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Disrupting Institutional Models of Writing

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Abstract

To invite more than imitation, institutional models—of writing and beyond—must leave space for individuals to bring their specific creative intelligence to bear on the rhetorical context. This reciprocal use of models depends on preparing for all students but also on having an open stance to the individual students not adequately accounted for in those preparations, an open stance through which the presence of actual students can disrupt harmful or limited models. Adopting new tools and practices is one thing; adopting a new stance with which to find, approach, understand, and use new tools and practices is something else—something more difficult to bring into public discussion and explicit consideration. I use the practice of book recommendation as an example through which to consider this knowing on the go.

Introduction

Models of writing can appear to invite imitation. Imitation can occur primarily at two junctions: teachers might reproduce inherited models within the larger institutional context and students might reproduce in their own writing a model that a teacher provides. By "models," I mean ways of communicating sets of expectations or conventions, whether by examples, templates, illustrative actions, or lists of guidelines. I'll think here about both models of writing and other sorts of models that students encounter. Using models in a way that invites responses that go beyond imitation requires a delicate navigation: leaving room for individuals to make something new but providing individuals with enough information to understand the nuances of the rhetorical context. To communicate expectations while being ready to be surprised is to turn the bi-directionality of models into reciprocity. Modelling is bi-directional: one end offers the model, and the other end receives it. This bi-directional work of writing models occurs between teachers and students, between institutions and teachers, and between institutions and students. This bi-directional work becomes

reciprocal work if both ends involve both offering and receiving. Such reciprocity opens opportunities to disrupt inherited harmful or limited models.

This article contributes to critical writing studies by explicating this reciprocal work of models. Critical writing studies is a lens through which to understand the reciprocal work of models; equally, this reciprocal work of models contributes to defining and enacting a critical writing studies. At the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing's (CASDW) 2021 conference, Graves and Graves offered a definition of critical writing studies: "A new term to mark the turn away from past/established ideas of writing studies and toward a new construct. And to signal a turn to interrogating questions of discourse and power." As Graves and Graves showed in their presentation, this term/turn enters into a long history of writing studies. More work like theirs would continue to clarify the difference and overlap between critical writing studies and other writing studies approaches. Both the strength and limitation of this lens is its current lack of firm definition. The strength of a lens not firmly defined is the opportunity to respond well and deliberately to contextual demands. The limitation of a lens not firmly defined is the difficulty of building a tool as one uses it. What seems unpinned to me is the nature of the relationship between the two parts of the definition (a turn *away* from previous ideas in writing studies and a turn *toward* questions of discourse and power), which is the relationship between critical writing studies and inter- and extra-disciplinary critical approaches to ameliorating inequity. Do we start with a foundation of writing studies and understand inequity in the university system through that starting point, or do we start with critical theories of inequity and use that foundation to understand writing? (I use "we" to mean teachers in post-secondary education throughout this paper, but I will also consider the differences operating within this pronoun.) I don't know if other scholars proceed, for example, with the idea that "power" and "discourse" show unique features when examined through the lens of writing studies or if writing studies offers one specific context of a more generalizable study. That is, are we all contributing, each in our own disciplinary ways, to one project or is the project different in each discipline, with its specific disciplinary history?

For me, the answer is both: the reciprocity I want in models of writing I also want between writing studies and critical approaches to inequity. This answer doesn't mean the question isn't an important one: this article's purpose is to work through the complexity of my approach of everything-at-once. Indeed, when I submitted a proposal about the reciprocal work of models as a contribution to critical writing studies for CASDW's 2021 conference, a peer reviewer of my presentation proposal asked a similar question: "Does disrupting the models lead toward the critical writing studies, or is the

further development of critical writing studies needed to disrupt the models?" My answer is that we need a complex interplay of both at once: to develop a new practice with new models, we have to, at the same time, disrupt the old models that otherwise shape how we proceed. The task is daunting precisely because it requires disrupting at the same time as developing.

Moreover, the task demands disrupting and developing in two directions at once (starting, here, from the pivot point of teachers). In one direction, this task demands disruption and development in response to calcified institutional models by using best practices available in the critical writing studies literature and the larger field of knowledges coming from Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization scholarship; social justice scholarship; activism; and studies of knowledge and communication across, between, and outside of multiple disciplines. In the other direction, this disruption and development comes in response to students' needs and ideas, both as groups and as individuals. Thus, to disrupt models, it is not enough to replace lacking models with better models. Instead, in addition to unlearning some inherited models, teachers need to create new models and, even further, a stance for using those models in a provisional, selective manner. This flexibility is important because no model can fit every context. To be successfully responsive to students, we might approach them with models at the same time as with the openness to learn from them what we need to put together a new model on the go, a model sensitive to local conditions, whether of a student, a class, or an institution. This approach is familiar, not a new proposition: we teach students to approach models for assignments with the same openness. What the student creates is not a replica of the model, but something new in response to the model and influenced by other models the student has encountered. My purpose in examining this openness is to make explicit the use of models already alive in teacherly life to help myself and other teachers to encounter this reciprocal model-work deliberately. By focusing on the stance teachers might take (on the pivot point of teachers between students and institutions), I don't mean to give the impression that students and institutions aren't operating as their own pivot points. Institutions and students also seek to respond to calcified models in teachers, for example. The stances of individual teachers must be in reciprocal relationship with students and institutions to address individual students and structural conditions.

Critical writing studies involves teachers helping students figure out their strengths in university systems and beyond by making expectations clear with the best models we can create while at the same time learning from students to rework these models on the go. Like writing in response to a model, presenting a model—for writing and more generally—in the first place requires the creative responsiveness that goes beyond imitation. In making this argument, I first focus on how models

work and why reworking them is important: models can appear to be an invitation to imitate them, and an entrenched deficit approach to writing assesses how well writing imitates a model. Then, proposing the reciprocal action of models as an alternative, I offer the practice of book recommendation as a concrete example of that reciprocal action. I do not lay out a strategy for book recommendations to be adopted by others; rather, my informal experiences with book recommendation led me to consider what inner stance led to my responses. Though book recommendation only happens to be the experience that shaped my understanding of responsiveness to students, this example is a meaningful one in the context of writing studies because reading is an important way to encounter models for writing. Finding and selecting texts is the first step to reading outside of the classroom, and students who have not already had opportunity to read widely face greater difficulty at this first step. While generalized recommendation lists exist, a good book recommendation responds to what one can learn about the other person rather than proceeding from one's own preferences and familiarities. Thus, book recommendation is a practice in which teachers must adapt the models we have to meet an individual student's needs.

Adopting new tools and practices is one thing; adopting a new stance with which to find, approach, understand, and use new tools and practices is another. The first is easier to do, to discuss, and to replicate. As Poe (2022) explains,

> It's tempting to take a "quick fix" approach—join a book group, add Black writers to the syllabus, change a grading practice, and suspend a testing policy. This approach to addressing inequity in the teaching and assessment of academic writing is likely not going to change much because it does not address the epistemological and structural contexts in which academic writing is taught and assessed. (p. 163)

Having tools and practices—like a practice of book recommendation—may feel like having a pedagogical stance. In fact, the pedagogical stance is something separate from (though necessarily affecting) the tools and practices we use. I use the practice of book recommendation as an example to focus on what's happening on the inside, the inner stance, to bring it out into public discussion and explicit consideration.

Model Student

When I started developing the ideas in this article, I was working as a contract faculty member at the Royal Military College (RMC) in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. On this campus, there is a statue named Brucie. A book about RMC called *Traditions of Excellence* describes Brucie: "The bronze statue of a

male officer cadet" was "unveiled during celebrations of the centennial of the College in November 1976" (Paziuk, 2016, p. 154); "He stands immovably as the model cadet" (p. 154). At RMC, students are cadets who achieve perfect imitation in dress and drills. If Brucie could write, he would inevitably, as the immovably model cadet, write as perfectly as he wears his uniform[1].

Writing, though, cannot be perfect and does not arise through immovable imitation. As Caplan (2019) points out in his essay "Sorry, There Are No Rules for Good Writing," most writing decisions hinge on questions of fitness rather than correctness. When it comes to writing, teachers can make clear that models aren't simply for imitating—by explicitly teaching the ways that rhetorical situations are uncontainable by the models we have for approaching them. But when I think about models like Brucie, I notice what other messages about models students get in their wider institutions.

Brucie stands as a model in an institutional context explicitly requiring imitation. Brucie is "the" model cadet. As "the" model, though, he can't look like everyone: he looks like a white male. What happens to women and Indigenous people, Black people, and People of Colour who seek to imitate this model cadet? Brucie's symbolic stature and place in tradition is difficult to match: this campus does feature other models but none equally salient. Simply presenting more models could not be enough to match that accumulated salience. Brucie, as the model cadet, makes particularly tangible something that is present at all of our universities: invitations and coercions to imitate models. I use this example from my own context to turn attention to the models already implicit or explicit in local contexts of teaching and in the more general context of post-secondary teaching. Though perhaps not as clearly rendered as a campus presence as Brucie is, models of students exist at all our institutions. What the institution has in mind, we should have too: what the institution has in mind, even implicitly, at the back of that mind, the members of the university system should have at the forefront of ours.

All institutions have ideas of their students in mind, developed in relation to institutional particularities. These models can exacerbate inequity because the idea of the generalized student body—having in mind some idea of a representative student—shapes how individual students feel included or not and how teachers include those students or not in our teaching aimed at that idea of our students. A military college, a polytechnic university, and a research-intensive institution will all produce their own ideas of students and resulting tendencies in faculty-student relationships; individual institutions and individual departments within them will create even more specific local images and interactions in conversation with their institutional types. For all this difference, a shared

foundation exists: the university inherits ideas of model students developed through the thinking and goals of coloniality, something la paperson (2017) makes clear by presenting examples of such ideas and of students who elude those plans for them. Teachers operate with, in Poe's (2022) description, "well-worn 'channels' of thinking, acting, and living [that] are rooted in the legacies of modernity" (p. 70). Institutions inherit models, and each individual teacher in the university teaches from that inherited ground, whatever else we do on it. Because institutional models of students root in coloniality, anyone in these institutions not aware of and responding to that ground will continue to contribute to that line of growth and its foundational inequities. Writing models are part of this larger picture. As Poe (2022) notes, "academic writing is part of a larger matrix of institutional structures that unwittingly compound inequities" (p. 164). As individual writing teachers, then, we can consider models of writing in relation to these larger institutional and social inheritances, inheritances that cannot simply be expanded but must be reworked. Hence, I focus on the complex interplay of disrupting existing models by calling attention to them as models at the same time as developing new models, making space in institutions for other models of students to accumulate the salience that a model like Brucie inherits.

Reworking Models

When I talk about reworking models, I'm using "model" as the encompassing term that it is. The Oxford English Dictionary splits the definition of "model" into three main categories of significance: (a) "[a] representation of a structure," sometimes on a smaller scale; (b) "[a]n object of imitation," sometimes involving the idea of worthiness; (c) "[a] type or design," in the sense of a certain build or make. To use a model is to involve issues of similarity, emulation, and copies of a type. The term itself certainly leaves open space for simple imitation. For students learning their own relationships to writing and also for professors teaching these students, the simplicity of the imitative approach can be enticing.

The invitation to imitate allies with the deficit approach to writing. Models should not elicit mere replication: writers create what they create in the space between themselves and a model. This foundational relationship between models and writers is just as true for other types of models. In writing and beyond, models inviting imitation instead of disruption and development diminish that relationship through which creation occurs. Yet, as Baker-Bell and her co-authors (2020) state in "This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!," there exists an "accepted communicative norm" in academia, one that "reflects White Mainstream English" (Demand

#1). When writing differs from the models one has in mind, one might read those differences as signs of "defective social behavior" (p. 152), a reading Williams (1981) notes is especially flawed since "errors of social behavior differ from errors of 'good usage'" (p. 152). Williams challenges the moral impulse to uphold the models passed down through tradition, regardless of real rationale or communicative need. More recently, the introduction to the book *Working with Academic Literacies* (2015) notes "the prevailing deficit approach to language, literacy, and indeed students, whereby the emphasis tends overwhelmingly to be on what student writers don't or can't do in academic writing rather than on what they can (or would like to)" (Lillis et al., p. 5). Likewise, Makmillen and Norman (2019) report that "the deficit model holds on tenaciously in talk about writing, and in some writing pedagogies, despite what we know about how focusing on error in student writing fosters passivity in students" (p. 219). If I'm looking for the difference between the model and a student's work, I might be seeing deficit. If I see deficit when a student differs from the model of a student I have in my mind (if I have one model of a student in my mind), I am demanding inequitable sameness out of diversity. If I demand imitation of a privileged model, I might not be looking for how students engage other models or the privileged model in the new way they have to do to be bringing themselves to the writing.

I see two interrelated approaches to inviting uses of models (models of writing and models for and of students more generally) that aren't based in imitative/deficit logics:

1) We rework our own models in advance in order to guide all students in assignments and classrooms.
2) We rework our own models on the go in order to react in the moment to a particular individual student.

This is another reciprocal process within the larger reciprocal process of disrupting harmful models while developing other models. To invite non-imitative forms of engagements, I can make space in advance for all potential students in my mind, my time, my syllabus, my classroom and my office hours, while also reacting in the moment to an individual student.

In the first approach, teachers respond to, for example, models like Universal Design for Learning. Though CAST (n.d.) provides guidelines for implementing UDL ("a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn"), our own responses here should not be imitative. I need to make something from the model by meeting the model with who I am in my context. But even among teachers, this tendency to imitate the model is a problem, as Dolmage (2015) points out in an article that "reframe[s] Universal Design

away from checklists and reductive formulas and towards more critical, problematized and active forms of engagement or 'ways to move'" (abstract). If we keep active 'ways to move,' we can keep our knowing on the go, that is, responsive to our real conditions and real students.

In the second response, which must come in relation to the first, we respond to individual students. We have all the models we've ever known guiding us, but mere imitation of those models is impossible if we *really* respond to the individual student. Such encounters with individual students are important opportunities for remaking our models. I argue for these encounters as such opportunities for remaking for two reasons:

1) In these encounters we might face something we did not expect which will require us not to proceed from habit.

2) These encounters require us to learn and reflect on what we know in vividly active ways.

Loveless (2019), in her book about research-creation, considers an alternative to the pedagogical and scholarly approach of "I know and now you know" (p. 50). Her alternative is that "the methods, tools, and approaches used, that is, the specific skills and literacies needed to pursue a research question or problem, are determined as a back-formation *from the question or problem itself*" (p. 40). In the context of teaching writing, working backwards from the question or problem is something we certainly do in assessment design (creating the assignment in order to hit the skills we want to teach), but it is also the action that I'm suggesting in terms of encountering students and then finding the models we need. "I know and now you know" is a pedagogy of imitation and inheritance. In contrast, what I'm calling "knowing on the go" demands of teachers a use of models that responds to students, not only in advance while we plan but also in process as we encounter.

Knowing on the Go

The work of reworking models (models of writing and beyond) is also difficult because of the reciprocal nature of models: we shape the model, and the model shapes us. These processes happen at the same time. They aren't linear and extractable. Yet this simultaneity is the genuine shape of teaching and learning. Bazerman (2020) expresses this all-at-once activity in his explanation of meaning production as a social activity, what he calls "an emergent and ever-evolving process of semiotic life in interaction with relevant others" (p. 158). In this process, "we as writers may push the boundaries of various social arrangements, in order to meet our own needs and desires within circumstances, even as we reformulate our ends within what we perceive as the available possibilities of circumstances" (p. 158). In the context of meaning-making as deliberate social action

toward equity, one might participate consciously in this evolving process by asking who counts as "relevant others," whose needs and desires one is creating meaning to serve, and which social arrangements are at play and to what effects.

One way to capture the nuance of the social action of writing models is to think about *kairos*. *Kairos* means, according to Lukas and Personn (2019), a readiness to think in context, "an awareness of what is likely needed to persuade an audience given those circumstances" (p. 164). Lukas and Personn point out the problem of taking a model of a genre like a template or list of rules as that genre's ontology: "[S]tudents may falsely view genre as a rigid form to fill, simply by adhering to abstract rules, and without sufficient attention to how each rhetorical moment exceeds any set of generic rules that can be applied to it" (p. 163). As a flexible response,

> an orientation toward *kairos* provides audiences with an ethical comportment for decision-making in a pluralistic world where timely action is necessitated despite uncertainty, placing great responsibility on those participating in such discourses to consider myriad conflicting perspectives to develop at best only probable solutions. (Lukas and Personn, 2019, p. 164)

Key here is this "great responsibility." Someone oriented to *kairos* who hasn't interrogated their inherited models might well be re-inscribing a harmful version of what has been accepted as right, but isn't.

With attention to responsibility, the concept of *kairos* might help one to notice opportunities to use that responsibility. Peeples et al. (2007) offer a way to think about *kairos* in relation to institutional structures. They present a method for going about program development in writing studies, though their argument is relevant to what they call "institutional action" more broadly. Engaging with Michel de Certeau's definitions, they contrast tactic with strategy and *kairos* with *chronos*. *Kairos*/tactic intervenes via opportunities not already defined by the environment, not fixed by the power relationships in place. In contrast, one uses *chronos*/strategy when one has control over how things unfold (Peeples et al., 2007, p. 60-61). They propose this "powerful heuristic framework" to make clear "the recursive inventional process" of program development (Peeples et al., 2007, p. 74). They explain that

> though appropriate action should be responsive to the space and time of one's context, action is not *determined* by space and time. Once we become aware of such points of overlap and variability, we become better equipped to understand our contexts and options. (Peeples et al., 2007, p. 73)

This overlap and variability is the reciprocal or recursive action of using and reworking models. As teachers, we might acknowledge that we have the power to control how some things unfold, and this

power to use strategy or fall into existing strategies is a responsibility we hold. Recognizing what this responsibility entails, we might also use tactics to encounter students as they surprise us, to take up these opportunities they present with their presence. Without tactics, we only hold power in place. But for our tactics to truly differ from our strategies—to not simply control the moment with strategy—we need to be able to know on the go, to learn in that moment what the opportunities are. In this paper, I focus not on strategy but on the mindset behind the more ephemeral tactic, with which one reacts to an individual student. Tactic happens in the moment, and to really respond to the moment, not only with strategy but with an openness to the moment, requires acknowledging the importance and difficulty of tactic. Making tactic recognizable as an object of study seems to me to be essential for critical writing studies.

In critical writing studies and more broadly, knowing on the go is a way of making space for people to be who they are and offer what they offer. By "knowing on the go," I mean not letting institutions simply reproduce themselves in us and not letting ourselves simply reproduce our institutions. We should be wary of a too-tight hold on the models we as teachers have inherited and of the ways they hold or don't hold us. Ahmed (2007) describes the comfortable fit of whiteness in institutional spaces as a habit that individuals inherit from institutions at the same time as maintaining institutional habits: "whiteness 'holds' through habits" and "[t]o be not white is to be not extended by the spaces you inhabit" (p. 156, 163). For la paperson (2017), writing about universities as colonial machines that individuals are enmeshed with and can also subvert, the recourse to these habits is the disruptive fact of each of us: "What your particular powers are is important for you to figure out" (ch. 4). He points out that "[y]our agential capacity extends beyond your being, into the system's capacity" (ch. 4). Ahmed's attention to the ways institutions hold in place conditions in which some people cannot extend themselves into institutional space meets with la paperson's attention to the ways in which an individual's very presence is an influence that extends beyond them. This presence is a *kairos*/tactic teachers and students can use within institutional *chronos*/strategy, or that institutions can use within the inequitable strategies of larger social structures. In "GET THE FRAC IN! Or, The Fractal Many-festo: A (Trans)(Crip)t," Maier et al. (2020) write about "surviving as oneself by carving out spaces for oneself-in-community" (Invitation, para. 1) in the face of

> the experience of finding it impossible to fit in. No matter how you shape yourself, you are always further confined by infinitely regressive borders. These colonial scripts for how and with whom we belong are ever-receding horizons. They always require more of you. (Prologue, para. 1)

Here we have again the double move of making new spaces while also needing to disrupt existing spaces. As Green said at the Canadian Writing Centre Association's (CWCA) 2021 annual conference, "Transformative justice is a process of unlearning, of critical thinking and unmaking our belief systems." She asks us to ask ourselves, "What needs to die in you so that justice and love can win?" Critical writing studies entails recognizing models that might not feel like models at all to those operating inside of them and recognizing the habits these models hold with the *kairotic*/tactical responsiveness that can transform them.

Example: Book Recommendation

Because the open *kairotic* and reciprocal stance of knowing on the go is something that happens inside of ourselves, I aim here to make it more observable through an example of an action for which one could take this stance. Book recommendation is an example of an action that requires the reciprocity of learning from and about the one that one wishes to offer something. By "book recommendation," I mean the suggestion of any form of written text to a student in response to that student's interests—in the context of a relationship founded on discussions about reading, writing, and learning. A book recommendation is a type of model: much as a sample essay is a recommendation of good writing, a book recommendation is a recommendation of good reading. At the CWCA conference, I proposed a fit between personalized book recommendation and the one-on-one interaction that is characteristic of Writing Centres. Writing Centre tutors are in an especially good position to listen to and respond to individual students to make good book recommendations. The same is true of professors in office hours, or in a general invitation to a class that might be taken up in an email exchange or a meeting. While other people in institutions might also be in positions to point students toward books—librarians, for instance—I'm suggesting that book recommendations have the most power within the context of an ongoing relationship because a good book recommendation is one that responds to what one can learn about the other person, not one that (only) proceeds from what one already knows. Responding to what the student is looking for is tactic, not strategy. This tactic of book recommendation is one that disrupts existing models by developing new models in response to the needs of specific students—not using a pre-existing actual or mental list of books as a checklist. A book recommendation is an engagement with models, models of good reading, and knowing on the go means being able to exceed one's personal and inherited models, the ones that hold one's own reading habits.

Though the open *kairotic*/tactical stance comes out it in many situations, book recommendation isn't a random example of one of these, but one that is directly pursuant to the goals of writing studies. In my time as a tutor in a Writing Centre and as a professor teaching literature, I received several requests for book recommendations. In this example, then, I'm beginning with a form of interaction and knowledge-sharing that students sought out and an aspect of my teaching experience in which I felt myself using tactics. I am not suggesting a generalized strategy of book recommendation for others to adopt, but instead use book recommendation as an invitation to think about something less tangible: the open stance one takes to allow for tactic in the moment. My informal experiences with book recommendation led me to these ideas about the tactical knowing on the go of reciprocal modelling.

In response to my conference presentation, several audience members asked me for a list of books that I would recommend to students. This response highlights the challenges of the reciprocal work of models: my point was that a good book recommendation must respond to the individual student, not come from pre-existing lists. Yet of course to be able to respond to a particular student someone would need to have a wide range of possible books from which to draw. Book recommendation rests on not only listening skills in the moment but also on diverse reading habits that help one to avoid simply continuing the repetition of existing institutional habits. As we each continue to learn more, we'll keep having new avenues opened for ourselves and thus for our future students. I think what teachers need especially is a lot of explorative reading (tactic), not the list of someone else's explorative reading (strategy). We have our own needs, just like the students whose needs we will try to meet. I want to be moved by the force of my need to learn and the force of the student's need to learn. To give a book list for others to adopt would be to replicate a strategy, but I am trying to attend to tactic: the stance that would allow a teacher to respond well to a student in the moment. Using the tool of a list of good books is not the same thing as developing a pedagogical stance that facilitates such response.

Pursuing a reading recommendation practice is one way to make reading more accessible (by empowering students to select texts out of endless possibility), more evident (in student consultations), and more alive as an activity that can involve care (in institutional systems). In sum, book recommendation touches on three strands of teaching relevant to disrupting and developing models of writing and models of students more broadly. One, reading helps with writing. Book recommendations are relevant to writing studies because teachers seek to help students write in the ways they want to write: the texts we read are models that shape our writing. Two, book

recommendations help with access to academic literacy but also to institutional literacy or knowing more about the unwritten rules of being a student. Book recommendations are relevant because students write out of the wholeness of their institutional experiences and their wider lives: the recommendations we make come out of and contribute to the models of students we have in mind. Three, a good book recommendation requires learning about what the other person wants or needs and thus shows care: disrupting and developing our models of students requires learning about actual students and learning about them as whole people. Care for teachers is also essential as we draw on a vast array of personal talents, emotional resources, and knowledges to show care to students—in inequitable conditions that make this care to students cost some teachers more than it does others. These three aspects (reading, access, and care) are interrelated, but I'll discuss them a bit artificially one at a time in what follows.

Reading

My suggestions about book recommendations respond to the call from Ihara and Principe (2018) for "more intentional and self-aware reading pedagogies" in the face of "a trend of reduced reading on college campuses" (p. 11, 2). Horning (2007) argues that "instructors in all disciplines need to refocus on Reading Across the Curriculum" (p. 1). A practice of reading recommendation would participate in Reading Across the Curriculum as a pedagogy of personal engagement. Howard et al (2018) note that students are more likely to read when "instructors make engagement in the text consequential in meaningful ways" (p. 192). Offering forms of meaning that are not directly tied to course grades might help students read more meaningfully since, as Gorzycki et al (2019) make clear, students commonly read to achieve a grade rather than to learn deeply. This is not a situation that students necessarily want. As one student explains, "I would like to be challenged to read more but I don't care for how the system works currently" (Gorzycki, p. 504). Reviewing the literature on unmotivated readers, Bennett (2016) concludes, "The most important strategy is to start with a conversation to understand why the reader is hesitant to read, then offer suggestions on an individual basis" (p. 7). Odom (2013) indicates that "students who connect on a personal level with what they read can engage more deeply with the text" (p. 10), Horning (2019) recommends enhancing students' reading abilities by "[w]orking on developing students' interest in texts" (p. 143), and Griswold (2006) points to the "research indicating that pleasure reading has an enormous effect on the development of reading abilities" (p. 68). But figuring out what kind of reading is pleasing is not a simple task, especially when one is a student learning a lot about who one is and how one fits in the world. Poet

Natasha Sajé (2014) expresses the difficult experience of learning one's own reading tastes, even as an English major, in a way that perhaps others, as I do, will find familiar:

> I'd been an English major in college, but I was driven by instinct. I had no framework for what I read and no idea how to find one. I knew what I liked, but what I liked kept changing and I couldn't explain why. (p. viii)

The individual conversation possible in writing consultations or office hours is one in which readers' interests might be learned and engaged so that they can find some framework for exploring those interests. Guiding students in this difficult process with the tactic of knowing on the go makes accessible to them models of writing that they might not otherwise encounter. At the same time, teachers can learn about and from students to disrupt and develop our models of them.

The frameworks through which students might understand themselves as readers matter because, as Horning (2007) argues, "[d]eveloping students' writing skills requires developing their reading skills" (p. 10) and reading, according to Gogan (2013), "is in and of itself transformative to student learning across the disciplines" (p. 16). Seeking to engage students' interest may have implications for their attitudes toward reading and writing, which are important for learning (Odom, 2013; Driscoll and Jin, 2018; Makmillen and Norman, 2019). When the importance of reading for academic literacy exists as unspoken knowledge of the hidden curriculum (Odom, 2013; Gorzycki, 2019), book recommendation may be one way to make reading more apparent and thus more accessible. Book recommendation provides an opportunity for engaging students on attitudes and practices related to reading, writing, and learning that may be difficult to engage in other ways and that have potentially widespread effects. Engaging students on these attitudes and practices involves the tactic that allows us to disrupt and develop the models we already have, the models we inherit as we operate within our institutions.

Access

Personalized book recommendation in one-on-one consultations can open access to academic literacy as defined in *Working with academic literacies*: writing and reading as "activities for individual meaning making" that are "socially situated" (Lillis et al., 2015, p. 4). Finding and selecting reading materials is the first step to reading outside of the classroom, and this step involves issues of access: students who have not already been encouraged or had opportunity to read widely face greater difficulty in choosing what they might like to read. Recommendation lists exist, but they set students up for trial and error. While lists aimed at specific (rather than general and universalizing)

reading wishes exist, they aren't the ones that come up with general search terms, so students would need to already know what they wanted to find in order to look for these. And many students may find that no texts on available lists suit them—especially where these lists reflect the power imbalances of taste, value, and representation such that not all students will see themselves in the options included. Lists with titles like "Ten books every student should read" reinforce the idea of a canon: a set of texts everyone should read to properly belong (even if these lists flourish and thus suggest a looser canon than in previous generations). Such lists are one-size-fits-all models. Knowing on the go involves disrupting the idea that every student needs the same books and thus that every student fits the model that these lists have in mind. To help students develop lists of books that will meet their needs means learning what they need (as learners, as people). In this case, the teacher is not expressing the need to read the "best" books, but instead offering possibilities shaped in response to the student.

A conversation eliciting a request for book recommendation is one that engages the student holistically as "a whole person," an approach that Driscoll and Wells (2020) explore in the context of writing centers (p. 17). Book recommendation is one route to helping students learn who they are in the university, which is an important step in individual learning journeys and in opening space for learners to reshape the university into a more equitable structure by being who they are within it. To act on and within the university, students need ways to find out the assumed norms they have internalized and the unwritten rules they have not learned (in other words, the model of students the institution has in mind). When students asked me for book recommendations, they did so with a kind of apology for not already knowing what they like to read, as though they should not have to ask. That students approached the request this way indicates an assumption that they should arrive at university already knowing who they are and what materials are important to them. In an article for *Inside Higher Ed* focused on class, Reed (2013) points out that it is important "to help students learn some existing unwritten rules, learn how to discern unwritten rules for themselves in unfamiliar settings, and eventually learn how to shape unwritten rules. We can't rely on them 'just knowing'" (para. 4). Since the practice of sharing recommendations for cultural texts is a common one that will feel familiar to many students, it is a good way to enter into wider conversations about unwritten rules. In this way, a book recommendation is a named social practice that students might ask for in order to access what they don't know and at the same time open up conversations bringing to light assumptions about who does and should know what.

Care

Knowing on the go thus clearly involves caring. To genuinely learn from students, to actively develop one's models of students through interaction with actual students, we must care about the individuals we encounter. In his study of professors' caring behaviours, Larsen (2015) reports that both professors and students notice that larger classes don't allow for much expression of care and that students felt the most care in office hours. Larsen found that students felt care when professors sought to "know their students as people, not just as students" (p. 98), by, for example, asking questions and "show[ing] interest in activities, background, and hobbies of students" (p. 97). In a presentation called "Visiting as Protocol" on a panel focused on "Indigenous Ethics in the Classroom," Cariou (2017) "consider[ed] the ways that apparently non-formal kinds of interactions prove crucial to establishing the relationships that are often required for stories to be told." Cariou made this point that visiting is valuable in the context of Indigenous literary studies; he makes clear more broadly the way that open interactions invite the whole student into university spaces. Book recommendation could be a way of getting to know students and expanding their presence in learning space through visiting.

At the same time, teachers themselves will come up against institutional habits as they show care to students. Chong (2009) explains that expectations about one's performance of emotional labour are shaped by "interlocking race, gender and class hierarchies" such that "emotional labour is not a neutral act since it has the effect of naturalizing inequalities on an individual level and justifying inequality at large" (p. 177-178). The expectation of emotional labour from those acting as the face of the institution for students is itself an issue of care. One positive aspect about book recommendations as emotional labour is that offering one does not demand a particular emotional performance or self-revelation. A book recommendation is a form of care that can be offered in a quite professional or quite personal manner, depending on the individuals involved. Nevertheless, teaching for the whole student is demanding as it draws from one's curiosity, openness, and flexibility as well as one's writing, pedagogy, and whole-life experiences and knowledges. Any act of care occurs within this complexity: students require care that does not replicate structural inequities and teachers themselves experience those inequities while providing care.

Teachers require a great deal of time to learn, not only about the content we teach and best practices for teaching, but also about the histories and present demands of social and cultural contexts that shape us, our students, our disciplines, and our institutions. To be in a position to

respond well to what I don't expect, I have to read broadly, well beyond my fields of writing studies and literary studies. Care in teaching and learning requires institutional support so that the conditions we're in our conducive to our care. Driscoll and Wells (2020) suggest that tutoring should be like other "caring professions" in which caring is recognized as part of the "professional work" (p. 26). Teachers should have time for preparation for caring behaviours, like diverse, curious reading. As much as knowing on the go means more demanding work for teachers, taking it on means different kinds and amounts of effort for different teachers, many of whom don't have their own needs met in institutions. Even someone teaching from a place of great privilege is a human who cannot perfectly comprehend and attend at all moments. Caring doesn't mean achieving a rigid and impossible mastery, or expecting that of ourselves or each other. Caring means doing what we can (different for each of us) in the conditions we're in, and caring means changing those conditions as much as we can into conditions that better facilitate caring.

Many teachers are kept too busy to change the systems we teach and live in, but that doesn't mean that teachers don't find ways to rework models; it means that they might do so at the expense of their own wellness and perhaps less effectively than they would do if this work were truly valued and supported. The demands on post-secondary teachers are often not in keeping with responding appropriately to students as individuals, especially for the university teachers whose contract labour is exploited. And the demands for responding well to students are not equally distributed. In her talk for Scholar Strike, "Black Tax and the Invisible Labour of Black Women in the Academy," Davis (2020) discusses the extra work entailed in being a professor who is a Black woman. She explains, "My workload is always higher because I invest so much" in students, which she does "[b]ecause I know there is nowhere else they will get that support" and "[w]e all know you can't survive in the academy without support." The intensified responsibility for care that Davis experiences is a material reality involved in institutional models of writing. Care can and should be included structurally in universities and colleges, even as "the institution cannot love you" (p. 52), as Gray (2020) reminds us. Gray suggests "we have to love each other, to extend care and grace where none has existed before. We need to change the norms of our profession, to centre each other" (p. 54). We all have talents and ways of being that we can share together to change professional and institutional norms—even though the structural changes must go beyond individual behaviours. I take inspiration from la paperson's conception of universities as colonial machinery that "decolonizing dreamers" "wreck, scavenge, retool, and reassemble" as "part of the machinery and part machine themselves" (ch. 4). As part of the machinery we might rework, we change the institution by changing ourselves

and change ourselves by changing the institution. This reciprocal institutional action highlights the way that teachers are models who inherit and use models. There are multiple points of intervention, and any point truly reworked must reverberate into the others.

Conclusion

Institutional models of writing, to do the reciprocal work that this article addresses, work that goes beyond imitation, must recognize the difficult balance of making evident all of the expectations involved in writing while also leaving space for individuals to bring their specific creative intelligence to bear on the rhetorical context. This reciprocal use of models depends on preparing for all students but also on having an open stance to the individual students not adequately accounted for in those preparations. This open stance is the readiness for creative responsiveness, for tactic, for knowing on the go. This reciprocal use of models fits with critical writing studies' turning away and toward, its simultaneous disruption and development.

Book recommendation is one instance in which responding to an individual student can help teachers use models in a way that is ready for any student—that is, that help us rework models not to repeat them like checklists but to use them as the individuals that we are for the individuals that students are. I've sketched out what conditions book recommendations in academic institutions might respond to for students and require of teachers in terms of reading and writing knowledge, access to unwritten rules, and care in the university. Inviting individual student requests for book recommendations in the context of ongoing relationship is one possible positive institutional action. But I offer book recommendation as only one example of how knowing on the go, the open stance ready to respond to the moment with tactics, can emerge concretely. In teaching, we use and hold many models that interrelate: models of reading, of writing, of students, of our own roles. In the work of all these models, we can aim for reciprocity instead of imitation.

Endnotes

1. I've thought about Brucie in another article: Tracy, D. (2022). Tailor made, skylarking, and making in the humanities. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *91*(1), pp. 88-107. https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.91.1.03

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