



JOGLTEP: Special Issue on Transnationalism

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Transnational Exigency: Pedagogies for Change

A central move of this special issue is to emphasize the global shift in writing studies through transnational and translingual inquiry. In current transnational and translingual research and pedagogy, the U.S. discipline of composition studies does not always pause to acknowledge the important work being accomplished in international contexts. To borrow from Martins, “transnational activities are thoroughly shifting the questions we ask about writing curricula, the space and place in which writing happens, and the cultural and linguistic issues at the heart of the relationships forged in literacy work” (2015, p. 1). Indeed, the contributors in this special issue offer powerful illustrations of how the tension between economic and pedagogical interests engendered by the global expansion of higher education strongly influences decisions made about the programs offered in transnational contexts. Contributors rigorously respond to Martins’ observations that transnational and translingual pedagogies are quickly shaping writing studies, both locally and globally, especially in regard to curricula, location, and literacy. And, while this special issue does not explicitly discuss the economic interests that surround the expansion of writing studies globally, contributors certainly acknowledge the cultural capital that transnational and translingual writing provides students.

As contributors elucidate, there are no standard themes in transnational and translingual curricula; instead, curricula explore myriad dimensions, negotiations, and tensions of linguistic and cultural diversity, especially in regard to location and literacy as entities that are fluid, rather than fixed. Transnational and translingual classrooms and curricula in this special issue consider both localized and globalized standpoints, where the movement of languages, ideas, and people are both local and global at the same time. By looking at the local and global, and where they intersect, students and teachers alike consider the ongoing negotiations of languages and cultures translocally. Hence, when we use the word “transnational” in this article, we are alluding to the global

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movement of people and languages across national boundaries, at the same time we acknowledge “translingual” as not just as a set theory, but as paying heed to the ongoing intersections of languages, dialects, and even registers of language, across time and place.

Moving beyond this acknowledgement and acceptance, the collection’s editors also view the integration of students’ own languages and cultures as assets and resources for learning, and recognize the many challenges of reimagining practices and pedagogies that support such transnational and translingual learning. Consequently, two primary goals of this collection are to (1) better understand how writing teachers can best meet the learning needs of monolingual and multilingual students across a wide range of institutional contexts, and to (2) offer pedagogies of replicability, which can better prepare writing teachers to shift their curricula and take up conversations of location and literacy in their own classrooms. For this reason, this special issue places emphasis upon the experiences, expectations, and practices of teachers and students alike, which create opportunities for learning and pose questions in designing transnational and translingual curricula. This move will not only further current discussions about student engagement and agency, but also offer important strategies for teaching, as well as insights into the experiences of “powerfully translanguaging students” (Gilyard, 2016, p. 284), which too often remain invisible or peripheral in writing classrooms both nationally and internationally.

Transnational Ideologies: Theory and Background

As linguistically diverse international and domestic student populations continue to collide, so too do tensions between writing studies and multilingual education. This special issue recognizes these tensions in terms of the need for more initiatives that develop and implement multilingual frameworks within English-medium classrooms (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Horner, Necamp, & Donahue (2011, p. 271) have called for writing teachers to consider how changes can be “made at the organizational level to rethink the ways in which English is represented in U.S. composition teaching, the design of writing programs and curricula, and the preparations of (future) teachers of postsecondary writing”; Dana Ferris has similarly noted that many translingual discussions are “philosophical rather than pedagogical,” with conversations focused on “[raising] awareness and [encouraging] advocacy regarding English Only policies, and [fostering] multilingual and translingual worldviews among composition scholars” (2014, p. 80). As such, this special issue aims to shift the discussions away from the philosophical and toward the pedagogical, encouraging sharing of not only the ways we teach, but who we are, and how our transnational and translingual pedagogical approaches surface important links between classroom practices, institutional contexts, changing landscapes of higher education, and students’ individual linguistic and rhetorical choices. In drawing attention to the ways transnational and translingual pedagogies can engage community, and consequently make classrooms more accessible to linguistically diverse students, we consider Gilyard’s (2016) observation that there is an increasingly normalized mix of international and domestic student populations across both national

and international post-secondary learning environments, which reifies the transnational time/space reality of increasingly mobile populations.

In choosing contributing articles, a central aim was to offer perspectives that consider how transnational and translingual pedagogies not only address the practical (e.g. the reality that writing classrooms are increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse), but also include pedagogical experiences where the teacher-researchers examine their teaching and their scholarship in terms of classroom dynamics and student accessibility. As such, this special issue addresses the coming-together of local (academic) settings and transnational pedagogies as challenges, resources, and sites of inquiry. Ergo, contributors offer replicable transnational teaching artifacts and framings that can be integrated into linguistically diverse writing spaces of domestic and international students.

As editors, we argue that situating transnational classroom practice as a community-building tool cultivates learning environments where peers are encouraged to think about difference, particularly linguistic difference, using concepts of “tolerance, patience, humility, cooperation, accommodation and negotiation” (Horner & Lu, 2012, pp. 68-69). Such pedagogies also appeal to Crowley’s assertion that writing courses, at their heart, should offer “a rhetorical orientation to the world” (1998, p. 78). Cushman (2016, p. 235) further explains,

As it stands now, translingualism can be defined as those meaning making processes that involve students and scholars in translanguaging, translating, and dwelling in borders... In the future, translingual approaches can continue to develop these and more decolonial possibilities through research and teaching that are dedicated to leveling the social, epistemic, semiotic, and linguistic hierarchies that (de)humanize us all.

Part of our intention in bringing together this special issue is to elucidate these “meaning making processes”; another intention is to make transparent the humanity of transnational pedagogies in relation to community-building, which we argue works to challenge dehumanizing hierarchies. As such, we position transnational pedagogies as central to not a select few writing classrooms, but as a way to realize and extend Alexander and Rhodes’ insight into multicultural pedagogies that “make spaces for different identities, for different stories to be told” (2014, p. 433).

A major component of inclusive community-building is inviting and making room for difference—a difference that encompasses the linguistic and cultural resources students bring with them. Whether we use Hall and Navarro’s (2011) ideas on multi-competencies or Canagarajah’s (2009) notion of plurilingualism, this perspective also honors the ongoing negotiations that presumably monolingual and multilingual students engage in all the time. It embraces embodied communicative forms, including multimodality and linguistic play, where emphasis is not on discrete languages but rather in the connections across borders that we negotiate with others. In these classrooms (Lu and Horner, 2016, p. 212),

a translingual perspective [can] show[] itself in the full light of day as present, albeit if hitherto going unrecognized, in the normal transactions of daily communicative practice of ordinary people. The translingual approach is thus the

"other," not to normal language use, language users, and language relations but, instead, to what monolingualist ideology would have us understand normal language use, users, and relations to be.

And, yes, while this special issue focuses on linguistic difference, it also recognizes that including transnational and translingual approaches and orientations in our classrooms is not a singular solution to the many faces of exclusivity (e.g. class, gender, race, etc.) that often penalize diverse student populations. In questioning the usability of translingual pedagogy, Gilyard furthers this argument with his position that "[t]ranslingualists are clear about the fact that we all differ as language users from each other and in relation to a perceived standard. Often elided, however, is the recognition that we don't all differ from said standard in the same way" (2015, p. 286). In response to such philosophical ruminations, we offer contributions from teacher-researchers across a span of space-time realities because in our minds, and in the words of Canagarajah,

the composition of each class with its own mix of multilingual students from varying backgrounds is resourceful for translingual negotiations. The mix of students and materials from diverse cultures and languages makes the classroom a contact zone. Such a space is extremely valuable for reflections and negotiations on translinguality (2016, p. 268).

While we acknowledge the complexities of Gilyard's argument, on the differing accesses to power that underlie language practices, we also feel that transnationalism and translingualism have the capacity to create, encourage, and foster greater levels of inclusivity in writing classrooms across many borders—not just national or linguistic.

Transnational Approaches: Contributors and Contexts

In the original call for this special issue we sought contributions from translocal contexts, particularly approaches that offered practical strategies for implementing transnational and translingual pedagogies across a broad range of programs and institutions. We asked contributors to consider the following areas of research and inquiry: challenges to integrating transnational and translingual pedagogy; transnational and translingual teaching within "mainstream" writing courses; intersections of transnationalism, translingualism, and multimodality; transnationalism and translingualism as an out-of-school norm; transnationalism, translingualism and student agency; and teacher training. Selected contributors explicitly address the the first five of these concerns throughout their articles; however, what is not always present in these conversations—both in these essays, and the broader pedagogical conversations surrounding transnationalism and translingualism—is the latter of these categories: teacher training.

This special issue is also a response to the call for redesigning our curriculum for the multilingual reality (Jordan, 2012) at this time of the "multilingual turn" (May, 2014). It speaks primarily to pedagogical practices and implications of enacting a translingual disposition in the teaching of writing across various transnational contexts. In the view of the editors, while there is often opportunity for our future teachers to enrol in

TESL/TESOL training in graduate programs thanks to the work of those like Matsuda (1997, 1998, 1999, etc.), this training does not always take up a transnational and translingual approach to writing. As such, most graduate students in our discipline do not complete their degree programs with practical and useable strategies for teaching mixed populations of monolingual and multilingual students. Moreover, when multilingual teaching strategies are addressed, it is often as a singular, brief module or add-on, rather than being an overarching theme. In this way, transnational and translingual learning can be marginalized to the edges of teacher education in composition studies. To this end, we offer this special issue as a series of readings that can be taken up in the graduate classroom; we hope that those who teach survey courses in composition programs will add the voices of our contributors to their coursework. Thus, we position this special issue as not only an important step in the reconfiguration of how we perceive writing, but also as a resource that holds promises and challenges for the teaching of writing, which can also lead to research along these lines.

Finally, in regard to teacher training, we see the contributing authors as working together, to collectively inquire into the interwoven questions of:

- What does transnational and translingual pedagogy look like across contexts and how do we assess its effectiveness?
- What are the challenges and rewards of enacting translingual pedagogy across transnational teaching contexts?
- What theoretical and methodological tools can teacher researchers utilize to empirically document and analyze students' new and renewed sense of linguistic capacities, cultural competency, and literacy identities?

For instance, Massimo Verzella's research examines translingualism in light of internationalization and global citizenship. In "Inviting the stranger: Building pedagogical practice on the foundations of cosmopolitan thought," Verzella considers how U.S. teachers can collaborate with teachers in other regions of the world to explore linguistic diversity. Of specific interest to this collection is the fact that Verzella's U.S. classroom is overwhelmingly linguistically homogeneous English and employs multimodal constructs. Verzella's contribution sheds light on how ideologies of exclusivity and particularism which currently dominate many of the English-only policies and ideologies of U.S. writing classrooms do not fully consider Gilyard's warning that as writers "we don't all differ from [the] standard in the same way" (2016, p. 286), and suggests that one way to move beyond challenging homogeneous constructs is to frame our pedagogical practices on the philosophical foundations of cosmopolitan thought. In this way, as Verzella states in this collection, students enrolled in our writing classrooms can be invited and encouraged to "think and live in terms of inclusive oppositions while rejecting the logic of exclusive oppositions," which offers a unique perspective into how translingual approaches and orientations—even those with majority English-monolingual students—can create room for inclusivity and student agency.

Similarly, Willard-Traub's essay, "The Threshold Potential of Transnational Pedagogies," discusses a partnership between American and French students. This project surfaces how implementing a series of transnational writing tasks can create a significant threshold potential for student learning and agency. Drawing on two case

studies, she highlights how one of her U.S. students, a recent Saudi refugee, comes to take a leading role in the transnational exchanges, while the second, a non-traditional African American student, comes to discover links between his own command of African American vernacular and the underlying course themes of language and power. Underscoring the roles these students took on as “meditators” negotiating between multiple languages, genres, and cultural expectations, Willard-Traub also offers the course material that framed the students’ transnational writing experience within larger themes and challenges of English monolingualism and the overall power of language to include and exclude.

In her article “Translingual Pedagogy Through Writing Poetry: A Case of College Composition Courses,” Liao argues for a translingual pedagogical framework that utilizes a poetic autoethnographic project in a mainstream first-year composition course. Drawing upon student interviews and class artifacts, she argues that a translingual disposition, which she sees as resulting from her pedagogical approach, enhances students’ understanding, appreciation, and agency, and engages both semiotic and linguistic differences. Arguing that translingual pedagogy is more about disposition than solely language, Liao analyzes the challenges her writing students face as they shuttle between genres and modes of communication to co-construct meaning, as they also draw on multimodal resources that they incorporate into their writing and their negotiations with one another.

Mysti Rudd’s contribution “‘It makes us even angrier than we already are’: Listening Rhetorically to Students’ Responses to an Imported Honor Code at an IBC in the Middle East” is unique in its surfacing of the role of transnationalism and translingualism in out-of-school contexts. This article brings to the surface the undercurrent tensions that powerfully shape the teaching and learning of writing in one specific transnational space: the international branch campus (IBC) of Texas A&M University located in Qatar. In rhetorically listening to students’ resistances and silences in response to a Western-imported honor code, Rudd problematizes the inherent challenges within the research impetus, ideological frames, and methodological tools that inform her inquiry. That is, Rudd draws our attention to the challenges of working through moral, institutional, religious, and ideological values that may conflict with those of our students. As Rudd documents, such recognitions and negotiations, for students and teachers alike, involve sophisticated tactics of “rhetorical framing,” “codeswitching,” and “fronting,” which are often fraught with ideological and institutional struggles that can negatively impact student agency.

Finally, the collaborative article “Translingual pedagogy, rhetorical listening, and multimodal experiences in a first-year writing conference that fosters intercultural learning” authored by Joyce Meier, Bree Gannon, Cheryl Caesar, & David Medei analyzes a U.S. university’s student conference that supports intercultural dialogue through student presentations of multimodal products. The collaborative nature of this text, both in terms of authorship and student experience, draws attention to both student agency, and the ways that this agency can be strengthened through the sharing of multimodal composition. The writing situations discussed in this piece illustrate a forced or “purposeful” coming together of “multilingual students of different cultures and

nationalities, to share aspects of their languages, cultures, and experiences in multimodal forms”; yet, the outcomes are highly inclusive and situate linguistic cultural difference as an important resource to students from a wide spectrum of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, like Rudd’s contribution, central to this study is rhetorical listening, via student feedback and reflection.

Transnational Futures: Research and Pedagogy

At the forefront of the research impetus and pedagogical inquiry of this special issue is a concern for the changing contexts of writing research, and how writing instructors can respond to the unique linguistic and cultural profiles of their students. The transnational spaces, as defined by individual contributors, diverge in their institutional, physical, and demographic characteristics, serving to engender an enriching multiplicity of perspectives. For instance, where Liao and Meier et al. document pedagogical innovations taking place in U.S. writing classrooms, Willard-Traub and Verzella explore the pedagogical affordances of international collaborative projects across U.S. and international contexts; further, Rudd situates her teaching in an international space, emphasizing both the mobility and limits of writing studies across borders.

A central takeaway, then, is the fluidity in how we define transnational space, and how changing learning contexts are inherent to ideologies of transnationalism; as Bruce Horner suggests in his afterword, the contributor contexts especially highlight how “*transnational* has the potential to complicate received notions of *international*.” In imagining future research and pedagogical innovation, we invite writing teachers to take up and use these contributions to inform their own research and teaching, and to consider how transnational approaches can create authentic opportunities for students to shuttle between linguistic and cultural contexts; assess and leverage the needs, attitudes, and reading skills of diverse audiences; and develop linguistic and rhetorical sensitivities. Together, we can move transnational and translingual research forward in expanding our descriptions of students from different ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, as well as offering new strategies as how to engage students across a variety of spaces.

In many ways, the lingering liminality of transnational and translingual pedagogies within writing programs nationally and internationally is simply a consequence of this moment in our discipline’s history: we are at a juncture in composition and writing studies where research is often, to return to Ferris, “philosophical rather than pedagogical.” Thus, we offer a cross-section of pedagogical strategies, teacher-researcher narratives, and institutional contexts in order to not only broaden current transnational and translingual conversations, but to also provide ideas and support for those starting out. We also emphasize Horner’s caution “that the “transnational/lingual” approach advanced in this special issue, and elsewhere, is not and cannot be a settled matter.” To close, we reiterate that the value of this special issue is not simply its emphasis on the global shift in writing studies, but the offering and sharing of multiple and differing approaches in the enactment of transnational and translingual pedagogies.

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