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Ann Burke

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THEORY

Locating Stakeholders Within the Technocratic Frame: A Rhetorical Analysis of Achieve, Inc.

ANN BURKE

Conversations surrounding education reform often include buzzwords and phrases like “college and career readiness” in the “twenty-first century.” Achieve, Inc. (a self-proclaimed educational reform organization led by state governors and individuals associated with corporations such as Intel, Prudential Financial, and IBM), for example, argues that, in competing with the rest of the world, it is important for the United States to be economically successful and competitively advanced in this twenty-first century. This organization, then, aims to make sure students have the right tools to be successful in the twenty-first century, and is not only composed of United States governors, business leaders, and “other influential leaders,” but also supported and funded by organizations including the Lumina Foundation, ExxonMobil, and JP Morgan Chase Foundation, among others (Achieve, Inc., 2014).

Currently, members of Achieve have situated themselves as proponents for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). By extension, Achieve champions the development of various assessments associated with CCSS, including Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). In fact, Achieve develops and manages materials about the implementation of PARCC and CCSS (“Achieving the Common Core”). Between Achieve, CCSS, and PARCC, the goal for students to demonstrate “college and career readiness” is not only a priority, but phrases like “college and career readiness” become familiar mantras to promote educational reform.

Mantras like these are often a characteristic of technocratic language, which can involve “public expressions” that further the priorities of the “technical elite” (Salvador, 1992, p. 19). In other words, technocratic discourse embodies language use that is exclusive to economic priorities, but is used to justify relationships between the stakeholders of

these economic priorities and other areas like education. For instance, technocratic discourse champions the idea that individual success, in a global market, is crucial to the collective good. As a result, stakeholders using this discourse become the “technical elite” who take part in and control exclusive conversations, and in this case, conversations about education. So too do Bernard J. McKenna and Philip Graham (2000) emphasize this notion of technocratic exclusivity when they say that, “technocratic discourse is exclusionary and ‘monologic’ insofar as it is an ‘expert’ language that operates within “sacrosanct, impenetrable boundaries [and thus] . . . retards and freezes thought” (p. 247).

With this in mind, there are similar conversations specific to education, and even more so to writing assessment, that embody a gate-keeping function in economic and educational organizations. Through technocratic discourse, specific goals are prioritized by the agenda of organizations like Achieve, and therefore will be the focus of this analysis.

It is important for teachers to be aware of how technocratic discourse is used among organizations and political leaders to establish education as a commodity, emphasizing individual student success as a crucial part of the collective good, or in this case, the American economy within a competitive, global community. Technocratic discourse is used among a specific group of stakeholders, often exclusive of teachers, and demonstrates how education is currently perceived and talked about. Furthermore, the technocratic discourse situates stakeholders with economic interests to determine how education should function as a way to compete in the world economy. Other stakeholders invested in education, like teachers, are situated by the primary users of technocratic discourse (e.g. Achieve), as either tools in the path to success in education, or nonexistent in the construct of education within the technocratic frame.

How Language is Used: Unpacking Technocratic Discourse

Linda Adler-Kassner and Peggy O'Neill (2010) echo concerns of how discourse is framed around writing assessment and who holds control over those conversations. In *Reframing Writing Assessment to Improve Teaching and Learning*, the authors explain that the purposes and goals for American education have historically been shaped by technocratic discourse. The authors identify this frame as technocratic, emphasizing the need for Americans to be productive citizens, and for students to achieve individual success for the collective good in a global economy.

As a result, the technocratic framing of education and writing assessment devalues teacher knowledge and sets educators up to be tools rather than experts or participants in conversations about how students might achieve academic success (p. 52). And so, the authors, acknowledging teachers as experts, rather than tools, argue for a reframing of the discourse surrounding writing assessment, which in turn, should create space, a location, for teachers to contribute to discourse surrounding writing assessment.

Chris Gallagher, in "Being There: (Re)Making the Assessment Scene" (2011), also grapples with the "preponderance of corporate interests" in education and argues for student and teacher authority in the generation and distribution of writing assessment (p. 455). Especially when education is associated with economic interests, or viewed as a way to achieve success in global competition, corporate interests of business and political leaders epitomize the technocratic discourse and framing of educational purposes, and ultimately exclude educators from this larger conversation.

With specific interest to the technocratic frame, the following rhetorical analysis demonstrates how patterns of language, which invoke economic principles, prioritize a certain agenda for education within the nation, and by extension, the global economy. In turn, in rhetorically analyzing this agenda, it will be useful to better understand how various stakeholders are positioned within a technocratic frame of education, and what audiences are welcomed to and excluded from conversations about educational reform.

In considering how Achieve, Inc. promotional materials embody technocratic discourse, documents about PARCC's ELA/Literacy assessment will also be discussed to see how patterns of language are echoed in assessment that will be disseminated on a national level. To determine whether patterns of language are mirrored in these documents further

demonstrates implications for how different stakeholders are positioned as far as the roles they serve or are handed when it comes to national agendas for education and assessment. Identifying patterns of word choice, delivery methods, and conversations held within these documents indicates a certain type of discourse that drives or motivates organizations like Achieve to be so invested in writing assessment.

A Rhetorical Analysis: Achieve.org

In analyzing Achieve's website, the synthesis of words and images demonstrate the priority of technocratic principles. At first glance, Achieve's website is seemingly clean, organized, and easy to navigate. At the top center of the page, it is clear what Achieve believes the goal of education should be: "All students should graduate from high school ready for college, career, and citizenship" (Achieve.org). The words college, career, and citizenship are indeed in bold font on Achieve's website, emphasizing three purposes for K-12 education, and embodying, especially by using words like career and citizenship, the relationship between academics and economics. McKenna and Graham (2000) explain how technocratic discourse, creates mantra-like words and phrases, that are often left unpacked, but become commonly used in the public at large. They state, "By making the relationship between globalization, trade liberalization, financial markets, and communication technology familiar and simplistic, the words and phrases become 'understandable,' 'accessible,' familiar, and, consequently, even desirable concepts for the public at large" (p. 235). This explanation becomes especially apparent on Achieve's website when "college, career, and citizenship" are placed front and center. These words, of course, are not limited to Achieve's mission but also further establish connections between the agenda of Achieve and its investment in CCSS.

In returning to Achieve's website, below the "college, career, and citizenship" statement, images of students and teachers flash on the screen, each image associated with a program or assessment with which Achieve is also associated. The last image that flashes in this sequence is of a pensive-looking female student, and next to this image is a blurb to advertise for PARCC saying, "States working to build the next generation of assessment together." By clicking on the image, users are taken to the official website for PARCC, which is managed by Achieve. Closer discussion of PARCC will be revisited, but for now, it should be noted that compared to Achieve's clean and organized appearance, at least on the

surface, PARCC's website is organized in the same fashion, but contains more tabs, text, and images, making the focus of its website and mission more difficult to navigate. This is worth mentioning because, within a technocratic frame, usage of "college, career, and citizenship," become common and a way to promote the purpose of education in a global economy. But when it comes time to actually apply these words to things like assessment, it becomes more complicated as it is necessary to define and explicate how college and career readiness, for instance, will be measured. This might account for the more convoluted appearance of PARCC, compared to Achieve. Still, PARCC's website carries similar language to that of Achieve's website using phrases like "college and career readiness" and "next generation assessments."

Often associated with technocratic discourse is a concern for how economic principles will be advanced for the public good. In preparing students to be college and career ready and creating next generation assessments, there is an implicit significance placed on the notion of looking ahead, moving forward, and getting ahead. This is especially important when it comes to competing in a global economy, and Achieve directly associates education as a way to make these advancements. The particular call for competition and moving forward within education indirectly places pressure on teachers and students, as it is these stakeholders who will, to note just one instance, be held accountable for successful results in assessment, demonstrating to the rest of the world a competitive drive. What the voices of Achieve, and by extension PARCC, don't indicate are the potential consequences of competitive, next generation assessments—for instance, the teachers and students who will be left behind if they are not moving forward as indicated by assessment results.

Returning to Achieve's website, the "About Us" section begins with the statement, "Achieve is proud to be the leading voice for the college- and career-ready agenda, and has helped transform the concept of 'college and career readiness for all students' from a radical proposal into a national agenda." It is not clear what, exactly, the "radical proposal" initially involved, but it seems that proposal has transformed into the mission to create students who are college and career ready. It is also unclear about what it means to be college and career ready, especially as this is a priority for Achieve. How is readiness measured? In applying the technocratic frame to this language use, the correlation between educational and economical goals does become apparent. For instance, in order to advance in the global economy, students need to be college and career ready. But if these words are further

unpacked, what does this mean for other stakeholders like educators? What does this language use mean for how assessment is created and implemented? For now, these questions cannot be directly answered with what Achieve provides on its website. What Achieve does offer, as far as language use, illustrates how "technocratic discourse becomes a 'value' in itself, and command of the discourse and its official conduits becomes synonymous with expertise and power" (McKenna and Graham, 2000, p. 236). It becomes even more crucial, then, to understand who, within the organization of Achieve, is dominating this discourse, and what other stakeholders might be excluded from this conversation.

To the Video: "Preparing All Students for Tomorrow. Today"

On the same "About Us" page, Achieve provides a promotional video that opens with words from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman: "Education is the great equalizer. It's the opportunity to get better." Heineman invokes idealistic principles of a capitalistic society in which everyone is equal, entitled access to education, if only to compete with others in a global economy, and through this equal access to education, able to become better and successful competitors. Technocratic discourse can also involve an "opportunistic tone" with which broad goals are established, like creating "higher standards." Of course, the finite details of how these goals will be achieved are vague.

Throughout this video, similar language perpetuates this tone. Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam is also featured in this video. At one point, he claims that "Everybody has come to see the connection between education achievement and economic achievement." At this moment, within this video that is meant to demonstrate the mission and values of Achieve for curriculum and assessment, education is directly connected to economic priorities. Haslam's statement involves technocratic discourse through which an assumption about the connection between education and economic achievement is created. Just as "college, career, and citizenship" becomes a common mantra for Achieve, so too does the idea that the American educational system and its economy are directly connected; this idea is automatically assumed and should, therefore, be accepted by the larger public.

Once this connection is established, a tone of competition is invoked as Craig Barrett, the chairman of Achieve, suggests that throughout the world, everyone is trying to figure out how to be competitive. After this suggestion is

made, the video immediately transitions to establishing the problem at hand. Governor Haslam returns to the screen, lamenting that, “Our competitors are a lot better than they used to be.” Barrett makes another appearance, this time championing education as “the most important aspect we have for competing in the twenty-first century.” The moves made up to this point in the video are important to note as the priority of competition and its association with education become apparent. Governor Haslam identifies the problem and reason for Achieve’s mission, it is the leader of Achieve, Barrett who offers a solution. Up to this point in the video, the voices of Achieve have established the problem, invoked buzz words and phrases that find a place within a technocratic frame, and made way for a solution to the problem offered, not by educators, but by those whom Salvador has identified as the technical elite.

There is little, if any agency for the teacher as stakeholder . . . It is curious to think about where actual educators are situated in Achieve’s promotional video.

As the promotional video moves into a discussion of competition within education, Governor Heineman offers another solution, and compares the purpose of education to the University of Nebraska football team’s competitive drive that raises and meets standards to win games. Similar to this anecdote, Haslam and other voices of Achieve argue that standards within

education must be raised to compete and win within a global community. The voices heard from thus far in the video restate the problem from their perspective. Students are no longer prepared or successful enough to compete with the rest of the world. Therefore, the standards must be raised.

To raise these standards, the voices of this video emphasize the need for math and science as this will certainly, they insist, lead students successfully into the twenty-first century global economy. For instance, Jeff Wadsworth, President and CEO of Battelle, says in this video, “The future of this country’s economy is based on innovation, technology, mathematics.” While it could be assumed that other subjects are important to innovation and use of technology, it is interesting to note that the first specific academic subject mentioned in this video is math. This move elevates mathematics as a priority to achieve academic and economic success. English Language Arts (ELA) is briefly mentioned and deemed important as well, but moments throughout the video point to emphasis on the former core subjects.

Watching this video, and honing in on what the voices of Achieve say, within a technocratic frame, shows how

priorities in learning math, science, and technology can develop “twenty-first century” skills that are needed to compete and find success in a global economy. This is not to say that Achieve completely dismisses ELA, but on Achieve’s site, and in this promotional video, what is said by Achieve representatives is intertwined with images of microscopes, scientists, and advocacy programs like “Math Works,” putting other core subjects in the spotlight. This concentration on those subjects, within the video, transitions to the need for assessment, and reemphasizes the idea that these core subjects and “new technology [are] simply assumed to be positive and inevitable” (McKenna & Graham, 2000, p. 238). Through the language that Achieve uses in its promotional materials, technology is something in which the organization believes students should be well-versed. But, technology is also something that will be incorporated into the ways in which students’ skills are assessed (e.g. automated scoring).

Certainly, the use of technology can take on positive agency that benefits the academic performance of students, especially in considering how students learn in different ways, but it is crucial that first, administrators and teachers understand what it is they are distributing to students, and second, that appropriate training with technological tools is provided to teachers who will, in turn, be held responsible for teaching and assessing students through certain technologies. It is easy to assume that most students know about various technologies, but it is also easy to forget that students might consume technology, but not fully understand the inner workings of a given program or how to learn with them. In another instance, if we make these assumptions, this can further perpetuate the marginalization of groups who are expected to demonstrate learning with technology, but may not even have complete access for funding for technologies in the first place. Especially with the recent news of a relationship between PARCC and Pearson to create technology-based assessments, concerns about accessibility become even more relevant (Barshay, 2013).

In another instance during the Achieve video, Wadsworth first acknowledges criticism toward standardized assessment: “People are nervous about being measured, and we say, ‘bring it on.’ Because if you don’t measure, you don’t know where you are.” Barrett then calls for an upgrade of assessment tools and argues, “You can’t fool the rest of the world by giving kids a dumbed-down test . . . you’re being dishonest to the child, dishonest to the parent, dishonest to society.” Mention of “the teacher” is nowhere to be found in Barrett’s statement, but one must wonder who “you” is, as,

for the first time in this video, with exception to the earlier football analogy, “you” as audience is engaged.

McKenna and Graham (2000) discuss how technocratic discourse can eliminate opportunity for human agency. Certainly, Achieve’s agenda, especially when framed within that of the technocratic, provides a role and agency for its representatives. But it is only when Barrett uses the pronoun “you,” with a patronizing tone can viewers see where the teacher as stakeholder might be situated. And in this space, there is little, if any agency for the teacher as stakeholder. McKenna and Graham explain:

Linguistically, people can be removed as easily from sentences, just as they are removed from the technological and political-economic models that technocrats use to formulate policies. Ideally technocracy as discourse, method, and ideology, adopts values which ‘completely leave behind the specifically human world.’” (p. 238)

It is curious to think about where actual educators are situated in Achieve’s promotional video. Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick specifically identifies his community and its role within education as he says, “the nations governors are leaders of laboratories, we’re trying new things and innovation in our classroom is as important as it is in our economy.”

In making this statement, this certainly clarifies why the makeup of Achieve largely consists of political and business leaders, rather than, for instance, classroom teachers. These Achieve representatives are taking it upon themselves to change the outcome, to change the product of American education. And as Governor Patrick and other representatives of Achieve speak, throughout this video, this is not to say that teachers—the ones who will, ultimately, assess and be assessed—are completely absent from the promotional video. Indeed, as the governors and CEOs argue for the importance of education in relation to a successful American workforce, images of teachers working with students float in and out of view. So, the speakers in this video may not directly address teachers, or even say the word teacher, and we may never actually hear from a teacher, but the idealized images of teachers working one on one with students, writing on the chalkboard and so on, are there, moving with the voices of Achieve representatives.

It is clear, of course, that education, according to Achieve leaders, is synonymous with the business model. Wadsworth explains that “Having a common standard in a measurement system is extremely powerful. It’s how the best

businesses operate in order to know they’re going to survive into the future. And I think in education, that’s something we need to do.” Ultimately, the governors and CEOs in this video set themselves up as experts of both educational and economic communities. Achieve representatives speak in this video with the assumption that audiences should not only understand business model principles, but should also see how principles applied to economics can be applied to educational standards. McKenna and Graham identify this move as a way to make certain discourse familiar to the larger audiences, but at the same time, exclude certain groups from either participating in or changing the proverbial conversation.

This idea comes into play especially when the speakers in Achieve’s promotional video refer to the collective “we,” and it is not explicitly stated whether actual teachers belong to this group. But as the video flashes each image of teachers and students, and as Achieve representatives speak and enact technocratic discourse, perhaps the synthesis of language and image represent teachers as tools, and something that will carry out the business model via education, propelling successful students in the twenty-first century workforce. Teachers and students, as still images, then, can accompany Achieve representatives as they speak, but outside of these frozen images, they cannot contribute to the conversation.

Implications for Assessment: PARCC

Craig Barrett, former chairman and CEO of Intel, and now, Achieve’s current chairman, clarifies the mission of Achieve in the promotional video that has been discussed throughout this analysis. He claims, “If you want to win, you have to choose to compete. Achieve is there to help to the United States compete, by setting the expectation level at the competitive level with the rest of the world, and that’s what Achieve’s mission is.” Barrett, in this particular clip of the video, is paired with Governor Heineman who states that Achieve intends to raise standards for every child, because every child deserves a quality education.

Just as Heineman suggests and Barrett reaffirms, then, every child has the opportunity to compete, to be successful, and to be rewarded. Barrett claims Achieve is there to help make this happen. Of course, one must wonder what happens when school districts or individual students choose not to compete, or do not have access to this competition in the first place (e.g. through means of technology, as discussed earlier). It can also be assumed that one of the ways to make this happen is through assessment, and as

previously mentioned, not only does Achieve's promotional video make a nod toward the need for assessment, but recall that on its website, Achieve provides brief information and links to PARCC, the assessment organization associated with Achieve. Also recall that once one leaves Achieve's seemingly clean and transparent website to explore PARCC's website, it becomes increasingly difficult to navigate, because it will attempt to promote assessment that should practice what Achieve representatives preach. This becomes more complicated, and one can spend hours clicking on various links and reading different documents about PARCC. In doing so, however, the technocratic language invoked by Achieve is echoed in elements of PARCC's assessment goals.

When one digs around PARCC's website, a downloadable PowerPoint, "PARCC ELA Sample Items Overview," can be found. Within this document, slides are provided to discuss the purpose of PARCC as well as samples of reading and writing questions for grades three, five, and six that students might encounter when taking this assessment. It should be noted that, as of this date, PARCC has not been officially administered, and so the samples provided are only possibilities based on what the developers of PARCC have deemed appropriate to measure "college and career readiness," and to represent standards and outcomes of CCSS. Nevertheless, especially when moving from Achieve's promotional materials to reading about PARCC's goals, similar technocratic language is used.

Slide two, "PARCC's Fundamental Advance," proclaims that, "PARCC is designed to reward quality instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards, so the assessment is worthy of preparation rather than a distraction from good work." Recall in Achieve's promotional video when Barrett and Heineman implied, through technocratic discourse, that if schools chose to compete, they would reap the benefits, with Achieve's help. Additionally, in that video, the word "teacher" is never mentioned, but this rhetorical analysis shows that while teachers are not given a voice, they are certainly given a place, to be used as tools, shaped by words like "accountability." So where Achieve, in its central promotional video, does not mention the word teacher, here in this second slide of the PARCC overview, "teacher" is still not used. But it becomes more explicit that Achieve's agenda, and therefore assessments like PARCC, will "reward quality instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards;" and teachers will be held accountable. This agenda essentially proclaims a need for new assessment and rigorous standards, but does not take responsibility for the facilitation of

implementing assessment, nor the consequences that may result from assessment results.

In acknowledging a limitation of this analysis, its focus on Achieve does not leave room for a close reading of specific writing assessment samples schools can expect to see from Achieve and its partner, PARCC, when assessments are officially rolled out. The focus of this analysis does, however, invite the opportunity for more questions to be raised about how, exactly, PARCC will implement Achieve's mission of higher standards, global competition, and college and career readiness in the twenty-first century, and whether writing assessment will be framed within the same technocratic discourse Achieve uses to promote its agenda. As of late, PARCC's possible partnership with Pearson to use computer based scoring by Spring 2015, does seem to indicate further practice of this technocratic discourse (Barshay, 2014).

At first glance, it is apparent that PARCC intends to develop ELA assessment that involves multiple choice "search and find" questions which call on students to actively engage with the text. As for writing, students first work through various questions specific to writing; then, using the same text they've been working with, they create a final written narrative. For instance, the sixth grade writing assessment asks students to invent a narrative on what has already been read throughout the ELA assessment (Advances in the PARCC/ELA Literacy Summative Assessment). Might the ability to "invent" demonstrate a student's skill of innovation—something that is so desperately required to compete in the twenty-first century? In turning to eleventh grade samples of ELA assessment, students are asked to respond, just as in the sixth grade assessment, to a text that has been used throughout the whole ELA assessment. PARCC justifies these sorts of writing prompts as follows:

The ability to compare and synthesize ideas across multiple texts is a crucial skill for college and careers . . . Students are also required to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge of language and conventions when writing (an expectation for both college and careers)" (Grade 11 Sample Items 37).

Just as Achieve representatives emphasize, repeatedly, the importance of college and career readiness, these words are used throughout assessment samples as means of justification. These are just a couple, brief examples, but, for future research, delving even deeper into how and why PARCC writing assessment might be framed within technocratic discourse could lead to important discoveries about what truly is expected of teachers and students by the technical elite.

International Trumps Local

This analysis, conducted within a technocratic frame, demonstrates how discourse around education reform and assessment is not only commonplace in the business and political community, but is shaping who is invited into, and excluded from conversations about how assessment will be developed and implemented for, to use a technocratic buzzphrase, competing in the twenty-first century. Adler-Kassner and O'Neill (2010) argue that writing instructors and writing program administrators need to look beyond the technocratic frame and work to develop assessment through local, community-based means. Similarly, Gallagher values teacher expertise in developing assessment and says, "only we—faculty and students—are in a position to improve teaching and learning in meaningful ways: being there matters" (p. 468). These arguments, which stem from communities of composition instructors and writing program administrators, are absent in the technocratic frame of education reform and assessment. Furthermore, as the CCSS have been implemented in the majority of states, the scope of this analysis highlights patterns of discourse that show the challenges students and teachers face to truly "be there," especially when they are not invited to do so, by the technical elite, who have thus far, been able to control the conversation.

It should also be noted that there are two versions of Achieve's promotional video. The version discussed throughout this analysis can be found, as previously mentioned on Achieve's website. A different, longer version can be found on YouTube, a medium through which to reach wider audiences. In this version, Mark Grier, Vice Chairman of Prudential Financial, Inc. has more to say about education reform and assessment, and what he says directly challenges arguments for reframing assessment outside of the technocratic discourse. Grier says, "we can't look at education as a local challenge." Instead, as other voices of Achieve agree with Grier, it is argued that there should be a common, internationally benchmarked standard for assessment. Otherwise, Grier explains, "if everybody's free to set their own standards it's like grading yourself, or doing your own performance review and it's very easy to decide and convince yourself that you're doing a really, really good job." It is no secret that stakeholders in the composition field (e.g. instructors, WPAs) often argue for and have developed local assessments, and the likes of Adler-Kassner, O'Neill, and Gallagher are representatives of the call for local collaboration. And while Achieve representatives never speak directly to actual educators, the

commentary on assessment especially exemplifies how educators and notions of local assessment are considered irrelevant. This is particularly evident when Grier states that education is not a local challenge. Instead, it is, according to technocratic discourse, something that is driven by economic and competitive principles within a larger, global community. This means, as Barrett and others point out, that assessment should be "upgraded," have a "common standard," and be "internationally benchmarked"—terms that have yet to be fully explicated in materials from either Achieve or PARCC.

Looking Beyond the Technocratic Frame

Achieve's promotional video concludes with words from Governor Patrick: "Education has always been that equalizer, and it will be in the future. But not unless we cultivate it, not unless we support it, not unless we care about it." The use of technocratic discourse especially comes full circle as "education as the great equalizer" begins and concludes this video, first with Governor Heineman and now with Governor Patrick. The video however, seems to take a new turn in its final seconds, when Governor Patrick uses the words "cultivate," "support," and "care." These are words that, in this analysis of both Achieve and PARCC materials, were rarely found, and even though the use of "we" suggests collective action, this analysis highlights how stakeholders like teachers are excluded from these conversations. But whether Achieve intended this, the sudden use of words that encourage development and fostering within education provide a glimmer of hope for stakeholders other than the technical elite to join the conversation.

In this brief moment, it seems there is room to step outside of the technocratic discourse and use language that "keeps improving student learning squarely in the center" of a new frame to discuss education reform and assessment (Adler-Kassner & O'Neill, 2010, p. 187). This rhetorical analysis not only hones in on patterns of language use among a specific group of stakeholders in education, but also calls attention to how these groups, and Achieve, Inc. specifically, are currently controlling the conversation, as CCSS and PARCC are infiltrating schools nationwide, and will become, if they haven't already, engrained in our daily, teaching lives. Stakeholders who are not part of the technical elite need to pay attention to and keep an eye on Achieve and their partners.

But, beyond this, it is equally important, if not more crucial, to understand how education is being discussed by organizations like Achieve, and in what ways different groups that

tend to clash with each other can use shared language, rather than a limited, reductive technocratic discourse. Considering Governor Patrick's use of "cultivate," "support," and "care" might be a place to start.

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After graduating from Aquinas College and then teaching middle school English, **Ann Burke** earned her M.A. in English, with a concentration in rhetoric and composition, at Ball State University. Ann is currently a doctoral student in the Joint Program in English and Education at University of Michigan, where her research interests include cross-institutional articulation between secondary and college writing teachers, and its implications for student transition.