Pick Yourself Up By Your Broadband: Access, the Digital Divide, and Migrant Workers

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By Enrique Reynoso, Jr

Entitled
Pull Yourself Up By Your Broadband: Access, the Digital Divide, and Migrant Workers

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Is approved by the final examining committee:

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PICK YOURSELF UP BY YOUR BROADBAND: ACCESS, THE DIGITAL DIVIDE,
AND MIGRANT WORKERS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
of
Purdue University
by
Enrique Reynoso, Jr.

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

August 2016
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana
To those family members I wish to see one day again: Jose “Pepe” Villarreal, Maria Villarreal, Socorro Vergil and Frank Reynoso. Every year a new loss and with it a pain that never goes away. May our family always honor your memory.
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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation proposes process known as *pizarron borrado*: reorienting “failure” as a productive part of the research process. Using the backdrop of research on migrant workers’ technological access, I argue that classrooms can become much more accessible by moving from failure and looking at points where writing and research have moved in unexpected ways. As scholars such as Grabill have pointed out, access to computers and the Internet is an issue of public policy, and technical communicators are strategically positioned to contribute to, “policy making, research, and teaching” in ways that can help expand these services to underserved and underrepresented populations (1998). And as the process for applying to even low-wage jobs becomes increasingly digitized, I argue that our role as scholars and educators is to both prepare and advocate for these “invisible populations” that will increasingly rely on open or public access to these technologies in and outside of the classroom.
CHAPTER 1

The research of Latino populations tends toward the borderlands of the US, with the Southwest, California, and Texas being major focal points in the history of Chicano and Latino studies. The founding of the United Farm Workers movement for example, with Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez serving as the key members of the organization, arguably served as the starting point of the Chicano movement. Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*, a seminal text in Chicano studies, was written and set in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. Damián Baca’s *Mestiz@ Scripts* focuses on the different varieties of texts of Mesopotamian indigenous peoples. Thus, geographically speaking, the areas of focus in Chicano Studies have been rather limited. Because of this there has been decidedly less academic research on the less visible, or often “invisible”, population of migrant workers.

According to the National Center for Farmworker Health, “there are over 3 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers,” in the United States, 68 percent of whom were born in Mexico (NCFH Factsheet). Additionally, the NCFH found that 35 percent of those migrant workers surveyed could not speak English at all, the average education level completed was at the eighth-grade level (with only 9 percent attaining some form of higher education), and 23 percent of migrant and seasonal farmworkers lived below the poverty line. To wit: in the U.S. we have a highly vulnerable, constantly mobile
population with very little education (at best) or means to even communicate with the other social circles (at worst). In addition to this, both public and higher education sectors are increasingly incorporating technological access in their measures of “literacy” – it is not enough to merely be able to read a textbook, but today’s students must also be able to navigate their way around a computer.

In 2014 the US, for the first time ever, saw the largest movement/capture/deportation of non-Mexican migrants along the US-Mexico Border. According to the Pew Research Center, US Border Patrol agents apprehended more than 250,000 non-Mexicans compared to 229,178 Mexicans, many of whom came from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The Honduran instance was particularly revealing considering Hillary Clinton admitted her involvement in a coup that lead to the arrest of former leader Manuel Zelaya. “Clinton admits that she used the power of her office to make sure that Zelaya would not return to office,” (“Hard Choices”). As a result of Clinton’s actions, Zelaya, a democratically elected leader who was ineligible to run again, is effectively arrested because of his refusal to align/support US interests. As Mark Weisbrot points out, John Kerry and other members of Congress, “have repeatedly warned about the deteriorating security situation”, pointing to a homicide rate increase of “50 percent from 2008 to 2011…political repression, the murder of opposition political candidates, peasant organizers and LGBT activists…” all the while the US continues to financially support the post-coup administration that has escalated the violence. This, in turn, has lead to the mass migration of Central and South American people to the US where they face deportation back to the countries whose violence and poverty they were
trying to escape. The “official” response from the Obama administration is that it was against the coup despite the involvement of officials such as Clinton.

These political backdrops are important in understanding the context of migrants: as stated earlier, historically we’ve understood them to be majority Mexican or Mexican-American. In light of recent developments, more and more migrants are coming to the United States and additionally, moving to areas heretofore not known for their Hispanic populations.

**Failure as process**

This is a dissertation about failure. A failure to adhere to theoretical principles initially laid out at the start of this project. A failure to account for the complexities involved in studying a highly vulnerable, highly invisible population. But most of all, it’s a failure to account for my own materiality: my inability to find more intricate ways to uncover, and safely reveal underlying power structures that lead to poverty with a particular population. The original plan for this project involved a site study and survey of migrant centers and migrant workers in Indiana, with a particular focus in Lafayette and Indianapolis. However, what became very clear was that the particular population I was initially looking for, 18-24 year olds, wasn’t large enough. I tried expanding to adults but again, not enough of a sample size. The problem here is that most “official” services here cater to children, a demographic that every Institutional Review Board (IRB) across the country understandably goes through great pains to protect, so the very idea of doing a site study had to be abandoned. As such, this dissertation has shifted to become more of
a heuristic, or rather, a work that lays a theoretical foundation for future work. One that looks at the particular structural issues that create invisible populations.

Considering the data we have on migrant workers, we need to uncover the structural problems facing migrants at this point. Historically, one of the strongest markers of economic success in the United States has been home ownership. But to get a sense of the importance of ownership, we must unpack the how: how placement in a city, state, or even area of the country plays a big role in access.

Scene: Seattle. Summer. My significant other and I are in the midst of a short vacation and have been hiking, biking and generally sight seeing. As I’m in the midst of working on my dissertation, we try to find a nice coffee shop to work at. You would think that of all places in the United States, Seattle would be coffee friendly, and they are. We walk around for a bit and find ourselves, unwittingly, in a Starbucks. We set our laptops down at a large table and begin working. Minutes later, a homeless man walks in and sets his backpack down at the far end of the table. He walks to the line and buys a coffee–I think back to our host joking about a “game” they play called, “homeless or hipster”. He sits back down and as I write I start considering where we are and where we’ve been–during our time at Seattle we’ve seen a lot of gorgeous scenery, multimillion dollar homes, advanced technology, but it’s contrasted with a LARGE and obvious homelessness problem. While Seattle brags about it’s football and soccer teams and boasts bikeable infrastructure, you can see from walking down any street that there are many left behind. Overlooked. I think about the man we saw across the street from us screaming out loud, arguing with himself. What kind of mental healthcare access does he have? Or the group of tents at pioneer square: where do they get their food? How do they
get from place to place? HOW DID THEY GET THERE? I think, “if I were homeless in the US, I think I’d do best to head to Seattle too.” The man sits down and, not to be insensitive, but you could tell he hadn’t showered in a while. The question becomes, then, not “what does that say about the man” but rather, “what does it say about Seattle, or about society, that he has easier access to coffee but not shower facilities?”

Scene: Lafayette, Indiana. Upstairs in a coffee shop. We come to this place more regularly because, a) it’s not nearly as crowded as the coffee shop near campus, and b) it’s closer. My partner and I come here often, lamenting the fact that they close at 9PM.

What kind of college town doesn’t have late night coffee shops?

We, my partner and I, live in Lafayette. Purdue is across the bridge in West Lafayette. As graduate students, we have free access to the local bus, which runs every half hour during the weekdays. I budget about a total hour from my apartment to campus, considering I have to transfer buses. I’ve become increasingly dependent on the bus this past year, as my unholy Volkswagen refuses to start, much less run efficiently. I’m paying $67 a month for insurance on a car that I can’t drive. I’m on the job market and have to either drive or fly for campus visits, which involves driving to the airport or taking a shuttle from campus. Car free, even in a college town, is still difficult. I’m lucky in that I have access to my partner’s car and, though she insists that it’s not an inconvenience, taking her Honda wracks me with guilt. Because it’s HER car and not mine and I’m adding more wear to it.

Gotta pay for access. Gatekeeper.

This project serves as a heuristic that will guide future primary research. Current data shows that the level of technological access afforded to migrant workers, the driving
force of which is the 2012 Pew Research report, which stated that 17 percent of all US adults used their cell-phones for most of their online browsing. It also reflects how younger generations and minorities are more likely to use their phones for most of their online browsing. “Half (51%) of African-American cell internet users do most of their online browsing on their phone…[while] two in five Latino cell internet users (42%) fall into [this] category,” (Aaron Smith 2010). This, more than anything, points to a different type of access not afforded to minority populations. If we consider the rise of smartphone usage in the past several years alongside the proliferation of prepaid cellphone plans, then one could reasonably assume that, given their income and transient lifestyle, migrants on the whole will report a greater use of cell phones browsing. But one cannot make these claims wholesale without future study, which will occur at a later date.

**Multilocal Preamble**

The picture this project is paints is necessarily temporal: it is a snapshot of a particular setting (Indiana) and is therefore necessarily limited. Nevertheless, it points towards movement: not just of migrant workers but my own—in the summer of 2008 I moved from Texas to Indiana to pursue my graduate degree in English. Moving from the Rio Grande Valley where approximately 90 percent of the population is classified as Hispanic to Lafayette, Indiana, where at present Hispanics account for only 7.6% of the total population (STATS Indiana). Our movements are socially entangled: who we are dictates not only how we move, but how we are allowed to move and how others view our movement. I had the privilege of being funded as a graduate student and yet arriving
here was a challenge, as I was forced to save money for several months in addition to
selling many of my personal belongings in order to pay for the move.

In order to better from the types of mobility at play here, I must insert my own: in
the summer of 2009 I moved from McAllen, Texas to Lafayette, Indiana to attend
graduate school at Purdue. I had been working for almost two years as a reporter at a
weekly newspaper and had been saving up money for the move. Despite that, I arrived to
my studio apartment with $20 in my bank account, which I would live off of for the two
weeks before my financial aid package was distributed. Stuck in a 450 square foot
apartment, only venturing out by bike to campus, I questioned my motives: why did I do
this? Why would I pack up my life, leaving the only state I’d ever lived in, my friends,
family and everything I’d ever known, to move 1500 miles across the country to start
begin a new life as a graduate student? Six years, one Masters degree and (hopefully) a
forthcoming doctorate later, it’s the same reason we all shift out of our comfort bubbles–
opportunity. And it is in this way that I argue that we are always already migrants: kairos
invokes us to shift our living places.

To be clear, I am not equating my situation with that of migrant workers. There is
a clear danger in this work–they are a particularly vulnerable population and because of
that many go to great lengths to remain purposefully hidden or invisible. My dissertation
could be viewed as a danger to them; indeed, I could be viewed as a threat to them. Yes, I
am bilingual. Yes, I may be from a similar population as them, have the same ethnicity as
them, share the same brown skin as them. I may even be from the exact same geographic
area. But I am not them and they are not me. I am recognizing this project as deliberately
following a decolonized methodology for the simple reason that from its inception I have
paid very close attention to my status as minority, graduate student, and researcher while at the same time recognizing that those particular statuses can both help and hinder not only myself but the potential subjects as well. My parents were migrant laborers and I myself have toiled the fields (for one summer admittedly) with my cousins who were migrant workers year-round. It’s because of this experience and this situatedness that I recognize that my dialect marks me from a particular region. My speech patterns uncover someone whose primary language is English, despite his mother tongue being Spanish. Perhaps this is the biggest obstacle to this research: I am a representative of an institution. I am deeply embedded in the academy and am most definitely an outsider. Thus, I must take care in doing this research; it must be in the service of this population. In doing this work, I argue that future research in the field must follow suit and build methodologies that work in conjunction with disadvantaged populations. This is especially important when dealing with a population whose citizenship status is often nebulous at best.

And it is here where we get to the complication—the National Farm Worker Ministry points out that 60 percent of migrant workers are undocumented, while “78% [of workers are] foreign-born and crossed a border to get here,” (Farm Workers & Immigration). For those few migrant workers who clear the numerous hurdles to the academy, handicapping them with more complex technologies only furthers their vulnerability. The domestic sphere is rife with vulnerability for migrants, as they are much more susceptible to abuse, theft of wages, and other indignities.

In chapter 2 I open with an analysis of citizenship as historically understood. We owe much of our understanding about what it is to be a “citizen” to the Greeks. I argue, however, that this understanding is a fiction that allows for/gives permission to ostracize
people based on their nation-state affiliation. These affiliations influence everything from our legal system to the way people are afforded access to cities and even property. Then, I bring in the field of mobility theory: a framework that argues, “social inequality and social stratification are interrelated; social stratification produces institutionalized patterns of inequality and patterns of inequality produce stratification structures,” (9). As Ohnmacht et al add, the places we are afforded access are tied to issues of social equality as, “social stratification refers…to the unequal distribution of scarce yet desirable goods or resources, whereas inequality means the disparity of opportunity or capacity to maintain, or improve, status,” (9). In other words, not everyone has the ability to move cross-country or sometimes, even within a city and in this way physical access is very often reflected in digital access: frequency of bus and train stops, parking spots, and garages can very much align with the areas that are serviced by Internet Service Providers (ISP’s), have strong cell phone signals, or public wifi hotspots. And for migrants in particular, this effect can be amplified: the cost and time commitment needed to access the Internet (to say nothing of a high-speed connection) is far too high. And when you have no “home” and live as a nomad, you become particularly vulnerable to the cycle of poverty.

In chapter 3 I provide a backdrop of current scholarly work in professional and technical writing, arguing that the while there is fruitful research that focuses on international perspectives, we must begin incorporating Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist Research methods as a way to address one large blind-spot: domestic people of color. I believe that professional and technical writing are particularly strong avenues for
enacting change *as long as* they begin incorporating work informed by CRT and anti-racist research.

Chapter 4 combines the methodological frameworks of CRT, decolonial theory, and Participatory Action Research (PAR) to not just inform but to create pedagogical practices that will allow students to engage with this research. This work builds from a decolonial methodology first and connects to Participatory Action Research (PAR), a methodology, “in which representatives of the focus population(s) participate as coresearchers,” (Irizarry and Brown 64). Because I cannot anticipate the type of access I will be afforded, it is impossible to predict the type of data I will be able to collect, thus this nexus of a decolonized PAR connects directly to anti-racism research because it, “bears a tremendous burden…to deal with whether the collaborating parties in a research study necessarily share a common understanding of the nature and politics of research (e.g., definitions, boundaries, objectives),” (Sefa Dei and Johal 13).

This dissertation necessarily is dappled: it operates at the nexus of critical race theory (CRT), technical communication, and rhetoric and composition and in chapter 5 I discuss all of the different types of accesses threaded throughout this work and articulate *pizarron borrado*: an idea that allows for “failure” of research and writing and uses that as a way to improve students’ perception of *how* to write and do research.
CHAPTER 2

Migrant workers and movement are inextricably linked. I argue that in order to better understand the movement of migrants we must first interrogate what can often be an impedance to their movement: perception of citizenship. To be clear, I am not stating that all migrant workers are “undocumented” as it were, but as I discussed in chapter one the vast majority of them are from Latin American countries, specifically Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador. What we are interrogating here is the reality that, documented or not, these populations are often perceived as “illegal” and therefore are held under more scrutiny by law enforcement. This chapter does two things: it first reorients our understanding of what citizenship is by arguing that our historical understanding of citizenship itself is a misreading of classical rhetoric. Secondly, it brings in a discussion on mobility theory and argues that infrastructure serves as an institutional superstructure that reinforces access to technology, jobs, and upward mobility. These two ideas help us conceptualize migrant workers’ dual status as (il)legal: whether born in the US or not, their very livelihood is largely dependent on whether or not people think they are American.
Classical Citizenship

In the *Constitution of Athens* Aristotle lays out the political history and subsequent development of Athenian democracy while the *Nicomachean Ethics* is essentially a guidebook for how to build the habits of an ideal citizen (which, by extension, would mean if everyone followed his ethics then Athens would be run by the most virtuous citizens). But it’s in the *Politics* where Aristotle provides the most detail on what it meant to be a citizen of Athens. He says that, “he who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state; and, speaking generally, a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life,” (63). Though we think of Athens as a bastion of democracy, those who were afforded political power were male landowners–women, minorities, children, and slaves had no political discourse. It’s from here that Aristotle begins making further distinctions–newly established city-states by necessity cannot rely on apply heredity as a measure of citizenship, but larger city-states certainly need to establish more citizenship requirements for the purposes of manageability. He argues for the land ownership requirement because, simply put, land constitutes an element necessary for the existence of the state–without adequate land, there is no state. But necessity, as Arendt points out, is a realm of violence. For Greeks, survival was a violent part of life. The citizen, or male landowner, had one major duty–to engage with the polis. Physical labor was the realm of the non-citizen, i.e. women, children, and most importantly, slaves. “Neither labor nor work was considered to possess sufficient dignity to constitute a *bios* at all, an autonomous and authentically human way of life; since they served and produced what was necessary and useful, they could not be free, independent of human needs and
wants,” (13). The private sphere, or home, was violent because the male had to maintain his household in order to continue being an active member of the polis. Violence was a, “prepolitical [way] to deal with people characteristic of life outside the polis, of home and family life, where the household head ruled with uncontested, despotic powers…”(27). This worked relatively well in ancient Greece, for sure, but as Arendt points out, Aristotle’s social structure is flawed because it is modeled on the home. Husband by definition delegates as he sees fit, and each subsequent family member, be they wife, child, or slave, operates on subordinate hierarchical planes. More importantly, though, Arendt argues that the household social structure is limited because the private realm is a realm of necessity, whereas the public realm pushes a freedom from necessity. Both of these things create what Arendt calls a realm of violence. “…force and violence are justified in [the household] sphere because they are the only means to master necessity–for instance, by ruling over slaves–and to become free,” (31).

John Stuart Mill echoes this exact sentiment when describing more thoroughly tyrannical systems of government⁠¹⁴ that base their legitimacy on precedent and birthright. The leaders of those governments had to necessarily enforce their legitimacy through violence because, “their power was regarded as necessary, but also as highly dangerous; as a weapon which they would attempt to use against their subjects, no less than external enemies,” (11). Here, though, Mills is afraid of what often manifests itself in governments–the “tyranny of the majority” and of “prevailing opinion”. Tyrants, in their singular form (be they a person or faction), are dangerous enough, but Mills proposes the following: while creating a political system that limits/counters tyrannical leadership, there need to also be put in place limits on the majority themselves.
Additionally, Mills fears those moments when the state micromanages each citizens’
individual life, on account that it is in the benefit of the state that the individual must be
regulated. It’s an interesting and troublesome point we’re dealing with here that Arendt
often harkens back to—it’s not enough to just regulate the power of the state, nor to
regulate the power of the majority; because the balance is so precarious, we often don’t
see how social conformity begins to manifest itself as personal regulation and we must be
wary of that, Mill warns. “Society has expanded fully as much effort in the attempt…to
compel people to conform to its notions of personal as of social excellence,” (17). He
goes on to say that, again, this thinking worked well in smaller societies that were
particularly vulnerable to invaders, but the sheer size of modern cities makes it difficult
to enact. More importantly, this results in a stifling of plurality and “moral repression”,
the forcing of individuals to adhere to abstract social norms.

And what of the burgeoning state? In The Federalist No. 10, James Madison
describes a particularly precarious position of the newly established country–the problem
of factions. So, let’s say you’re a young United States of America: you’re in debt after a
long war with your mother country, attempting to establish some sort of democracy that
arguably hasn’t been done before, and basically figuring it out as you go along. You’ve
got all of these little states running around trying to control their own pieces of the pie
while you establish some semblance of order. This, Madison argues, is how factions lead
to chaos. He says that superior parties, rather than general rules of justice, make
legislation happen. Rival parties fight back and forth at the expense of the greater public
good. The problem lies in what to do about it—cut off the head, or cure the effects. For
Madison the former is simply not an option because you’d either have to completely
remove liberty or give everyone the exact same “opinions…passions…[and] interests,” (2). Therefore, the only choice is to control the effects of faction. How do we do this? As a republic: the cities and states are just too large for a direct democracy to work. If we have representatives for large groups of people, he argues, then we can start to balance these things out and most importantly, limit the spreading of factions. “The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States,” (9). Put more simply, Madison believes that because the few representatives (or “factious leaders” if they come into representative power) are the barrier to their respective constituents, there is a much smaller chance that wild social swings will take over large portions of the country. Put a simpler way, representatives are a sort of barrier reef that stems the tide of swinging opinion. Effectively, this keeps a loose group of communities into contact with a greater state authority. They keep their identity, the state keeps them under control.

Minority Citizenship:

Breaking away from the traditional understanding of civic rhetoric requires us to ask what it means to be a citizen *today*. Does citizenship, as classically defined, even exist in a post-global age? More importantly, what (O)ther historical narratives have been suppressed in order to prop up the Greeks? Walter Mignolo offers decolonial theory as a way to break free from the western *epistemae* by calling for what he calls “border gnosis”, a process that helps uncover non-westernized epistemologies without resorting to intellectual colonialism. He argues that most theory has a tendency to co-opt alternative or subaltern and westernize them. Gnosis was originally part of the “semantic
field” of the “western configuration of knowledge,” and he suggests aligning (but not equating) it with episteme. It is, “a response to the need to indicate a secret or hidden kind of knowledge…not available to sense experience…attained by mystical contemplation or by pure logical or mathematical reasoning,” (Local Histories 9). Gnosis is a way of giving voice to the subaltern, unencumbered by the Greeks or Romans. Mignolo argues that equally powerful episteme developed simultaneously with the Greeks, but the “coloniality of power” effectively silenced the “better known memories (although not as well known as the Greek legacies) in the Andes and in Mesoamerica,” (17).

One example of a gnostic approach is looking at the pochteca, an ancient Mesoamerican people who traded and traveled throughout both the American Southwest and into the Aztec empires. Randall McGuire’s 1980 essay “The Mesoamerican Connection in the Southwest” argues that the pochteca were itinerant traders that moved from empire to empire. He points to the sudden rise of certain “Mesoamerican traits” between 1000-1400 A.D. as evidence of the rise of influence of the pochteca, such as trade outposts, burial sites and architectural designs. The strongest point of pochteca influence is the prevalence of spiritual symbols in the American Southwest that trace their origins to Latin America, such as the feathered serpent (which is often connected to Aztec and Mayan tribes, among many others). “The appearance of these symbols and beliefs in the southwest does not indicate proselytizing by missionaries of specific cults but does indicate the northernmost extent of a basic set of symbols that were variously combined in different cults,” (25). So here we can make a distinction via gnosis: the pochteca weren’t an official “tribe” per se, yet the influence of this itinerant group spread
from Latin American into the American Southwest. A westernized approach to the
*pochtecta* would make a strong parallel to the Sophists in that they too were itinerant
traders oratory whose influence spread all through ancient Greece. But as Mignolo points
out, doing this is an act of intellectual imperialism—Latin America is not Greece and the
*pochtecta* were not Sophists. Instead, gnosis allows us to look at who the *pochtecta* were
on *their own* terms and ask a far more important question: what would a rhetoric of
*pochtecta* look like and what influences do we see in border areas of the US? By design,
they couldn’t have been “citizens” as we currently understand them—their constant
migration meant that they were the tribe of no tribe.

Baca supports this idea of gnosis via the subaltern perspective, arguing that Latin
America and the Caribbean have a rich history of discursive critique of “Anglo–and
Eurocentric ideologies,” (“te-ixtli: The ‘Other Face of the Americas,” 2). Both he and
Mignolo are essentially proposing “new” old rhetorics in an attempt to break free from
the dominant westernized rational ideology. Baca says that, “contemporary problems
related to scenarios of neoliberalism, transnationalism, migration, social movements, and
cultural hybridity, moreover, cannot be appropriately analyzed without an understanding
of the Americas,” (5) If we are to understand how citizenship carries with it a history of
racism and violence, we must return to the past and trace an(O)ther rhetoric that has
worked alongside and against the one we already know.

Returning to the “citizen”, Derrida complicates this notion by comparing the
construction of official "other" versus the absolute other in ancient Greece and how it
manifests itself into issues of citizenship today (something I'm sure I mentioned in a
previous response). What Derrida begins with is a description of the limits of hospitality
towards political outsiders—it was common courtesy for Greeks to extend a certain amount of courtesy to "outsiders" of a community on the condition that they held claim to some sort of title or name. They weren't granted the full rights of the Athenian citizen, but were instead given an alternate space where they could officially engage with citizens through their outsider status. However, that hospitality was conditional—the actual or perceived comfort of the citizen could in no way be threatened, and it is here where we see law intervening in very complicated ways. The state, in the name of protection, has to delimit boundaries of outsider and absolute other, citizen and stranger, and public and private space. So if Derrida's logic reads as follows: the State must check to see if you have enough social standing to qualify as an outsider/stranger rather than a barbarian/absolute other. If you qualify as outsider, then the citizen can provide conditional hospitality only insofar as the citizen feels comfortable. If, at any point, the citizen feels that the outsider is encroaching on their personal space, then the state must decide the boundaries of that particular citizen's private space and act accordingly. “…a reflection on hospitality presupposes…the possibility of a rigorous delimitation of thresholds or frontiers…between the private and the public, private and public law, etc.” (49). It’s this moment where Derrida says that the State can now begin encroaching on the private, or rather, extending where the public sphere is and legislating around it. Of this he gives the example of how email, though connected to a private user, can be deemed public space because of its potential to extend to anyone anywhere, which therefore becomes subject to State laws.

In a country where a large amount of the population has a nebulous status (e.g. “illegal immigrants”) there is no better reason to expand civic rhetoric to include those
very people. Gloria Anzaldúa articulates this via border rhetoric and “mestizaje”: people who have lived along the border have seen their status arbitrarily change despite their own historical connections to the land. Mexican immigrants, for example, navigate multiple identities while the US government attempts to force of two–legal or illegal. Anzaldúa points to this when she says, “with the victory of the US forces over the Mexican in the U.S.-Mexican War, los norteamericanos pushed the Texas border down 100 miles, from el rio Nueces to el rio Grande,” (29). It’s an attempt to remove the Burkean “consubstantiality” between two types of people, Americans and Mexicans, and separate them. The ambiguity of the “illegal” immigrant cannot exist under the Aristotelian logic of the state. But mestizaje, or “new consciousness” is a way of embodying that ambiguity. The mestizo embodies a new consciousness, a person who is transformed from a supplicant to a body with awareness of, “the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and…show[s] in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended,” (102). Border thinking pushes us to think from the perspective of those who lack an official status.

Another example of border thinking comes via Enrique Dussel’s “Polarizing Mexico”, in which he traces the financial history of Mexico and what it meant for the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). His main argument is that financial struggles in the early 1980’s made Mexico’s leaders desperate to create a financial strategy that would quickly remedy the situation. NAFTA was part of a “liberalization strategy” whose aim was to separate sectors of the Mexican economy in the hopes of offering a fix. However, Dussel argues that, “although specific segments of Mexico’s economy…have so far resulted in moderate positive economic outcomes at the
aggregate level, a majority of firms, branches, households and regions have not benefited and pose overall economic and social sustainability problems,” (2). We need only look at the affects of austerity measures in Greece or the riots in Brazil to recognize this to see how liberalization strategies have played out writ large. Liberalization strategy, is yet another attempt to place western thinking in a non-western context.

And what of the millions of Americans whose discourse is not English? The rules of traditional civic rhetoric dictate that those lacking the official discourse by necessity lack power to engage with the state. How can the field continue to invoke civic rhetoric when it automatically silences Other voices? Including the un-recognized voice as part of civic society not only helps break the systematic disenfranchisement of the silenced, but can also offer additional modes of thinking. Mignolo claims that this inclusion of subalternized voices can make for more powerful *epistemae*. “The variety of Western metaphysics…is, as Derrida himself states, monolingual. [Abdelkebir] Khatibi, instead, underlines that his, unlike Derrida’s, is a *bilingual situation* related to two (forms of) metaphysics, Western and Islamic,” (82). This is an argument for articulation from the perspective of the Other–current research fails to take into account the perspective of the observed. Rather, they merely choose to represent, through anecdotal evidence and accounts of the dominant discourse, the researched. Including the Other into civic rhetoric allows for “double critique”, Mignolo argues, and invokes Anzaldúa’s border rhetoric. There are social realities that Latin Americans and borderland dwellers have lived with and embodied for centuries. Including viewing civic rhetoric through border rhetorics allows us to not only critique issues like globalization and exploitation of labor, but to also internalize them *while* articulating current situations.
The implications of citizenship are vast in the U.S. In their article “The Double Occupancy of Hispanics”, Pimentel and Balzhiser note that census data on the “Hispanic” population serves two purposes: 1) to monitor the growth of Hispanic populations, and 2) to shore up the numbers of “white” populations. “Hispanics”, they argue, are just the latest minority group whose numbers have been mishandled: they track several historical points where population data was manipulated in order to serve the needs of the state, with blacks in Texas in the mid 19th century, and Native Americans in New Mexico in the early 20th century. Historically, Hispanics were categorized as “white” on census forms—even before implementing the designation of “Hispanic”, enumerators recorded Hispanics as white. They go on to say that many Hispanics come from varying mixed heritages, “including both Spanish and indigenous roots,” (323). But because the term “Hispanic” is nebulous at best, it results in those same populations counting themselves as “white” in terms of race, but “Hispanic” in terms of ethnicity. Thus, they are “double counted” at the same time as they are misrepresented. The result, they argue, is that, “this way in which analysts often disaggregate the white racial data—into Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites—further reinforces the idea that Hispanics are not conceived of as white even though that is how most Hispanics are counted,” (327). The implications of this are vast: voting districts, social services, and government funding (among many other things) are all affected by the double count of Hispanics to the point that a city as culturally diverse as San Antonio could still be read as a white majority despite its large Mexican and Mexican-American population.

It is important to note, however, that special care must be taken if we’re to expand civic rhetoric using border theory. Wholesale application of Freirian methodology, border
rhetorics, or decolonial thinking onto traditional Greek and Roman rhetorical concepts not only does a disservice to those theories, but it also perpetuates the colonialization of the subaltern voice in academia. The ultimate purpose of these rhetorical approaches is to open up different discursive spaces outside of the traditional constraints of classical rhetoric. Though Aristotle, Plato, Cicero and the like remain the commonly accepted “source” of the field, these (O)ther rhetorics challenge traditional narratives precisely because they operate outside of them. That is to say, the expansion of civic rhetoric to include the nebulous and the non-citizen shouldn’t be used as a way to shore up the traditional narrative. Rather, it should be used to draw distinctions between the classical and the (O)ther.

Why is this important to the field? As universities across the globe begin pushing for more “globalized” or “diverse” initiatives, the composition classroom is beginning to feel the limits of “cross-cultural” research. In “The Public Work of Rhetoric”, Coogan and Ackerman pushed this logic towards the broader global implications. “Globalization is fabricating a new category of ‘the people’ as resident and citizen, transcendent of national boundaries and identities, and we are caught up in the drama of how civic life unfolds in these times,” (10). What we research, who we are, and where we’re from stems from a global/international space where you have not only official citizens, but also more unofficial citizens like illegal immigrants, amnesty groups, militia, etc. When you encounter these unofficial citizens, does it mean that their voices are any less valid? For example, in many big cities like Chicago and New York you have large populations of undocumented workers who absolutely need affordable housing, yet they can’t really use their own voices out of fear of being discovered by the State. The double bind there is
that you have political parties attempting to connect themselves to those populations for their own benefit. They can’t vote per se, but their voices can be heard by local (and presumably “legitimate”) citizens and communities (or via census data, as Pimentel and Balzhiser showed). At the same time, scholars like Ralph Cintron complicate this idea of inclusion as, “a topos to be examined,” (Public Work of Rhetoric 103). If we don’t allow for the complication of terms like “inclusion”, we could set ourselves up for failure. For example, lets use the term “diversity”– much like engagement, diversity is this buzzword constantly pushed by universities and businesses. Our own university touts a large international student population, but those students also bring with them more fees than domestic students. And what happens to those numbers of “diverse” students during recessions? They’re usually the first to go–without interrogating what institutions mean by “diversity” we’re effectively viewing it as extraneous. Cintron’s essentially making the same argument in critiquing the idea of democracy naturally virtuous: by uncovering the Burkean substance of terms like “democracy”, we can avoid the danger of conflating them with hegemonic forces like the state.

Very often students are situated in a narrow context: they are tasked with researching (O)ther countries within a glass box of an American university. Border rhetorics, minority rhetorics, decolonial thinking, etc. all attempt to push beyond a Eurocentric, westernized approach. Working to broaden the scope of civic rhetoric is a way to 1) highlight the nebulous boundaries of citizenship, 2) provide agency to “stateless” persons, and 3) create a more powerful rhetoric that can work to create more powerful epistemae. As such, a borderized civic rhetoric theorizes a classroom pedagogy that pushes students to jettison the westernized perspective and instead consider
contextual/historical issues that have affected and continue to affect “citizens” to this day. The expansion of civic rhetoric aims to push away from the question “what is a citizen” and instead ask “who is a citizen and why?”

I argue that there never was a citizen: that moving towards theories of cosmopolitanism allow us to see a globally situated worldview where we are connected more strongly than we previously understood. But migrants, whether they are citizens or not, are limited by where they are able to move—and mobility theory helps us understand why that movement is important. Their movement, or “nomadism”, hinders their ability to bridge the gap in that digital divide.

**Mobility Theory**

Mobility theory argues that, “today we are all nomads, but our nomadism—it’s causes and consequences—differs radically,” (Larsen and Jacobsen 80). One example of this is to take a look at how Chicago distributes its public transportation: if we compare a rough outline of the Chicago Transit Authority (Dodge) to a map that highlights the average income of each neighborhood of the city (Density and income Chicago), we see a startling disparity: the lower income neighborhoods in the south get more infrequent stops (roughly 23), whereas the north side has more access to purple, brown, red and blue lines (more than 50). That the south side’s residents are predominantly African American should be no surprise, as the most disenfranchised populations have historically been minorities, women, and children. This, to say nothing of those whose homes are constantly shifting. Mobility studies also allows us to expand our notions of what that movement looks like.
The migrant constantly moves, often having to hide their movement so as to not call attention to their otherness. It is the difference between being a “vagabond versus tourist”: their nomadism a way of life.

“While some revel in the ability to move freely and without spatial limitations, others are forced to stay on the move, bound to be on the run. Contrary to our ancestors…the nomads leave few traces behind for their successors to follow,” (Ohnmacht 80).

Trapped by their movement, migrants have to live everywhere and nowhere: this “multilocal living…a way of organizing everyday life in and between different homes,” (145). From Texas to Indiana: I have my own apartment here, but go back to my “home” in Texas every year. I live multilocally and nomadically, yet I have it substantially easier than migrant workers of my skin color.

Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist research play a critical role in understanding how we get such unequal distribution of this movement. In the following chapter, I will discuss this in tandem with how the field of professional writing often couches difference in terms of international populations, rather than racial difference.
CHAPTER 3

“Digital literacies, indeed all literacies, exist and develop within the context of complex
and interrelated local and global ecologies”

-Hawisher and Selfe

Scene: Once again in the coffee shop in Lafayette, Indiana, writing a dissertation chapter. I periodically attempt to open up my internet browser in order to look up a source, but the coffee shop’s wifi isn’t working. I attempt to use Lafayette’s public wifi instead, switching to their network and agreeing to their Terms of Service agreement and...nothing. Still no internet. I’ve used it before but it’s finicky at best—it only works well outdoors and only then in certain specific areas.

My interest in Professional and Technical Writing happened largely by accident: as an undergraduate I began studying to be a computer programmer due to a lifetime obsession with video games. I began mostly with simple “choose your own adventure”-type programs I would send to my friends as DOS files. Hours of coding and compiling, even when I switched schools, I tried it for years. But all of that coding fell flat for me and I eventually stumbled into an English major, mostly because I was always confident in my writing. But that love of tech is still there: my daily routine consists of reading
Jalopnik, an automotive website, Reddit, Kotaku (a gaming website) and of course Facebook. As I moved on through Purdue’s graduate program, I began to make those connections in the classroom: I would show video clips from the British show “Top Gear” in order to get students talking about concepts like horsepower or torque and get them to define those complex terms in a more understandable way.

As someone who grew up on the US-Mexico border, I connected with a lot of the research in the field, particularly because it was one of the first times I encountered discussions of globalization and writing. I was born a child of the Regan administration, the product of a fiscal conservative father and a liberal arts loving mother, and came of age during the age of NAFTA. I’ve previously discussed the rhetorical moves that manifested themselves in the construction of the border wall in the Rio Grande Valley and how a place so firmly Mexican-American could allow for such moves (Flan Revolution). This work directly informed my research into global business writing and would eventually inform my pedagogy in that class and Purdue’s entrepreneurial section of business writing. At a time when institutions all around the country, especially Purdue, have been heavily increasing international student enrollment numbers, I felt it important to orient both my business and technical writing courses towards a global perspective, particularly influenced by the work of Zsuzsanna Basca Palmer, who articulates a “cosmopolitanism” as a framework for extending our understanding of technical communication. For the field in particular, Palmer notes that certain “hybrid linguistic and rhetorical features” are symbolic of a larger ecology and can “provide ways for researchers to systematically describe technical writing practitioners’ experience and can serve as the basis for teaching successful transcultural communication strategies,” (383).
In my classroom this manifests itself through in-class exercises where groups of students are required to find sources written in the primary language of their research and use translation software to help find research from alternative perspectives. This invariably leads to discussions on grammar, mechanics, and politics–my international students often use these opportunities to explain terms and give context for the rest of their group members. More broadly, I find it fruitful in making connections between my research and my thinking.

I’ve also researched these cosmopolitan interconnections: a previous research project used the McAllen Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) as a site of rhetorical analysis that used globalized language in order to build an economic argument for investment in South Texas. I argued that MEDC is a post-industrial site\(^1\) because they have to rhetorically emphasize their alliance with Mexico as an advantage over manufacturing development in China: MEDC argues that China’s wages have grown to the point that their manufacturing advantages have been rendered obsolete while the physical distance between China and the US make it disadvantageous to continue. But what was really interesting was how MEDC built their argument around expertise, “Companies need skilled, knowledgeable managers running their factories. This is more of a concern in China than in Mexico. By locating in the U.S. Mexico border, managers and their families can live in the United States while the manager works in Mexico and crosses each day,” (MEDC). The “concern in China” lies with several factors–American managers need to be trained in Chinese business practices if they’re going to effectively

\(^1\) Thanks Michael
manufacture in and ship from China. This work came largely out of Paul Madlock’s 2012 article that examined the differing power structures and management techniques between US and Mexican businesses, arguing that businesses in Mexico contain a high power distance. "...power distance refers to the degree to which an individual prefers to be told what to do and how by persons in higher power positions than themselves," (170). This highlights a larger cultural chasm—American employees tend to reflect largely American values of individualism and risk taking. In contrast, Mexican workers tend to adopt much more homogeneous habits and thus, as Madlock shows us, wait for orders to come down the chain of command. We can extrapolate this even further: it’s common practice in the US office to refer to coworkers and managers by their first names. In Mexico, there is still a tendency to refer to a person by their professional title, such as licenciado (lawyer) or doctor². What MEDC is recognizing is the power of the bilingual population along the border: they travel and work to and from both countries and effortlessly navigate both discourses. This narrativization of the RGV in terms of its geological advantage, cultural adaptability, wealth of both domestic and international labor, along with its financial advantage via cost savings is what Beverly Sauer calls a grounding of “material sites where knowledge is ‘mined’ or ‘extracted’ from local experience and transformed into writing,’ (189). In other words, I argued that MEDC was also “mining” local knowledge of the bilingual/bicultural RGV, thereby speaking to an advantage no other region (especially China) could have.

² There’s an academia joke in here. I just know it…
But I noticed that I fell into the “global trap”: I was moving away from what I saw as a domestic blind spot in professional and technical writing. The field is rightfully concerned with global matters due to both the push to recruit international students as well as the socioeconomic realities of working in the 21st century, and this is reflected in much of professional and technical writing’s scholarship: Annous and Nicolas (2015) discussed the rhetorical setting of business writing courses in non-English speaking countries, finding that often instructors in those settings “did not feel that nurturing [students’ writing skills] was part of their responsibilities,” (93-94), an issue that can arise even in American universities. Zhu compares the “translation criteria of different contemporary schools” and with written examples in international business communication to make the point that these criteria need to be more effectively implemented in order to avoid future mistakes (“Translation Criteria”). Agboka, whose scholarship has repeatedly showed up in my work, provides several “decolonial approaches” as ways to approach “international research sites, particularly in many post-colonial, unenfranchised/disenfranchised sites,” (298). Using the example of sexuo-pharmological imports in Accra, Ghana, the author showed how legacies of imperialism played a key role in the negative perception of locally manufactured drugs, arguing that this type of knowledge only makes sense when influenced by decolonized research methodologies.

And it was this work that really forced me to make a methodological turn. In Chapter 1 I alluded to the idea of gnosis and decoloniality as a way to consider our understanding of people of color, particularly when dealing with Latin Americans. But to see how this worked within the field of professional writing was especially powerful. I
am recognizing this project as deliberately following a decolonized methodology for the simple reason that from its inception I have paid very close attention to my status as minority, graduate student, and researcher while at the same time recognizing that those particular statuses can both help and hinder not only myself but the potential subjects as well. My parents were migrant laborers and I will explicitly claim that I am not identified as a member of the migrant community, nor will I attempt to approximate a migrant status as that would be insulting at best and unethical at worst. I do this project because it has the potential to uncover what often is covered. But the international perspective still perpetuates that inner blind-spot.

I do not believe, however, that we can be happy playing identity-politics games: first, theoretically speaking it doesn’t go far enough. Some scholarly work has been written regarding how identity shapes perceived notions of legality–Medina and Martinez dissect the rhetorical ecology behind Arizona’s controversial SB 1070 vis-a-vis a justified critique of Asenas and Johnson. I would respond that their critique doesn’t go far enough, as they claim that Arizona governor Jan Brewer’s victory was “short lived” because of responses of boycotts by companies and large organizations.

The victory isn’t “short lived”: SB 1070 is still on the books AND nothing has been done to dismantle the institutional racism that exists at the legislative and legal level (see Joe Arpaio). And while, “Arizona business leaders [urged] state lawmakers to back off future immigration legislation,” the socioeconomic conditions that lead to that legislation are still as deeply ingrained as ever.

Granted, there have been attempts to create some semblance of Benetton diversity, but they’re often couched in niche themed publications such as the 2012 JBTC
Special Issue “Race and Ethnicity in Technical Communication”. At the same time, scholars such as Savage and Matveeva expanded the scope on race, an example of which was their analysis the state of technical communication programs at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU’s) and tribal colleges and universities where they found that, while many offered technical communication courses, little existed in the way of actual tech-comm programs or certificates (Toward Racial and Ethnic Diversity). Along similar lines, Savage and Mattson found that much of the lack of student diversity in technical communication programs stemmed from lack of faculty diversity, retention difficulties, and even K-12 education. Even when looking at POC the blind-spot persists: Todd Ruecker looked at the technological literacy practices and access, “of two students transitioning through high school and into a two-year college or four-year university…” (Exploring the Digital Divide 239). While Ruecker’s article does effectively critique assumptions of access and technological divides in minority populations, he is working with a largely static (though sometimes hidden) population, whereas my study hopes to track similar issues as they shift from “home” to “work” and state-to-state.

This is the shortcoming of identity politics and one of the reasons I’ve had misgivings with it over the years. There’s a tacit implication that these rhetorical moves serve to enact some sort of change that will undermine racism, or at the very least spur people to action. But again, this is an inadequate strategy considering, in the case of Arizona especially, nothing has changed. Barclay Barrientos agrees, arguing that in the case of LGBT populations, “it is no longer enough to ask students or LGBT instructors to come out…in a world where the question that follows, increasingly, is as what?” (346). It is for this reason that I argue that professional writing must not only incorporate
decolonized practices, but it must also be informed by scholarly work in Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist Research in order to better broaden the field’s perspective to include minorities.

**CRT and Anti-Racism**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a field in the social sciences that looks to uncover and articulate racialized history of our sociopolitical lives. Authors such as Derrick Bell have proposed CRT as a lens through which we can begin understanding how state institutions perpetuate cycles of poverty and violence, particularly for people of color. In 1995 Ladson-Billings and Tate provided an insight as to how identity politics has lead to the development of CRT, stating, “naming one’s own reality is to demonstrate how political and moral analysis is conducted in legal scholarship”, which reflects how, “social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations [which] serve as interpretive structures by which we impose order on experience and it on us,” (57).

But their main argument is that CRT allows us to see racism not as separate isolated incidents, but as an institution that serves to undermine the upward mobility of minorities. While some might argue that poor children, regardless of race, do worse in school, and that the high proportion of African-American poor contributes to their dismal school performance, we argue that the cause of their poverty in conjunction with the condition of their schools and schooling is institutional and structural racism. (55).
It is through this lens that this dissertation arises: in a system that privileges homeownership as the ultimate sign of socioeconomic success, minorities find it particularly difficult to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps”. Historically speaking this has always been the case: despite mid twentieth century policies that provided safety nets for the poor while raising taxes on the rich and enacting international policies aimed at facilitating standardized fiscal and political maneuvers, the 70’s brought about technical revolutions that allowed companies to subtly remove minorities and women from the workplace (Blackmon). As the federal government attempted to address discrimination, companies developed, “new and more subtle ways to maintain their privileged position in society…if one mechanism proves impossible to sustain, whites have an incentive to develop alternatives that may be associated only indirectly and therefore not in obvious violation,” (Massey 54). At the same time, realtors enacted “neighborhood improvement associations” as one of these innovations that lead to subversive homeownership policies, serving to segregate neighborhoods by race. Sometimes it was more overt, as when the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, “revised its code of ethics to state that ‘a realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood…members of any race or nationality…whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values…” (59).

This results in cities such as Chicago, where the north side neighborhoods such as the upwardly mobile [read: hipster] Wicker Park, Wrigleyville, and the Gold Coast, are predominantly white. Meanwhile, the predominantly black south side neighborhoods have become notorious due to rampant gun and gang violence, one of the most famous examples being the Cabrini Green housing project. Opened in 1942, the housing project
was constructed as a result of the 1937 U.S. Housing Act, “which provided federal funds to state-chartered municipal corporations for job creation, slum clearance, and housing construction,” (Fleming 4). By the 90’s, former Mayor Richard Daley would target the area for redevelopment, resulting in the eventual demolition of project housing. Policies like Daley’s “Near North Redevelopment Initiative” are the logical conclusion to these innovations: limit minority access to homeownership while simultaneously keeping them out of upwardly mobile jobs, and then decry the violence of their neighborhoods when it begins to encroach on whiter neighborhoods. This results in schools within poor neighborhoods lacking the requisite tax base, thus receiving less funding and furthering the decay of their education.

The city begins to be articulated as a war zone. The architecture slowly reflects this attitude: the years during and after the civil rights era saw a rise in “defensive architecture” that impedes, slows, or prohibits movement through certain areas. From “prickly space” structures where trees are removed, reflective paving installed, and backless benches built, to stealthy space that, “cannot be found, is camouflaged or, more commonly, is obscured by such view impediments as intervening objects or grade changes,” (Flusty 48). This came to light during a trip I made to Chicago: my friends and I were visiting Millennium park one fall day in 2014. As we moved from the park, one of my friends saw Navy Pier in the distance and suggested we walk towards it. What seemed like a 20-minute walk turned into over an hour of walking down hidden stair paths underneath Randolph and Lakefront, backing out of neighborhoods with condos with “resident access only” gates, and needlessly circuitous routes to get to what is ostensibly a public space. As Chicago adopts this architecture it abandons its grid
structure, creating an environment where poor neighborhoods contain the violence that
dighter neighborhoods are spared from.

“From a rhetorical perspective, the ghetto silences its inhabitants. Because
of the high rates of criminal activity, people here mind their own business
and raise their children to do the same…a frightening snapshot of the
pervasive and palpable mistrust that the projects breed,” (Fleming 90).

CRT allows us to see these movements, while Anti-Racism works in tandem to
look into colonial practices that show how “diversity” is just another tool in neoliberal
ideology. It argues that such attempts are merely band-aid tokenism disguised as
inclusion and that, when we do research, we acknowledge that social sciences are always
already racist at their core. “…the concepts and methodologies that are privileged; who is
allowed, legitimated, and validated to research what and how,” are windows into the
underlying racism embedded in most research practices (13).

This is an instance of “collective imagining” of the public sphere, an example of
which Asen gives is in the difference of images portrayed with social insurance programs
and welfare aid. He argues that with the former we both create and are given images of
the “honored senior citizens to whom politicians have binding obligations,” whereas the
less politically powerful welfare recipient is a leeching drag on the system, ostensibly
because they never “added to” the system like the senior citizen did (352); this, Asen
argues, despite the similarity of both programs. He goes on to say that this process allows
for “a power of representation” that gets distributed through both “linguistic” and
“visuals” avenues. So what this seems to suggest is that these imaginings create
representations, which in turn get repeated and then internalized by those same spheres
who imagined them (as well as others). And this goes back to how the marginalized sphere is often imagined: a unified subaltern who speaks as a unified whole, in other words, the monolithic Other.

And Latour speaks to this when talking about gatherings: he says that conceptions of the Public have traditionally been contingent on not only a physical space but by concerns. He undoes that when saying, “the objects of science and technology, the aisles of supermarkets, financial institutions…offer paramount examples of hybrid forums and agoras, of the gatherings that have been eating away at the older realm of pure objects…” (13). Much in the way Squires’ argument, there is no one public place, Latour is saying. Our technology and our ways of being have allowed us to create and operate in these spaces that consist of separate smaller (or larger) spaces, like a Voltron of spaces. One of the big reasons for this is that we no longer have those small communities who could physically meet in the agora. We rely on these technologies and smaller places and spaces to at the very least inform ourselves of the broader public issues that are at play, while the migrant becomes more vulnerable due to their lack of access to these spaces.
CHAPTER 4

“In proposing a pedagogy that attempts to connect classroom readings and discussion with imagined action and political agency rather than one that’s based on explorations of identity and its constructed nature, I mean to suggest that such a teaching strategy can contribute to an LGBT student’s (or any other student’s) education in how to negotiate this briar patch of a world, how to find a way around and through its brambles, and potentially how to participate in the kind of social change that can reshape the briar patch itself.” (Barclay Barrios Computers and Composition 21)

As I write this dissertation, I unable to resist the call of the future: I’m going to be employed as an assistant professor of English Writing at a university in Wisconsin. This year has been especially difficult: both faculty and my colleagues have spoken at length about how tough the fifth year is, pointing to the dissertation and the teaching and the job application process, and the phone interviews, and the Skype interviews, and the campus interviews, and the constant CV and letter of application edits, and so on. It doesn’t matter how long you’ve been here (seven years in my case) or the countless times alumni have described the process. The first day you get that large job packet, your heart sinks and your mind reels and what you have to get done in less than a year. Now, I rush to
write this morphing, dappled dissertation because the promise of a living wage is my incentive.

I think about my campus visit to my future university: meet on a Thursday to have dinner with the department chair, two other faculty members and a student. They’re very laid back and continually offer me more and more pizza and seen genuinely interested in my research. The next morning, I meet with the Dean of the Liberal Arts. She pulls up my CV and we begin talking about the diss. I tell her about my background and growing up bilingual, having family who work as migrant laborers, and the discussions with faculty on how to articulate what is happening and what is at stake. I think back to another interview where, after talking about the plight of migrant workers and their lack of access, a faculty member asked, “why can’t they just go to a Starbucks and use their WIFI?” I remember wanting to scream, “THERE’S A FUNDAMENTAL LACK OF ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY, MUCH LESS TO A WIFI-ENABLED LAPTOP THAT THEY CAN USE ON TOP OF HAVING TO PURCHASE A TWO-DOLLAR CUP OF COFFEE!”

Thankfully I played it more diplomatically.

She mentions their campus being a strong spot for continuing my research, noting that with numerous dairy farms in the area, there’s been a large growth in migrant labor. She comments on wanting to connect to those populations alongside faculty.

This is where the project will head: despite spending more than two years writing this dissertation, I have little quantitative data to show for it, much of it my fault. I failed to estimate how long it would take to make connections with the target population and couldn’t recognize that the research I wanted wasn’t going to happen in the way I wanted
it. I was stubborn in my methods: I wanted college aged migrant workers. I wanted a mixed methods study where I would survey and interview. I wanted to work with the migrant centers in Indiana to build this research. None of it happened: most of the resources for migrants were aimed at children. Now, I seek a more adaptable research methodology that will pull from my pedagogy. One that also looks inward in the way Cintron called for when he said, “what I find interesting about these texts…that advocate greater inclusivity of peoples and arguments is how authors imagine their positions as having automatic virtue–as if inclusion itself were not a topos to be examined,” (103). I was stubborn at the beginning of this work because I privileged my position as scholar and researcher to the point that, despite the apparent lack of access to the targeted research population, I remained steadfast in my search for college-aged migrant workers. This stubbornness is counterproductive at best and highly unethical at worst. What helped to shift the framework of this project was viewing it as one that engaged with the public, or rather, with a particular public. The public that this project engages with consists of me, my graduate cohort, the faculty working with me alongside the students I teach and the migrants themselves. What seems like a large group is actually much smaller because of who we’re talking about; throughout the research and interviews of this work, I’ve gone out of my way to recognize how vulnerable they can be as a population. The last thing I want to do is accidentally reveal/uncover someone.

Scene: a grocery store in Lafayette. I wake up from a nap and put on T-shirt that says “F**K Johnny Marr” on it; it’s a shirt I bought at a concert months prior. As I get out of my car I put on my headphones and walk toward the entrance, walking into the
cart area. An elderly white man approaches me saying something. I take out my headphones and say, “Sorry. What was that?”

“That’s a horrible shirt.”

I pause, forgetting momentarily then realizing what he means. “Oh, I’m so sorry. I forgot I had this on. I’ll just be grabbing something really quick and heading out. Don’t mean to offend.” I continue walking inside and the man follows me.

“Are you a U.S. citizen?”

“Excuse me?”

“Are you a U.S. citizen?”

“Uhh, yeah. I was born in Texas.”

“Well you’ll never get your citizenship continuing on the way you are.”

I’m shocked. I continue walking and the man follows again.

“If you had any sense you’d turn that shirt inside out.” He continues making some comment about me being an embarrassment to “my people” but at this point I’m completely rattled. I leave the store, asking myself how a t-shirt that names a guitarist from arguably one of the whitest indie-rock bands of all time can point anger someone so much that they’ll racially harass me in a store.

For a migrant the need to be invisible is a daily necessity. Theirs is an “intimate public” where, “one senses that matters of survival are at stake,” (Berlant 226). To that end, I do not want to my research to damage their publics in any way and in order to ensure that, I have to better situate how this project engages with these publics of academia, race, and class. This is a public work because it invokes those who often don’t have a space within civic discourse. The intersection of this project is within a public
university that increasingly emphasizes its status as a leading innovator in STEM fields while also aggressively situating itself as a globalized site of study. It is a player in the new economy in which innovations in both technology and fundraising are praised. This work aims to re-center itself by, “locating [its] practice somewhere in the ‘middling’ range between everyday life in our communities and the regional economic policies that influence [it],” (Ackerman 81).

I see this research as a continuation of Flower’s work in emergent community literacy in that it stems from a particular context: hers in Pittsburgh, mine in the Midwest (first Indiana, then expanding to other states). The hesitation I felt in engaging with migrants is reflected when she invokes Grabill’s call that, “a community is not a physical group of like-minded people but is instead a ‘symbolic construction,’” (24). The strength in using a term like Flower’s “community” is precisely in its vagueness: it allows the project to emerge from and adapt to the specific situation as opposed to forcing a methodological engagement within a completely different context. Rather than making assumptions on what a community is and subsequently what it needs, Flower argues that the community itself should be a part of the design process. This is evident in the “Collaborative Planning” section where we see that Mrs. Baskins’ role is to support Shirley in her documentation of teen stress. “As planner and writer, Shirley takes authority and the floor, taking out her plan…for the story. Her adult partner is…a supporter whose job is to draw out Shirley's expertise and best thinking,” (55) [emphasis mine]. Remember that this project came out of a prompted discussion on teen stress: the volunteers didn’t try to define stress to the kids. Instead, they asked the teens themselves
to define what *they* thought stress was. From that came Shirley’s scenario, which begat larger discussions on violence, crime, and race relations.

This is the first “a ha” moment; recognizing that a healthier view of this research would be *more* participatory as a whole. Flower’s project is strongly participatory. It allows for researchers and subjects to cooperate in ways that not only provide rich research, but it *does* something. It creates an *impetus* for change. It falls in line with Irizarry and Brown methodology, “in which representatives of the focus population(s) participate as co-researchers,” (64). In the initial proposal for this work, I discussed how the project would be participatory, yet failed to actually *do* it, which I believe contributed to its initial “failure”.

What I also realized is that students can also help inform and influence research. This past year, I had my technical writing students work on documents that engaged with a particular public situation—the Flint water crisis. They were to first individually create infographics that helped simplify the complex information sent out to citizens of the city, following basic design principles such as HATS\(^3\) and CRAP\(^4\). Then, based on the audience of their infographic, they were put into groups that would create multimedia packets aimed at informing several “publics” within the city. The work they came up with was fantastic: one group created a website that provided prevention and mitigation tips for expecting mothers and linked to resources within the city such as a map of water distribution centers and links to city and state websites (“Expecting in Flint”). Another group created a Facebook page complete with a sample posts and how-to videos,

\(^3\) Headings, Access, Typography, and Space  
\(^4\) Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, and Proximity
supplementing it with an information packet with strategies for how government entities can effectively use social media. And yet another designed their materials for elementary school children: they created videos on how to brush your teeth and shower using bottled water.

What these projects showed me was that research can be informed by classroom practice. The rhetorical situation of Flint provided a sense of urgency to the project—each and every group was invested in their work because it was timely. The students’ investment in the project was largely contingent on the primacy of the situation; it was happening now and during an election year no less, and through their work were able to articulate the, “complex web of stakeholders and positions that contribute[d] to the meaning of risk in [this] situation,” (Grabill and Simmons 428).

This is where I believe the project can grow in the future. I learned that if given a rhetorically situated project, students can create rich, nuanced work that engages with publics in ways that I, as a scholar-teacher, cannot. It’s a way to, “enact a pedagogy that moves beyond sticky questions of identity…that imagines instructors and students as political actors engaging…issues important to all citizens in a democracy,” (Barrios 342). I argue that this pedagogy is CRT and anti-racist in that it allows students to engage with those “sticky questions of identity” on their own terms. Whether subconsciously or not, I never explicitly brought up the topic of race when in the classroom. Rather, I provided a topic and a short list of resources I’d found on my own, and allowed students to make their own connections. Now this is not to say that every student in every group saw the connection between the poisoned water supply and the predominantly African-American population of Flint. In fact, very few students explicitly mentioned race in their final
projects; however, they were engaged with it in productive and meaningful ways. The project itself “connect[ed] classroom readings and discussion with imagined action and political agency,” (344).

This is much more adaptable and sustainable for my research. As someone who will be composition in addition to business, technical and newswriting, I have an opportunity to connect a variety of different classrooms to this project. I can have composition students do research papers on “small” or “rural” communities as a way to orient them towards “intimate publics”. Business writing students can write grants and proposals to help build better technological infrastructure for disenfranchised populations. Technical writing students can research the architecture of these small towns and propose designs for more easily accessible public spaces or even for more efficient public transportation. The newswriting students in particular have countless options that have to potential of investigating particular institutions that serve as barriers to social mobility.

These are just rough ideas and in a way they must necessarily remain vague for now, lest I repeat my mistakes. I have yet to meet any of my future students and to build elaborate pedagogical frameworks outside of their context will only serve to perpetuate both my and their failure. I also don’t know how the students as a whole will react to issues of identity and race. As I previously mentioned, I did not explicitly bring up race in my technical writing class. Much of that is a learned behavior; in my seven years here I’ve only had a handful of students of color in my classroom. As a STEM-focused university, Purdue’s student body is predominantly white and male. With a total enrollment of 39,409 students, 54 percent are Indiana residents and overall, “domestic
minorities” account for 20 percent of the student population (“Student Enrollment, Fall”). Ostensibly that includes both African-American and Latino students, but Purdue makes that information hard to find. Instead, it emphasizes the enrollment of international students, revealing where their priorities lie.

I walk into my classroom and am almost always the only person of color in the room. How do you start talking about race without shutting down the classroom? How do you help freshmen understand difference in productive and meaningful ways without antagonizing them? How do you get engineers to understand that, historically speaking, technological advancements result in further disenfranchisement of minorities? In my seven years at Purdue, I’ve learned to drop small bits of this into the class through readings, conversations, sources, etc.

I confess that I’ll most likely continue doing so at my new university, largely because they have a large STEM-focus and they are situated in a rural, Midwest area as well. However, it is a much smaller school and the department is organized very differently than the one I’m currently in. Given my conversations with the dean, they seem to be much more interested in creating an environment where students are able to do this kind of public work. This is the reason why this dissertation has changed from a mixed-methods study to more of a heuristic: I cannot anticipate the type of access I will be afforded because it is impossible to predict the type of data I will be able to collect.

What I can do in the meantime is be vigilant and adaptable as I move into this new setting. I don’t want to perpetuate the, “practice of seeing subjects merely as ‘objects and subjects of raw data and [my] role as collecting data then ‘theorizing’ elsewhere apart from the subjects,” (Sefa Dei 5). As Flowers showed in her project, community literacy
projects are contingent on a “mediator” of sorts: a person of the community who can also work outside of it. As Freire says, “only through comradeship with the oppressed can the converts understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving, which in diverse moments reflect the structure of domination,” (61). In her case, we saw how Mrs. Baskins was integrated into the community and, without her, it becomes much more difficult to sustain such work. As it stands I’m an outsider both to my new university and to whatever migrant communities exist in the area. Ethically, I cannot continue this project unless I encounter community mediators who will be brought into the research process and, hopefully, help create a more enriching and productive project.
CHAPTER 5

“This awareness is agony for persons rooted in primary orality, who want literacy passionately but who also know very well that moving into the exciting world of literacy means leaving behind much that is exciting and deeply loved in the earlier oral world. We have to die to continue living.” (Ong 15)

I’ve been writing about access since 2014 (and arguably earlier). I’ve talked about access in terms of others without ever critically engaging with it personally until the past year. Being on the academic job market and having certain types of access taken away showed me just how important it is to one’s success.

My own access[s] fall into three categories: mobility, technology, and funding. Access to mobility meant having my own car, a bus system that runs regularly here in the greater Lafayette area, being able to rent cars and fly to airports for campus interviews. My access to technology is reflected in my graduate career here at Purdue: 3 Macbooks, one iPad, a subscription to Amazon Prime in order to facilitate quicker ordering of books, a subscription to Adobe Creative Suite in order to teach InDesign and Photoshop, and computer labs on campus when my laptop wasn’t working (or was forgotten). Access to funding is more direct: graduate teaching assistants are expected to teach while taking coursework and doing research, with the understanding that their school is paid for a
maximum of two years during the masters, five during the PhD. For professional development purposes, we have to consistently present at conferences, yet Purdue provides very little in the way of financial support for these conferences (except in your 4th and 5th years of your PhD). Thus for a total of seven years, I had to pay for the equivalent of one conference a year, almost all of them self-funded. This final year I did receive funding in the way of reimbursement, which takes a full pay period to show up in my bank account. Additionally, when we’re on the job market we have to foot the bill for new clothes (a new $200 suit), shoes, dress socks, etc. as well as taking the up-front cost of traveling to campuses for visits, which can range from $300 to even upwards of $800. When you make $1500 every month for only 9 months out of the school year, this becomes very difficult.

Maintaining these types of access can be very difficult and I found out that when one fails, the rest suffer. The Volkswagen I bought in 2006 decided that it couldn’t wait to quit on me. In September of 2015 I had paid $1300 for its 120,000-mile service only for it to quit on me two months later. I saved until January and had it fixed for an additional $400 and it ran ok, until March when it had enough. I still wasn’t done with job interviews and suddenly found myself having to rent a car for my next interview. Meanwhile, I was dependent on Lafayette’s Citybus and my partner’s Honda in order to get around town. The added stress made life difficult in what was already a difficult year. Even now that I’ve secured a job, I’ll have to wait until the beginning of October for my first paycheck. It feels like I’m constantly encountering obstacles every step along the way, even now at the very end of graduate school. Never mind the fact that I have to finish this dissertation…
But these mishaps helped me arrive at two main arguments: first, that access an important and necessary component of success. Second, and most importantly, that lack of any one type of access causes a chain reaction that negative affects the others, resulting in a severe impediment to success. In one year, lack of access to a vehicle forced me to improvise and find alternate means of transportation while also serving to hamper me financially. This for a person who is “fully funded” through graduate school: now imagine what it’s like for a student who has sparse access to computers, shares a car with their family, has moved at least two times a year since they were a child, and barely graduated from high school. Statistically speaking, this is the scenario many migrant students face. It’s their access that must be improved before we can begin pushing our students to compose with new and emerging technologies.

From “Dappled” to Borrado

Elizabeth Losh notes that scholars in the field debate the relative merits of the technologies used in the classroom rather than the implications they provide. “…in the standard model of digital rhetoric, literary theory is applied to technological phenomena without considering how technological theories could conversely elucidate new media texts,” (47). I argue that we’re paving theoretical foundations originating from very different contexts into our writing classrooms without considering the implications. This isn’t to say that “dappling” is bad—rather, if the fields of composition and tech-comm are going to ethically serve our students we must consider: a) where they are coming from (physically and technologically), b) how they interact with those technologies, and c) why they may or may not have experience with the technologies we push on them.
This research builds off of and pushes against Chican@ and Cultural Studies: they help build theories of knowledge making but very rarely address the material circumstances that lead to the disadvantaged becoming more disadvantaged. It’s here where my methodology brings in CRT–indeed this work owes much to Mignolo’s version of decolonialization in that it presupposes the policies and institutions that lead to broken bootstraps. It makes clear that we absolutely do not live in a postracial society but in a post-global society imbued with race. It recognizes that, “much of social science research has been rooted in a historical legacy of institutional racism, which governs the work of the academy…therefore, the ethics and key concepts underlying the aims and purposes of research, and the ethos, design, conduct, application, and dissemination of research knowledge should be guided by antiracist principles of multiple ways of knowing and the need to seek full representation and the inclusion of varied experiences,” (Sefa Dei and Johal 13). I argue that too often, Chican@ Studies presume Chican@s as a monolithic whole and one purpose of this dissertation is to dismantle that by moving away from Chican@ through the everyday practices of migrants–how they work and live in and through the world.

In this way, my research calls on Chican@ Studies, Composition and Professional Writing to uncover the material conditions of underprivileged populations while simultaneously embedding in further methodological dappling– using a CRT, PAR, anti-racist decolonial methodology that I refer to as pizarrón borrado. Scholars often view “trans-cultural” or “trans-global” communication as pagina en blanco (a blank page)—when we give our students a research topic, they often assume that their work has to be
generated in a vacuum. A whole new idea must emerge from their minds and it takes time to help them understand that writing and research instead builds on previous knowledge.

Instead I will theorize the concept of the pizarrón borrado, which implies that these learning moments are an opportunity to start over while recognizing that there was something that existed prior to this. The use of both Spanish versions of tabula rasa is a play on words that provides the opportunity to demonstrate Other knowledge as it is affected by Minority Rhetoric and history—pagina is a direct translation and co-opting of the Western universal idea of the blank slate that does not allow for a historical/cultural understanding of influence. So it’s a multilingual play on words that invokes/pokes the concept of tabula rasa, arguing that when writing and researching, we never really start from scratch. We are always already writing over what’s been written before, and what gets read is reflected in who we are and where we come from.

Dial “F” for “Failure”

Throughout this document I’ve repeatedly referred to this project as a “failure” and for me that helps. In my time working on this project I’ve discovered that, despite your efforts or intentions, research doesn’t necessarily follow a linear progression. My failure to account for and adapt to this particular rhetorical situation forced me to step back and reassess my project. I now see it as one part of a more complex ecology of access to people, technology, identity, and movement. But I must refrain from using “failure” in the classroom, particularly when working with students of color. As someone who has been involved with higher education for the better part of 14 years, I’ve at least gained enough experience to see that failure is just a part of the research process. But
students don’t often see it that way and they see failure as Failure: the project is done and they get an “F”, and when you have a student of color whose very success hinges on that passing grade, Failure is not an option. Failure is never an option. Failure, like access, is a ticking time-bomb that can create a chain reaction where their lives are effectively destroyed. As Derrick Bell notes legacy of racism is embedded in everyday life, not just in the classroom.

“Our careers, even our lives, are threatened because of our color. Even the most successful of us are haunted by the plight of our less fortunate brethren who struggle for existence in what some social scientists call the ‘underclass.’ Burdened with life-long poverty and soul-devastating despair, they live beyond the pale of the American Dream.” (3)

I too am a legacy of that. Parents, family, friends and countless others far worse off than me. When I applied to Purdue, my letter was essentially a long list of statistics of Hispanic males, my point being that I’m already a statistical anomaly so why not keep the success train running? The good news is that the overall high school dropout rate for Latino students has dropped significantly. The bad news is that at 10.5 percent it’s still higher than that of whites (5.2) and blacks (7.4) (“Fast Facts”). The economic recession hit Latino males particularly hard: the median home value, “fell by 11 percent between 2007 and 2008, compared 2 percent drop for non-Hispanic whites, and a 1 percent decrease for African Americans,” (“Hard Times”). To Fail is to suffer and fall. No student should have to pay the emotional and economic price of Failure.

*Pizarron borrado* doesn’t erase Failure, but instead writes along and over it. We need the smear of previous work to get to the clear chalkboard writing. It is a way to
frame research and writing for students in a way that reveals an entangled and non-linear progression. You have to constantly look back in order to move forward. This isn’t merely an emphasis on revision; this is an orientation towards knowledge building in and out of the classroom.
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WORKS CITED

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Education

PhD Rhetoric and Composition (Expected August 2016)
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Dissertation: “Pull Yourself Up By Your Broadband: Access, the Digital Divide, and Migrant Workers.” Chair: Samantha Blackmon

M.A. English (August 2011)
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN

B.A. English, Minor in Communication (December 2007)
University of Texas Pan American, Edinburg, TX

Teaching Experience

Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Graduate Instructor, Department of English (2009-Present)

**Introductory Composition, ENGL 106 (2009-2012)**
As part of the “Digital Rhetorics” syllabus approach, this class helps students compose using digital means. Assignments include podcast narratives, video editing, web design, and mobile research.

**Business Writing, ENGL 420 (2013-Present)**
English 420 teaches students the rhetorical principles and writing practices necessary for producing effective business documents and collaborative projects in professional context. This includes projects dealing with international and globalization issues, whose aim is to consider not only socioeconomic and political practices, but cultural ones that may impact our interactions with other countries.
As with the face to face Business Writing class, 420E covers much of the same topics and content, but with more of a focus on online collaboration. More time is spent working with and dissecting collaborative software (such as GoogleDocs) and engaging in larger meta-discussions of the pros and cons of the online class.

Business Writing for Entrepreneurs, ENGL 420E (2012-Present)
As part of a requirement for students receiving an entrepreneur certification through Purdue’s Krannert Business School, 420E focuses on generating business ideas and reframing them rhetorically for an investor-type audience. Their research includes market analysis, demographic studies, surveys and interviews—all of which help to inform their final marketing packet, which is presented in front of a panel of instructors in a “shark tank” scenario.

Technical Writing, ENGL 421 (2014-Present)
English 421 helps students understand articulate technical documentation in the workplace through a variety of projects such as technical descriptions, instructional documents, and site studies. The aim of the course is to help students create technical documents that can be easily readable to a wide variety of audiences while still maintaining all of the pertinent technical information.

Research Methods for Professional Writers, ENGL 203 (Fall 2014)
This course is aims to unpack a complex research questions: 1) what constitutes “research”, 2) what does a researcher look like, 3) what ethical dimensions must we take into account when engaging with subjects, 3) how can we build better methods and, subsequently, methodologies? Sample assignments include research proposals, IRB writeup, survey design and testing, and post-mortems.

Relevant Coursework

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Minority Rhetorics
Seminar in Minority Rhetoric        Samantha Blackmon
Public Rhetorics                    Jennifer Bay
Rhetoric and Politics               Samuel McCormick
Second Language Acquisition        Dwight Atkinson
Rhetoric and Ethics                 Michael Salvo

Research

My research is centered at the intersections of professional and technical writing, composition and critical race theory. My dissertation focuses on the technological access afforded to underprivileged populations–through a mixed methods study I unpack the type and frequency of access, focusing specifically on migrant workers in the US. This connects to my broader research in international politics: analyzing US-Latin American relations and how legislation and economic policy are rhetorically constructed and what material effects that has on an international stage.

Digital Rhetorics Presentations


Minority Rhetorics Presentations


“’Levee Barrier’: Tracking the Implications of Rhetorical Maneuvers at the Border Wall.” NACCS Tejas Foco. San Marcos, TX. March 2012.


Invited Talks

“N@rcoRhetorics: Border Violence and Global Capital”
Invited by Professor Samantha Blackmon
Minority Rhetorics [ENGL 680M]
Fall 2014

“Nudge: User Experience in Professional Writing”
Invited by Dr. Jeremy Cushman
Intro to Professional Writing [ENGL 306]
Spring 2013

“Borderlands: Anzadúa and Decolonized Chican@ Rhetorics”
Invited by Professor Samantha Blackmon
Minority Rhetorics [ENGL 680M]
Fall 2012

“Borderlands and Bootstraps via Burke”
Theory and Cultural Studies Colloquium
Purdue University
Spring 2010

Professional Affiliations

ATTW.  2012-Present
Latin American Rhetoric Association.  2011-Present
NCTE Latino Caucus, Member.  2010-Present
NCTE, Member.  2009-Present
MLA, Member.  2009-Present
### Professional Development/Awards

**Assistant Director of Professional Writing**, Purdue University. 2014-2016
Coordinated with administrators and mentors in advising new graduate instructors and lecturers and assisted with hiring decisions.

**President of the Rhetoric Society of America**, Purdue Chapter. 2012-2013
Coordinated guest speaker events, recruited students from both Communications and English programs, facilitated growth of the organization.

**Crouse Masters Research Scholarship.** 2011-2012
A programmatic award recognizing emerging scholars whose research focuses on the field of professional writing.

**Project Rhea Professional Writing Coordinator.** 2011-2012
Co-developed content with the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering for a Purdue developed student driven online education platform.

**Co-editor of Technical Communication Today, fourth edition.** 2010-2011
Revised and updated content that reflected ongoing trends in the field. Created student exercises for the teacher’s manual.

**Assistant Editor–Progress Times [Mission, Tx].** 2007-2009
In charge of reporting for the lower Rio Grande Valley: in particular the Hidalgo County Commissioner’s Court meetings, and local police department and school board meetings.

### Community Engagement

**Advanced Professional Writing (ENGL 515):** Community project with Food Finders of Lafayette. Did onsite interviews with volunteers for instructional placard redesign, collected and compiled survey data on the redesigns.

**Publishing and Professional Writing (ENGL 680P):** Group project with the Tippecanoe County Historical Association. Worked on designing survey that collected feedback from local public and private school teachers. That feedback was used to then write a report that aimed to provide a plan of action for TCHA’s proposed “Mobile History on Tour.”