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The Gap Between "There" and "Here": Internationalizing GVSU Courses and Americanizing Overseas Courses

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The Gap Between “There” and “Here”
Internationalizing GVSU Courses and Americanizing Overseas Courses

In the days following the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001 many of us who teach at GVSU devoted class time to discussion of the events. Indeed, we felt compelled to talk about the events in some of our classes. Some of us even found ways to incorporate the tragedy into special assignments, in which we encouraged students to investigate their own thoughts and feelings about the attacks and their aftermath. Beyond our classrooms, across campuses and in our communities, a new dialogue took place—unique its unity and humanity. That dialogue was about America, what it meant to us, and what it meant to others.

In some classrooms and on some campuses in America, the post-September 11 dialogue was wider ranging than at others, with deeper investigations of international policy, Middle Eastern cultures and religion, as well as analyses of propaganda overseas and in the U.S. On the GVSU campus, the Student Life office, the Teaching and Learning Center, and the Middle East Studies program combined to offer regular seminars through early December, on topics such as Islam, international press coverage, and Middle East politics. These well-attended sessions, along with similar teaching opportunities at institutions across the country, serve as evidence of the very real effort at internationalizing university curricula.

The theme of international education for the January Teaching Workshop, sponsored by the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, helped keep some of our internationalizing thoughts alive. Yet months later, as our classrooms and our lives settle into whatever normalcy is possible after such a large-scale tragedy, we have a bit more space to reflect on our writing classrooms and how they might continue the dialogue begun in September. For most of us, myself included,
the urgency for these dialogues and internationalizing our courses is somewhat less apparent. Students don't seem as keen to read or talk about topics they perceive as not directly relevant to the course, or to concerns more distant than their own career preparation in a sluggish economy. But we must not slip into complacency. We must continue to make educational use from our window of opportunity since September 11 and foreground international themes in our courses. We must do so precisely because we are in danger of slipping into our old ways of isolationist thinking—even in our composition classrooms and computer labs. In this essay, I will be looking at how my own first-year writing courses could be internationalized here at GVSU, but also how other writing courses—both at GVSU and at other institutions—can be internationalized. In doing so, I examine my experiences as an American director of a writing program overseas. It is my hope that these reflections encourage those of you who teach in other disciplines to consider ways to broaden the boundaries of your own curriculum.

The Isolationism of Writing Instruction
In their article in volume 46 of *College Composition and Communication*, Muchiri et al. describe the significant differences that writing teachers outside of North America see between themselves and their colleagues in the field that live and work in North America. The article is unique in that the authors address an issue that often goes unnoticed in the major conferences and publications in our field: that composition is a particularly American field. That is, it exists as a discipline only in North America. As someone who was a full-time writing instructor and Writing Program Director of a composition program in a Middle Eastern University for nearly 7 years, I believe that the article's authors are correct in their judgment that composition scholars on the University level are overly focused on the "American" context. I also agree with their charge that those in the U.S. composition community remain largely ignorant of college writing overseas. Compositionists, both within the U.S. and in institutions overseas, are in a position to change the perception of composition as something by and for Americans. This article will survey the issues I experienced as an American-trained Writing Program Director overseas. I will then look in which composition can be an internationally-focused discipline.

Composition's America
Historical scholarship in the evolution of our profession origins through its inclusion of Britain. It was the Scot into composition classrooms Americans—though it was rare at institutions outside the U.S. fields like ESL, Applied Linguistic Purposes for curricular, guidance. This is true of several the Freshman Writing Program at the University in Cairo. My colleagues and conference proposals the
are in danger of slipping into essentialist thinking—even in computer labs. In this own first-year writing program here at GVSU, but both at GVSU and at nationalized. In doing so, an American director is my hope that these you who teach in other broaden the boundaries


describe the significant the American University in Cairo. My colleagues were more likely to send conference proposals to TESOL (in the U.S.)


The early morning quiet of the courtyard at the American University in Cairo belies the chaos and noise on the other side of the wall: Tahrir Square is the busiest square in the city of 15 million.
IATEFL (in the UK) than to American writing-related conferences like the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) or Association for Computers in Writing (ACW).

Another reason for the very low profile and name recognition of Writing Studies outside of North America is because there are very few composition-oriented conferences held in other countries, except as an interest area within ESL conferences. One notable exception is the bi-annual conference on international literacy education, organized by the National Council of Teachers of English. The 1996 conference was held in Heidelberg, Germany; the 1998 conference was held in Bordeaux, France; and the 2000 conference—attracting almost 300 participants from 28 countries—was held in Utrecht, the Netherlands. In the Summer of 2001, the University of Groningen hosted an International Writing Conference, at which some European scholars interested in the nascent movement of native language writing courses at the university level shared ideas for program development—using American writing programs as their primary models.

ESL composition has become practically a field itself, bridging a gap between second language specialists and composition scholars. The journal of Second Language Writing has been published since 1992, and the bibliographies of journals like the ESL flagship publication TESOL Quarterly are peppered with well-known composition scholars, particularly in articles that have to do with ESL writing. Silva’s call for more theories specific to second language writing still holds; he is correct in arguing that we cannot “assume that theories of first language writing alone will suffice” (20). Santos argues that one of the areas in which second language writing can gain more from first language (or L1) composition scholarship is in those areas which explore the ideological impact of writing instruction methodology. The great majority of the scholarship she points to by way of example are American composition theorists. Indeed, U.S. scholarship is likely to continue to lead the way in ESL writing scholarship, at least in the ways it might draw on L1 theories and research.

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On our Cairo campus, I am aware of the pervasive lack of awareness among faculty. There is a pervasive lack of awareness about the nature of ESL learning, with respect to both content and the purpose of our courses. What is most important is that there is awareness exists in a setting where ESL writing is not a field, it is a program. In an article describing the attention given to second language issues on American campuses, Vivien Zamel describes the situation many ESL writing teachers and students face on their own campuses, being “strangers in academe.” The pervasive lack of awareness exists across her institution, about ESL literacy education.

Over half of the American faculty are themselves non-native speakers of English. Yet many non-Americans are themselves non-native speakers of English. In particular, there are few second-language specialists in American composition scholarship. Santos argues that one of the areas in which second language writing can gain more from first language (or L1) composition scholarship is in those areas which explore the ideological impact of writing instruction methodology. The great majority of the scholarship she points to by way of example are American composition theorists. Indeed, U.S. scholarship is likely to continue to lead the way in ESL writing scholarship, at least in the ways it might draw on L1 theories and research.

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...the attention given to second on campuses, Vivien Zamel ESL writing teachers and students face on their own campuses in the U.S.: that of being "strangers in academia" (506). Zamel encounters a pervasive lack of awareness, by the faculty colleagues at her institution, about ESL students and ESL "problems." On our Cairo campus, I encountered similar levels of unfamiliarity among large numbers of our University's faculty. There is a pervasive lack of awareness about the nature of ESL learning, writing instruction in general, and the purpose of our own composition program in particular. What is most puzzling is that this lack of awareness exists in a setting in which English is, for most students and faculty, a second language.

...Over half of the American University in Cairo's faculty are themselves non-native English speakers; even these second-language speaking colleagues often didn't know why our institution had a "Freshman Writing Program" or why we required each student to pass two composition courses. As the Writing Program Director, I often needed to remind or convince other faculty at my school, the students, and even my colleagues in the writing program that there is, in fact, a field called Composition. Indeed, many of my non-American colleagues—mostly Egyptian or British—found the notion of college-level writing instruction fairly odd. If they were educated in a university in the U.K. or at one of the national universities in Egypt, they never had the opportunity to take such a course.

Yet another composition element missing from many non-American contexts is the "spinoff" effect that first-year composition has on popular culture. In particular, there are few references to "Freshman Comp" in the popular media, in places such as newspaper columns, prime-time TV programming, or in motion pictures. In television programs from "Beverly Hills 90210" to the defunct "Cosby Show," references to a new college student's "Freshman English" teacher assume wide familiarity with the concept among the viewing audience.

American Education Abroad
The American University in Cairo is a private, liberal arts university of 4500 students (including 550 graduate students). Over 80% of the students are Egyptian nationals, with the rest primarily from other Arab and African countries. The university bills itself as an
“American-style” institution, and the Freshman Writing Program is one aspect of the way in which the AUC curriculum is modeled after American higher education. That phrase “American-style” carries with it the baggage of linguistic and cultural imperialism. Linguistically, AUC is part of the Anglo-American drive for spreading English and English education worldwide, a drive Phillipson labels “linguistic imperialism.” AUC does receive considerable financial support from the U.S. government’s foreign aid agency, USAID. Additionally, more than 35% of AUC’s faculty are American citizens, adding to the American cultural flavor of the institution.

The business of educating the world on the model of American universities continues to flourish. Not only do U.S.-based campuses host hundreds of thousands of foreign students each year, but students around the world enroll in courses at American Universities or branches of American Universities in their own countries. The American University in Cairo was founded in 1920 by Presbyterian missionaries from the U.S. It is one of the older “American” universities outside the U.S., but the numbers of its peers are growing yearly. AUC is part of a consortium of independent private institutions called Association of International American Universities. AIAU’s membership includes AUC’s Middle Eastern sibling, The American University in Beirut, Richmond College of London, The American University of Paris, and others. In recent years, U.S.-based campuses from California to Maine have opened up The American University in Armenia to The American University in Bulgaria. Other Middle Eastern institutions that bill themselves as “American-style” universities include Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey; Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, and the new American University in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates).

In Cairo, AUC’s success (only about 30% of those who apply are accepted) has spawned many imitators. The Egyptian government opened a semi-private American-style university 3 years ago (Misr International University); City University of Seattle, WA has a branch campus in the Cairo suburb of Dokki;
Freshman Writing

In which the AUC joins higher education.

with it the baggage of Americanism. Linguistically, there is a drive for spread-
worldwide, a drive for Americanism." AUC does not depart from the U.S. in this respect. USAID. Additionally, the faculty are American in the cultural flavor of the institution.

AUC is on the model of American universities. Not only do they enroll thousands of foreign students around the world in universities or branches in their own countries. The school was founded in 1920 by the U.S., but the institution is-American. AUC is part of the consortium of American Universities. This includes Middle Eastern universities such as Beirut, Richmond College, and the University of Paris, as well as North American campuses from Harvard to New York.

The American University in Cairo University is one of the institutions that bill themselves as American universities include the University of California; Al Akhawayn University in the new American University in the Middle East; and the American University in the Emirates.

out 30% of those students and many imitators. AUC opened a semi-private law library in Cairo (Misr Inter-

Exhibiting classic elements of Islamic architecture, AUC's administrative building housed at various points in its history a boy's school, a palace, and a cigarette factory.

and Northeastern University of Boston, MA opened a distance-learning campus in Cairo.

Composition at the American University in Cairo

"American-style" composition also assumes there is a definable American approach to college-level writing instruction. This is problematic, since there is an incredible range of different kinds of writing programs, with very different problems and strengths, within very different kinds of institutions across the U.S. At my present institution, for example, we grade our first-year composition students collaboratively, within a separate department of Writing. At other universities in our region, first-year composition courses are either writing-about-literature courses or, at the large land-grant
institution, taught in the context of a vast menu of courses within the “Department of American Thought and Language.”

In my role as WPA at AUC, I was the person considered by most at my school as the one most familiar with U.S. composition programs. As a result, I was often asked to report the “norm” for writing instruction in the U.S., despite the incredible range of approaches to composition instruction that exist in one region of one state of the U.S., much less the entire nation. On numerous occasions I was called upon by composition colleagues, by administrators, or by faculty in other departments to provide a summary of the “normal” policies for U.S.-based composition programs on the issues of placement and exemption, on transfer credits, and on credit allocations. I was asked to compare our class sizes, our teaching loads, to what is typical in the U.S. Not surprisingly, my answers usually began with the phrase “Well, that depends on ...”

Because I was the WPA and the spokesperson for composition instruction on my campus, I—like it or not—spoke on behalf of the entire field of composition. This is nothing unique for a WPA; even within the U.S., as McLeod points out, writing advocates are often in the role of “missionaries” or “foreigners” as the lone voice spreading the gospel of writing across their respective campuses. McLeod was writing about the position of a Writing Across the Curriculum specialist, but the analogy of a composition missionary was appropriate in my role as WPA.

Being expected to speak about and for composition was something I have always been cheerful about; I enjoy talking about our work as teachers of writing. But it was problematic for me personally, at times. Not only was I expected—for years—to describe a mythical “norm” for writing programs across all American universities, I was put into ethical dilemmas common for WPAs everywhere.

One situation that highlighted these kinds of decisions in a non-North American context was when the issue of class sizes came up. As is the case with other issues, what was appropriate for our school became associated with the perceived situation in the U.S. Invariably, someone brought up the fact that at many large public universities in the U.S., composition class sizes number between 22 and 28 or more. These same people often turned to me for confirmation of these numbers. Should I have mentioned that for many composition programs (albeit in the U.S.) an unfortunate “norm” is to resort to far cheaper graduate assistants and part-time adjuncts? With 31 full-time composition Instructors (and no adjuncts or graduate Instructors), we saw our situation as an all too rare luxury. Likewise, our own composition sections of 16 or 17 are something we all would have liked to retain; self-interest and the interests of our students made me want to keep quiet about the typical class sizes in the U.S. In negotiating these dilemmas, my course of action was to turn the focus on our own program in Egypt, not on American programs. Unless, that is, I was trying to secure more computers for our faculty or writing lab—then I made it a point to harp on the technology available to comparable private universities in the U.S.

Problems with the present situation

There really is no composition “field” independent of the U.S. composition field. Negotiating between the local context of a writing program and “the field” is something all Writing Studies faculty must be able to do. But for composition specialists around the world there is an extra step that they must negotiate: this “field” is exceedingly culture-bound—that is, bound to the culture of American higher education. It is up to those of us outside the U.S.-context to expand the field. We need to move from discussing “American” models in terms of our local situation, towards discussing local models in the non-U.S. contexts.
A case in point is the dearth of truly “multicultural” composition textbooks. Countless readers and rhetorics have flooded the composition textbook market in the past ten years, billed as “diverse” or “multicultural.” Yet all of these seem culture-bound to “diversity” in American, or western, contexts. The majority of the selections in those readers are authored by international or non-Euro writers writing about their contact with, and consequent struggles in dealing with, American cultural values and norms. Used in composition classes in other parts of the world, these multicultural readers too often appear preoccupied with American—diverse as it may be—culture. Perennially, our own departmental textbook committee at AUC complained about the lack of composition readers with a truly global focus.

Even texts as seemingly innocuous as writing handbooks are written and marketed solely for their North American markets. There simply are no options—besides those published in the U.S.—for general writing handbooks that encompass grammatical...
and punctuation guidelines, stylistic and formatting conventions, and citation styles that are international in scope. MLA and APA styles, after all, are guidelines for publication in American academic journals. To teach MLA style to my Egyptian students, I had to specify the picayune 2.54 centimeter margin as the equivalent to MLA’s one inch margin. European academic journals and their citation styles simply are not something that non—American universities incorporate widely in any classes in their curricula. For UK or Australian guidelines on grammar, punctuation, and formatting, teachers and students must look to second language textbooks, where instruction of the language itself is the primary goal.

Internationalizing composition

Local knowledge continues to be composition’s strength. But at the same time, we must all continue to expand our discipline; our field does have something to offer those in higher education on other continents. The reverse is also true: those teaching writing in Malaysia or Finland or central Cairo have something to offer writing specialists and administrators in America. This point has been raised within literary studies, and perhaps writing studies can deal with internationalization along a parallel path. A decade ago, Reed Way Dasenbrock wrote in the MLA publication Profession that “English is a world language and a world literary language; English departments can therefore introduce students to the world” (58). Of course, Dasenbrock wasn’t by any means the first or only scholar to call for a globalization of English studies. Nor was he the last. Writing in a 1994 issue of College English, Avrom Fleischman is quite negative in his assessment that:

The time when American intellectuals were programatically cosmopolitan has long passed—despite the continuing flow of personnel from abroad and the mechanical and financial facilitation of overseas contacts. There is no avoiding the recognition that this internationalist mentality was once a hallmark of the intellectual avant garde and that we have lost it. (162)

One of the best things about the field of composition is that its roots are in the local, in the local practice of writing and writing instruction. Those in the writing program at The American University in Cairo have
Composition

It is composition's strength, just as all continue to expand its borders, and have something to offer on other continents. The writing of the students in Malaysia or Australia have something to offer in America. This point has studies, and perhaps writing internationalization along a parallel line. Dasenbrock wrote in recognition that "English is a world language; English department students to the world" wasn't by any means the globalization of English Writing in a 1994 issue of which is quite negative in a world market for use as barter in a foreign market of knowledge. Because of the importance of that article on my own intellectual and day-to-day work in Cairo. To be able to know that another WPA in the Eastern Mediterranean was having similar doubts about granting transfer credits for writing courses at a particular institution provided me with additional confidence in making those decisions. Yet what was most encouraging from those "feeler" posts I put out on the listservs, was the fact that more than half of the respondents were living and teaching in the U.S.—most of them simply were interested in international issues and wanted to develop contacts with non-North American colleagues.

Muchiri et al. asked readers of College Composition and Communication to envision what they would pack from the world of composition for use as barter in a foreign market of knowledge. Because of the importance of that article on my own intellectual and day-to-day work, I have pondered that question often. I know some of the things I probably wouldn’t bring, besides the aforementioned culture-bound textbooks. Some of the knowledge that I’d leave behind is much of the research on collaborative writing. In my experience as composition teacher or WPA for over six and half years in Egypt, those discussions seem less relevant in a culture like that which permeated our program. In my own classrooms of Arab students, I worked to diminish the impulse of the students to work in groups, collaborate on their written assignments.

Composition scholars, teachers, and WPAs can and should encourage efforts at making ours a more globalized field. We’ve already adopted Friere’s writings about his Brazilian context to instruction of students from North American contexts, but they suburbs or barrios. James Britton’s scholarship on school literacy in Britain found its most receptive audience in America. There are writing teachers and WPAs around the world who may well become the next big theorists in the global market for composition.

Ways to globalize composition

§Acknowledge the hegemony of English. Composition specialists need to continue to recognize the importance of English as dominant international lingua franca and investigate the ways in which the work done in their writing programs relates to this fact—even in institutions in which very few students are non-native speakers of English. More people in the world use English as a second or other language than use it as their native language. This trend has already begun to cause new "spin-off" problems. My article on a situation we noticed at our institution in Cairo is one that I fear is growing elsewhere in the developing world (see “English as a Second Written Language”). Middle- and upper-class students at the American University in Cairo are becoming literate in English, while remaining illiterate or poorly-skilled in reading and writing their native languages—primarily Arabic. My
More than eighty percent of AUC's undergraduates are Egyptian. The rest are primarily from other parts of Africa and the Middle East. The faculty is half Egyptian and about thirty percent American.

own dissertation research has shown that over 62% of AUC undergraduates stated that they write as well as or better in English than they do in their native languages (Schaub, "Sociolinguistic Profiling," 75). This trend of native-language illiteracy corresponding to English-language literacy is dismaying, to say the least, and the blame can be directed towards countless different groups. Nonetheless, I predict that in the future we will see more and more of these highly-educated people around the world that will actually prefer and feel more comfortable writing in English than writing in the languages of their own countries or cultures or families.

§ Investigate Contrastive Rhetoric. Another way we can foster internationalism in composition is to acknowledge, and possibly teach, contrastive rhetoric in non-ESL settings in the U.S. Until now, discussion of the different ways that humans organize texts and use language has been primarily reserved for second-language contexts. One could argue that many American students have a

hard enough time mastering rhetorical strategy within U.S. culture, and bringing up a plurality of rhetorics would only complicate matters. Still, L1 composition could follow the lead of some business-communications pedagogies and more directly acknowledge the variety of rhetorical norms—the different cultures—one might encounter in one's audience. Connor summarizes the trend in contrastive rhetoric research as "moving from a purely linguistic framework—involving structural analysis of products—to [research] that considers both cognitive and sociocultural variables" (202).

§ Become acquainted with overseas perspectives. English composition instructors outside the U.S. often have experience in working through cultural issues which is valuable to U.S. composition instructors when these experiences are shared. Many oft-cited studies or articles on second-language writers were conducted on students in their native languages, and these same students may have been writing in English-speaking environments. American academic institutions could offer courses for overseas participants on Rhetoric: An International Perspective. Writing originated as widely used by writers in their own language experience. Our English language is just one of the academic writing programs that infusion.

The buzzword "multicultural" is sometimes odd with overseas writing programs as they worked in multi-cultural settings. It's taken for granted in the United States, and is meaningless. More relevant to AUC writing programs are students from other countries in eastern Africa—former colonies. Globally speaking, the United States had little cultural "infusion.

§ Make conferences international. overseas participants should not have sessions as strictly "CCC or other rhetoric" in terms of international composition. there are sessions a compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended are other compositionists end up sharing their expertise and advice and expertise in terms of international composition. courses on the unattended
students in their native countries, as they learn English as a foreign language; these articles offer insight into these same students as they study in the U.S., in English-speaking environments. One article that has helped American academics better understand their Chinese students for over a decade, Matalene's "Contrastive Rhetoric: An American Writing Teacher in China," was written after the author spent time teaching English writing in China. A significant percentage of the studies published in *The Journal of Second Language Writing* originate from overseas institutions, yet is widely used by writing teachers in the U.S. as a way to gain insight into the expectations and abilities of their international or second-language students. Helen Fox's book, *Listening to the World*, illustrates the richness in language experience that non-native speakers bring to the academic writing classroom; all of us benefit from that infusion.

The buzzword of "multiculturalism" in the U.S. is sometimes odd when mentioned in connection with overseas writing programs; many of us work or have worked in multi-cultural settings in which the concept is taken for granted to the extent that the word becomes meaningless. More than 85% of the students in the AUC writing program are Egyptian; nearly all the rest are from other countries in the Middle East or north-eastern Africa—from the same relatively small region, globally speaking. Does this mean that the program had little cultural "diversity"?

$\textit{Make conferences in U.S. more inviting to overseas participants.}$ Conference organizers can avoid compartmentalizing International or ESL-related sessions as strictly as they now are. Every year at the CCCC or other rhetoric and composition conferences, there are sessions at which scholars hope to be directing advice and expertise towards those who do not think in terms of international or second-language writing courses on the university level; but most of those in attendance are others already interested in or familiar with these issues. Regardless of intended audience for the material presented, ESL or international compositionists end up speaking just to one another. With the truly international annual conference of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) occurring in North America during the same two-week
window as the CCCC meeting in the U.S. each spring, many second-language writing teachers and theorists opt for TESOL's meeting rather than CCCC—an unfortunate coincidence of scheduling that further weakens the ESL or international presence at the annual CCCC meeting.

These conferences in the U.S. are also not as accommodating as they could be for international participants. Each time I went to a conference from Cairo (such as CCCC), I always had to pay for an extra copy of the program; the programs were simply not mailed early enough for the program to arrive in Cairo before I left for the conference in the U.S. And I lived in a large capital; I would imagine the mail delays to be even more significant for those living in provinces or in countries with less reliable mail services than Egypt's. Without listserv access, there would be similar problems in receiving the calls for papers: my copies of WPA and CCC and College English generally arrived two months later than they would to a U.S. address (and I paid the international rate for membership).

Another possibility for making the U.S. composition conferences more international in scope, is to provide funding assistance to participants from developing countries or institutions less well-funded than AUC. Faculty in our composition program in Cairo had the luxury of applying for conference grants to present papers at international academic conferences. Our colleagues at the national universities across greater Cairo had extremely limited (or nonexistent) opportunities for such support. Perhaps conferences could emulate what the CCCC has done with its “Scholars for the Dream” program—and assist participants with travel funds from underrepresented institutions such as those in the developing world.

§INTERNATIONALIZE PARTICULAR SECTIONS OF FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION.

By “internationalize” I do not mean the common practice of earmarking sections of writing courses for ESL learners. What I mean is to design a composition course so that it brings international focus to the reading and writing assignments as an explicit goal. In my own writing courses at my home institution, it is difficult enough to meet our existing goals, much less add yet another goal for the course. But for those courses where theme-related reading and writing assignments are central, the internationalization process could largely be accomplished by substituting reading assignments from non-U.S. cultures and writing assignments that respond to international issues or involve writing to international audiences.

While teaching composition overseas, the course was thoroughly “internationalized” in that most of the English-language readings were by necessity on topics outside our host country. Because our students made use of English-language databases and libraries for their research, the bibliographies reflected a range of international perspectives. Here in the U.S., though, it is somewhat more difficult to get those international perspectives into our classrooms, much less our students' papers. I don't pretend to have all the answers on how to do this, but I've been experimenting nonetheless. Some of these efforts are summarized in a document I created for my GVSU Writing Department colleagues on ways to internationalize our first-year writing course, WRT 150.

Conclusion

There are, I suppose, as many different ways to internationalize a writing course as there approaches to writing. Consider ways in which your own courses could be more global in nature and focus. Seek out internationally oriented sessions at your next academic conference. Pick up a journal like World Englishes, TESOL Quarterly, or Journal of Second Language Writing, for those in history—but try to change this, slowly, and with change.

Notes
2. The Appendix was written by Kristine Hansen, Teaching & Learning Center, National Council for the Teacher of English (NCTE).

Works Cited

Connor, Ulla. 1997. “Constructing Cultural Classrooms.” In Women, Race, and Education.


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of the most multicultural nations in history—but that we remain isolated and self-centered in a global sense. We can change this, slowly, and we can begin this very semester.

Notes
1. According to the Institute for International Education, there were close to 491,000 foreign students in American Colleges and Universities in the 1998-99 school year (www.iie.org).
2. The Appendix was created as a handout and I would like to thank the Pew Faculty Teaching & Learning Center for support.

Works Cited
Schaub, Mark. 1999. “Sociolinguistic Profiling and the Negotiation of Stakeholder Expectations in a Writing Program: A Case Study.” Diss. Purdue University, West Lafayette IN.
Appendix A:

Internationalizing Writing 150

What does it mean to "internationalize" a course?
Internationalizing a course means to provide students—within the mission and parameters of a particular course—with reading, writing, and research assignments which foster a more global vision for the discipline being studied.

Isn't internationalizing a course a particular agenda—like diversity training?
Yes it is. But an explicit goal of internationalizing a course can be added to a course's objectives, while still maintaining the central focus for the course (in the case of English 150, on writing). In one sense, the internationalization allows you to teach concepts like audience and purpose more extensively—by including discussions on writing to audiences outside the USA.

Why internationalize Writing 150?
If you cannot do it without compromising the stated goals of the course, don't do it. In fact, several of the syllabi for first-year writing courses that I've looked at do not seem to be about writing, first and foremost; they appear to be about other things. Yet there are effective ways to make your 150 class more global in scope. I can think of at least two reasons for providing a global spin for your Writing 150 section:

• GVSU's student body has one of the smallest percentages of international students in the Midwest; they simply need more exposure to international perspectives (no, that's not our job, but we can do some things to help in our own teaching).

• Allows for an infusion of how "culture" (broadly defined) affects written communication.

Where can I look for help?
The best place I've found is the MIIIE (Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education), a consortium of 2 and 4-year colleges and universities that have made an effort at internationalizing courses across the curriculum. Their website, <puma.kvcc.edu/midwest/>, has links to actual syllabi and instructional modules in each discipline, including writing.

Some tips for internationalizing your WRT150 section
1. Develop an exchange with an overseas class. While I taught for 6.5 years at the American University in Cairo, my Arab and African students wrote letters, reports, or papers on a variety of topics intended for audiences of American undergraduate students. For example, in February 1991, my students sent "letters on the Gulf War to America" to students in a composition class at Clemson University. Mostly, they argued that the USA should not be invading Iraq and asked why Americans could support Operation Desert Storm. The Clemson students responded to individual letters the following week. In 1996, my students sent their reports on the continued U.S. bombing of Iraq to a class at DePaul University—with the DePaul students responding two weeks later. These kinds of exchanges require simply a willing contact in another country. The web site <www.epals.com> is a resource for teachers seeking these contacts; the site caters primarily to K-12 teachers that is interested in an exchange setup.


3. Include a research assignment. See the MIIIE site at <puma.kvcc.edu/midwest/>.
Diversity training?

To foster a more global awareness and parameters of a course's objectives, (English 150, on writing). Let's look at the audience and purpose outside the USA.

Of course, don't do it. In fact, it doesn't seem to be about there are effective ways to reasons for providing a few international students in the written commu-

For example, in February its in a composition class invading Iraq and asked 'n students responded to reports on the continued contacts; the site caters

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primarily to K-12 teachers but there is a section for higher education. Furthermore, if anyone is interested in an exchange with my former colleagues in Cairo, I'll be happy to help set you up.

2. Assign readings from a variety of international perspectives. There are not many textbooks available that have a truly international focus (most OmulticulturalO readers have a distinctly American flavor). One decent one, however, is Carol Verburg's Ourselves Among Others, 4th edition. Bedford Books, 1999.

3. Include a research assignment on an international topic. P.J. Colbert at Marshalltown Community College (IA) describes some of these possibilities in his syllabus—available through the MIIE site at <puma.kvcc.edu/midwest/modules/wri020-pc.htm>