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Kathryn Valentine

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The Potential and Perils of Expanding the Space of the Writing Center: The Identity Work of Online Student Narratives

by Kathryn Valentine

Writing center directors have often valued narratives, using them to understand students in rich ways, to train tutors effectively, and to build knowledge about writing center practice and theory (see for example Boquet; Briggs and Woolbright; DiPardo; Grimm; Welch). Less explored in writing center work has been the use of narratives to share what we know and value in the writing center with those who work in our institutions but do not often enter the space of the writing center. I see narratives as both a mode of inquiry and a site for participating, complicating, and intervening in the shaping of institutional understandings of students—particularly students who are considered “under-represented” (Clandinin and Connelly; Davidson; Delgado; Riessman). Writing centers can play a key role in making this happen. This is because the writing center is a space where stories about learning, literacy and identity are told and re-told. Using narrative inquiry, writing centers can reflect on the implications of these stories for theory and practice and share understandings based on these stories from the center with those outside of it.¹

In this article, I explore what happens when we ask writing center students to write narratives about constructing identities that allow them not only to survive at college but to excel and to make public their struggles and successes. What are the potentials and perils of shaping and sharing narratives from the writing center? What do we learn not only about students but also about ourselves? In considering this last question, I suggest that academics, particularly those of us who come from “mainstream” (white and middle class) backgrounds, can learn much from student narratives, the stories that writing center tutors and students hear and tell about the complexities of writing and learning in the academy—narratives often accessible inside but not outside the center. While I see the primary audience for these under-

About the Author

Kathryn Valentine is an Assistant Professor in the Rhetoric and Professional Communication program at New Mexico State University where she directs the NMSU Writing Center. Her research interests include literacy, identity, and the teaching of writing.
standings as those who do not work in writing centers (i.e., "outsiders"), I also see potential learning for those of us who work in writing centers (i.e., "insiders"). My understanding of this potential for narratives, as well as the perils which I discuss later, is based on my work with and research on a multimedia website, MakingOurMark@MTU, featuring stories written by students considered underrepresented at their university. In these stories, students from diverse backgrounds reflect on stereotypical understandings of students from their backgrounds, challenge these stereotypes, and discuss how they successfully negotiated the conflicts they faced as a result of such stereotypes. The project features the students’ stories, photographs of the students, and Quicktime™ videos of some of the students’ activities.

This project developed out of a series of interviews that Nancy Grimm initiated and that Nancy Barron conducted with students. These interviews were meant to gather information, through talking to underrepresented students, on academic adjustment to the university. As a result of these interviews, Grimm and Barron noticed that several students had stories that offered examples of the conflicts they negotiated and advice on how they adjusted to the university. This led to the proposal of a website that would support student retention by sharing information about academic and social adjustments, provide convincing testimony written by underrepresented students, and employ underrepresented students in activities leading to university change. In addition, the website would offer complicated representations of students to faculty and administrators. This proposal was made through the Department of Educational Opportunity as one component of a larger program called ExSEL, which was funded by a grant from the State of Michigan King-Chavez-Parks Initiative. The grant provided a supported position for a graduate student to act as project coordinator, stipends for undergraduate students who wrote stories for the website, and money for supplies. The project has been continually funded since its initial year in 2002. New student stories are featured on the site each year as well as additional stories from returning students who revisit what they first wrote and write new stories to show how they have changed. Graduate students also continue to coordinate the project and conduct research related to it, helping not only to expand the project but also to critically reflect on it.

Before the web project began, I took over Nancy Barron’s role as Project Coordinator and began to work with a group of seven students to compose stories that would be featured on the website. Six of these students were students whom Nancy Barron had interviewed, and one was a writing center coach who was rec-
ommended by the Assistant Director of the Writing Center. Four of the seven students were writing center coaches. In my role as Project Coordinator, I met with students individually and in groups. I coached students on the writing of their stories, discussing the stories with them, reading drafts, and suggesting revisions. I collected photographs from students, video recorded a few of their activities, and designed the website featuring their stories. I also conducted research on the project, including interviewing project participants and writing reflections and observation notes based on my participation in the project. My own reflective writing was often done in narrative form, and I used it to develop themes for my interpretation of the students’ stories, of their experiences participating in the project, and of my experience working on the project.

The research design was informed by case study methodology (Merriam; Stake) and was initially part of larger project, which included two other case studies. This research project can also be understood as a form of action research (Herr and Anderson). It was my goal both to understand how stories might be used by students to represent themselves in this specific case and to engage in an act, that of creating a website with students, both to create change and to research this act/action through participation, observation, and reflection as a valid practice for writing centers. In this article, I focus more specifically on this project as an example of narrative inquiry, that is, the use of narratives to understand lived experiences. I draw on narrative inquiry to reevaluate a writing center project that employed stories as a means to expand its offerings to students and to the university community. Lyons and LaBoskey suggest that narratives become modes of inquiry and ways of knowing when our narrative practices are intentional, reflective human actions, socially and contextually situated, in which teachers with their students, other colleagues, or researchers, interrogate their teaching practices to construct the meaning and interpretation of some compelling or puzzling aspect of teaching and learning through the production of narratives that lead to understanding, changed practices, and new hypotheses. (21)

It is my aim in this article to show an example of how such narrative inquiry can occur within the context of writing center teaching and learning.

**The Identity Work of Learning**

My sense of the potentials and perils of narratives develops out of my assumption that a central aspect of learning is the negotiation of identities. This assumption is supported by the work of Etienne Wenger, a specialist in learning theory. In con-
structuring a social theory of learning, Wenger argues for the importance of understanding learning as a transformative process, which “concerns the opening of identities—exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state” (262). Wenger claims that learning results from participation in communities of practice, particularly through three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination and alignment, in which participants come to belong to and construct an identity through a particular community. In other words, people learn best when they engage with other learners, imagine new potentials through learning, and align themselves with the practices and people associated with what they are learning.

Wenger defines the work of engagement as the ongoing interactions, practices, and relationships through which members of a community engage and participate in a common enterprise (73-74, 174, 184). He defines the work of imagination as “the process of expanding our self by transcending our space and time and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (176). This work, if successful, often results in new relations and new identities as individuals and groups imagine who they are, who they can be, and what they can do. He defines the work of alignment as coordinating our practices with a community’s efforts as we become a part of something bigger than ourselves (179). For each of these modes, Wenger also notes there are trade-offs. For example, imagination can be alienating or ineffective, particularly if it is “so removed from any lived form of membership [in a community] that it detaches our identity and leaves us in a state of uprootedness” or if it is based on stereotypes rather than actual practices (178). In thinking about imagination in terms of narrative inquiry, it is important to keep these trade-offs in mind so we don’t get caught up in imagining identities that can be difficult to live up to in actual practice or that disconnect us from the other members of our communities. We must be careful to focus on imagination as a means of extending ourselves into the future and realizing new possibilities but not at the expense of lived experience or of connecting with those who know us in our daily lives.

What I believe is important about Wenger’s work for our understanding of narratives in the writing center is that he calls our attention to the work of identity negotiation within learning—an area often ignored in traditional concepts of education. He explains the significance of identity work:

I am suggesting that the maintenance of an identity across boundaries requires work and, moreover, that the work of integrating various forms of participation is not just a secondary process. This work is not simply an additional concern for an independently defined identity as
viewed as a unitary object; rather, it is at the core of what it means to be a person. (161)

Students coming to college from a variety of backgrounds bring with them multiple memberships in communities of practice—some of which align with the practices of higher education and some of which are at odds with those practices. Particularly for students who do not belong to dominant communities, the work of constructing and maintaining an identity through which they can successfully learn will be quite significant and will involve tensions that might never be fully resolved. Many of these students struggle again and again with “what it means to be a person” in the setting of their local institutions. It is through narrative inquiry that we can start to appreciate and facilitate such work.

The Potentials: A Narrative of Belonging

One potential of narratives is their ability to illustrate and teach us about the identity work of learning in our institutions. In particular, the story I discuss in what follows demonstrates how one student worked through alignment, imagination, and engagement in order to obtain a sense of belonging to the university.

In his story for the project, Jermaine wrote about how he negotiated his way from imagining and aligning himself as only different (one of the few inner-city, black males on campus) to having similarities, alignment, and engagement with what he calls the “average Tech student.” He writes,

Contrary to popular belief, I had no idea what it felt like to be a minority in my surroundings. In Detroit, [his hometown] everywhere you go, (in the inner city), African American people outnumber any other ethnic background. In high school I had friends from diverse origins and ethnic groups, (or should I say knew people from diverse origins and ethnic groups), but never before had I been emerged in a setting so different [as Tech]. It was uncomfortable. I readily stood out in any class that I walked into or anywhere I went for that matter. Initially I was apprehensive about things as simple as eating lunch in the dorms or asking questions in class because I didn’t want people to stereotype me. Individuals never had to open their mouth and say I was different—I was too busy seeing it with my own eyes. In my mind I thought that the average Tech student had never encountered me (an inner city black male). (Donaldson 3)

Jermaine highlights the identity work that this new experience of being a minority requires on his part. In adjusting to being a minority, Jermaine begins to inter-
nalize his sense of difference, writing that nobody had to point out that he was different as he already felt, saw and imagined his own difference. Here, Jermaine appears to be engaged in a struggle with belonging to the university as a learning organization. In discussing belonging as an aspect of the identity work of learning, Wenger suggests that imagination is one facility through which learners connect or disconnect themselves from learning communities. Initially, Jermaine imagines only difference. This difference produces a tension that he must resolve in order to belong and to learn at the university. In Jermaine’s story, this difference is resolved when “the average Tech student became a friend instead of a foe” (Donaldson 3), and Jermaine begins to have contact with students, through his job in the writing center and his participation in organizations, that lets him experience both similarities and differences with other students. Jermaine moves from imagining students at Tech as enemies to seeing them as friends. Here, then, is the positive effect of imagination: “It is through imagination that we recognize our own experience as reflecting broader patterns, connections and configurations” (Wenger 178). It is in finding communities to which he can meaningfully belong that Jermaine resolves this tension at least enough to be a very active and successful student at MTU as he imagines and experiences connections with students.

Jermaine’s story offers another example of the identity work involved in learning when he discusses his initial adjustment to academic life at the university. He first describes his easy success in high school. This suggests that not only was he very successful in the communities of practice there but he also constructed an identity as “one of the brightest people in the world in [his] age bracket” (Donaldson 1). However, in his story, Jermaine recognizes that this is an identity he cannot maintain once he arrives at a new school. He writes of being shocked because he did poorly on his first exams and of being humbled by college. His initial response is to withdraw, drawing on a common narrative about success in college: it is accomplished individually and through acquisition of knowledge rather than through practice. Later though, as he becomes more of a member of communities of practice on campus, Jermaine begins to realize that competence might be a matter of mutual engagement in practices:

The people that were excelling around me were the same people who were going to learning centers, study group sessions, and professor office hours. I began to utilize the associates I acquired, which gave me endless opportunities in every class to get help. My life has been a lot easier since then. Accepting the helping hands has cut down study time and aided me in establishing meaningful friendships. (Donaldson 2)
Here Jermaine offers a story which works both to warn students and to give them advice. He addresses the common sense understanding that in order to be successful a student needs to isolate himself or herself and study. And he suggests ways that students can become more effective at studying (through campus resources) and can establish more meaningful relationships. This aspect of Jermaine’s story touches on learning as a social rather than individual act. His warning and advice point to the problems with conceiving of learning as acquiring information:

When information does not build up to an identity of participation, it remains alien, literal, fragmented, unnegotiable. It is not just that it is disconnected from other pieces of relevant information, but that it fails to translate into a way of being in the world coherent enough to be enacted in practice. Therefore, to know in practice is to have a certain identity so that information gains the coherence of a form of participation. (Wenger 220)

It is through Jermaine’s experience as conveyed in his story and through his participation in the project that we see this identity work that Wenger points to. As I discussed above, Jermaine’s story demonstrates the work of imagination as he imagines and re-imagines himself and other students, creating images of who he and they are. What Jermaine’s story also shows is his work with engagement and alignment. He shows himself engaging in the communities of the university, such as the gospel choir (which is featured in a short video on his page) and the writing center (where he worked as a tutor). And he shows himself aligning with the university as he participates in the web project and connects his individual efforts to broader efforts of reaching other students. In his story, he speaks with the authority of a graduating senior and marks himself as belonging to the university.

To me, this is one of the potentials of such a project—it showcases identity work, acknowledging its importance and offering strategies to students who read the stories for undertaking this work. In addition, in featuring narratives on a website, we in the writing center expand the space of the center as stories, such as Jermaine’s, become accessible to students, teachers, and administrators outside the center. In this way, these narratives might contribute to changed understandings of the different ways students define themselves and negotiate their identities within our institutions. This is especially true of the understanding these students construct in their narratives when they write as members in multiple communities—showing differences and similarities between school and home and between students. In this sense, the real value of narratives is that they can be interpreted and re-interpreted.
The Perils: Narrative as Reification

However, for all its possible potentials, the project, particularly as it works through narrative, is not without its problems. One of the real perils of narratives is that they are open to interpretation and re-interpretation. When we use narrative inquiry to make public narratives from the writing center, we have to be aware of the possibility that they will be interpreted in ways that the writers and researchers did not intend or plan for. In addition, we need to be aware that narratives, once written, are static while the identity work and learning they showcase are ongoing processes.

For example, in working with these students both before and after they wrote their stories, I realized the limits of narrative to represent the students—both as they were at the time of writing and as they changed after that writing. One student, Norma, talked and wrote about the importance of being an athlete and playing tennis as part of who she is as a student. She described how much she learned about success and not giving up from the game. The fall term following our work on the website, Norma told me she decided not to return to the tennis team. When I asked her why, she told me she needed more time to focus on school and studying. I was surprised because it seemed like such an important part of who she was at the university. I worried about her giving it up. Later in that term, I told her I was worried and she laughed, telling me that the people who knew her, knew she would be all right.2

As my experience with Norma illustrates, I’m particularly concerned with the way in which narratives reify identity. This concern draws on Wenger’s concept of reification, defined as objects (such as narratives) we produce which give form to our experience and congeal experience into “thingness” (58). This concern makes me reconsider the potentials of narrative because of the way in which they can diminish identity work as a participatory and active process—as though students who write these stories are finished negotiating identities within the university and as though students who read them have access to these experiences so that they don’t have to negotiate identity conflicts. As Wenger points out, identity as an experience is a way of being in the world, not simply our projection of self into that world: “I am not trying to belittle the importance of categories, self-images, and narratives of the self as constitutive of identity, but neither do I want to equate identity with those reifications. Who we are lies in the way we live day to day, not just in what we think or say about ourselves, though this is of course part (but only part) of the way we live” (151). In Wenger’s understanding such reifications are contrasted with participation, the former being occasions when “we project our-
selves onto the world, and not having to recognize ourselves in those projections, we attribute to our meanings an independent existence” (58), and the latter being occasions when “we recognize ourselves in each other” (58).

Problems of reification became evident in an editorial about the Making Our Mark project, sent to the school newspaper by an alumnus, Chris Lubowicki, from the Class of 2000. He writes, “On the Web site cover page appears a listing of the students’ names, and their race—with no mention of their stories or achievements.” He continues, “It makes no difference if a person is White, Black, Hispanic or Asian—the only thing that should matter in the ‘Making Our Mark @ MTU’ pages is how each individual managed to succeed at Michigan Tech. Why not focus on those points instead?”

While I don’t agree with Lubowicki’s point (and while I doubt that he read any of the stories or at least doesn’t indicate that he has in the letter), I do see the way in which he is able to point to the site as a thing, and to the students’ race and ethnicities as “things” as a problem with the site itself and not simply a problem with
his reading of the site. Because the stories are things, because the website is static, it does reify identity to some extent, and it does allow for people to take up the sites in ways that I, as the designer, never intended. In fact, Lubowicki points to one of the features of the site that troubled me as I designed the opening web page—the labeling of students by race and ethnicity. I remember the awkwardness I felt in making the decision to label students by race. I can still remember sitting at the computer in an office attached to the writing center as I created the page. During the year, there would have been many students and writing center coaches around, but in the summer it was much quieter. It was difficult even though I had asked students how they identified by race or ethnicity and later had shown them the site (but this was only after the opening page had been created). Because it was summer and the students were no longer on campus, I couldn’t get together with them and
discuss the site in the way I had discussed their stories with them. I did talk with the writing center director about the opening page and these labels, but ultimately I made the decision by myself, alone at that computer. It did feel like a way, my way, of limiting their identities and of framing their difference.

From one perspective, it is easy to see why Lubowicki might read the site as being only about achievements and not about race—despite the fact that the stories themselves demonstrate how these achievements are connected to and not separate from issues of identity such as race. It is easy to see this because the site does emphasize these students' achievements. From another perspective, though, it is difficult to accept this reading because of the way Lubowicki draws on a narrative of whiteness—one that disregards race altogether. This narrative is similar to what Richard Dyer posits is the equation of whiteness with the human condition or with being normal. He argues that, because we don't often recognize whiteness as a racial category, “the equation of being white with being human secures a position of power. White people have power and believe that they think, feel, and act for all people; white people, unable to see their particularity, cannot take account of other people's” (12). This perspective suggests that reading the site as only about achievement and not also about race is an act of power that draws on the ideas of whiteness as the norm.

From a third perspective, at the same time as I worry about the whiteness narrative that informs Lubowicki's claims, I'm aware of another narrative of whiteness that surrounds this story—one that challenges whiteness as the norm. This is the narrative of a white male graduate student, Matt Hill, who wrote in response to Lubowicki's letter, a response that calls into question many of Lubowicki's claims and argues in favor of the work of the website. Hill writes,

As a white guy who grew up in an incredibly affluent, white suburb in Ohio, I never faced issues of diversity in a life or death manner. I had the privilege of being able to think that race does not matter. However, I realize that my story is not the only important story to be told. In order to know more about myself and the worlds I inhabit, it is crucial to listen to and understand different narratives. That is what is important about “Making Our Mark.”

This perspective suggests yet another way in which whiteness informs readings of this site.

In these responses to the website, I see a layering of narratives, some which recognize the working of whiteness, some which deny that working. As these narratives build up I wonder about them as reifications, as projections of “selves” with an inde-
pendent existence when what I feel is the potential of the website is to show a dependent existence, the need for belonging that students are faced with when coming to university. This is where I most feel the perils of narratives used in the ways they are in this project—they move beyond the space of the center and in that way move beyond our control—provoking other narratives, narratives we might not want to feature or invisible narratives that our site helps to maintain as hidden. In the end though, I try to take comfort in these perils as they tell me this project is working, maybe not always in ways I would want or can control but in ways that disrupt my and my institution's understanding of student identity and the work of belonging.

*The Possibilities: Learning through Narrative Inquiry*

While narratives and narrative inquiry offer both potentials and perils for expanding the space of the writing center, they also offer the possibility for writing center workers to continually relearn what it means to be a student. This can be seen through my experience working with Jermaine. In an interview I conducted with him about his experience writing a story for the project, he explained to me the difficulty of imagining his own competent identity as compared to that of an “average” or “mainstream” student’s identity. For Jermaine, the average mainstream student was a construction of the different narratives about students at Tech conveyed in such things as pamphlets and student lore:

I created an identity from what I read in pamphlets and heard from others. I kind of put together this image of this average student from this upper middle class home, you know, who probably didn’t live in the inner city but lived in the suburbs or a rural area who came with a lot of financial backing, a lot of emotional support ...And you know that was really weird to combat against where my situation was not as stable and not as vocal and not as just, I guess, run of the mill. It wasn’t something that is done all the time in my social circles where everybody has a degree ...[For the average student], it wasn’t even an if. It was like, ‘go to college,’ yeah. You know. ‘I know exactly what I’ll do, and my dad already does it, and I already have all the programs that the school has at home because they got them all for me when I was in high school, and I took prep college classes.’ You know they kind of already have the doormat made so the transition is really smooth. (Donaldson, Personal interview)
Clearly, this is another example of the potential of narrative inquiry: Jermaine uses his participation in the project and my research as opportunity to reflect on what he has learned. However, Jermaine was not the only one who learned something unexpected from this interaction.

During this interview, I was struck by this idea of a “transitional doormat,” that some of us have a mat welcoming us into institutions, one we hardly notice as we walk across it, and some of us don’t. The idea that some students were offered more preparation for college, felt more comfortable at college, and were better aligned with its practices didn’t surprise me. But in listening to this student, I began to realize just how much I take for granted or how much I don’t have to notice about the work students outside the white, middle class have to undertake in order to feel competent, to feel able to learn and to feel able to belong at university. In calling this a transitional doormat, I realize there is an investment in preparing white, middle class students for college and that this investment is often invisible but still has significant effects. This is similar to what George Lipsitz calls a “possessive investment in whiteness,” arguing that “white Americans are encouraged to invest in whiteness, to remain true to an identity that provides them with resources, power and opportunity” (vii). Lipsitz explains that while whiteness is not a scientific or cultural fact, it is “a social fact, an identity created and continued with all-too-real consequences for the distribution of wealth, prestige, and opportunity” (vii).

My work with this project prompts me to reflect on my own preparation for college. I think back to the assumption in my family that I (and my two older brothers) would go to college. I think back to the college prep course my mother enrolled me in the summer before my first year of college. I remember her own sense of inadequacy at not finishing her college degree and her certainty that all of her children would. I remember all my close friends from high school going to college just like I did, preparing throughout our high school years. Part of the aim of the Making Our Mark@MTU project is to recognize this investment—not necessarily as it affects “mainstream” students but as it affects those students who must work harder to obtain membership in the learning communities offered to them at university.

In working to understand Jermaine’s story and his writing of that story, concepts I’ve begun to take for granted become unfamiliar. Writing about defamiliarization as an aspect of qualitative research, Kamberlis and Dimitriadis highlight its potential for allowing us to rethink ourselves and our practices: “These acts of defamiliarization can help people recognize the fragmentary, historically situated, partial, and unfinished nature of their ‘selves’ and promote processes of self-construc-
tion/reconstruction in relation to new discourses and others" (54). Narrative inquiry, as a process of defamiliarization, allows writing center workers to resist reifying students and their experiences.

Another example of how narrative inquiry disrupts reification can be seen in the complementary and conflicting representations that multiple stories from the project create. For example, while two black male students who wrote stories for the project confirmed my sense of the difficulties of attending a predominantly white school, a third black male student countered this assumption. In discussions with him and through reading his story, I learned that this student, Bryan, did not have a difficult social experience. He writes about this in his story, describing how he has not experienced difficulty in adjusting to being around so many white people (which is a topic he is often asked about when he is home on break): “Actually I have found the transition almost seamless from a social standpoint. (From an academic standpoint it is a little bit different. In fact I am still adjusting to it.) I am well liked by everyone I come across. People stop by my room all the time, and I feel that they see me as a person, not just as an African American person” (Pew 3). Here I see this student engaged in disrupting what are often reified beliefs about what his experience is like and complicating how students are represented within his university and within his home community. Interestingly, it is also another moment in which I see a layering of narratives about both identity and experience, much as I saw with the narratives of whiteness that I discussed above.

In championing the use of narratives for understanding teaching and learning, Gian Pagnucci highlights this possibility of narratives to address contradictions and complexities: “Where narrative may fail in its exactitude, it offers instead a way to deal with overwhelming complexity, to handle a cacophony of thoughts and ideas” (53). I would argue that this possibility is especially important for those of us who work in writing centers amidst a cacophony of thoughts, ideas, stories, students, and writing.

Conclusion

Writing centers have long been places where stories are told, but without more formal approaches like the one I’ve discussed here those stories rarely make it outside the center or our field. And at times, because they are so commonplace, they tend to be dismissed within writing centers themselves as simply anecdotes.

Narrative inquiry and projects resulting from such research can help to make these stories more accessible outside the center and inside the center. In particular, the project I’ve discussed shows the potential for tutors, teachers, administrators,
and researchers to learn about things we wouldn't otherwise. And in this unexpected learning, the narratives force us to confront how much identity work students undertake as well as the complexity of that work. While we should be both trusting of the potentials of narrative and wary of the perils, we should also recognize the value of narratives and narrative inquiry for expanding the space of the center. Within the center, this means we continue to shape and reshape our understandings of what it means to be a student in our institutions. It also means we continually invite students and tutors to define and redefine who they are and who they can be in our centers. Within our institutions, it means we both participate and intervene in the institutional understandings of "student," "learning," and "teaching." Within our field, it means we join narrative inquiry with other valued methods of research to share our learning and knowing not only with each other but also with those outside of the writing center. Ultimately, we understand and undertake narrative inquiry as an ongoing and complicated process—much like the ongoing and complicated processes of teaching and learning to write.

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NOTES

1 I use the term story to refer to the writing students produced and that is featured on the website that I discuss in this article. In this sense, story refers to an artifact. I use the term narrative to refer to the collection of stories on the website which as a whole I call narratives, especially when I am discussing the use of narrative as a form of inquiry. In this sense it is more general than story. I also use the term narrative to refer to socially- or culturally-shared accounts of experience such as Lipsitz's concept of a "narrative of whiteness."

2 After I had completed my work as project coordinator, Norma (along with a few other previous participants) was writing another narrative to be featured on the website as a means of addressing this problem. While this new narrative also becomes a reification, it can show that Norma has changed over the years she spent at the university as she prepares to graduate.

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