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"It's Not as Rosy as I'd Like It to Be": A Literacy-and-Identity Case Study of a Contingent Academic (Not) Writing for Publication

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Abstract
For academics hovering between contingent and permanent status, getting publications on the CV can make the difference—or can it? Looking closely at engagement with professional academic literacy practices offers meaningful insights into academic labor. This article considers the case of a newly-minted Ph.D. working a collection of contingent jobs while aspiring to publish and obtain a permanent position. In the face of a heavy teaching load and disheartening job search, Elle Stewart (a pseudonym), decides to put off writing. She disidentifies with the discourse of being an academic and disengages from professional academic literacy practices, despite a life history full of success with academic writing. This case study takes an academic literacies approach and uses a framework of discoursally constructed writer identity to consider how Elle's literacies and identities mediate one another. While personalizing many of the dilemmas of contingent labor, the case study also considers Elle's painful disconnection from research and the structural factors that lead her to feel shut out of professional academic writing.

For some academics, publications are a ticket out of a contingent position into a tenure-track one. Once on the tenure-track, additional publications become the ticket to tenure. For departments and institutions, counting publications by faculty members is a way to quantify the labor force's research productivity. But before any of those texts can be counted, before they are published and enshrined on the CV or institutional document, they must be researched, drafted, revised, submitted, revised, and resubmitted. How—and whether

or not—an individual academic engages in professional academic writing practice is a dynamic process that is itself the result of countless other processes in the writer's past and present, and in her sociocultural world. Looking closely at professional academic literacy practices in unique contexts offers meaningful insights into academic labor. For example, examining how departmental practices factor into an academic's decisions about writing for publication inspires reconsideration of the effects of those practices and reflection on a department's goals for its labor force.

This article offers a case study of Elle Stewart (a pseudonym), a newly-minted Ph.D. who is working a trio of contingent jobs while on the market, hoping for something permanent, benefitted, and, ideally, with resources for research. Elle's case study is of interest because it illustrates what leads her to defer writing. While personalizing many of the dilemmas of contingent labor, the case study also considers Elle's painful disconnection from research and the structural factors that lead her to feel shut out of professional academic writing. Analyzing Elle's case study through Roz Ivanič's framework for writer identity shows how Elle's negative experiences in the academic labor market lead her to disidentify with professional academic discourse and disengage from professional academic literacy practices. Because Elle perceives mixed signals about the value of a publication record for the various jobs she is applying to, and therefore feels conflicted about publishing, her case study offers hiring departments an invitation to consider how their practices either encourage or discourage publications by non-tenure track faculty, and what may be gained or lost for both the department and the individual.

Literacy, Identity, and Academic Labor

Moje and Luke define *literacy-and-identity studies* as "the move to study identity's relationship to literacy and literacy's relationship to identity" (416). According to Moje and Luke, this move has been motivated by interests in: 1) the actor's role in literate and social practices, 2) the ways identity labels privilege and marginalize readers and writers, and 3) how people demonstrate agency and power when engaging with texts. Moje and Luke also observe that researchers conceptualize both literacy and identity in many ways, even when they are all coming from a sociocultural perspective—that is, a perspective aimed at understanding people's interactions, activities, or practices within social and cultural contexts.

The conceptual frameworks used in this research grow out of New Literacy Studies (Gee; Street), a body of research which re-conceptualized literacy from an autonomous skill to socially situated uses of reading and writing. Street distinguished between the *autonomous* and *ideological* models of literacy, two different stances he observed in research on literacy. Researchers subscribing to the *autonomous* model viewed literacy as a neutral, technical skill. Literacy was something people had or didn't have. But, as Street pointed out, the literacy people supposedly had or didn't have was actually just one particular way of using reading and writing (usually a dominant,

Western, school-based way). In contrast, researchers subscribing to the *ideological* model "attempted to understand literacy in terms of concrete social practices and to theorize it in terms of the ideologies in which different literacies are embedded" (95). From this social practice perspective, literacy is something people do and what they think of what they do. It is social, it is purpose-driven, and it happens in specific contexts. Seeing literacy this way, it quickly becomes apparent that there are many different ways of doing reading and writing—many different *literacies*—and that different literacies are valued differently depending on the values of the social contexts in which they occur.

Taking that reconceptualization to higher education settings is the academic literacies approach: "a critical and social practice perspective on writing and reading in the academy" (Lillis, et al. 6), which emphasizes practice over texts, is rooted in participants' perspectives on their texts and practices, and views options for meaning-making as contested (Lillis and Scott). Since first described by Lea and Street, academic literacies research has placed identity at the center of understanding reading and writing in academic contexts. As Lea and Street put it, the academic literacies approach "views student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialization" ("Academic Literacies," para. 5). Participating in the social context of higher education involves practicing particular ways of knowing and enacting particular identities.

Within the New Literacy Studies framework, a way to conceptally link literacy and identity is through Gee's notion of *Discourse*, which is:

> a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (143).

Understood this way, a *Discourse* is an "identity kit" (Gee 142). According to Gee, everyone acquires a primary *Discourse* at home, and multiple secondary *Discourses* in social contexts outside the home. Literacy is mastery of a secondary *Discourse*. Particular ways of using reading and writing may be included among the ways of using language in an identity kit.

Given this focus on identity, academic literacies researchers need a robust conceptual framework for identity. In her book, *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*, Ivanič synthesized work from New Literacy Studies, discourse studies (including Gee's ideas described above), and studies of social interaction (such as Goffman's work on everyday social interactions) to develop a multifaceted framework for writer identity, which she further detailed in a set of case studies of mature students in higher education. In this framework, writer identity is "constructed in the interaction between a person, others, and their sociocultural context. It includes the 'self' that a person brings to the act of writing, the 'self' she constructs through the

act of writing, and the way in which the writer is perceived by the reader(s) of the writing" (Burgess and Ivanič 232). Using Ivanič's approach, a researcher can focus in on any of the multiple facets of writer identity and consider how the elements interact. Two of Ivanič's aspects of writer identity proved to be particularly salient in this study. First, the *autobiographical self* is "the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped as it is by their prior social and discoursal history" (Ivanič 24). Second, *possibilities for self-hood* are "abstract, prototypical identities available in the sociocultural context of writing" (Ivanič 23). Elle's case study renders elements of a life story taking place in personal and academic settings; analysis of the case study draws on both of these aspects of writer identity to consider how and why Elle disengages from professional academic writing practice.

A few other researchers have successfully used the academic literacies approach and Ivanič's writer identity framework to study professional academic writers. Lea and Stierer explore academic identities through interviews about everyday workplace documents. Taking an academic literacies approach and viewing writing as central to the discoursal construction of identity, Lea and Stierer asked their participants, 30 academics from three different UK universities, to select "three documents they had recently written, contributed to or worked on" ("Lecturers' Everyday Writing" 422), which would be the focus of an interview. The aim was to understand academic practice—and from there identity—through discussion of everyday documents. "In order to gain an understanding of writing as professional practice, we needed to examine the texts in detail 'close up' with their authors – not just because the texts carry the meaning along, but because they instantiate practice" ("Lecturers' Everyday Writing" 422). Lea and Stierer found that "considerable 'identity work' is involved in producing and working with everyday documents" ("Lecturers' Everyday Writing" 426). Their participants used writing "to maintain power and authority and assert their own identities in the changing context of higher education" ("Changing Academic Identities" 612). Additionally, Lea and Stierer's analysis challenges the primacy of disciplinary writing in academic identity construction: "academic identity also involves becoming adept at engaging in a range of written genres which are often far removed from such traditional academic writing" ("Changing Academic Identities" 615). Lea and Stierer's work presents professional academic writing as workplace writing while highlighting academic workers as empowered individuals.

In her academic literacies study of how researchers negotiate between conflicting demands, Nygaard develops a theoretical model of research productivity as an interaction of identity and environment. She argues that "productivity will depend greatly on the researcher's subjective understanding of their own identity (including abilities, desires, and fears); their subjective interpretation of their institutional environments (including expectations and values); and their own (perceptions of) agency within these constraints" (Nygaard 10). In Nygaard's model, identities incorporate experiences of practice and their impact on beliefs about the self: "the experience of publishing (or not

publishing), and whether this output is valued (or not valued), will feed back into the researcher's beliefs about themselves (e.g. competent or incompetent)" (Nygaard 11). The reciprocal relationship continues as researchers weigh institutional demands and their own goals and "the concrete practices that result depend on what kind of ideas they have about themselves" (Nygaard 12). Nygaard's model captures the mediating relationship of literacies and identities in a particular context of academic labor.

Contingency and College Writing Teachers; A Division of Teaching and Research Labor?

The research reported in this article is situated in a U.S. higher education context, that of the college writing teacher. In the U.S., most faculty in English departments are part-time and non-tenure-track (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing). In fall 2006, English departments surveyed indicated that 36.2% of the faculty were full-time tenured and tenure-track, 12.6% were full-time non-tenure-track, 23.9% were part-time, and 27.3% were graduate student TAs (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing 30). While this faculty labor distribution reflects U.S. higher education as a whole—in 2011, over 70% of faculty in U.S. higher education were off the tenure-track (Laurence)—it is a much-discussed issue in English Studies and in Composition specifically. At doctoral/research universities in fall 2006, 98% of all first-year writing courses were taught by faculty off the tenure-track; at master's institutions, it was 87% (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing 51).

So most writing teachers, and most faculty in English departments, are *contingent* faculty, "those who teach without the job protections and material and economic privileges of tenure" (Schell 172). Full- and part-time non-tenure-track faculty members are "often invisible to the public and policy makers, as well as to colleagues and administrators in the institutions where they are employed" (Laurence 6). English Studies' professional organizations, greatly concerned by the marginalization of contingent faculty since at least the 1980s, have responded to the situation with an "evolving discourse," as Doe and Palmquist relate: the initial response was to argue for the importance of tenure (unfortunately, disparaging contingent faculty along the way), then to promote ethical treatment for contingent faculty, and, most recently, to advocate for some kind of tenure or job security for part-timers. Doe and Palmquist propose that a new kind of tenure would focus on just teaching or just research. This split would reproduce what the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing points to as the source of the two-tiered system: a separation of the functions of research and teaching. As Bartholomae elaborates, "the use of a multitiered faculty is part of the history of English instruction in the United States […] it is hard to see an end to a differential investment in teaching and research" (Bartholomae 26). These arguments make it seem that 'the haves' and 'have-nots' in English Studies are simply divided by teaching or research functions. However, even if institutions separate teaching and research roles, these activities aren't necessarily separated in practice. Through an activity system analysis of work-logs, Doe et al. found that contingent faculty

participants took part in all of the same activities (research, service, outreach) that tenure-line faculty pursue, even when their annual evaluations did not reward them for such work. And Poe argues that "the erosion of tenure has not merely meant that more faculty work off the tenure track but also that those non-tenure-track faculty are increasingly expected to produce research—an expectation rarely stated officially in writing" (508).

Methods and Data

The case study presented in this article is one of four case studies of new Ph.D.'s working in composition, which I carried out for my doctoral dissertation (Vacek). Like other academic literacies researchers, specifically Ivanič and Lea & Stierer, I found it helpful to approach my identity-focused, academic literacies research as a set of case studies. At its core, case study research is about understanding the complexity of a case in its context (Stake *The Art of Case Study Research*). Data collection created opportunities for participants to discuss their perspectives on their identities and literacy practices. The primary data sources were: 1) a one-hour semi-structured interview about the participant's background and current contexts and 2) a one-hour discussion of an in-progress text of her choice. The importance of the literacy history interview for understanding participants' views on their texts is stressed in literacy as social practice and academic literacies research (Barton and Hamilton; Lillis "Ethnography as Method"), and such a historical view was essential for exploring each participant's autobiographical self. I combined the literacy history interview with discussion of present work and personal contexts. The second meeting, the manuscript discussion, is an example of *talk around texts*, a method developed by Ivanič, which is defined as "talk between the researcher and the writer-participant about a text that the writer is writing or has written" (Lillis "Bringing Writers' Voices" 171). To gain a sense of how my participants' identities shaped their day-to-day literacy practices, it was essential to focus on a real text that they were actively working on. For Elle, the interview took place in August 2014, and the manuscript discussion took place in October 2014.

Analysis began as soon as I began data collection, so the two proceeded concurrently. Immediately after each interview and manuscript discussion, I recorded my initial impressions in my researcher journal, which served as preliminary analysis. The remaining analytical steps on the way to each final case report included transcribing the recordings, annotating the transcripts, drafting the case report, and incorporating participant feedback into the revised case report. Cross-case analysis was based on the completed case reports, and entailed steps of reading the reports with the research questions in mind, rating the importance of the cases and each case's findings for understanding the research questions, and developing assertions for the multi-case study (Stake *Multiple Case Study Analysis*).

The four participants in the multi-case study were college writing teachers holding different kinds of positions at four different institutions across the United States. Elle's case study is worth looking at

on its own because she was the only participant who chose not to write. After earning her Ph.D. in English in 2014, Elle moved across the country to be closer to family and to find a lower cost of living. While on the job market, Elle took on a combination of online and face-to-face teaching at three different institutions. She desired a tenure-track faculty position but was open to non-tenure-track opportunities. Elle had published one peer-reviewed journal article at the time we met for data collection. The text she initially planned to discuss with me was the outline of an accepted conference presentation, which she planned to later turn into a journal article. However, by the time we met to discuss the text, she had shelved that project and was planning a new article on a different topic.

Case Study of Elle Stewart

Elle's family moved around a bit as she was growing up, but reading and writing were a constant part of her life wherever she was. As a child, Elle saw her mother as an avid reader. In school, Elle was rewarded for reading and writing, whether it was winning a spelling bee, being made a peer tutor in elementary school, or earning prizes for reading a certain number of books. She recalls going to the public library as the main activity during summers spent with her grandparents. In high school, Elle participated in a creative writing program, where she was given two hours a day to sit in a room with other writers and just write.

Elle studied literature in college. After graduation, she bounced around geographically, moving back and forth across the country as she tried to sustain both a relationship and a livelihood. She eventually settled on the west coast, got married, and took on a job coordinating a community college tutoring center. This job shaped her career trajectory. On her first day of work, her supervisor told her to hurry up and get her master's degree. Elle complied. She also dove into her work in the tutoring center, both managing the center and tutoring. Working closely with a small group of students, Elle felt she was able to develop relationships with them that she valued as part of her tutoring practice and, later, her teaching:

> Really being able to develop those very individual personal relationships with, I don't know, fifteen or twenty people per semester, just based on the schedule and seeing kinda what they struggled with, has helped me when I go into the classroom. I'm like okay, so I know that even though this seems really easy for me, some of you, you know that being acclimated to the college setting is not that easy. (interview 8/4/2014)

The tutoring center was also where she started becoming an ESL teacher, since she worked with many multilingual students one-on-one.

After completing her master's degree, Elle continued managing the tutoring center and began taking on college teaching jobs as well—which meant working more than full time. As she began seeing her career path as a teacher, she wondered if she should leave the tutoring center, but the full-time job had a particular economic hold on her:

> I started teaching part time in addition to that, and I definitely went through some periods where I was like what am I doing? I need to be in the classroom. I need the teaching experience. I should quit this full-time gig so that I could take more teaching jobs and get more connections and meet more people and have more chances of being the person for the full time teaching job. But I never gave that job up until now because of the benefits. (interview 8/4/2014)

The need for benefits, particularly health insurance, is an ongoing issue for Elle, which plays a role in her decisions about work.

Elle pursued her Ph.D. while continuing to work full time at the tutoring center and teaching part-time. She chose a doctoral program that allowed her to take her coursework only in the summers, when she wasn't teaching or tutoring. During her Ph.D. program, she fell in love with research, feeling suited to the work. She says, "I'm interested, and I'm good at reading stuff and synthesizing stuff and organizing stuff, and I think that's why research appeals to me" (interview 8/4/2014). Elle feels she thrived in her Ph.D. program because the structure of the program—summers only when she was not teaching—allowed her to focus just on being a scholar. This undivided attention to research was powerfully appealing for her:

> When I'm teaching I'm a hundred percent teaching. When I have time, like when it was [doctoral institution] and school, it's like, no. I could totally do this all the time. I'm totally into this. I could totally do this forever. I don't have to choose. (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)

While in her Ph.D. program, Elle submitted her first manuscript to a peer reviewed journal, a manuscript she had written for a doctoral program requirement. Knowing that she was prone to doubting herself, she decided to shortcut her fear about submitting a manuscript for the first time. She recalls thinking, "I'm gonna send this out immediately before I talk myself out of it" (interview 8/4/2014). She received an acceptance letter from the journal: "It wasn't even revise and resubmit. It was like we accept this when you add this" (interview 8/4/2014). To receive such a positive response to her first scholarly manuscript was thrilling. Looking back, she says the first publication experience was "so easy, and I was shocked. And I don't expect it ever to repeat itself" (interview 8/4/2014). Even with an immediate acceptance, Elle feels she took more than an acceptable amount of time to turn the manuscript around because, by then, she was back to teaching for the academic year.

Elle completed her Ph.D. in 2014, passing her dissertation defense with distinction. Her early success with reading and writing has continued through her adult life, as evidenced not by mere acceptance but singular approval of her work by a professional journal and her dissertation committee. Still, Elle doubts herself. When I interview her, she has recently moved from the west coast to a southern state in search

of a lower cost of living and a chance to be nearer to family. The ensuing job hunt tests her sense of self-worth. At such times she tries to remember that she has valuable talents when it comes to literacy. As we wrap up our talk about her childhood literacy experience—one full of gold stars—she says,

> I don't know. I think sometimes I feel—especially when I'm not getting a job, a full-time job that I want—it's like I have a hard time finding things that I'm good at. So it's like, okay, I'm good at that. I'm good at that. Yay! Let me remember that I'm good at that! So I don't suck at everything. (interview 8/4/2014)

The as-yet-unsuccessful job search is looming large for Elle at the moment. Elle has had no trouble finding part-time teaching jobs in her new city: "I have no shortage of work here," she says (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). But she doesn't have *the* job—the one, full-time job with benefits. For now, full-time and benefits would be good enough, though she'd really like to add "tenure-track" and "research requirements" to that list of attributes.

Elle has submitted plenty of applications and had plenty of interviews for full-time jobs; she's even been a finalist several times. Despite coming so close, she hasn't landed a full-time job, so she has taken multiple part-time teaching jobs. She teaches a combination of face-to-face and online courses at three different institutions. That means several different preps, since the different composition programs don't take the same pedagogical approach, don't use the same textbooks, and therefore don't use the same assignments. Elle is putting a lot of time into designing assignments, time over and above the already intensive work of responding to and grading students' papers.

It's especially time-consuming work for Elle because she's still new to teaching composition. Her previous teaching experience was in ESL and developmental reading, so while she is an experienced teacher, she can't necessarily fall back on her old toolkit. Elle feels her doctoral program gave her the expertise she needs to be a successful writing teacher—"I've got the skills, I have the information, I've got the ideas, I've got the books" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)—yet the work still takes time. She might have saved some time by using someone else's syllabus, but that is not the kind of teacher Elle is: "I had a couple of syllabuses for them, and it's like, no, I don't want to do that. I don't want to have that. I don't want to do this. And it's like, you know, I have to create it" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Elle is conscientious about putting her own mark on her courses, so she chooses to put in more time to do so. That choice doesn't come without sacrifice.

When I interview Elle in August, the fall semester hasn't yet begun, and she is teaching just two online sections of a composition course. For Elle, this is a light teaching load. She and her husband are living with her brother until they can find their own place, and she wants to help out and have a closer connection to her brother and his family, so she is conducting "Camp Stewart" for her young nephews, coloring, making shrinky-dinks, and watching movies: "they're five and nine and,

you know, I don't have any kids, so this is all kind of new to me" (interview 8/4/2014). Additionally, Elle remarks that, for the first time since starting her dissertation, she feels she has a little time for some pleasure reading, and she's reading a young adult fiction series. She also has a chance to help her husband, an artist, at a music festival, where he is selling some of his work. Even these activities may be circumscribed when the demands of teaching ramp up: "last week we didn't do much because I had so much to grade" (interview 8/4/2014). And by the time the fall semester is in full swing, Elle has taken on jobs at two additional schools, and work feels all-consuming. When we meet for the manuscript discussion in October, Elle and her husband have rented a house, and now she talks about wanting to see her brother "at least once a month" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014), and I'm not sure that's happening. Elle doesn't tell me about family or personal activities this time. She's in her home office when we meet, and after describing her teaching load she says, "so I spend a lot of time in this room with perfume bottles in it" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)—she hasn't even had time to unpack.

The receding of family and free time into the background is not the only change from August to October. In August, Elle tells me about her current writing project, a project which has already been accepted for a national conference presentation and which Elle plans to turn into a journal article as well. The call for proposals for the conference caught Elle's attention because it engaged directly with the research methodology she used for her dissertation. The process of writing a proposal in response to the call helped Elle clarify some observations and questions she had about her relationship with her dissertation research participants. Her abstract was accepted for the November conference. When we talk in August, she has done some outlining. She has thought a little bit about where she might submit the manuscript, naming a few different methodology-focused journals. As we talk, she identifies her next step as clarifying the research questions. After doing that, she can outline the conference presentation, and then use that outline to draft an article manuscript. I ask her when we might meet again to talk about the project, once she has had a chance to do some more work on it. Because the fall semester and more teaching will begin soon, Elle decides she can't work on it again until October.

When we meet in October, however, Elle tells me that she has canceled her conference presentation. She is now working on a different piece, a reflective essay about her experience transforming from an ESL teacher to a writing teacher. On one level, she creates this new project for me—because we have a meeting to discuss a work in progress, and she has stopped progress on the other project we were going to talk about. She says, "I wouldn't be writing about it if I didn't know that I needed to produce something for you" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014), but also "I want to have something to say, not just for you, but for me, too" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). For this new project, she has started an outline. We talk about where it might go. When I offer some suggestions of journals that might be appropriate, Elle responds with doubts. She's not sure there is an audience for the piece, saying "I don't

want to bother if it's not that interesting" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). She also feels "kind of removed from what's going on journal wise" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). When I press her to identify a time when she can read through some journals to select one as a venue for her new piece, she says it will have to be when the semester is over: "I have hopes that I'll be able to do some work besides teaching and planning in December and in the summer. I just—I can't imagine it happening before then or outside of those times. Like I just—there's no way" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Elle puts off writing because she just can't find time to do it alongside the demands of her teaching load. At the same time, she is limiting the content of what she might write by deciding that her dissertation data is off-limits.

Elle's dissertation involved in-depth interviewing with a small number of participants. Her participants were people with whom she already had close relationships, and the research process deepened the intimacy they already shared. For Elle, engaging in that research experience with her participants carried a great deal of meaning, shaping how she has come to see herself as a researcher. She expresses two main reasons she doesn't want to work with her dissertation data at this point. First, she feels it is unfair for her to gain from the data now that she has moved away from her participants and can't continue helping them as she once did: "I can't be there for them anymore other than providing some kind of emotional support, so I don't know if I—but it feels a little bit weird to me to be using them to make research publications" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Secondly, the distance has also led Elle to feel uncomfortable speaking for her participants: "I think maybe because I'm far away physically and emotionally, I felt like I didn't want to—I was no longer able to be the mouthpiece" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Additionally, Elle won't pretend to be anything she's not. When I suggest that publishing her participants' stories for a wider audience might be a way to honor their research relationship, she agrees but also says, "Sometimes I worry about being a fraud. I worry about just being a fake" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). She can't pretend to be still involved in the lives of research participants who are now on the other side of the country, and she also can't bring herself to write just for the sake of getting published. "It feels a little weird to kind of then be like, well, I'm gonna use what we did just so I can have something to say" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). With the combination of time pressure from teaching and discomfort about writing from her existing work, Elle is not writing and not publishing.

And why should she be? None of her jobs requires her to publish—but then, she is looking ahead. She is trying to position herself to be competitive for a full-time job. Right now, though, she's feeling discouraged. She thinks she lost one of the full-time jobs she interviewed for when she brought up research as something she could add to the position. Elle thought that would make her a stronger candidate for a tutoring center administrator position, but she tells me, "I think what it really came off as is: Are you sure you want this job? Because it doesn't require research" (interview 8/4/2014). She also feels she is getting mixed signals about what's required for the full-time teaching jobs she

wants to apply for. For example, for one advertised position at a teaching-focused institution, "there's not a requirement to produce research. But then in the frickin' job ad it said have an active research agenda! I'm like, what do you want from me?" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Elle is frustrated with the job search. She wants to do research, but she says, "Even with a Ph.D. and thirteen years of experience, they're not really putting me in a research position right now" (interview 8/4/2014). She is wondering if she should just give up on research altogether and give up the idea of ever working one full-time job.

Should she continue trying for any kind of full-time academic job in the region? Should she expand her search to other areas, possibly moving again? Should she settle for what she's doing—a collection of part-time teaching jobs? These are the questions she tries to sort out, thinking about who she is and who she wants to be. On the one hand, she thinks acceptance of a multi-institution, adjunct life might help her feel better about herself and to be comfortable just living life. She says, "I'm at this point where I want it to be good enough" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). She doesn't want to feel like she is perpetually waiting for a full-time job. On the other hand, the adjunct life is not easy. While she believes it is economically feasible as long as she can get work at multiple schools, it means a very heavy teaching load: "I don't think I want to teach six classes a semester part time" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Yet that seems to be what it would take to earn the income she wants to contribute to her family and be able to buy health insurance. Elle's husband recently asked her if he needed to work more so she could work less—for now, she said no. She's willing to work hard at several part-time jobs, hopeful that it may be a temporary situation. Elle is critical of the system that privileges tenure-track jobs over adjuncts, but still:

> No matter what my stance is on the problems in administration and issues with the tenure system, it would be very silly for me to not try to get a job where I could just have one job instead of four. That is dumb. That is not healthy radicalism, you know? Why would I hurt myself more? (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)

Part of Elle is resolved to keep trying for the full-time job, and so she is trying to prepare emotionally for another round of applications. Given the mixed signals she felt she got about research in her first round, she is unsure how research and publishing fits in with any of these three choices. Even in August, when she was a bit more optimistic, she felt shut out of research and unsure of a way back in:

> I want to get back into it. When I'm into it, I'm really into it. It's just hard to do it without it being a requirement because I feel like I'm trying so hard to do what everybody else wants me to do. I need a job. I am not independently wealthy. So right now none of these things require research. I'm hoping that even a

> part-time position that I have will give me some travel funding or be interested in it, in some way, to maybe lead into a full- time thing. But I think I'm a little bit—I'm not disillusioned, I'm not hopeless about it, but it's kind of like—it's not as rosy as I would like it to be. (interview 8/4/2014)

Elle is hoping for a future in which her professional identity allows her to be in a place she wants to live and to contribute income to her family without feeling like she is scrambling. And she longs for dedicated research time. Because, as she says, "When I'm in research mode, I feel so like I know what I'm doing. Like this is my thing. This is my jam" (interview 8/4/2014).

Processes of (Dis)Identification with Professional Academic Literacies

For Elle, the dominant discourse (in Gee's sense of Discourse as an "identity kit" [142]) of being a professional academic involves both teaching and research. Elle tries to take up this discourse through her strong desire to do more than just teach. Teaching-only positions, like the three jobs Elle holds, are among various possibilities for selfhood inscribed within the discourse of being an academic, and they are afforded lower status. A simple way to view the positioning of these possibilities is through the privileging of tenure-track positions over non-tenure-track positions, but Elle shows us that individuals orient to these differences in more complicated ways. Elle sees "problems in administration and issues with the tenure system" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014), and what's more important to her than a tenure-track job is a full-time job with sufficient compensation so she can "have one job instead of four" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). While applying for non-tenure-track jobs, she perceives mixed signals about the value of research for these positions. She fears that expressing her interest in research hurt her in an interview for a tutoring center director job—that by presenting herself as a professional academic with a research agenda, she presented an overreaching combination of interests for a staff position. At the same time, she questions why an advertisement for a teaching position that does not require research states that candidates should have an active research agenda. This is a concrete example of Poe's concern about unwritten expectations for non-tenure-track faculty to produce research.

While the discourse of being an academic is not monolithic, but contested, Elle's case study illustrates how one college writing teacher is positioned among possibilities for selfhood in the higher education workplace. From a social practice perspective, "the literacy practices in which people engage cannot be separated from the processes whereby they identify with or resist particular social positionings" (Burgess and Ivanič 232). Elle identifies and disidentifies with being an academic in complex, sometimes contradictory ways, and these processes of (dis)identification shape her sense of (dis)connection to professional academic writing. Two distinct processes of (dis)identification play out in Elle's case study. First, particular aspects of Elle's autobiographical

self make her feel either connected or disconnected to professional academic writing. Elle's early literacy history as a successful student writer would seem to position her as a successful professional academic writer. Yet now that Elle has completed her Ph.D., and her teaching positions do not require her to produce research, she feels disconnected from research, which blocks her from writing. Her disconnection is all the more striking because research is so important to her and she has had success doing it. For example, Elle has a strong intrinsic desire to do research and has experienced herself as a competent researcher. But even with that strong previous connection, she hasn't found a way to carve out time for writing amidst her teaching duties and job search. In fact, the job search has been such a negative experience that it has taken a toll on Elle's sense of self-worth. One way to understand why Elle does not write comes from Burgess and Ivanič's discussion of how the autobiographical self shapes the discoursal self and the authorial self:

> If the socially available possibilities for selfhood a writer has experienced are ones in which she is treated as inferior and does not have an authoritative role, she is likely to incorporate a sense of inferiority, and possibly feelings of indignation at having been treated in this way, into her autobiographical self. Her sense of inferiority is likely to have a strong influence on the kind of authorial self she constructs and may lead her to be hesitant about engaging in writing at all, as writing is by its nature an agentive social act. (Burgess and Ivanič 246)

Feeling stuck in contingent positions has disrupted Elle's sense of what is possible for her as a writer.

The second process of (dis)identification at work in Elle's case study centers on the meanings she ascribes to research and professional academic writing. While Elle primarily emphasizes her teaching load as the reason why she disengages from academic writing, she also discusses her disidentification in terms of strongly held research ethics. Having been immersed in feminist research ethics while conducting her dissertation research, Elle has incorporated values of reciprocity and authenticity into her researcher identity. In feminist research methodologies, reciprocity, the "give and take of social interactions" (Harrison et al 323), is central to empowering participants and establishing a more equal, less exploitative relationship between the researcher and the researched. Attention to reciprocity is a way to judge a qualitative study's trustworthiness, along with other signs of authenticity (Lincoln), such as disclosure of the researcher's positionality. Now that her dissertation is complete, Elle feels her cross-country move has broken the reciprocity she established with her participants; she feels her potential gain from publishing about them is exploitative if she can not provide them with some benefit in return. Additionally, writing about her dissertation research from her new position as a contingent writing teacher in a completely different community feels inauthentic to Elle.

These two processes of (dis)identification are specific ways one writer's identities mediate her literacy practices. In their discussion of

how socially available possibilities for selfhood shape the autobiographical self, Burgess and Ivanič state that writers do not simply reproduce possibilities for selfhood when they take them up, but rather they integrate these possibilities with other resources they have adopted, resulting in combinations unique to each writer. Burgess and Ivanič also observe that the writer's autobiographical self includes "interests, views of the world, values and beliefs, and his or her sense of authoritativeness and agency" (Burgess and Ivanič 239). Elle is incorporating a *contingent labor* identity and an *unsuccessful job seeker* identity into her autobiographical self, and these identities are overriding her past positions as a successful researcher and writer. The result is that she lacks a sense of agency in professional academic writing and ends up deferring the work of writing.

The meanings Elle ascribes to professional academic writing can also be understood as *values* in the sense that Burgess & Ivanič describe values as being part of the autobiographical self. Again, everything a writer has experienced in life up to now shapes how she sees professional academic writing as personally meaningful (or not). Elle's experience stands out in that she attaches a strong personal meaning to research, but uses specific values of reciprocity and authenticity to limit her opportunities for writing.

Considerations for Academic Practice: College Writing Teachers' Labor

Elle's job search struggle illustrates how departments can send mixed messages about research expectations. Since concern about unofficial research expectations for non-tenure-track faculty has been raised before (Poe), and since the very existence of non-tenure-track positions has been explained as a result of the separation of teaching and research functions (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing; Bartholomae), this is an issue worth addressing. In response, departments hiring non-tenure-track faculty might consider whether or not they currently expect research in these positions—either formally or as an unwritten expectation—and how they make (or don't make) their expectations transparent. Can the presence or absence of research expectations be made clear in the position advertisement, in the position qualifications, the job description, and in any reward system in place? Is any expectation for research accompanied by support for it in terms of time, resources, and recognition?

Professional organizations in Composition, and in English Studies more broadly, have been advocating for the needed transparency described above. The Conference on College Composition and Communication has position statements which stipulate the need for clear expectations and support for expected activities ("CCCC Statement on Working Conditions"; "Statement of Professional Guidance"), as does the Modern Language Association. Elle's experience shows why these guidelines remain important.

Conclusions

In this article, I have shared Elle's story, and I have pointed out ways I see her case study contributing to literacy-and-identity studies and to studies of college writing teachers. Case studies, like this one, that illustrate processes of (dis)identification with particular uses of writing, deepen our knowledge of how literacy and identity mediate one another. Case studies also invite reconsideration of day-to-day practices - in this example, labor practices in a discipline relying heavily on contingent labor.

But in addition to these disciplinary contributions, it is my hope that the case study and analysis I've presented here spark meaningful insights for individual readers. As Stake points out of case study research, "a personal valuing of the work is expected" (*The Art of Case Study Research* 135). In addition to generating ideas about the broad concepts of academic labor, contingency, and academic publishing, this research provides an opportunity for individual academics to reflect on their own journeys. Ivanič's framework for writer identity serves as a heuristic to consider one's own life experiences and academic workplace contexts. How does writing for publication fit into their own academic labor, if at all? If they aspire to publish but feel shut out of professional academic literacy practices, how might they find a way in? When academics are in positions that do not value or compensate their writing, they will either choose not to write, or they will find their own connections to professional academic literacy, and find ways to write and to be read.

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