Writing Is/And Therapy?: Raising Questions about Writing Classrooms and Writing Program Administration

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As a student and teacher of writing over the last fifteen years, I've often wished that I had been given more encouragement for investigating the personal, therapeutic, and affective aspects of our field. Daily, I find that I need to know more about the least talked about and least researched areas of writing: how writing includes and celebrates the personal and how authoring, writing instruction, and program administration are thoroughly connected to our personalities. Perhaps we have not investigated these areas because we are unfamiliar with psychological theory and practice and remain uncertain about the legitimacy of translating those theories and practices to our own classrooms. However, I believe the unfamiliar only becomes familiar and more comfortable through discussions like the one I will share in this essay.

Comparisons of writing instruction to therapy often focus on teacher/student interaction, but the analogy is necessarily more extended and complicated. In composition studies, we should be paying attention to issues of affect and providing teachers and program administrators with a course of study that includes introductions to personality theory, gender studies, psychoanalytic concepts, and basic counseling, even if such study mainly confirms that there are large differences between a teacher/administrator's and therapist's roles. “Perhaps it might be helpful to remind ourselves,” says Ann Murphy, “that the analogy between the two professions is not symmetrical: analysis, as Shoshana Felman discusses, may be a ‘pedagogical experience,’ but teaching is not a purely psychoanalytic one” (179). Still, I would add that it may be crucial for teachers and writing program administrators to understand the degree to which both activities are pedagogical.

To help me define terms for this essay, friends knowledgeable about counseling offered this clarification:

Therapy . . . is a change-process that takes place with another person (in our culture, a person who has undergone rigorous training, controlled and prescribed for the specific fields within the profession). Processes can be therapeutic; they can make you feel
healthy and facilitate change, but the processes themselves are not "therapy." Thus, "therapeutic process" seems to be the more appropriate term for what happens in writing or in a writing class. (Reid and Lord)

My intention then is to hold a discussion based on this suggestion: we need to understand the degree to which writing may be a therapeutic process and the degree to which teachers and administrators can or should undertake counseling roles. By doing this, I hope to indicate where future research and discussions might take us.

Authors: What if Writing Is a Therapeutic Process?
Creative writers have long offered tantalizing hints concerning the therapeutic aspects of writing. For instance, Willa Cather acknowledges the power of early life experiences: "Most of the basic material a writer works with is acquired before the age of fifteen," and Milan Kundera sees the self as subject: "But isn't it true that an author can write only about himself?" (Murray Shoptalk 16-19). And I can attest to the connections from personal experience. As a writer in the literary marketplace from the 1970s through the 1990s, I've learned that I write because I want to and need to; I try to publish because I've found pleasure and reward in sharing my private explorations publicly. In talking to a writing student recently, I found myself explaining that I didn't keep a journal even though I advocated journal-keeping. Instead, I write and publish poems and essays. The poems, in particular, I said, have two faces for me—the public face, a text I am willing to send out into the interpretive arena—and the inner diary. When I reread my own poems I remember the reason I wrote, the way I felt while writing, the personal story behind the public story, and only then do I stop to (re)examine my craft. And of course the memory of the impulse of writing may be embedded for any author in any text, no matter the genre. Equally, composition students often tell us of the many ways they "use" writing for personal knowledge, savoring their texts and sharing them with friends and lovers.

Why then, are many writing teachers (some are published authors, of course, and some are not) quick to deny the personal, therapeutic aspects of such work? For instance, I have heard teachers begin writing workshops by demanding that participants focus exclusively on the text, never on the author; workshop participants are reminded that their "constructed" texts allow them to share a (seemingly) safely distanced and artfully transformed personal experience; that is, writers may be encouraged to "draw from life" but are discouraged from discussing what it means to be living that life. Of necessity, tensions arise when writers create texts which closely explore aspects of their individual lives, and teachers (for reasons that will be examined below) choose to distance class discussions from those same lives-in-the-texts.

To resolve these tensions in some workshops, writing teachers are more likely to emphasize craft than to encourage discovery through writing: "The
conference isn’t a psychiatric session. Think of the writer as an apprentice at the workbench with the master workman” (Murray qtd. in Tobin 341). And teachers do this despite their familiarity with authors’ claims that writing is intensively a matter of self-exploration. As an example, Donald Murray, who offers the apprentice/craft/master-workman analogy above, has also gathered a contradictory bouquet of quotes from writers regarding self-expression. These quotes include the observations by Willa Cather and Milan Kundera that I have shared, as well as the even more fervent attestations to the interrelatedness of writer and writing that follow:

John Cheever: It seems to me that writing is a marvelous way of making sense of one’s life, both for the writer and for the reader.

Graham Greene: Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation.

Jean Rhys: I wrote because it relieved me. (Murray Shop talk 5,9)

Overall, I sense a profession-wide uneasiness regarding the connection of self to writing, and from this uneasiness springs a substitution of attention: even our process workshops are under the sway of craft-based pedagogy and generally insist on author-is-always-distinct-from-the-text ground rules from the first class onward. It is striking then to see a writer like Murray who inhabits both worlds—professional author and writing teacher—evolve in his thinking concerning the degree of connection between writing and writer. What he wasn’t able to sanction earlier in his career, he emphasizes in a recently published essay, “All Writing Is Autobiography.” If all writing is autobiography, a life in writing must of necessity consider writing as a process of self-discovery and the writing classroom as a site of such exploration.

Professional authors, it seems, have strong intuitions about the degree to which their writing represents a therapeutic process of self-discovery, a curative journey with sometimes dazzling outcomes that can be shared with an interested readership. Writing teachers, though, have encountered the less curative aspects of this discovery process in student writings that are not controlled, in life stories that are not sublimated to purposes of “artful” re-envisioning, in classroom essays which seem indecorous or uncontrolled, in student conferences filled with emotional reactions, rebellion, personal admissions, tears. This set of experiences—students finding writing more powerful than expected and, perhaps, removing defenses before they have developed new, equally necessary defenses (for instance, the agreement that what they say on paper is not synonymous with fact, feeling, and life)—has perhaps led writing teachers to embrace a craft-based approach to writing instruction as a way to downplay the affective states students as writers negotiate when they begin to explore and express selves.

Also, in my experience professional authors who are teachers may become quite taken with their role of writer/artist, able to transform life
experiences for others. Obviously, such a role is more valuable if few are able to undertake it. Think of the “apprenticeship” metaphor (it takes endless years to become a great poet or novelist), and the literary writing life necessitates initiation penalties, embodied in author myths: writers are wild, drunk, liable to depression and suicide; after much trauma, writers experience transfiguring and transformative emotional states; writers “feel” more and are “at risk” and therefore their life-style is not for everyone.

Long inculcated romantic beliefs about author/artists may lead teachers of writing astray. To solidify their own professional standing, creative writing teachers often fuel the art writing image. In doing this, they may fail to acknowledge writing more generally as a personally empowering, often curative, and necessary way to develop a literate self-in-society. Such a failure may disempower the majority of our students, those who don’t plan to apprentice and don’t view themselves as inspired and/or talented and because of such deficit views also don’t view their writing (sometimes even themselves) as valuable. However, when writing is demystified—understood as a useful, personal, and productive activity, perhaps even as part of a therapeutic process of coming of age—then the activity of writing and teaching writing becomes radically more democratic. We all have life histories that are in need of and available for exploration.

To see writing as a democratic practice is to challenge traditional beliefs about the value of genres of writing and to challenge writing teachers to change pedagogy. As in any “relationship,” change threatens a working status quo and induces resistance. Therefore, strong curricular and aesthetic borders have been set up between creative writing and composition in most English departments, although borders are breaking down to the degree that certain teachers have come to know themselves as teachers of writing in general before they develop their abilities as teachers of “types” of writing in particular (see Bishop “Crossing”; Released). At the same time, first-year writing teachers, who may or may not consider themselves professional authors or “creative” writers, are also hesitant to explore the strong personal relationships and undercurrents that develop in the workshop due to the very power of writing to become for some students, at some junctures, a therapeutic process. As I pointed out earlier, first-year writing teachers have not been trained or encouraged to view writing in this manner. Instead, more simply, more safely, but equally problematic, many first-year writing programs have internalized a university perception that our job is primarily one of socialization, thereby constructing composition as a service course without content. If we believe this, we may too easily look to the student in the university before we look to the person that is the student.

Currently, some theorists and researchers are calling for an examination of the connections between the often separated areas of creative writing and composition instruction (Bishop; Moxley) as well as exploration of the interrelatedness of feelings and writing (McLeod; Brand Therapy;
Pennebaker). Alice Brand has suggested that we need "hot cognition"—that is, research agendas that include attention to emotions. She outlines some of the work that is being undertaken:

We know that affective traits and personality overlap conceptually and empirically (Plutchik and Kellerman). We are just now recognizing that personality may govern discursive style (Jensen and DiTiberio; Selzer), just as discursive style has an impact on personality (Brand, *Therapy*; Denman). In fact, how personality influences the way writers function is the direction I think composition research is ultimately headed.

(Brand, "The Why" 441)

Through his research, Robert Brooke asserts that the study of writing is really the study of writers and of their developing writing identities: "The entire 'process, not product' revolution can be seen as a change of focus from results to behaviors, from texts to people—in its best forms, the goal is to teach people to be writers, not to produce good texts in the course of a semester" ("Modeling" 38). And this assumption—that we are teaching people to be writers not simply to produce texts—has great import for the role of the writing teacher who is him or herself always in the process of developing a teaching identity. This is particularly true if the teacher is new to the field and being trained to investigate his or her own writing. The basic tenet of the National Writing Projects—that writing teachers should be writers—is notably similar to that of Freud who required would-be analysts to undergo analysis (McGee 667). Process instruction and response pedagogies necessitate change, so the move to process requires that we give greater attention to the people undergoing, and resisting, those changes: writers and writing teachers.

*Are Teachers Writing Therapists?*

In a number of recent articles in the major composition journals, scholars have begun to explore writing teachers' relationships to their students, using personal experience and often relying on both clinical and therapeutic analogies. Diane Morrow, a doctor turned writing tutor and instructor, suggests that as a field we reject even metaphorical connections between writing and the health professions because they present a negative view of the teaching relationship as that of an authoritative physician attending to a "sick" writer. Morrow claims, though, that the physician/patient relationship in medicine is changing and that the metaphor may now be more relevant than before (218-19).

Gregory Ulmer, however, uses the analogy quite comfortably, perhaps because he sees the "patient's" submission to therapy as elective:

The patient agrees to put herself in the care of the analyst, but then she may resist all attempts of the analyst to cure her. Similarly, our students sign up for our classes with the intention of being educated, but then not infrequently they refuse to cooperate with the process ... because people tend to accept only that which corresponds to the opinions they already hold. (762-63)
In noting that resistance is one of the natural responses to submission, even when undertaken by the learner for the learner’s own good, Ulmer suggests that the student’s job is to become more open to change.

Lad Tobin supports Diane Morrow’s claims that it may be time to explore the connections between health professions and the profession of writing instruction when he notes that a number of writing theorists bring up the connection between writing and therapy and then repudiate that connection as being no more than metaphorical. This is not surprising for considering the teaching relationship in a therapeutic light raises questions about transference (students endowing teachers with inaccurate expectations or characteristics [see Scheffler]) and counter-transference (teachers coloring relationships with their own past contexts) in the Freudian sense. Transference may involve teachers and students in emotional relationships with ethical dimensions (Torgersen), and transference and counter-transference may both have to be dealt with for a therapy or a pedagogy to succeed. If we don’t label what happens as transference, teachers will certainly still note strong role identification among students, identifications that may be complicated by teachers’ and students’ gender, race and class.

Metaphors may signify real conditions or alert us to important new ways of conceptualizing a subject. Certainly, when looking at writing and therapy, more than just metaphor-making is at stake. For instance, as concerned writing teachers, we acknowledge our relationship to students through liberatory pedagogies, student-centered classrooms, personal discovery essay assignments, and so on. At the same time, we sometimes finesse responsibility for students’ actual responses and feelings. Or, if we acknowledge responsibility, we’re still unsure of the degrees and limits of such responsibility. How do we respond to journal or essay discussions of suicide, incest, anorexia, and depression, the underside of the often-elicited writing about high school triumphs, personal bests, or greatest moments?

At this time, it is not clear if expressivist pedagogies necessarily result in more personal issues being raised in the classroom. For instance, in an expressivist classroom, students might certainly be encouraged to construct personal, often autobiographical essays, potentially leading to revelations that might prove curative and/or disturbing. At the same time, social-constructivist classrooms may ask students to consider political, social, or ethical topics (date rape, discrimination, gender bias in the workplace) which may in turn elicit curative and/or disturbing narratives, discussions, or memories for students who have experienced rape, discrimination, or gender bias.

Overall, it is not surprising that students open up in writing classes since workshops usually enroll twenty to thirty students and aim to develop community feelings. This is a welcome contrast to the many impersonal, large-enrollment classes a student may experience in the university. In fact, university officials may understand that composition classrooms offer writ-
ing instruction but fail to understand the degree to which these classrooms often act as "home rooms" for a first-year class in transition. However, when community engenders connectedness and feelings, interpersonal relationships are at the center: "We cannot create intensity and deny tension, celebrate the personal and deny the significance of the personalities involved" (Tobin 342).

Lad Tobin raises some of the issues I've been grappling with for several years, openly acknowledging teaching beliefs which I know have not generally been sanctioned:

In my writing courses, I want to meddle with my students' emotional lives, and I want their writing to meddle with mine. Transference and counter-transference emotions are threatening because they are so powerful, but they are most destructive and inhibiting in the writing class when we fail to acknowledge and deal with them. (342)

Unlike Tobin, I'm not sure that I've intended to meddle, but I have no doubt that I have. Whether they understand transference or counter-transference, experience identification or alienation, students see any sort of teacher intervention as authoritative, and they always expect to learn from their teachers. Robert Brooke by way of the writings of Jacques Lacan describes the teacher as the Subject Supposed to Know: "The mentor, the priest, the therapist, the lover, the guru, the martial arts master . . . helps us 'find ourselves,' helps us 'unlock our true feelings,' helps us know ourselves as we can't on our own" ("Lacan" 682). We may be uncomfortable acknowledging that we are about to take such a momentous role in our students' lives because "unlocking" involves us in both transference and worries about counter-transference. However, the Lacanian version of transference is posited on the notion of the student forging an understanding of separated parts of him or herself; the "other" is not necessarily the teacher but a part of the self that he or she needs to and can come to know.¹ It is worth noting that studies of the academy indicate that women may have particular problems forging identities in the postsecondary academic setting (Aisenberg and Herrington).

Teachers do affect students in a variety of complicated ways. Lad Tobin suggests that unknowingly we may "read" students and our instruction in ways that help us see our classrooms in the best possible light.² Additionally, he found himself "reading" classroom situations according to his personal scripts—for instance, not getting along with students who were unintentionally re-creating problematic scenarios from Tobin's own high school learning past. Tobin believes that being aware of the similarities between writing and therapy keeps him from preferring the student who makes him feel secure or avoiding the student who threatens him. He says, "And that is what I need to monitor: as soon as I find myself giving up on a student or, on the other hand, feeling tremendous personal pride in a student's work, I need to question my own motives. I need to discover in what ways my biases and
assumptions—both conscious and unconscious—are shaping my teaching” (347).

The type of powerful “misreadings” that can take place between students and teachers is highlighted in Richard Murphy’s “Anorexia: The Cheating Disorder.” Murphy describes how he misunderstood, misread, and intimidated a student who didn’t want to claim the portrayal she had written for him concerning her experiences as an anorectic. For this student, writing involved her in a classroom transaction that elicited emotional reactions to her teacher and his instruction even if he didn’t know it. The anorectic student was in the position described by Ann Murphy:

In encouraging our students to unlock and express their ideas, feelings, and beliefs more effectively, we are, like psychoanalysts, insisting that they confront lost or denied elements of themselves—itself a project filled with social, familial, and personal dangers—and then that they express those elements in written, often alien discourse, the very use of which arouses a whole new host of terrors. (175)

However unwittingly, Richard Murphy's pedagogy elicited a confrontation between the student and her past which the teacher then did not believe.

Response pedagogies inevitably elicit powerful responses from our students. Ann Murphy suggests that we should be wary of creating this classroom; Tobin claims he has come to seek this classroom; Richard Murphy illustrates how he could not avoid this classroom; and Brooke suggests that our field’s movement to process pedagogy has made this classroom inevitable. And for all we know, social-constructivist classrooms may appear not to but may equally often do the same. Clearly, things are getting complicated these days in the profession of writing instruction.

Personally, I agree with Brooke's suggestion that such classrooms are inevitable, particularly given a response pedagogy. Ann Murphy has noticed this is especially true for basic writers; she feels that just as an analysand returns to and repeats ancient family traumas with her analyst, so too, I suggest, the writing student returns to and re-enacts an ancient drama of initial wonder at the brave new world of language and ideas and then subsequent, painful humiliation and defeat by teachers, institutions, and cultural/political forces. . . . (184)

But I would enlarge her assertions by suggesting that such a movement may occur for any writer who enters the always dramatic acculturation process of writing within institutional settings. Writing classrooms are complex arenas: “Students and their writing contribute to the linguistic, psychological, and social richness of the classroom, creating what Charles Schuster, describing Bakhtin’s view of language, calls ‘a rich stew of implications, saturated with other accents, tones, idioms, meanings, voices, influences, intentions’ (597)” (Ritchie 159).

Part of this “rich stew” is the teacher. Writing teachers may coauthor their students’ essays as they assign and shape a text (through conference and draft review)—and then subsequently “create” a student over the course of
the semester. For instance, Tobin found himself reading a student's text "in such a way that it reached a self-confident and successful resolution, by making her into a text with a happy ending" (335). The problem, he feels, is not that we do this but that we deny that we do this. We need to examine teaching as a constitutive process, consider more deeply the idea of the teacher as the Subject Supposed to Know, and continue to explore the many complicated issues of gender, transference, and counter-transference in the writing classroom; if we don't, we will fail to act on available developments in reading and writing theory and research in our own field.

To start, we need to acknowledge these issues and investigate what we might learn from analogous psychoanalytic discussions; this is not necessarily a comfortable suggestion. Like "hot" cognitions, emotions are "hot" topics for us all and ones we tend to avoid. I believe, however, that issues of emotions and teachers' actions are becoming more important since they deal with the "why" of the workshop. Why did this class work? Why did this student stop trying? Why is teaching writing so difficult and so rewarding? And, finally, if emotions, therapeutic relationships, and hot cognition, are important for teachers, they must also be significant for writing program administrators.

Therapy, Counseling, and the WPA
Trudelle Thomas suggests that graduate students as apprentice writing program administrators should be given training in five areas: they should apprentice through a practicum, acquire a broad picture of the world of a WPA by serving on department and university committees, teach a variety of composition courses, be involved in teacher training, and learn about testing and assessment. This will be useful but will it be enough? How, I wonder, will the WPA learn to counsel a teacher who comes to her to discuss a student who is experiencing ongoing sexual abuse from a father who is "putting her through school"? How will the WPA deal with the teacher who is concerned over a student's response to an autobiographical collage assignment that opens this way with a quote from the student's two-year-old journal entry—"Dear Diary, Die, die die! Death looks good compared to my life"—and is followed by a new freewrite titled "My Unorthodox Funeral." "My Unorthodox Funeral" is an account of the writer's imagined burial at sea: "Though she felt desperately depressed, my mother took control of her reactions and seated herself Indian-style with the urn between her legs. Feeling comforted, my mother began to recite my favorite poem."

What should a teacher and the WPA think, feel, and do when the student, as this one did, does not return again to class? Equally, how should the WPA react when a TA calls on the weekend to read a student essay in which two students describe how they plan to kill a third student that weekend? The story ends: "Tonight, Janet and I will fix everything with him, permanently." Inevitably, a writing program administrator will need to counsel teachers
about highly charged problems, problems that cannot be labeled exclusively "academic." Students and teachers resist their instruction, the program, and the institution, and the WPA is someone who is in a position of power and authority within the English department and the university; no matter how well-intentioned or how sensitive and right-minded, the WPA helps to maintain those structures (Chase; Daniell and Young; Strickland).

Ann Murphy reminds us that Freud linked three powers: teaching, psychoanalysis, and government. Students trust writing teachers with their thinking and their feelings because our classes are "friendly, intimate, and safe" (183). Teachers are asked during training to trust their WPA who helps them institute the response pedagogies which create intimate classrooms. Yet, I've heard myself and other teacher-educators say more than once: "You're not a trained counselor. The best you can do is get students to the counseling center quickly." And while that is a fact I believe in and a strategy I support, I know that strategy is no longer adequate. Such a response didn't help me early in my teaching career to deal with my guilt over a "problem" student who committed suicide the semester after he was in my class. It didn't help me to counsel an able new teacher who experienced "teaching anxiety" to the point that she resigned her assistantship. It didn't help me endure the long weekend when I was "pretty sure" the student paper about killing another student was a satire, although the student's experienced TA was alarmed because the paper was so different from the assigned topics as to seem believable; that teacher and I both worried until a student's Monday conference confirmed that the paper had been a "joke."

When my current administrative office was turned over to me with its student-journal suicide file and the out-going director's listing of hot-lines and crisis support numbers, I felt then, as I feel today, that saying what we're not (not therapists, not counselors, not specialists in affect or dysfunction) is not helping us to understand and prepare to be what we are. I believe the WPA explores and participates in forms of "the talking cure" on multiple levels and from multiple perspectives. Perhaps it is time to enlarge WPA training by providing new teachers and administrators with an introduction to psychoanalytic theory and the basics of counseling to support them in their necessary work.

My own effort to become more educated in this area developed into a two-year process that has no clear end in sight. In the course of drafting this essay, I have contacted and talked at length with student health services counselors on my campus. They have provided me with a copy of their booklet (see Student), designed to help teachers detect, respond to, and support students who are undergoing stress. On our campus, teachers are encouraged to refer students to free campus counseling services but also to stay in contact with students, checking in on their progress, remaining available for informal talks. I shared copies of the booklet with my teaching staff and use the booklet as a teaching aid in my teacher education class.
In addition, I have regularized my department files beyond simply asking teaching assistants to provide me with writing samples from students undergoing stress. Currently, I also ask the teacher to provide me with as much classroom context as possible. I plan to draw from some of these files to create anonymous “cases” of classroom/student problems to share with new teachers of writing (see also, Anson et al.).

Next, I am exploring the legal implications of this active way of looking at student and teacher classroom relationships. There are many moments when my natural desire to counsel and help students puts me (or the teachers I direct) into situations where I may be violating students’ rights, however well-intentioned my motive. I once sought advisement when I felt the need to contact a student’s resident advisor and alert her to a student’s emotional state. This student wrote in her journal (which her teacher shared with me) about having no friends and feeling suicidal. I could not leave my office that day, feeling that no one had been alerted to the student’s situation, knowing that no one in her dormitory was actively seeking her out and offering her support. Yet, I knew that my desire to support this student was potentially in conflict with her right to privacy since my knowledge of her situation had come from a private journal entry. In this instance, I sought the advice of a counseling center doctor who said, “You’d rather be sued for having intervened than for having not intervened, wouldn’t you?” I called the resident advisor and wasn’t sued— that semester. The counselor’s advice was sobering though. Clearly, writing program administrators are themselves in need of legal counsel.

On my agenda, then, is an appointment with the university’s lawyer to investigate the laws regarding students’ rights to privacy, programs’ legal responsibilities to students and parents, and so on. When we meet, I’m certain I will find a second use for the student “cases” I have been collecting, since I can share several with a lawyer and receive information that will help me make the most responsible decision when similar cases arise in the future. No doubt, legal advice will vary from institution to institution, and all writing program administrators will want to understand their own situation in order to counsel their own teaching staff effectively.

I have taken two other self-education steps. I continue to review databases to find other discussions of these issues, in order to find work like Mary Vroman Battle’s “Suicide: Students at Risk,” which offers a useful discussion, set of recommendations, and bibliography of books for further reading. And I have started a further course of self-education by way of reading introductory counseling books; I may continue this education by contacting colleagues in other departments and perhaps even by enrolling in some of their classes.

When I read books like Kennedy and Charles’*On Becoming A Counselor* or Moursund’s *The Process of Counseling and Therapy*, I don’t feel like rushing out and practicing without a license. I know that I need someone with
more experience to help me pick the best books and to curb what might be an overly facile application of what I am learning. But I do believe that I need to make a start. The analogies between writing instruction and therapy have something to offer me and something I need to offer to the teachers I train. Particularly, program administrators may begin by reading, but we all need also to investigate other avenues of support, contacting the campus counseling center and the psychology department. Even more, though, we need to find colleagues who are open to these discussions and willing to share what they have observed, suspected, and learned in similar situations. We need to talk, share conference papers, and write journal articles. We need to include these topics and this training in graduate curricula because we need to listen to and respect the affective needs of our writing students and our selves.  

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Notes

1 McGee and Brooke are discussing a theory of transference derived from the writings of Lacan rather than those of Freud; the special issues (October and November 1987) of College English in which their articles (as well as Ulmer's) appear provide a good introduction to Lacan in relation to pedagogy.

2 Glynda Hull and Mike Rose, on the other hand, warns that if we don't "read" students well, we miss the clues to student understanding which are imbedded in students' personal histories.

3 Thanks to Catherine Reid, Kathryn Lord, and the anonymous JAC reviewers of a previous draft for useful comments and ideas; they will not fully agree with my final observations, nor are they responsible for my (still) developing understandings of these topics, but all contributed to my learning.

Works Cited


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**Composition in the 21st Century**

The Council of Writing Program Administrators, the University of Connecticut, and Miami University will sponsor a conference on Composition in the 21st Century: Crisis and Change at the Marcum Conference Center of Miami University from Oct. 8-10, 1993. The conference is organized around three-hour sessions that encourage full audience participation and discussion.

There are seven sessions, with no more than two running concurrently, and each addresses a major question about the future of composition: (1) What is composition and why do we teach it? (2) Who should teach composition and what should they know? (3) What have we learned from the past and how can it shape the future of composition? (4) What political and social issues will shape composition in the future? (5) Who will assess composition in the 21st century and how will they assess it? (6) What directions will research take and how will research affect teaching? and (7) What will be the relationship between writing program administration, teaching, and scholarship?

Speakers include David Bartholomae, James Berlin, Miriam Chaplin, Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, Peter Elbow, Linda Flower, Sarah Freedman, Anne Gere, Shirley Brice Heath, Sylvia Holladay, Andrea Lunsford, Steven North, James Slevin, John Trimbur, and Edward White. Conference directors are Lynn Bloom, Donald Daiker, and Edward White.

Registration is limited to 400, so please register early. Write to Don Daiker, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.