

EDUCATION OR *EDUCACIÓN*? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE
DISCOURSES OF LATINO/A STUDENTS AND THREE COMMUNITY
COLLEGES

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The main question addressed in this dissertation relates to the discourses that Latino/a students and community colleges bring to the educational table. From this question come corollary questions concerning the concept of education and the linguistic and cultural realities that inform the conception of *educación*. Using theories of cognition, metaphor, and sociocultural linguistics, this dissertation illustrates that overlaps and divergences in the semantic conceptualization of the constructs of education and *educación*, as well as their actualizations in practice, are informed by the habits of categorization that are held by persons involved in the American educational system and by students who come from the various Latino/a communities in the United States. In what might be termed the contact zone of education and *educación* this dissertation addresses the questions of discursive stasis, resistance, transcultural negotiation, values hierarchies, and positive discourses that contribute to individuals' success—defined as achievement of the goals of the individual within the educational milieu.

Examination of the rhetorical and discourse literacies that underlie the communicative habits and expectations of Latino/a students and the instructors, administrators, and the community colleges involved in this study shows that *educación* socializes individuals to value *familismo*, *personalismo*, *simpatía*, *respeto*, *confianza*, *cortesía*, *humildad*, and *empatía*. Community colleges that address these values

supportively do so by engaging in positive discourses not only in their written forms, but in terms of institutional and classroom level actions.

DEDICATION

Thank God.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.

Diogenes

EDUCACIÓN IN MEXICO AND ON THE BORDER

Sitting in the office of a junior high school in Torreón, Mexico, my colleagues were discussing the inappropriate behaviors of some few students, behaviors that were as unusual as they were unseemly in this private school. The discussion centered on how it was that children from well-to-do homes could act so disrespectfully. Without realizing it, I ventured an observation, a pun that spoke directly to the malaise: “Es que,” I opined, “tienen una buena educación.” My colleagues laughed in appreciation of the pun as well as my grasp of the cultural meaning of *educación*, a meaning which I had intuited only as I said it. The students were indeed being offered a good academic education, and supposedly because of their socioeconomic class were to be considered well-brought-up as well. The joke was that the behavior of these particular students displayed a regard for neither breeding nor academics.

Two years later, I moved to Laredo, Texas to work with immigrant ESL learners at the International Language Institute at Texas A&M International University and subsequently to teach writing courses at the university proper. Laredo is a border town,

with a population mix of native-born, international, immigrant, generation 1.5,¹ and transnational inhabitants. Ninety-six percent of the population is Latino/a, primarily of Mexican origin. Many are descended from the original Mexican inhabitants who chose to stay on the U.S. side of the border when it was moved west to the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo River in 1846, while maintaining ties to family, friends, and business interests across the river. That is to say, Laredo is a bilingual American city with a predominantly Latino/a culture.

It was here that I truly encountered some of the differences between academic education and the social construct of *educación*. For everyone here, family comes first. If there is a family event—a wedding, a funeral, a birth or baptism, a first communion, a reunion, a trip—that conflicts with a scheduled class meeting, a student will ask permission to be absent for that event. The request is a courtesy; the student, especially if he or she is still living at home, has a greater obligation to attend to the family than to attend class, even though the student, the family, and the instructor might all agree that class attendance is very important. The courtesy I encountered—the reluctance to challenge or argue or even speak out in class, the deference to authority that is generally not as pronounced with non-Latino/a students—was as evident in the speech, attitudes, and behavior of almost every single Latino/a student I met.

¹ Generation 1.5 refers to persons who were born in another country but brought to the U.S. as children, and consequently raised and schooled in this country. As adults, these “in betweeners” are left to sort out their citizenship, college attendance, and employment difficulties pretty much on their own.

As an ESL instructor I expected there to be differences in language use as English learners drew upon the discourse styles of their native Spanish. In the composition, introduction to literature, and remedial writing courses I taught, I found that most if not all the Latino/a students—non-native English speakers, bilingual, and English monolingual—exhibited a discourse style in their writing that reflected a different cultural centering than non-Latino/a students I had encountered. At first I attributed some of these differences to language interference from either a Spanish home-language or the development of a Spanish-influenced English native to the region. Then I thought perhaps it was the outcome of being raised in a lower socioeconomic community, except these students were, almost without exception, from the local middle class. Yet aside from the types of “errors” common in freshman writing—vocabulary choice anomalies, punctuation anomalies, sound-alike word anomalies—there was a difference in the voice, the organization, and the flow of the student writing; it wasn’t the sort of linear, straightforward logic that I expected, mechanical errors aside. My goal became the discovery of Latino/a students’ ways of knowing that informed their ways of communicating, and how to make these ways work for, rather than against, the students.

EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

The story of America is that it was founded as a democratic republic and grew as a meritocracy where the best and brightest were encouraged to succeed and allowed to realize their natural potential to the benefit of all society. A viable democracy demands an educated populace to maintain it, and to prevent the devolution of a society into a

failed state. Without offering every capable individual the means to better themselves, we remove hope and reduce the possibility of self-sufficiency and contribution to the nation, “for a less-educated citizenry without the necessary cultural resources and support cannot take care of its own business, much less flourish, as Americans are expected to do” (Portales 2000).

In the United States, education has been seen as a civic-social good and as preparation for employment. As a social good, “education shows a significant effect on life satisfaction independent of its effect on income,” (Salinas-Jiménez, Artés, Salinas-Jiménez), as well as promoting the democratic values of civic literacy, informed judgment, public service, social justice, critical awareness, and social responsibility. As preparation for employment, higher education has been seen as a source of marketable skills that provide opportunities for better jobs and advancement, and as a means of facilitating social mobility through income. While there may have been debate in the past over whether or not this perception is valid, a number of studies have indicated that college does provide positive benefits. Withey (1971) found that college graduates generally are more optimistic and have better opportunities, greater job security, better working conditions, and higher job satisfaction. In 1971 Levin, Guthrie, Kleindorfer, and Stout summarized the importance of educational attainment and opportunity:

Educational attainment and opportunity are linked in many ways.

Abundant evidence supports the view that education affects income, occupational choice, social and economic mobility, political

participation, social deviance, etc. Indeed, educational attainment is related to opportunity in so many ways that the two terms seem inextricably intertwined in the mind of the layman and in the findings of the social scientist. (14)

This observation is just as valid today, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on education, pay, and unemployment for 2006 found that people with an associate's degree averaged \$721 in weekly earnings, while those with bachelor's and master's degrees averaged \$962 and \$1,140, respectively, with corresponding reductions in unemployment ranging from 3.0 percent for holders of an associate's degree to 1.1 percent for those with a master's.

LATINO/AS IN EDUCATION

The importance of higher education for an individual as well as for a nation cannot be overstated. Yet Latino/as, the largest minority group in the United States, are drastically underrepresented in higher education and in the professional fields that represent the middle and upper middle classes in this country. In 2000, Latino/as comprised 12.5% of the population of the United States, up 57.9% from 1990. Fifty-nine percent of U.S. Latino/as have attained a high school diploma (75% of U.S. born and 48% of foreign born), and one-third of Latino/as in the U.S. have at least some college, but only 12% have at least a four-year degree. By 2010, Latino/as comprised almost 16% of the U.S. population. According to the 2010 census, 26% of Latino/as in the U.S. had achieved at least a high school diploma, 16.9% had some college, 5% had

two years of college, 9% had a bachelor's degree, and 4% had earned a graduate degree. This leaves 29.1% of the Latino/a population of the U.S. with less than a high school diploma, while the overall poverty rate for Latino/as stands at 22.1% (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

For those Latino/as who do enter college, 60% enroll in a community college (Chronicle of Higher Education 2002). Yet studies show that while that up to 87 percent of Latino students enrolled in community college plan to go on to earn a baccalaureate degree (Bensimon and Riley, 1984; Rendón, Justiz, and Resta, 1988), institutional, regional, and national studies report an unconscionably low number (15%) of Latino/as transfer to four-year institutions (Castaneda, 2002; Nora, 1993; Rendón, Justiz, and Resta, 1988; Rendón and Nora, 1989, 1994; Rendón and Valadez, 1993; Suarez, 2003).

If education is the key to employment, income, and social mobility, “gatekeeper” courses—first-year or entry-level courses in math, science, and English that students are required to complete before enrolling in more advanced classes in their major field of study—are the keys to the educational “pipeline” that takes students to their educational goal, or conversely, act as “hurdles that slow or halt a student’s progress toward a degree” (“Achieving the Dream”). Many Latino/a students entering college do not successfully pass these gatekeeper courses, and many more are tracked into remedial or developmental preparatory courses by skills testing, from which even fewer manage to successfully go on to complete the core courses or to graduate (Tinto 1997).

Core courses in math, science, and composition challenge students to develop ways of thinking that seem right and logical to the academic context in which most formal education occurs, yet for writing instruction particularly, “when we teach composition, we are teaching culture” (Dean 1989).

Explanations for the achievement gap for U.S. Latino/as

While some 89% of Latino/as young adults (ages 16-25) believe that a college education is important to succeed in life, only 48% of these same young adults intend to get a college degree themselves (Pew Hispanic 2009). The most salient reasons for not attending college are financial: supporting a family, no money for tuition. This holds true even more for foreign-born Latino/as than for native-born. Foreign-born Latino/as make up 35% of those 16-25 years old, and nearly two-thirds (68%) of these are supporting not only themselves but are sending remittances to family in their native countries, as compared to 21% of their U.S. born counterparts (Lopez and Livingston 2009). Other reasons for not attending college include: a) the cost of tuition; b) inadequate high-school education; c) discrimination; d) no need for a college degree to be successful; and e) a preference for staying close to family rather than going away to college (Fry 2004).

For those Latino/as who do enter college, persistence to degree completion is lower than that of Whites. In 1995 21% of all Latino/as aged 18-24 were attending college, and 35% of all Latino/as of that age who had attained a high school diploma were attending college. By 2000, NCES reports showed that the highest degree attained

for all Latino/as aged 25 or over included 5% with associate's degrees and 10.6% with a bachelor's or higher (7.3% bachelor's, 2.2% master's, 1.2% first professional or doctoral). For whites, in 1995 38% of all whites aged 19-24 were enrolled in college, and 44% of white's with a high school diploma were enrolled in college. Degree completion in 2000 showed that 8.4% had obtained an associate's degree and 28.1% had obtained a bachelor's or higher. Some reasons for the lower level of persistence cited by Latino/as/a families include: parents of Latino/a students do not play an active role in helping their children succeed in school; limited English skills; different cultural backgrounds; and Latino/a students not working as hard as other students (NCES 2009).

Academic researchers who study Latino/a student persistence or failure to persist in college have cited a complex array of factors that affect educational outcomes, usually focusing on systemic discrimination or cultural insensitivity. Latino/as in the United States have faced a long history of discrimination in almost all areas: legal, civil, employment, and education. Much of this discrimination is based in theories of biological, cultural, and social structure deficiencies (Barrera 1997), which have been applied not only to Latino/as, but to every struggling and oppressed minority in this country. Biological theories arise from differences in intelligence test scores, which have already been shown to be biased in favor of white, middle class culture. Bias theories focus on prejudice and discrimination as sources of minority inequality, citing structural, cultural, and class-based bigotry as part of a recursive system of oppression and failure for minorities. Cultural deficiency theories include the belief that differences

in language variety—anything other than standard edited English—is the result of language interference from whatever language variety is spoken in the home and among peers. Class-based deficiency theories include a lack of value placed on education, resulting in family interference and lack of support for the individual student. If there is an emphasis placed on working to gain needed income, especially through hard physical labor, that is also a class-based deficiency or lack of value on education. The common weakness of all these deficiency theories lies in their assumption of a fundamental equality of opportunity that never existed (Barrera 9). While there may be many causes, effects, and reasons for the lower rate of participation and persistence of Latino/as in the educational system, simply postulating an etiology, especially a flawed etiology, does not help to change the reality. Knowing the causes of failure can be of help in avoiding negative educational practices, but it is more important to know and support the attitudes and practices that actually contribute to learning.

Factors related to Latino/a success and failure in the community college

Major obstacles in college achievement for Latino/a students identified by researchers include the lack of strong adult guidance, misinformation about college requirements, and poor academic career choices on the parts of students (Zalaquett 2005). At the same time, institutions with low success rates for students have been found to provide invalidating classroom curriculum and pedagogy, unsupportive and demeaning faculty interactions, and a campus atmosphere that discounts, devalues, or negates Latino/a cultural identities (Castellanos and Gloria 2007).

Regardless of a student's academic readiness for college work, institutional programs and attitudes that best support student persistence incorporate additive, rather than subtractive attitudes and approaches to education. Subtractive approaches to education locate the epistemology of academic failure in the students themselves (Valenzuela 1999); these are the deficiency theories. Additive approaches to education recognize and validate students' social and cultural capital within the community by privileging student cultural identities, and nurturing reciprocal trust and caring (de Jesús 2005). For Latino/a students, additive approaches to education would include a personal, caring, relationship-based curriculum that recognizes, supports, and integrates the value of family and community, language, multiculturalism, and the educational and cultural traditions that inform the way that students make sense of the world.

There is no dearth of research or theorization—whether quantitatively or qualitatively grounded—to support the idea that the imposition of a dominant monoculture on a multicultural community, or the denigration of a minority culture by the majority culture, produces resistance to the values being imposed. Feelings of being disrespected, alienation, and shame do not motivate learners to explore, discover, or stretch themselves intellectually or culturally. In the case of Latino/as, research by Marcia Farr (2005), Elias Dominguez Barajas (2010), Victor Villanueva (1993), Rita and Marco Portales (2005), Kathleen Shaw (1999), and Robert Rhoads (1999) show that the cultural discourses of “education” are not absolutely the same as the cultural discourses of “*educación*,” whatever commonalities might be assumed by the apparent

cognate status of the terms. Yet it is precisely in the contact zone of the discourses of culture and of literacy that Latino/a students and community colleges are obliged to meet in order to fulfill the aspiration of an educated populace.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the discourses that Latino/as students are likely to bring with them to the community college, the discourses they are likely to encounter at the community colleges they attend, and the communicative relationships that are likely to develop as Latino/a students and colleges interact. By examining the rhetorical and discourse literacies that underlie the communicative habits and expectations of Latino/a students and the instructors, administrators, and the community colleges (as institutions) that people attend, I hope to illuminate specific ways in which the institutions, as the wielders of power, can reach out to the community of learners in positive ways that enhance not only the students' educational experience but increase the success of Latino/a students in achieving their own educational goals.

In this study I will describe and define the concepts and values of *educación* and the ways they inform the behaviors and learning of Latino students in their writing courses. I will then use rhetorical, sociocultural, and linguistic approaches in the analysis of texts posted by community colleges on their websites to examine the discursive cultures of the institution and to answer the following questions:

- What are the points of stasis in the educational contact zone?

- What points of transcultural negotiation are in evidence in the institutional programs?
- Where do points of resistance appear for both the students and the institutions?
- What factors inhibit negotiation of values hierarchies for both students and institutions?
- What discourses contribute to the success of Latino students within the institution?

METHODS

Educación

Evidence supporting an interpretation of the behaviors, values, and world-views that inform and are informed by the *educación* Latino/as receive in the home and in society have been gathered from articles on the subjects of *educación* and what it means to be *bien educado*, as well as on studies in the persistence and success of Latino/as in academia, particularly the community college. Case studies, memoirs, and autobiographical publications of Latino/as' experiences of *educación* and academic education are also examined, in order to develop a portrait of the discursive values a Latino/a student might be expected to bring to the academic milieu of a community college campus.

Education

At the institutional level, analysis of the discourses of the community college as an institution are based on public statements made by the institution in the form of explicit mission statements, policies, and rules (written discourses), and of implied messages of the institutional structure, including degree and certificate offerings, course offerings, administrative and faculty demographics, testing requirements, and available student services such as academic, career, and job counseling. English Department discourses are examined as they are presented in the form of written departmental policies and rules regarding student attendance and performance, institutionally or departmentally mandated tests and evaluations for first year composition courses, and instructor syllabi and texts. Instructor demographics within the department are considered, as well as full- to part- time faculty ratios, as indicators of the departmental ability to personalize the relationships between instructors, students, and the department. At the individual instructor level, individual syllabi are analyzed for tendencies to either support and encourage students through the use of positive grammatical, semantic, and textual features, or their tendency to discourage, infantilize, or demean students through the use of negative discourse or textual features.

Procedure

I chose three community colleges in Texas as subjects for the analysis of institutional discourses. I focused on Texas because of the growth of the Latino/a population—both native born and immigrant. The colleges were chosen on the basis of

demographics and location; two of the colleges are considered to be Hispanic serving institutions because at least half of their student populations identify as Latino/a and/or the populations of the regions that the colleges serve have significant a Latino/a presence. The student population of third college is a primarily white, with a population distribution that reflects the demographics of the region the college serves. This third college was chosen as a basis for comparison of the types of discourses to be found in non-Hispanic serving institutions.

All texts were taken from publicly accessible college websites.

For the analysis of the institutional discourses, the mission statements, vision statements, and president's messages for each college were read for both surface or literal messages to the students and the communities and for the rhetorical deep structures of the messages. In doing this I referenced linguistic and psychosocial theories of Norman Fairclough, Paul Gee, Pierre Bourdieu, and Paulo Freire regarding the ways in which discourse can be constructed to reproduce (or resist) social and political inequality, power sharing, or domination.

Departmental discourses were examined through the common or master syllabi provided instructors, statements of policy, and statements regarding the range and types of resources provided by the department, by writing centers, and by the institution to assist students in learning and in managing their relationship with the institution/department.

For the syllabus analysis I constructed tables of the grammatical parts of the syllabic discourse, specifically pronouns (1st, 2nd, and 3rd, singular and plural), noun phrases, command forms (imperatives vs. jussives), modifiers and modals, passive voice constructions, and if/then conditionals. I quantified the types of words and phrases according to function, to determine if the overall effect of the syllabus' discourse might be positive and encouraging or if the overall semantic effect might be more negative and punishing, giving rise to perceptions of authoritarianism or coercion on the part of the instructor.

APPROACH/ORGANIZATION

This introduction to the dissertation presents the background of the problem of Latino/as participation in higher education, problems faced by first-generation college students, trends in retention, persistence, graduation and transfer to four-year universities. Here I explain the importance of an educated populace for the sake of the individual and for the sake of any society or nation.

In the second chapter I give an overview of the literature on education in the American community college, and some of the theoretical frameworks that have been introduced to explain or alleviate the problem of Latino/a persistence and success in the community college. This overview presents the pedagogical theories of Paulo Freire as well as theories of cultural capital, cultural resistance, contact zones, and social identities in writing.

The third chapter introduces and defines the concept of *educación* as it pertains to cultural literacies of the home, the school, and the community. I include ethnographic studies of what it means to be *bien educado*, “well educated” or “well bred,” and how this particular cultural literacy can inform and impact Latino/a students’ relationships within the community college setting. These concepts are presented in relation to theories of cognition, metaphor, and sociocultural linguistics.

In the fourth chapter I present a history of the community college and of writing programs in American universities, the academic situation in community colleges today, and the approach and methods used for the analysis of the community colleges’ written texts.

The fifth chapter examines the social and educational discourses presented by three community colleges in Texas. While Texas as a state does not count the largest number of Latino/as residents in absolute terms, the state does have a higher percentage of Latino/as students (47%) enrolled in its schools than any other state. Three Texas community colleges have been chosen for analysis: one a semi-rural, predominantly white institution with a transfer program to a nearby state university; a second college with a predominantly Latino/a population in an urban setting, also near a state university; and a third college with a predominantly Latino/a population in a semi-rural setting, also with a transfer program to a nearby state university. The written discourses of education of these colleges as educational institutions are examined, as well as the written discourses of the writing programs, program administrations, and writing

program faculty. Analysis of the discourses of the institutions are based on website-available mission statements, college catalogs, course offerings, and administrative proclamations. Writing program analyses are based on both website-based statements of philosophy, course descriptions and requirements, and on an extensive analysis of the grammatical and semantic rhetoric presented in five instructors' course syllabi.

The sixth chapter of the dissertation discusses the results of the research and implications for approaches to writing pedagogy in community colleges, and for creating dialogues with institutions about the communities they serve.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Any situation in which some men prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence; ...to alienate humans from their own decision making is to change them into objects.

Paulo Freire

In the second chapter I give an overview of the literature on Latino/as and education in the United States and some of the theoretical frameworks that have been introduced to explain or alleviate the problem of lower rates of persistence and success in college for Latino/as. This overview also presents the pedagogical theories of Paulo Freire as they relate to *educación*, as well as theories of cultural capital, cultural resistance, contact zones, and social identities in writing as they relate to the discourses of the more and less privileged classes of people in this country.

LATINO/A EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

The history of the American educational system as it relates to Latino/as—of various origins, socioeconomic status, and ethnicities—is well-documented in school and general history books as well as in academic studies of the historical, political, cultural, educational, and linguistic positions of minorities in the United States. Mac Donald and Monkman (2005) chart the shift from education in Spanish and German as well as English in Texas and in California to English-only education beginning with the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and then statehood for these two territories. They

note that when education was locally controlled and conducted in the home language of the students as well as in English, communities flourished and the middle class of minorities grew.

As schools were incorporated into state-run systems, bilingual and parochial schools that had tended to the needs of the students and communities they served were gradually defunded. “English only” became the mode of education, and discriminatory practices in segregation, testing, tracking, and differential funding of “Spanish” students and schools created both disadvantages and opportunities for Latino/a schoolchildren and communities. Segregated schools staffed with Spanish-speaking administrators and teachers enjoyed a higher rate of enrollment, attendance, and school-completion than did segregated schools housed in sub-normal facilities with predominately Anglo administrators and teachers. The more advantageous practice of incorporating students’ language, values, and culture into the curriculum and the classroom—considered to be an “additive” approach in that it builds on what students already know— was replaced by a subtractive approach that supplanted familiar discourses with foreign. In removing students’ language and culture from the educational environment, school boards, administrators, and teachers generated a deficiency attitude towards those students who became disabled in their learning through that same loss of language and culture.

Proponents of subtractive approaches to education continue to call for a market-based analysis of educational outcomes, ignoring or discounting the human processes of learning as social development aimed at integrating, as opposed to subordinating,

community members. In the market-based model, community members and learners are treated as consumers and client-customers, and education is a commodity to be purchased. Educational outcomes are measured in terms of grades—a form of cultural capital, skills acquired, and employability. Public education for the masses is not so much a matter of civic-social responsibility or the greater good of the democratic nation; rather it is job training for the maintenance of the class-based social structure. Integration as Americanization through the educational system effectively cultivates the “political and economic subordination” of Latinos through vocational tracking and maintains the social, political, and economic stratification of the nation by race and class (Gonzalez 1997 158).

This assessment of additive versus subtractive education is reinforced by Sánchez (1997), Gonzalez (1997), and Valencia, Menchaca, and Donato (2002) in their studies of education for Latino/as in the United States. George Sánchez argues that lack of progress for Latino/a students in Texas schools in particular are more a measure of the state school system than of the students who fail, fall behind, and drop out. Reflecting on the success rates of schoolchildren in schools that meet the learning needs of the children, he notes that good schools produce good students, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or socioeconomic status.

Gilbert Gonzalez (1997) tracks the “Americanization” efforts of school districts and educators in predominantly Latino/a communities across the first half of the 20th century. The paternalistic attitudes held by the Anglo powers-that-be at the time are

echoed in current “English only” arguments: in order to succeed, they (Spanish-surnamed students) must learn to assimilate linguistically and culturally, if not economically, so that all Americans have a “common ‘apperception mass’ (experiential heritage) that subsequently forges a unified organization of individuals, although separated and differentiated by the economic roles” of the larger society (159).

Richard Valencia, Martha Menchaca, and Rubin Donato’s review of the practices and consequences of segregated schooling for Mexican American students—both historical and current—finds that the “separate but never equal” conditions of education for Latino/as in the U.S. has been driven by racist attitudes that deny equal status and value to the cultural, linguistic, and human contributions of minorities to what is, or should be, an integrated, multicultural educational experience for all school students. While it has for many years been illegal to deliberately set up separate, inferior schools for minorities, Valencia, Menchaca, and Donato point out that, even within integrated schools, Latino/as may still experience a de facto segregation into “special” programs that do little to promote academic success. Citing the slow rate of advancement of Latino/as on the whole in education, employment, and civic representation, the authors urge a more posthaste pace toward true integration than that which has been accomplished in the decades since *Mendez vs. Westminster School District* (1946) and *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954).

THEORIES ABOUT THE “LEARNING GAP” BETWEEN LATINO/A AND ANGLO STUDENTS

The call for quality education for Latino/a students continues to go forth from educators, parents, and students interested in promoting equal opportunity for Americans. In the attempt to define and address the reasons for the slow pace of Latino/a achievement in academic studies, theories regarding the nature and causes of the difference in outcomes have been posited, with some impact on school practices.

Deficiency theories

The most prevalent theories on the gap between Latino/a and Anglo achievement in academic settings fall under the rubric of deficiency theories. The common thread linking these theories is the notion that Latino/as are a “problem” in the school system because they lack some characteristic necessary to fit in and do well at school. Mario Barrera (1997), Sofia Villenas and Douglas Foley (2002), Terrence Wiley and Gerda de Klerk (2010), and Ofelia García (2010) address a range of theories that place the locus of responsibility for the perceived failure of Latino/as to thrive in the larger social, academic, and political context on innate deficiencies of heredity.

Genetic deficiencies

The language of deficiency includes openly racist claims of biological/genetic inferiority as indicated by lower scores on intelligence tests and school failure in itself. The opinion that Americans from non-northern European ancestry are by nature less

capable or deserving justifies educational tracking into “appropriate” programs for vocational training or menial labor. Darker skin coloring has been considered ipso facto evidence of an individual’s suitability for outside physical labor, and by extension for only lower levels of indoor labor under careful management. Just as chauvinistic as blatant prejudice are the more subtle forms of socially embedded discrimination. Chesler (1976) describes three signs of race based oppression, comprised of symbol systems and ideologies that are based in personal and cultural views of the “other” as inferior; institutional processes that lead to differential civil, legal, and economic privileges; and disproportionately unequal levels of attainment among differing groups of citizens.

Social and cultural deficiencies

Deficiencies in social structure and cultural deficiencies interact as supposed cultural attitudes and values that don’t regard education as a worthy goal. This deficient attitude, combined with the lack of a work ethic and no concern for the future, lead to a sense of present orientation, fatalism, poor employment history in low-paying jobs, and weak family structures. These conditions are said to support poverty, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and dependency on others. Children from such communities are regarded as underprivileged, underprepared for school and life, and severely disadvantaged.

Language and literacy deficiencies

The languages of Spanish monolingual, bilingual, and speakers of what are known as Tex-Mex, Spanglish, and Chicano English are considered to be an inferior,

non-standard, “patois” (García 193). Efforts to educate Latinos and other users of non-standard English have focused on “fixing” the problem of multiglossia by enforcing standardized English preferences as a goal of linguistic and literacy assimilation (McLaughlin and Agnew 1999; Barrera 1997; Villenas and Foley 2002). The language practices of bi- or multilingual students are perceived to create problems of language interference and a language handicap insofar as individuals do not use a “pure” or school-approved variety of English. From the deficiency viewpoint, children developing language facility in more than one context suffer from low-level language skills, “foreign” ways of thought, speech, ideals, customs, and attitudes, and an overall lack of Americanization (García 199).

Sociolinguistic theories

Educators and researchers interested in Latino/a education emphasize that all persons require a supportive, nurturing educational environment—at home as well as at school—to thrive and grow. Rita and Marco Portales’ (2005) experiences and research in educating Mexican American children in U.S. schools emphasizes that teaching is socialization, and that the manner in which education is approached is as important in early education as it is in higher education. Michelle Hall Kells (2004) and Valerie Balester (2004) quantify the observation that when students’ language and culture are diminished in the school as well as in the larger social setting, self confidence and trust in the educational process is damaged, and school failure and drop-out rates increase. The problem, however, is not with the students, or their families, or the teachers per se

(not to say that students, families, teachers don't have problems); it may not either be solely with the system of education being skewed toward monocultural hegemony, but certainly a monocultural approach to education in a multicultural nation can be seen to be problematic.

PAULO FREIRE AND *CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO*

Paulo Freire (September 19, 1921 – May 2, 1997) was a Brazilian educator, philosopher, and pedagogical theorist whose overarching tenet was the self-liberation of oppressed classes of people through critical reflection and practical action, or *praxis*. Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* introduced theories of "liberatory dialogic pedagogy," the "banking" approach to education, critical pedagogy, and the humanization of education.

Freire terms traditional lecture and memorization pedagogy the "banking model" because it treats the student as an empty container to be filled with knowledge, which can then be disbursed on demand. In this model, the teacher and the institution (administration) have knowledge- the students do not. The teacher and the institution give the student the knowledge that they determine the student needs; the student is effectively trained and socialized to serve authority and power, for the most part without question or recourse, so maintaining the class-based status quo. The banking approach to teaching supports what critics term a "neoliberal" view in which "educational processes are increasingly being reconceived as merely commercial transactions in a competitive marketplace" (Roberts 1999). Critics claim that the effect of a marketplace ideology in

education is the commodification of learning and the dehumanization of the teacher-student relationship, to the detriment of both the teacher and the student (Roberts 183; Freire 1972; Rose 1985; Engel 2000; Ayers 2005).

Dialogic pedagogy uses problem posing to require both the teacher and the student to work together in a critical, communicative environment. Freire's approach stresses the social nature of knowledge, and of learning as the structured, critical investigation of a specific subject, problem, or theme. Freire's pedagogical *raison* was to educate oppressed peoples to recognize the means by which they are oppressed in the social system, and to free themselves physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Freire explains that "[f]reedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (47). According to Freire, freedom will be the result when a balance between reflective theory and pragmatic action (*praxis*) is achieved.

The use of education as a means of consciously shaping the person and the society is called conscientization (*conscientização*), which is one of the foundations of critical pedagogy and is the basis of the relationship between the teacher, the student, and society. Conscientization, or critical consciousness, is an ongoing process, a continual struggle to realize or humanize one's relationships with oneself and with others through dialogical interaction. Conscientization has at its root respect for oneself and for the other, so that we act as a unified one. In describing this bond between

persons, Freire references Martin Buber's (1970) relationship of the *I* and the *thou* and the *it*:

In the dialogical theory of action, Subjects meet in cooperation in order to transform the world. The antialogical, dominating *I* transforms the dominated, conquered *thou* into a mere *it*. The dialogical *I*, however, knows that it is precisely the *thou* which has called forth his or her own existence. He also knows that the *thou* which calls forth his own existence in turn constitutes an *I* which has in his *I* its *thou*. The *I* and the *thou* thus become, in the dialectic of these relationships, two *thous* which become two *I*'s. (Freire 167)

Buber's writings on peoples' relationships to one another and to God greatly affected Freire's conceptions of humanization, dialogue, and the teacher-student relationship. Buber's philosophy is prescient of the dialogical and spiritual nature of Freirean conscientization in which authentic dialogical experiences allow students to acquire a sense of the relatedness between self and others. For Buber, dialogical relations reside in the experience and acknowledgment of an "other" by which the self is defined through inclusion of the other in the self (125). Buber's *I* can be the individual as part of the connected whole, or the *I* as the isolated autonomous individual. He makes it clear that the isolated, non-dialectical individual owns the status of the *it*- the other with which there is no relatedness, no inclusion, no humanity. Paulo Freire's conceptualization of dialogic pedagogy is rooted in the values of *educación* as the socialization or

humanization of persons in a society or culture—that is to say, in the values of respect for the individual and for their place in society, recognition of the dignity of the individual, humility, and harmony. The dialogical relationship exists regardless of whether the *I* and the *thou* occupy the same space and time or not. Both Buber and Freire note that the experience of the dialogical *I-thou* is not static or constant, but the result of continuous effort on the part of individuals.

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND VALIDATION

In “Constructions of Identity in Community College Students,” Kathleen Shaw identifies three strands of identity theory: identity theories based on a “solid sense of self” that result in a single fixed, integrated whole identity; identity theories based on power differentials and difference, a view “appropriated by those interested in challenging the primacy of traditional modes of discourse and education,” by portraying identity as situation specific; and a third theory of identity, or human agency, which “does not negate the power of race, gender, or class” as part of the ways in which we perceive our self-identification, but adds a “category of ‘difference’” determined by individual agency (155-156). Shaw finds that few students are able to adhere to a single sense of identity; most describe their identities in terms of both socially-ascribed power differentials and self-choice. The recognition of different ways of identifying applies to the college as well as to the students they serve. Institutions that evince a tendency to essentialize student identity into a single, organic whole—student, Asian student, female student—also tend to have one-dimensional or “one-size-fits-all” policies and programs

as well; student services are directed at academic performance, diversity is a matter of “Women’s History Month” or “Martin Luther King Day,” and “personal problems” are not something the school or faculty care to deal with. Schools in which students’ cultural and gender identities are recognized as significant elements of who the students are tend to include programs and courses in ethnic studies, gender studies, politics, and civic literacy as means of empowerment, and schools that recognize the multiplicity of identities and priorities in students’ lives will create programs that support the needs engendered by having complex lives: on-campus day care for students who are also parents, flexible assignment schedules for students with varying work schedules and home responsibilities, as well as for student athletes (163-167). Mary Louise Pratt (1990) has termed these meetings of institution and student “contact zones . . . social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (4). She goes on to clarify that the meeting of cultures, while uncomfortable, need not always be negative or marginalizing, that the zones of conflict can be zones of transculturation, in which each person or group is free to mix, match, select, and invent from what is offered by the larger or dominant culture (9). The possibilities for dialogic education in compositional contact zones is demonstrated in the ethnographies and case studies presented by Michelle Hall Kells (1999, 2002) and Valerie Balester (1993, 2002), in which teachers and students learn from one another as they negotiate the values and contexts for the apt use of regional and cultural dialects.

If, as Rendón (1994) finds, students who have a stronger sense of validation of their values, culture, and language will have a stronger sense of efficacy and integration within the fabric of the institution resulting in student success, it must also be found that a lack of validation will result in inefficacy, alienation, resistance, and ultimately failure and/or disaffection and withdrawal. These effects and some of their causes are explored in Labov's 1971 study of value conflicts in language acquisition, in which he hypothesizes that

The primary interference with the acquisition of Standard English stems from a conflict of value systems. Language may be looked upon as a system for integrating values . . . [i]dentification with the class of people that includes one's friends and family is a powerful factor in explaining linguistic behavior. (153)

This resistance to assimilating the language of "others" has its corollary in the resistance to assimilating the full range of cultural identifiers and values that an individual brings with him or her to the college campus. Fairclough (1992) points out that "Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitute' them; different discourses constitute key entities . . . in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects" (3-4). Discourses are inherent in institutions, and the community college is an institution that creates its own narratives of education as the academic literacies that students encounter and are expected to acquire as a

measure of success, an expectation that highlights the connection between knowledge and power (Foucault 1977, Gee 1996, Usher and Edwards 1994).

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

The socialization process (*educación*) and social networking skills that Latino/a children learn at home, in their neighborhood, their schools, and through interaction with extended families and friends develop what Coleman (1988) terms “social capital,” personal and collective power based on interpersonal relations and obligations between individuals and within a closed social group. According to Coleman, “Social capital is defined by its function. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors” (S98). Social capital also refers to the networks of people who can provide other forms of capital, including economic and cultural capital (Stanton-Salazar 2001). The difficulties of acquiring social capital in the academic setting is depicted by Victor Villanueva in *Bootstraps*, a descriptive autobiographical account of his struggle through the academic gauntlet, and the persistent sense of “other” that lingered even after he earned his PhD

Closely related to the concept of social capital is cultural capital. As conceived by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1990), cultural capital is the power an individual or social/ethnic group accumulates through its ability to impose an arbitrary set of values upon other individuals within the group, or on other groups from outside

the cultural paradigm, through the application of symbolic violence to the values of the object group or individuals. Rueda, Monzó, and Arzabiaga (2003) refer to the learned knowledges and skills of cultural capital as

An outcome of cultural interactions and embedded with culturally produced values and meanings. Thus [. . .] we treat cultural capital as encompassing all that which is culturally learned, including values, beliefs, information, understandings, skills, and ways of engaging in particular practices. (NP)

Regarding differences in learning styles and values between communities, Rueda, Monzó, and Arzabuaga point out that “the cultural capital that middle class families have vis-à-vis the schools has proven elusive for many children and families from low-income, non-dominant groups,” and that while there is research on the integration of the knowledge and experiences that children bring with them to school as a means to contextualize academic knowledge, the task becomes difficult “as most teachers have little knowledge of the communities in which they teach” (NP).

DISCOURSE AND LITERACY

According to James Gee (1996), language and literacy can only be understood within a sociocultural frame:

[W]e can turn literacy on its head, so to speak, and refer crucially to the social institutions and social groups that have these practices, rather than to the practices themselves. When we do this, something

odd happens: the practices of such social groups are never just literacy practices. They also involve ways of talking, interacting, thinking, valuing and behaving. (41)

Literacy practices are culturally, historically, and socially situated forms of discourse that are closely tied to the development of social power and group and individual identity (Moll 1990; Vygotsky 1962; Wells 1999; Wertsch 1991). These approaches do not situate literacy within the individual person, making it solely a function of reading and writing skills; instead, they place literacy in society so as to emphasize connections between the workings of literacy and power (Gee 1996). Dijon and Moje (1998) argue that it is important to consider the multiple contexts and multiple literacies of students' lives. Students' literacies and identities are not limited to those utilized in schools. In a study of adolescent literacies they focused on how students were positioned by "asymmetrical power relations" (194) and how they positioned themselves and others in light of these relations. As adolescents negotiate the complex relations of their worlds, they "may make choices about whether to be 'good' students or 'resistant' students within a set of discourses about what it means to be a student and what the consequences of resistance are" (194). According to the authors, literacy research must be more than simply hearing and valuing student voices. Researchers must analyze these voices for a reflection of dominant discourses and study how students are positioned to both resist and perpetuate these discourses, while at the same time, teaching students to ask the same types of analytical questions.

Writing on discourse and power, Norman Fairclough (2001) describes the constructed nature of “preferred” institutional discourses:

Modern society is characterized by a high degree of integration of social institutions into the business of maintaining class domination, with a high degree of ideological integration between institutional and societal orders of discourse, which legitimize the exercise of power by consent rather than by coercion.

Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices which appear to be universal often can be shown to originate in the dominant class or bloc and have become ideologically naturalized. (30)

Discourses make that which is socially constructed appear obvious or natural, which subsequently marks practices outside the obvious or “accepted” mode of discourse as substandard. Because individuals each have a particular discursive history, a result of their participation in various social settings and various discourse communities throughout the course of each person’s life, discourses are both inclusionary and exclusionary practices that function as sorting mechanisms within institutions and societies (Foucault 1977; Gee 1996; Kress 1989). Gunther Kress explains further:

The accounts provided within one discourse become not only unchallenged, but unchallengeable, as “common sense.” If the

domination of a particular area by a discourse is successful, it provides an integrated and plausible account of that area, which allows no room for thought; the social will have been turned into the natural. At that stage it is impossible to conceive of alternative modes of thought, or else alternative modes of thought will seem bizarre, outlandish, unnatural. Given this view of language (itself the product of the interplay of discourses) it can be seen how the speaking/writing and reading/listening of individuals is determined by their positions in institutions, by their place within certain discourses. It allows us to link speaking and writing, listening and reading to social place and to social/institutional meanings, without giving up a serious notion of the individual as social agent. (10)

ACADEMIC LITERACIES AND SCHOOLING

Academic literacies are a type of literacy practice, defined by Brandt and Clinton (2002) as “socially regulated, recurrent, and patterned things that people do with literacy as well as the cultural significance they ascribe to those doings.” Shirley Brice Heath’s (1983) seminal study of the learning practices of two towns and their inhabitants—white working-class families, black working-class families, and “townspeople,” the families of business owners and professionals, showed that children exhibited language behaviors in accordance with the values of their respective families and communities. Heath writes that “...the different ways children learned to use language were dependent on the

ways in which each community structured their families, defined the roles that community members could assume, and played out their concepts of childhood that guided child socialization" (11). According to Heath, children learn language, be it spoken or written, through the process of socializing in the specific society they are in. If students come from a non-dominant culture, however, their social literacy practices can often conflict with the literacy values of the educational system. Heath illustrates this point through the storytelling practices of the working-class children from Trackton, who were encouraged at home to exaggerate and to fantasize, and Roadville, where children were expected to recount factual information and who interpreted Trackton storytelling conventions as lying. Heath further describes resistance on the part of children from "outside" communities—in this case white and black rural working class residents—to the ways of learning used in the town schools. The children from outside the town schools preferred to bring their home habits into the classroom (266), rather than bringing classroom habits into the home.

Following Heath's work on the learning environment of the children according to location (rural/town), race (black/white), and socioeconomic class ("professional," blue collar/working class), further ethnographic studies have shown how schools tend to force students into the framework of education style that favors children from white, middle-class or professional backgrounds. These studies focus on children from pre-school through high-school, but do not continue to study the impact of college students' socioeconomic class on their adjustment and success in college, as though the values and

learning styles that have developed over the first eighteen years of an individual's life do not carry over into the college environment. In "Stages in the Acquisition of Standard English," William Labov outlines not only the various stages of language or dialect acquisition, but factors that impede the full acquisition of a second dialect, including isolation, structural differences, and value systems conflicts, emphasizing that "the primary interference with the acquisition of Standard English stems from a conflict of value systems" (153). Social class identification, peer pressure to maintain adherence to group norms, and fears of assimilation and loss of identity figure as value factors in the resistance to accepting and using Standard English where other dialects are the norm. Subsequent studies in language, literacy, identity, and power have continued and expanded on Labov's observations. John Gumperz' 1982 *Discourse Strategies* notes that persistent adherence to a particular dialect or manner of speech, even when there is frequent and close contact with another dialect, serves to "mark social identity" according to "established norms and traditions" (39). Social boundaries are delineated according to the measure of what Gumperz terms "network overlap," an index of social cohesion based on the strength of interactive ties between persons of similar backgrounds ("internal ties") and persons with different backgrounds and experiences ("external ties"); the greater the overlap of interactive ties, the more cohesive the community and the more defined the social boundaries between people, while the less the overlap of social ties the more difficult it is to delineate social boundaries (41). What Gumperz is describing are linguistic indicators of social assimilation, as he notes in his

conclusion that “language shift reflects basic changes in the structure of interpersonal relations rather than mere macro-alterations in the extralinguistic environment” (57).

CHAPTER III

EDUCACIÓN

In this section I explore the nature of cognate words, with emphasis on the commonalities and divergences in meaning between the concepts of education and *educación*. Using theories of cognition, metaphor, and sociocultural linguistics, I show how the interpretations of these two constructs are based not only on metaphors of physical or bodily experience from which universal categories of experience might be built (Lakoff 1980), but cultural or life habits and experiences (Grady 1997). Even as metaphor draws correlations between experiences from two or more different domains or categories of experience, the metaphoric expression of that correlation will vary between and within cultures according to life experiences. I propose that overlaps and divergences in the semantic conceptualization of the constructs of education and *educación*, as well as their actualizations in practice, are informed in part by the habits of categorization that are held by persons involved in the American educational system and by students who come from the various Latino/a communities in the United States.

EDUCATION AND *EDUCACIÓN* AS COGNATES

Educación. Education. To the extent that both terms refer to learning in a school or academic setting, the words are full cognates. And while *educación* does refer to academic training, cognate symbols can obscure conceptual differences in meaning.

The variances in nuance between being well-educated and being *bien educado* reveal a distinction between the entity “education” and the social value of *educación*: when viewed as a commodity, a good education is something that is important to *get* or *have*; when perceived as a value, *ser bien educado* is the result of a socialization process intent on developing character. As we will see, “education is a commodity” is a markedly different metaphor than “*educación* is a community.”

COGNATES AND THE PROCESS OF MEANING

Determining meaning requires both cognitive-linguistic and social-rhetorical processing (Dominguez Barajas 2010). Cognitive-linguistic ability refers to the ability to acquire and use language, while social-rhetorical processing refers to the social and cultural contextualization of language and its appropriate use. Discussing the role of context in meaning making, Dominguez Barajas references Ferdinand de Saussure to explain the difference between signs (words) and significations (concepts or meanings) as it applies to interpreting *dichos* (proverbs or homilies). Differences between what is said and what is understood is a “referential gap” between the sign and the signification, entailing the negotiation of multiple levels of reference and signification (97). In the case of *dichos*, the listener must be familiar with not only the definitions of the words being used, but their relevant social, linguistic, and historical references. So for example Dominguez Barajas cites the proverb, “He who is a rooster, crows anywhere.” At the literal level, the sign, “rooster” signifies a male chicken. In order for the proverb to make sense, the listener must also be able to associate the sign “rooster” to a number

of other referential significations, i.e., the characteristics of bravery, pride, confidence, and reliability that are contextual to Mexican culture and particularly to rancho culture (100). The referential gap between the literal and the figurative meanings of the term is bridged to the extent that the speaker and the listener share knowledge of the sociolinguistic referents of the term, “rooster.” However, the gap is bridged differently for a listener for whom “rooster” carries references to other qualities, such as cowardice (“chicken”), smallness, unjustified ego or “cockiness,” so that misunderstandings arise between people with differing referential contexts.

The bimodal approach to defining terms originated by de Saussure is critiqued by Ogden and Richards (1923) as not accounting for the process of interpretation of the signification of a term separately from that of the sign, so that definitions “have nothing to fear from certain ambiguous terms which do not coincide in one language and another,” since for Saussure all words in a language, rather than being symbols for ideas, already have fixed meanings (5, 6). Ogden and Richards (1989) conceive a tripartite theory of meaning based on the relationships between a symbol or signifier (word), a referent object in the real world (signified), and a reference, which is the collection of experiences and contexts associated with the referent. Misunderstandings arise as speakers and listeners interpret meaning in accordance with their own background of unique experiences and associations (Richards 1965). Richards proposes that metaphor is more than a rhetorical device, but a complex relation of thoughts that reveals the relationship between two objects or ideas that do not seem at the literal level to be

related. He suggests that most of complex language is expressed through metaphor, and that the purpose of rhetorical inquiry is to be a “study of misunderstanding and its remedies” (3). I propose that differences in the interpretation of cognate words are the result of differences in contextual understanding of the experiences and associations that the cognate languages carry. The tension that occurs between Saussure’s signifier and signified when different meanings are applied, what Dominguez Barajas refers to as “gaps of uncertainty” (97), I see as part of Pratt’s description of cultural contact zones.² Awareness of how we understand cognates and the metaphoric constructs that inform them can contribute to our understanding of the discourses that Latino/a students, as well as the institutions they come into contact with, bring to the educational table.

Cognate constructions are traditionally seen as etymologically based; words are interpreted as being equivalent or similar in meaning because they supposedly come from the same root-words. Carroll (1999) cites four types of etymologically derived cognates: true cognates, which are etymologically related and have the same or almost the same semantic references; deceptive cognates, which are etymologically related but the range of semantic references only partially overlap; false cognates, words that are etymologically related but have no related semantic references; and accidental cognates, which are not at all etymologically related, but have some orthographic or auditory

² In “Arts of the Contact Zone,” Mary Louise Pratt describes a “contact zone” as the “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34). The idea of the contact zone has been extended by various authors to include email (Doherty 2003), green toads (Stöck , et al. 2010), Chinese rhetoric (Swearingen 2009), and film (Verdoodt 2010), among other applications of the idea.

resemblance (101). The existence of false and accidental cognates evidences a sociocultural, rather than an etymological, basis for our mistaken interpretations. In the case of education/ *educación*, the range of semantic references overlap in regard to the academic meanings, but diverge on the concept of education as socialization. Yet because of the etymological similarity and partial overlap in meaning, we perceive the two terms as fully cognate. Following Burke's theory of terministic screens,³ we can find that in assigning a familiar meaning to foreign words or concepts based on orthographic or auditory similarity to words we already know, we expect speakers of other languages, people from different cultures, and even those who speak some variant of our own dialect to understand a word referent the same as we do because we cannot conceive of references other than those we ourselves have (e.g., it is rather difficult to conceive of that which we don't know). Differences in interpretation of sign/referent/reference relationships are the result of differences in the metaphors through which we process our interpretations. It is also the metaphoric aspect of language that helps us to bridge this gap.

THEORIES OF METAPHOR IN LANGUAGE, COGNITION, AND CULTURE

We tend to think of metaphor as a rhetorical device used in literature and persuasive imagery such as advertising or political campaigns. A bit of metaphoric hyperbole can convince the most reluctant Juliet to swoon over a persistent Romeo who

³ Kenneth Burke's "terministic screens" refers to the frames of reference through which we as individuals view and interpret events, actions, and verbal and written symbols.

proclaims his love to be the sun at dawn, and mention of putting lipstick on a pig can throw a wrench into the most well-oiled campaign machine (which is a metaphorical construct in itself). We recognize words as inherently metaphorical in that they substitute a concept or experience that originates in one domain—such as the physical, for an expression from another—a sound or a written symbol (Richards 1965). Current cognitive theory asserts that language is grounded in physical realities but expressed figuratively (Nunberg 1978; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Gibbs 1997; Kövesces 2005) if for no other reason than that words are not things, and much less thoughts, but rather representations of objects and mental images.

In discussing metaphors, Richards (1965) makes use of two terms—"tenor" and "vehicle." The tenor refers to the underlying idea or principal subject of the metaphor. The vehicle conveys the underlying idea, the borrowed idea, or what the tenor resembles, but beyond that resemblance there are also the differences [or "gaps"] between the tenor and the vehicle that carry as much meaning as the similarities, a matter of what is not said as much as of what is said (127). Richards argues that metaphors are highly effective in facilitating comprehension and therefore minimizing misunderstandings. Since metaphor reveals the relationship between two dissimilar objects, it is effective in communicating experiences to others because the speaker may use the listener's knowledge of one of the objects to convey the meaning of the second. Richards summarizes:

The mind is a connecting organ, it works only by connecting and it can connect any two things in an indefinitely large number of different ways. Which of these it chooses is settled by reference to some larger whole or aim, and though we may not discover its aim, the mind is never aimless. In all interpretation we are filling in connections. As the two things put together are more remote, the tension created is, of course, greater. What seems an impossible connection can turn into an easy and powerful adjustment if the right hint comes from the rest of the discourse. (125)

The ways in which we interpret the connections is informed by the social, cultural, and linguistic lenses that we learn as we encounter the various communities of which we are a part; all these together help to shape our perceptions of reality.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) developed a theory of categories to show how physical properties define our perception of reality, and how we categorize thought, feeling, and experience through references to the physical, by describing components from one domain in terms of another. Our value systems are developed in accordance with the metaphorical concepts we live by, and different cultures live by different orientations. Their most famous paradigm includes the “argument is war” category, exemplified by statements such as “he shot down all of my arguments,” and “Your claims are indefensible.” The authors point out that while for Western societies we can say that “argument is war,” for another culture argument may be seen as a dance in

which the objective of the point-counterpoint, give and take performance is to present points of view in a “balanced and aesthetically pleasing way” (5) . Lakoff (1987) expanded and refined this work to argue that the way we organize our world—how we reason and group and categorize both the abstract and the concrete parts of our experience—is a matter of “both human experience and imagination—of perception, motor activity, and culture on the one hand, and of metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery on the other” (8).

Barcelona (2005) applies Lakoff and Johnson’s seminal work to examine figurative and literal translations and equivalencies between metaphors in English/Hungarian and English/Spanish. His research investigates how certain figurative meanings are expressed as conceptual metaphors in different languages; whether abstract ideas can be expressed literally; what the differences between languages are in the linguistic expression of the same conceptual metaphor (that exists in both languages); and how cultural contexts influence the linguistic expression of these metaphors. In regard to the third question, he finds differences in the “degree of elaboration, conventionalization, specificity of the metaphor, and scope of the metaphor” (161). On the fourth question, two languages may have the same conceptual metaphor, but the linguistic expression of that metaphor is shaped by differences in cultural-ideological assumptions of the cultures, suggesting that metaphors are both cognitively and culturally based (162).

The differences between education and *educación* are not solely linguistic. Even for Latino/as who speak little or no Spanish, the cultural values of *educación* as socialization remain (Delgado-Gaitan 1993).

THE NATURE OF *EDUCACIÓN*

Descriptive definitions of *educación* have in common references to respect, obedience, manners, empathy for others, and familism. In her ethnography of ten Mexican immigrant families in Chicago, Guadalupe Valdés (1996) explains that *educando a los hijos* includes teaching the expectations of the roles that children will play in life and the rules of conduct that had to be followed in order to be successful in those roles. *Educación* is a matter of respect and obedience, in part taught through *consejos* (counsel or advice) or *dichos* (proverbs). *Dando consejos* (counseling) involves advising children on what to do and how to behave through lectures and homilies designed to influence behavior and attitudes (Valdés 125). *Dichos* are proverbs that are used to get a point across respectfully, through the use of cultural and linguistic metaphors. As with the education/*educación* cognates, *respeto* means “respect” both the same and differently than the English notion of respect as esteem or deference. Having *respeto* for oneself and others involves recognizing the roles that each person plays in society, functioning appropriately in those roles, and demonstrating a regard for the persons who fulfill those roles.

Delgado-Gaitan’s (1990, 1991, 1993, 1994) longitudinal studies of literacy, education, and socialization of Latino/a families in Carpinteria, California demonstrated

how family members, usually the mother, used *consejos* to negotiate their and their children's relationships with local school administrations. Beyond the pragmatics of counseling or advising for the purpose of solving a problem, *dando consejos* "implies a cultural dimension of communication sparked with emotional empathy and compassion, as well as familial expectation and inspiration" (1994 300). *Consejos* are given to young children to praise good work and to correct problematic behavior, and to older children to guide them in their life decisions, in a conversational rather than in a directive tone. Reese et al. (1995) note that in addition to subscribing to a socialization value of *educación*—teaching morals, respect, deference, and family unity—those values being taught are best adopted if they are instantiated in activities that include active participation of both parents in the family (77).

In addition to ethnographic and sociolinguistic studies of the values of *educación*, psychological studies of personality and approaches to counseling and treatment for Latino clients have addressed the range of culture-specific sensitivities that relate to an individual's ways of thinking, behaviors, and beliefs—that is, their cultural and personal discourses. Constructs that have been found to be important to the psychological functioning of Latino/a clients in particular include *familismo* or family orientation; *personalismo*, or a preference for relationships with individuals more so than with institutions; *confianza*, a need to know and trust persons with whom one has personal dealings; and *respeto* or mutual deference.

Respect for the autonomy of others can be demonstrated through politeness or *cortesía*, or through directness of speech and manner, *franqueza*. Dominguez Barajas' (2010) study of proverb use within a transnational Mexican family network based in Illinois and Mexico demonstrates not only how the use of *dichos* supports the indirect politeness or discretion of *cortesía*, but also the culturally-based ways of communicating norms and manners within a community. Criticism expressed through a *dicho* places an individual's behavior within the context of customs and traditions, rather than the judgment of the person who speaks the proverb, so that the intent of the critique can be inferred to be on the part of the community, rather than on the part of an individual (104). This referencing of traditional wisdom supports the continued inclusion of both parties as part of the given discourse community by saving "face," which is to say, maintaining the dignity of both the critiquer and the critiqued person. *Dichos* are used to establish solidarity and rapport between speakers, as support for arguments, in giving advice, and to entertain (70). These purposes are not at all mutually exclusive; a single *dicho* may cover one or more purposes, depending on the context in which it is spoken. Aside from familial or social contexts, *dichos* are used to help bridge cultural gaps in psychotherapy (Zuñiga 1991), family education and literacy (Sánchez, Plata, Grosso, and Leird 2010), and in academic success strategies for college students (Castellanos and Gloria 2007).

Other researchers note the importance of respect as a part of *educación*, describing it as "the deference given to parents because of their important hierarchical

position” (Ortiz and Plunkett), and extend this deference to elder siblings, family members, teachers, and religious and civic leaders (Weaver and Márquez). This deference and obedience to authority forms an important part of the bond of family tradition, unity, and loyalty in a supportive reciprocal community system (Ortiz and Plunkett). Christina Carger illustrates this bond in her observations of the values of *educación*:

What I saw was a comprehensive, inclusive conception of educating children. Latino/a parents use the term *bien educado*. Translated literally it means “well educated”; but in Spanish, it connotes a wider sense of being *well-bred, mannerly, clean, respectful, responsible, loved, and loving*. Children are an integral, celebrated part of family and neighborhood. They are expected to obediently fulfill the teacher’s directives and to respectfully, lovingly fulfill family responsibilities. Rarely did the families refer to specific career or long-range educational plans, but they always hoped that their children would be *bien educado*. (42)

In school, the teacher is perceived as an authority figure whose dignity should not be abridged and whose expertise is never questioned (Acheson 5). Parents often send their children to school with the admonition that, “your teacher is your second mother.” My own teaching experience in Mexico showed me that this respect for dignity is reciprocal, as well. I consistently observed that teachers are expected to exercise their authority in a

caring and kindly manner, never yelling or becoming angry but always remaining calm and patient, respecting the dignity and feelings of the student. Academic and disciplinary personnel would *dan consejos* to the most recalcitrant of offenders, advising them gently but firmly that skipping school, not doing homework, and being generally disruptive in class was not in their best interests, did not reflect well on their parents, and was not helpful to the other students. It should also be noted that because the respect and dignity accorded teachers and school officials as experts in their roles of formal education, parents for the most part will not want to be perceived as meddling or interfering in the way that the school manages the students. However, when the teacher, or the school, fails to respect a student as a whole person, focusing only on the function of being a student—arriving to school on time, following the rules, doing assignments, getting good grades—and ignores the social and cultural values that are found in caring, reciprocal relationships, students and school personnel begin to talk past one another, engendering a mutual sense of alienation (Valenzuela 22-24).

Parents who subscribe to values of *educación* see the relationship between the home and the school as a partnership in creating good, honest, respectful people. Yet at times the authority of the school can clash with that of the parent. In *Escuela, Estado, y Familia: Un Pacto por Redefinir*, Pablo Vain (2009) argues that the agreement between families and the State, to work together to educate the nation's children, has been transformed into a program that further stratifies classes of people and reproduces the status quo rather than offers opportunities for advancement. This is achieved through

the manipulation of the familial values of *educación* as the state appropriates the prerogatives of the family in the socialization of their children, rather than working with the parents to develop the children to the best of their abilities.

Marcia Farr's (2005, 2006, 2010) studies of immigrant/transnational and first-generation Mexican families in Chicago shows that while there are a number of constant ideals associated with the value of *educación*, different Latino/a communities have different conceptions of how to socialize their members, and what it means to be *bien educado*. In what might be considered to be more refined language, the values of *cortesía* and *simpatía* are expressed through indirect speech, or face-saving redressive actions aimed at solidarity or deference (174). For the *rancheros* of the family network studied by Farr, *respeto* between self-assertive speakers is expressed in dialogue as *franqueza*, "direct, straightforward, candid language that goes directly to the point" (2005 37). This directness respects the autonomy of both the speaker and the addressee (see Dominguez Barajas 2010 161-162), by avoiding wasting time with insincere social niceties, and supports the "valuing of both autonomy and affiliation" important to the family-oriented yet fiercely independent *ranchero* culture. Just as there are differences among Mexicano communities as to the use of *cortesía* or *franqueza* in speech, so there are differences in the practice of *educación* between Latino/as from different countries and socioeconomic backgrounds (Stevenson 2009). Tony Del Valle (2005) writes about two girls from the Chicago Puerto Rican community, differently socialized by their families in their views towards schooling. One girl, Ana, came from a home in which

reading and writing activities, both formal and informal, were normal parts of the household routine. School attendance, homework completion, and progressively higher education were expected of the children. The other girl, Sandy, came from a home of similar, although slightly lower, economic standing, in which there was an awareness of the “connection between schooling habits and life goals,” yet academic accomplishment was neither modeled nor strongly encouraged by the parents, and consequently not valued by Sandy herself. Both girls were socialized to regard the family and familial values as of primary importance, and both respected their parents and their families’ values. Differential socialization to the values of *familismo* and *respeto* is detailed in Ruth Horowitz’ (1983) *Honor and the American Dream*, an ethnographic study of Chicano gangs in Los Angeles. Horowitz describes an incident in which a gang banger from one club is caught driving in another gang’s territory with his sister, who is not affiliated with a gang. As the rival gang members jump the car at a stoplight and prepare to shoot the young man, he requests of them that “if you can’t respect me, at least respect my sister” and not shoot him in front of her. The rival gang members, ascertaining that the girl is not affiliated with her brother’s gang, respect that she is innocent family and let them both go (53).

EDUCACIÓN IS COMMUNITY

A review of the comments on the role of *educación* in the Latino/a family reveals a focus on the community, cooperation, getting along, and supporting the whole sometimes at the expense of the individual. Dominguez Barajas (2010) contrasts

academic values with those of the traditional Mexican family, noting an emphasis on familism, tradition, faith, a belief in universal truths, and set gender roles and differences in family and society (44), to which I would add collaboration as a summative for the values of community, cooperation, getting along, and supporting the whole.

Much of the literature available on *educación* and what it means to be *bien educado* centers on the process of raising children, with few, if any connections to how an individual's *educación* informs his or her college experience. I believe, however, that the indicators of competing discourses in the contact zones of the public school and the community college are made clear, if not explicit, in the literature on the factors of Latino/a success in college.

WHAT ARE THE DISCOURSES THAT SUCCESSFUL LATINO/A STUDENTS BRING WITH THEM TO COLLEGE?

Among the factors for success in Latino/a students' college experiences noted by Rendón and Valadez (1993) and Zalaquett (2005) are family, responsibility toward others, friendship, and community and school support, which can be related to the ideals of a person who is *bien educado* and well-integrated into their community. Other researchers stress the value of significant individuals (parents, peers, siblings, extended family, and other adults) in the "emotional support and cognitive guidance" of students (Sánchez, Reyes, Singh 2005). Padilla (2001) emphasizes that having an understanding of institutional protocols and institutional culture is also necessary to overcome "barriers" to success such as lack of nurturing (no role models, low expectations on the

part of faculty and staff, lack of familial support), lack of representation (racial/cultural isolation, no minority mentors, no minority focused curriculum, or lack of minority support programs), lack of resources (lack of financial aid, lack of counseling), and social discontinuity (difficult transition to campus life, living alone, loss of immediate employment). All of these factors combine to indicate that both the institutional personnel who work at community colleges, and the students who enter with the hope of “getting what they need” to get ahead are dealing with a complex set of discourses. As a result of these conflicting discourses, either party may not be fully cognizant of what the other brings to the educational table in terms of discursive styles and values.

In addition to differences in ideals for socialization to *educación* noted above, there are differences in social discourse styles among Latino/as from different countries and socioeconomic groups. Many Cubanos, for example, share the common Latino/a values of *familismo* and *personalismo*, but also place an emphasis on individualism (Crockett et al. 2009), while Latino/as of Mexican origin tend to exhibit a more collective orientation, again with the exception of rancheros, whose discursive *franqueza* is complemented by a more individualistic outlook (“A Mi No Me Manda Nadie”). Additionally, Suarez-Orozco (1998) notes that the degree and manner of family attachment changes with the level of acculturation of each generation; that is, first-generation immigrants will exhibit a stronger sense of familial interdependence than succeeding generations, although Sabogal et al. (1987) find that regardless of national origin, succeeding generations will retain a sense of the importance of family in their

lives even as they adopt values that encourage greater autonomy, and that these levels of familism remain higher than those of white non-Hispanics (408). Rinderle and Montoya (2008) note that the collective orientation of the value of familism manifests as a reliance not only on family and friends for modeling behaviors, making marital choices, and seeking help, but also in the subsuming of personal interests and needs to the good of the group or community (148).

Oral and written discourses also vary with reference to nativity, age, generational status, and socioeconomic status. Chicano English, for example, is largely associated with native-born Latino/as of Mexican descent from working-class or low-income homes. Speakers of Chicano English may be Spanish/English bilingual, use both languages simultaneously (Spanglish, Tex-Mex, or code switch) or may be monolingual speakers of one or more dialects of English.

Because the greater number of Latino/as in the U.S. are Mexican or of Mexican heritage, particularly in Texas where the colleges in this study are located, the focus of comparison between Latino and academic discourse is based on studies of Mexican heritage Latino/as (generation 1, 1.5, and 2+)⁴, who are Spanish dominant, bilingual, or English monolingual.

⁴ Generation 1, or first generation, refers to persons born in another country who immigrated as adults. Generation 1.5 refers to persons born in another country who were brought to the U.S. as children and who subsequently grew up here. Generation 2+ refers to U.S. born children of immigrants and the succeeding generations of U.S. born descendants.

LATINO/A DISCOURSES AND THE LATINO/A STUDENT

The concept of *educación* and the values associated with it (*familismo*, *personalismo*, *simpatía*, *respeto*, *confianza*, *cortesía*, *humildad*, *empatía*) foreground relationships more than processes or products. As part of the concept of *respeto* (the deference to hierarchy and position or role within the institution), regard for the role of the instructor, the counselor, or the administrator can support a reluctance to question or challenge openly, or to evaluate critically policies or stances presented by authorities. Delgado-Gaitan (1996) notes that many students, socialized to listen to *consejos* given by parents and elders without responding or questioning, can also engage in a form of cultural code switching which allows them to interact critically at school while maintaining the behaviors valued at home. At the same time, Castellanos and Gloria (2007) warn that cultural code switching between incongruent home and institutional discourses can challenge an individual's sense of identity.

The value of *familismo* can be a double-edged construct for Latino/a students, depending on the strength of the adherence to stated support for education, the familial need to maintain closeness to individual members, and how these are expressed. Parents may either choose to support students financially or emotionally in their choice of schools or studies, or they may desire to keep the student close to home, out of concern for the student's safety or for fear of disconnection from the family and the community. In fairly recent studies, Latino/as report higher degrees of familial cohesion than other racial or ethnic groups (Desmond and Embirbayer 2009; Portes 1998).

Castellanos and Gloria (2007) advise that, for the institution, “[C]entralizing the core aspect of *familismo* for Latino/a students within the educational setting is essential. Tapping into the aspects of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity inherent to a family [...] can ensure that students are connected and ‘related’ in ways that are simultaneously comforting and effective (385).” The concept of *comunidad*, the caring for and responsibility to community as part of the individual’s identity, is closely related to *familismo*, and the system of extended relationships to co-parents and close friends is supported by the values of *confianza*/trust and *simpatia*/harmonious relationships (Sanchez, Reyes, Singh 2005). A person who prefers to deal with individuals rather than an unseen bureaucracy may avoid expressing disagreement with other individuals or expressing it in an assertive or direct manner (Añez et al. 2008), whether that disagreement is with the institution itself or a representative such as an administrator or instructor. As noted above in the research of Dominguez Barajas on *dichos*, as well as by Zuniga (1991), Sánchez et al. (2010), and Castellanos and Gloria (2007), individuals can express disagreement effectively and respectfully through indirection, but only if the recipient of the disagreement is culturally sensitive to the indirection.

There is a tentative but growing body of evidence that supports a theory of inherited rhetorical structures in the communicative styles of Americans of Mexican origin.

With reference to written discourse, Villanueva (1999), citing Montaña-Harmon (1991), and Santana-Seda (1974), finds that the writing structure of Latino/as and

bilingual non-Latino/as who grow up among Latino/as shows features of a “Sophistic” style of rhetoric, with fewer but longer sentences, more digressions, and greater use of repetition and coordination using synonyms for emphasis. This is in comparison to the more linear, deductive discourse structure of (monolingual) Anglo-American writing, which generally uses shorter sentences and more subordination. Research by Baca (2008) and Baca and Villanueva (2010) suggests that the speaking and writing styles of Chicanos in the U.S. carry influences of pre-colonial Mesoamerican written/painted discourse. Possibly more germane to Latino writers’ discourse style, Farr (1986) reviews and expands on studies of cultural influences in written and oral language styles among different populations. What is most notable among these studies, although not specifically noted, is that major differences in writing styles appear to be less related to ethnic background or race as they are to factors of class.

EDUCACIÓN AND ACADEMIA

Latino parents value education for their children, and they work to instill this value into their children yet, as Mejía (2004) points out, there is often a disconnect between the ways and values of a “good education” as understood by Latino families and as presented/practiced by educational institutions in the U.S.:

The collaborative behavioral nature that Mexican-American students are often raised to have by their extended families . . . is being disrupted by the competitiveness that schools inevitably inculcate in our students. These family structures, however, can offset the

competitive and consumeristic forces adversely affecting the well-being and stability of our students and families, families that represent our strongest defense against forces disrupting our Mexican culture(s). (51)

The tension between the values of “educación” and “education” described by Mejía articulate the discursive tensions or dissonance á la Saussure and Dominguez Barajas in the contact zone of the community college and the Latino/a students and their communities.

“YOU HAVE TO HAVE A GOOD EDUCATION TO GET AHEAD”

Education in the United States was earlier identified as a commodity. This claim is based on statements by schools and news media that support the metaphor “education is a commodity.”

For K-12 and, increasingly, for colleges and universities marketplace discourses are used to describe the educational milieu. U.S. News and World Report’s rankings of colleges and universities in the U.S. references a college education as an “investment” that affects an individual’s “career opportunities, financial well-being, and quality of life,” in that order (“Why U.S. News Ranks Colleges”). In the next section of this study, my analysis of institutional discourses reveals that market values—the values of competition and individualism—have become naturalized as part of the discourse of the community college at all levels. When the role of the college is to “make high-quality education accessible to everyone” and “parents attempt to consume the best education

product possible in the form of high-quality schools,” the metaphor of education as a product is reified. When “the college serves as an economic catalyst by assisting business and service sectors by training employees” (Ayers 50) and “[i]ncreasing college participation will provide the state with the necessary human capital to maintain and grow its technology-based industries” (Closing the Gaps 2000), students become customers or economic entities rather than persons broadening their horizons. And when “[Teacher] accountability, like with the contractor, is only fair and possible when teachers have the freedom...to use all the tools at their disposal in the manner that best fits them and their students” (Rose 2009), teaching and testing standardization become product consistency, and teacher accountability becomes quality control.

In the ideation of education as a commodity, we create an intangible entity, which entity’s tangible representations—grades, credit hours, certificates, diplomas—must be worked for, fought for, competed for. It might be said that education in the United States, particularly public education, is socialization for employment as *educación* is socialization for community. U.S. education has been described as more individualistic, with emphasis on the responsibility of the individuals for taking advantage of educational opportunities to improve themselves and to “get ahead” socially and economically. In contrast to the Latino/a cultural emphasis on familism, tradition, faith, a belief in universal truths, and set gender roles and differences in family and society, Dominguez Barajas (2010) further ascribes the valuing of critical thinking,

formal logic, expertise and credentials, and anti-absolutism (44) to the academic world view, a world view that supports the metaphor, "Education is competition."

CHAPTER IV

LIFE AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In order to understand the discourses of the community college, it is first necessary to understand the college's history, purposes (related to vision—why the college was founded, what the founders see as its future role), and functions (related to missions—the different ways the college fulfills its purposes). In order to develop a clear and open discourse about the visions and missions of a college, it is necessary that a college have a well-articulated *raison d'être* that defines specific community needs that give rise to the institution and to the direction of the college. Mission and vision statements, as well as institutional and departmental policies, should express a college's focused reason or set of reasons for being in a community as part of the discourses it shares with that community.

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The history of the development of the two-year college as presented by Cohen and Brawer (1987, 2003), Dougherty (1994), Townsend and Twombly (2007), and Hutcheson (1999) indicates that most two-year institutions started out as junior colleges, providing the first two years of a bachelor's degree for those living in rural areas without nearby universities and a chance to explore options for those who were undecided about their careers. From the first community college established in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois

(Dougherty 1994), the number of community colleges across the United States multiplied until the 1980s. After World War II the GI Bill of Rights promised returning veterans access to higher education. In the 1960s the Johnson Administration used the community college as “a key weapon in its War On Poverty,” supporting growth to the extent that “by late in the decade, a new community college opened every week” (Nystrand and Duffy 10). With the Center for Educational Statistics showing enrollments of over 2.1 million students in 654 community colleges as of 1970, more students were beginning their college careers at two-year community colleges than at their four-year counterparts, and by 1980 more than 4.5 million students were enrolled in community colleges (Brint and Karabel 198). Local school and other government officials were motivated to support the establishment of community colleges to meet the needs of business, the demands of families for affordable education, and their own self-interests (Dougherty 1994). Many colleges also added occupational and technical programs and became comprehensive community colleges in the 1970s and 1980s. Levin (2000) and Weaver (2002) see the 21st century community college mission changing from programs as inputs to programs as outputs in the form of outcomes, and from individual and community benefaction to community colleges as sites for workforce preparation, with some social benefit through service learning to place the community college as a good corporate citizen. One result of the move to a market-centered mission, says Levin, is a change from a collegial atmosphere of learning to a

labor/management mentality of productivity, efficiency, and students as economic commodities rather than as learners (11).

FRESHMAN COMPOSITION AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Freshman composition originated as a course of study in 1874 at Harvard as a response to the “poor writing of upperclassmen, whence it “spread rapidly, and became the most consistently required course in the American curriculum” (Rose 1985 342). The assumption had been that students would learn to write in high school, and that in college “freshman English students were supposed to be brushing up their ability to produce a certain kind of written product” (Bizzell 1982 192). Yet as students from a broader range of social backgrounds started entering colleges and universities, it became necessary to add courses to the curriculum to prepare students who arrived unprepared for the style of academic writing and discourse (Sadovnik 1994). Academic writing has become an area of accommodation and struggle for the diverse types of students entering higher education, as freshman English not only acts as a “gatekeeping” course to academic continuation, but it also represents a form of cultural capital necessary for success in the university. “Cultural capital” refers to what Bourdieu (1973) identifies as a familiarity with the social and economic connections available within a politically dominant culture. According to cultural capital theory, members of the dominant culture and are better situated to employ these resources than individuals from non-dominant groups. In this context, the ways of writing and speaking that are valued by the community in which an individual grows up are important keys to academic cultural

capital. Lamont and Lareau (1988) assert that “cultural capital is institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goals, and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion” (156). If the mastery of the writing style preferred by the economically dominant middle and upper classes is rewarded with praise and good grades, then students who do not display the preferred writing habits are marginalized in the classroom and from among the dominant elite. Composition studies emerged simultaneously with these social and educational theoretical developments, contrasting with a tradition in English studies that taught standard models of texts, in particular the five-paragraph essay and a prescriptive approach to grammar, punctuation, and surface-level features of writing, that was “atomistic, focusing on isolated bits of discourse, error centered, and linguistically reductive” (Rose 1985 343). The reduction of complex, socially and culturally rich behaviors to individual components is incompatible with the goal of individual growth and improvement, upward social (class) mobility, and the development of cultural capital across a larger, national or global arena. It is, however, compatible with a market based “process” ideology that uses people as resources in the production of goods, services, and wealth, and supports a hierarchy of power and ownership that does not favor the majority, whether they be workers or users of language.

THE ROLE OF FACULTY

Increasingly, community college instruction, and composition courses in particular, are provided by a framework of part-time adjunct faculty rather than full-

time, tenure-track professors. While adjunct instructors hold approximately the same levels of education as full-time community college faculty (Grappa and Leslie 1993; Leslie and Grappa 2002), they earn lower pay per course or contact hour, receive few or no benefits, and have little job security or institutional support (Benjamin 2002; Valadez and Antony 2000). Equally important, these adjunct faculty members are often marginalized members of the academic communities in which they teach. Many of them shuttle from multiple jobs where they teach a number of courses at different colleges. As a result, part-time faculty may not share the institutional culture and values or know current pedagogical theories (Palmer 1999; Grappa and Leslie 2003). In addition, writes Rose, the courses of adjunct faculty are “robbed of curricular continuity and of the status that comes with tenured faculty involvement” (1985 342). Aside from a lack of professional development and respect from full-time faculty, the subordinate positions of adjunct English composition instructors are manifested in poor working conditions such as insufficient access to resources, shared offices that offer no room or privacy for meeting with students, and common syllabi and readers that leave no room for creativity or innovation for those adjuncts who have kept up with the latest in composition theory (Jaeger and Hinz 2007). These conditions affect both the classroom practice and the professional identities of these instructors, and can be expected to affect the relationships and discourses that the instructors have with their students as well as with their colleagues and departments.

Studies of the effects of the use of contingent faculty in community colleges in general and in English composition courses in particular are varied and contradictory. Most research focuses on the conditions and characteristics of adjunct instructors, with little attention to the relationship between the use of part-time faculty and student success. Gappa and Leslie's (2003) study of the "invisible faculty" accepts the normalcy of institutional dependence on part-time workers, and focuses on improving the quality of education imparted by adjunct faculty in order to "improve their morale and commitment to the institutions where they work [...] to help part-time faculty contribute to stronger programs and institutions while finding personal and professional satisfaction in work that has often been ignored and devalued." Wallin (2005) presents a composite of contradictory factors in the employment of large percentages of adjunct faculty:

Adjuncts are valued for their specialized knowledge . . . adjuncts are usually paid much less than permanent faculty . . . while many of these part-time faculty have a great command of their subject matter, they may have little experience teaching what they know. students learn as much in the classes of part-timers. . . administrators need to be concerned about the financial inequities faced by part-time faculty and should look to professional development opportunities for their part-timers. (*Adjunct Faculty in Community Colleges* 3-8)

Studies of the relationship between adjunct use and student retention, grades, and satisfaction by Johnson (2006), Schibk and Harrington (2001), Kehrberg and Turpin

(2002), and Ronco and Cahill (2004) find no significant differences in course outcomes for students of full-time vs. part-time instructors that could not be accounted for by other variable influences. These studies, however, were all conducted on university student populations. In research based in community colleges, though, a fair amount of evidence supports perceptions of lower levels of preparedness for students who take initial English and mathematics courses with adjunct faculty before taking a second course with full-time faculty (Burgess and Samuels 1999). Adjunct faculty also tend to have less total teaching experience, use less innovative or collaborative teaching methods, interact less with students, peers, and institutions, and overall are less effective than full-time faculty in working with students (Umbach 2007; Schuetz 2002). Claims of quality education made by supporters of a “best practices” approach to recruiting, training, and retaining part-time faculty proposed by Wallin and others (Gappa and Leslie 2003; Lyons 2007; Grieve and Worden 2000) are challenged by Jacoby (2006) and Eagan and Jaeger (2009). Jacoby’s quantitative analysis of graduation rates in relation to the proportion of part-time faculty employed at all community colleges in the United States found that, even with faculty development and inclusion programs in place, “increases in the ratio of part-time faculty at community colleges have a highly significant and negative impact upon graduation rates” (1092). Eagan and Jaeger found that the likelihood of students transferring to four-year institutions dropped by two percent for every ten credits earned with adjunct faculty. In relation to the reason for lower teaching effectiveness on the part of part-time faculty, Brown and Clignet argue:

The demoralization of teaching results from its deprofessionalization as a calling. As a result, education is reduced to training or socialization, and educators are disheartened and alienated from students and from one another. They cannot readily offer appropriate role models within the bureaucratized hierarchy. Nor can they easily engage in intellectual exchange with their harried, specialized, and competitive peers. (*Knowledge and Power in Higher Education* 38)

Levin, Kater, and Wagoner (2006), respond to suggestions for increased inclusion for adjunct faculty through faculty development opportunities by noting that the use of part-time faculty for economic ends, rather than pedagogic, creates a situation in which “best practices will not be implemented because they are not viable economically” (84).

Knowledge of these conditions contributes to our knowledge of the factors that inform and bind institutional discourses. Whereas we might like to think that these discourses are constructed for the sake of the students and the community that the college serves, we would do well to investigate what or whom is meant by “the community” when referenced by the college. Academic and administrative proponents of the open access, something for everyone system of post-secondary education refer to community colleges as “the People’s college” and “democratizing” or “Democracy’s” colleges (Cohen and Brawer 2003, Cain 1999, Mahoney 1997), while detractors accuse the workforce training function of the community college of supporting and maintaining the class system status quo by diverting lower and working class students to vocational

occupations or by steering them into developmental courses that have a “cooling out” effect on the students’ higher education aspirations (Dougherty 1994, Clark 1960, 1980). Dougherty (1994) and Brint and Karabel (1989) conclude that the forces behind the structure and discourses of community colleges are the “values and interests” of the local school officials, state governments, legislators, and education department officials for whom the prestige of creating an institution, sitting on the board, and administering or teaching at a college drive the founding and expansion of community colleges “even in the absence of strong local demand” (Dougherty 35). Dennis McGrath and Martin Spear (1991) argue that the most common organizational feature of community colleges is a lack of center, in that they “are not driven by any unitary view of what education, especially nontraditional education, is all about,” to the point that “so great is the multiplicity of function of community colleges . . . that they can hardly be intelligibly described as single institutions at all” (66). Others contend that a lack of focus evinces a failure to build community, particularly a community centered on an ethic of caring as an “essential, integral aspect of education” (Mittlestet 562). Ayers (2005) attributes what others call a “lack of focus” to a shift in ideology, from education as a “social good” for an enlightened citizenry to a “neoliberal ideology” that “promotes consumerism in lieu of participatory democracy” (528). His critical discourse analysis of community college mission statements reviews the use of institutional discursive practices that are informed by a market-based ideology, which in turn reify that ideology through its presentation as “normal” and “commonsensical.” Ayers describes what he

calls the institutional “discursive construction of inequality” as that which 1) reduces learners to economic entities, or human capital to be developed for their value in the labor market (532-33); and 2) essentializes education itself as a market function (529). Whereas Ayers casts a negatively critical eye on evidence of the social processes of transmission of neoliberal ideological norms as a discursive function of cultural hegemony in written texts, Shaw (1995, 1999, 2001) engages in ethnographic analyses of the sociocultural factors between students and the institutions they attend that contribute to student integration and success (defined as higher than average transfer rates) at community colleges.

This dissertation combines critical discourse analysis of written texts and institutional practices with studies of community college culture and Latino culture, specifically concepts of cultural education and socialization, or *educación*, to discover points of convergence and divergence in the contact zone of student and institutional discourses.

THE DISCOURSES OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: METHODS

This section is a critical and comparative discourse analysis of three community colleges as presented in their mission statements, vision statements, statements of policy for students and faculty, student handbooks, public statements made by administrators and faculty as they touch on the relationship between the institution and students, and discourses of the classroom, specifically the freshman composition classroom as presented in course syllabi available online. Discourse, we should note, is not limited to

oral or written communications, but includes institutional practices and activities as well. Fairclough (2001) refers to discourse as “the whole process of social interaction of which text is just a part. [. . .] Text analysis is correspondingly only a part of discourse analysis, which also includes analysis of productive and interpretive processes.” He describes the range of resources that people draw upon in producing and interpreting discourses as “members resources,” which includes their “knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on,” (20) in short, what individuals and groups bring to the discursive table. Phillips and Hardy (2002) expand this view to include “texts and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception,” concluding that “social interaction cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning” (3). James Gee (1999) adds that beyond values, beliefs, and assumptions of our communities, Discourse (with a capital “D”) as a system of doing and being involves the ways, times, and places that we consider appropriate for using tools and objects as symbolic of who we are, privileging “certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others” (22). Gee parses the discourse system into a number of interrelated aspects or “building tasks” of language (Table 1), which he calls a “situation network.” Within this network, each of the aspects “simultaneously gives meaning to all the others and gets meaning from them” (2001 85-86).

Table 1: James Gee’s building tasks of language

BUILDING TASK	DISCOURSE FUNCTION
SEMIOTICS	Language, gestures, images or other symbolic systems that situate ways of what is real or probable, possible or impossible
ACTIVITIES	Activities participants are engaging in at the moment
SOCIOCULTURAL	Identity and relationship building relevant to interaction, with associated attitudes, values, ways of feeling, knowing, believing, and knowledge of sign systems
POLITICAL-	Distribution of “social goods” in interaction: power, status that determine what is “right” or “proper” or “correct”
CONNECTIONS	How past and future of an interaction are connected to present moment and to each other
WORD	What is the “reality” here and now of how the language privileges a specific sign system

This analysis section examines the surface and deep features of grammar, including pronoun use, modals (imperatives, jussive mood, and modifiers), noun phrases, conditionals, and passive/active voice, which help to establish the semiotic and political realities of the writing classroom. Less quantifiable than counting parts of speech is the construction of tone through diction and formatting. While instructors are obliged to support and enforce institutional and departmental authority expressed as policies and

rules, the manner in which those rules are communicated colors students' perceptions of their relationships to their instructors and to the institution as a whole.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

In order to create an assessment of the discourses of the institutions, I gathered and read web pages from each of the three institutions. I noted the overall messages and examined the layouts of the web pages, including formatting and visuals, as well as the words presented on the web pages. Because the classroom is the primary point of contact between the student and the institution, I placed particular focus on the departmental discourses and the discourses of the instructors as presented in individual syllabi. I wanted to see what the overall qualitative messages might be from these pages, as supported by the quantification of words and visual effects, so I combed through the several syllabi and counted: how many times an instructor uses "I" in the syllabus, how many times he or she addresses students personally as "you," and how many times the students are spoken to through impersonal noun phrases such as "students will learn," "any student who," and the like. Both the grammatic and semantic analyses examined the sort of authority⁵ an instructor projects or maintains through the syllabus, as well as the sort of relationship he or she builds with the students, with attention to how this relationship building is accomplished.

⁵ French and Raven (1959) identified five basic forms of teacher authority: Attractive/Referent (also called "charisma"), Expert, Reward, Coercive, and Position/Legitimate.

The analysis was undertaken with the understanding that in the relationship between the institution and the student, it is the institution that holds the dominant position of power so long as the student adheres to the societal value of acquiring post-secondary education and/or training through attendance at a community college.

Mission discourses

At the beginning of this section it was noted that a vision statement has to do with the purpose of the college, defining the impact the college wishes to have on those who attend. A well-articulated statement of vision guides the way the college relates to its community and improves communication among the faculty, the administration, and the community (Abelman and Dalessandro 308). It is the vision statement that provides the framework and the impetus for the mission statement, which expresses the vision in terms of strategic activities meant to further the college's fulfillment of its long-term vision through present-moment policies. According to Pekarsky (1998), a "well conceived vision is an informing idea that is shared, clear and compelling" (280). Ideally, shared values, unambiguously conveyed through discourses grounded in democratic consensus, become texts that legitimize the norms and policies of the institution in line with the expectations of those who have a stake in the mission of the college, including the students. Institutions that have clear vision and mission statements are better able to speak to their students in ways that the students can understand, which in turn opens the way for reciprocal communication by students.

Discourses of the syllabus

Syllabi have been described as “communicating documents” in terms of both content and symbolic messages (Thompson 54). The content of a syllabus is meant to reflect its purposes as a contract and a support for student learning (Parkes and Harris 2002; Singham 2005) that sets out course goals and expectations, as well as rules and policies. As a contract, the syllabus can provide students with information about the instructor’s credentials, teaching philosophy, and an initial impression about the instructor’s attitude towards the course and towards the students as learners. An instructor’s attitudes are revealed not only in the explicit goals, requirements, rules, policies, and procedures, but in the styles of discourse implemented to communicate these designs. While many rules and policies are initially stipulated at the departmental or institutional level, teacher-discretion policies and the manner in which they and the departmental requirements are communicated make a difference in whether the syllabus becomes a vehicle for supporting student learning or a device for oppressing them.

As students engage the course syllabus they negotiate language identities in contexts that can help them begin to situate themselves as writers, acquiring and developing multiple writing registers. It is through the syllabus that students receive their first impression of what the course will be like in terms of expectations and policies for a given course. The syllabus is also a harbinger of the instructor’s style of engagement with the students. Regardless of how carefully students do or do not read

the words of the syllabus, the deep structure presented in the tone, diction, and formatting of the syllabus are read as part of the instructor's perceived relationship with the students. Negatively expressed warnings of what not to do and stern advisories of non-constructive consequences signal the students that the instructor expects them to fail, or does not see them as persons able to rise to the instructor's expectations (Ishiyama and Hartlaub 2002; Green and Therrien 1993).

The syllabus can also be a site which emphasizes the importance of a particular writing or discourse style (academic discourse) that is not just different from but is more valued than others, so that the imposition of this style can become linguistically subtractive for the student. James Gee (2005) notes that "Speakers and writers use the resources of grammar to *design* their sentences and texts in ways that communicate their perspective on reality, carry out various social activities . . . and allow them to enact different social identities" (5). As with the mission statements and departmental policies, the course syllabus serves as a communication device and as a contract and learning tool (Parkes and Harris 2002), in which "some instructors feel that it is their right and responsibility to make all decisions about course content and procedures, and others believe that students should always provide input into such matters" (55). See Table 2 for examples of syllabi course descriptions.

Table 2: Examples of course descriptions from two individual instructors' syllabi

<p>This writing-intensive first-semester freshman composition class focuses on the writing of researched argumentative, expository, and persuasive papers. Analytical skills, critical thinking, and library-based research skills are emphasized. Essays, including a 1,500-word documented research paper, are required.</p> <p>(Instructor R1 Spring 2009)</p>	<p>This writing-intensive first-semester freshman composition course focuses on the writing of researched argumentative, expository, and persuasive papers. Analytical reading, critical thinking, and library research-based skills are emphasized. Essays, including a 1500-word documented library research-based paper, are required.</p> <p>(Instructor R2 Fall 2009)</p>
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Methods of analysis

In examining the discourses of the instructors in the course syllabi, I looked for indications of how the institution and the instructors construct the academic discourses that place them in relationship to the students, who are the most immediate audience of the syllabus. My analysis is based on more than frequencies of key words or phrases. Previous examinations of course syllabi have combined quantitative counts of surface structure features such as pronouns (Baecker 1998), negatives and forceful modals such as must, ought, should, and will (Ishiyama and Hartlaub 2002), and formatting features (Román-Peréz 2008). Articles on the discursive attributes of syllabi deconstruct the rhetorical, social, and ideological functions of the syllabus. Rossi, Tinning, McCuaig, Sina, and Hunter (2009) parse the semiotic structuring of institutional discourses through

the use of declarative, transitive, and action verbs in creating a formal discourse that is “antithetical to diversity” (80). Diane Baecker (1998) covers the use of pronouns—particularly the use of the third person plural “we”—in the construction of discourses of power and discourses of solidarity, noting that “ambiguous linguistic markers blur the distinction between power and solidarity and allow power to be expressed as solidarity” (59). Ishiyama and Hartlaub (2002) find that younger students (e.g., first and second year students) are more affected by how a syllabus is worded than older students. For younger students positively worded syllabi are more likely to encourage them in approaching an instructor for assistance, while harsh or negatively worded syllabi reduce perceptions of approachability. Maurino (2006) surveys print- and cyber- syllabi to question whether uniform genres of syllabi are better for students in terms of preventing confusion about a course, or whether normalized syllabi suppress the expanded use of digital functionalities (chat, email, shared wikis, graphics) available on web syllabi, to the detriment of student learning. Yet we must recognize also that the whole of a text is greater than its parts; texts have a comprehensive structure that transcends individual words, phrases, and sentences. It is the ideas in the text and their interrelations with the reader, the creator, and the text itself that is of interest.

In order to address both the holistic and the particular in the analysis of the syllabi, I take up the grammatical and the semantic rhetorical and discursive structures that contribute to the surface and deep construction of tone and voice in the syllabus as a whole. To do this I constructed tables of the grammatical parts of the syllabic discourse,

specifically pronouns (1st, 2nd, and 3rd person, singular and plural), noun phrases, command forms (imperatives vs. jussives), modifiers and modals, passive voice constructions, and if/then conditionals. I quantified the types of words and phrases according to function, to determine if the overall effect of the syllabus' discourse might be positive and encouraging, acknowledging students as capable learners, or if the overall semantic effect might be more negative and punishing, giving rise to perceptions of authoritarianism or coercion on the part of the instructor. I found that the grammatical bases for a positive or encouraging rhetoric come from the use of jussive mood and modals, as well as the use of a truly inclusive or collaborative third person plural "we" and a personal second person "you." Negative or punishing rhetoric can be constructed through the use of imperatives, cautionary if/then statements, and broad use of impersonal third-person noun phrases and passive constructions.

Imperative and jussive moods

Both the imperative and the jussive⁶ moods are directive modalities that signal that the intent of the speaker—what the speaker commands, permits, desires, or agrees to—will happen. The difference between the two moods lies in the intensity of the directive, which indicates the speaker's *degree* of requirement for compliance to the intent expressed by a statement. The imperative expresses direct commands, requests,

⁶ According to most English grammar texts, while the jussive exists as a grammatical feature of many languages including Latin and the Romance languages, there is no grammatical formation of the mood in English. There are, however, phrases and clauses that create the jussive signification in English, equivalent to the functions of the polite command, the implied command, and the exhortative modality that exist as the jussive in other languages.

and prohibitions, and is used to tell someone to do something without dispute. It is usually indicated by absolute modals “must” and “will,” but may also be constructed as a positive or negative statement or a speech act. The imperative always requires total compliance with the speaker’s command or demand. The jussive utterance is a more moderated polite command, an indirect command, or an exhortative directive. In both cases there is an expectation of compliance on the part of the addressee(s), but there is a semantic difference that reflects the attitude of the speaker towards his or her audience, much of which difference may lie in the perception of the audience of the intent of the speaker in terms of inclusion, respect or disrespect, and relative position in the social hierarchy of the community, the institution, and the classroom.

Voice and tone

The rhetorical technique of voice answers the question: Who is speaking? In this sense, a writer’s voice is his or her persona, the presentation of who he or she wishes to be to the audience. The titles, names, credentials, and attitude (tone) used in writing, as well as the style of writing, all contribute to the construction of the writer’s voice.

Tone refers to the attitude of the speaker towards his or her topic and towards his or her audience. It is closely related to—perhaps a subset of—the writer’s voice. The tone of a written piece of work is created through the word choices (diction) that a writer makes, the way the words, phrases, and sentences are put together (syntax), and the details of information that is included or omitted.

Formatting

Formatting—the placement and arrangement of a text, its font type, size, and color, highlighting, background patterns and color, bolding, italics, underlining, and special characters— also contributes to tone. Formatting can give visual cues about the order a document should be read in and which parts are more important than others. The visual appearance of the font and the arrangement of the text can communicate the texture, tone, and mood of a rhetorical stance: serious, authoritarian, conversational, low key, or user friendly. Regardless of what the words of the text say, the texture of the typography can influence the message of a document: dark type tugs at the eye; capitals speak loudly while boldface or all capitals fairly shout; special characters curse, question, or exclaim; colors suggest personalities and emotions, and font style can speak in many different voices, from formal, to whimsical, to **BOLD**, to *gracious*.

I chose to approach the syllabus from the standpoint of positive and encouraging voice and tone vice negative or punishing voice and tone because research on the purposes and effects of syllabi indicate that in addition to being informative, a syllabus should indicate to the students that the instructor believes in them as learners and seeks to mentor rather than coerce (“Purposes of the Syllabus”). The Discussion chapter will draw contrasts and parallels between the culture of the classroom and the specific values/discourses that Latino students in particular are liable to bring with them to the classroom.

CHAPTER V

THE COLLEGES AND THEIR DISCOURSES: *COLLEGE R*, *COLLEGE P*, *COLLEGE C*

COLLEGE R

College R is a comprehensive community college with one main campus and three secondary campuses. The largest campus enrolled 76% of the college's students for the academic year (2007-2008), and is located in close proximity to a university. This major campus draws most of its students from one county, which county shows an overall population makeup of 75% white, 11% Black, and 18% Latino and 4% Asian as the major demographic blocs.⁷ In the Fall 2007 semester, the campus enrollment was 78% white, 5% Black, 13% Latino, and 2% Asian, indicating a relative parity between the general population and the largest campus' enrollment for Whites, Latinos, and Asians.

Mission discourses

At the beginning of this section it was noted that a vision statement has to do with the purpose of the college, defining the impact the college wishes to have on those who attend. A well articulated statement of vision guides the way the college relates to

⁷ United States Census Bureau.

its community and improves communication among the faculty, the administration, and the community (Abelman and Dalessandro 308). It is the vision statement that provides the framework and the impetus for the mission statement, which expresses the vision in terms of strategic activities meant to further the college's fulfillment of its long-term vision through present-moment policies. According to Pekarsky (1998), a "well conceived vision is an informing idea that is shared, clear and compelling" (280). Ideally, shared values, unambiguously conveyed through discourses grounded in democratic consensus, become texts that legitimize the norms and policies of the institution in line with the expectations of those who have a stake in the mission of the college, including the students. Institutions that have clear vision and mission statements are better able to speak to their students in ways that the students can understand, which in turn opens the way for reciprocal communication by students.

Mission statement

The full mission statement for *College R* (Table 3) is buried in the yearly budget statement, available online to anyone who knows where to look or is sufficiently persistent in seeking it out.

Table 3: *College R* mission statement, from the 2008 budget

College R exists for the primary purpose of serving educational needs of the people in its service area. *College R* seeks to provide educational experiences and opportunities that will assist the student in developing intellectual curiosity, and social responsibility and skills and knowledge in support of a productive life. Underlying these basic goals is a strong commitment to instructional excellence through philosophical and financial support. The institution will be alert to the changing educational requirements of the region and endeavor to meet those needs.

While an abbreviated version is found online and in the Student Handbook, the full mission statement lays out a number of lines of purpose for the college: commitment to the development of the student as a citizen (“developing intellectual curiosity” and “social responsibility”); employment skills (“skills and knowledge in support of a productive life”); support of its instructional staff (“instructional excellence”) with financial resource and philosophical commitment to their mission; and lastly, flexibility in carrying out these missions (“alert to the changing educational requirements of the region”) is promised, as well. The full mission statement reflects the progression of purposes of community colleges across their common history: citizenship, educational excellence as the first two years of a four year degree, community service, economic development and opportunity, and service to the needs of employers.

According to the more readily available mission statement, the mission of *College R* is to provide “personal commitment to individual and community enhancement through educational excellence.” Since the mission statement is written

for a corporate entity, an impersonal legal fiction made real by social agreement, all (natural) persons who enjoy an association with the corporate entity of the college—directors, employees, sponsors, and students—are assumed to assent or acquiesce to the mission and values of the college. That is to say, the institution itself constitutes its audience of adherents. The stated vision for the future of the institution is somewhat more focused and specific, in that it “will raise the educational aspirations and achievements of all people by being the doorway for enriching lives and broadening horizons.” Nonetheless, this too is a corporate vision, conceived and written by no one individual. It is up to the president of the college, an individual, to provide a specific statement of both mission and vision:

Our unique role is to make high-quality education accessible to everyone, create opportunities for our students and contribute to the economic development of the communities we serve. We promise a community of students, faculty, and staff dedicated to you and to the accomplishment of your dreams. (*College R, President's Welcome*)

Here the president reiterates the constitution of a community defined as the college itself (“we promise a community of students, faculty, and staff”) providing both a service and a commodity—education—aimed at the student-consumer (“our role is to make high-quality education accessible to everyone . . . dedicated to you and the accomplishment of your dreams”).

The “our” of “Our unique role” refers to the members of the college itself, not the college and the students or larger community, except as they come under the aegis of the college: “our students.” In the language of the neoliberal or “learning college,” the primary goal is to produce learning outcomes in the form of acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes that employers seek, as efficiently as possible (Flynn 1999; Barr and Tagg 1995). The college, as an institution, will have the power to act: it will create and it will contribute; the institution will own the authority of recognized, legitimized education within its mandated service area. Prospective students are being invited to join the college as they might any social community with all the attendant support structures, yet the organizational configuration of the college works both for and against this vision.

“We,” those affiliated with the institution, offer a certain type of social capital in the form of educational credentials to “you,” the outsider student or potential student; the institution places itself in the position of holding the key to things that members of the community outside cannot attain without its assistance and approval. Under the metaphor of school as patriarch, students may be assisted, but they are not recognized as respected, autonomous stakeholders in the college. The college rather counts students as units of full-time equivalent (FTE) attendees (*College R* “Student Profile Summary”), and its “products” are the quantitative counts of competencies in reading, writing, computer literacy, “critical thinking,” and outcomes in the form of grades (*College R* “Core Curriculum Competency Percentages”).

In addition to mission and vision statements, the Student Handbook offers an outline of the institutional goals and outcomes that draw on norms of learning-centeredness and adjective-laden descriptive language, rather than concrete action verb-based, specific tasks: “student success” occurs in an “environment that encourages learning and engagement.” There is no description of what constitutes “success” in such an environment, or what defines “learning” and “engagement,” except that the outcomes of this environment will be the result of these “innovative, student-centered success initiatives that promote student engagement and improve retention.” The only concrete parameter in the goals or outcomes is “retention”—keeping the customer coming back for more—which is apparently the institutional measure of “student success,” an attitude that conflates course-taking with learning, or perhaps even education. Just as mission statements are defined by language that is “shared, clear, and compelling,” how much more so should be the discourses of the institution when directly addressing the students via the Student Handbook. What makes the vision of the Handbook less than clear and compelling is the vagueness of the meanings of the descriptors used in the statement. In order to be clear and concise, verbs that tell precisely what the institution does or will do for the student are required, so as to minimize misunderstandings or misinterpretations. The administrators who are the representatives of the institution are just as likely to have one understanding of what constitutes an “environment that encourages student success” as a student is to have another, each understanding based on the personal and cultural needs and perceptions that they bring to the text. For this reason, verbs that define

specific actions taken or to be taken are needed to set the parameters of the promised environment, e.g., “we will create an environment in which students are free to voice their thoughts as long as they are expressed respectfully in regard to diction and tone.”

Administrators are familiar enough with current educational-theoretical jargon to recognize that “student-centered” “learning centered” “lifelong learning” and “[student] engagement” are important ideas, and so salt their communications with the terminology. What the administration at this college does not do is to actualize the vision of what it means to be “student-centered” “learning centered” or “engaged” in one’s learning, lifelong or otherwise. What the undefined language of the Student Handbook does do, is to maintain control of the discourse values at the institution by retaining for itself the authority to determine meaning according to the ideology of those who administer the institution, rather than negotiating with the students and other stakeholders what the meaning of success should be, or what constitutes an environment that supports success for the student.

Institutional discourses of mission, vision, and administrative web pages illustrate the shift to marketplace values in education. Abelman and Dalessandro (2008) describe the evolution of institutional ideology in “missions and missions statements [that] transitioned from a focus on facilitating individual and community development to a focus on economic development and workforce preparation” (309). An emphasis on workforce development stands in opposition to “broadening horizons” and personal development, and in fact contributes to the cooling out of student aspirations to continue

learning. When the power and authority of the community college reifies marketplace values as the ultimate goal of education in the mission statement, it creates a limiting effect on the perception of possibilities of the community of people who would be most likely to attend a community college.

Through the collocation of the *College R* mission statement goals of “community enhancement,” “educational excellence,” and students’ dreams with the “economic development of the community,” the institution defines for the student what is possible and desirable, reducing the value of education to learning directly related to obtaining employment, and reducing the value of the student as a contributing member of a democratic community to that of an economic resource.

Departmental discourses

The English Department at *College R* maintains control over course texts, syllabi, course content, and structure. “High-quality education” is expressed through product uniformity based on student learning outcomes specified in the departmental master course syllabus, required number of essays of specified type and length, readings taken from division-approved texts only, and departmentally developed multiple-choice pre- and post-semester inventories. According to the department handbook, the purpose of these inventories is to “scrutinize the acquisition of student knowledge throughout the semester . . . based on an inventory of selected questions that are directly linked to the student learning outcomes identified in the Master Course Syllabus” (*College R* Faculty Handbook).

The department Master Course Syllabus specifies the types of information to be included in a syllabus and the objectives and learning outcomes for English 0320 “Fundamentals of Grammar and Writing,” English 1301 “Composition and Rhetoric,” and English 1302 “Introduction to Literature.”

Table 4: Non-transfer level English placement (left) and transfer level English placement (right)

<p>Students’ placement in non-transfer-level English courses shall be based on THEA scores or alternative assessment instrument scores in accordance with published division policies.</p> <p>Nontransferable course offerings in English serve to develop and strengthen basic academic skills, thereby permitting students to be successful, not only in college-level English but also throughout the college curriculum.</p> <p>Students must master the course objectives with a “C” or better before they will be permitted to enroll in English 1301 (or satisfy TSI requirements)</p>	<p>All of the English courses, including the sophomore literature courses, have as a major objective the improvement of the students’ thinking, reading, writing, and researching skills. The faculty has made a commitment that makes writing instruction the essential component of course grades. To receive credit for an English course, students must demonstrate that they possess the level of writing skills established by the division.</p> <p>Only three hours of the sophomore writing courses (2307 or 2308) can be used to fulfill the <i>College R</i> College twelve-hour English requirement for an Associate of Arts degree.</p>
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Guided by the specified learning outcome “skills” and the department-written post-test embedded in the final examination, the content areas of these core, gateway courses are not so much taught as delivered, like a pizza with standard ingredients and few options. Writing is set up as a set of discrete skills that can be taught as units of knowledge when emphasis is placed on quantitative assessment of the written product, apart from the overall context of the writing situation. Discrete skills teaching as an evaluative feature highlights grammar, punctuation, spelling, and parts of speech. It also includes the memorization of a linear, non-recursive “writing process”: first do the invention/prewriting (new product development), then write a draft (pilot product), reread and revise (redesign/refine), proofread for mechanical errors (quality control), and present the final copy (market). The emphasis is, just the same, the product rather than the growth of the writer. Where the course syllabus requires that students “understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development of exposition and argument” (English 1302), the use of standardized, multiple-choice scantron-graded tests discourages these same abilities by requiring that students have “right” answers and produce “correct” text, a practice more attuned to standardized production than original or critical thought.

When the department administration requires instructors to teach a common curriculum, restricting input from both the instructor and the students on what they want to learn, it indicates that the instructor is neither trusted nor valued by the college as a master of his or her field, nor as a competent mentor. This approach is problematic also

because it restricts the range of cognitive activities and experiences that the writer can bring to his or her writing.

Despite all that is known about the relationships between writing and the cognitive development of analytical and synthetic faculties through language growth, writing and identity development, and writing and learning, this college continues to require efficient delivery of a product (education) for the production of another product (student learning as measured by grades and certificates). Rose (2003) warns that viewing writing as a set of fundamental tools, “reduces the possibility of perceiving it as a complex ability that is continually developing as one engages in new tasks with new materials for new audiences” (553). For students in remedial writing courses, this means that the possibility of moving onto and through first year composition courses is also reduced. Ayers (2005), Levin (2000), and Hanson (2007) associate the adoption of such a “learner-centered”⁸ skills discourse in community colleges with a shift from education as a social good aimed at developing enlightened citizens—*gente bien educados*, we might say—to publicly supported employment training centers in which the discourse of outcomes, performance, efficiency, and customer satisfaction supports the idea of education as an economic, rather than a democratic, endeavor. This shift ignores the

⁸ In this context, “learner-centered” refers not to instruction that has as its central point the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that students bring to the classroom, but the decontextualization of the learning environment as a whole, by placing students in the center of class activity that is nonetheless directed by the department via the instructor. The difference is referred to by Ramsey and Fitzgibbons (2005) as one of “doing [learner-centeredness]” as opposed to “being [learner centered]” (354).

founding *raison d'être* of the community college system, and disrespects the intelligence and capabilities of the people who go there to learn.

Writing center

Writing centers are the community college service most closely related to the actual mission of composition courses. At *College R*, the writing center serves and is funded through fees from Humanities and developmental writing courses, yet is not directed by the Humanities Department chair, but has its own director. Like the college mission statement, however, the writing center mission is bifurcated; on one page of the center's website, the mission as stated is "to help students become better writers":

We believe that writing is an ongoing process and that all students have the potential to communicate effectively through writing. The tutors strive to help students **learn**, not just make a better grade on an assignment. (*College R Writing Center website*)

At the same time, the same website explains the importance of writing as a skill to please employers, and the writing center's importance to students a result of employers finding that, "People's writing skills are not where they need to be," and that college graduates "do not have the necessary writing skills to get hired—or get ahead. Writing skills are essential in almost every profession!" Writing for literature courses are also linked to employment skills, as "critical thinking (looking beyond the surface), analysis (figuring out how the parts affect the whole), organization, argument, and research" abilities "are essential in today's working environment" (*College R Writing Center website*).

The bifurcated messages of the mission statements for the writing center reverberate in the service/quality/funding conundrum of the center; the center provides a labor-intensive service to students that can only be supported and expanded through increased funding. From a market-based perspective, however, funding is dependant on the expansion of service to departments outside the Humanities, and will only happen if departments and instructors perceive a maximum return on the funds invested in the writing center in the form of measurably improved writing on the part of the students who use the center's services (Flacy 7). At the time of Flacy's (2007) study of the *College R* Writing Center, the Center was engaged in a pilot assessment program that sought to correlate differences in course grades and overall GPA between students who took the English composition series and used the writing center, and those who took the courses but did not use the writing center. The purpose of the study was to quantitatively validate the continuation and expansion of funding for the center an efficient delivery system for writing skills. At no point was there consideration expressed for the social and educational value of the development of the student as a person and as a citizen.

Focusing on immediately visible outcomes is part of the reduction of writing development to discrete sets of skills and activities which affects not only the instructors charged with teaching students to write, but the counseling and service oriented writing centers that support the college's writing program. This focus on skill sets is part of the emphasis on servicing business and market interests over the broader interest of helping

students develop ways of thinking about their writing as part of their overall cultural literacies. Emphasis on outcomes and efficiency in the writing center overlooks the social literacy origin of writing as communication, and ignores the heterogeneity of discourses that students bring with them to the classroom. Standardized, quantified outcomes based assessment essentializes the individual nature of writing, and effectively silences student writers' voices by disincluding them in the assessment process (Lerner 2003, Hanson 2007, and Grimm 1996). The influence of marketplace values in the quantification of educational return in the learning processes related to writers' development are an indication of the ideological foundation of the institution as a whole, and of the power of the institution to "naturalize" market discourses as part of the discourse of education and social good (Fairclough 2001 28-29).

Faculty discourses

Faculty discourses at the community college flow in a number of directions: faculty/administration (department), faculty/faculty, and faculty/student. While students at the college may or may not hear the discourses between faculty and administration/faculty, Jacoby's (2006) research indicates that these discourses do affect what the instructors bring to the faculty/student discursive table, be it in the classroom, at student counseling, or at grading. At *College R* part-time faculty comprise some 60% of English instructors, who teach 85% of the first-semester Composition and Rhetoric courses and 77% of second-semester Composition and Literature. This means that the vast majority of gateway writing courses are taught by faculty who have no job security,

no eligibility for medical coverage, no private space in which to work on lesson plans and grading or to meet with students, and no voice in curriculum development, but are required to provide office hours, complete online attendance surveys and training modules, read and comply with all departmental and college faculty policies, and to receive at least one teaching observation per semester (Faculty Handbook). The pay per classroom contact hour for part-time instructors is about 58% of the pay for the same number of classroom contact hours for full-time instructors with equivalent qualifications, leaving aside benefits and committee obligations (Salary Schedules). Part-time faculty are not, in fact, “instructors” as in the language of the university hierarchy; they are referred to as “teachers” (Faculty Handbook), a term more closely related to the language of grade-school parlance than collegiate professionalism. This is the nature of the administrative/adjunct discourse. At the departmental level, both full-time and part-time composition faculty are constrained in their instruction by a number of factors:

- common syllabi and texts for both 1301 and 1302;
- departmentally constructed pre- and post-multiple choice tests (“course inventory”) on vocabulary and concept identification for both 1301 and 1302, required as no less than 5% of the final examination;
- required number, type, and length of papers for both courses;
- guidelines for content and procedure in teaching composition courses.

At the same time that the Departmental Master Syllabus emphasizes the teaching of “analytical reading, critical thinking, and library-based research skills,” it also instructs the “teachers” in the progression and procedures to be followed, stating that

The first focus of the course should be placed on content, on the ability to discover significant insights, to create logical arguments, to probe beneath the surface of generally accepted ideas, and to marshal a variety of evidence in fresh and compelling ways. The second focus of the course should be organization. Students should learn to arrange their ideas in an easily perceived pattern that enhances the clarity of their thoughts. (Appendix BMS)

The effect of this sort of over-the-shoulder management is not only product uniformity to ensure that all students receive largely the same instruction, it also degrades the value of faculty credentials and professionalism, as well as the instructor’s classroom authority. Research by Jacoby (2006) indicates that the discourses employed between management and faculty, particularly part-time faculty, has a bearing on the discourses that faculty bring to the classroom, in that “poor institutional assimilation by part-time faculty adversely affects student learning. The effects included reduced instructional quality, lack of curricular cohesion, and weak advising” (1083). A comparison of master syllabi for English 1301 and 1302 with syllabi posted by course instructors reveals little variation between the two; purposes, goals, and outcomes are fairly replicated, as are course requirements for papers and grading rubrics. Most instructors, in short, speak

with the same voice as the management. Recalling Fairclough's definition of discourse as power, there is little evidence of the authority of the instructor in the classroom when the context of the classroom discourse is set by the institution and the department.

Instructor R1 syllabus

Grammatical aspects

Figures 1 and 2 show the predominant areas of grammatical and semantic discourse types for the Instructor R1 syllabus. In terms of grammar, this instructor addresses the class primarily through the use of noun phrases (35% of statements), the passive voice (21% of statements), and imperatives (14% of statements). The instructor refers to herself as "I" in 12% of the statements, but on no occasion does the instructor join with the students through the use of the first person plural "we." The grammatical tendency is to maintain distance through noun phrases and passive constructions on the one hand, and authority through the use of imperatives on the other.

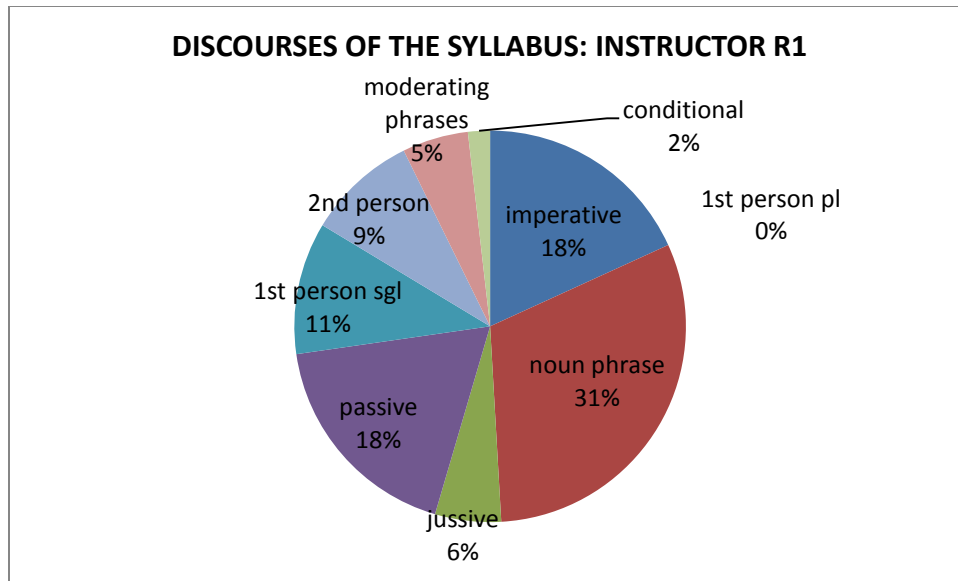


Figure 1: Instructor R1, grammar analysis

Imperative vs. jussive

Instructor R1 uses the imperative ten times in expressions such as “Cellular phones and pagers must be turned off before entering the classroom,” and the jussive as exhortative commands three times in encouraging the students to “Work together! Learn from each other.”

The result of this directive style is that while the instructor of the syllabus appears to have the interests of the students at heart, even in her positive exhortations she approaches her audience with the expectation that they don’t know what to do or how to learn, and her job is to tell them.

Tone

Beginning with the instructor's use of imperative and jussive, the attitude towards the students is reflected in the semantic creation of tone through the use of twice as many negative or punishing statements as positive or rewarding statements, as well as the grammatical absence of the constitutive "we."

In presenting class policies, the instructor uses negative or punishing language in eight instances (e.g., "A student who cheats or plagiarizes will receive a zero,"), and positive or encouraging diction four times (e.g., "Remember that the most important goal of this assignment is not the end result of the paper produced—but the experience of writing in a group"). Even while encouraging the students, the instructor maintains distance from the students through the use of the passive voice: "Participation in class discussion and activities is encouraged." At times the distance is increased by combining the passive with a noun phrase: "Students are expected to be considerate of others." The overall tone of the syllabus is dominated by distancing, negative, punishing, harsh, or authoritarian diction over personal, positive, rewarding or encouraging statements by two to one.

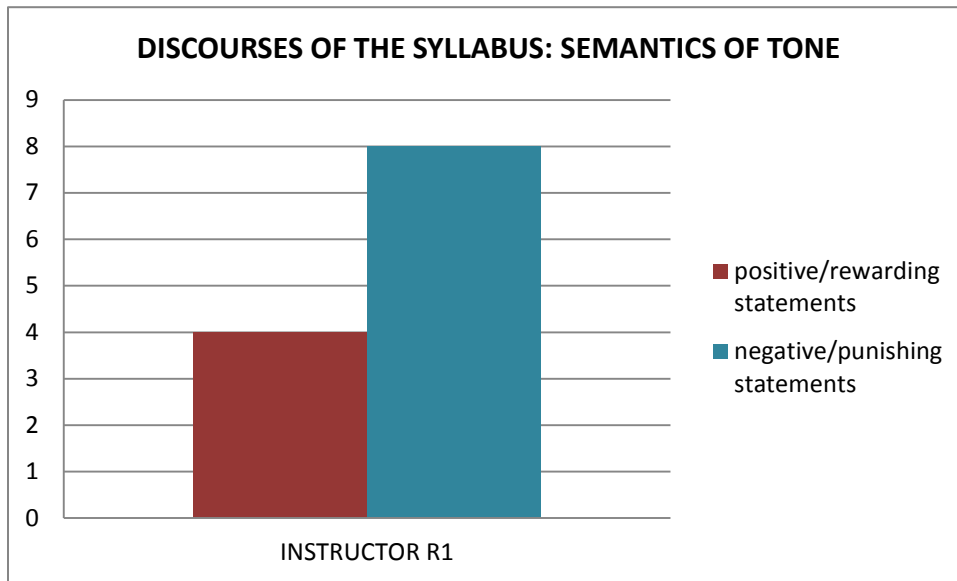


Figure 2: Instructor R1, semantic analysis

Voice

Two voices conflate in this syllabus: that of the instructor and that of the institution. The institutional voice is assimilated into the syllabus through the use of college and departmental policies and course descriptions that are pasted into the structure of the syllabus, and which stand out for their use of the third person impersonal. The Learning Activities section of this syllabus begins:

English 1301: Composition and Rhetoric focuses on students' developing a clear, correct, analytical prose style. Students are exposed to examples of written prose that serve as models both of analysis and of argument; students will thereby develop the skills to

analyze others' arguments and develop personal, persuasive, and rational styles of their own.

This set of descriptors is taken directly from the Departmental Master Syllabus, as are the course description and course objectives sections. By not differentiating between text taken from the departmental master syllabus and her own text, the instructor assumes the voice of the institution in her work (syllabus) and so takes the institutional voice as her own.

The instructor's adoption of the institutional authority's voice lends weight to the course expectations and precludes objections to the curricula on the part of the students. The weight of the institutional imperative is complemented by the use of the second and first person personal voices of the instructor in the required materials, grading system, and classroom policies sections, which, while less authoritarian in tone, yet maintains the authoritative right to determine standards. Thus the instructor advises students to "Keep your own copy of everything you turn in to be graded [. . .] in the event that something is misplaced, you are responsible for resubmitting a copy of your work for evaluation." And again in the grading section, the extra credit project portfolio of semester work is the "only extra credit project offered in this course [. . .] because I believe that is it helpful for students to self-assess their semester's work in this class. Up to 15 Points may be added to the lowest major paper."

Students are responsible for their work and their learning, but they are not in control, nor is assessment a collaborative endeavor. The effect of responsibility without

control in the first example is constructed through the use of the imperative in the first sentence, “[You] keep your own copy of everything you turn in to be graded” and in the inequality of accountability in the last, in which the shift from the agentless passive “in the event that something is misplaced” (avoiding direct reference to the instructor), to the student-as-agent “you are responsible for resubmitting a copy of your work for evaluation.”

In the case of the extra credit portfolio project, the instructor as mentor continues the hierarchical “I know/you don’t know” attitude of the syllabus. The extra-credit project is offered by the instructor because she thinks it is good for them, not because the students worked with the instructor to develop the evaluation instrument. Even the development of students’ awareness of their own growth as writers through self-assessment portfolios is mitigated by the quantification of the value of this development: self-awareness is worth 15 points on the paper with the lowest grade. The students’ writing itself is not necessarily improved by this award for self-awareness, only the grade is.

Formatting

The predominant formatting feature of this online syllabus is its presentation in color: blue boldface for the course and instructor information and for the headings, brick red for the text itself. The grading section is all in blue, suggesting that this section is important above all others. Numbering and bullets are used to outline the course objectives, course materials, and grading system sections. The bolding has the effect of

organizing the syllabus to make it easier to find information, while the bulleting emphasizes points that the instructor deems important or of interest, such as the bulleting of advice in the Group Work section, although the header for this section itself is not emphasized by bolding or underlining. Underlining is used in one instance, to advise students that "Quizzes or class work are not eligible for make up. So, do not miss a class meeting!" The underlining and exclamation mark effectively emphasize and reemphasize the point that quizzes and classwork cannot be made up, with an implied "so don't even ask" as its argument. The selection of a lighter contrasting color for the text areas results in the near invisibility of the text itself; the darker blue is calm and commanding, the lighter red is harder to read, and so becomes irrelevant noise or a chore, easily overlooked or ignored, especially since the "important" information stands out so well.

Instructor R2 syllabus

Grammatical aspects

For this syllabus, Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the types of grammatical constructions found in the Instructor R2 syllabus, while Figure 4 shows the comparative use of positive or rewarding statements vice negative or punishing statements in the syllabus.

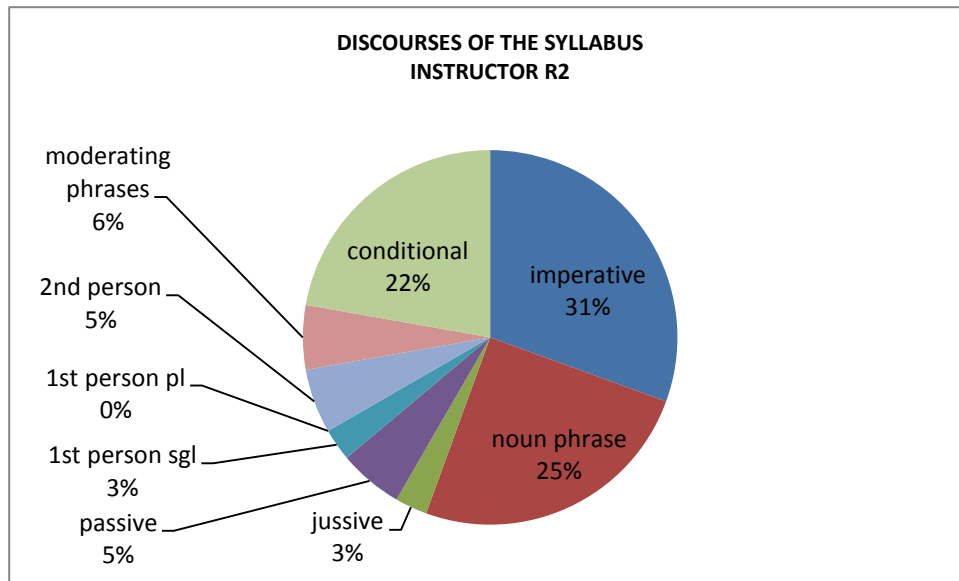


Figure 3: Instructor R2, grammar analysis

Thirty-one percent (11) of the grammatical constructions in the Instructor R2 syllabus are composed in the imperative mood, followed by noun phrases in 25% (9) of the statements and if/then conditionals in 22% (8) of the statements, so that a representative statement presented in this syllabus might be: “Students who miss 20% or more of this class, excused or unexcused, may NOT do any make-up work.”⁹ The analysis of the overall semantic tendencies of the syllabus corroborate the impression given by the grammatical analysis of a syllabus with a negative, autocratic tone.

⁹ The implied if/then conditional would be, “If a student misses 20% or more of this class, the student may NOT do any make-up work.”

Imperative vs. jussive

On the whole, the syllabus leans towards an apparent reliance on stern authoritarianism. Ten of the eleven imperative statements in this syllabus are in the third person impersonal, with one in the second person, while only two (5.5%)¹⁰ of statements use moderating phrases to soften strict or punishing policies (“in other words, you could be marked as absent”). Passive voice constructions (“A short objective assessment ... will be administered during the final exam period”) can also temper the tone of the syllabus even as they distance the audience from the speaker, but only two such constructions are employed throughout the syllabus.

Tone and voice

At the surface level the Instructor R2 syllabus presents little of the instructor’s own voice. The course description, course objectives and learning outcomes, course requirements, required texts and materials, grading criteria, and class policies draw heavily on the corresponding sections of the Master Syllabus, with some editing for brevity. In three out of four instances of self-reference, the instructor uses the third person impersonal to maintain the link of authority between himself and the institution: “formatting must adhere to instructor requirements”; “[Instructor R2] will not accept

¹⁰ Percentages calculated by the charting program vary for items that have the same count because of the way the program rounds partial percentages so as to not produce a total percent of more than 100.

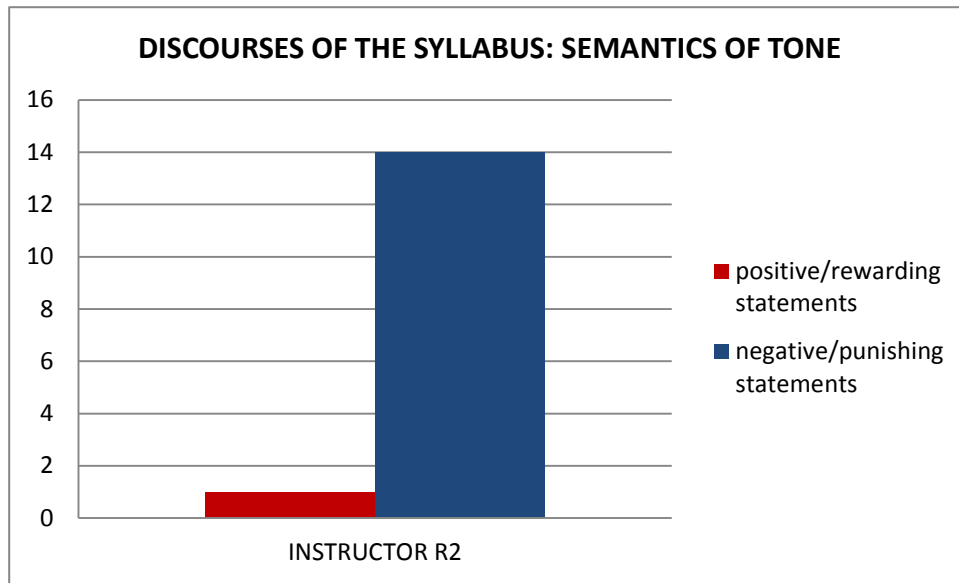


Figure 4: Instructor R2, semantic analysis

emailed final versions”; “You may record classes only with prior permission from [Instructor R2] for each class session you record.”

Students are addressed in the second person familiar nine times—four positively, five negatively: “We are counting on you being here!” vice “you could be marked as absent.” The third person impersonal noun phrase “students” is used four times, three of which are used to relay a negative or punishing policy or rule (“Students are expected to abide by all the rules and regulations of *College R*,” “Skipping class or not participating can significantly lower the student’s grade”). There are five instances of positive or rewarding language being used (“Please bring to each class meeting,” “Students are strongly encouraged to use the writing center”), but nine instances of negative or

punishing statements (“Not uploading your paper before you hand it in on the due date will result in a zero,” “[INSTRUCTOR R2] WILL NOT ACCEPT EMAILED FINAL VERSIONS”).

The instructor addresses the students in the second person “you” in 5% of the statements, while in no instance does he refer to himself in the first person; two of the nine uses of a noun phrase in reference to a person occur when the instructor refers to himself by his own name, e.g., “You may record classes on only with permission from [Instructor R2].”

Formatting

In addition to the explicit use of diction that indicates the instructor’s conception of his relationship with the students, there are thirteen instances of formatting (change of font, bolding, italics, underlining, capital letters, and special characters) used for emphasis, in at least one case to the point of shouting in print. One announcement alone used emphatic formatting three times in the single sentence: “**Late papers** are accepted up to two **DAYS** (not class periods) after the due date, with a penalty of ten points **PER DAY**.” The single use of the first person familiar “I” in the syllabus was an emphatic imperative: “**I ALLOW NO AUDIBLE AND/OR VISIBLE (OR OTHERWISE DISCERNABLE) CELL PHONES AND/OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES, SUCH AS VIDEO GAMES, CALCULATORS, AND IPODS.**”

The instructor provides explanations and rationales for some of his personal policies, in particular the attendance/participation policy which stresses the students’

responsibility to “attend class and take part in the discussion and activities (i.e., we are counting on you being here!),” with the justification that each student is part of a community of learners, and participation is an important part of an education.

Notwithstanding this concession, rules and policies are overwhelmingly foregrounded in the syllabus, more so than student growth, learning, or development as writers or members of an academic community.

COLLEGE P

College P is one of five colleges in a central Texas community college district. It has an enrollment of around 8,000 students, of whom some 65% are Latino, higher than the general population figure of 58% for both the city and county in which it is located, with the next largest majority (31%) of the college’s remaining students being Anglo. This Latino ethnic majority has been a main focal point of the institutional discourses at College “P,” as seen in the textual and institutional practices, from the inception of the college.

College P claims a grassroots foundation from the southside community it serves, a deliberate plan to make the discourses of the college parallel that of the community by being of and from the community. At the administrative level this discourse is supported through the available written statements and services offered to the students and the surrounding community. Ethnographic evidence collected in a four-year study by Shaw and London (1995) at the *College P* campus also touts the commitment at the administrative and faculty levels to match the institutional discourse

style to that of the students, noting a “recognition of dual identities” among faculty and administrators which leads them to speak with students in Spanish or codeswitch during conversations whenever it was more comfortable for the student to do so (20).

Mission statement and institutional discourses

As a public comprehensive community college, *College P* provides exemplary, accessible education and training to a diverse and aspiring community. The College educates, nurtures, and inspires students through a dynamic and supportive learning environment, which promotes the intellectual, cultural, economic and social life of the community. (“Mission Statement”)

College P sets up a broadly purposed mission in a prose style that contrasts vividly with the utilitarianism of the *College R* Mission Statement, and reflects the discursive styles of the founders of the college as well as the community it serves, as indicated in the President’s Welcome:

We were founded in 1985 with the mission of providing higher education in the Southside with the goal of transferring students as well as preparing them for the workforce. [. . .] The average transfer rate for Hispanic students in Texas is 8.9% - at *College P* it is 38% for Hispanics. Faculty and staff are committed to welcoming you, educating you, and sending you off to a successful career. I hope that you will join our community of higher learning as a student, and

contribute to this most important endeavor in the Southside of [the city]. (“Alumni and Community” webpage)

The broadness of purpose in both the mission statement and the President’s welcome precludes vagueness by enumerating specific goals to be attained within the college’s purpose, and places emphasis on the development of the individual for the long term; references to higher learning, education, and transfer outnumber those to training, the economy, and the workforce seven to two, with the former always being placed before the latter.

Combining an elaborate rhetorical style with the use of the first person inclusive “we” of the institution and second person familiar “you” to address the students, who come from a predominantly Latino population, the President’s Message creates, rather than just states, a context of community between the institution and the populace. Not only are the people personally invited to join in the benefits of education, but to be contributing members of the larger community with which the college identifies. This invitation draws on, and connects with, the cultural values of hospitality, education, industry, and responsibility to community (family, extended family, friends, and neighborhood) documented in studies of Latino culture and Latino success in college (Padilla and Pavel 1986, Tinto 1993, Valdes 1996, Shaw 1999, Rendón 2000). The discourses of inclusion and community are continued in the web pages for prospective students, *College P* is committed to serving your needs and helping you actualize your

potential,” in the specific enumeration of ways the college is ready to assist students, and in the upbeat, informal diction of the student services offices:

Everyone has a great reason for coming to *College P*. The Center for Academic Transitions is the place to get help with planning for your future. An experienced staff is ready to work with you on the career path of your dreams or help you evaluate the best transfer options for your major. Every week we bring four year universities and colleges to you. We might even be able to take you for a virtual tour or campus visit.

We have everything you need to make a successful transition in your academic quest. We will still be here for you after you graduate.

Maybe you need a job now or an internship. You might want to find a mentor. Creating a resume is something you have not done before.

Where do you start? Come see us. We offer classes, one-on-one services, computer resources and career assessments. Every semester well known companies and institutions come to our career fairs to recruit you. We work to provide you every opportunity you deserve.

(College P Center for Academic Transitions webpage)

The institutional written text is supported by the institutional discourses of action, as the college offers and advertises the availability of on-campus child care, career services that include mentoring and internships, job search assistance, transfer counseling, and student

development courses (required for new students) that focus on life and academic competence, including college resources, time management, note-taking, degree plans and transfer strategies, campus culture, career exploration, college policies and procedures, study techniques, motivation, goal setting and decision making, critical thinking skills, learning styles, stress management, and interpersonal skills (Appendix B).

The open availability of support services for an increasingly “non-traditional” student body supports a culture of community and caring that is important to students in general and Latino students in particular. Among of the predominant factors in Latino student retention/attrition are the ability to feel a part of a campus community, to have a sense of belonging there, and the difficulties of managing school, work, and family life as a commuter student.

Writing Assistance Center

The web-based text for the Writing Assistance Center at *College P* is not written in the same expansive, inviting style as the broader institutional discourses. The third-person informative, “The Writing Assistance Center is a supplemental tutoring program designed to assist *College P* students with ANY writing assignment,” is softened and personalized somewhat by emphatic capitalization and the use of the passive voice and jussive mood to suggest, rather than command, compliance with a rule or preference: “a student *should* expect to come to the center prepared to work individually and interactively with a tutor”; special arrangements *can be* coordinated by calling”;

“students *are encouraged* to bring an assignment sheet, typed paper draft, and all associated notes”; “it *is advised* that students stop by or call the center to schedule appointments (emphases added).” As with the *College R* center, tutors at *College P* hold at least a bachelor’s degree, and include instructors from the college itself. The promise to assist students with ANY writing assignment, including resumes and assignments from any discipline, is somewhat compromised by the limited hours (Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 or 3:00 p.m.), which is in turn mitigated by an online tutoring service which requires a 24 hour turnaround period for responses. The commitment to serving students’ writing assistance needs is focused on the majority of students enrolled in daytime courses only (72% for Fall 2007).

Departmental discourses

The discourse style of the English Department is noticeably more formal and distant than that of the larger administrative departments. This tone is created by the use of third-person and passive constructions: “The English Department offers a variety of writing and literature courses. *For students who enroll* in English classes for the first time, *placement testing is required*. If performance on these tests reveals inadequate preparation for satisfactory completion of the college-level course work, *ENGL 0300 and/or ENGL 0301 are required*” (emphases added). The effects of this distancing language are twofold: the departmental requirements are more authoritative and absolute than they would be if a more informal diction were used, and the use of the passive voice implies that the strictness of the requirements comes from a higher authority than the

department, so that neither recourse nor blame is to be found in the department itself. It also hints at an adoption of corporate-style management within the department that is not as apparent in the familiar, welcoming tone of the mission statement, president's message, and prospective students' web pages. The online-catalogue course descriptions are somewhat minimalistic, with overtones of a technical manual. The course descriptions for both English 1301 and 1302 (Tables 5 and 6) are tucked into pull-down menus, and consist of one terse sentence each:

Table 5: English 1301 course description

	1
ENGL 1301 - Composition I	
Prerequisites: Demonstrate College Readiness through appropriate placement scores and/or completion of developmental sequence in English and/or Reading.	
Principles and techniques, which may include documentation, of written, expository, and persuasive composition; analysis of literary, expository, and/or persuasive texts; emphasis on critical thinking.	
Semester Hours: (3 - 3 - 0)	
CIP: 23.0401.51 12	

Table 6: English 1302 course description

ENGL 1302 - Composition II

Prerequisites: Students must earn a “C” or better in ENGL 1301 or its equivalent.

Principles and techniques of written, expository, and persuasive composition; analysis of literary, expository, and/or persuasive texts; emphasis on critical thinking.

Semester Hours: (3 - 3 - 0)

CIP: 23.0401.51 12

Anyone who would want a more detailed description of a course’s requirements would have to go to an individual professor’s website and download the syllabus for that course, except there are no individual professor’s websites for the English department, and, but for one exception, no access to course syllabi unless one is enrolled in a course. An online search of the bookstore listings for English 1301 and 1302 showed that first-semester writing courses taught by adjunct instructors use a common set of texts, while texts for those sections taught by full-time faculty are chosen by the instructor. Whether deliberately constructed to do so or not, “getting to know the professor” means meeting him or her in person at this college. The department has 13 (29%) full-time and 32

(71%) part-time English instructors, with most of the first-semester 1301 courses (69%) being taught by adjuncts, and most of the second-semester 1302 courses (79%) being taught by full-time faculty, who also teach all other English courses in literature and technical writing. The first instructor most first-semester English students encounter at this college are part-time, none teaching more than two sections of first-semester composition for a maximum of six hours a week on campus and in direct contact with students. This reality stands in contrast to the Faculty Webpage that informs readers that:

Just as *College P*'s motto shares our belief that *College P* is "the heart of the community," the College knows that the Faculty is the heart of the institution. It is through stimulating interaction with instructional leaders that a student is challenged and gains the knowledge that will propel him or her into the world. The College is committed to providing the resources to help our Faculty succeed so that our students can succeed. (*College P* "Faculty and Staff" webpage)

The college indicates an awareness of the importance of student-instructor interaction to student learning and integration into the academic community, but does not seem to apply that awareness to one of the major gateway courses that all students must pass. The college, or at least the department, is obliged to serve two masters: the economic demands of marketplace cost effectiveness ideology and the pedagogical demands of labor-intensive writing programs. This observation coincides with the growing use of

distance courses in English 1301 and 1302 as efficient and easy modes of delivery, but which are almost totally lacking in face-time or “stimulating interaction with instructional leaders.”¹¹ The efficiency and outcome-based outlook of the department towards the two first-year writing courses appears similar in the succinct to the point of terse course description:

ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302 are designed to satisfy the requirement of most colleges that demand six hours of freshman composition and to meet AA and AS exit competencies. (*College P* “English A.A.” webpage)

Gone are the elaborate, descriptor-filled references to “knowledge that will propel [a student] into the world,” or programs dedicated to a “successful transition in your academic quest”; the English department first year writing courses are there to “satisfy requirements”—diction more suited to marketing or training than to providing a broad education, with the emphasis on preparing students to perform on tests more than to think.

Faculty discourses

I was able to obtain but one course syllabus for English 1302 at *College P*. This one available course syllabus adopts the outline format used in the college procedure manual, which requires the inclusion of the following items: the course number and

¹¹ *College P* Schedule, Spring 2010.

name, instructor's name, office hours, phone numbers, course information (classroom number, time class meets, number of credits) catalog description of course, rationale/purpose statement, course objectives or goals, learning competencies, principle units of the course, instructional methods, evaluation/grading procedures, textbooks and other required learning materials. The instructor's syllabus includes all the above items, plus sections on attendance, tutoring, class (instructor) policies, a section on student responsibilities and requirements (but not one on instructor responsibilities), and an additional instructor information section.

Instructor P1 syllabus

Grammatical analysis

In this single available syllabus, one-third of the discourse is presented in the distancing language of noun phrases (sixteen instances, or 17%) and the passive voice (seventeen instances or 18%). Contrastively, the audience is addressed in the familiar second person somewhat more (twenty instances or 21%) than in the impersonal third-person noun phrase. The agency of the first person singular "I" (four instances or 4%) and the collaborative first person plural "we" (three instances or 3%) are scarcely used at all. Twenty-five uses of the imperative comprise fully one-quarter (26%) of the statements in the targeted grammatical categories, somewhat less than but in line with the combined percentages of noun phrases and passive constructions that tend to signal a hierarchical, authoritarian, or negative discourse tone. (See Figure 5.)

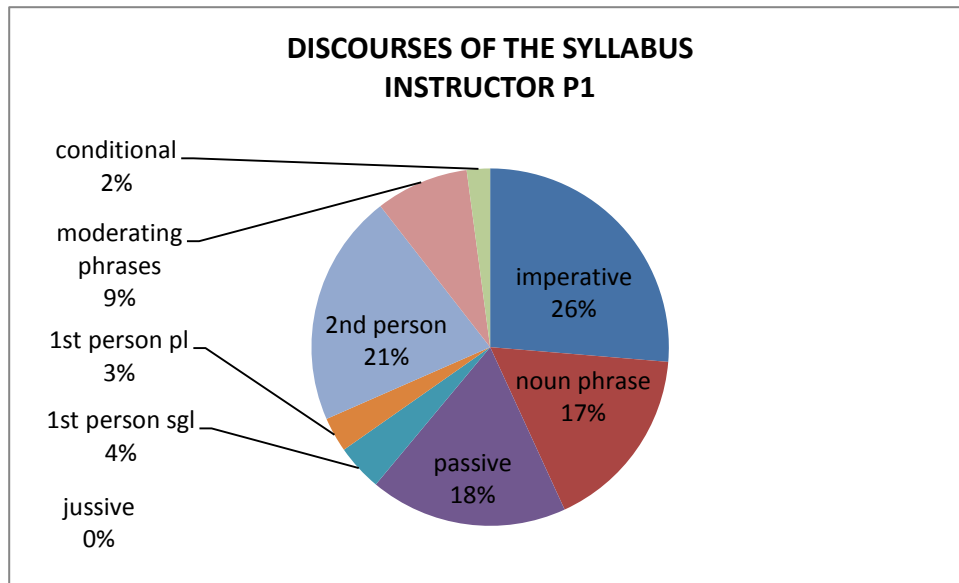


Figure 5: Instructor P1, grammatical analysis

Imperative vs. jussive

There is no instance in which a directive is expressed as a jussive; in all cases, directives are given as commands (“Come prepared to class”), absolute imperatives (“This also means you must have a Works Cited page”), or statements of requirements (“During the course, you will complete three formal writing assignments...”). There are, however, eight instances in which statements are moderated or mitigated through the use of modals (“The readings will vary in length and some may require more than one reading”) or other moderating phrases (“Students will be asked to read the assigned selections and be prepared for class discussion about the material on the date listed on the schedule”). These moderated statements stand in contrast to the imperative

statements that refer to the reading assignments, which tell the students “You will be required to read the assignment on your own outside of class time.” The difference in the use of the passive voice in the moderated statement and the second person directive in the imperative statement suggests that the two sections of the syllabus in which these statements appear were written with two different audiences in mind, and perhaps drawn from different original sources for inclusion in the syllabus.

Tone/voice

Positive or encouraging statements in this syllabus are outnumbered by negative or punishing statements by a ratio of 1:3 (see Figure 6). This is best illustrated by the assurance on the positive sides that the “tests will allow you a chance to demonstrate your mastery of the reading material,” while at the same time cautioning that “**no make-up quizzes, tests, or journals will be given.**”

The syllabus appears to be directed at two, or perhaps three, audiences. The primary, or given, audience are the students who are taking the course. Secondary audiences might include those administrators responsible for evaluating the instructor’s course delivery, based on his adherence to institutional style and policy in his syllabus, and perhaps a third audience might be the instructor’s colleagues, reading the syllabus for comparison, evaluation, or inspiration.

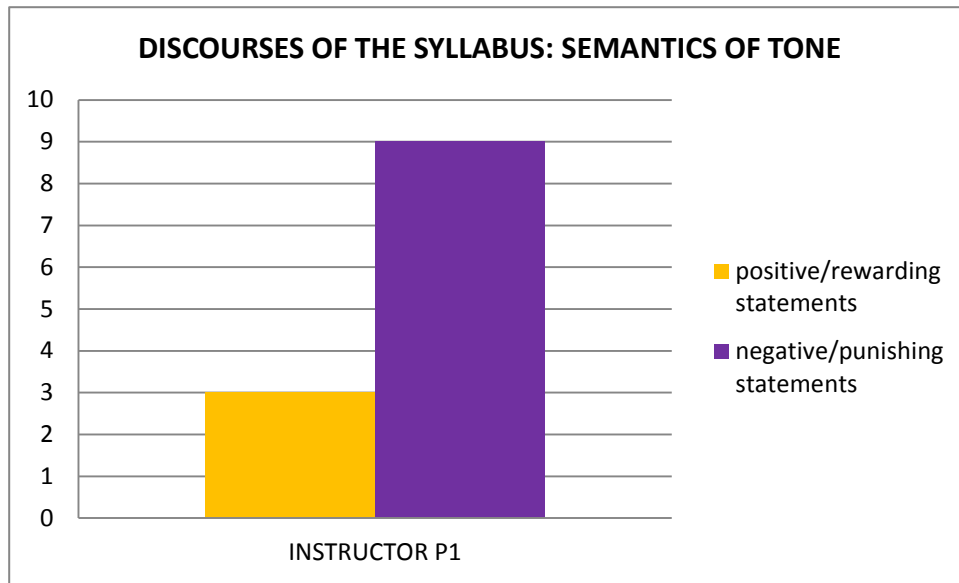


Figure 6: Instructor P1, semantic analysis

One main indicator of multiple audiences is the frequent shifts in person across and within the sections of the syllabus. In the “Course Outcomes” section, for example, the list of outcomes begins in the understood 2nd person, “[You will] Develop a unique writing voice,” and this continues through the first seven outcomes listed. The last three outcomes, however, shift to the third person singular, “The student will” read literature for the experience, experience a student-centered community, and engage in the academic research process. This latter voice may include the student, but this is not necessarily a “student friendly” syllabus, despite the assurance made in the course outcomes section III.G.: “[You will] Experience a student-centered community that

supports diverse ideas and learning styles by engaging collaborative and active learning.”

The instructor-author’s use of declarative structures—third-person formal, modalized commands—and passive constructions in phrases such as “This course emphasizes,” “Please put the appropriate amount of time and effort into each reading,” and “Students will study,” creates a tone of distanced, if legitimate, authority. The tone carries through in the shift to the second person: “This is because as a college graduate you must be able to communicate effectively in writing no matter what degree you are seeking.” The student is spoken to directly, but not collaboratively. The diction is not one of a referent or expert authority counseling or advising students, but that of a positional authority, prescribing for them what they will need and do. The type of authority with which an institutional figure addresses students is significant to the relationship between the student and the institution at all levels. Despite institutional assurances of respect for linguistic diversity, when the instructor indicates that the goal of the course is to “highlight for you the shared *conventions* of clear, precise and meaningful written dialogue” he creates an atmosphere of a classroom authority that does not integrate students’ diverse linguistic styles into the study of language, which effectively projects a disregard for or rejection of the students’ culture and self, possibly resulting in resistance to and reciprocal rejection of the values of that authority on the part of the students (Labov 1971, 1982 and Kells 2002).

Formatting

In conjunction with the outline layout of the syllabus, the instructor uses bolding, italics, and underlining as organizational cues and for emphasis. The use of bolding is reserved for outlining emphasis in section headers and for cautionary statements (“**No made-up quizzes, tests, or journals will be given,**” “Please contact me **BEFORE** the class meeting time to avoid penalties to your grade”). The instructor’s addition of the formal address, “Mr. Instructor P1,” and his academic credentials (two M.A. degrees) further bolster the image of institutional authority via credentials (as opposed to personal or expertise) and position.

The very formal layout of the syllabus mimics the layout of other institutional texts, and thereby draws authority from them for the instructor, while also providing a visual example of the organizational style necessary for academic writing in the course.

COLLEGE C

College C is a comprehensive community college located in a coastal city of 270,000 people. The college’s population of 3,300 (29%) full-time and 7,900 (71 %) part-time students is 58% Latino, 32% White, and 3% Black (*College C Statistical Profile 14*), which very closely reflects the demographics of the city itself.

The mission statement

College C’s mission statement is presented in three sections: an opening line that pithily establishes the college’s main goal in broad, general terms; a second, qualifying

statement that defines the terms of the opening statement; and an expanded, detailed set of purposes or functions of the college.

College C is dedicated to providing educational opportunities for students to achieve their dreams. (*College C* mission statement)

This opening declaration, seemingly as general as that presented by *College R*, functions both similarly and differently than the *College R* mission statement. Because the *College C* mission statement is followed by increasingly detailed qualifying statements, its purpose is changed from mission statement *en toto* to introduction. The lexical structure of the statement contrasts with that of *College R*, as well, giving evidence of differences in attitude and point of departure. As the *College R* mission statement positions the college as the source of community good by providing that good itself (“*College R* provides a personal commitment to individual and community enhancement through educational excellence,”) the college also focuses attention on the authority, prestige, and control of the institution over the educational environment and process in its Biblically reminiscent vision statement: “*College R* will raise the educational aspirations and achievements of all people by being the doorway for enriching lives and broadening horizons.”¹² The *College C* statement positions the college as a facilitating partner (by providing opportunities) for members of the community (students and families) to realize their own goals as they achieve their dreams through their own

¹² Cf. John 10:7, ““Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep,” and 14:6, “No one comes to the Father except through me.”

efforts. The *College C* statement recognizes students as independent actors who are in control of their learning and their lives, while the *College R* statement disenfranchises students of control and responsibility, maintaining them in a position of dependency upon the authorities of the institution—instructors, administrators, and board of trustees—in a manner that supports Morphew and Hartley’s observation that “if institutions are using these statements to legitimate themselves they are doing more than creating a symbolic document—they are using these statements to communicate particular messages, likely to specific and multiple audiences” (467). For *College C*, as for *College P*, the community is the audience of students, the population of the city of which the college is a part. For *College R*, the community is the audience of authorities who run the college, and the political and business interests who support them.

The idea of students’ control over their learning is continued in the second and third parts of the *College C* mission statement. After declaring the institution to be dedicated to educational opportunities, the statement further “affirms that student learning is its highest priority,” but only “within the limitations of its physical and financial resources.” The mission statement additionally defines how it will fulfill its goals, within those limitations, by listing seven “provisions” the college will offer students: academic and occupational courses; job skills training; basic skills instruction; educational and personal support services; opportunities for intellectual stimulation and civic awareness; lifelong learning and personal enrichment; and cooperative community programs. While this college may or may not offer anything more or different than other

community colleges, the precision of the college's position as set forth in the mission statement illustrates Morphew and Hartley's reflection that "clarity facilitates the provision of genuine guidance in making educational decisions and setting priorities on all levels of the learning community" (cited in Abelman and Dallesandro 322).

President's welcome

In one sentence and by his own example the president of the institution reifies the promises of popular education that all persons can benefit from it, that an individual can go as far as he or she sincerely wants with a beginning in the community college, and that the college is truly in and of the community.

As President of *College C*, as well as a former student of this exemplary institution, I am dedicated to providing excellent educational opportunities while increasing access for all residents of the Coastal Bend. (Appendix C)

Connection with the audience of the community of learners at *College C* is not limited to the institutional level of mission and vision. At the administrative level, the president of the college establishes a real or legitimate authority as a representative of the institution, an expert authority as a former student of the institution, and referent authority in his personal pledge to the community.

Departmental discourses

As part of the Division of Arts and Sciences, the discourses of the Department of English and Philosophy follow the discourse style of the division, albeit with more emphasis on the pragmatics of an English education than the philosophical benefits of a well-rounded education. Both the division and the department speak to a distant, third person audience, rather than directly to the student audience, indicating the possibility of more than one audience: students, potential students, community members, and outside observers. As with *College P*, there is a sharp loss of eloquence between the division statement and that of the English department (see Table 7), reflecting the narrowing of purpose between the levels of administration: the division deals with the broad mission of the college while the department deals with the nuts and bolts of teaching and learning. The division deals with “usefulness and pleasures” while the department deals with practicalities of “opportunities,” “support,” and “preparation.” The shift from eloquence to pragmatism is achieved through the use of elite, abstract diction (usefulness, pleasures, educate, successful, lucrative, acquiring fundamentals, cooperative behaviors, civic engagement) on the one hand, and a more succinct and immediate vernacular on the other (provides benefits, transferable courses leading to a degree, improve skills, give support to achieve goals).

Table 7: Comparison between division and departmental statements at *College C*

Division Statement	Department Statement
<p>What We Believe. We believe in the usefulness and pleasures of a liberal education. We help to educate and train our students for successful and lucrative experiences in the larger world. We understand the need for acquiring the fundamentals of leadership and of cooperative behaviors which lead to responsible civic engagement, and we feel strongly about the successive stages of personal and professional development required for a successful future. Yet just as important are the delights and pleasures of learning. These are what ultimately bring happiness and give depth to our human experience. They are what lend meaning to our lives. In the end, the enduring questions of life are what are addressed each day by our fine faculty in our many classes. We invite you to join our conversation.</p> <p>Our Invitation. We invite you to start this conversation by browsing the pages of the Division’s Departments and to explore their many links to interesting and useful information. If I may assist you in answering questions, making contacts, or obtaining information, please email, call, or write me.</p>	<p>The Department of English and Philosophy at <i>College C</i> provides educational benefits to a diverse student body. We specialize in transferable courses leading to an AA degree or teaching preparation.</p> <p>Our department is here to provide students the opportunity to improve their writing and critical-thinking skills and give them the support they need to achieve their educational goals.</p>

Faculty discourses

Within the English department, full-time to part-time staffing for fall schedules follows a ratio similar to that of College P; for the entry-level 1301 writing courses, 73% of courses are taught by part-time or adjunct faculty and 27% are taught full-time faculty, while for the Introduction to Literature courses, 29% are taught by adjunct faculty and 71% are taught by full-time instructors.

Classroom discourses: English 1301 and 1302 course syllabi

Course syllabi for English 1301 and 1302 at *College C* are abundantly available online for both classroom based and web based (online) courses. This availability indicates an openness towards students and community, a desire for transparency, open sharing, and approachable on the part of the several instructors who make their syllabi readily available. The available syllabi tend towards two styles: the technical and the conversational. Technical style syllabi are formatted to follow the outline of information required by the department (instructor information, texts, materials, objectives and outcomes, grading scales and distribution, disability and plagiarism statements), with slight variation in policies for attendance, point distribution on assignments and papers, late submissions, and a greater variety of required texts than in other English departments (see Appendix Technical Syllabus). Standardized syllabus format is easier for the instructor to produce (just fill in the sections) and for students to read and find specific information such as what books are required, how many papers are required, and how grade points are distributed. The benefits for the student of having a set syllabus

are dichotomous: on the one hand, the student knows almost exactly what is expected of him or her in the course, what steps he or she must take to get a grade. On the other hand, the students' voices are removed from the learning environment; participation is required, but the topic and contexts are directed by the institution (department and instructor), not the student.

Instructor C1 syllabus

Grammatical analysis

The syllabus created by Instructor C1 stands out in the use of the second-person “you” or “your” (52 occurrences, or present in 40% of statements) and the first-person singular “I” (21 occurrences, or present in 16% of statements) in addressing the student audience (Figure 7). Most of the first-person sentences are politely couched instructions or policy statements: “I will ask you to keep a journal. If your handwriting is illegible I will ask that you type your journal,” and “I feel that it is important to explain what plagiarism is and what the consequences are.” The second-person addresses are balanced between policy statements: “If you miss three labs and do not make them up 15 points will be deducted from your final grade,” and encouragement, “You should do fine on these quizzes if you have done the reading.” The first person plural “we” or “our” is used in seven cases, or 6% of the statements analyzed. Each of these is at once inclusive, encouraging, and directive: “We will think of ourselves as rhetors as we engage daily in the activities of class discussion and writing.”

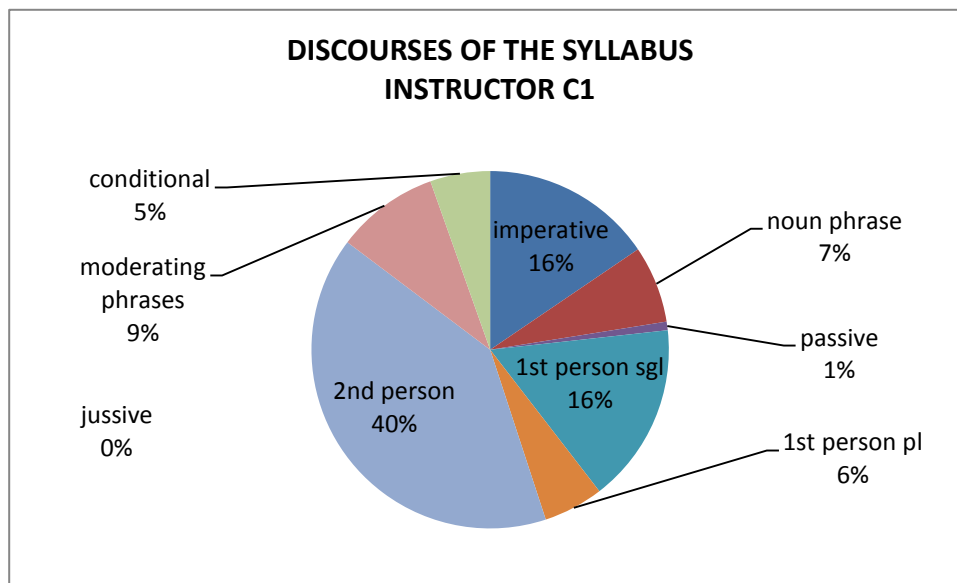


Figure 7: Instructor C1, grammatical analysis

If/then conditionals are employed in seven instances (5%), four in a positive sense: “[I]f you have a lab deficit of “0” at the end of the semester I will ADD 5 points to hyour final grade,” and three in a punitive sense: “[I]f you miss three labs and do not make them up 15 points will be deducted from your final grade.” With 20 occurences (16%), the imperative is more often used than the conditional to establish requirements “You are required to see me for help before you make any revision changes.” While there are no instances of requirements phrased in the jussive, there are twelve instances (9%) of moderating phrases, seven including modals (“You may be dropped if you...”) and five with politeness modifiers (“I will ask you to keep a journal. Please inform me

as soon as possible if you have documented special needs”). Noun phrases and the passive voice, the two types of statements most associated with distancing effects between the author and the audience, occur only nine times (7%) and once (1%) throughout the syllabus. This is fairly appropriate given the frequency of use of the familiar “you” throughout the syllabus.

Jussive vs. imperative

The syllabus is highly directive, if not authoritarian, in its use of non-modified and modified imperatives, and in its lack of elective or exhortative jussives. Requirements are at times couched politely: “I will ask that...”, but for the most part are direct and unequivocal: “A one-hour lab is required, and I follow departmental policy on lab attendance.” The imperative modal “must” is used only one time; requirements are otherwise phrased as “we will/there will be,” “is/are required,” or “are expected.”

Tone/voice

This syllabus contains forty-four positive or encouraging statements and fifty-six negative or punishing statements (Figure 8). The statistical difference is 11.8% of the total statements analyzed, but statistics aren’t language.

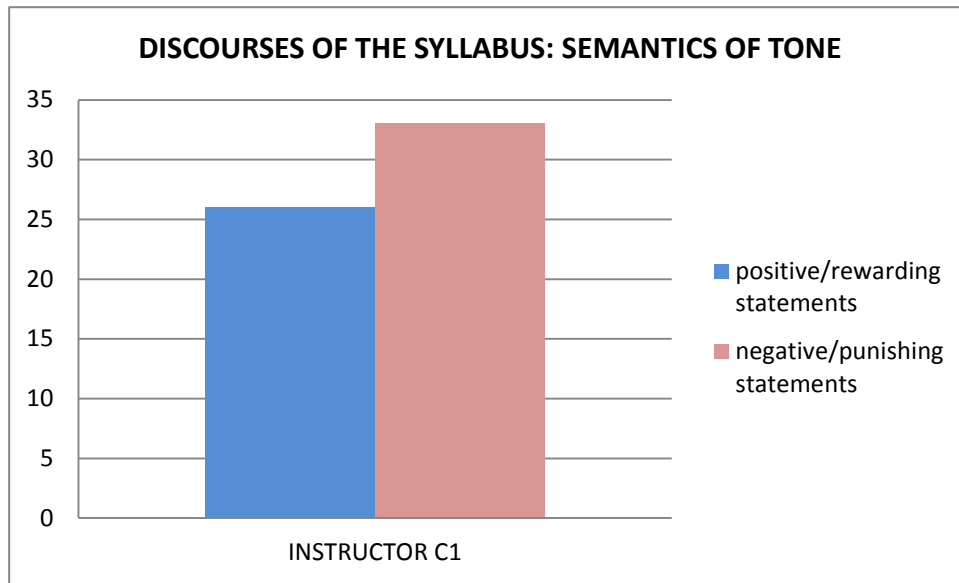


Figure 8: Instructor C1, semantic analysis

The syllabus begins positively in what appears to be a collaborative “we” statement:

Welcome to this writing community. Together we will elicit reasons to write. Our reading and discussion will help to generate an abundance of expression or style as we work in groups and individually within this community.

This introductory welcome is followed by a second collaborative “we” in the Course Description: “We will think of ourselves as rhetors (eloquent speakers and writers) as we engage daily in the activities of class discussion and writing.” But the constitutive rhetoric of the collaborative “we” quickly becomes the power of “I” as the consequences

for non-compliance and rewards for compliance are set forth in the name of the instructor:

A one-hour lab is required, and I follow departmental policy on lab attendance. Each lab absence that is not made up results in a five-point deduction from your final grade in this 1301 class. This means if you miss three labs and do not make them up 15 points will be deducted from your final grade in this English 1301 class. Likewise, if you have a lab deficit of “0” at the end of the semester, I will ADD 5 points to your final grade.

The instructor gives and the instructor takes away, but note that consequences for non-compliance are longer and are listed before the rewards for compliance, as though the instructor thoroughly expects students to not complete assignments without some type of coercion, and is unaware of the limited effectiveness of external motivators (positive or negative) on student behavior (Roen, et al., 2002).

This same pattern persists in the syllabus grading scale descriptions. The descriptions for achieving an “A” or “B” on any given assignment are two sentences each, relating them to achievement that is “outstanding,” “superior,” or “significantly above” the level of work “necessary to meet the requirements” of the assignment. A grade of “C” on an assignment “signifies that the work is average, but nothing more,” as though average work is, in fact, failing work. The grade description for an “F” grade begins, “F stands for **Failure**.” In addition to the bold-faced emphasis on the word

itself, the description consists of four long sentences full of conditional clauses and consequences, all related to failure. The negative tone continues in the sections on paper revisions and late work, with references to requirements, restrictions, and consequences for late submission of work. Even a positive reference to students doing their own work, “I assume that you will do honest work and that you will work with me on improving writing that is your own,” is followed by a warning that the instructor “understand[s] the occasional temptation to plagiarize,” but that she is “surprisingly good at recognizing plagiarism. My basic message is DON’T DO IT.” The tone here is both condescending and accusatory; the preemptive warnings carry an assumption that individuals will cheat, with a “gotcha” attitude implied for that moment that the student is “caught” doing so.

Finally, after all the admonitions and warnings, the instructor gives positive advice: “when you need to take something from another person’s work—an idea, a powerful statement, a set of facts, or an explanation—cite your source.” Many of the policies and requirements that are given in negative terms—what will happen if students fail to meet or comply with a given standard—could be restated in positive terms, i.e., what will happen if the students achieve a given standard, and the benefits of compliance with requirements and policies.

The instructor uses the first person “I” as a subject thirteen times and the third person inclusive seven, although three of these inclusive statements could be taken to be falsely inclusive, as the instructor uses “we” to describe work that the students, not the students and the instructor, will be doing: “Together we will elicit reasons to write” is

countered by the well-defined four major writing assignments, and “Our readings and discussions will provide ideas for your writing” leaves the instructor out of the heart of the writing process, as does “We will peer review each of your papers in-class.” Most of the uses of “I” are negative, authoritarian, or both: “I will assign you a daily work grade that reflects how involved you are in the class” and “I will not tolerate behaviors that interfere with my teaching and with the learning of others in class” place emphasis on the power of the instructor more than they do the status of the instructor and the students as a community of learners.

Formatting

The organization of the syllabus is for the most part logical and easy to follow, with bolding to highlight sections, underlining to highlight subsections, and relatively limited use of boldface, italics, capitals, underlining, and special characters to set off or emphasize points that the instructor deems important (e.g., “**Save ALL of your process work**”). One singular jarring use of organizational formatting is the placement of the lab requirement, with its consequences for non-attendance, immediately after the opening welcome and course description sections, rather than in the attendance section. The placement of this paragraph not only produces a highly distracting non-sequitur in the format of the syllabus, it counters the positive tones of the welcome and course description. The positive tone is somewhat recovered, however, with the placement of a final, mostly positive statement at the end of the paragraph:

“Likewise, if you have a lab deficit of ‘0’ at the end of the semester, I will ADD 5 points to your final grade.”

Instructor C2 syllabus

Grammatical analysis

The Instructor C2 syllabus is the only wholly web-based syllabus found in this study. That is to say, it is not a Word file uploaded to a web site, nor is it formatted as a Word file. This syllabus consists of a single web page embedded with iconized hyperlinks connecting to related web pages, so that the reader is able to access a section or a topic in a non-linear manner. Printed out, it is, at twenty-one pages, also the longest of the syllabi studied.

Reading the main webpage shows a focus on the student audience. Thirty-three percent (50 occurrences) of the statements analyzed contained the second-person “you” or “your”, followed by the first person singular “I” (28 occurrences, or 19%), and the first person plural (27 occurrences, or 18%) “we,” “us,” or “our.” The use of the first and second person is casual and personal, as in, “We’ll try to take our work a step or two further than you may have in the past, mostly by thinking very carefully and critically about what we’re saying and how we’re saying it.” The abundance of personal and familiar audience address is matched by the total absence of the use of distancing noun phrases or passive voice. (See Figure 9.)

While there are fourteen occurrences of the imperative mood (9%), there is no occurrence of the modal “must.” Rather, the future tense is employed to phrase requirements as informative; “We’ll work according to deadlines,” is more representative of the style of imperative than the more stringently phrased, “Be very precise with the word count.” The syllabus employs nineteen (13%) moderating phrases and eight (5%) jussive phrases, which augment the overall encouraging tone of the syllabus through statements such as, “I hope that you’re anticipating a successful semester. Let’s see what we can do to make it happen.” Even the four (3%) conditional “if/then” clauses are formed positively: “If you come to class just about all the time, do all the work, and approach the substance of the course with intellectual curiosity and responsibility, you’re probably going to do just fine.”

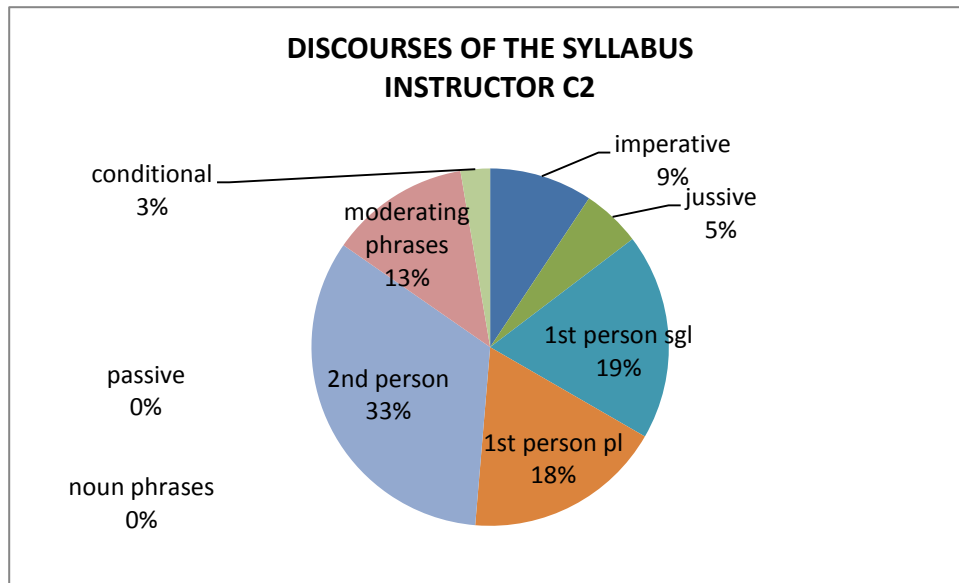


Figure 9: Instructor C2, grammatical analysis

Imperative vs. jussive

The Instructor C2 syllabus does use the imperative, but it is, for the most part, gently done. The most stringent imperative statements are more instructive than they are demanding; in reference to the writing lab requirement, “Be sure you complete this departmental requirement” is hardly more demanding than “you’ll attend on a particular day and time every week,” yet both statements set forth a requirement for the student audience. The softened tone is achieved in the latter statement through the use of the future tense to indicate an expected behavior. In the former statement, the requirement is referred to as originating not from the instructor, but from the department/institution,

thus constructing the requirement as helpful advice and softening it by the omission of the stronger imperative modal “must” or the phrase “required.”

The imperatives expressed in the syllabus could almost be jussive, but that they do express an expectation of compliance, however gently. The three jussives in the syllabus are clearly encouraging of cooperative behaviors, using the typical “Let’s” phrasing twice— “Let’s talk a little about grades” and “Let’s see what we can do to make it happen,” and the exhortative, “Make your writing as good as you can.”

Formatting

Unique to this syllabus among all the syllabi examined in this paper is the formatting: this is a traditional classroom course driven by a digital/web syllabus. Whereas a fully web-based syllabus might be expected for an online or even a hybrid course, with the possibility of the syllabus being an uploaded version of a print syllabus, this syllabus is 100% online. The differences between print, uploaded print, and web genre syllabi lie in the area of “functionality,” which refers to the capabilities available to users of a given medium (Maurino 2006, Shepherd and Watters 1999). For this syllabus, the web functionalities available include color graphics, web links, personal web page development, and email links. The effect of these available functions is that reading the syllabus becomes like surfing the web for information and, in a sense, is an exercise in learning by exploring.

The background color is a cool medium turquoise tone, with the typeface in contrasting yet still cool navy blue and navy blue bolded headers. There are no

demanding colors (usually red), and only one instance of the use of all capitals: “One of our goals is NOT to avoid the writer’s most difficult task, which is thinking of something to say.” Even the emphatic in this syllabus is used positively.

Tone/voice

The tone and the voice of the Instructor C1 syllabus is that of a mentor, as opposed to a colleague, a supervisor, or a parent, as evidenced by the extensive use of the collaborative “we” in the text: “It’s difficult to tell someone how to write; I’m hoping that we can actually show you how to do it while working with text that’s in the process of becoming good writing. When I say ‘us,’ remember that I’m going to be writing this semester, as well.” In addition to the collaborative “we,” the use of the familiar “you,” and relaxed grammar contribute to an instructor’s voice that is familiar, relaxed, and straightforward.

The instructor projects an interest in the well-being and the progress of the students as individuals and as a class by addressing the advantages to the students of complying with the institutional policies (“College C has attendance regulations and we’ll be paying attention to those. But here’s a good reason for being there just about every time we have class...”), and of taking their work as writers seriously (“I hope that we can produce work that says something interesting, thoughtful, or provocative to a real audience...”).

Policies and rules are presented and explained in a reasonable and reasoned manner, explanations are given, and the tone is consistently one of collaboration and

guidance, rather than of paternalism or coercion. The instructor develops and maintains his classroom authority through expertise and relationship building (attractive or referent authority), which support the occasions of boundary setting (coercive authority) that exist in the syllabus.

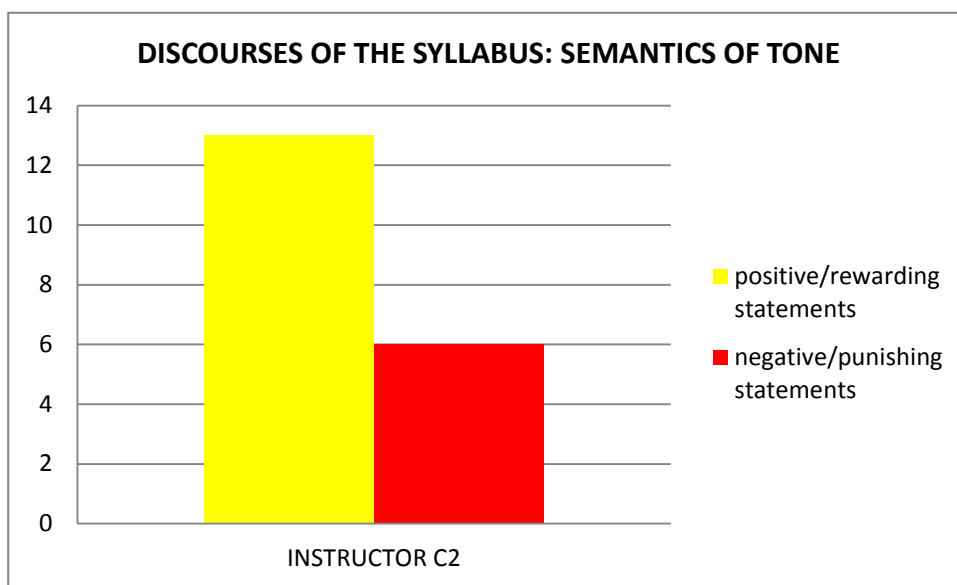


Figure 10: Instructor C2, semantic analysis

The instructor is fully engaged with the students, while at the same time maintaining authority in the course by clearly outlining the goals for the course:

The heart of this course is writing. We'll try to take our work a step or two further than you may have in the past, mostly by thinking very

carefully and critically about what we're saying and how we're saying it. More than anything, this course is about ideas, and to a large extent, you'll be participants in deciding what we think about, talk about, and write about. What will we write about? I'm going to ask you to have four good ideas this semester. For many of us this will be the most challenging part of the course. (When I say "us," remember that I'm going to be writing this semester, as well.)

Here the instructor has given the course description ("The heart of this course is writing . . . More than anything, this course is about ideas"), objectives ("... thinking very carefully and critically about what we're saying how we're saying it"), and goals ("We'll try to take our work a step or two further than you may have in the past"). The instructor uses familiar diction and "we" phrasing to create a tone of collaboration. The instructor leads the class ("I'm going to ask you for four good ideas this semester") while giving ownership of the learning to the students themselves ("...to a large extent, you'll be participants in deciding what we think about, talk about, and write about"). The instructor differentiates between his own voice and authority and that of the institution by pointing them out in his course goals and descriptions, indicating that "These are the things that the Coordinating Board says English 1301 and 1302 should try to accomplish. We'll be working on many of them this semester; others will be reserved for 1302."

One aspect of the tone and diction of this syllabus that makes it stand apart from the other syllabi studied here is the almost total absence of negative or coercive statements, and the “soft” tone of the imperatives employed (Figure 10). Writing about the discursive differences between negatively expressed communications and positively expressed communications, Román-Pérez (2007) cites James Gee (2005) on perspective in analysis:

[O]ne device that helps us think about what something means is to ask in what other ways it could have been said or written. Once we see that alternatives existed, we can ask why the person said or wrote it as they did and not in some alternative way. (15)

The two syllabi from *College C* provide numerous instances of alternative ways of addressing an audience. Both syllabi open with a welcoming greeting to the reader/student. The Instructor C1 syllabus tells the reader what the class will be about, while the Instructor C2 syllabus invites the reader to peruse the syllabus to get a “pretty good sense” of what the course will be like. The messages are the same: “here is what we will be learning.” The Instructor C1 syllabus is more blunt than the Instructor C2 syllabus through the use of the modal “will”: “we will elicit reasons to write” not only expresses a direction for the conduct of the course, it leaves little room for ownership or control over this direction by the students. What is presented as an inclusive “we” is actually a false or coercive “we”; it is akin to telling someone that they “will have a good time,” whether they like it or not.

The Instructor C2 syllabus also has its agenda for what will happen in the class, but by inviting the students to “read the page” and to “have a good sense of what the course will be like,” it opens the course to interpretation on the part of the student, and encourages student initiative in the learning process. Both syllabi tend towards negativity in the attendance, plagiarism, and late work sections. However, “For each unexcused absence, I will deduct 5 points from your grade” is harsher and more punitive than “*College C* has attendance regulations and we’ll be paying attention to those. At the beginning of each class period I open the gradebook, call the roll, then close it. If you’re in class and you’ve got the [day’s] assignment, it goes in as a ‘5’. If not, it goes in as a ‘1.’” Both offer negative consequences for non-attendance, although the Instructor C2 syllabus is more positive overall in encouraging attendance, effort, and participation in the class. (See Table 8 for comparison.)

Table 8: Syllabus comparison

Syllabus Section	Instructor C1 Syllabus	Instructor C2 Syllabus
Introduction	Together we will elicit reasons to write. Our reading and discussion will help to generate an abundance of expression or style as we work in groups and individually within this community.	If you read this page, you'll have a pretty good sense of what our course will be like, and if you want details, you can take the various links for more information. Here are the links that you'll use most often this semester:
Course Description	English 1301 is a writing course that focuses on principles, techniques, and processes of written composition, textual analysis, and critical thinking. This course places emphasis on revision and on audience, purpose, and occasion.	The heart of this course is writing. We'll try to take our work a step or two further than you may have in the past, mostly by thinking very carefully and critically about what we're saying and how we're saying it.
Course Objectives	Understand and demonstrate writing and speaking processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.	Our goal is to work together and alone to produce real writing that genuinely communicates with an audience. We're also going to learn about nine fairly practical elements of writing.
Requirements	There will be four major writing assignments, a portfolio, and a final exam survey	What will we write about? I'm going to ask you to have <u>four good ideas</u> this semester.. Eventually, we'll write a final, in class version of each of the four ideas. That's the one I'll grade.
Attendance	For each unexcused absence, I will deduct 5 points from your grade	<i>College C</i> has attendance regulations and we'll be paying attention to those.
Plagiarism	I assume that you will do honest work and that you will work with me. I am surprisingly good at recognizing plagiarism. My basic message is DON'T DO IT. When you need to take something from another person's work cite your source.	Generally, plagiarism is not a problem in this course since most of you are basically honest and conscientious. Papers that have received help from any other person or source than The Writing Center will not be acceptable. If you plagiarize, I'll use <i>College C's</i> plagiarism policy to resolve the case.
Late Work	I will provide no make-up assignments, and I will not accept late papers unless verifiable extenuating circumstances occur.	If you miss deadlines consistently, you'll have a hard time passing this course. Late work won't be accepted, except under the most extraordinary of circumstances and at my discretion.

The Instructor C1 syllabus expresses the course description, objectives, and requirements in authority-laden academese, much taken directly from the departmental descriptions and requirements; the tone is that of a superior speaking to an inferior, of students as objects rather than subjects in a conversation. The Instructor C2 syllabus says the same thing in a more comfortable vernacular with plenty of familiar “you” addresses, in a tone more reflective of a conversation between subjects. The Instructor C1 syllabus uses declarative and absolute phrasing which is clear, concise, and inflexible sounding. The Instructor C2 syllabus is more informal, broader, and perhaps not as concise in its descriptors of “real writing that genuinely communicates with an audience” based on “four good ideas” that will “eventually” become finished papers to be graded. Yet however casually couched, the students in this class will be meeting the same objectives set by the department and the institution, as noted in the Instructor C2 syllabus:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has issued "Educational Objectives" for Freshman Reading and Composition (English 1301 and English 1302), goals that it expects all composition courses in the State to address. These are the things that the Coordinating Board says English 1301 and 1302 should try to accomplish. We'll be working on many of them this semester; others will be reserved for 1302.

Consistent with these goals, the Department of English has developed a set of “Student Learning Objectives” to help guide our work in 1301.

Now, my job is to put this all into plain English for you. In some respects all of these goals and objectives point toward the same thing: learning how to write better, that is, to produce prose that’s clear, interesting, effective, and, for the most part, grammatically correct.
(Instructor C2 Syllabus)

SUMMARY

The observations made about the differences and similarities between the Instructor C1 and Instructor C2 syllabi hold true for comparisons between the Instructor C2 syllabus and the other three syllabi analyzed. The three syllabi from the other two colleges examined indicate an attitude toward the students and the course described in the syllabus consistent with a reliance upon coercive authority through emphasis on negative communication: higher occurrences of strong imperatives and negative conditionals; relationship distancing between the instructor and the students through the use of noun phrases and the passive voice; authoritarianism constructed through diction full of warnings and consequences, supported by an emphasis on the will and demands of the instructor in the formatting of the syllabus itself.

At the institutional/administrative level, differences can be seen between the discourses of the Latino-serving colleges (College P and College C) and the Latino

minority college (College R), most notably with College P, which identifies its *raison d'être* as being the predominantly Latino community for which the college was established.

Limitations

The analysis of the written discourses in this chapter is limited in a number of ways. The texts analyzed capture a limited selection of the possible written discourses for the array of community colleges in Texas at the administrative and, even more so, at the instructor/syllabus levels. Each of the texts is a snapshot of what the colleges and the syllabi examined looked like at one point in time; in this case most of the texts were downloaded from the internet following the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters. This limitation could lead to further study of the changes in discourses at the classroom syllabus level; changes in the written text at the institutional/administrative level are not likely to be significant, but could be interesting nonetheless.

Because the discourses examined are from written texts downloaded from the internet, the analysis can only project probable rhetorical effects of the styles observed in the texts, based on previous studies of the semantics of written texts. The interpersonal styles of instructors as they interact with students in the classroom cannot be stated or even inferred to any great extent beyond the observed written attitudes.

Based on studies of student-teacher discursive interaction, we know that student achievement in the community college is heavily influenced by the relationships that develop between the student and the college. The relationship between students and the

community college depends to a great extent on the discourses that define and influence the academic and social standing of the student vis-à-vis the institution.

CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE IMPLICATIONS AND
RESEARCH

PURPOSES

In the broadest sense, the purpose of this dissertation has been to gain some understanding of the long-term trend of disproportionately lower rates of achievement of Latino/a populations in terms of educational attainment, employment, poverty rates, political representation, and participation in the “American dream.” More specifically, the study was designed to focus on the discursive factors that impinge on Latino/a success and failure in higher education, with special attention to the gatekeeping aspects of writing and composition requirements. Since the majority of Latino/as in the United States are of Mexican origin, reference sources and the study itself refer primarily to that cultural population. And since Texas has one of the largest and most quickly expanding Latino/a populations in the United States, references and data collection have been placed primarily in that state.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS BEING ADDRESSED

The main question addressed in this dissertation is: what are the discourses that Latino/a students and community colleges bring to the educational table? From this

question come corollary questions concerning the concept of education and the linguistic and cultural realities that inform the conception of *educación*. In what might be termed the contact zone of education and *educación*, I address in this discussion the questions of **discursive stasis, resistance, transcultural negotiation, values hierarchies, and positive discourses** that contribute to individuals' success—defined as achievement of the goals of the individual within the educational milieu.

What are the points of stasis in the educational contact zone?

By stasis here is meant points of balance, stability, or equilibrium in discourse between students, faculty, and administration (as opposed to stasis as agreed upon points of disagreement).

Latino/a students expect and agree with institutional authority based on expertise, and with the necessity of education in getting a good job. Latino/a students want to complete their educational programs to transfer, to enter the workforce, or to improve their chances for promotion, but they also want to improve themselves as individuals and become more knowledgeable in general. Latino/a students want to be considered as individuals in the schools they attend, and institutions express the same aspiration for inclusiveness in the institution, the programs, and the classroom. College P specifically asserts an attitude of community inclusiveness, recognition of multiculturalism in the community as well as bilingualism on campus and in the classroom, an additive approach to preparing students for transfer to university, and services designed to help make that preparation more comprehensive. College C presents itself as being of the

community through the example of the president of the college having begun his career at College C. This connection provides the discourses of *personalismo* and possibility through modeling and of authority based in expertise and charisma. College R stands out as the contrastive element that underscores the desirability of equilibrium in institutional-to-student discourses through the decided disequilibrium in the institutional-to-student discourses found on its websites. In the rhetoric of College R, students are required to become part of the college by adopting the values and discourses of the college, with no reciprocal recognition of student discourses on the part of the college.

What points of transcultural negotiation are in evidence in the institutional programs?

The colleges in this study that have created programs that address and integrate the values of the communities they serve, e.g., to recognize and respect the students, families, and surrounding community as equal stakeholders in a common endeavor, have done so in these ways:

- Their actions ratify their words in welcoming students and the community through practical support services and outreach to the districts they serve, outlined in specific terms in the college mission statements and instructor syllabi;
- They speak to the community of students as equals in the academic endeavor through the use of inclusive “we” and familiar “you” based discourses, greater use of jussive and moderating phrases and more infrequent use of harsh

imperative forms, and through greater overall use of positive and rewarding statements than negative or punishing statements ;

- At the instructor level, authority is based in expertise and personal (charismatic) appeal more than in coercive or status-based power.

Where do points of resistance appear for both the students and the institutions, and what factors inhibit negotiation of values hierarchies for both students and institutions?

Students and members of institutions alike recognize the necessity of order, organization, and discipline in the educational setting. Resistance occurs when the discourses that communicate the realities and expectations related to organization and discipline do not meet or reach a point of stasis with the discourses that students are familiar with. This resistance may inform, in part, the differences in transfer and retention rates among the three colleges introduced in the study. College P, the college with the most student and community centered discourses, claims a 38% transfer rate for Hispanic students and a 43% retention rate for 2007-2008; College C, whose president graduated from that college and who presents a discourse of solidarity with the students, claims a 22.1% rate of transfer for the Fall 2006 entering cohort and a 44.8% rate of retention for Fall 2006 to Fall 2007 (Fall 2007 to Fall 2008 statistics were not available), but does not differentiate for race or ethnicity. College R, with the least student/community oriented discourses, reports a 25.9% transfer rate and a 43.5% rate of retention for Hispanics across the 2007 to 2008 Fall semesters.

Earlier in this dissertation, I described the ways in which social and cultural discourses shape our perceptions of reality. The concepts of *educación* that Latino/a students are likely to bring with to the community college –family orientation, a preference for relationships with individuals more than institutions, a need to know and trust persons with whom one has personal dealings, and mutual respect—can be lost in the organizational need to maintain order, to deliver a more or less standardized educational experience to all students, and to meet the guidelines and requirements of administrative and certifying entities.

Administrative dissonance occurs when the institution promises faculty and staff dedicated to the student while using adjunct instructors to teach gateway courses. This practice undercuts the desire for personal relationships between students and instructors. Administrators are faced with growing demands by institutions' boards of directors to provide evidence of efficiency, efficacy, and results in the form of graduation, retention, and transfer rates. The pressure to perform in a standardized, quantifiable way is passed on to department chairs and instructors, and through them to the students, so that individual and personal relationships are lost in the drive for quantification and systematization (Trujillo and Diaz 1999). Even where administrators' or instructors' expectations cannot meet student expectations, the discursive style employed to engage students and make clear the academic requirements for amenability to these requisites can either engender willing compliance or insult and frustrate students, who are then apt to respond by resisting demands, finding ways around the demands, or refusing to play

by the rules (e.g., failure to complete work, absenteeism, dropping or stopping out of school). White (2005) describes Latino/a resistance to acquiring “white” academic literacy due to feeling like an “outsider” because “I just don’t talk like them” (374); this feeling was realized as a reluctance to participate in class, avoidance of peer interaction, and failing grades. On the other hand, when the acquisition of the discourses of academic literacy is presented as an additive, rather than substitutive, area of knowledge students are able to feel empowered in the classroom rather than judged.

Administrative and instructor resistance to meeting students’ needs or demands occurs when student discursive styles of resistance appear to challenge the security or authority of leadership roles, especially if the administrator or instructor is already feeling straitjacketed by policies and demands on their time, or by performance requirements. The instructor/administrative response, under pressure from the demands of the institution, is as likely to resist student demands for more personal relationships and learning, leading to stalemate and disengagement on everyone’s part. Resistance on the instructors’ part can display as rigidity in course requirements and control, expressed through negative and punishing discourses of imperative modals (Students must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade) and negatives (Homework assignments will NOT be accepted late!).

What are some of the negative or subtractive discourses on the part of the three institutions studied?

College R

We have already noted a certain dissonance between what the administrative websites appear to be saying and the underlying rhetorical messages that are carried in the sites' proclamations. In addition to administrative claims of being the door to success for students who join the established society/culture/club of the community college, English department and instructor discourses place the student in the position of lacking any real power in the classroom or in their own learning. By standardizing curriculum and content to provide an "equal" experience for all students, class and cultural differences among students and between students and instructors/administrators are disregarded, rather than addressed as discursive issues. This is especially true when the college does not recognize the value and legitimacy of Latino/a discourse styles within the college or the larger community. The lack of discourse about conflicting discursive styles engenders an atmosphere—at times obvious, at times more subtle in its normalization—of oppression of the less powerful, e.g., the Latino/a student.

College P

College P indicates an awareness of the importance of student-instructor interaction to student learning and integration into the academic community, but by

using a majority of adjunct instructors to teach entry level writing courses, does not seem to apply that awareness to one of the major gateway courses that all students must pass.

The type of authority with which an institutional figure addresses students is significant to the relationship between the student and the institution at all levels. Despite institutional assurances of respect for linguistic diversity, when the instructor indicates that the goal of the course is to “highlight for you the shared *conventions* of clear, precise and meaningful written dialogue,” he creates an atmosphere of a classroom authority that does not integrate students’ diverse linguistic styles into the study of language, which effectively projects a disregard for or rejection of the students’ culture and self, possibly resulting in resistance to and reciprocal rejection of the values of that authority on the part of the students.

College C

At the department/instructor level, College C presents a dichotomy of discourses, displaying at times harsh, demanding, noninclusive, and negative discourses, and at other times positive, inclusive, and clear but respectfully presented requirements, depending on which instructor a student has the fortune to fall to. Harsh or negative discourses are subtractive in that the use of negativity distances the student-teacher relationship, reduces the perception of belonging to the overall academic endeavor, and diminishes students’ confidence and persistence in their studies.

Positive or additive approaches towards education on the part of the three institutions studied

College R

The stated objectives of the institutional authorities at the administrative and instructional levels at College R are to effect positive outcomes in education and workforce preparation for individual students and the community at large. The invitations to learn at College R are sincere; instructors and administrators believe in their mission to improve the quality of life and to provide opportunities for personal attainment to all who enroll in College R, and from the written discourses of the college mission statement and departmental proclamations, it would appear that the College strives to do this in the best ways known to the educators and administrators who govern the college's programs. Bless their hearts. The most positive, encouraging, student-centered program at college R is found at the Writing Center, where students are guided and counseled in examining their own written texts for clarity, content, organization, and meaning, as well as in interpreting and understanding their assignments in meeting instructors' requirements. At the College R Writing Center, the student writer retains ownership of his or her writing, and has the power to determine when the writing is where he or she needs it to be.

College P

Shaw, Valadez, and Rhodes' (1999) research at the *College P* campus touts the commitment at the administrative and faculty levels to match the institutional discourse style to that of the students, noting a "recognition of dual identities" among faculty and administrators which leads them to speak with students in Spanish or codeswitch during conversations whenever it was more comfortable for the student to do so (20). This study buttresses the college's written discourses of solidarity with the Latino/a community that the college serves.

The college addresses the students and potential students in the college catalog, expressing the hope that each individual "will join our community of higher learning as a student, and contribute to this most important endeavor in [the City]," so naming students as stakeholders who have value in a community endeavor, e.g., raising the educational and living standards of the city as a whole by raising the standards of the Latinos/as who live there.

The college recognizes, values, and uses the preferred rhetorical styles of the Latino/a students/community when speaking to that audience, rather than insisting on a conversation conducted in the discourse style of the dominant academic culture, again naming Latino/a students and the Latino/a community as valued stakeholders in the local and the larger community. For College P, the institutional written text is supported by the institutional discourses of action.

College C

In the chapter on discourse style analysis, Illustration DS6, “Comparison of discourse styles, Instructor C1 and Instructor C2,” presents the clash between negative or subtractive discourses and positive or additive discourses in the syllabus. The information conveyed in each syllabus is essentially the same, but the tone and diction of each create two very different discourses. The informal voice of the Instructor C2 syllabus sets the instructor up as a guide, counselor, and facilitator for the course, and addresses the students as learners seeking to improve and expand their writing repertoire. This attitude creates a positive atmosphere for the classroom even before the students enter on the first day and respects the students as autonomous, capable individuals. The tone of the Instructor C2 classroom syllabus echoes that of the mission statement and of the president’s greeting, giving support for a feeling that each person at College C is valued and treated as an individual by the institution.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The original scope of this project was intended to include classroom observation of at least one 1301 or 1302 course at each institution. While this protocol was approved by the IRB at Texas A&M University, none of the community colleges approached with a request for a single semester observation of the discourses of a writing class found it desirable to approve the request. As a result one significant aspect of the study was precluded, and the structure of the study had to be redesigned to rely on publicly available texts for data for analysis of the discourses of the institutions.

Partly because this study relies exclusively on the assessment of written discourses of the three community colleges involved, the limited scope of the data set findings cannot be generalized to other institutions, or to the discourses of personal communication, oral direction or instruction, or to classroom interactions. The results and conclusions herein, therefore, create a picture of possibilities for further investigation rather than a definitive statement of the total array of discourses that occur between community colleges as institutions and Latino/a students.

The analysis of the written discourses in this chapter is limited in a number of ways. The texts analyzed capture a limited selection of the possible written discourses for the array of community colleges in Texas at the administrative and, even more so, at the instructor/syllabus levels. Each of the texts is a snapshot of what the colleges and the syllabi examined looked like at one point in time; in this case most of the texts were downloaded from the internet following the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters. While changes in the written text at the institutional/administrative level are not likely to be significant, further study of the discourses of classroom syllabi could determine whether there are substantial differences in discourse styles or whether little or nothing has changed at all.

Because the discourses examined are from written texts downloaded from the internet, the analysis can only project *probable* rhetorical effects of the styles observed in the texts, based on previous studies of the semantics of written texts. The

interpersonal styles of instructors as they interact with students in the classroom cannot be stated or even inferred beyond the observed written attitudes.

Based on studies of student-teacher discursive interaction, we know that student achievement in the community college is heavily influenced by the relationships that develop between the student and the college. The relationship between students and the community college depends to a great extent on the discourses that define and influence the academic and social standing of the student vis-à-vis the institution.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The greater part of the rhetorical analysis in this study is based in the five instructors' syllabi. Notwithstanding the advantages of rhetorical/semantic analysis of actual classroom discourse, further comparative analysis of syllabi for community college composition courses across Texas and possibly across U.S community colleges would be logistically more feasible both in regard to data collection and data analysis. This line of inquiry might at first appear to beg the question of whether and how syllabi are actually *used* in community college composition classrooms in terms of who actually reads or follows course syllabi and what real impact they have on students' learning, attitudes, and relationships with instructors and institutions; however, these questions actually form the basis for a separate line of investigation involving contacting English departments and individual instructors to request (possibly in the form a questionnaire) their responses as to how they do use syllabi in the classroom.

While the analysis and quantification of the construction of the rhetorical strategies used in the textual discourses examined in this study was relatively straightforward, there also needs to be a comprehensive, working definition of *educación* as a complex set of values, beliefs, and behaviors for future studies. Such a working definition would include practical examples of actual behaviors related to *educación* that help to illustrate and explain how the discourses of *educación* play out pragmatically in the educational milieu.

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