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FYC's Unrealized NNEST Egg: Why Non-Native English Speaking Teachers belong in the First-Year Composition Classroom

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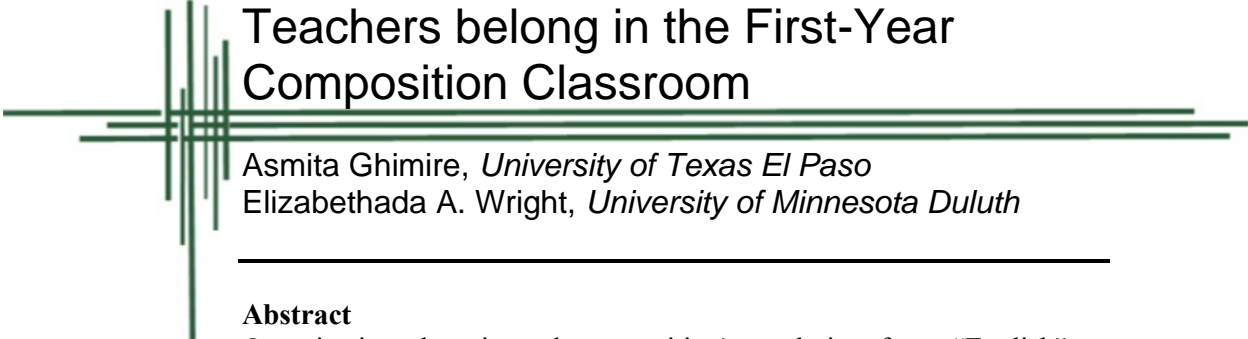
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FYC's Unrealized NNEST Egg: Why Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers belong in the First-Year Composition Classroom

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Abstract

Overviewing rhetoric and composition's evolution from “English” to “Englishes,” this article shows how the denigration of non-native English-Speaking Teachers (NNEST) of writing on the basis of English difference disregards linguistics’ understandings of the evolutions of language. Additionally, this essay demonstrates that when we consider writing via the lens of the threshold concepts and see writing as an exercise of mind, ideas and thinking, NNEST of writing can be a strength in twenty-first century First Year Composition (FYC) course.

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As readers of this journal are well aware, issues regarding academic labor have been coming to the forefront over the past few decades as the structure of the university forces those who are the most exploited to be themselves “unwitting” accomplices “to the erosion of the academic profession, faculty power, and undergraduate education” (Levin and Shaker 1462). In fact, the current structure of the university may be forcing the field of composition and rhetoric to be another, perhaps unwitting, accomplice to this erosion of power as it employs a significant percentage of non-tenure-track faculty to teach writing classes (e.g., CCCC “Statement on Working”) and utilizes graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in a kind of “bait and switch” that promises them academic apprenticeships but only offers them treatment as “contingent faculty in a system where tenure lines are decreasing while contingent jobs become more common” (Wright 277).

Such complicity seems untenable, especially since throughout the second part of the twentieth century and all of the twenty-first, the first-year composition (FYC) course has been working toward more inclusive and democratic practices (e.g., Rose; Royster; Flynn). As Wendy S. Hesford observes, part of this trend toward egalitarianism has resulted in the field’s trend toward globalization, with compositionists responding to injustices in the world outside the classroom. However, the field’s responses to injustices and its treatment of globalism may be superficial, as Hesford herself notes in another article written with several co-authors. When universities in the United States speak of globalism, too often it is an inequitable model with, “students from the United States [going] to study in China under the auspices of US professors importing a monolithic Standard English, or bringing international students to the United States to learn from US professors that same monolithic Standard English” (Lalicker 53).

In fact, the university’s internationalism focus on Standard English is curious because there have been continued questioning of the continuation of Standard English being demanded in the composition classroom, with some noting that what is taught in the classroom is actually different from linguistic usage (e.g., Park et al.), and others arguing that our considerations of “mechanics” need to broaden to include the mechanics necessary for multi-modal writing (e.g., Rice).

Certainly, the field of composition and rhetoric might separate itself from the flaws of university’s internationalism focus, especially the university’s prioritization of Standard English, to argue that the field approaches internationalism differently. For example, Margaret K. Willard-Traub pointed out in a 2017 *Composition Forum* article how she creates a cross-cultural experience for multinational students by emphasizing the heteroglossic nature of the transnational classroom. Yet within the work on globalism in the writing classroom, there has been a notable absence of multi(bi)lingual voices. More specifically, the field of composition and rhetoric’s advocacy for egalitarianism, the academic

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environment of the composition class appears to be hostile for non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) of writing within most universities in the United States.

Hostility to NNEST

We have encountered such hostility firsthand. One of us (Ghimire) is a NNEST of writing from Nepal who has been speaking English since she was five. Ghimire came as a GTA to a graduate rhetoric program in a regional United States university (where most of the graduate students come from the Midwest) with a master's degree in rhetoric from a Nepali university and a publication in a Nepali periodical. One American university administrator, when learning of Ghimire's background before meeting her, expressed concern at Ghimire's ability to teach writing to the university's students. Then, when Ghimire took the university-administered language speaking proficiency test, she was told she could not work as a GTA nor work in the university's writing center—despite that fact that her experience with English composition and rhetoric exceeded many native English-speaking GTA's.

This experience is not unique. Evidence of such prejudice in the field is provided by many scholars who show how NNEST of all disciplines face numerous macroaggressions from students, faculty, and staff. For example, Jacobs and Friedman; Ruecker et al.; and Fitch and Morgan detail how white American students consistently complain about NNEST, blaming NNEST for their own inadequacies. Other studies illustrate how NNEST are perceived as less intelligent and more instinctual (Karamcheti) or as intrusions on students' own "neutral" study (Kopelson). Most significant, NNEST are often not hired when the hiring institution sees a "foreign" name or face (Ramjattan). These problems are exacerbated in the writing classroom, where NNEST must participate in what Christiane Donahue terms the "colonialist practice of composition" (215), where the linguistic and rhetorical norms of the United States are treated as universal, and NNEST of writing face exceptional bias.

Basing their conclusions on multiple examples of NNEST of writing being humiliated and discriminated, many NNEST of writing scholars suggest much of this discrimination is based not on any lack of abilities, but on a bias against an image repertoire of skin, eye, and hair color as well as social backgrounds. Evidence of such prejudice in the composition classroom is borne out in George Braine's study regarding the treatment of NNEST of English. Braine notes that while many Caucasians are NNEST (such as those from Northern Europe), they are mostly viewed by United States students as native speakers. Braine's observations suggest that much of the negativity toward NNEST is not toward their use and knowledge of language and rhetoric, but instead is based on long-standing prejudices of race, ethnicity, language and social-economic background. Supporting this idea, Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner's work on translingual literacy and agency argues that many of the

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vilifying practices against multilingual and translingual teachers in the writing class attempt to give the dominant language “agency” while repressing minority Englishes.

Overview

While some might argue that there is much research and interest in multi(bi)lingual voices within our field, a closer examination reveals that most of this scholarship centers on the English as a Second Language (ESL) class and its students. In considering the published texts on NNEST of writing, it seems there may be a belief that the multilingual teacher can be effective only for teaching students in ESL class. As Suresh Canagarajah observes, there seems to be an assumption that the learning trajectory of writing migrates from “communities in the center” to the “geopolitical periphery”; in other words, faculty and students in the United States have nothing to learn from non-American students while these students have much to learn from us (*Transnational* 69). This issue exacerbates the current labor inequities in the field of composition and rhetoric, especially when considering that international contingent faculty and GTAs are either excluded or exploited, and in both scenarios their abilities are criticized and debased.

However, recent developments in the field create an ideal opportunity for all NNEST of writing to lead, and perhaps reverse, some of the discriminatory labor practices in the composition and rhetoric classroom. In particular, the work of Elizabeth Wardle on transferability (767), as well as her work with Linda Adler-Kassner (1-16), illustrates the field’s need to focus more on skills that transfer out of the classroom and to teach particular habits of thinking (threshold concepts) that are essential if any person is to become a good writer.

This article argues that when practitioners of composition and rhetoric consider recent approaches to the FYC class, we are taking a hypocritical stance if we do not consider how the NNEST in the FYC program, whether faculty or graduate students, can be stalwarts to the teaching of critical thinking. NNEST are ideally positioned to advantage the FYC class by incorporating their multidimensional perspectives to help first-year students respond to rhetorical situations. Overviewing our field’s evolution from “English” to “Englishes,” this article shows how the denigration of NNEST of writing on the basis of English difference disregards linguists’ understandings of the evolutions of language. Additionally, this essay demonstrates that when we consider writing via the lens of the threshold concepts and see writing as an exercise of the mind, NNEST of writing can be a strength in the twenty-first century FYC course.

Rewriting Non-Native Teachers of English Writing as “Outsiders”

Within the field of composition and rhetoric, the relationships among language, power, and identity are continual subjects of study. One focus within this study concerns intersectionality, and how each individual’s myriad identities create the lens through which they see the world. For example, in 2017 the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) offered a feminist workshop on “Intersectionality within Writing Programs and Practices.” According to the chairs’ review of the workshop, the session examined how scholars can “use intersectionality to address some of the inequities ... in the classroom, our institution, the field, and communities” (McDermott et al.). Such a focus is much needed, especially since faculty in the field face discriminations coming from various directions. As a 2016 issue of *Inside Higher Education* noted, diversity among faculty is growing within contingent faculty, not tenure-track (Flaherty). With so many of the contingent faculty teaching in composition and rhetoric, many of these diverse faculty are facing the labor crisis in addition to the discriminations of other aspects of their identities.

Such bias is problematic not only because it affirms prejudicial preference to superficial and personal attributes of perceived Caucasian writing instructors, but it also promotes colonialist ideas about language, casting doubt on the rigorous writing methods of and pedagogical practices in teaching writing at non-American universities. As John Docker has articulated, this approach to knowledge is parochial as it warrants its claim with a far-fetched idea: English is an inherently American academic exercise. Docker claims that by disregarding minority cultural values and devaluing NNEST of English, such language systems—dominated by the majority—contribute to a neocolonial façade of segregation.

On the other hand, NNEST of writing themselves have very different views regarding their role in teaching English and the FYC class. According to much of the scholarship in Enric Llurda’s anthology of research on NNEST, a majority of NNEST see themselves as very capable of teaching English, as do many of the students. While some NNEST with less English fluency do recognize their inabilities, NNEST are not the only ones with inabilities: as the BBC notes (though regarding British speakers), many native English speakers are very poor communicators (Morrison).

NNEST of Writing as Insiders with Englishes

Even if the prejudicial biases are not considered, any linguistic biases against NNEST of writing are also unfounded. This is due to the fact that, as most every student of Ferdinand de Saussure recognizes, language is a social phenomenon; it differs in terms of time and context, and it constantly evolves. Saussure states that language is a “semiological

phenomenon” (145), which does not have any inherent relationship of sound image (signifier) to its concept (signified). Instead, the production and use of language is arbitrary (depending on the community of the speakers) and is affected by social facts (time and space) (144). This is an important idea about the evolution and use of language, for he even explains that phonemes, accent, and grammatical application (plural vs singular) of particular words are “imposed on individuals by the weight of collective usage” (156). Considering that the university classroom is increasingly concerned with internationalism, the classroom must recognize that the “collective usage” of English is evolving with the multiple Englishes found across the globe, especially since a majority of English speakers come from outside Anglo countries (e.g., Widdowson; “Who Speaks English”).

In such an evolving world, and hence an evolving FYC class, the issue of the validity of teaching Standard English is increasingly questioned. For example, linguist James W. Tollefson suggests that standard language is a highly ideological construct, one promoting values of the American upper-middle-class society. According to Tollefson, power ideologies of educational institutions play a crucial role in enforcing homogeneous English, whose root is arbitrary. Similarly, Canagarajah dismantles the concept of Standard English and argues that instead classes should be teaching world languages:

English should be treated as a multinational language, one that belongs to diverse communities and not owned only by the metropolitan communities. From this point of view, ‘standard’ Indian English, Nigerian English, and Trinidadian English would enjoy the same status as British English or American English, all of them constituting a heterogeneous system of Global English. (589)

Canagarajah is explicit that all students—whether native or non-native English speakers—need to learn Englishes. He argues that disregarding varieties of Englishes “disables students in the context of linguistic pluralism” (592), and that “in order to be functional postmodern global citizens, even students from the dominant community (i.e., Anglo American) now need to be proficient in negotiating a repertoire of world Englishes” (591). Along these lines, the Irish Ministry of Trade and Employment recognizes that the “‘English is enough’ viewpoint, while superficially appealing, is seriously flawed and needs to be strongly countered ... language skills are complementary to other skills such as science, engineering and technology” (Garcia 99).

The Modern Language Association (MLA) also recognizes the serious limitations to such an “English is enough” perspective. In 2007, the organization released an “ad hoc” report on the need for higher education to recognize the importance of providing students with

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translingual competence. Identifying the significance of the United States' language deficit in the post-9/11 environment, the report articulated the ways in which higher education can address this deficit while serving both the country and students. While the report certainly encouraged students within the United States to learn languages other than English, it also noted the importance of having American students better comprehend the relationships among languages, cultural knowledge, and perceptions of reality. To meet these ends, the report offered numerous suggestions, among them having the presence of more non-native educators, so Americans can better understand how language acts as a means of negotiating difference.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) offers a similar perspective in its 2017 "CCCC Statement on Globalization in Writing Studies Pedagogy and Research." Recognizing the importance of globalization, NCTE states that "all levels" of education, "including first-year/lower-division writing," need to embrace pedagogies that are "sensitive to the complex effects of globalization." In its recommendations, the Statement encourages writing programs to "prepare teachers to address linguistic and multicultural issues," and to help students "expand their language repertoires." One means of doing so is by inviting "exploration of a wide range of sociocultural and linguistic experiences and practices" ("CCCC Statement on Globalization").

With all these sophisticated understandings of language and writing that articulate why North American students need to develop translingual communication skills, regarding NNEST in a writing program as pariah and perceiving heterogenous English as deviant excludes the other greater half of the issues. NNEST of writing have socio-linguistic, cultural, geographical, and various other differences from the native speakers. And these diversities can be strengths rather than hindrances in the twenty-first-century writing classroom.

With these perceptions of language and the need for translingual education, it would seem absurd that anyone would argue against having NNEST in composition and rhetoric classes, yet such an argument is an undercurrent in much of higher education. Though it was almost forty years ago that Kathleen Bailey first made her infamous argument about the "foreign TA problem," the belief in such a problem still lies at the core of many student complaints about NNEST (Khan and Mallette 134-136) as many faculty, administration, and students continue to make this argument, augmenting the arguments regarding clarity and student success with implicit biases—as much of the previously cited research and our own experiences illustrate. While much research discredits this argument (e.g., Khan and Mallette; Fitch and Morgan; Zheng; Medgyes 432; see also Subtirelu; Tsang), the belief persists, exasperated in the 2010s and 2020s by anti-immigration rhetoric. Though such arguments are not found in credible sources, listservs like Reddit have numerous such (often incoherent) claims (e.g., u/throwaway61).

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Despite the recognition of such ideals as well-trodden myths (Davie 157), the next sections articulate how—even if we accept these myths—NNEST of writing can enhance the FYC classroom. One obvious advantage is NNEST of writing's encouragement of multilingualism within the classroom, including the need for students to look for research outside of that published in English. Another is an advantage that might seem almost counter-intuitive: NNEST of writing tend to have better knowledge of language mechanics than do native speakers of English. The final, and perhaps most important, point is that NNEST encourage students to embrace many of composition and rhetoric's foundational concepts, or what have been termed threshold concepts, via their practice in the classroom.

NNEST of Writing and Complex Thinking

In one of his many articles encouraging composition teachers to embrace a translanguaging approach in their classrooms, Bruce Horner joins with Samantha NeCamp and Christiane Donahue to observe that within North American research and classrooms, our monolingualism is “a practice ingrained institutionally and historically that produces linguistic limitations in scholars that in turn restrict the horizon of what is understood to be possible or realistic” (276). Although expanding our realm of potential scholarship to investigate may be “arduous” (284), it works toward more sophisticated and less limited thinking—goals celebrated by the MLA's ad hoc committee report and the NCTE's “Statement on Globalization.”

Increasingly, the metacognitive abilities possessed by NNEST writers are valued in FYC classes as the classes have abandoned the teaching of “correctness” to focus on encouraging student writers to think, first and foremost. This abandonment has been a long time coming, however. For decades, journalists have bemoaned the focus on correctness. In 1974, *Newsweek* explained the necessity for American citizens entering college to learn to think: “Rather than thinking of Writing as the form of triage, inoculation, or clinical diagnostic ... [w]hat writing teachers have known for generations is that ... it is a method of instruction that gives shape to our view of the world and empowers us to engage in discourse with our fellow beings” (14). In many ways, this radical perspective is actually quite old, not only because it was called for in the 1970s but because it is aligned with classical Western rhetoric's connections with citizenship—e.g., enabling the citizen through the art of argument. The purpose of composition is not to pass a placement test or write what Wardle terms “mutt genre” essays, genres that students will never duplicate once they leave the classroom (Wardle). The purpose is to allow students to transfer what they learn in the textual environment of the composition classroom to prepare for both the professional workplace and their role as citizens.

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Overall, then, current practices in composition and rhetoric value practices that involve thinking and ideas more than structures and linguistic correctness. For example, Carol Booth Olson states, “Writing is the vehicle of thought; it plays an important facilitative role in the development of thinking ...The nature of writing means that writing teachers teach thinking” (17). She asserts that there is a dialogic relation between writing and thinking: thinking can mold the writing and writing in turn can change opinion. Thus, writing is social act. It is a way of bringing the discursive universe of self, context, text, and society in intersection with one another.

Heather Bastian would agree. Bastian argues current writing practices require innovation and creation, not the redundant and ornamental use of words in writing. She claims that it would be impossible to teach students all the language and genre knowledge they will need in the future because the various forms of media on which the students will write and the various genres in which they will write in the post-digital age is unpredictable. She states that teachers must instead develop “students’ rhetorical knowledge and flexibility so that they can respond to evolving written texts and composing processes” (8). In this context, trying to instruct a conventional pedagogy of “correctness” will inhibit the students’ abilities to respond in future rhetorical situations. Hence, Bastian illustrates, that from a pragmatic point of view, disrupting the conventions is more essential. A group that is congruous for this task of developing students’ rhetorical knowledge and flexibility is NNEST of writing. Building on Bastian’s observations about the needs of twenty-first-century composition and rhetoric students, this next section explores what Adler-Kassner and Wardle define as “threshold concepts,” and how NNEST of writing can enhance the field’s ability to impart these concepts to its students.

Threshold Concepts

In 2015, Adler-Kassner and Wardle attempted to articulate “what we might call the content of composition: the questions, the kinds of evidence and materials” that define the field (Yancey xviii). Building on economists Erik Meyer and Ray Land’s articulations of threshold concepts that are necessary for a person to master their field, Adler-Kassner, Wardle, and many other scholars identify numerous ways of thinking that need to be encouraged in composition classrooms if students are to write well. If composition and rhetoric is not a field focused on thesis, form, style, and correctness, then what is the field focused on?

With their many contributors, Adler-Kassner and Wardle identify five overarching concepts as the core of composition and rhetoric: 1) writing is a social and rhetorical activity; 2) writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms; 3) writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies; 4) all writers have more to learn; and 5) writing is a cognitive ability. Stressing that these concepts are not “how to” instructions

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regarding writing, Adler-Kassner and Wardle instead state that the concepts can inform instructors' curriculum and assessment (9). The concepts provide tools for instructors to use in order to consider whether their assignments and assessments "act out" what the field generally agrees assignments should be teaching and assessments should be measuring. While stating that their list is by no means definitive, Adler-Kassner and Wardle have found their approach to be warmly received within the composition and rhetoric communities—even as it is critiqued (e.g., MLA 2016 "Troubling Threshold Concepts in Composition Studies"; CCCC 2017 "Transfer, Habits of Mind, and Threshold Concepts: Trends Redefining the Field"). They, too, have participated in a critique, editing an assessment of these threshold concepts in *(Re)Considering What We Know*.

NNEST of writing are perfectly suited to teach American students writing since all these threshold concepts involve metacognition, thinking critically about how and what we write. As individuals who are always in situations of negotiating language (Leonard 228; Canagarajah), NNEST are in some ways superior to native speakers for generating curriculum and teaching in writing classes. Whether they have identified these processes of metacognition as "threshold concepts" or not, NNEST have considerable experience with them. As people who live in the United States with a variety of backgrounds, NNEST are experienced with negotiating language within their encounters with new cultures, challenges, and ways of thinking. To manage, they continually need to respond to changing rhetorical situations, using critical thinking skills and logical approaches to arguments. Therefore, rather than considering bilingualism as a taboo or hindrance in a U.S. college composition course, universities need to recognize that NNEST of writing can be an asset, particularly regarding threshold concepts.

To support this claim regarding NNEST of writing's ideal positioning for teaching the threshold concepts (and at the risk of not heeding Adler-Kassner and Wardle's advice of not using these concepts as a list), we want to briefly overview the five meta-threshold concepts and a few of the ways in which NNEST of writing are well-positioned to teach lessons involving these concepts. Through their experiences, NNEST of writing have internalized many of these concepts, and they can use their knowledge and experiences to model their practice for students and to create curriculum based on that knowledge and experience.

NNEST and Threshold Concepts

The first of the threshold concepts, "writing is a social and rhetorical activity," is a concept that NNEST of writing are able to help students within the United States perceive. As Canagarajah observes, NNEST have the ability to switch from one language to another depending on with whom they are talking: "Multilingual people always make adjustments to each other as they modify their accent or syntax to facilitate

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communication ... they come with psychological and attitudinal resources, such as patience, tolerance, and humanity, to negotiate the difference of interlocutors” (*Place* 593). Because of their experience recognizing their varying social and rhetorical situations, NNEST of writing can facilitate U.S. students in recognizing this also. For one thing, merely by being in the class, the NNEST of writing are forcing students to acknowledge that the class is what Mary Louise Pratt terms a “contact zone,” or a space “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34). With NNEST of writing in the classroom making explicit the nature of such a contact zone, students will be forced to recognize that norms are not universal, and that there is some social and rhetorical negotiating in order to communicate. Additionally, in this contact zone with the NNEST of writing in the position of power, students might be more willing to recognize their own intersectionality, and how they are always involved in social and rhetorical negotiations of texts. In other words, students who are accustomed to reading texts similar to those they have read throughout their academic lives must recognize that outside the monolingual classroom, they must negotiate numerous types of texts.

Exploring different types of texts with the NNEST of writing can also assist students to pass through the threshold of the second metaconcept: writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms. As we mentioned above, Horner et al. show how NNEST of writing can help composition students develop broader perspectives on research, and this widened perspective can also help students understand that writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms in a slightly different way. NNEST of writing could have U.S. students read academic texts in English from the NNEST’s native cultures. Through the experiences of reading either world language journals and books or translations of those journals and books, students will have a variety of first-hand experiences with ways in which writing enacts disciplinarity. For example, students might read the South Korean journal *Linguistic Research* published in English by the Kyung Hee Institute for the Study of Language and Information. Considering the articles written for a world culture for linguistic experts, students would have to ask themselves if the difficulty they might encounter with the text emanates from the journal’s home culture or home discipline. In other words, students might have difficulty grasping concepts—but not because of their differences in language but because of the complexity of the discipline of linguistics. Reading *Argumentation & Analyse du Discours* in English translation, students might recognize that within the field of rhetoric, international scholars raise similar questions to ones raised in the United States, and the structures of the arguments are much the same as those in rhetoric articles published in the United States. In addition to seeing how disciplines remain relatively stable across cultures, students could also identify the differences between rhetorical situations of cultures. For example, Horner et al. observe that a French

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article that Horner might have cited in his earlier work takes a stance regarding monolingualism similar to that held by “English only” advocates; however, the differences in the argument are significant because the French exigencies that promote this monolingualism are different than those that encourage English only arguments.

With U.S. students noticing their positionality within contact zones as they read non-American texts and work with NNEST of writing, the students would also be forced to perceive the third threshold concept: that writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies. The frustration students might feel with texts that do not enact familiar identities for the students can challenge the students’ identities. A NNEST of writing could help students parse cultural assumptions made in the text that differ from assumptions made in the United States. While this frustration could prompt resistance to the NNEST of writing, a NNEST of writing could also guide the students to understand the source of their frustration, and how that recognition can help them as writers. In this scenario, NNEST would differ from native English-speaking teachers who might share frustrations with students and not be able to unpack the different cultural assumptions.

Certainly, some who object to having NNEST in the first-year class might argue such a teacher might make the curriculum too difficult for students. Since the students would need to be continually negotiating meaning with their instructor, they would not have the ability to consider such a range of rhetorical situations. However, the fourth of the threshold concepts outlined by Adler-Kassner and Wardle is the writer’s need to understand how there is always more to learn with writing. Therefore, the NNEST of writing’s ability to prompt college-level students’ immediate recognition of the fourth of these threshold concepts, all writers have more to learn, would certainly be superior to the facile lessons of pre-packaged essay formats. While students with a passing score on the English Language Advanced Placement Test might think they have mastered what there is to know about writing, extensive research on the writing process, context, and transfer illustrates how much more these students need to know. While many students in FYC classes do recognize the writer’s ongoing learning process, too few do not. With NNEST of writing helping students negotiate social and rhetorical negotiations and identities, students would appreciate the need to continually think about writing.

And with this recognition of the continual need to think about writing, students in classes taught by NNEST of writing could better comprehend the fifth of the threshold concepts: writing is a cognitive ability. Working with their NNEST, composition students would have many different kinds of practice in rhetoric and would have experience with negotiating language differences. They would not become entrenched in one particular means of creating texts, a habit that Chris Anson notes can be particularly limiting for students. As Anson discusses, entrenchment can often result when students experience too much

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familiarity—and a good NNEST could provide students strategies while challenging students to think differently and not rely on familiar concepts.

These five metacognitive concepts are, however, not the sum total of the threshold concepts. As writers embracing the concepts, Adler-Kassner and Wardle have continued to explore these ideas and listened to suggestions regarding additional threshold concepts, and NNEST of writing are no less able to help students with these. The most relevant of these additional threshold concepts is “literacy is a sociohistorical phenomenon with the potential to liberate or oppress.” As NNEST of writing have continually been oppressed through various biases and histories of colonialism, they are certainly experienced with this concept and can provide American students with first-hand narratives. Additionally, as NNEST of writing work with their students, they can illustrate the fluidity of this sociohistorical phenomenon by using their abilities to liberate the U.S. classroom of biases while liberating U.S. students from their entrenchment in the belief in American norms as universal.

Aside from excelling in instilling the threshold concepts for North American students, NNEST of writing excel in teaching technical aspects of the English language. For example, Ping Li claims L2 speakers (people who do not have English as their native language) have more cognitive control and mental flexibilities with English than do monolingual speakers (512). Medgyes also notes NNEST of writing’s superior insightfulness regarding language. Within his chart on differences between NNEST of writing and native ones, Medgyes observes NNEST of writing focus more on grammar rules and accuracy than do native teachers, who focus more on fluency and colloquial registers (435). Louisa Buckingham’s examination of the English academic writing competence of Turkish students in Turkey might appear to contradict Li’s and Medgyes’ research. Buckingham notes many ways these students were disadvantaged as they composed in English. Yet Buckingham also noted that these Turkish students were aware of their limitations and regularly used rhetorical and linguistic strategies to overcome their limitations and disadvantages. Thus, this research illustrates that NNEST of writing not only have the technical writing skills many of their critics feel they lack, but they also have the metacognitive abilities required to create strong texts.

Conclusion

This overview of the threshold concepts, and its discussion of NNEST of writing’s unique position to help students develop metacognitive and rhetorical awareness, is not by any means conclusive, especially since there is so much to explore regarding the interrelationship between NNEST of writing and the experiences of the threshold concepts. However, this overview argues that while there may be stylistic and rhetorical differences between the English of NNEST of writing and native U.S. instructors and students, these differences—when approached

through the lens of threshold concepts—can benefit the students, NNEST of writing, the academic community, and the world.

In all these threshold concepts, and in the theorizing of writing from generations earlier (e.g., Murray), writing pedagogy concentrates as much on the process of writing as on the finished product. And in this process, students are expected to employ their working brains to anticipate, think, analyze, argue, and criticize. In pedagogical theory for the composition class, the main foci are the texts' rhetorical situations, exigencies, and constraints. In other words, what composition theory ultimately prioritizes for students is the development of their thinking. As Keith Grant-Davie states, "Teaching our writing students to examine the rhetorical situation as a set of interesting influences from which rhetoric arises and which rhetoric in turn influence, is therefore, one of the most important things we can do" (268). Teaching students to respond to the exigency of situation with accurate analyses of pros and cons of various ideas ushers in the fundamental function of writing—a function that students will use throughout their lives in whatever situations they encounter. The writing teacher, in this sense, must have acumen to help students react to the urgencies of situations with analysis of situations' constraints and potential audiences. With this acumen, the teacher can then help the student engage in the process of the writing as much or more than the teacher can by helping the student create the product itself.

Though this notion of threshold concepts of writing in composition is upheld in the field, the notion seems to be abandoned when the question of the NNEST of writing is raised. The potentials of NNEST of writing are considered doubtful, and they, whether instructors or GTAs, are relegated to marginal labor positions within the academic community.

We would like that not to occur. Though the threshold concepts can be amended and extended, we believe in their potential to encourage thinking in students within the first-year classroom. We also believe NNEST of writing are particularly well suited to teach U.S. students lessons on threshold concepts. Embracing these ideas addresses many problems that face our discipline. As the CCCC's "Position Statement on Globalization" states:

On one hand, colleges and universities may recognize, respect, and respond to the complexities of globalization by reimagining administration, teaching, and research. On the other hand, they may use the pretext of globalization in a limited fashion to enhance institutional reputations, identify new sources of revenue, and entrench received standards.

The refusal to accept NNEST of writing or to exclusively use them for ESL classes is an example of such a pretext of globalization. NNEST continually face a lack of respect when first-year programs refuse to

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recognize the contributions NNEST can make, or when first-year programs refuse to address the complexities of globalization. As this article illustrates, NNEST of writing can offer rich pedagogies for all students in first-year writing classrooms across the United States—even without too much reimagining of administration, teaching, or research. The theme of globalization needs to be embraced and internalized by college administration, faculty, students, and the United States' first-year writing classes. Such classes are the laboratory of “thinking our thinking” and “thinking other’s thinking.” Unless we can internalize the objective of the threshold concepts and respect the identity of NNEST in writing and composition courses, our classes will be promoting the teaching of cookery rather than of rhetoric.

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