Deceptively Simple: Writing's Answer to the Mobius Strip

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A colleague of mine, who directs faculty development at the community college a few miles from my university, asked me recently to talk to members of her school's content-area faculty about methods to address a statewide mandate requiring that all their courses incorporate writing. Because I prepare English/Language Arts teacher candidates in methods of teaching writing to high school students, she figured I might have some tricks up my sleeve to assist faculty with this curricular challenge. Through this mandate, the state is nobly embracing the well-established notion that writing must be emphasized across the curriculum. At the same time, it is trying to achieve WAC "on the cheap" by circumventing the associated (and costly) commitment to smaller class sizes, institutionalized professional development, and a systematic support system. Soliciting my assistance was a way to support teachers in fulfilling this mandate, one class at a time.

Integrating writing instruction into the content-area classroom poses a variety of challenges for instructors at all levels. Beyond the need to embrace a new skill set involving writing instruction, there is the resistance of students (and faculty) who find a disconnection between content-area and literacy learning. Teachers at the secondary and the post-secondary

levels are familiar with students who complain, "This isn't English, so why must I worry about my writing?" Increasingly, students demand immediately practical learning. And, although we might lament the resulting "commodification" of learning we see among our students, understanding their concerns is vital if we are to convince them of the importance of writing in all their courses and prospective careers. However, developing a method for engaging resistant (sometimes even antagonistic) students in discipline-specific writing is simpler than one might imagine if we privilege less the literacy product and *more* the literacy learner--if we, in short, begin from the student's perspective. In all my classes—composition, English education, and American Literature--I do just that with what I reductively call the "Stick Student." I think of the Stick Student as education's answer to the Mobius Strip, a tool deceptive in its elegant simplicity. Although perhaps not so encompassing in its application as August Mobius' twisted paper the equally minimal Stick Student is another kind of a simple visual that opens intriguing doors for students. And, as the Mobius Strip demonstrates, when one can visualize, the applications are seemingly endless.

Multimodality in the Headlines

There is abundant and compelling research from a variety of sources and disciplines about the value of using visuals in teaching and learning. Not surprisingly, visual literacy has become one of the "hot" new literacies with teachers who increasingly incorporate multimodal texts into the classroom. A variety of the composition textbooks touted by publishers reflects this emphasis: Costanzo's *The Writer's Eye: Composition in a Multimodal Age* (2007) is a recent example, and Ruszkiewicz, Anderson, and Friend's 2006 *Beyond Words: reading and writing in a visual age*

[sic], has already been highly revised for the second edition. Alongside the skills and processes students require for "reading" and "writing" texts, this new breed of textbooks offers instruction on "seeing," "visualizing," and "designing." And, in the same way that composition textbooks have become multimodal, so, too, are the corresponding pedagogies. Notions of multiliteracy and multimodality are in direct response to the recognition that language--spoken and written--is but one of the multiple representational modes through which meaning is made, distributed, interpreted, and revised. Cary Jewitt explains in "Multimodality and Literacy in School Classrooms (2008)," "Multimodality attends to meaning as it is made through the situated configurations across image, gesture, gaze, body posture, sound, writing, music, speech, and so on. From a multimodal perspective, image, action, and so forth are referred to as *modes*, as organized sets of semiotic resources for meaning making" (243). Multimodality, in recognizing that all modes contribute to the meaning of a text, reflects a shift from the dominance of the linguistic modes of writing and speech.

Despite the *au courant* moniker, the ideologies underpinning "multimodal pedagogy" are familiar, rooted in the notions that literacy involves the transaction between the reader and the text within an epistemic community. These are the same notions that we inherited from John Dewey via Louise Rosenblatt through Maxine Greene and that now are central to the work of compositionists and educators at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. In particular, multimodality acknowledges that the full range of literacy practices is interactive and complex. The responses of scholar-teachers tell the story. Kathleen Blake Yancy describes students' "textured literacy" as their ability to use and combine a variety of texts, including print, spoken words, visuals, and digital processes. Meanwhile, for one such as David O'Brien, novice

writers practice a form of composition that he calls "multimediating" (43). Even while we wrestle with what terms accurately circumscribe what we mean, all such responses drive to a crucial question: where is one to start in the actual classroom?

Mediating Multiple Modes

To be sure, multimodality in the writing classroom is nothing new. The New London Group (NLG), in their manifesto "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures (1996)," set a kind of educational stage by envisioning a pedagogy composed of four components that prepare students for and incorporates multiple modes and multiple literacies. Gone was a linear model; rather, the NLG saw writing components related "in complex ways. Elements of each may occur simultaneously while at different times one or the other will predominate, and all of them are repeatedly revisited at different levels." This multiliteracy pedagogy places a multimodal twist on familiar practices. Briefly summarized, the four components include the following: (i) situated practice--that is, addressing issues related to students' social locations and integrating a variety of texts from these spaces into instruction; (ii) overt instruction, which is a systematic and analytic introduction for students to the explicit metalanguages or "grammars" that will allow them both to make meaning and to discuss the process of making meaning; (iii) critical framing, which involves identifying and analyzing the socio-cultural contexts and values implicit and explicit in how knowledge is structured and used and how meaning is made; and (iv) transformed practice, where students use their learning to reconsider and reconstruct texts and knowledge practices in new ways and different contexts.

Although the NLG components etch a recursive process, the first component, "situated practice," is of special consideration if students are to attend to overt instruction, be prepared frame texts critically, and, ultimately, be able to use what they learn to transform their knowledge practices. Situated practice, as the NLG describes, "recruit[s] learners' previous and current experiences, as well as their extra-school communities and discourses, as an integral part of the learning experience" (33). In their "pedagogy of multiliteracies," the NLG's call for immersing students in "meaningful practices within a community of learners" of diverse skills and experiences (33) brings us directly to our classrooms. On a practical level, our students draw on the variety of modal resources available to them to make meaning in particular contexts. Obviously, the more resources (and opportunities to use them) students have, the more likely they will be to transcend the formulaic. Multimodal pedagogy plays its part in this challenge, looking both to exploit students' existing resources and to offer new modes for making meaning. It begins by acknowledging that individual and group learning needs are multiple and require differentiated learning tools. Consequently, the focus of multimodal pedagogy is the learning *process* rather than the learning of *content*, with a goal of creating self-directed, self-starting learners. It is a pedagogy that introduces students to the representational modes available to them--particularly nonlinguistic representations--in order to support their learning across content areas.

As important as the multiple literacies students practice are the discourse communities where they originate. Many of the literacies students practice originate at home or within their social or cultural communities, emerging from their interacting with peers or responding to popular culture. These outside influences are the source of the "literacy capital" students bring to the classroom (Obidah and Marsh, 107). Yet, too often, this capital and these literacies are

devalued (or worse, dismissed) in an educational environment that continues to privilege a print-centric approach to teaching. We do so at our peril. As Jennifer Obidah and Tyson Marsh contend, teachers should rather "create spaces in their classrooms where students' literacy currency can be showcased and built on to enhance their academic endeavors" (108). By integrating outside literacies, interests, and texts into the classroom, in other words, we can better exploit the sophisticated literacy skills students possess but do not always recognize, engage students in academic content by connecting it to their authentic experiences and interests, and prepare our students to examine the larger, socio-cultural contexts that influence how meaning is constructed.

Authentic Assignments

In school-based writing assignments, situated practice can begin with invention--or more familiarly, pre-writing--during which students locate a topic addressing a pre-established subject. The goal is to guide students to locate a subject that contextualizes school-based knowledge in terms of their social, cultural, and material communities. Those same communities, moreover, often develop skills that students do not recognize they possess and, as I mentioned earlier, are not often valued in school. At issue is what is often called "authentic experience": by using students' own materials, we as teachers ready students to examine the larger socio-cultural contexts that influence how meaning is constructed. Our challenge begins, of course, with what we assign.

How we craft assignment prompts is as much a skill as how students answer them, and we do well to remind ourselves of this idea as we develop writing tasks. Broadly framed writing

tasks can be daunting and disastrous for students and teachers alike. This fear often compels teachers towards closed-ended prompts that are uninspiring and, in effect, "student proof" (they are also the easiest prompts to plagiarize). However, if time is taken at the front end of the writing process, during the invention or pre-writing phase, teachers can ensure students are prepared to negotiate the broadly framed assignment, and students can be confident in their preparation as they tackle what can be exciting, engaging, and personally relevant writing. Pedagogical theory meets student reflection, and we may begin to explore the possibilities with the most basic and minimalist--and perhaps most universal--of tools: the stick figure, or in my class, the Stick Student.

The Simple--But Not Simplistic--Stick Student

Regardless of our pedagogy, multiple invention strategies are bound to figure in introducing students to the writing process. Some are as uncomplicated as free-writing or webbing. Others rely on questioning--for example, the familiar "Journalist's 5Ws and H" and, other more complex, like Aristotle's *topoi*. It is important that students practice these techniques and other invention strategies at least one time (in the spirit of our parents commanding that we take at least a bite of Brussels sprouts) in order to locate one or some combination of strategies that well serve them during pre-writing. The Stick Student, rather than replace these approaches, can precede and/or supplement them: it is designed to aid students in locating a topic to which they can apply other invention strategies. It is an approach to learning that is independent of content, exploits students' familiarity with visuals, and, ultimately capitalizes on their "social locations," all in the service of school-based writing tasks. The assignment's charm lies in its simplicity, and,

as more and more teachers confront the challenge of students with a variety of learning abilities mainstreamed into their classes, simple *and* effective tasks are increasingly important tools.

Perhaps more important than how we use it in our classrooms, the Stick Student is an invention strategy that students can implement in courses across content areas. Writing teachers well know that students have trouble transferring skills across disciplines even as they *seem* familiar with invention practices. As much as we might cajole them, students rarely look to the *topoi* as they pre-write (if they pre-write at all!) for an econ assignment or a sociology paper. The Stick Student, because it feels more like doodling than an "invention strategy," is likely to transfer as a kind of universal invention tool, applicable in all classes and throughout their academic careers.

Before we consider in detail the Stick Student, it is beneficial to recall the relationship between images and words defining our earliest literacy experiences. Discussing with students how they learned to read through the combination of words and pictures evokes memories of favorite stories and beloved childhood picture books. Students often recall, quite accurately, that, as they progressed through grammar school, the books they read contained fewer and fewer pictures. As a result, they are not surprised when presented with studies that reveal how, as students move through middle and high school, interest in reading wanes decidedly. Further, considering how visuals are incorporated in the content of the various subjects they study (for example, photographs in history, charts in science, tables in math, etc.) convinces students how images can help them as they learn new material. Finally, surveying the kinds of visual tools or graphic organizers with which they are familiar--for example, cluster maps, webs, T-charts, and Venn diagrams--reveals how using visual tools in conjunction with reading and writing helps us

remember concepts, identify the relationships among ideas, and understand abstract thinking. Faced with these ideas, students recognize how visual representation lends to written expression.

The Stick Student in Slow Motion

The best way to explain the Stick Student is to share how I introduce the task in the classroom. All one needs is the outline of the familiar Stick Person and a broadly framed writing assignment, especially one for a class in a *different* discipline from English or writing. This kind of entry point reminds students that the composing skills taught in the English or writing class are, in essence, the *same* skills they should employ for writing assignments across the curriculum. Of course, such requires cooperation with content-area teachers, asking them to embrace the idea of permitting students to work across their studies. For instance, in working with an American History class at my university, a colleague shared a selection of familiar writing prompts:

- What was the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation and what effects did it have on the North and the South?
- Compare and contrast Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis as wartime presidents.
- Evaluate the growing political discord over slavery and the rise of sectionalism from 1787 until 1860.
- Trace the political processes from 1844 to 1861 by which conflict exploded into secession and war.

- Identify and explain the importance or significance in United States history of the following (a list of a dozen events).
- Compare and contrast the battle of Shiloh with any two other major Civil War battles.

Many of these assignments are unit questions provided in school-based texts or teacher's guides, prompts that have been developed for a "universal" or collective student, a kind of Joe/Jane College. Moreover, these prompts rely on the kinds of "patterns of development" presented in first-year writing: causal analysis, comparison, and process analysis. Well-trained students respond accordingly, but whether these narrow topics are truly engaging on a personal level, though, is dubious.

In presenting more flexible prompts, we must remind students that, even though teachers do not pose *explicit* questions, there are always *implicit* questions. Those questions can be bundled into one: "What can I say about [the topic] in order to wow the audience [the instructor], convince him/her that I have something engaging to say, and earn praise [and a good grade]?" To this challenge, students must narrow their focus to engage not just their teacher-reader but themselves. Prefabrication need not apply. Indeed, Kelly Gallagher argues, in his 2009 text *Readicide* (his study about how school "kills" student interest especially in reading and writing), "Authentic interest is generated when students are given the opportunity to delve deeply into an interesting idea" (10). The problem is thus twofold: to ground curriculum in substantive materials from history or science or mathematics and to encourage students to use their learning to reconsider and reconstruct texts and knowledge practices in new ways and different contexts.

With a prompt such as the Civil War example, my modeling begins not with the Stick Student but with two more traditional, academically acceptable "pre-writing" tools: a simple

cluster map and the Journalist's Questions. Using the Civil War as the subject, I place the words "Civil War" in the center circle of a cluster diagram. Next, using the 5Ws and H, I ask each student to complete the second level of circles. The simple act of completing this chart provides, at the very least, *six* ways to begin to locate a topic within the subject. Having students complete these circles independently results in fairly consistent and expected responses:

Who: Slaves, Lincoln, Grant, Lee, Davis

What: Slavery, cotton, states' rights, the Union, the Confederacy

When: dates between 1860 and 1865, sometimes specific dates, such as the Emancipation Proclamation or the Fugitive Slave Act or Lincoln's Gettysburg or Second Inaugural Address

Where: Gettysburg, Atlanta, Vicksburg

Why: Slavery, economics, state's rights

How: Secession, emancipation

For some students, this sequence alone will inspire topics that are engaging and personally satisfying, and they are ready to proceed with invention (although I require they complete the Stick Student just in case). For those unmoved by these questions, we turn to Stick Student, placing each student in the center of the discussion. Most students respond with quizzical squints, and more than a few students have reminded me that they have previously been taught to disdain the "I" in academic writing. I reply that a style element is not the same as authorial tone, and compelling tone derives only from truly being invested in--if not inspired by--a topic. (Well-

considered letters of protest are a good example.) Quizzical squints, most of the time, turn into understanding nods. Then, I reveal my graphic of the Stick Student, explaining, "Say this is you":

Students are instructed to create links from Stick Student to words that indicate their interests--not simply school interests but (and) especially outside-of-school interests as well. I model this using "Stick Jeri" (i.e., me), to which I attach my personal interests. I list animals, music, and literature. I add cooking and biking. I like to read old letters and documents. I am really interested in women's issues. When I've finished, Stick Jeri is surrounded by bubbles that list the variety of my interests. At this point, as I explain to my students, my question becomes, "How can I tie my love of animals or music to the Civil War? What about my interest in literature or cooking or biking women's issues?" I begin the invention process by consider my options. Quickly, I eliminate biking as a “tough call” and literature as boring because it is what I do all the time. I decide to begin my research with animals and the role of animals in the Civil War. Using my classroom computer, I let my fingers do the walking on the internet and get a sense of what role animals might have played in the war by turning to my preferred source for all quick-and-initial research: Google. Typing "animals + Civil War," I find a few interesting sites, including "Animal Mascots of the Civil War," "Civil War Horses," and "Horses of Civil War Leaders." The writing journey has begun:

Fort Ward Museum - *Animal* Mascots of the *Civil War*

Animal Mascots of the *Civil War*. Introduction | Dogs | Horses | "Old Abe"|

Other 2 and 4 foot friends Units with *Animal* Names | Sources of Information

History of the *Civil War*

The *Civil War* was noted for many things including its troop mascots.

Mascots ranged from the sublime to the bizarre. Many types of *animals*

held the elite ...

Civil War* Horses and other *Animals

News and Articles on *Civil War* Horses and other *Animals*.

Horses Of The *Civil War* Leaders

Dec 23, 2001 ... This was done and my father purchased the *animal* and kept him until he

died, which was long after the *Civil War*. ...

There are some interesting ideas here, but, I tell my students, my "hits" are not really moving me. (Too many of the animals were killed, which is very sad business for an animal lover.) I give it another search with food and discover victuals for Civil War soldiers were spare and pretty unappetizing:

A Taste of *Civil War Food*

Mar 8, 2006 **...** A historical society project researches and bakes the *foods* of *Civil War*

soldiers.

***Civil War Food* - What Union and Confederate Soldiers Ate**

Nov 22, 2006 ... Take the *Civil War*. *Civil War food* kept the soldiers fed and not much else. ... The other difference in *Civil War food* between the Union and [. . .]

I try my music bubble and find information about songbooks and sheet music. But, although I like music, I do not read music, nor do I play an instrument, and as my students often remind me, I am a really awful singer. So, this might be a little too challenging for me. Undaunted, I turn my attention to my "women's issues" bubble and Google "women in the Civil War." (Here, I pause to remind students that an excellent tactic when thinking about topics is to consider other courses, connecting what they are studying or have studied in one discipline to their current work.) In reviewing the responses to my query, I come across a familiar name, Elizabeth Cady Stanton:

***Women* of the American *Civil War* Era**

Women of the American *Civil War* Clara Barton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dorathea Dix.

A*merican**civilwar**.com/**women/women**.html*

In my mind, I associate Cady Stanton with the women's suffrage movement, *not* the Civil War. Looking a little further into Stanton, I discover that that many other women who fought to free the slaves also fought for women's right to vote. In fact, it looks as though they learned about civic activism as abolitionists first. Suddenly, I have landed on an intriguing (to me) Civil War

topic--namely, how women moved from one social issue to the next given their limited place in society. My task becomes, then, adapting this topic to the demands of my history instructor.

A bit more focused, I can return to those 5W and H questions and apply them to my topic:

Who were the women involved in abolitionism?

What did they do as abolitionists? What skills did the develop? What did their husbands think? What did society think?

When did they find time? When did they become activists? When did the suffrage movement really begin?

Where were they most active? Where did they write or publish?

Why was the cause important to them?

How did they get from issues of slavery to issues of women's suffrage?

My initial research leads me to a "working topic" for my essay, which I frame in the form of a question: "What skills did women who worked as abolitionists develop in lobbying for freedom for the slaves and how did they use those same to fight for their own freedoms in the women's suffrage movement?" The answer to this question becomes the working thesis to my essay: "Although women did not get the vote until 1920, their experiences as abolitionists, fighting for the rights of slaves, were useful in their fight for suffrage because they provided women with the skills needed to advocate for their rights and revealed to women that they had a public role to

fulfill." This thesis will guide me through my research, for it makes clear the points I must address and support I shall need in order to validate my argument:

- Some of the issues regarding the rights of slaves were aligned with issues regarding the rights of women.
- After the war, women used the skills they honed in the abolition movement to fight for women's suffrage
- Their public role was unusual because, during the 19th century, were confined to the home
- As abolitionists they moved outside the home into the public sphere
- They developed a number of skills in their work as abolitionists

Clearly, I acknowledge to my students, this topic is a far cry from comparing Jefferson Davis with Abraham Lincoln or comparing First Bull Run with Antietam. It does not directly examine the effects of the Emancipation Proclamation, nor does it trace the dissolution of the Union. It does, however, require that I identify the issues raised by abolitionists--issues central to the Civil War--and to address how those issues were made public. It examines the role of women in the 19th century, in particular how public and private spheres were delineated and gendered, and it compares abolitionism against women's suffrage. It allows me, as a writer, to engage the ideas of the period in ways that speak to my interests. It does not ignore those ideas or dismiss them; rather, it contextualizes them in authentic and engaging ways. Now, I tell my students, it is *your* turn.

Rethinking Content's Status

Having students create Stick Student and develop topics of personal interest--the heart of situated practice--requires that teachers reject the practice that learning stems from "hard" information such as dates, statistics, or terminology. Rather, situated practice means going *behind* the seemingly quantitative: what stories do facts tell? Stick Students weld facts (what the NLG calls "grammar") with narrative analysis by asking students to interrogate the socio-cultural contexts in which knowledge is constructed. Thus, my Civil War example does not imply that we reject *in toto* the grammars that enable us to engage the ideas of the historical period; rather, Stick Students foster the application of facts to what we learn about essential questions about freedom, agency, and domesticity during the 19th century.

Incorporating students' literacies does not mean that students' mastery of content is obsolete--far from it. Pedagogy is not content. Indeed, in the NLG's approach, instruction and activities scaffold student learning by offering "explicit information" and "guiding practice" while "recruiting what the learner already knows and has accomplished." Part and parcel of instruction is introducing students to the discourse of practice that defines a particular discipline. Elizabeth Moje and Deborah Dillon iterate this point in their "Adolescent Identities as Demanded by Science Classroom Discourse Communities (2006)" by acknowledging that each discipline is a discourse community. As such, they contend that part of the teacher's responsibility is to understand the subjectivities students bring to the classroom and recognizing that each discipline represents but one more discourse community that students must negotiate (85). Disciplinary discourses that ask students to think, speak, act, or talk like a member of a discipline--like a

writer or a mathematician or a scientist or a historia--represent strange new worlds to students. For learning to take place, there must be a balance between the students' identities and the "identities demanded by content-area classrooms" (85). This process starts with acknowledging students' identities and communicative practices, and then teaching students the communicative norms and practices of the disciplines.

For many teachers, an approach such as Stick Student subtly changes what constitutes knowledge and learning. In defining his notion of "readicide," Gallagher writes that it is a noun for "the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in school" (2). I fear those practices also induce "writicide" and, worse, "learnicide." Only by engaging students in tasks that at once interest and challenge them can we move them below the surface level of engagement, manifest in regurgitated lists of facts or the dispensing of information in uninspired and formulaic responses, to deeper engagement with ideas. Gallagher's notions echo the idea of "disidentification" posited by Joy Reed and her colleagues in "The Motivated Reader, Engaged Writer: The Role of Motivation in the Literate Acts of Adolescents (2004)." The authors conclude, "how quickly students will disidentify when they are asked to do school tasks they do not believe are interesting, useful, or necessary" (274). Although allowing students a larger voice in connecting classroom content to the their out-of-school experiences may come off as "pandering", only when teachers fail to use the connection as an opportunity for deeper learning do assignments devolve into more amusement than inquiry. Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis explain, "Any successful theory of pedagogy must be based on views about how the human mind works in society and in classrooms, as well as about the nature of teaching and learning" (30). All human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural, and

material contexts, and to ignore either these contexts or the communities with which students engage is to create an inauthentic classroom experience.

Working the Room

Once students understand the associative process of Stick Student, my role becomes as dynamic as the explorations of students. I must, in a phrase, "work the room" while students complete their drawings, asking them about their outside interests and prompting them to see these as valid and important ways to connect with school-based learning. The classroom has not always been welcoming to these aspects of students' lives, and they are suspicious of my motives. For teachers, who must read the essays students produce, the rewards are inestimable. Consider the following essays delivered to me by students in a general education American literature course. The subject of the broadly framed assignment was simple: "Write an essay on some aspect of Mark Twain's novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*." My only requirements were that (1) that students root their essays in textual evidence and (2) that students submit their research questions and working theses for my review prior to writing their essay. Among the essays proposed and submitted: how the superstitions that shaped Jim's identity were representative of African superstitions practiced by slaves in the American South; a paper titled "The Road to Cairo (and Beyond)," in which a student studied escape routes from the South and the use of symbols in slave quilts as keys and roadmaps to freedom; and a history, inspired by the fate of the King and the Duke, of the practice of the tarring and feathering of confidence men and others. Some of the English majors in the course chose traditional topics addressing character development. A History major considered how the novel was positioned in terms of the Civil

War. For these students, however, their Stick Students counted "literature" and "history" among their interests.

More than most lesson ideas, a procedure such as Stick Student brings us to this fundamental point: our job is to help students identify and employ what they know, connect prior learning to new, content-based learning, and then, from the two, create new ways of translating their knowledge. The result, the NLG nicely articulates, is that students emerge ready to "to participate fully in public, community, and economic life" (9). It is this principle that makes learning relevant. The NLG continues,

> To be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes that students bring to learning. Curriculum now needs to mesh with different subjectivities, and with their attendant languages, discourses, and registers, and use these as a resource for learning." (18)

Opening essay topics to responses that "recruit" students' "interests" or "subjectivities" requires that we address the *praxis* of literacy learning in their day-to-day classrooms. We must, in other words, truly walk the talk of reading and writing across the curriculum. The rewards are obvious. Rather than mounds of papers (some of suspect origins) on defined topics, students will often produce genuinely engaging--and better-written--work. Everyone wins.

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