

- **Want to know Shirley Rose, ASU's new WPA?**
- **Did you miss the Composition Conference? Find out what happened.**
- **Need some fresh ideas for teaching composition? Check out the "Teaching Tips."**

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# Writing Notes

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## A Conversation with Shirley Rose

By Steven Accardi

**Accardi:**

First of all, thank you so much for taking the time to do this interview. I am sure you are quite busy wrapping things up at Purdue and getting things ready for your transition to the desert. As you probably know, ASU has been going through quite a transition as well, but before we get into that, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself, where you are from, where you grew up, where you went to college, what you studied, what your experi-



ences were like in graduate school, and so on?

**Rose:** I've lived in Indiana for the past fifteen years, but I grew up in Colorado. Though I'll gloss over the details of my grade school years in a two-room country schoolhouse on the High Plains of Southeast Colorado and of my 28-mile school bus rides to the nearest town's junior high and high school, I do want to note that I grew up with a Westerner's sense of distance and an appreciation—or rather, an expectation—of blue skies most of the time. I like to think that's helped me to develop a certain perspective on things.

My undergraduate work was

completed at Manhattan Christian College and Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, and I earned my MA in English at Kansas State as well. I was fortunate to be a student of George Kaiser, who directed my M.A. thesis on the garden in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*, and of Donald Stewart, from whom I took a seminar on contemporary rhetorical theory, among others. After I finished my M.A., I taught composition as an adjunct for a couple of years, then took a full-time position as an instructor at Northwestern College in Minnesota. After two years there, I went to the University of Southern California, where I completed the program in Rhetoric, Linguistics, and

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## Composition Conference, Big Success

By Wendy King



The 2009 Arizona State University Composition Conference,

held on the Tempe campus on February 20-21, was an outstanding success. Participants from all four ASU campuses, the University of Arizona, and numerous Arizona community colleges met together to share teaching strategies in this the two-day conference

that included two plenary sessions and six concurrent sessions. The Friday afternoon-Saturday conference was designed as a kind of one-stop shopping experience, so that faculty could choose to attend several sessions on topics they desired, mostly on

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## Edward White Speaks at Composition Conference

By Melinda Sims



“The great thing about being a writer,” offers keynote speaker Dr.

Edward M. White citing novelist John Barth, “is you can turn your worse experiences into money.”

On a Friday night deep within ASU’s Memorial Union gathered an intimate group of con-

ference attendees whom White did not disappoint. He carried everyone back to his 1960s teaching experiences at Wellesley College and even further back in time to one life changing childhood experience.

“I believe I’ve had more success with writing than with making money.” jokes Dr. White, the recipient of two Harvard graduate degrees in English. Along his chosen career path, he also picked up the title of visiting professor of English at the Uni-

versity of Arizona and professor emeritus of English at California State University, San Bernardino, where he served prolonged periods as English department chair and coordinator of the upper-division university writing program.

As he begins to introduce the selected text and focus of his discussion, he pauses . . . and recalls struggling with his editor’s latest question concerning the memoir he is writing based on an essay he wrote in *Coming*

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*“Over my twenty-five years of experience as a WPA at a variety of institutions, I’ve developed the philosophy that writing program administration is primarily the rhetorical work. I see a WPA’s primary area of responsibility to be articulating and making visible the work of the program she directs. That means making it visible to the teachers and students who participate in it as well as to the broader university community, to higher education partners, and to others in the profession. Doing this well and faithfully requires as much reflection as action.”*

## Rose, Published *The Writing Instructor*

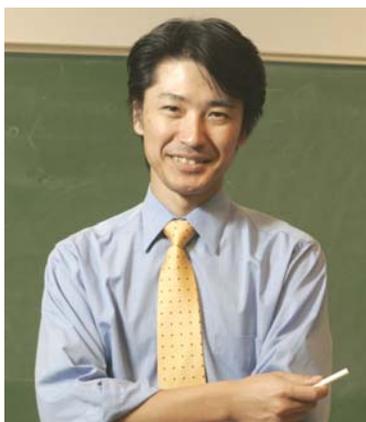
Literature. Some of the faculty I had coursework with include Ross Winterowd, Louise Phelps, Marilyn Cooper, Walter Fisher, Bernard Comrie, Elinor Ochs, and, for a summer course, Stanley Fish. I defended my dissertation just in time to vacate my Los Angeles apartment so my landlord could rent it out again for about ten times as much during the 1984 Summer Olympics.

I was fortunate to be at USC in the early 1980s. Our whole cohort knew we were lucky to be admit-

ted to a Ph.D. program in rhetoric, because there weren’t very many such programs—maybe only four or five then in the whole country—and there were hundreds of people who wanted to study rhetoric and composition at that level at that time. That recognition of our privilege prompted six of us who were regularly meeting for a study group to start publishing a journal, *The Writing Instructor*. The journal was partially supported financially by the university, but was managed and edited entirely

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## Final Thoughts from the Interim Director



By Paul Kei Matsuda

It has been a real privilege serving as the Director of Writing Programs during the 2008-2009 academic year. This year has been a particularly challenging one for many of us because of the economic downturn, among other things. Yet, with our positive energy, cooperative spirit and dedication to students as well as a bit of optimism, we have overcome many of the obstacles and successfully completed another year of providing quality writing instruction.

I would like to welcome Shirley Rose, the incoming Writing Programs Director. I have known Shirley since 1995, when I had the pleasure of working as a writing teacher under her directorship at Purdue. I—along with many of my colleagues—enjoyed working with Shirley; I know you will, too.

As the Interim Director, one of my personal goals has been to get to know the dynamics of the program and pass on the knowledge to the incoming Director to ensure a smooth transition. I have been in communication

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## Dr. Shirley Rose: “Born to be a WPA.”



**Dr. Shirley Rose, ASU's new WPA**

hired at Eastern Michigan University for my first tenure-track position. A big part of my job there was to teach courses on teaching writing and to mentor the Graduate Assistants who were teaching first-year composition. Preparation of writing teachers has been the main focus of my WPA work for most of my career. Even when my administrative responsibilities have been much broader and more comprehensive, as they were when I was Director of Composition at Purdue, I've always seen composition faculty development—whether it's TA preparation or professional development for continuing lecturers—as the foundation of writing program development.

**Accardi:** How have Writing Programs changed over the years? Or perhaps, how have you changed as a WPA?

**Rose:** Changes in writing programs over the years is way too big a topic for me to take on here! I think answering that question adequately would require a large-scale empirical project. Perhaps it's time for someone—or a group of people—to prepare a sequel to Carol Hartzog's *Composition and the Academy*. One important change is that many writing programs have become adminis-

tratively “independent”—that is, they've left English departments or other departments and become established as separate administrative units. I participated in the process of establishing the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at San Diego State University in 1993, and though it was clearly the right move for that writing program, it's not right for every writing program.

I like your question about how I've changed as a WPA, though it's a hard one. I think I've developed some skill at identifying priorities and focusing on the longer term and bigger picture. I've observed that the more experienced and effective teachers I've worked with have learned to quickly change tack or shift gears when something doesn't go quite as they planned and anticipated. They have a clear idea of what their goals are, even if those goals are very abstract, and they have a large repertoire of strategies for making progress toward those goals. A less experienced teacher is more likely to be unwilling or unable to change strategies even when she suspects things are not working. I think that same thing is true for me as a WPA—I work more now on understanding the big picture and I've developed faith in my ability to tell the difference between the important details and the unimportant details.

by a collective of graduate students who were teachers in USC's Freshman Writing Program. I think I learned most of what I know about developing and maintaining strong collegial relationships from my involvement on the Editorial Board of *TWI*.

**Accardi:** Did that experience with *TWI* get you interested in Writing Program Administration?

**Rose:** I've been teased once or twice that I was “born to be a WPA,” but I think my work as Managing Editor for *The Writing Instructor* for a couple of years helped me to develop some valuable administrative and leadership skills early on. I had the good fortune of being

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## Mike Markel Speaks at ASU

By Jane Parkinson



“Making the Transition from Composition to Technical Communication” was presented at ASU February 24th by Dr. Mike Markel, best-selling author of *Technical Communication*, a popular text for ENG 301 and ENG 302 (Business Writing) courses. In his trademark humorous style, Markel assured the audience that bridging this gap can be fun, not fearsome. Both technical communication and composition share the concept of rhetoric, so argumentation is built with familiar bricks. For example, both types of writing are dictated by purpose and audience. The process is identical: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. Arguments must be supported by evidence (“facts are always welcome”). Finally, both attempt to persuade rather than compel the reader to arrive at a conclusion.



**Markel's textbook is used to teach ENG 301 and 302.**

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## Rose: “I’m excited about making a change.”

Over my twenty-five years of experience as a WPA at a variety of institutions, I’ve developed the philosophy that writing program administration is primarily the rhetorical work. I see a WPA’s primary area of responsibility to be articulating and making visible the work of the program she directs. That means making it visible to the teachers and students who participate in it as well as to the broader university community, to higher education partners, and to others in the profession. Doing this well and faithfully requires as much reflection as action.

**Accardi:** Why did you decide to apply for and then accept a position to be ASU’s next WPA?

**Rose:** I have loved my job at Purdue University for the last fifteen years. Purdue is a great university and my colleagues and students have been a joy to work with. I don’t allow myself to think about how much I’m going to miss them. But I’m excited about making a change.

A couple of people have told me that I’m one of only a handful of people who could do the job of ASU Writing Programs Director. I should probably be flattered, but I don’t really know what they mean by that comment. I don’t believe I’m uniquely suited to the role, but I do think I’m well-suited to it. I have a good record of experience with all of the major elements of the position, yet there is enough that is new to give me room to grow.

I have a long list of reasons for my interest in the position of ASU Writing Programs Director, but they all finally come down to an eagerness to work with others who are here.

I’m in the last few months of a six-year term of service as I’ve advanced from Vice-President, to President, to Immediate Past President of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, so I’ve had the opportunity to get to know most of the leaders in the field of rhetoric and composition. ASU Writing Programs has been directed by a succession of these leaders—each with different strengths, each contributing to establishing an incredibly strong theoretical and practical grounding for the program. What’s really unique about this situation is that most of my predecessors are still around, still at ASU or close by. That’s an invaluable

resource for me.

I’ve also had opportunities to consult for a number of writing programs around the country over the past few years, and I’ve seen firsthand that a program’s intellectual resources are more important than its material resources—though maintaining one over the long term depends on maintaining the other. ASU Writing Programs has outstanding intellectual resources, such as the Graduate Teaching Assistants who are pursuing degrees in the Rhetoric, Composition, and Linguistics Ph.D. program and the very highly qualified corps of lecturers and instructors who teach in Writing Programs, to name just two of these. The participation of these two groups in the program means that it can be a site for research and for community outreach, in addition to its primary instructional work.

**Accardi:** As you know ASU has been experiencing some drastic changes. The Writing Programs in particular have experienced extensive layoffs and an increase in class size, to name a few. As WPA, what would you like to do and what do you think you could do for ASU Writing Programs, in the short-term and the long-term?

**Rose:** Though ASU is not unique for its challenging current financial situation, I know there are many specifics about the local institutional context and practices that I will need to learn before I can work on concrete steps to guide the program in weathering the difficulties. I started working on learning what I could about the university and the Writing Programs even before I first came to campus last November, and I’ll be focusing a good deal of my energies and attention to continuing that effort at first. While it’s distressing to see hard-made gains in managing class size and program instructors’ working conditions disappear so quickly in a budgetary crisis, I recognize that the very aspects of Writing Programs that make it vulnerable are what make it responsive to change in other ways. Particularly in the case of first-year composition, the program’s character is determined to a great extent by students’ needs, interests, and abilities. Likewise, on a larger scale, a university’s aspirations are always grounded in its students, and they must come first.

That’s all pretty abstract. More concretely, I’ll be doing what I can to guide Writing Programs instructors in making good decisions about how to

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## A Teaching Tip: Oral Argument in ENG 102

By Justin Sikes

This semester, to provide more opportunities to practice persuasive skills, I have asked each student in my two 102 sections to lead oral class arguments.



These arguments take up the opening 10-15 minutes of a class period, and are required to incorporate the specific argumentative strategies that we're currently studying. Students present some background information on a subject of their choice, followed by a claim and at least one reason to support that claim. The class then jumps in, with that student

able to fuel the discussion with additional information or claims if need be.

I have been consistently impressed by the quality of discussion this activity engenders. Students have taken the initiative to employ Power Point presentations and other creative means to present their claims. Their chosen topics can be quite varied—everything from the new Light Rail to restorative justice to the quality of bottled water. It's a thrill to watch the whole class jump in and bounce ideas off of one another. These arguments let students learn from one another about common interests, and they're informative for instructors, too.

There hasn't been a day that I've left my classrooms without knowing something I didn't know before, thanks to a student contribution during the daily argument.

Instructors should be able to explicitly connect parts of the day's argument to the day's lesson plan. Also, you may need to spend some time bucking up—or devising alternative assignments for—students who are very shy, or aren't comfortable with impromptu argument. But all in all, I have found these arguments to be an effective way to get the majority of my classes participating each day, and also to energize them before launching into a group project. ~

## A Teaching Tip: Using *The Onion* to Examine Logical Fallacies

By Sarah Klontz

To say that getting students to examine what lies beneath the surface—and in the every day—is tricky, goes without saying. Logical fallacies look so familiar, but of course this can make them more difficult—rather than less—for students to understand. In response to this difficulty, I developed the following exercise.



I begin by introducing students to common logical fallacies (using Andrea Lunsford's *Everything's an Argument* or any list of fallacies of argument). After placing students in pairs, I assign each pair one to two fallacies and ask students to generate a definition as well as an example of how and where that particular logical fallacy might be used. After each pair reads its definition and example out

loud, we collectively discuss and challenge what is shared.

Next, I distribute copies of “We Can Put a Man on the Moon, but We Can't Make Killer Robot Police?”—an article published in Issue 32-04 of *The Onion*, a satirical newspaper published at the University of Wisconsin Madison (<http://www.theonion.com/content/node/33838>). In the article, an elderly woman rants about the injustice of her government to award \$40 billion to NASA and nothing to her small community which would allow it to build, in her words, “laser-powered servomotorized patrol-bot[s],” keeping Danville free of litter and purse-snatchers.

Recognizing the absurdity of her argument, the class begins to grapple with this disingenuous article in surprisingly scholarly ways. Students discuss how her argument makes use of the band

wagon appeal when it states, “I understand that in Sweden, every citizen is guaranteed a patrol-bot” or when it appears dogmatic as the woman complains, “it is painfully obvious that the government has the money and resources to build a high-energy force field around every single American” or when the speaker uses a sentimental appeal when she states, “What about my handbag? The pictures in my wallet of little Kevin and Annie are irreplaceable!”

In all, this is an exercise that I look forward to using each semester, one that students enjoy, and one that really does benefit the quality of rhetoric that they produce as they come to better recognize fallacies of argument both in their own work and in the work they read. ~

## A Teaching Tip: 3-D Learning for Online Technical Writing

By Stella K. Hadjistassou



Virtual Environments, such as Second Life, have

stirred the instructional landscape in multiple institutional settings, expanding the realms for all instructors by facilitating the implementation of networked, interactive learning environments in three-dimensional forums where students can actively *interact* with their peers, construct new *identities*, and maintain a dominant *presence* through their virtually-constructed representations or customized avatars (Gee, 2003; O'Brien & Levy, 2008).

Yet in business and professional communication courses, little attention has been paid on how such virtual forums can enhance students' learning experi-

ences by immersing them in professionally-constructed environments, which allow them to explore the business practices of some of the most prominent and well established professional organizations.

To introduce students' here at Arizona State University to the rich pedagogical context of virtually-constructed learning environments, in the Fall of 2008, I implemented for the first time "IBM's Virtual Green Data Center" in two three-hundred-level online courses in technical and professional communication that I was teaching. I meticulously selected "IBM's Virtual Green Data Center" since it was launched in an effort to promote IBM's well orchestrated one billion dollar initiative on critical energy efficiency on information technology-related products and to teach other professionals in the field about the importance of green data centers. Students

could first acquire more information about the critical role that IBM's virtual island is serving in promoting such energy efficient products and services to a technologically-savvy generation of users through various websites, YouTube videos, and other assigned reading material.

Then, through specifically designed task-oriented activities and virtually interactive experiences, students could experience first-hand with their avatars these virtual environments, view the various interactive presentations, discuss and exchange ideas about the multiple energy efficiency products and services presented in this virtual island and expand their knowledge in the subject-matter from the comfort of their home environment or anywhere around the globe. ~

## Matsuda, Implementing Changes for Multilingual Students

with Shirley about a number of issues and initiatives, and will continue to work with her over the summer and into the Fall semester.

As many of you know, my specialty is second language writing, and one of my projects this year has been to assess how well the Writing Programs has been addressing the needs of a growing number of multilingual writers—resident or international. Like most writing programs, ASU's Writing Programs has much room for improvement in this regard. I have already implemented some changes to the placement procedures and developed plans for further revisions.

Although my official role as the Director will come to a closure at the end of this month (there will not be a WPA during the summer), I hope to work closely with Shirley to ensure that all students—not just native English speakers who fit the traditional image of college students—will receive appropriate kinds of writing instruction and language support as they prepare themselves for the task of responding to a wide varieties of rhetorical situations both within and outside the university. If you would like a free copy of *Second Language Writers in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook* (2006), please let me know. You can also obtain a copy from

Will Hasler, the local rep for Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

At the end of the semester, I will be going back to focus more centrally on another important task that brought me to ASU in the first place—to contribute to the further growth of the Ph.D. program in Rhetoric, Composition and Linguistics, and Master's program in TESOL as well as the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Applied Linguistics. In addition to mentoring aspiring teachers and researchers, I will continue to be an active contributor to several fields, including applied linguistics, rhetoric and composition, and TESOL.

Finally, I would like to thank this year's Writing Programs administrative team—Demetria Baker, Ruth Johnston, Jackie Wheeler and Steven Accardi—as well as the student workers for their excellent work throughout the year. Many of these people have gone above and beyond the call of duty to address various issues that arose throughout the year. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of all Writing Programs teachers—Track-Faculty, Lecturers, Instructors, Faculty Associates and Teaching Associates/ Assistants—for their hard work and dedication in serving our students. Thank you and have a great summer!

# Comp Conference, Teaching Award Winners

the same day, with no conflicts with their teaching schedules.

The 29 topics for the conference sessions were derived from surveys the conference committee administered to Writing Programs faculty in Fall 2008 and covered both pedagogical and professional development concerns. In each session, experienced ASU faculty offered practical advice to their peers that could be immediately implemented to improve their teaching and professionalism. Session topics included:

**Practical Approaches to Teaching Composition:** teaching students to effectively peer review one another's writing, to think more about audience in their writing, and to effectively evaluate student writing

**General Pedagogical Concerns:** teaching online and hybrid courses, de-centering power structures in the classroom, and designing effective assignments

**Professional Development:** developing curriculum vitae and statements of teaching philosophy, utilizing ASU campus resources for faculty, and developing an ASU homepage

The conference keynote speaker, Edward M. White, discussed "Social Class and the Teaching of Writing" in his Friday evening address and also gave popular workshops on Saturday on reducing the stress of grading through effective assignment design.

In the Saturday opening session, the winners of a teaching award for best practices presented on their winning entries. This year's winners were:

David Pegram, *Evaluation / Analytical Comparison*  
Wendy M. King, *Online Discussion Series*  
Marian Crotty, *Definition Argument Mock Trial*  
Shavawn M. Berry, *Writing Wiki Assignment*

The conference also offered unique opportunities for social interactions. One room was arranged to serve as a hospitality room where faculty could get to know one another as they enjoyed a complimentary breakfast and lunch together. Also during lunch, in another room, Dan Brendza led an open mic session in which faculty shared their creative writing, performed with musical instruments, and

participated in a sing along.

An addition to this year's conference was a publisher's book fair where faculty had the opportunity to browse for texts for future terms.

This year's conference was the result of the efforts of many people. The steering committee (Wendy King, chair; Susan Davis; Laura Cruser, Ginny Simmon, Mick Parsons, Nick White, and Ryan Muckerheid) relied heavily on the support of 83 others from Writing Programs and the greater ASU community who developed the conference website; presented and facilitated in conference sessions; photographed the events; and helped with setting up, cleaning up, registration, and serving the food. This united effort had the additional bonus of enabling Writing Programs faculty to become more acquainted with one another.

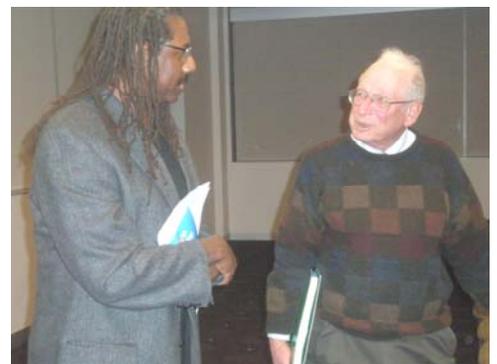
Sponsors for this year's conference included the Department of English, the ASU Distinguished Teaching Academy, and our text publishers (Pearson, McGraw-Hill, W. W. Norton, Bedford, and Cengage). ~

## White, Making Memories Meaningful

to *Class: Pedagogy and the Social Class of Teachers*. "Who is the audience?" asked the editor. Dr. White wrestled with this probing question until just a few days after President's Day. He explains, "What is different about my experience is that I have tried to make my memories meaningful to a wide audience."

White looks back at his father's working class struggles at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Brooklyn, N.Y. His postal worker father labored hard to provide for the family, but he didn't value education. It was his mother who moved young Edward and his sibling toward the idea of college and a better life. While one day outrunning local neighborhood bullies,

White stumbled into the Brooklyn Public Library. He recalls reading continuously from that point on and as the years went by—he knew he



Neal Lester with Edward White

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# Book Review: Damian Baca's *Mestiz@ Scripts*

By Natalie Martinez



In a wonderfully unapologetic critique of Rhetoric and Composition's continual and uncritical "gaze back across the Atlantic" as America's originating source of rhetorical knowledge and traditions, Baca's work is a hemispheric account and rethinking of how Mesoamerican and *Mestiz@* scripts offer a more engaging pedagogical framework for the teaching of so-called "writing."

Baca's critique implicates everyone involved in the teaching of writing and composition as being a part of a "globalizing process," and his rhetorical analysis and historical presencing of *Mestiz@* scripts forces us to see the connection between the processes of colonization, subjugated knowledges, and the narrow definitions of writing that operate in our field. More importantly, Baca's hemispheric examples offer resistant readings to this presumed subjugation by focusing on how embodied exchanges displace, defer, and remediate the narratives of writing and

rhetoric as we know it.

*Mestiz@ Scripts* is divided into nine distinct parts: "Pronunciation Guide and Brief Chronology Section," which familiarizes the reader with Nahuatl and Mesoamerican history; seven chapters; and finally, "Class Reading and Discussion Guide," which makes this an accessible text and important addition to anyone interested in rethinking rhetoric and composition in the way Baca provokes us to do.

Chapter one and two historicize and contextualize *Mestiz@* scripts as the

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## White: Retiring after 50 years

would be going to college.

A scholarship to New York University financed his education and his writing professor served as the mentor who assured him that it was indeed possible to make a living in the field of writing. "Although," adds White. "I was really at NYU to be a lawyer who made a lot of money."

Upon completion of his graduate studies in English at Harvard University, White began teaching at Wellesley, an elite woman's college in suburban Boston. Despite his recent exposure to an Ivy League setting, White relayed, "Over the years [at Wellesley], I felt I didn't belong. I became hypersensitive to the working environment." Social class also affected the academic skills of students at Wellesley. Inadequate writers were rare and developmental writers were simply not there.

These students simply came in knowing the codes and dialect of college discourse. "At Wellesley, good writing was seen as a social skill," recalls White, "and they [the students] saw the instructor as one who would give them challenging writing experiences which would comfortably display their skills."

When an offer to teach at a college with a working class student body arrived in the mail, White opted for a change. He moved out West and began working at California State University (CSU) in 1965. At CSU, White found the students to be no different intellectually than the upper class ones. However, the students did differ in their view of the connection between their writings and life experiences.

One intuitive student saw the act of writing as a useless thing not

designed for people like her. Her writing professors were seen as people who "...make you write so they can get you."

Toward the end of his reading, White paused to address the audience asking, "Which is worse . . . upper class complacency or lower-middle class conformity?"

"Coming to the state college felt like a sense of homecoming for me. These were my kind of people," states Dr. White, "they may not have owned the world, but they knew writing could improve their lives in countless ways. It [state colleges] offered new ways of thinking and reflecting about the world."

In spring of 2009, Ed White will retire after more than 50 years in the field of writing. ~



# Baca, A “Must Read” for Southwest Comp Teachers

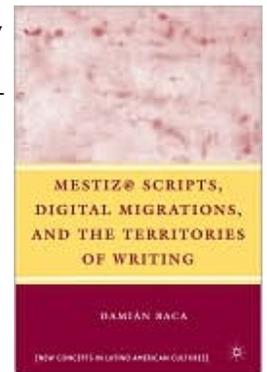
subversive framework and site of inquiry, while chapter three offers a historical account of Mestiz@ scripts and perhaps one of the most nuanced and qualified strategic employments of Gloria Anzaldúa’s notion of “mestiza consciousness” than those which have been put forth in the field as of late. Chapters four and five offer provocative re-territorializations of writing and syncretic rhetorical processes through a rhetorical analysis of Mestiz@ codices, ceremonial buon fresco paintings, and Matachíne dance rituals. Relying heavily on Latin@ subaltern theorists, like Walter Dignolo and liberation theologian Enrique Dussell to put forth his pedagogical arguments, Baca’s final proposition for curriculum changes comes in the form of three modes: Spatialization, Periodization, and a Nation versus State analysis where the writing

curriculum of the Americas would add to its current understanding a critique of the various ways we link a geographical space of knowing to writing and the memories that inform these knowledges.

One of Baca’s most interesting and important contributions is his discussion of *amoxtli*—a highly collaborative and complex system of pictographs that involved a rich rhetorical tradition of wise male and female philosophers, *Tlaminimes*, who interpreted the text. The *amoxtli* were later delivered orally and performed in dance by the *Amoxoque* as a means of conserving cultural memory (72). Baca’s rhetorical account shows that this tradition should not be read simply as pre-alphabetic or pre-linguistic. Rather, his discussion of the *Huehuetlahtolli*, the “discourse of the Mesoamerican ancients,” demonstrates

the relevance and close connection these uncovered literacies have to our students’ current multi-mediated lives.

*Mestiz@ Scripts* is not another peripheral addition or mere “alternative” to Western rhetorical traditions. Instead, Baca’s work serves not only as what should be required reading for anyone teaching in the contentious southwest borderlands, but also offers a new direction for reading and writing and a deeply striking colonial critique of writing instruction itself. ~



## Markel: “Do the Best You Can...”

The difference between the two, according to Markel, is that technical communication has different applications—reports, letters, proposals, manuals, instructions—and always results in a product. It relies on technology to create graphics and spreadsheets and to implement design features. Routine language is favored over an artful turn of phrase. Elements of technical communication cross over to composition—the effective use of headings, for example.

Is there a difference in student motivation? Absolutely, contends Markel. The point of the course is obvious, and Technical Communication students are highly motivated to succeed. The first requirement for success, says Markel, is character. The second is the ability to be articulate: In the business world, the ability to be articulate trumps subject expertise. As a final point, Markel half-jokingly attests that technical communication students “want to acquire nice things,” providing instrumental motivation to transition from composition to technical writing. Students quickly figure out that superior writing skills correlate with higher incomes.

Real-world connections abound. Markel cites that technical industry leader Hewlett Packard receives 1,000 job applications per day: an example of a compelling argument to learn to write an ace resume. As Markel aptly puts it, applying for a job “is not like selling a car on craigslist.” The savvy job seeker would not use a phrase like “attainable solutions” because the opposite is ridiculous. In preparing resumes, students must learn that computer-scanning focuses on nouns, whereas humans focus on verbs. The job application letter can be a potent sales tool if it is writer-oriented and not generic. The application letter can also be used to explain lapses in employment, such as prison time, jokes Markel. If students lack job experience, they should seek internships. Employers, says Markel, are looking more for potential than job experience.

The presentation concluded with a reassurance that technical communication teachers already know what they need to know. “Do the best you can; the rest is out of your hands.” Markel is a professor and Director of Technical Communication at Boise State University and is the author of six books and numerous articles. The presentation and workshop were co-hosted by ASU Writing Programs and Bedford/St. Martin’s Press. ~

## Kudos to...

**Karen Chang** presented a paper entitled “Barry Trotter versus Harry Potter” at the Peaks Conference held in Northern Arizona University. She also presented a paper entitled “Task-based Instruction in English for Academic Purpose (EAP) Context” at The Third Conference on College English held in Taipei, Taiwan.

**Cheng Chen** presented a paper entitled "The Controversial Reception of Yiyun Li's A thousand Years of Good Prayers" at The 2009 Joint Conference on "Migration, Border, and the Nation-State" at Texas Tech University.

**Valerie Fazel** recently attended the Shakespeare Association of America's 2009 conference in Washington, D.C. where she participated on the seminar panel, "Shakespeare Cinematexuality" with her paper titled, "Mapping the Performance Spaces of Interactive YouTube Shakespeares."

**Maureen Daly Goggin** and **Michael Stancliff** won the 2007-2008 WPA Best Article Award for “What’s Theorizing Got to Do with It?: Teaching Theory as Resourceful Conflict and Reflection in TA Preparation.” She also published two book reviews for *Rhetoric Review*: *Disciplinary Identities: Rhetorical Paths of English, Speech, and Composition* by Steven Mailloux, and *1977: A Cultural Moment in Composition* by Brent Henze, Jack Selzer, and Wendy Sharer (with Ryan Skinnell).

**Wendy King, Susan Davis,** and **Ginny Simmon** presented a panel discussion entitled “Swimming in a Sea of Ignominy: Professional Growth Lifelines for Contingent Faculty in Tur-

bulent Times” at the TYCA-West conference in Clarksdale, Arizona.

**Sheila Luna’s** nonfiction piece entitled “Sca(tered) Solitude” has been published in the winter issue of *Sotto Voce Magazine* - <http://www.sottovocemagazine.com/>.

**Paul Kei Matsuda** gave plenary talks at the Conference on College English at National Chengchi University, Taiwan, and at the CCCC Research Network Forum. Also at CCCC, he was part of the featured session on voice and multilingual writers, served as a respondent for the global composition panel, and gave invited talks at Global Composition and Second Language Writing SIGs, among other things. He also presented a poster session at the American Association for Applied Linguistics and two papers at the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. At the American Educational Research Association, he presented an invited lecture on the myth of linguistic homogeneity at the Writing and Literacies SIG. In collaboration with **Aya Matsuda**, he also published the following book chapter: “The Erasure of Resident ESL Writers,” in *Generation 1.5 in College Composition: Teaching Academic Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL*, edited by Mark Roberge, Meryl Siegal and Linda Harklau.

**Ryan Skinnell** co-authored a book review of Paul Butler's *Out of Style* with **Duane Roen**, which appeared in *Rhetoric Review* 28.2 (2009). He also co-authored a book review of Brent Henze, Jack Selzer, and Wendy Sharer's *1977: A Cultural Moment in Composition* with **Maureen Daly Goggin**, which also appeared in *Rhetoric Review* 28.2 (2009). At CCCC, Ryan presented a paper, "The Logic of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Pathos," and gave a workshop presentation, "When the Archive Finds You: A Crossroads." Finally, he was accepted as a workshop participant in the Rhetoric Society of America's bi-annual Summer Institute Workshop. ~

## Conversation with Rose

change their teaching to accommodate larger classes with the least damage to their teaching effectiveness, such as changes in ways class time is used and changes in numbers of writing projects vs. changes in length of projects.

But let me go back to my earlier point about resources: ASU Writing Programs is very rich in intellectual resources. With the exception of the loss of some experienced teachers, this hasn't changed much—despite recent losses of material resources. I want to be the best possible steward of those intellectual resources.

**Accardi:** Is there anything else that you could like to mention, add, or emphasize?

**Rose:** Yes. I'd like to give a plug for my graduate seminar scheduled for Fall 2009. I'll be teaching an ENG 651 Advanced Studies in the History and Theories of Rhetoric seminar that focuses on the History and Theories of Writing Program Administration. This will also be the focus for the WPA seminar taught at Purdue next fall by Irwin Weiser, who has been my colleague, co-author, and co-editor on several projects. We're making plans to put our two groups of students in communication with one another and to possibly help them launch a collaborative project of some kind. Mentoring the next generation of WPAs is an aspect of my new job that's particularly important to me.

**Accardi:** Thank you so much for your time. We are all looking forward to your arrival. And let me be one of the first to welcome you to ASU Writing Programs. ~



# Writing Notes

## The Writing Programs@Arizona State University

Arizona State University  
Writing Programs  
Department of English  
Box 870302  
Tempe, AZ 85287-0302  
Phone: 480-965-3853  
Fax: 480-965-2553  
Hours: M-F 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location: LL 314

ASU Writing Programs is committed to the belief that the ability to write well is the hallmark of the educated person in any career or profession and is the collective and cross-disciplinary responsibility of the academic community. Writing Programs' primary mission is to help students acquire the writing skills they will need in their academic work, in their careers, and in their lives generally.

[writing.asu.edu](http://writing.asu.edu)

## Important Upcoming Events...

**July 16 - 19:** “Discerning WPAs: Discourse/Diversity/Accountability.” The Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference. University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**August 10:** Hard copy of fall syllabus due by 5:00 p.m.

**August 19:** The “Big” ASU Writing Programs meeting, from 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., LL building, room TBA.

**August 24:** First day of classes.

**November 5 - 7:** “The Future of Second Language Writing.” Symposium on Second Language Writing. Arizona State University. Tempe, Arizona.

