Students of Color in the Writing Classroom: An Annotated Bibliography

**Carolyn Evans &
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Preface

This Technical Report is the second in a series of informal papers published by the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing at the University of Minnesota. The Center annually funds projects at the University that attempt to study any of the following topics:

- characteristics of writing across the University's curriculum;

- status reports on students' writing ability at the University;

- the connections between writing and learning in all fields;

- the characteristics of writing beyond the academy;

- the effects of ethnicity, race, class, and gender on writing; and

- curricular reform through writing.

We make informal reports on the projects, such as this bibliography compiled by Carolyn Evans and Carol Miller of General College, available directly from grant holders in the form of technical reports. More elaborate reports and extended discussions, refereed by outside critics, are available through our monograph series.

In this case, Evans' and Miller's bibliography provides background for a combination of several of these categories as they studied the writing histories of students of color, the conditions under which writing helped them to learn, and the conditions for curricular organization that might improve these students' chances for success. A companion report (No.1 in the series) outlines the research that was informed by this bibliography. In addition to Technical Reports No.1 and No.2, we expect to publish a fuller version of the work completed by Miller and Evans as a part of the Center's monograph series.

One of the Center's goals is to disseminate the results of its funded projects as broadly as possible within the University community and on a national level. We encourage discussion of the articles annotated by Evans and Miller.

Lillian Bridwell-Bowles, Series Editor
Susan Batchelder, Editor
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Introduction

This annotated bibliography of representative articles provides an overview of the evolving scholarly discussion concerning students of color in composition classrooms. It originated as one component of an interview study funded by the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing at the University of Minnesota. The bibliographical segment of that project included a review of composition scholarship and more general studies of student retention to seek areas of intersection that might indicate more effective programmatic and instructional practice affecting students of color as learning writers.

Two conclusions emerge from examination of these articles. One is that composition theory alone allows a limited understanding of the experience of students of color that may be augmented by other sources of information that make possible a more complete contextual profile. A second is that the developing theoretical frame of research may be summed up by noting changing and increasingly complex conceptualizations of the factors relating writing performance and cultural transition.

Ten years ago the discussion was consistently centered on the essentially ethnocentric goal of getting minority students (and the discussion almost always focused exclusively upon African-American students) to "acquire Standard American English." Nembhard' s (1983) article represents a sort of micro-example of a significant current of that discussion. She identified the issue as teaching African-American dialect speakers to write Standard English, acknowledged the debate about whether insistence upon "standards" is a racist denigration of African-American cultural linguistic heritage, and noted bidialecticalism as an alternative in which students retain their own expression but acquire the standard form as a second language. Her conclusion, however, eventually

reinforced an ethnocentric perspective in its unqualified judgment that "[t]oday's automated society does not have room for the man or woman who lacks skill in the language of education" (78).

Writing proficiency at this point in the developing dialogue was generally and simplistically equated with the absence of major syntactic and mechanical infractions. Students' deficiencies were frequently attributed to the "double bind" of confusion resulting from students' inability to clarify simultaneous instruction about the need to exhibit competence in Standard English and to write from their own experience in their own voices.

Research over the last ten years shows an evolution of the terminology of the discussion—from, for example, "Standard English" to "academic discourse" to "culture of power"—and its significance from human as well as institutional perspectives. One piece of that evolution is the emergence of the social-contextual argument and objection to models of universal stages of cognitive development that equate basic writers' difficulty in producing "college-level" writing with cognitive deficiency. Alternatively, connections between construction of discourse and culture-specific thought processes have been increasingly grounded in the theoretical works of Vygotsky, Labov, Bakhtin, and others, who propose variations in cognitive styles and conceptualize an interactive rather than linear model of language learning.

Holloway (1980), for example, addresses the importance of cultural background as a critical factor in what students bring to the educational environment, suggests a frame of reference conducive to producing good writing, and contends that teachers need to provide students with instructional tasks that give them access to this frame of

reference. Kogen (1982) assumes the social-contextual position by asserting students'

natural abilities to think and reason and contending that they simply need to learn to do

this within the particular conventions of the academic arena. Bizzell (1982) recognizes

the importance of both cognitive and social-contextual theories but emphasizes the

challenges presented by multiple discourse communities.

       Coles and Wall (1987) illustrate a further phase of the scholarly discussion in

their warming of the "danger of reductiveness in the social contextual approach" (299),

which casts the university in the role of socializing students to its empowering but

monolithic discourse. Their caution is against the obvious red flags in metaphors that

involve initiation, assimilation, and accommodation, and that put the responsibility for

change almost entirely upon students.

       A significant correction in the apparent direction of the discussion is represented

by Lisa Delpit's influential 1988 article, "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in

Educating Other People' s Children." One of her theses addresses the "schism between

liberal educational movements and non-white, non-middle class teachers and

communities" (282). She suggests that, from the point of view of many African-

American educators, "progressive" instructional strategies are seen as resulting

in perhaps unintentional but still racist outcomes that insure that minorities are denied

access to the dwindling pool of jobs.

       In an interesting and somewhat circular refraction of the earlier debate, she argues

that "[t]eachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that 'product' is not

important" (287), and that the directives for producing that academic product must be

made explicit. The distinction, however, between Delpit's position and that of others who

advocate acquisition of Standard English is critical: though students must be taught the codes needed to participate in the "culture of power," they must also be informed about the arbitrariness and power relationships they represent.

This bibliography also includes selections of more general scholarship on retention, which usefully supplements composition theory in bringing attention to the cultural history and context of students of color in a primarily Eurocentric system. Ogbu's (1990) work on variables of cross-cultural differences contends that the historical context of ethnicity is central to the student's perception of possibility for success and subsequent performance. For some minority groups and individuals, cultural-language differences encountered in academic settings are barriers to be overcome; others consciously or unconsciously perceive the characteristics of their culturally grounded discourse as markers of group identity to be maintained. Scott (1986) and Locust (1988) particularize Ogbu's assertions among Native Americans. Miller (1990) suggests global institutional directives necessary to create more inclusive and effectual educational environments for students of color.

Perspectives of cultural diversity applied to writing performance demand acknowledgment of how the social and cultural histories and identities of students of color more particularly interface with monocultural educational systems. That acknowledgment is beginning to occur as more composition scholars now offer specific strategies and perspectives which direct pedagogy. Dean (1989), for example, highlights cultural transition as a factor of performance in academic environments and suggests inclusive classroom techniques. Ritchie (1989) focuses on how the workshop may

function as a medium for experiencing written language as a process of interactive negotiation.

This review indicates that much remains to be learned about how composition theory and instruction may be illuminated by consideration of more general issues affecting the academic performance of students of color. As composition teachers struggle with the complexities of instruction for all students that are both equitable and functional, it appears that research would be advanced by a clearer focus on two factors. One of these is the positioning that accompanies students into the writing environment and that affects their success and failure. Another need is development of educational models that explore objectives of cultural transaction rather than cultural assimilation.

Bibliography

Bizzell, Patricia. "Cognition, Convention, and Certainty: What We Need to Know about Writing." *Pre/Text* **3.3 (1982): 213-243.**

Bizzell calls for reconsideration of the relationship between thought and language in the pedagogy that governs composition classrooms. She distinguishes between the inner-directed and outer-directed theoretical camps to illustrate differing perspectives about what is relevant to composition studies. Inner-directed theorists believe that language primarily originates in cognitive skills and that fundamental structures of language can be taught. Outer-directed theorists, however, acknowledge the role of the social context and consider formal structures as reflecting the language of a particular discourse community. Since writing courses teach formal structures as the conventions of the discourse, students can think in complex ways if they understand the conventions.

Bizzell cites Flower and Hayes as important representatives of the inner-directed schools who provide a hierarchical and recursive model of how individuals compose which gives insight into students as problem solvers. Outer-directed theorists emphasize, on the other hand, students as problem solvers within discourse communities and see the planning and translating process as most problematic because translating is viewed as "pouring meaning," regardless of how the meaning exists before the pouring. Planning becomes most central to the process as the writer generates and organizes ideas before putting them into words. Language itself is not viewed as a generative force. Bizzel cites Vygotsky, who believes that a model that separates planning and translating is not useful for adult learners because these issues of thought and language are never separate in adult language use. Finally, Bizzell addresses Flower and Hayes' failure to see the generative

power of connections, "which is to say that their notion of conventions does not include the interpretative function for which I have been arguing" (229).

Bizzell concludes that to help learning writers, educators have the responsibility to "explain that their writing takes place in a community, and to explain what the community's conventions are" (230). If Flower and Hayes' model "describes the form of the composing process, the process cannot go on without the content which is knowledge of the conventions of discourse communities" (231). Given our pluralistic society and heterogeneous school community, not acknowledging the various discourse communities that create our student population ensures pedagogical choices that will affect our students unequally.

Coles, Nicholas and Susan V. Wall. "Conflict and Power in the Reader-Responses of Adult Basic Writers." *College English* 49.3 (1987): 298-314.

Coles and Wall address the tendency for textbooks and instructional strategies to view students entering educational settings as without personal histories. Textbooks tend to make abstractions of students, as though they are "unformed before they come to us" (298). Cognitive theorists equate a difficulty in producing college-level prose with difficulty in thinking and view students with writing deficits as being stuck at an early stage of cognitive development (299). According to Coles and Wall, however, students bring their backgrounds, their sources of motivation for college and life, and their knowledge to the work they will do. Writers' difficulties are not cognitive but inherent in the social situation as students confront an unfamiliar discourse when they enter the university. The danger in the emphasis of social context in outer-directed pedagogies, the authors point out, is that they tend to "overemphasize what it is that students must learn in order to become members of our community. The focus of metaphors such as

'initiation' and 'assimilation' is on what must change in our students, how they must become other than they are in order to accommodate our discourse" (299).

Dean, Terry. "Multicultural Classrooms, Monocultural Teachers." *College Composition   and Communication* **40.2 (1989): 23-37.**

Dean emphasizes the importance of the cultural transition that students who are not from the middle or upper class confront in composition classrooms. Acquiring the academic discourse of the institution involves a different language and, therefore, a different way of thinking.

To ease this transition, Dean discusses theoretical models and teaching strategies useful for teachers in classroom settings. Using topics that are not part of "school culture" is important in order to reinforce the valuing of other experience and also to create a bridge in helping students to adapt to school culture. Cultural topics are also useful to mainstream students. Using home language along with forms of academic discourse as topics of study allows students to have pride in their heritage and a sense of power while acquiring academic discourse. "Assignments that require students to analyze their attitudes towards writing, their writing processes, and the role that writing plays in their lives can make these conflicts explicit" (30). Peer response groups encourage active learning and link home and university culture. Guidance within groups is, however, critical. Class newsletters encourage students to write for a different audience. Bringing campus events as topics into the classroom through using school newspapers and other media builds a stronger sense of classroom community. In addition to these strategies, the teacher must also project an attitude that she/he is not the only expert in the room, and that students and teachers can learn from each other.

Delpit, Lisa D. "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children." *Harvard Educational Review* **58.8 (1988): 280-298.**

Delpit uses the debate over process versus skills approaches to teaching to shed light on the "silenced dialogue" which results because white educators are not listening to educators of color about critical issues in teaching students of color.

Delpit defines the "culture of power" by describing five aspects of power. First, she contends that issues of power are inevitably enacted in classrooms. Next, she states that there are codes or rules for participating in power—that is, there is a literal "culture of power." Furthermore, the rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power. Fourth, if one is not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier. Finally, those with power are frequently least aware of, or least willing to acknowledge, its existence. Those with less power are often more aware of its existence.

Addressing the differences between "progressive" white educators and educators of color, Delpit concludes that "to provide schooling for everyone' s children that reflects liberal, middle-class values and aspirations is to ensure the maintenance of the status quo, to ensure that power, the culture of power, remains in the hands of those who already have it" (285). She does not believe that schools should change the homes of poor and non-white children to match the homes of those within the culture of power since the children in those homes are receiving what they need in order to survive in their communities. The assumption that such change is a goal of educational process "may indeed be a form of cultural genocide" (286).

Delpit also questions the effectiveness of the process approach as a teaching strategy for people of color. Although the problem is not necessarily in the method, in

some instances, adherents of process approaches to writing create situations in which students ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them. Teachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that "product" is not important.

Delpit draws insistent attention to the importance of explicit communication. She says that the absence of explicitness appears to students as one of the following: that secrets are being kept, that time is being wasted, or that the teacher is abdicating her duty to teach. Resulting confusion or a sense of being cheated are strong enough to affect a student's sense of motivation and performance.

She concludes that some white teachers are resistant to using or revealing their power in the classroom, resulting again in implicit communication that causes confusion for students who are not a part of the culture of power. She adds, however, that the teacher cannot be the only expert in the classroom: students need to be validated for the expertise they bring to the class and must write about topics that are relevant for audiences that are real.

The solution, claims Delpit, is "to accept students but also to take the responsibility to teach them" (290). Her position is to help students to assume additional codes while also reinforcing the importance of retaining and understanding the codes they already possess. In this way, students might be given the tools to participate fully in American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within contexts of meaningful communicative endeavors.

They must be allowed the resource of the teacher's expert knowledge while being helped to acknowledge their own expertness as well. And even while students are assisted

in learning the culture of power, they must also be helped to learn about the arbitrariness

of those codes and about the power relationships they represent (296).

Harris, Joseph. "The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing." *College*
Composition   and Communication **40.1 (1989): 11-22.**

Harris discusses the concept of community in terms of how it is defined and how

it plays a role in teaching and learning to write in the university environment. Harris

defines the academic discourse community as those "presumed to think much like one

another (and thus also much unlike many of the people they deal with every day:

students, neighbors, coworkers in other disciplines, and so on)" (15). For students, this

means discovering and learning a language that does not belong to them.

Harris cites Bartholomae and Petrosky's course in which students write what they

think and feel about a subject and then redefine that thinking through reading and

dialogue, resulting in a merging of student and academic discourse. "Such a pedagogy

helps to remind us that the borders of most discourses are hazily marked and often

travelled, and that the communities they define are thus often indistinct and overlapping"

(17). Harris argues that students should not necessarily work toward an already well-

defined discourse but instead should work with "awareness of and pleasure in various

competing discourses that make up their own" (17). Harris asserts that we are all

outsiders and insiders with discourses that "conflict and overlap." He argues not for

consensus in order to have community, but for a view of community that "allows for both

consensus and conflict, and that holds room for ourselves, our disciplinary colleagues,

our university coworkers, and our students" (20).

Holloway, Dale W. "Cohesion in English: A Key to the Way Our Culture Thinks?"
Paper presented at the College Composition and Communication
Conference,   Washington, D.C., March 1980.

Holloway addresses the connections between the construction of discourse and culture-specific thought processes. Holloway's premise is that "too narrow a focus on syntax has left too many questions about language unanswered" (10). Presumed deficits in the logic and cohesiveness of minority student writers may actually result from the dominant culture's isolation of its minority cultures; the imposition of homogeneity in customs, cultures, and language; and inadequate recognition of cohesive devices and unfamiliar systems of logic. Teachers need to consider the impact culture has on the implicit thought processes of students. Since students draw on "recognized cognitive devices" to create discourse, their environment plays a large role in what defines their frame of reference for producing a piece of writing.

Holloway's argument is that research demonstrates that this problem does not derive from deficiencies in cognitive ability but from "differences in cognitive orientation" between some American minority cultures and the dominant white culture (6). His recommendation is to find ways to make explicit the processes of reasoning involved in problem solving as a mechanism for improving communication across cultural boundaries.

His discussion largely discounts Piagetian models of universal stages of cognitive development and is grounded instead upon the theoretical and experimental work of Vygotsky , Labov, and others, who propose that identifiable "cognitive styles" are more predominant in some cultures than in others. His further review of studies of more specific types of cognitive styles leads to the conclusion that it is counter-productive for educators to categorize preferred styles of perception or problem-solving as cognitive abilities or disabilities and that the goal instead is to help students to broaden the

range of their cognitive styles.

The remainder of Holloway' s essay is devoted to detailed identification and discussion of the characteristics of "cohesion" defined most generally as the quality that links sentences together into meaningful discourse in student writing (22). His conclusion is that teachers need to provide language tasks, which help students make explicit to readers what is implicit in their thought processes.

Kogen, Myra. "The Conventions of Expository Writing." *Journal of Basic Writing*
     5.1 (1982): 24-37.

Kogen asserts that students have the ability to reason and think analytically but need guidance in how to apply this ability to academic writing. She challenges the deficit model that assumes that students are cognitively undeveloped. After reviewing Ong's work, which claims that "primitive and nonliterate people are capable of developing intensely rich and complex forms of language based on oral traditions" (25), Kogen concludes that Ong's analysis reveals that college freshmen are not cognitively deficient but rather are "falling back on less academically oriented forms of reasoning." She cites Bartholomae as further extending this position in contending that learning writers need to learn the language of academic discourse and the use of this language. Kogen differentiates between inherent forms of thinking and conventional modes and concludes that students possess inherent modes of thinking that allow for abstraction, but that they need to learn the conventional expectations for the presentation of their thoughts.

**Locust, Carol. "Wounding the Spirit: Discrimination and Traditional American
     Indian Belief Systems."** *Harvard Educational Review* **58.3 (1988): 315-330.**

Locust discusses the educational system's failure to honor diverse racial and cultural groups and specifically informs her readers about American Indian belief

systems that remain unrecognized by educational systems. She describes differences among tribes to reinforce the rich diversity within tribal communities. In order to call attention to the impact that lack of recognition has on American Indian students, she discusses ten traditional beliefs that are common to the majority of tribal members and describes conflicts that this belief system confronts in the educational system.

Miller, Carol A. "Minority Student Achievement: A Comprehensive Perspective."
***Journal of Developmental Education* 13.3 (1988): 6-11.**

Miller contends that "high risk students, often academically underprepared and hampered by adversarial experience with education, are learners who present a more complicated challenge to conventional, entrenched, and often inflexible academic structures, curricula, and personnel, and that challenge is too often simply ignored" (7). Miller first cautions her readers that not all students of color are "at-risk," "high risk," or "nontraditional." A disproportionate number of students of color are, however, academically disadvantaged because more than half of black, American Indian, and Hispanic families live below the poverty line. With this in mind, Miller addresses the under-representation of minority learners in higher education. Not only is there a disparity between the degree of participation between white and non-white students, there is also a difference in skill base. Institutions typically recruit minority learners who have backgrounds similar to the majority group, but targeting high achieving students does not address the challenge of meeting the needs of disadvantaged learners and does not fully address diversifying the student population.

Miller calls for an institutional commitment to increase access and attainment for marginalized groups through a variety of strategies that involve administrative commitment, financial resources, student services, curricula, and personnel. First,

institutions must address the needs of disadvantaged learners rather than "minority" students. Second, there must be more hard and soft money resources, increased investment by state and national legislatures, and a broadened role for financial aid offices. Third, student services must implement systems such as intrusive advising, which monitor academic progress, have an early alert system to identify students in jeopardy, and include competent academic advising and personal counseling. Fourth, and most important to these initiatives, are curriculum and instruction.

Miller cites Lederman: 25 percent of all freshmen are enrolled in remedial or developmental courses. The most common instructional method, however, is still lecture. Also, despite research that skills courses separated from content courses do not prove effective, basic skills courses in reading, writing, and math still proliferate. Strategies for disadvantaged students include small group and collaborative learning, supplemental instruction, and reading and writing across the curriculum. "As a whole, appropriate curriculum for nontraditional students should demonstrate sensitivity toward and recognition of the historical and cultural contexts which these students bring with them.… Academic integration should not mean—and cannot occur as—immersion of ethnically diverse students in the knowledge bases and value systems of the dominant culture" (8).

Nembhard, Judith P. "A Perspective on Teaching Black Dialect Speaking Students to Write Standard English." ***Journal of Negro Education*** **52 (1983): 75-82.**

Nembhard contends that if black students are to have a voice in initiating change, they must acquire Standard American English. She stresses that improving writing means achieving clarity and specificity with a larger audience. Sympathizing with black students

and ignoring "surface structure errors" keeps the students from competing with their white peers.

The following components, according to Nembhard, are essential for a successful program: having confidence in students as potential learners, setting high expectations, distinguishing between oral speech and standard English, grading fairly but thoroughly, not glossing errors, conferencing, writing in class, encouraging out of class support (tutors/learning center, etc.), and, finally, failing students when that is necessary .

Nembhard stresses that teachers should de-emphasize student inadequacies and emphasize a process approach within which grammar and mechanics are addressed.

Noonan-Wagner, Lesley. "Black Writers in the Classroom: A Question of Language Experience, Not Grammar." Paper presented at the College Composition and Communication Conference, Washington, D.C., March 1980.

Noonan-Wagner presents an early argument that the problems black students confront in the classroom stem from a particular discourse style rather than grammatical problems. Noonan-Wagner designed a study that looked at essays from a remedial writing program to determine whether there were identifiable traits in black students' writing, since grammatical formatives were determined not to be race-specific. Identifying features in essays were "use of free association as a generative principle, redundancy, use of quotes and misquotes, use of proverbs and clichés, references to the Bible, sermonizing, moralizing, and word choice" (4). Most striking were redundancy, use of quotations, sermonizing and/or moralizing, and references to the Bible.

Since the classroom demands formal writing, black students return to a context—the church—that is formal to them. She quotes Smitherman to further her point: "It is within the black church that traditional black folk create much of their reality, which

includes the preservation and passing on of Africanized idioms, proverbs, customs, and attitudes." Students' writing is rich in its reflection of a frame of reference based on cultural knowledge. Grammar formatives were no more prevalent in the identification of black student writing than white student writing.

Ogbu, John U. "Minority Education in Comparative Perspective." *Journal of Negro Education 59* **(1990): 45-57.**

Ogbu acknowledges that cultural and language differences and conflicts, socio-economic status, inadequate home environment and early socialization are all contributing factors in the difficulties minority students experience in school. However, he contends that educators need to acknowledge the variability of cross-cultural differences.

He defines three categories of minorities. Autonomous minorities "are minorities in the numerical sense. They may be victims of prejudice and pillory but not of stratification" (46). Immigrant minorities are individuals who chose to leave their homeland and move to another society "because they believed such a move would result in improved economic well-being, better overall opportunities, and/or greater political freedom" (46). Involuntary or caste like minorities are "people who did not choose to become members of a society; rather they were brought into that society through slavery, conquest, or colonization" (46). Unlike immigrant minorities, they believe that "improved economic well-being, better overall opportunities, and political freedom will result only through collective struggle with the dominant group" (47). Ogbu notes that this group faces more difficulties in school adjustment and academic performance. Culture and language differences do not pose a threat to immigrant minorities who interpret culture and language differences as barriers to be overcome. They have pride in

the identity established in their homeland. Involuntary minorities, however, do not always see culture and language differences as barriers to be overcome but rather as "markers of group identity to be maintained. Cultural and language differences become boundary maintaining mechanisms between themselves and the dominant group" (48).

Ogbu's "involuntary" and "immigrant" minorities differ in their perspective on ways to get ahead. Involuntary minorities believe that rules for advancement in society do not work for them; therefore, they believe in changing the rules. Because immigrant minorities see their position as temporary, following societal rules does not have the same implications. Involuntary minorities, having seen little evidence of change, are more likely to view their struggles as endless. Consequently, they trust the dominant group less and tend to "view prejudice and discrimination they experience as institutionalized and enduring" (50).

Ogbu believes that there are three ways in which minorities have been denied equal educational opportunity: by denial of equal access to desirable jobs and positions in adult life that require a good education, by prevention of equal access to good education, and by lowered teacher expectations. As a result, involuntary minorities have come to view "the inadequate and unequal reward of education as a part of the institutionalized discrimination structure which getting an education cannot eliminate" (53).

Ritchie, Joy S. "Beginning Writers: Diverse Voices and Individual Identity."
  ***College Composition and Communication* 40.2 (1989): 152-174.**

Ritchie describes the dynamics of the writing workshop for the teacher and the student. She aligns herself with Bakhtin and Vygotsky in presenting language as an interactive process of interactive negotiation. Both students and teachers bring conflicting and complementary values and unique perspectives to the workshop setting; therefore,

the setting is multifaceted. "The writing workshop becomes an environment approximating the wider language community with all its diversity and dissonance" (155). The dialogical nature of the workshop is reinforced by a dialogical style in the instructor's feedback on student essays.

Ritchie traces two students' experiences and reactions to the workshop. Both began to see themselves and their values in relation to the people around them, realized the complexity of writing, and became more confident as they engaged in the challenge to develop individual voice.

Ritchie also addresses the challenge to the writing instructor. "[W]e cannot describe the process of learning to write as a tidy, predictable process which we can organize for our students in thirty lessons with predictable results in every case. We must resist reductive descriptions of our students' development as writers. Each student comes to our class with a unique history, with different assumptions about writing, and different needs" (171).

Scott, Wilbur J. " Attachment to Indian Culture and the 'Difficult Situation'. "*Youth and Society* 17 (1986): 381-395.

Scott describes the "difficult situation" represented by American Indian students-- that, compared to white students, a smaller percentage of Indian students finish high school and go on to college, and that Indians who do go to college are less likely to finish their degrees (381).

Scott asserts the historical relevance of Indian-white relations as key to understanding American Indian experience in higher education. Being an American Indian means being both a voluntary immigrant and an involuntary minority, a member of a group that was conquered and forced to adhere to the solution of whites, which was

to dissolve tribal ties and encourage Indians to assimilate into white culture. American Indians have differences rooted in historical experience that produce tension that is played out in the context of higher education. Scott supports the cultural conflict argument that "Indians do poorly in school because the educational system has been one of the major battlegrounds in the confrontation between Indian and white worlds (Chadwick, 1972; Havighurst, 1970)" (384). Making the transition to a system that celebrates and practices white culture poses challenges and barriers for Indian students committed to Indian culture.

Scott contends that status hierarchies present in academic institutions are correlated with integration into white culture:

> Where status hierarchies denigrate Indian characteristics and values, Indian students who cherish Indian ways must suppress that regard or run the risk of negative evaluation. Negative evaluation leads to one of four responses: the student can try harder to be "less Indian" (mobility orientation), change the criteria by which he or she is being evaluated (challenge orientation), accept devaluation and develop poor self-esteem (defeatist orientation), or withdraw from the institutional setting altogether (escape orientation). Of the four responses, Indian students committed to Indian ways frequently choose to "escape"(384).

In a study of the 101 freshmen enrolled at the University of Oklahoma in 1975 to measure "Attachment to Indian Culture" and "Integration into the University Community," Scott found that, out of 101 students who started in 1975, 22 were still there in 1978. The two factors significant in accounting for academic success among

Indian students were academic ability (ACT composite score and high school GPA) and the extent to which one is a "cultural Indian." The determining factor for American Indian students' success in higher education is "attachment to Indian Culture."

Scott draws attention to the fact that students are counseled to be "less Indian" in order to succeed in this system. Given this practice, many Indian students may drop out without considering dropping out as failing.

Scott concludes that academic institutions need to "formally institute structures that positively evaluate Indian students for being Indian, make them part of the university community, and enhance the skills and resources required for academic success" (393).