. Ritz is a Boettcher Scholar and a double major in economics and Russian. She is a fifth-generation Coloradoan and a first-generation college student. "I grew up on a farm, with a very hard-working family. There wasn't a lot of money for college, so education was everything," Ritz says. Her father had a stroke at age 43, and her family experienced some tough times as a result. But through those struggles, she learned about working hard and staying focused on a goal.

Ritz is an avid writer and while she admits that writing is a challenge, she assures me that it's an enjoyable one. She tells me that she spends a lot of time in the "mental planning" stages where she works through problems and develops a better sense of what she wants to say. Writing is also a regular part of her role as president of GO VOTE. For the election, the organization produced fliers on the candidates and on the when, where, and how of voting. "We are focused on knowledgeable voting at all levels," Ritz says, "and we wanted to target a broad range of students." Crafting fliers that accomplish these goals was no small task. Ritz says that GO VOTE has gotten lots of positive feedback and, unlike many other get-out-the-vote orgs found around campus this fall, GO VOTE is a long-term and consistent enterprise, promoting a US voter turnout as well as informing students about local elections.

Ritz seems to be a consummate optimist -- down-to-earth and dead-set on making a difference. "I am excited to see what my future holds," she tells me. And I'm sure I'm not alone in my sentiment when I turn to her and say, "Me too!"

