Review of *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities*

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Grounded in the work of Cook (1999), and the work of Canagarajah (2006), *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities* is not just a book for teachers of multilingual students; it is a book for students and teachers who find themselves in a daily multilingual reality. Drawing on his own experience and empirical work with diverse multilingual English users, Jordan's goal is to encourage teachers, researchers, and administrators to discover, and make pedagogically relevant, the emergent competencies of these multilingual language learners. Based on the premise that composition "should be a research agenda, a pedagogy, and a practice that has discovery at its heart" (p.142), Jordan expertly uses Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), to support his belief that the best way to address multilingual realities is through discovery, which he characterizes as the ongoing practice of language learning and use.

Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities is comprised of an introductory chapter and four subsequent chapters. In the first chapter, Jordan addresses the term *compensation* and its significance for second language users in US colleges and universities. Chapter two presents the author's empirical research on diverse multilingual English users and their symbolic repertoires as they emerge from composition courses at three different universities. Chapter three reports on observational data collected by the author between native English-speaking (NES) and non-native English speaking students (NNES) in a piloted 'intercultural' composition course. In the final chapter, based on Byram's model (1997) of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), Jordan suggests specific directions for intercultural composition pedagogy in the US.

In the introductory chapter of his book, Jordan situates the composition classroom as the place where thousands of students find themselves in a multilingual English setting. As Jordan points out, despite the movement that calls for a 'translingual' approach (Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur, 2011) to writing instruction, several questions still remain in the air, such as how composition can be multi-or even translingual. Thus, as the title of Jordan's book suggests, his work "represents an attempt to take seriously the charges to advance cross-disciplinary understandings of multilingualism and to develop specific pedagogical approaches to it" (p. 4).

In the first chapter, suitably titled *Compensation: Fixin' What Ain't Broke*, Jordan explains how the linguistic diversity of English users is often seen as a pathological disease that needs to be either eradicated or repaired. Then, through a brief historical account, he describes the role that writing centers in US colleges and universities have played in the eradication of this disease "as spaces to quarantine and/or inoculate students whose language practices diverge from acceptable standards" (p.27). However, for Jordan, writing centers—compared to classrooms—represent optimal spaces where students' cultural and linguistic differences can be more fully explored. Hence, he proposes a shift in the perspective of "language diversity in the (writing) center from a *problem* to be contained and, ultimately, eradicated, to a *resource* to be encouraged and spread" (p.33). Drawing from a broad array of theories like Bakthin's (1986) theory of dialogism, Gee's (1996) New Literacy studies, and Wenger's (1998) community and organizational learning theory, as well as his own detailed studies and experiences working with multilingual English language users, Jordan's goal is to demonstrate the value of diversity, and the productive role of emergent English language users.

In chapter two, Jordan calls for a reevaluation of Chomsky's (1959) famous concept of "linguistic competence." Jordan also points out that, since its creation, linguistic competence has

been conceived as a fixed, 'neat' term, and yet, this term contradicts the 'messy' or diverse competences of multilingual English users. For this reason, the second section of this chapter encourages teachers, researchers, and administrators to discover "what those competencies look like and how they can be responsively and appropriately assessed and made relevant to writing pedagogy" (p.53). In this chapter, Jordan also presents and analyzes his own collected written and spoken data, which displays multilingual English users' often hidden competencies.

In chapter three, Jordan purposefully draws on the rhetorical work of Kenneth Burke (1995), and design-oriented literacy studies (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000), as well as on the work of new literacy studies theorists like Gee (1996) and Street (1995) to suggest a design-oriented approach to composition. Jordan argues that multilingual language users should be allowed to use the 'Available Designs' they have—even if these designs might not be immediately recognized as legitimate resources by native-English-speaking peers and teachers. By using these designs in 'designing' (interpreting and /or producing texts), multilingual language users will generate 'Re-Designed' resources, "thus giving rise to new newly 'Available Designs'" (p. 91). As an example of this designing cycle, in the second section of this chapter, Jordan provides a detailed description of failures and successes in an experimental cross-cultural composition course. By presenting portions of students' face-to-face and computer mediated interactions, course assignments, peer review comments, and examples from his own teaching journal, Jordan hopes to demonstrate not only the value of the above mentioned theories, but also "that composition can be useful as a testing ground for ambiguities about increasing cultural and linguistic diversity " (p.87).

In his final chapter, Jordan proposes Byram's (1997) framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a guiding concept for teaching, assessing, and programming composition in multicultural and multilingual environments. As Jordan explains, ICC not only replaces the image of the 'native speaker' with that of the 'intercultural speaker', but also the idea that language and culture are deeply interrelated. Thus, competence is a process of discovery and negotiation. Although Byram's ICC theory was not created to target writing, or specifically, writing in a second language, Jordan believes that " [ICC] seems not only a worthwhile goal, but also a practically possible one" (p.126), given the rich environments of many composition classrooms. In the final section of this chapter, Jordan suggests specific intercultural assignments like the utilization of realia to make multilingual users aware of the dynamic nature of language, and portfolios to document their language learning development.

There is substantial merit to be found in *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities.* Not only does Jordan call for a reexamination of linguistic competence, but also suggests strategies that can leverage the linguistic and rhetorical knowledge that students bring with them when they enter composition classrooms. He encourages composition teachers to take into account multilingual users' competencies, such as 'book' knowledge of English grammar, lexical and syntactic innovation, cross-cultural knowledge/critique, etc. As a result, Jordan believes that composition can grow from the truncated term '*comp*' to *composition* as a necessarily intercultural practice.

Jordan's text is timely, as researchers and composition teachers continue to discuss ways (Canagarajah, 2006; Cook, 2003) that more fully account for the presence and role of

multilingual writers. *Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities* underscores multilingual English users' often hidden competences, and how these should be acknowledged in composition courses. More importantly, the text reminds teachers to view these students "as speakers in their own right, not as approximations to monolingual native speakers" (Cook, 1999).

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