

Article

# Welcoming Writers, Welcoming Instructors: Integrating Antiracist and Decolonial Pedagogies via Multimodal Assignments in Canadian Postsecondary Writing Courses

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## Introduction

Canadian scholars increasingly recognize the importance of diverse and inclusive writing pedagogies to welcome students of various races, languages, orientations, genders, and abilities. Yet, if instructors do not feel welcomed into using the tools of antiracist and decolonial writing pedagogies, they often will not use them, and many feel very new to the task. As a Black Caribbean Canadian professor, my experiences in classrooms and students' writing conferences have prompted me to use what Carroll and Mazak (2017) call "microlevel policies" (p. 5) to shape students' views of the relative value of various languages, voices, perspectives, and writing practices. Curdt-Christiansen draws on Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997) work to explain that "[m]acro-level refers to national level or governmental level organizations, whereas micro-level refers to small organizations, such as a school or a classroom" (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p. 392).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Bartlett and Vavrus (2014) point out, "teachers are key actors in educational policy appropriation" (p. 141). As writing instructors, our microlevel policies include how we speak about language(s) in our classrooms and individual student conferences, the curriculum materials we construct for our students' use, and our writing/language in course syllabi. The ways we engage with students dynamically demonstrate the microlevel policies we practice. I have found it helpful to consider all the various ways that microlevel policies about language<sup>2</sup> become apparent as I signal and live out my commitments to inclusive writing pedagogies.

Among these microlevel policies is the use of multi-modal assignments, which I have found can be useful for empowering students to resist English-language supremacy; this resistance is a central hallmark of antiracist and decolonizing writing pedagogies (Baker-Bell, 2020a, 2020b; Inoue, 2019,

2021, 2022; Motha, 2014; Young, 2018, 2020).<sup>3</sup> Such assignments draw on “various semiotic resources” (Li & Storch, 2017, p.1; Kress, 2010) as key components of the composition process and the materials analyzed. As Blommaert and Rampton write, “Meaning is *multimodal*, communicated in much more than language alone” in ways that apply to “written and technologically mediated communication as well as to speech” (2016, p. 27; see also Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). As they explain, indexicality is “the connotational significance of signs,” and there are “signs with unstated meanings” as well as those with “socially shared interpretations.” This is at play when “someone switches in speaking and/or writing into a different style or register,” which forces the hearer or reader to “consider more than the literal meaning” of what is being shared. In this way, signs “extend far beyond language itself”; it is in this context that Blommaert and Rampton assert that meaning is truly multimodal (2016, p. 27). The contemporary communicative landscape, including mobile phones and social media, invites us to draw on this multimodality (Blommaert & Rampton, 2016; Scollon & Scollon, 2003, 2004; Kress, 2010). Multimodal approaches can empower students and instructors to resist what Cedillo (2020) dubs “white language supremacy” and Inoue (2019) calls “normalized whiteness” (p. 373) and *Habits of White Language* (HOWL; Inoue, 2022). Multimodal assignments, I find, can encourage linguistic, digital, and textual diversity in student writing; such assignments are a desirable pathway into inclusive pedagogy.

In this paper, I will use analytic and reflective methodologies to explore such an assignment and the processes around it to demonstrate some simple, effective ways writing instructors can integrate antiracist and decolonial writing pedagogies into their teaching. The assignment, to write an argumentative paragraph, is from a course at a Canadian university in which over 90% students were from India and had already earned degrees in subjects other than writing. Most had arrived in Canada a few weeks before the term began. The course’s aim was to help them develop writing skills, and it was structured very similarly to first-year composition courses in writing in Canada. For most of the students, this course was a mandatory part of their program, although a few took it as an elective. Much as in a first-year composition course, the learning outcomes were the ability to construct thoughtful, organized, and clear written assignments from start to finish, developing a confident writing voice, practicing peer review and self-editing skills, deepening their analysis of various texts, practicing English language writing skills, and creating oral presentations for academic and business purposes. Because the course serves a heavy population of students for whom English is an additional language, it features substantial material to provide practice in the students’ second/additional language (also called their L2).<sup>4</sup>

This writing course has eight assignment items, many of which have multiple parts. Among these, the argumentative paragraph is one of three that students complete in class. To assess student views on the writing process for the argumentative paragraph assignment, I created a voluntary and anonymous survey; as 73% of students responded,<sup>5</sup> results gave me a deeper sense of the impact of the assignment and my microlevel policies. For example, encouraging the use of texting in a sustained way in the prewriting and drafting phases of the writing process had a positive effect. In particular, the multimodality of the assignment enhanced students' ability to develop their writing in ways that they found helpful.

## **Rationale**

Multimodality generally and digital media and associated literacies in particular are increasingly demanded in postsecondary education (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008; Hafner, 2014; Li & Storch, 2017). I find that empowering students to use multimodality in assignments can also increase the range and use of their linguistic repertoires. This flexibility supports an enhanced ability to communicate effectively in postsecondary and employment contexts. As D'Silva and Tallman (2023) argue, multimodality "allows students to...explore their nonlinguistic resources" and "to make [the] critical decision of how to employ various modes to enhance their communication" (p. 62). Expanding the linguistic diversity of their writing and resisting the view that written English is superior to speech (and the variety that comes with it) for composition tasks also reinforces antiracist and decolonial approaches to writing.

By including speech-based options in their linguistic and technological writing toolkits, students can often find greater spaciousness in composition tasks. Their toolkit might include non-English L1s, varieties of English including textisms or textese, and poetic devices and writing strategies and styles. These toolkits might also contain a range of computer-mediated communication (CMC), particularly web-based ones. As Li and Storch (2017) highlight, CMCs have transformed how we "construct, communicate and access knowledge" in ways that "expan[d] what it means to be literate in the digital era" (p. 1; see also Ware et. al., 2016; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). Students can draw upon multimodal approaches in ways that support linguistic diversity and thus resist white language supremacy, and instructors, by embracing students' toolkits, can resist creating environments that further advantage already privileged students by supporting white language supremacy.

The argumentative paragraph also functioned as what Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) call a "bridging activit[y]" as it demonstrated my "focus on developing learner awareness of vernacular

digital language conventions and analyzing these conventions to bridge in-class activity with the wider world of mediated language use" (p. 562). In class, I explained the various writing processes where students could mobilize the features, varieties, and options of/for texting and/or speech-to-text, such as the prewriting, rough drafting, and final drafting phases; I also demonstrated using these options in writing in class.<sup>6</sup>

Emerging research addresses the impact of texting and text languages<sup>7</sup> on student writing; while David Crystal (2008) argues that texting does not cause harm to student writing and literacy in English, much of what has been written since then essentially alleges that frequent texting and use of text languages compromises student writing in academic settings (Khatoon et al., 2020; Odey et al., 2014; Seleem & Bakhsh, 2017<sup>8</sup>; Yousaf & Ahmad, 2013). Instructors and scholars regularly bemoan the impact of texting on students' writing (Boştină-Bratu, 2015; Saleem & Bakhsh, 2017; Shafie et al., 2010; Verheijen, 2013); however, I have not observed this effect in my students' writing. As well, these studies ultimately have little relevance to my encouraging students to integrate texting into the writing process. They do not feature texting used as an integrated component in the writing process, but rather rely on correlation of the general frequency of texting to the quality of student writing (Khatoon et al., 2020; Odey et al., 2014; Seleem & Bakhsh, 2017; Shafie et al. 2010; Yousaf & Ahmad, 2013). Texting to communicate in general is not the same as using this method intentionally to develop one's writing for course contexts.

As well, much of the chagrin is grounded in a desire to enshrine and stabilise a "pure" and unchanging English. As such stabilisation is designed to promote the superiority of English, it is imbued with the priorities of the white habitus. It participates in a long history of stigmatising non-English languages and varieties of English as impure and "other" to further entrench "colonial logics through [imposing] boundaries" around what conforms to acceptable renditions of whiteness/Europeanness in language and disempowering or empowering people based on the perceived lack or attainment of it (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 626). In other words, such laments are signs of investment in the myth of so-called standard English (Greenfield & Rowan, 2011; Lippi-Green, 1997); they are signs of what Inoue (2021, 2022)<sup>9</sup> would call HOWL. Instructors registering such laments might insist on a very limited view of what grammars are acceptable if one wants to write in "correct" English at the postsecondary level. Yet English is a living language, and as such, is always changing.

As well as rejecting the vision of a "pure" or "stable" "standard English" I believe that students should be prompted to mobilise the options available through technology, such as texting and

dictating, that might serve them better than pens, pencils, paper, and computer screens. Some writing instructors have told me that oral discourse is inferior to written text and that, therefore, the former should not be part of the process of creating the latter; I reject this view, much as I reject all notions of inherent superiority of certain linguistic modes of communication over others.

In contrast to research on texting, research on the use of speech-to-text technology does address its use in the writing process, though it has focused on secondary school students. Multiple studies indicate that students can write more effectively when using speech-to-text options, and that such options are well-suited to students with disabilities (Kambouri et al., 2023; MacArthur & Cavalier, 2004; Peterson-Karlan, 2011; Schneider et al., 2013). Dictation appears to increase the speed and length (De La Paz & Graham, 1997; Hayes & Berniger, 2009; MacArthur & Cavalier, 2004; Peterson-Karlan, 2011) and quality (De La Paz & Graham, 1997) of students' writing. Speech-to-text can help students learn writing strategies (Haug & Klien, 2018) and both dictation to a scribe and dictation using speech-to-text supports "holistic text quality" and thus may be particularly useful for English language learners (Arcon et al., 2017, p. 533).

In considering their students' toolkits, it may be helpful for instructors to reflect that students are often expected to analyze texts in modes such as video, podcasts, music, poetry/prose, paintings, magazines, and social media posts. In this multimodal context of analyzing, it makes sense to empower students to use some of the modes associated with the texts under consideration. Indeed, the ability to analyze a variety of texts in different modes is a strength, and I contend this applies to the composition process itself as well.

## **Assignment Design**

Working in groups of 4-5, students choose a course reading or assigned video on which to base their argument about any topic they choose. They must use at least two of three options for their prewriting: texting (on their cellphones), dictating and using speech-to-text for transcription, or writing (by hand or on a computer). Prewriting can use any language common to all group members.<sup>10</sup> They then use Google Docs to bring ideas from prewriting into paragraph form, collectively thinking and writing in this format. Time is allotted for this activity over several classroom sessions.

As students practice composing paragraphs in English, they start translating any parts not in Academic Englishes, a term I use to acknowledge the variety in language expected across academic postsecondary contexts in North America,<sup>11</sup> which is part of the honesty students need to make their

own linguistic choices. By honesty, I mean that writers will need to make choices about what words and phrases to use to convey meaning in a particular context and to a particular audience. Throughout various writing tasks, students will make choices about what matches they want to make between the words they chose for the context and audience they envision. While some instructors might suggest when writing for a particular audience students have few choices, as I discuss at length in my classes, I disagree: writers have many choices, even if some might disgruntle a particular audience. Writers should be empowered to make their own decisions about how they will match their words to a chosen audience or context, as the perceived consequences (both good and bad) will ultimately be their own.

Once students complete a draft of their argumentative paragraphs, I project their creations onto a screen for the entire class to view and we discuss as a class how each group can refine their argument. The assignment incorporates text mode (at least one course reading), audio-visual mode (if the student chose to respond to a TED talk either with or without the transcript as a resource), digital mode (speech-to-text and/or texting), and written mode (writing and argument). It is graded for completion based on specifications regarding length, references, goals, and submission guidelines. I reward students for their labour (Inoue, 2022) by, for example, grading for completion submission of screenshots of texting discussions.

After completing this assignment, 73 out of the 100 students who did this activity across my sections of this writing course completed the voluntary and anonymous questionnaire which contained three open-ended questions and one scale question. The results of the completed questionnaires reinforced what many students had told me prior—that testing out multimodal approaches that draw on CMC and innovating with them increases their sense of having abundant resources in the composition process. Their responses were insightful in this regard. For example, responding to “if you had to create an assignment at home requiring you to use the prewriting (idea generation) phase, which two of the three options would you use and why? Are there any that you haven’t used much, but would like to use more in the future in your writing process? Please share,” 23 students chose texting and dictating, 29 chose texting and handwriting, five chose handwriting and dictating, six chose handwriting alone, one chose dictating alone, one chose texting alone, and four abstained from answering this question. Thus, students reported that texting is an easy and accessible way to generate thoughts in the writing process. When asked about the pros and cons of each method they used for the prewriting phase of the assignment,<sup>12</sup> students provided several insightful thoughts about these tools. For instance, they pointed out some benefits that texting offers

to English language learners: their messaging apps have spell check, which they liked using in the prewriting phase, and did not have grammar check, which made them feel less stressed about “perfect” spelling and grammar. They felt texting enabled clearer discussion of ideas and better organization of ideas, led to easier record keeping in their groups (of who said what), and made it easier to select what ideas to use for the final paragraph. Repeatedly, students said texting was “easy”, “convenient”, “flexible”, and “personal.” While they also pointed out that some students might choose to send delayed responses via text and that they would need to do more editing, overall, students believed that texting was beneficial to their writing process.

In contrast, students’ reaction to dictation was mixed. Most did not feel particularly comfortable with it at first—they described it as unfamiliar, requiring a steeper learning curve than texting, which they do every day. Students also noted that dictation (in this case, speech-to-text) favoured a one-speaker-at-a-time composition approach. But students repeatedly expressed interest in using dictation more as a valuable part of their writing practice in the long-term. They noted that dictating was easy and fast, helped them to remember things, increased concentration and learning power, and helped them to interpret the ideas of people around them better. (As different programs and devices offer different user experiences, I hope that they might try different tools in the future.) Nonetheless students’ reservations about dictating serve as a reminder that some students might prefer more traditional options, and we must resist the tendency to create a new, rigid default with tools that are *en vogue*.

The sense of comradery while groups explored multimodal drafting options was palpable, encouraging students’ explorations into using texting, textisms, and speech-to-text in class as an integrated part of the writing process. Students viewed texting and speech-to-text as both old and new: old, because all had used them in casual communication; new, because they had never so deliberately used these tools in their writing process. Moreover, through the results of this questionnaire, I saw that my students did not harbor resistance to increasing their multimodal options for writing via CMCs; they described writing, language, and technology in more fluid ways, ones that destabilize common beliefs projected by HOWL-invested instructors.

Students could only use the article or video they chose, no other sources, though they might refer to course modules on paragraph structure. This maximized their practice of creativity as a group, encouraged students to draw on their own multifaceted knowledges, and minimized distraction. I also led class discussion about how conventions for argumentation can differ across cultures and why some of these differences appear and what they signify. This was part of my effort to destabilize

the perceived dominance of English/North American styles, which also included, in other assignments, encouraging students to draw on other styles of argumentation.

## Multimodal Prewriting

The course readings and videos (which my course syllabus refers to as Application Readings/Viewings) were drawn from recently produced magazines, videos/live speeches/talks, newspapers, etc. Students who wrote on one of the Application Viewings from the course covered before the eighth week—"Indigenous Knowledge Meets Science to Take on Climate Change" by Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim *TEDWoman* 2019 and "The Case to Recognise Indigenous Knowledge as Science" by Albert Wiggan *TEDxSydney*—engaged in prewriting via various combinations of speech-to-text, texting, handwriting, and typing while watching these TED talks and reading transcripts in order to generate meaning from the texts. For course reading selections, students considered the interplay between the written text and the images embedded within the article of their choice. Thus, the selections themselves encouraged students to consider the multiple modes of communication that were often represented and the effects of these authorial choices on the meanings that the reader/viewer might glean. In terms of cultivating their writing skills and broader communication skills, this multimodal approach enhanced students' abilities to think through how meaning is often layered and dynamic. In response, students considered how to draw these strategies into their own writing and communication.

Moreover, as part of this assignment, students first went through the reading or video their group had chosen to start to compile their thoughts as they moved towards creating an argument and finding evidence for their claims. Groups were able to draw on course materials that discussed ways of building arguments as they engaged in the prewriting process to plan their responses. Much of the students' planning occurred using the various prewriting strategies encouraged in this activity and discussed more widely throughout the course. Many groups availed themselves of the opportunity to use non-English languages. Carroll and Mazak (2017) suggest that moments such as when students read course materials in English, but discuss these materials in other languages, highlight translanguaging practices that are now widespread in higher education. These moments, Carroll and Mazak (2017) note, support Christa van der Walt's (2013) point that the internationalization of higher education fuels opportunities for translanguaging. But students' diverse linguistic responses to navigating this assignment also suggests what Garcia and Wei (2014) call the "translanguaging lens," through which people have "*one linguistic repertoire* from which they select features

*strategically* to communicate effectively” (p. 22, emphasis in original). Students also demonstrated intentionality in their reasons for making various linguistic choices as they “shuttl[ed]” between languages (English, textisms, Hindi, and additional languages) in much the way that Canagarajah (2006, p. 591) suggests.<sup>13</sup> I noticed more use of English in the prewriting samples using speech-to-text and computers, demonstrating that, in contrast, texting particularly helped students use all the languages to which they have access.

Throughout the assignment, students demonstrated independence and creativity in their collaborative writing approaches to the videos they analyzed and as they worked throughout the composition process itself. These findings are in line with Yi and Angay-Crowder’s (2016) insight that multimodal writing strengthens students’ multiliteracy skills while also allowing them to become more independent in their learning and integrate their unique knowledges into the process; moreover, while Rouhshad and Storch’s (2016) findings suggest face-to-face interactions might be superior in supporting collaboration, my students seemed to find Google Docs helpful in their collaboration even as they were able to interact face-to-face during this activity. Though I was available for student questions, my goal was to facilitate students’ independence as well as their collaborative writing skills.

## **Multifaceted and Collaborative Analysis of Visual and Written Text**

All students chose a text with some graphic material—either a TED talk selection or a written article containing images. Groups who wrote on a video selection commented on the presenter’s use of rhetorical modes and appeals and on audience reactions. For students, this seemed to be an interesting process—analyzing not only the reaction of the audience in attendance towards the speaker, but also their own. Considering these talks through the lens of rhetorical modes and appeals, but also their own life experiences and cultures as students, created a rich tapestry of understanding. Similarly, groups who chose a reading commented on the included images, discussing whether the images seemed effective for highlighting the main argument of the article. Thus, the ways in which “meaning is *multimodal*, communicated in much more than language alone” (Blommaert & Rampton, 2016, p. 27) and applies to “written and technologically mediated communication as well as to speech” (p. 27; see also Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996) came to the forefront.

In order to fully flesh out their multimodal artifacts and draw upon multimodal writing options for this activity, students had to stay committed to collaborative writing during multiple classes. Collaborative writing in L2 contexts has been the subject of much discussion (see, e.g., Hu & Lam,

2009; Swain & Lapkin, 2013; Storch, 2013). Bhowmik et al.'s (2019) suggestion that lack of experience with peer collaboration can be a challenge in L2 contexts influenced my placement of this activity after other peer collaboration opportunities in the course. Students had practiced argumentative paragraphs in other contexts and were ready to handle the numerous decisions they needed to make as a team. Collaborative writing via Google Docs to pull a draft together also empowered students to provide thoughtful comments on the work of their peers and be truly self-regulating and creative throughout the multimodal writing process.

## **Conclusion**

Multimodal assignments in writing instructional spaces can be tremendously empowering for student writers, but also for writing instructors who desire to use antiracist and decolonial pedagogies in the writing classroom. In this sense, multimodal assignments leave both facilitator and student winning in the writing context.

The argumentative paragraph assignment I have shared here models some of the actionable changes that an instructor can make to welcome diverse students into their own writing via their own knowledges, languages, and perspectives, keeping their eye on their institutions' goals and mobilizing technologies and students' language and technology toolkits in ways that promote inclusive writing instruction. I have used these techniques successfully in other writing courses as well. Destabilizing traditional hierarchies of English language power that exist in postsecondary contexts has broad value.

One of the key points I began with—that microlevel policies within an instructor's classroom can be sculpted in ways that promote an antiracist and decolonial writing environment—bears repeating here. The argumentative paragraph stood alongside 1:1 writing conferences with my students where I took notes about their linguistic histories and anything they shared about their views on the writing process, course materials where I explained my views on Academic Englishes, modules and activities where I demonstrated the value of all languages and linguistic varieties (while honouring students' desire to practice in English which was their L2), and so on. At multiple levels, the microlevel policies in my course showed my commitments to my students and reassured them of our classroom as a safe place for their linguistic and technological toolkits. As instructors reflect on the ways that their own microlevel policies might become apparent to students, I feel confident that many will see avenues for living out their commitments to antiracist and decolonial pedagogies in ways that work within their own unique contexts for their diverse students.

This assignment, then, might be just a first step, one that touches on all the key aspects of practicing in an L2 while embracing decolonial and antiracist approaches—with focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking throughout the composition process—and enables students to creatively draw on their own languages and knowledges, as well as various technologies and modes, throughout the writing process.

## Endnotes

1. See Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) for more on the micro-level and macro-level distinction.
2. Hereafter, I will simply refer to these as microlevel policies.
3. These works by these scholars as well as many others by them and other scholars.
4. Typically, a child's "first language" learned is also called their "L1, mother tongue, [or] native language." In contrast, the term L2 refers to the "second language" learned by a person. Notably "many children learn more than one language from birth and may be said to have more than one 'first' language" (Lightbrown & Spada, 2021, p. 238), and in this article, I use L2 to refer to "any language other than the first language learned" (Lightbrown & Spada, 2021, p. 244).
5. Out of 100 students who did the assignment, 73 filled out the questionnaire.
6. Students seem to use speech-to-text more and texting less as they revise to create a final draft. I encourage them to choose whatever they feel works best for them, which I believe supports a positive process and good learning outcomes.
7. Also called textisms and textese, among other terms.
8. While this study assessed the impact of texting on the writing of university students, it also looked at the mobile phone use of these students overall.
9. Inoue also refers to the related phrase "Habits of White Discourse" in "Classroom writing assessment as an antiracist practice: Confronting white supremacy in the judgements of language" (2019) and gestures towards similar ideas in his 2015 text as well.
10. For groups that included students who each had different L1s and L2s, the linguistic inclusivity of the activity was more limited, as students tend to primarily use languages held in common during group assignments. While I encouraged students to welcome concepts from various languages they know into their writing process if desired, this may have been difficult and not as natural as in conversations with people who shared their L1s and any L2s besides English.
11. In coining the term Academic Englishes, I use the concept of "Englishes" as discussed in Braj B. Kachru's work where he calls the many Englishes spoken worldwide "world Englishes" (1990, p. 3);

however, Academic Englishes differ from “world Englishes.” As Kachru notes, “the world Englishes are the result of these diverse sociocultural contexts and diverse uses of the language in culturally distinct international contexts” (1990, p. 5). Academic Englishes include what are sometimes termed “postsecondary English”, “English for Academic Purposes”, or “Standard American Edited English.” Like Kachru, however, I am troubling the claim that there exists an English that is stable and pure, rather than diverse and ever changing; thus, I use the term “Englishes” rather than “English.” Indeed, while Academic Englishes expected across academic postsecondary contexts have similarities (Writing Across the Curriculum), there are also differences, sometimes even within subfields of a given discipline (Writing in the Disciplines). Moreover, as many scholars engaged in interdisciplinary work will attest, there is often cross-pollination between terms, jargon, and writing approaches of various fields when trying to express the complexities of work that sits at the intersection of fields. The varieties of English as well as other languages that students and faculty bring to various postsecondary tasks continually transform Academic Englishes within and between disciplines; as there is no “standard” English, it is evident that Academic Englishes are themselves continually codemeshed in practice (although this is not typically acknowledged and thus is not how the terms “codemeshed” or “codemeshing” as discussed by Vershawn Ashanti Young are usually used). Thus, I emphasize that no “standard” Academic English exists through the microlevel practice of referencing Academic Englishes.

12. The questionnaire was simple—four typed questions on a sheet of paper. One of the questions asked only which two of three prewriting options the student used. In addition to the two questions discussed in the body text, I also asked for the students’ consent for me to share some of their responses anonymously in conference papers or articles. Four students indicated that they did not want their responses used beyond the classroom. They are included in the tally of students who completed this questionnaire, but none of their responses were used; for this reason, the number of individual responses to the question about the options of texting, dictating, and handwriting does not add up to 73.

13. Canagarajah writes that “rather than studying multilingual writers as static, locating the writer within a language, we should study the movement between languages; rather than studying the product for descriptions of writing competence, we [should] study the process of composing in multiple languages [and] focus more on the changing contexts of communication, perhaps treating context as the main variable as writers switch their languages, discourses, and identities in response to this contextual change; rather than treating writers as passive, conditioned by their language and

culture, we could treat them as agentive, shuttling creatively between discourses to achieve their communicative objectives” (2006, p. 591). When working with students, I seek to heed Canagarajah’s call by focusing on the ways that writers mobilize various languages and contexts within their writing. I view all these languages as parts of students’ toolkits for writing, resources that they deploy in alignment with their purposes and values.

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