Inkshed

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This issue was edited by Heather Graves and Roger Graves (University of Western Ontario). It is accessible through the Inkshed Web site, at http://www.stu.ca/inkshed.

About Inkshed . . .

This newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning (CASLL) provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use, particularly in the Canadian context. CASLL membership runs from January 1 to December 31 and includes a subscription to Inkshed. To subscribe, send a cheque, made out to "Inkshed at NSCAD," for $20 [$10 for students and the un(der)employed] to the following address:

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From the Editors' Desktops

This edition of the Inkshed newsletter features an article by Kathryn Alexander called "Liminal Identities and Institutional Positioning: On becoming a "Writing lady" in the Academy," and two poems, "A Culture of Uncontrol" by Pauline Sameshima and "Ars Poetica" by Carl Leggo.

Alexander's article is an important one, and especially so for Inkshed readers, because it reflects on her experience as a female professional writing instructor at a Canadian university. Writing programs and the people who work in them do not, by and large, enjoy the privileges of an established disciplinary identity and the concomitant ethos and authority that come with those privileges by default. This is particularly acute for recent PhDs and those who work in inter- or cross-disciplinary programs. The term "Writing lady" that Alexander came to be known as sets before us a problem that many have faced: how to establish and maintain a professional identity that is taken seriously in institutions of higher education. In her case, Alexander has identified a series of strategies to resist this gendered, derogatory label.

Reflecting on our own experiences of this sort can be productive for ourselves and others if we share strategies for self-definition within our institutional contexts. Creating and maintaining a web site or page where you identify your own credentials, experience, and research interests is one way to define who you are; publicizing that site on course syllabi and as a signature link at the bottom of your email messages is another way to direct people's attention to this information. Displaying this site during presentations is another way to establish ethos during a speaking event (in front of a class you are visiting, or as a way of introducing yourself at a workshop). As director of the Writing Program at the University of Western Ontario, I face this challenge of establishing the credibility of the program as well as myself. As a program, we have purchased a sales meeting-type display unit, revised the program website, and produced a new brochure describing the program. What have you done, personally or on behalf of the program you teach in, to promote the status of the work you do? We would love to share your strategies and your thoughts about doing this or not engaging in credibility-building exercises in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Sameshina introduces her poem by noting that *Isomainaquiijutiit*, the Inuit word for culture, means "things to make us realize when chores have been completed" and calls for us to work towards wholeness or "living, learning, teaching, and researching in, through, and around all the boxes, dichotomies, and compartmentalizations" that define our lives. We thought that this made for a good reminder to us all, particularly at this busy time of the year, to step aside and take a moment to reflect. Perhaps this issue of the newsletter can perform the function of *Isomainaquiijutiit* and help you to realize that the chores of the fall term are behind you. And right after I finish marking those final exams, they will be behind me!

Carl Leggo's poem Ars Poetica moves us from the sacred to the profane—you'll have to read it yourself to see where he's going with this, and it isn't pretty!

Roger Graves Heather Graves

Liminal Identities and Institutional Positioning: On becoming a "Writing lady" in the Academy

Kathryn Alexander ✍

> *Those of us taking up these roles occupy an unstable niche that is neither outside nor genuinely inside the academic power structure but mixes features of both. More truly marginal than in the feminist sense, we are like animals of the tidal zone, neither sea nor land creatures. This is not feminization as we have known it, is the liminal condition we live in...." (Louise Wetherbee Phelps, 1995, Becoming a Warrior: Lessons of the Feminist Workplace)*

This paper briefly explores how becoming described as a "writing lady" at the university can make the politics of gender relations, disciplinarity and textual mediation in the academy visible as a site for critical analysis[1]. I will argue that certain junctions of our relationships to being a "knower" or one who "professes" has a great deal to do with how we are institutionally positioned in the power relations of the university. The term "writing lady" also provides a means to explore how emergent speech genres concerning the roles of those involved in the implementation of writing-intensive learning in my institution revealed the "gender technologies" of identity formation and the marginalization of teaching and writing specialists as non-skilled contingent labour within the academy. My analysis is informed by questions from a range of theoretical frameworks: the institutional ethnography methodology of feminist sociologist Dorothy E. Smith (i.e. what kind of work does the social text and discursive relations of "writing-lady" accomplish?); new rhetoric and genre theory analysis as modeled by Bazerman, Russell, and Prior among others (i.e. how are selves/communities of practice mediated by genre systems?); feminist rhetorical studies on gender roles in composition studies (i.e. who does the work of teaching composition and what is their status in the academy?) (Schell, 1999; Enos 1996, Wetherbee Phelps, 1995, Schell and Lambert-Stock, 2004), and finally the emergent field of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, (how do we make the scholarship embodied in good teaching visible to the academy?) (Boyer, 1990; Huber and Taylor, 2005; Bazerman, 2002).

In 2002, I was hired as Limited term Faculty in the newly established Centre for Writing-Intensive Learning or CWIL. The mandate of our Centre was as follows:

> The purpose of the Centre for Writing-Intensive Learning is to *naturalize* the use of writing as constitutive of the teaching and learning culture in the university and to foster students' knowledge and skills as writers. ... The Centre will collaborate with faculty and departments to assess the implementation of new or modified approaches to the uses and teaching of writing. Information from such assessment will be used to influence future instruction, develop new strategies and propose new outcomes. (italics my emphasis)[2]

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[1] This paper has been adapted from a conference paper presented at a joint institute hosted by CASWE (Canadian Association for the Study of Women in Education) and CSSE (Canadian Society for the Study of Education) at the Congress of Social Science and Humanities Research at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg in May 2004. The 2004 theme of CSSE was Knowledge Building in an Educational Research Community and CASWE commemorated its first decade with a retrospective on the status of women's roles in the Academy with a sub-theme entitled: "Sexism in the Academy? Ten Years Later." Simon Fraser University had also hosted an inter-disciplinary conference on Women in the Academy in May 2004, where I also participated as a panelist.

[2] This language is from the Constitution for the Proposed Schedule A Centre, Centre for Writing-Intensive Learning (CWIL) Faculty of Arts, Simon Fraser University, 2003/2004.

As a newly minted PhD, with a specialization in curriculum and implementation, genre theory and academic writing, I experienced a brief interval of being referred to as "Dr." after I began to work at CWIL but soon noticed the disappearance of the "Dr." salutation. For example, in our first year, during a public forum introducing the "W" implementation process to the University community, all of the faculty members serving on committees such as the writing support group and the university implementation task force were identified on the program as Professor's or Dr.'s so and so from their respective departments. However, my colleague and myself were identified on the written agenda by our first names and as being from the "Writing Centre." Curiously, we did not work in a writing centre; our Centre was located in the Faculty of Arts, where we had departmental appointments and we had the same alphabet letters after our names as the other people.

Over the following year, I began to notice in the post- course surveys and course evaluations, and in emails, students began to refer to us by our first names, or as the "writing ladies" or "the CWIL ladies." Finally, when a good (female) colleague from the natural sciences jokingly referred to us in her class as "the writing ladies," I knew that I was onto to a peculiar kind of phenomenon. The term "writing ladies" had become common-place, signifying that a new speech genre was emerging around the implementation of writing-intensive learning curriculum across the university community. Obviously it didn't help that all three faculty in the Centre were women, and if we had a male colleague perhaps we would not have been called the 'writing ladies."[3] However, Louise Wetherbee Phelps suggests that even men and women in leadership roles as Directors, Chairs or Writing Program Administrators face the same problem as representatives of a feminized discipline (Phelps, 1995, 291).

Taking up the methodology of institutional ethnography, it is useful to look at the *language in use* that a particular discourse or a social text accomplishes in an institutional space. A central feature of institutional ethnography is its orientation of inquiry around issues, concerns or problems that are real for people, "from the standpoint of their experience in and of the actualities of their everyday living" (Smith, 2002, 18). What does becoming described as "a writing lady" imply for a non-tenured female academic working for a trans-disciplinary service mandate?

I will suggest that the received perception about the value of the teaching of writing is an inherent contradiction about the way writing actually functions within the institution. Writing *is* the core activity of the academy. Academic writing is intimately tied to the dissemination of disciplinary knowledge, the educating and apprenticeship of novice scholars into the cultural ways of knowing, and is the primary vehicle for obtaining funding and credentialing students, graduates, researchers and faculty alike.

The institutional documentary writing of the University provides the material means by which we are all "text trade workers" in the knowledge economy.[4] Thus, the invisibility of the everyday actuality of the organizing capacities of textual practices at the university is enormously significant when we examine who does the work of teaching writing, how writing in the disciplines is understood, and how that work is valued. Recently, there has been a galvanized effort from within the field of rhetoric and composition to reclaim the work of teaching writing, the textual dynamics of institutions, and the study of writing as "intellectual work." Charles Bazerman observes

> In short, the study of writing is a major subset of the study of human consciousness, institutions, practice, and development over the last five millennia: and composition –

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[3] In 2005 we hired a male colleague. As well, the use of "writing ladies" has fallen off, but the issues of liminality and institutional positioning remain. Phelps would argue – so does the gender roles.

[4] Dorothy Smith has previously referred to the organizational capacities of documents, discourse and literacy through the textual mediation of identity, discourse and selves in institutions as "the conceptual relations of ruling" but now terms the activity "the social text".

> the learning and teaching of writing—is in the middle of all that. It appears, then, that composition is a serious intellectual endeavor (Bazerman, 20002, 35).

Institutional Ethnography: Tracing the work of "writing-ladies"

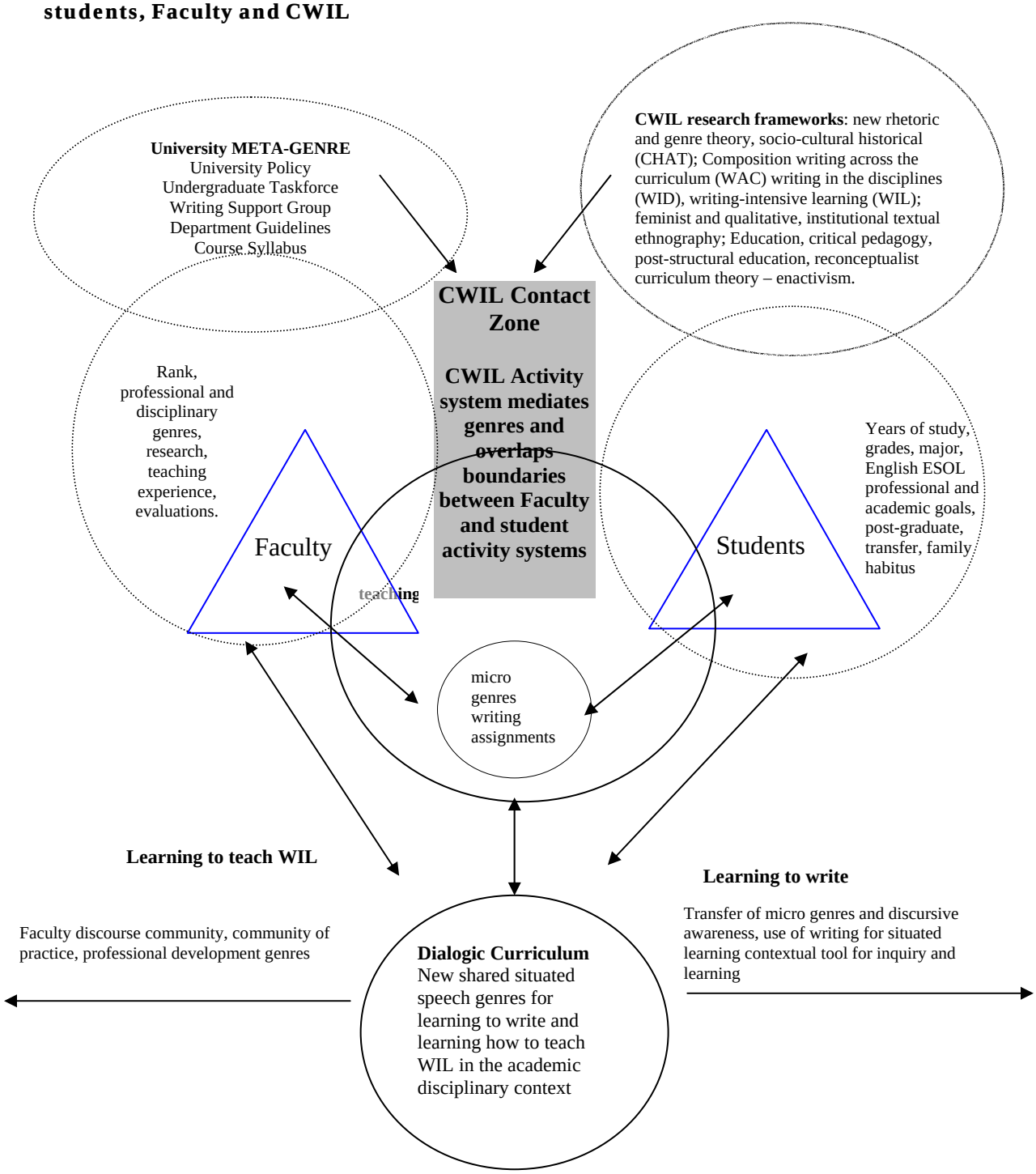
Feminist institutional ethnography as described by Dorothy Smith always asks us to start from the standpoint of our experience. When I started to work in CWIL, I thought that it would be difficult to "not explicitly profess" my own research, or teach in my own classroom, but I didn't think that my identity as a "scholar" would be virtually erased. I did not anticipate the degree that the social hierarchy of the University would construct our work as skill-based, transparent, and belonging in the realm of the maternal domestic labour of the academy. Interestingly, I do not teach writing. Most of my work consists of a kind of faculty development and curriculum inquiry based on consultation with faculty members in the site of *their teaching practices*. Nevertheless, I've acquired an institutional identity as a non-disciplinary practitioner, in other words, a "writing lady."

In their recent text *Moving A Mountain: Transforming The Role Of Contingent Faculty In Composition Studies And Higher Education* (2002), Eileen E. Schell and Patricia Lambert Stock have described this phenomenon in larger systemic terms as the "trifurcation" of higher education with a core tenured/tenure track faculty, the off-track full-time faculty, and the part-time/adjunct faculty (2002, 5). They suggest that it is ironic that just as higher education has become increasingly democratic, admitting "millions of minorities, women, older students, low-income persons, the handicapped, and other non-traditional students"....academic hiring practices have become increasingly undemocratic (Bowen and Shuster, 1986 , 9, cited in Enos and Lambert-Stock, 2002, 5).

I will develop three plausible strands of analysis to discuss the discursive work that such an identity reveals. First, being identified as "a writing lady" may have occurred because we are non-tenured faculty in an ad-hoc centre that did not belong to a specified academic department and this may have contributed to the perception that we were not engaged in scholarly research or teaching when we worked with faculty members. Our consultative collaborations with faculty necessitated that our collective PhD's were sublimated when we were in the contact zones of their classrooms where it was NOT our role to be the content experts. However, the valence of gender relations in the feminized fields of teaching (education) and writing (composition) may have amplified the perception that we were helping out with the domestic labour of teaching writing.

Eileen Schell's text, *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers* (1999) discusses at length the metaphor of teaching and writing instruction as the domestic work of the academy, as well as reasons for the disproportionate numbers of women who comprise the ranks of non-tenured, temporary writing instructors. Citing Sue Ellen Holbrook who wrote a landmark article "Women's Work: The Feminizing of Composition" (1991), Schell writes, "writing instruction has been referred to as "women's work" because it fits the criteria for occupations traditionally defined as "female": It employs a disproportionate number of women; it has a service ethos; it pays less than teaching literature, "it is devalued" (8). Writing ladies are definitely not knowledge makers even though we are visibly engaging the discourses of the discipline alongside the faculty member, TA's and students. The incompatibility of a multi-disciplinary collaborative and egalitarian model of instruction in the typical university classroom or lecture hall contributes to the "physics law" of traditional professing – there can only be one authoritative voice in an instructional space. Further taking up the analysis suggested by the epigraph by Louise Wetherbee Phelps, I realized that many students and faculty lacked an understanding of our roles in a larger institutional context – we were liminal "*neither outside nor genuinely inside the academic power structures.*" If we were simply not "professing," what were we doing?

Fig. 1. Writing-Intensive Learning Activity System: meta-genres, micro-genres, students, Faculty and CWIL



(See Figure 1.) This figure demonstrates the web of textual, inter-textual, discursive and genre activities systems that attend the activity of implementing writing-intensive learning in a course. I developed this schematic to make sense of how my Centre was situated in the textual dynamics of the new "W" implementation process.[5] As this figure suggests, we are working in the **contact zones between** the activity systems of Faculty, students and the larger meta-genre systems of the University. Mary Louis Pratt's well cited concept suggests that a contact zone is a "social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of high asymmetrical relations of power" (34) and in particular, that the "idea of the contact zone is intended in part to contrast with the ideas of the community that underlie much of the thinking that gets done in the academy" (37).

In figure 1, the balloons labeled meta-genres illustrate that while we are informed by our individualized disciplinary backgrounds and the micro-context of a particular course curriculum – the larger institutional structures such as university policy, faculty governance, promotion and tenure intersect and mediate **how** we can articulate our authority because of our roles and activities in the service, teaching and research continuum of academic labour. Our scholarly and pedagogical interventions in other faculty members' disciplinary spaces are realised through collaboratively negotiated micro-genres such as writing-intensive course assignments, informal writing assignments, shifts in classroom discourse about the teaching and learning of writing in the discipline, and the acquisition of new practices and speech genres about writing, teaching and learning. These in turn are mediated somewhat invisibly by the larger meta-genres of the University (University undergraduate curriculum taskforce policy, department guidelines, disciplinary histories, proscriptions and beliefs about writing and teaching). Beyond this drawing, are the larger social discursive networks that shape social life in institutional contexts, the individual and collective identities of students and faculty members and the purported role of the comprehensive university in the development of democratic citizenry.[6]

Liminality and working language: the fine print

When I began research for my original presentation on the role of women in the academy I went to the Centre's web site and re-read the fine print of the mandate that we had carefully crafted and made a list of the verbs that described our activities in the larger university community. The verbs in the mandate of our Schedule A Centre read: meet, mentor, train, provide, offer, offer, offer, house, document, assess, offer, offer, conduct, publish, provide, coordinate, collaborate, research, develop, provide.

I was surprised to see how much of the language that described our Centre's activities obscured the intellectual and research expertise of the Centre. The verbs of the published mandate mainly suggest the provision of resources and assistance and they are collocates of service, not research or inquiry. Inside the Centre, we interpreted our role as primarily focused on cross-disciplinary pedagogical research and collaboration; consultation and faculty development, research about writing, assessment and implementation of new curricula and pedagogies in the various departments. 'Consult, teach, research and assess;' these were the academic practices that I had been trained to do and be as a PhD. The helping and facilitative metaphors that described our activities modulated the inherently transformative social action of our mandate. The active social science verbs of academic agency such as implement, test, inquire, deconstruct, reconceptualize, investigate, explore, interrogate, critique were absent or minimized. Rather, the work as described and the language in use obliterated an authoritative traditional academic

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[5] I developed this schematic for a paper presented in American Educational Research Association AERA 2004 San Diego April 11- 16, 2004.

[6] Many of the initial curriculum taskforce documents that discuss the rationale for the transformation of the undergraduate curriculum and the WQB initiative at SFU refer to the role of the comprehensive university in the development of an educated citizenry capable of democratic participation in the global knowledge economy. Final Report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee June 2002; New Directions for the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Discussion Paper on the Implementation of University-Wide Writing, Quantitative, and Breadth Requirements Revised recommendations, April 2004.

institutional identity, one that could have been assigned to the trans-disciplinary university curriculum implementation process that we were mandated to develop but wasn't. In subsequent years, during debates about the long-term academic positioning of the faculty of the Centre in the University, we have been pressured to move into the professional union, identify with service and management roles, or to defend how our work justifies ongoing academic appointments. The language in use does indeed mediate academic positioning and instantiates the intentions of the institutional relations of ruling (Smith, 1999).

Liminal positions: teaching writing and gendered roles

A second strand of analysis concerns the function of gender roles in the academy where women dominate the lower rungs of the teaching professions in writing, composition and rhetoric studies. Theresa Enos's comprehensive study *Gender Roles and Faculty Lives In Composition* describes how the intellectual work of teaching in the field of composition and writing program administration is obscured by the administrative categories of "mere-work activities" and "service":

> While other departmental faculty agree that the WPA (writing program administrator) works very hard, they are not sure she does "real work"; indeed, they have difficulty specifying exactly what she does, although they agree she is an excellent writing program director.... The problem has been that it's the WPA's responsibility to be able to specify exactly what it is she does. Most typically the WPA has to list administrative duties under "service," a category "distinguished by its lack of clear definitions in contrast to the detailed subcategories under "research" (books, articles, chapters, reviews, presentations, and grants) and "teaching" (student evaluations, supervisory reports, curriculum development, presentations, and publications). (Enos, 1996, 76).

Our Centre's role in the "W" implementation process may have inadvertently re-inscribed the gendered power relations of the "feminized" composition/education field onto our mandate (Schell, 1999, 2002; Wetherbee Phelps, 1995, Jarratt and Worsham, 1998, Enos 1996). Thus we inherited the historical gendered politics and practices of a marginalized discipline just as we were charged with the task of transforming the writing and teaching culture of an entire university. What does that mean for academic identity formation?

Louise Wetherbee Phelps in *Feminine Principles and Women's Experience In American Composition and Rhetoric* writes about the discipline of composition in the following manner:

> ....we are a field dominated in numbers by women, concerned with a subject and a teaching practice perceived by many academics and the public as low-status, elementary, service-oriented, menial "women's work." As such, composition has suffered from minimal resources, intellectual invisibility to other's fields, subordination to other's interests and goals, and a lack of institutional authority and control." (Whetherbee Phelps, 1995, 289 – 290).

Phelps suggests "composition's gendering is not immutably fixed but is susceptible to transformation ...(where institutional circumstances (not necessarily or even likely feminist in origins) create occasions for composition, though programmatic action, to join in and affect the broader policies and pragmatics of higher education." (290-91). It seems that a central challenge for the success of those of implementing the writing-intensive mandate will be to consciously dis-identify, resist and reject the gendered institutional positioning that is currently emerging from the tacit naturalized discourses circulating at the University and to re-articulate them within more valued spheres of academic activity - more on this point will follow later.

Upon reflection, I recognize that I colluded in my own construction as a 'writing lady' because I had also internalized the hierarchical and disciplinary values of the University. As a new PhD, I initially found my footing as a "professor" to be difficult because of positioning outside of the discursive territory of my own classroom, courses or disciplinary departmental structure. I took up the "joke" and ventriloquated the phrase "writing lady" and could not provide alternative language when others used it in flippant ways because I could not legitimately articulate the speech genres of critique in the different discursive occasions of other faculty members'

classrooms. My colleagues have diplomatically pointed out that an ironic uttering of the label "writing lady" complicates my narrative. Thus I discursively accept the separation of my critical scholar self from the institutional projection of a feminized nurturing helping figure. Our work at pilot phase of the project with "early-adopter" faculty members was relational and voluntary, and the collaborative nature of the pilot courses required a tremendous balance of diplomacy, collegiality and cooperation on the behalf of all parties. When tensions, resistance or difficulties arise around writing-intensive curriculum implementation and pedagogy in another person's course, there was not a typical academic context to work through differences such as debate, argument, analysis or publications, because of how our work was positioned and our role.

Liminal practices: the invisibility of textual practices in the academy

The third strand concerns what I call the 'writing up - writing down" problem, where the production of writing as an organizing discursive and material practice in the academy is not well understood. Ignoring the constitutive role of writing as the material mode of production for the workplace, learning, scholarly production and teaching obviates the discomfort that direct attention to social dynamics and ideology of literacy, meritocracy and cultural difference might otherwise provoke. A writing intensive-learning initiative has the potential to be student-centered and to advocate for discursive difference and multi-literacies. It also has the potential to validate the scholarship of teaching and learning for faculty, reframing the values of academic production as it relates to teaching. For instance, the institution may see the implementation of writing-intensive learning as an opportunity for reflective practice and professional growth. If so, the scholarship of teaching in the disciplines could regain some of the same value as producing and publishing research. In this way, we may work between the institutional and discursive interests of the academy and the everyday agency of faculty and students. Developing a meta-discursive awareness about writing and the heterogeneity of academic literacies across a University community intersects with ideologies about teaching as service work and interrupts beliefs about the nature of scholarship, unitary writing standards, and problems of linguistic diversity, student literacy levels and other god-tricks of academic privilege. A writing-intensive learning approach across the curriculum helps to develop a shared understanding across the university community that becoming educated in a discipline and its writing conventions involves a long apprenticeship into a contextual set of values, ways of seeing and skills, across varied communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Dias, Freedman, Medway and Paré, 1999).

Constructing our professional and academic activity as the care-taking labour service of helpful 'writing ladies' not only keeps our interventions as trans-disciplinary knowers invisible, it maintains the separation of teaching and writing from the content of the course and allows the transmission of curriculum to remain transparent and unproblematic in the University classroom. From this perspective, knowledge-making is understood mainly through exchange or vehicle metaphors. Writing thus understood remains a technique for facilitating the transmission of information by the instructor, or a vehicle for demonstrating evidence of acquisition of the information by students. It preserves the inherent commodification of post-secondary education as a means for credentialing and guaranteeing educational "products" such as graduates who can seamlessly function in their professional fields or workplaces. Writing disappears as a social, political and culturally mediated activity; and learning is not tied to the formation and construction of students' identities as situated knowers along a continuum of legitimate peripheral participatory structures (Lave and Wenger, 1988).

From "writing ladies" to reflective practice from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

As previously mentioned, we do not directly teach writing to students; we work primarily with faculty members in the context of their courses where we attend carefully to surfacing the meta-discursive instructions that hold important clues for students as to what counts as meaningful writing and thinking in the discipline. An important aspect of this work is to also identify these moments and intersections for the faculty member *so that they* become more aware of the tacit features of their disciplinary underpinnings thus making them more explicitly visible for students. If our work is successful, the effects of the interventions seem to disappear and enhance the learning and teaching experience of faculty and students. The social action of the new

emergent speech genres developed in the classroom are absorbed into the engagement of everyday activities of the classroom practice, more successful student papers, and a transformed course curriculum. Unlike typical academic modes of production, the products of our scholarly and pedagogical work do not " belong" to us, as they are jointly constructed with faculty, students and TAs. So we are left without the explicit products of academic activity such as individual research papers, teaching evaluations, curriculum artifacts that we can point to as evidence of our scholarship, research and teaching. As Lee Shulman notes, teaching will not be valued in the academic community until it becomes community property. His well cited metaphor about the private nature of teaching being as ephemeral as dry ice unless it is discussed and evaluated in reference to the disciplines whose canons and standards of quality we value...it will lack the potency of other forms of scholarship" provides support for the meta-discursive and professional development that can occur in writing-intensive collaborations (Lee Shulman, 1991, Stanford University New Release, 05/07/91).

However, like dry ice, our interventions in the curriculum, pedagogy and improved teaching and learning of other's classrooms are difficult to trace. If we return to diagram Figure 1, the idealized outcome of our activity is a more dialogic curriculum where faculty observes the successful emergence and acquisition of disciplinary genres on behalf of students (better teaching). Students seem to be learning the content of the course through deeper understanding and facility with the written speech genres of the discipline (improved writing). The locus of activity is funneled through the micro genres of the course assignments, with better scaffolding of disciplinary conventions and expectations situated learning is enacted and students report that they enjoyed the course (successful instructional design). Thus the work of implementing writing-intensive learning is to "facilitate" learning and so requires that the autonomous agency of the WIL faculty members remain repressed. Thus co-opted into a service model– our work is not visible unless the products of our work (successful student writers) are deemed flawed, problematic, or interfere with the seamless flow and exchange of information. It is a bit of a double bind unless we adopt new discursive frameworks to describe our professional work.

The scholarship of Teaching and Learning or SoTL[7] is such a framework that may assist in articulating how the contributions of those of us who work in the liminal contact zones between faculty members, writing and students can be understood as engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning. In a nutshell, the four fundamental principles of SoTL involve:

> .....the scholarship of discovery (work that adds to human knowledge and to the intellectual life of the academy), the scholarship of integration (work that makes connections between and among knowledge developed within disciplinary communities and that places that knowledge in broader contexts), the scholarship of application (work that emerges when academics' theories and practices inter-animate one another), and the scholarship of teaching (work that transmits, transforms, and extends knowledge to others, some of whom may themselves become scholars (Boyer E. 1990, Scholarship Reconsidered in Lambert, Brown, Franke, and Starkweather, 2005, 288).

The problem with such a move is that it displaces the inherent value of the teaching of academic writing in and of itself, as a legitimate locus of expertise. Another strategy might be to forge stronger alliances with other marginalized disciplinary communities that have been more successful in opening up new ways of understanding theory, social dynamics and practices in the academy.

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[7] Definition of SoTL: The Carnegie Foundation is organized around the scholarship of teaching and learning. This concept of a scholarship of teaching and learning not only describes a type of research that the Foundation conducts and supports, but also a concept of moral action, as well as of dissemination and of cultural change. We have a "knowledge-building" agenda, an attempt to build a rigorous and dynamic field around teaching and learning. Faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning not only to improve their own classrooms but to advance practice beyond them.

Teaching writing-intensive learning and the social text: textual relations of ruling

For example, as this paper has explored, I now realize that our Centre unconsciously intersected with twenty years of gender roles in the treatment of contingent faculty in the field of teaching writing across the disciplines. Our Centre was commissioned to fast-track implementation of a writing-intensive learning curriculum under the rubric of an academically endorsed comprehensive policy change, and the method of delivery occurs primarily through a faculty development approach. Our university had little prior history with the politics or problems accompanying the teaching of writing with the freshman composition model, yet the familiar ideologies and perspectives endemic to the field of composition still arose. As institutionally mediated identities, we found ourselves positioned in a nexus between our former scholarly and pedagogical identities and the instrumental needs of the institution to turn its writing faculty into writing ladies. Interrupting those desires through feminist critique or demands for different faculty hiring models calls into question the ways we had simply become as Smith suggests, "a means through which these objectified modes of ruling were passed on, through which, therefore, ruling got done." (Smith, 48).

The point I am trying to raise here is whether the proximity to the teaching of writing in academe, is currently inherently disempowering. As with earlier social feminists' analysis that the exchange of women's bodies comprised the material conduit for the exchange of discursive power and social relations in society, do we now need to pay closer attention to the gendered and economic power relations accompanying the teaching of writing across our respective fields? And as with other historical issues of equity, will ameliorating current institutional treatment and attitudes towards the teaching of writing require some rigorous critique and consciousness-raising from within and across the academy by those who are in positions of privilege?

Writing is the means of acquiring an academic identity, but teaching it is also the means by which we can institutionally made invisible. We lecture, argue, publish, assess and are evaluated through writing - and we call this research, scholarship, thinking, talking to one another, teaching, marking or responding to papers. We name these activities as academic scholarship but we don't name them as textual practices. Charles Baseman (2002) suggests that it is time to recognize "that writing provides some of the fundamental mechanisms that make our world work, and it is time to assert that writing needs to be taken seriously along with the other major matters of inquiry supported by institutional structures" (34).

Dorothy Smith has stated repeatedly that we must look at the work that is accomplished through discursive utterances, speech genres and documentary networks in order to comprehend the organizing capacity of the social text (1990a, 1990b, 1999, 2002). So simply put, we become our social texts and if we are to resist the academy's insistence on separating the writing/ teaching/ research continuum, in particular for faculty working in so called feminized fields in the academy, then we must reframe our work in terms of that identification

Conclusion: counter practice and liminality as a site for intervention

Writing is a technology that mediates social meaning in cultural, political and economic discourse of the university. And yet, even though writing is the core social and cultural practice of the academy, and "texts" are the currency of our identity at the university, our understanding of textuality often remains at best naïve and transparent, even by those of us who are sophisticated in the creation of texts. The power relations that are encoded in the ways we are positioned as teachers, writers, or researchers are expressions of the power relations of gendered textuality in the academy, and they will continue to mediate our identities in terms of how we are understood and valued as academics, teachers or researchers unless we construct a counter-practice about writing at the university.

My recent experience bears out as anecdotal evidence of the organizing capacity of the intersection of institutional positioning and gender-role socialization patterns in the disciplines that teach writing. Now it looks like I am making an argument that will make my work at the university even more impossible, and chronically under-valued. However I believe that one solution might be to actively demonstrate that genuine attention to engagement with textual practices, discursive formation, and disciplinary genres might mediate against the less

empowering effects. For example, the very rich field of feminist work in the area of rhetoric and composition studies see feminisms, feminist pedagogy and composition as complementary disciplines, or as Susan C. Jarratt describes historical and political metonymies (Jarratt, 1998, 6).

> Both feminist inquiry and post-current traditional composition studies, in other words seek to transform styles of thinking, teaching and learning rather than to reproduce stultifying traditions. They share a suspicion of authoritarian pedagogy, emphasizing instead collaborative or interactive learning and teaching. They resist purity of approach and the reduction of their scope by moving in and around many contemporary critical theories and disciplines (Jarratt, 1998, 3).

Jarratt describes both as feminism and composition as trans-disciplinary fields – where feminist academic projects seek to transform disciplinary knowledge by pointing out its ideological investments, and composition as described by Patricia Harkin is a "post-disciplinary lore - "a knowledge whose primary function is to help us to see ways of construing relations ... to which our ideology has made us blind [and to see that] disciplinary inquiries can be strategies of containment" (Jarratt, 2).

As Wetherbee Phelps, Schell, Jarratt, Smith and others suggest, those I describe as "writing ladies" are located in a double bind between the disciplinary discourses, gender roles and the mediating social and textual practices that interrupt our agency. Gender analysis is largely missing from broader discussions of this phenomenon and there is a genuine need to intercept the conceptions of ruling that persistently structure inequity through professional positioning and academic practices (Smith, 1999). Early in November the business section of my local newspaper featured an extensive article about 'academic gypsies" as an employment/economic problem for Canadian universities. Experienced female university teachers who received their degrees in middle-age are more likely to be members of this 'academic gypsy" or "roads scholars" subgroup[8] (Kubacki, Maria, Nov. 9, 2005, Ottawa Citizen). Other strategies, as previously mentioned, will be to identify the liminal role of teaching faculty, and to draw the active attention of our faculty associations to the inequity, professional and economic problems such positioning creates. The issues of contingent academic labour has also been more recently taken up by CAUT, so there is a national vehicle for such discussions now too.

The publication of this article is another example of counter-practice. In its former context, the utterance "writing ladies" functioned as a socially organizing way of seeing the work of the teaching of writing within a negative gendered framework. It enabled the structuring of particular institutional identities and disciplinary work. In its new published context, potentially read by an inter- disciplinary academic community of practice, the phrase is reclaimed and re-accented with new intentions. The new situational context of the utterance "writing ladies" has been in Bahktin terms, "re-populated by the intentions of the speaker/writer and it now "exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions..." (Bakhtin, 1981, 294).

As mentioned earlier, another strategic approach is to align our work with newer and more academically prestigious frameworks that link teaching, writing-intensive learning, or the study of writing in the disciplines more closely to scholarship on or in the disciplines. For instance, our unit was recently publicly acknowledged at an international conference as providing cutting-edge models for the scholarship of teaching and learning. Finally, at an individual level, in order to raise our individual and collective profiles as scholars within our institution, we have decided to list our scholarly publications and disciplinary credentials on our Centre's web-pages.

This need for active re-writing of our positioning suggests that the struggle over the meaning and value of teaching, researching and implementing writing in the academy is problematic, leaving much room for exploration and redefinition. However, there *has been* a decided shift in public awareness and discourse about writing at the university since our inception in Fall 2002, and we have successfully met a four year mandate to develop enough writing-intensive courses across all faculties and departments to meet the needs of all incoming students

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[8]The unappreciated plight of the underpaid 'roads scholar' "With no benefits and no job security, qualified instructors working on contract are little more than cheap labour, Maria Kubacki reports. Some are asking whether a 'more McDonaldized workforce' is what universities want.

for Fall 2006. The sheer numbers of students, faculty members and courses engaged with writing and pedagogy in new ways will also bring about institutional changes, new speech genres, and shifts in discourse about the role and value of writing.

In summary, a critical engagement with the inter-disciplinary frameworks made possible through a comprehensive writing-intensive learning initiative in an institution can become one that vigorously takes writing as a focal point for critical, social, and disciplinary inquiry.[9] In this manner, reclaiming writing as a site for identity and institutional formation renegotiates the power relations inherent in the tensions between our obligations to teach and to research, and it recuperates the construction of teaching as the domestic labour in the academy.

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[9] Faculty associated with Cornell University's John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines have eloquently written about the links between their lives as disciplinary scholars, writers and teachers of writing in their disciplines. See Jonathan Monroe Writing and Revising the Disciplines (2002); and Local Knowledges, Local Practices: Cultures of Writing at Cornell (2003).

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Editors' Note:

This article has been peer-reviewed and revised.

Two Poems

A Culture of Uncontrol

Pauline Sameshima ✍

Isomainaquiijutiit, the Inuit word for culture, means “things to make us realize when chores have been completed”. Culture refers to joyful, artful, and heartful living; experiencing deeply and diversely; and living "wholeness". Wholeness is belonging personally and publicly; and living, learning, teaching, and researching in, through, and around all the boxes, dichotomies, and compartmentalizations created in efforts to control.

Carl Leggo (2002) explains that the etymological root of "grammar" is *gramarye* which means magic and enchantment. Many think of grammar as rules of control. Leggo encourages a view of *gramarye* "which invites mystery and openness and poetry, the firm belief that what is known are flickering points of light lining a vast unknown without beginning or ending, always more to know, always more to be known" (p. 4). This is what writing is, not rules and regulations, but a reproducible iteration of the unknown, the beginning of believing the impossible, and the freedom to forget.

Isomainaqiijutiit: Beyond the Chores[1]

The papaya dawn sings crystal clear
running like Annainuk Brook in Nain, Labrador
through the tall Prairie grass like Hermes, messenger of the gods, trickster and beloved
The notes sing of untouched realms, planes we’ve felt but haven’t documented
for through the written word, we begin to believe

Through the resonating harmony of the
twinkling Deepawali lights, the flickering Hanukkah candles
and the shimmering Northern curtain
our minds somersault across the land
from the Pacific to the Atlantic
navigating to whispered promises we try to clutch
We hear the *Ode to Newfoundland* and trace the evergreen BC trails
smelling the dark rich earth, reaching for all
because we want to understand

Sadly,
we box, compartmentalize, define, reduce, conclude
and stifle the voices of the children
until the adults know no voice

Open a place, create a space
to speak, sing, write, record, share, connect and synchronize
the unlimited synergetic potential
undiluted and unassimilated, culturally pure and vivid
woven loosely into an intricately complex Canadian tapestry
of light

Build our voice by promoting
learning and teaching through the heart
writing stories and inventing new ways to tell stories
allowing energies across disciplines to merge
looking for questions high and low
giving voice to the unheard who have remained silent
across fertile mists and civilizations with histories etched in stones
We only believe what we’ve seen, only what we’ve seen

But

Here, hear what I feel,
The dragon on my silk robe is blowing
a great wind
through my sleeves
blurring my culture into *Greensleeves* through the bagpipes
puffing the gingham sleeves of *Anne of Avonlea*
swirling the Celtic Sea
eroding the Hopewell rocks in New Brunswick
bursting the sleeves of all precious mementos
The words and papers flutter
twirling and swirling, dancing to the unseen by currents evidenced
Smudging, obscuring and confusing
all the dichotomies we've built in our quest to delineated this amazing world
I feel the wind of trireme
the fastest vessel of the ancient Greeks
powered by 170 rowers
built with a wooden ram under the waterline to sink enemy ships

Row with me, open the boxes we cannot see
Row through the containers that define us, limit our culture
and free ourselves to ask about the unknown
flood through the gates
silvery fish
and feel the scintillation
on your cheeks

[1] The Inuit use three words to describe the English word "culture"
illiquusiq refers to survival skills, games, clothing, arts, weather, land, and sea
Isomainaqiijutiit means "things to make us realize when chores have been completed"
*sviilaqujutiit i*s "making fun"
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Ars Poetica
Carl Leggo ✍

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

at sixteen I first read
Archibald MacLeish's *Ars Poetica*
but had no idea what he meant,
and there wasn't much chance my English teacher
would reveal the mystery since she was preoccupied
with comma splices, I still don't know what
MacLeish meant, even though I am now fifty,
and a poet who steadily seeks to know his art

and MacLeish's last lines continue to befuddle, too:

A poem should not mean
But be

Perhaps

A poem should not be mean

But be a bee that pollinates
Grasses leaning in the light
Of the empty doorway
Where grief and love
Equal Maple Leaf bologna

how much weight can the alphabet bear?
even the unbearable lightness of being?

*

A poem is:

1. the frost on a winter window like a meadow of wildflowers or
2. a bucket of berries like a whisper in a crowded shopping mall or
3. the late sun in the winter valley like cranberry claret or
4. a tree afire in autumn's light or
5. a shard of moon in winter's night or
6. the sun awash in the sea in summer's dusk or
7. a crocus, purple and bold, in spring snow or
8. a stone that holds the April sun or
9. a sparrow in a bare alder tree like a silent response to prayer or
10. the scent of rosemary lemon balm oregano or
11. a thousand snow geese startled from the slough with raucous laughter or
12. a passage through the frozen tundra of the heart or
13. twelve grain bread brushed with olive oil or
14. dark wine crushed at the back of the throat or
15. the warm catch of sixteen-year-old Lagavulin or
16. four blackbirds in the snow on the backyard fence or
17. wind blowing leaves, rain-washed, leaning into winter or
18. snow falling in the street light outside my lover's window or

*

and Harold Bloom is mortified

because Stephen King has been awarded
the 2003 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters

and Laura Bush cancelled a visit by poets to the White House
when she learned some of them might criticize
American involvement in the Iraqi War

and David Solway thinks Al Purdy is a mediocre poet,
too popular, too accessible

and nobody reads poetry anymore,
takes poets seriously anymore,
especially not universities
where poets are barely tolerated,
and only because they have tenure

and I can't get anybody to publish my poem
Does Wayne Gretzky Deliver Pizza?
about the Great One's orgiastic consumerism,
and I suspect the editors are scared
of Wayne, or perhaps Wayne has bought
all the literary journals, too

but at least some of my favourite
Canadian contemporary poets
are opening up new perspectives
on *ars poetica*:

> Michael Crummey writes about
> *bare buttocks like*
> *two sad loaves in a pan*
>
> Lorna Crozier writes about
> Patrick Lane's arse
> in lines too erotically charged
> for my innocent poem

and if I were braver,
I would tell
the editors who don't publish my poems and
the readers who don't read my poems and
the reviewers who don't review my poems and
the merchants who don't sell my poems and
the poets who don't like my poems

how in the expansive spaces
of my *ars poetica*,
I will drive my poems
like a mighty wind
that puffs with
an asthmatic's urgency
across the empty page
of wild lonely imagination
with a bumper sticker:
> *if you're not reading this,*
> *you can kiss my poet's arse*

Call for Proposals

Inkshed Working Conference XXIII ✍
May 4 – 7, 2006
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Context is Everything: Everything is Context

As we experience writing and writing instruction in our lives and in our pedagogies, we are continually bumping up against context. When, where, why, and under what conditions writing and writing instruction take place have profound impacts on the products and processes of writing and teaching. The contexts of writing and teaching imply particular kinds of decisions writers must make when crafting texts. Contextual conditions also have impacts on how we teach and on how our students write and learn about writing. Though less obvious but equally important, contexts shape the ways in which students read and learn to read. It could be argued that contexts are the most important elements in decisions readers and writers make when engaging with texts and that every engagement in itself transforms those contexts. Therefore, context is everything and everything is context.

The intent of this conference is to explore the influences of context on reading, writing, and learning literacies. We wish to explore not only the ways in which context constrains learning to read and write but also the ways in which it enables these processes.

Format. The Inkshed Conference format—which includes inkshedding, discussion, and no concurrent sessions—encourages a continuing conversation among all participants. As anyone who has attended Inkshed before will know, the conversations begun here often continue on the list and in the newsletter. For more information on CASLL, Inkshed, and inkshedding, please visit our website at http://www.stthomasu.ca/inkshed/.

As usual, we want to avoid the "talking heads-reading papers" model by encouraging participatory and unconventional approaches. We welcome a variety of modes of presentation: performances, case-studies, collaborative presentations, student involvement, workshops, research works-in-progress, or interactive demonstrations. We would also be willing to help with arranging an innovative presentation format to create variety.

We invite interested members of the Inkshed community to submit proposals on this topic. Sessions will be limited to half-hour presentations. In the interest of supporting graduate student participation, we will distribute graduate student works-in-progress sessions throughout the conference timetable.

Tentatively we are planning on each session being limited to 30 minutes, followed by inkshedding. Depending on the specific proposals we receive, timetable adjustments may be necessary.

All Proposals Should Include:
1. Contact person's name, e-mail, snail-mail address, and phone number(s),
2. Names of all presenters as you wish to have them appear in the program,
3. Title,
4. Brief abstract (approx. 400 words),
5. Brief description of the mode of presentation.

Deadline for Proposals: January 30, 2006
Decisions will be made and presenters contacted by February 28th.

Send All Proposals by E-mail Only (Word or WordPerfect) to:
Stan_Straw@UManitoba.ca

Members of the conference team:
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