

ReVisions:

A Zine on Writing at Queens College

Special Issue: Multilingual Queens

Issue 5, Spring 2008



“What is your native language?” Applicants to Queens College are asked to list their native language. This image represents the responses of the 10,052 current QC students who provided an answer. The size of each language name is roughly proportionate to the number of students who reported that language as their native tongue. Nearly half of the respondents named a language other than English; in all, 75 different languages are represented. (Thanks to Margaret McAuliffe and Institutional Research for the data.)

FROM THE EDITOR

As a follow-up to the 2004 issue, “Teaching Writing on a Multilingual Campus,” this year’s invitation for submissions to *Revisions: A Zine on Writing at Queens College* requested offerings that explore the College’s linguistic diversity:

Communication at Queens College is carried out in multiple languages on a regular basis. Our admirable linguistic repertoire should come as no surprise, given our location in the heart of the most linguistically diverse county in the U.S. (and given our functions as an institution of higher education). This year . . . we seek to display the beauty and complexity of multilingual Queens, by taking a snapshot of the languages we speak, the languages we write in, the languages we learn in, the languages we read and comprehend, the languages we perhaps wish we had access to, and the languages we might sometimes wish we could forget.

The graphic on this issue’s first page partially, but by no means completely, captures the extent of this diversity. On any given day, there are native speakers of some 80 languages on this campus. Among their friends as they hurry from class to class, they speak their mother tongues, but in class they listen, speak and write in English, unless, of course, they are enrolled in a foreign language class. In the context of Queens College, it is almost comical to employ the term “foreign language.” Indeed, not long ago I spoke to a student who thought he could apply his credits from English 110 and 120 to the College’s foreign language requirement.

To our pleasure and surprise, the writers who responded to our call did so in more ways, even, than we suggested, presenting a kaleidoscopic view of the ways we struggle with, use, enjoy and



Writing Fellows Ken Nielsen, Anna Obratsova, Boone Gorges (back), Assessment Coordinator Tsai-Shiou Hsieh, Writing Fellows Eileen Baker, Noriko Matsumoto, and Jason Krellman

learn the many languages we encounter here. A few took an Olympian view and literally charted the wide array of languages spoken by Queens College students or reported the ways in which this linguistic mix has changed over the years. Some gave a closer view by writing in their native language rather than in English. Others mixed their native tongues with their second language, English, while yet others wrote purely in this adopted language. A few native English speakers expressed themselves in languages they are in the process of learning. A few offer a glimpse into the kaleidoscope’s cylinder so we can see and hear how an individual shifts and turns while

negotiating the complex challenge of living in a culture not one’s own and doing so in a new language. Still others took the term *language* in its most general sense, reminding us not only of the richness of cultures and spoken languages found on campus, but also of the range of academic and social discourse that language, in its infinite adaptability and flexibility, makes possible.

There is truth in the cliché that the world is getting smaller and that predicts the 21st Century will birth “one world.” The cultural and linguistic kaleidoscope that is Queens College means that our students, perhaps more than anywhere else, are ready for such a future.

As always, we hope that this issue of *Revisions* will engender further reflection, discussion and response from the students, faculty and staff about the multilingual reality of our situation and the possibilities and challenges it presents. With that wish in mind, we invite readers to visit the WAC website at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Writing> to find out about future events and inspect, become familiar with and contribute to these resources for students and faculty.

— John Troynaski, Guest Editor ■

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ReVisions: Embracing the Multilingual Experience

NO HAY MONOLINGÜES

EVA FERNÁNDEZ, Linguistics & Communication Disorders

La palabra *monolingual* no existe en el vocabulario de los alumnos de *Queens College*. De esto me enteré cuando empecé a trabajar con el *Psychology subject pool*, en la época que el *research component* de *Psych 101* se llevaba a cabo apuntándose en un *sign-up sheet* colocado sobre un *bulletin board* en un pasillo del *Science Building*. Necesitaba hablantes monolingües de inglés, para un estudio que pretendía comparar el comportamiento de éstos con el de hablantes monolingües de español. Preparé mi anuncio, lo coloqué en el lugar indicado, y esperé.

Después de varios días sin conseguir ni una víctima para mi estudio, me puse en contacto con la persona encargada del *subject pool*, un profesor de *Psychology* que me sugirió lo que para mí no era nada obvio: *They probably just don't know that word, monolingual. Why don't you just say you're looking for "native speakers"? Maybe that'll work.* La estrategia de mi colega funcionó bien. A los pocos días había logrado reclutar un buen grupo de hablantes nativos de inglés. Pero con esto surgió un nuevo problema: los *native speakers* que aparecían por el laboratorio me contaban que además de inglés, también hablaban español, hebreo, francés, punjabi, urdu, árabe,

italiano, mandarín, yiddish, croata, alemán, hindi, japonés, coreano, malayalam, portugués, tailandés... (Fernández, 2003, p. 128).

Sin lugar a duda, es extraordinario trabajar en un campus como éste, donde la diversidad lingüística abunda. Este año escolar, por ejemplo, habrán pasado por mis clases pocos más de 100 alumnos de los cuales el 80% sabe hablar inglés y otro idioma—unos 17 idiomas distintos en total. El 74% también sabe leer y escribir en sus dos o más idiomas. Más interesante aún es el hecho que estos alumnos, bilingües o políglotas, se han criado desde muy pequeños con dos o más idiomas en su entorno, normalmente el idioma minoritario en casa (promedio de edad de adquisición, 2 años), y el idioma mayoritario—el inglés—quizá también en casa, pero definitivamente en la escuela (promedio de edad de adquisición, 4 años). Son bilingües, y muchos de ellos son bilingües de nacimiento: aquí, en Queens, no hay monolingües.

Entre los dos idiomas del bilingüe prototípico de Queens existe una asimetría muy sistemática. (No es un bilingüismo equilibrado, con destrezas perfectas en ambos códigos. Ese tipo de bilingüe ideal existe en pocos rincones del mundo.) El inglés es típicamente el idioma dominante, patrón que he observado repetirse en todas las clases que he dado en Queens hasta ahora, así como



"We Are a Learning Community," a 2005 mural painted by QC students in Dr. Rikki Asher's graduate Art Education course on Mural Painting on the western exterior side of the Student Union building.

en todos los grupos de participantes que han pasado por mi laboratorio. De mis alumnos este año, un 98% dice que habla y comprende inglés bien o muy bien, y un 97% indica que también lo escribe y lee bien o muy bien. En comparación, en el sub-grupo bilingüe, un 71% cita buenas destrezas al hablar y comprender su otro idioma, pero únicamente el 59% asegura que también lo escribe y lee eficientemente. Esta asimetría es característica de los grupos de los llamados *heritage speakers* en otras

College, 2007), pero esa misma diversidad lingüística nos parece ser la causa de las debilidades que observamos cuando analizamos cómo escriben, y quizá también cómo leen, nuestros alumnos. Errores de ortografía, torpeza con frases y oraciones, desorden en la elaboración de párrafos y ensayos: es tentador atribuir todos estos problemas a la existencia de un otro idioma.

Las actitudes del cuerpo docente tienen un efecto negativo. Nuestros alumnos, tal y como sus homólogos en otras partes del país (Carreira, Jensen, Kagan, Tighearnain, & Abate, 2007), terminan abandonando su lengua madre, a pesar de las ventajas que les puede brindar su bilingüismo. Según una encuesta llevada a cabo en el año 2006 con casi 400 personas que se graduaron de Queens en el 2001 (McAuliffe, 2006 survey), nuestros alumnos perciben la habilidad con otros idiomas como menos importante que otras habilidades críticas (menos importante incluso que otra fobia favorita, las matemáticas); ver [Figure 1](#). No nos ha de sorprender que para estos mismos alumnos, de todo lo que aprendieron en Queens, los idiomas es el área de menos desarrollo. A la vez, según la encuesta, nuestros alumnos consideran muy importante en su lugar de trabajo el tratar con personas en un ambiente de diversidad cultural, e indican, además, que han aprendido bastante sobre esto en su experiencia en Queens. Sospecho que esta sensibilidad multicultural es algo que aprenden nuestros alumnos no tanto en el salón de clases como por los pasillos, en las cafeterías, en el gimnasio, en la parada del autobús. Es ahí, además, donde mejor explotan sus destrezas lingüísticas, sus sensibilidades políglotas, en entornos donde el leer y escribir no es imprescindible. Mientras tanto, casi todos los contextos donde figura la lengua escrita son exclusivamente en inglés, lugares donde la variabilidad lingüística no se tolera.

Si de veras nos interesa seguir contando con nuestro multilingüismo como característica especial, debemos urgentemente empezar a estudiar con más detalle la

SI DE VERAS NOS INTERESA SEGUIR CONTANDO CON NUESTRO MULTILINGÜISMO COMO CARACTERÍSTICA ESPECIAL, DEBEMOS URGENTEMENTE EMPEZAR A ESTUDIAR CON MÁS DETALLE LA DINÁMICA DE LOS IDIOMAS QUE SE MUEVEN POR NUESTRO CAMPUS.

partes del país (Carreira, Jensen, Kagan, Tighearnain, & Abate, 2007). Es un perfil lingüístico que resulta de las experiencias típicas de la población inmigrante, cuyas primeras generaciones mantienen el idioma minoritario en el ámbito doméstico y privado, pero utilizan el inglés en casi todos los demás dominios de uso, particularmente en la escuela, la universidad, y el lugar de trabajo.

Está claro que tenemos un diamante hermoso, pero sin pulir, en nuestro *multilingual Queens*. Nuestros alumnos tienen fuertes destrezas orales en una multitud de idiomas, pero leen y escriben con soltura y fluidez—si es que realmente leen y escriben con soltura y fluidez—sólo en inglés. Paradójicamente, vemos la diversidad lingüística de nuestros alumnos como característica especial (Queens

	Speak and Comprehend English	Write and Read English	Speak and Comprehend Other Language(s)	Write and Read Other Languages
Very Well	78	71	34	21
Well	21	27	25	23
So-so	2	3	17	19
Poorly	0	0	2	5
Very Poorly	0	0	4	6
Monolingual / Monoliterate	n/a	n/a	18	26

Table 1. In a pool of 101 students, self-reported proficiency is asymmetrical, an extremely systematic pattern (interaction, $p < .001$).

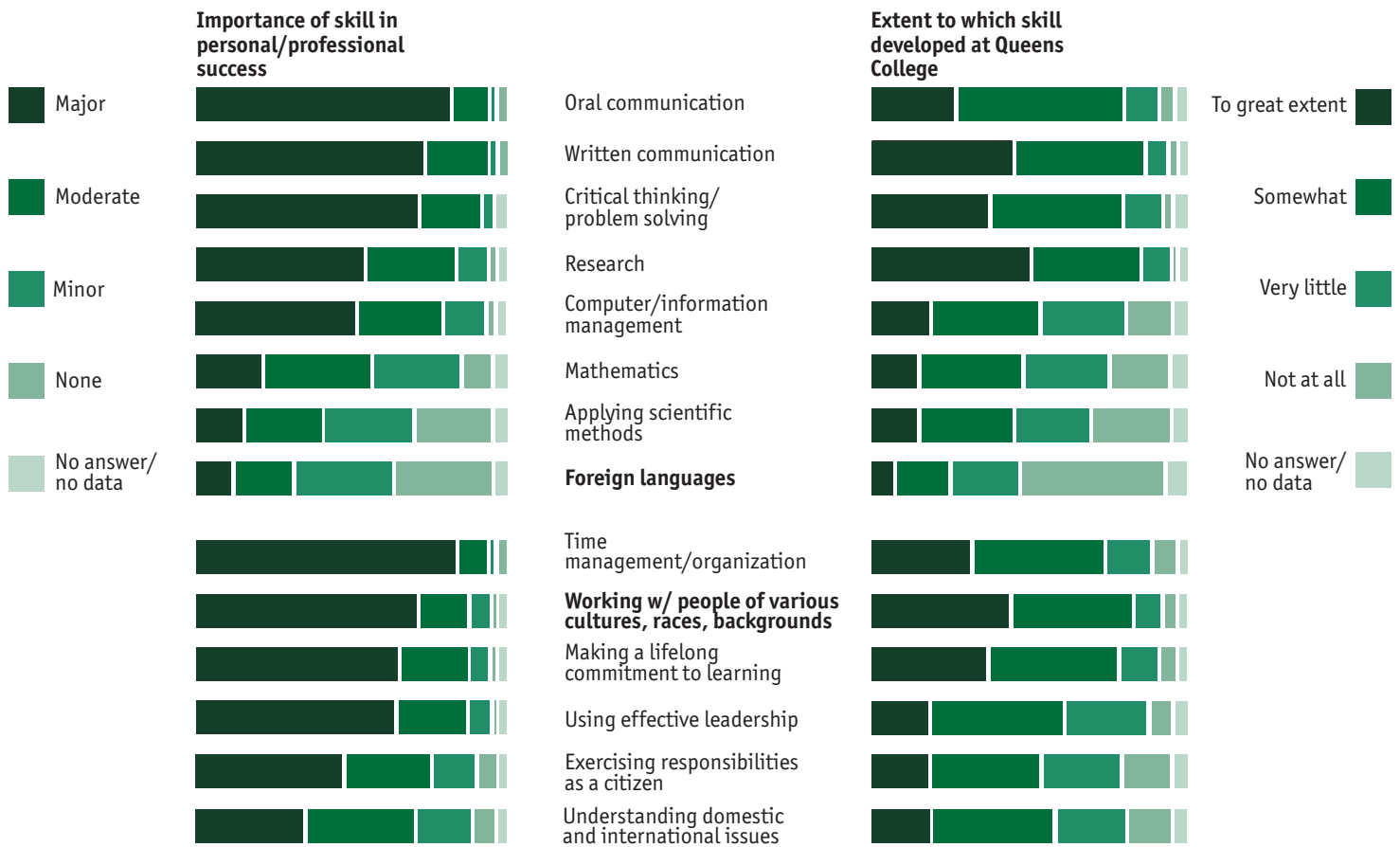


Figure 1. Alumni ratings of core and applied skills, from a survey of students graduated in 2001 (McAuliffe, 2006 survey). Bars represent proportion of respondents (393 in total) rating the perceived importance of core skills (top panel) and applied skills (bottom panel) with respect to their current success (left), and the extent to which they feel these skills developed at Queens College (right). The data pattern is strikingly similar to that for a 1999 survey of over 1500 alumni (McAuliffe, 1999 survey).

dinámica de los idiomas que se mueven por nuestro campus. A la vez debemos refinar las oportunidades que les ofrecemos a nuestros alumnos para desarrollar sus destrezas, tanto en inglés como en sus otros idiomas.

A guide to the essay

What follows is an abridged version of the discussion above, in a language that might be easier for our readers.

I begin with an anecdote about how I came to learn that QC students don't know the word *monolingual*. I Post an ad to recruit participants for a subject pool study: "Monolingual English speakers wanted..." Nobody signs up so I change my strategy: ask instead for *native speakers of English*. The ones who show also speak Spanish, Hebrew, French, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Italian, Mandarin, Yiddish, Croatian, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Portuguese, Thai.... At Queens there are no monolinguals.

Iterations of this experience take place in many of my interactions with our students. For example, out of 101 students in my classes this academic year:

- 80% speak English and a language other than English—17 different languages in total
- 74% also read and write a language other than English

Most are bilinguals or polyglots, growing up with two or more languages from early childhood on. My students this year report that they acquired their languages, on average, when they were:

- 4 years old (5.9 SD) for majority language, English
- 2 years old (4.8 SD) for minority language

The linguistic diversity of our student body is widely seen as a strong marketable point, but weaknesses in our students' writing are often attributed to the presence of other languages. Such attributions could be ill-founded,

given what our students say about how relatively poorly they read and write their other languages (see Table 1).

And if we examine student attitudes towards the study of languages, we are again surprised: our multilingual students see “foreign languages” as a skill that’s unimportant in their personal and professional success (see Figure 1).

For our multilingualism to flourish and continue to be a characteristic that makes us unique, we need more study of the multilingual community on our campus, and we need to implement changes in the options offered for the study of language.

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BRIDGING CULTURES AND NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

TSETEN GELEK, Student

My name is Tseten Gelek and I am Tibetan born in Nepal. I did my schooling in Nepal and I transferred to Queens College. I felt welcomed at my first visit to United States, but I was very nervous about how I was going to approach my first class at Queens College. The first day of my class at Queens College was on Tuesday, 28th of August, 2007. Coming from a school where there were only students from one country, the first experience that I had during my first day at CUNY Queens College was the most beautiful scene of people or students from diverse backgrounds of culture, nation and religion coping with each other in creating a very studious and peaceful

environment within the boundaries of the college. Seeing different faces from different races made me feel relieved and gave me confidence as I presented myself in the college and classroom.

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Being the loved and cared one in my bordered circle of life within my families and my cultural parameter, I felt so nervous and afraid to face a world which looks totally different to me. Living within a society with a majority of Tibetans, I had only my culture, the teachings of my teachers and parents to help me adjust myself to this world. Throughout my life I have always looked at foreigners with love, care and welcome. The College is very big and covers a very huge area that I had to wander around a lot to go to classes. But the students at Queens College helped me a lot in finding my way when I interacted with them. The greatest thing that I experienced was how the values of my culture helped me interact with the students and the teachers of different cultures. It made me realize no matter how the values and the culture differ they always have basic similarity and moral sense of unity and love. With my first footsteps into the class, I was nervous. It was a Political Science class and there were some students and a lady teacher already in the class before all the students were in the class. Seeing a teacher waiting for students was a very rare scene compared to the school where I studied back in Nepal. In our school we have to be present before the teacher arrives in the class. We, the students, wait for the teacher to come to class and we have to stand up when the teacher arrives in the class as a sign of respect to the teacher. This was totally different from what I experienced here. When the class started, the professor started taking attendance. I could hear names of students with different last names, students belonging to different races of people, but I didn't hear my name. So I had my name registered by the professor in the attendance book. The fascinating thing was the various types of surnames of students from all around the world that made

me feel that I was one part of this class representing my nation Tibet; I felt very proud of myself.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE. . .

EILEEN BAKER, CUNY Writing Fellow

As a Writing Fellow at Queens, I have been very interested to learn about the many students who came here as immigrants. I, too, came as an immigrant to New York City in 1952. Although my parents had made the move to America, they were reluctant to let me explore the many cultures America had to offer because they did not understand these cultures yet. It's interesting that several decades later, and coming from different cultures, students at Queens have expressed similar thoughts about fitting in and dealing with their parents.

When I was growing up in New York City in the 1950's, the ideology of the melting pot was embodied in the curriculum of assimilation in our school system. Neighborhoods, however, were delimited around ethnic and racial differences. Difference was embodied by the material reality of housing and other socio-cultural patterns. Children tend to form social bonds easily, and I remember wanting very much to fit in with the other children. This desire was often difficult to accomplish. On the streets the children all played together, but when we got together with our families, our friends were all of the same immigrant background and country that our parents came from.

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Talking to students from many different immigrant groups today at Queens College, it's interesting that several decades later and coming from different cultures students feel similarly about fitting in and dealing with their parents. I guess this problem is something all immigrant

children struggle with as they and their parents adjust to a new country, and as they debate how to maintain the culture from their place of origin while embracing the new mainstream U.S. culture.

ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC MAKE-UP OF THE STUDENT BODY: QUEENS COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

CHRISTOPHER COLEMAN, Faculty Technical Support Specialist, Division of Arts and Humanities with TAMARA EVANS, Dean of Faculty, Division of Arts and Humanities

The college requires all graduating students to attain proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to three semesters of college-level study. Students may be granted exemption from this requirement by either (1) successfully completing three years of high school study in one foreign language, (2) passing the New York State Regents Comprehensive Foreign Language Exam at Level 3, or (3) passing a foreign language proficiency exam approved by the Dean of the Division of Arts and Humanities.

From the Fall of 1984 to the Spring of 2007, a span of 23 academic years, more than 2,700 students successfully passed a foreign language proficiency exam in any one of 66 known languages, including American Sign Language. Topping the list of languages are Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) with 640 exemptions, Spanish with 379 and Hindi with 280.

Given the complexity and rigor of proficiency exams, it is reasonable to assume that a passing score is indicative of native or near-native proficiency. Using data from these exams, we wish to examine the linguistic make-up of our student body, how it has changed over the years and whether these changes have reflected the demographics of the borough of Queens.

Unfortunately, the results are inconclusive for several reasons. First, the informal guidelines for testing that were in place prior to 2007 did not provide a standard baseline for evaluation. As a result, some speakers of foreign languages were likely unaccounted for in earlier years. Additionally, the relatively small number of exemptions granted for many languages in a given year, especially in the early years of data collection, provide little information to extend to the larger population.

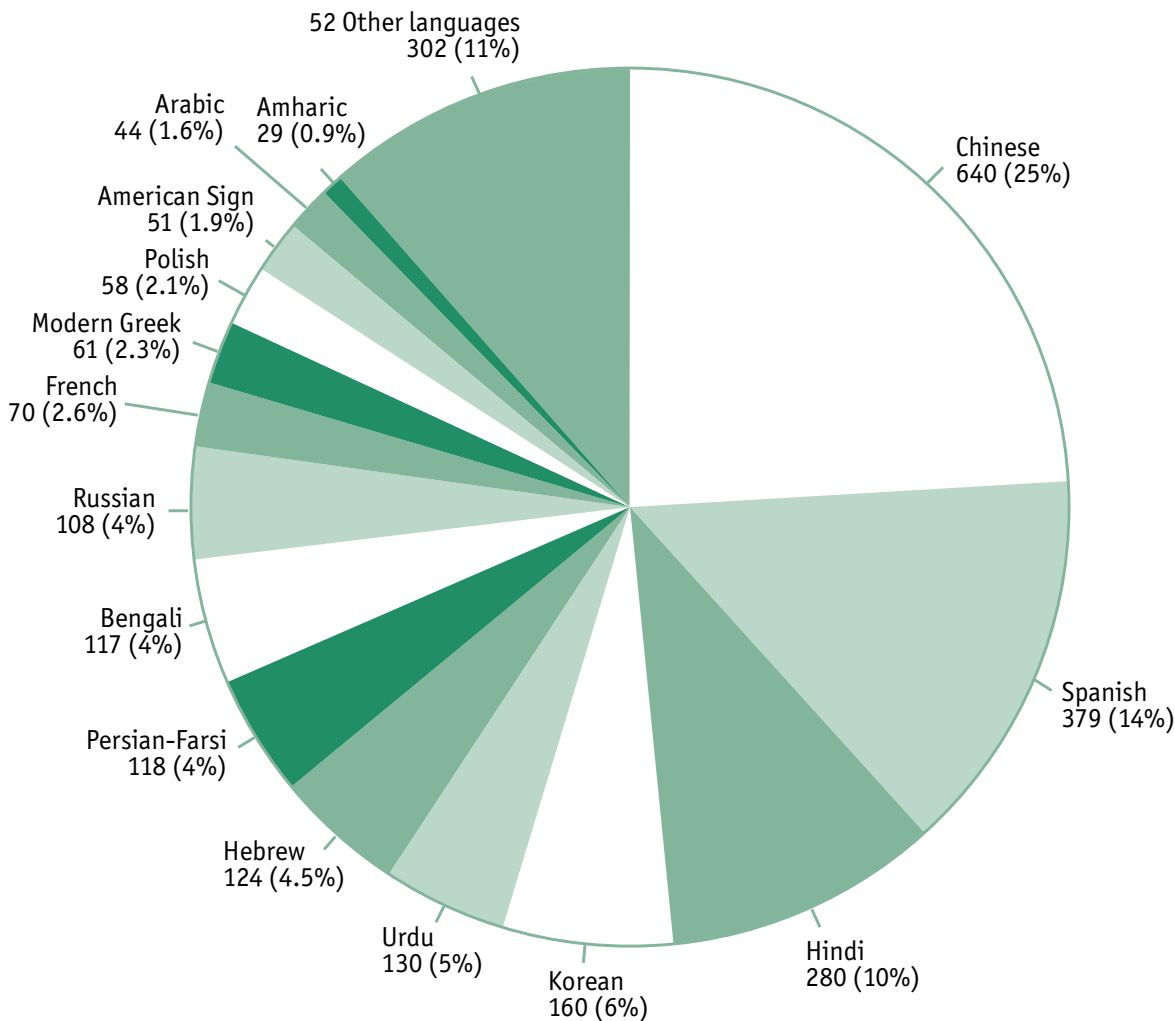
For example, exemptions for Chinese were very rare

until the 1992-93 academic year, when one faculty member began administering all Chinese proficiency examinations. In the previous eight years there were a total of 23 exemptions for Chinese. Since 1992, there has been a fairly constant amount of exemptions year after year with moderate fluctuation, averaging 40 per year. Yet the Chinese population in Queens County has more than quadrupled since 1980¹.

Spanish has shown the greatest and most consistent increase in exemptions since results have been recorded. The first year of significance was also 1992-93, in which 15 exemptions were granted. In the 10 years following, the number of exemptions remained fairly constant with some fluctuation, averaging about 20 per year. In the past four years, the yearly average has increased to about 36, peaking at 47 in 2005-06. This trend is very consistent with the increase in the Hispanic population of Queens County, which, in 2006, was 61 percent larger than in 1990¹.

Likewise, the trend in the amount of Korean exemptions reasonably follows that of the growing Korean population in the borough. In six-year increments, exemptions increased from an average of six per year from 1990 to 1996, to an average of 10 from 1996 to 2002, and finally to an average of 12 since the fall of 2003. In the borough of Queens, the Korean population increased by about 24 percent from 1990 to 2000 and by another five percent from 2000 to 2006¹.

Several languages spoken primarily in Southern Asia have been prevalent. Hindi, spoken in India and Nepal, has shown great fluctuation with little change over the years despite a substantial increase in the Asian Indian population of Queens. Exemptions of Urdu and Bengali have steadily increased, accounting for 130 and 117 total exemptions, respectively. Hebrew and Persian (Farsi) have remained fairly constant, with 124 and 118 exemptions, respectively.



Total counts of foreign language proficiency exams: 1984-2007.

With the exception of Spanish, languages of European countries have been much less represented in the total number of exemptions since 1984. The four most common—Russian with 108, French with 70, Greek with 61 and Polish with 58—exhibit varying trends with great fluctuation. Exemptions in other European languages, such as German and Italian, are rare. There are even fewer exemptions granted in languages of African countries but, when combined, those total 66 since 1984 and exhibit a constant trend. Again, the very small number of exemptions in any given year makes it difficult to extrapolate and compare the trends observed in these languages to the greater population.

As previously noted, students may also be granted exemption from the foreign language graduation requirement upon matriculation either by completing three years of high school study in a single foreign language or by passing the Level 3 Foreign Language portion of the Regents exam. These students are not required to take the aforementioned proficiency exam and thus are not included in the data previously presented. Instead, they are represented in data provided by the Office of Admissions from the six most recent academic years, from 2002-03 to 2007-08.

Spanish by far represents the most of these exemptions with 3,895 and has been increasing every year. Other languages exhibit fairly consistent long-term trends despite large occasional fluctuations. Hebrew represents the second-most exempted language with 642, followed by French with 547, Italian with 477, Chinese with 350 and Modern Greek with 113.

Unlike with proficiency exams, it is much more difficult to assume a level of proficiency based on high school coursework or Regents exams. High school students with no prior experience in a foreign language may very well take the same courses as heritage speakers. Unfortunately our data on these matriculated exemptions does not take this into account and therefore, like some of the data obtained from proficiency exams, may not be representative of the larger population.

The results of this analysis leave much to be considered. Declining enrollment in foreign language courses has been observed over the period represented by our data. Going further back over the course of the college's history, we have seen prevalent changes in immigration patterns throughout the borough of Queens and in particular in neighborhoods surrounding the college. Areas where immigrants of Germany, Italy and Ireland resided a half-

century ago are now occupied by more recent immigrants of Asian and Latin American countries. In the same time, the college has also seen increasing enrollments of first-generation students, recently being named America's Hottest School for First-Generation Students by *Newsweek* magazine.

¹ United States Census Bureau.

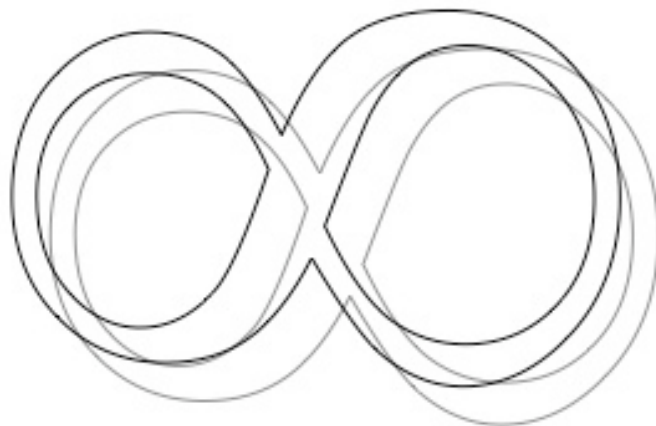
LANGUAGE OF MATHEMATICS: A BRIDGE TO POSSIBILITIES

MINDY MILLER, Student

My original intent was to write a piece about the language of mathematics using poetry: kind of a four-dimensional comment on language. I'd recently attended a weekend writing workshop on poetry at Bard College, and I was inspired to try to convey some of my ideas about the language of mathematics in verse. I worked on it for a while but as I type these words I'm an hour short of the twice-extended deadline for this submission. So I've decided to shelve the reluctant poem (for now) and use prose to touch on the power of mathematics as a language.

I believe mathematics is indeed a powerful language. I think many of us forget that mathematical symbols—including numbers—are no more or less than the symbols (letters) we string together to make words and sentences, to communicate our thoughts and feelings, to articulate and illustrate our imaginations. I also think that many of us don't receive the gift of going past the obligatory math skills we had to learn in school, of walking through that door into the world of imagination and possibility, a door through which mathematics can shine a light.

A recent lecture I attended included reference to a particular kind of prime number called a Mersenne



Eternity...Infinity

prime. Mathematicians believe that an infinite number of these Mersenne primes exist, but so far only 44 have been identified. The 43rd Mersenne prime, found in 2005, has over nine million digits. If one were to print the 43rd Mersenne prime in a bound book, that book would be 500-pages long and would take a person a month to recite aloud. A month!

Again: The current belief is that there is an infinite number of these Mersenne primes.

Sit and ponder that idea of infinity for a bit. It stretches the boundaries of my mind, that's for sure. It reminds me of a story I once heard that attempts to convey the idea of eternity. Imagine a ball of soft gold, the story begins, that's as large as our sun. Now imagine a bird flying by that ball once a year and brushing it with its wing as it flies by. The length of time it would take that ball to dwindle down to nothing from an annual brush of a bird's wing is only the beginning of eternity (infinity). It does boggle the mind, no?

Mathematics as a language also has a powerful quality that it shares with music and art: that of crossing cultural and language barriers. True, some mathematics symbols are used slightly differently in some cultures. But, in general, a mathematics equation or expression means the same thing to someone whose native language is Mandarin Chinese or American English. This bridging quality of the language of mathematics is the reason I wanted to contribute to this year's *Revisions*. When we think about the diversity of cultures and languages that are represented by the student body at Queens College, aren't we really thinking about ways that those cultures and languages interact with each other, about how our interactions are affected by different cultures and languages, and about how those differences can be honored and bridged?

Well, maybe I'll be inspired by such thoughts (and hopefully by visiting muses) to find the bridge leading to my wayward verses, perhaps while procrastinating as I study for my next mathematics exam.

萬花筒般的自我 MULTILINGUAL SELVES

謝采秀 TSAI-SHIOU HSIEH, WAC Assessment Coordinator

我常常想著，不同語言是如何像萬花筒的各個色鏡一般，以說聽讀寫的各種形式鑲嵌在我的日常生活裡。早晨我用羅馬尼亞文和室友問安（她以中文相對回應，這是我們互

相學習的方式），在地鐵上總是充斥著各種聽得懂或聽不懂的語言，到了學校則自動轉換為全英文，即便只是自言自語。做論文研究不時得摻雜我癩腳卻實用的德文，回到家看「外語電影」（一直不了解為何這自成一類）、讀著中文小說、翻閱日本漫畫...不同的語言從外在看起來似乎只是不同的表達形式，或是多種文化滲入生活的表徵。那麼向內探索呢？萬花筒的綺麗是否也反映著內在思考、感受的多樣性，或者只是將自我切割與片段化？

I often wonder how different languages assemble as mirrors in the kaleidoscope of my life, in the forms of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Every morning I greet my roommate in Romanian, and she greets back in Chinese. (That's how we learn each other's language.) In the subway, my ears are always filled with various

SOMETIMES I FEEL THAT MY ENGLISH-SPEAKING SELF IS DIFFERENT FROM MY CHINESE-SPEAKING SELF. IT'S LIKE WHEN A KALEIDOSCOPE IS TURNED A BIT, THE SAME COLORED BEADS THEN DISPLAY A DIFFERENT PATTERN.

languages, some I understand and some I don't. Upon arriving at school, I automatically switch to English-only mode, even when I'm just murmuring to myself. When I was doing my dissertation research, sometimes I had to use some German—very limited yet necessary in many cases. At home I watch “foreign language” movies (I never understand why it's a genre), read Chinese novels, skim through Japanese Manga.... Looking from outside, different languages seem to be merely different forms of expression, or at most a symbol of how various cultures are intruding into my life. But how about exploring from inside: Are the many faces of the kaleidoscope reflected in my diversified thoughts and feelings—or are they just fragmented?

這種切割感將我長久以來莫名的錯覺顯影：彷彿講英文的我和講中文的我，其實是兩個不同的自己。就像輕輕將萬花筒轉一個角度，同樣的色片便展現出不同的風景。這種差異性一方面是在語言本身—英文畢竟非我母語，所知字彙有限，少掉了許多成語典故、迂迴隱喻，讓情緒及意見

的表達相對地赤裸直接。另一方面則是自我生命經驗和英文能力的同時性：離鄉所帶來的性情變化與開始大量使用英文的時間疊合，「說英文的自己」或許其實只是反射著「搬到紐約後的自己」，獨自在異鄉生存讓我學會必須勇於表達自己、爭取所欲，並且快速有效率地達成目標。

The sense of fragmentation seems to make a long-time delusion more realistic: Sometimes I feel that my English-speaking self is different from my Chinese-speaking self. It's like when a kaleidoscope is turned a bit, the same colored beads then display a different pattern. On the one hand, the difference lies in the language itself. I have a much smaller vocabulary in English than in Chinese. When speaking and writing in English, I'm less sensitive to using metaphors and less capable of using allusions and idioms. As a result, the way I express my emotions and opinions seems balder and more straightforward. Chinese, compared to English, allows more indirectness and ambiguity. On the other hand, the simultaneousness of my life experience and the growth of my English ability seem to create different selves. I only started speaking English in daily life after leaving my home country. Perhaps my "English-speaking self" is merely a reflection of my "moving-to-New-York" self. Living in a foreign country alone helped me learn how to express myself bravely, to fight for what I want, and strive to accomplish things more efficiently.

讓我思索的不只是疑似分裂人格的現象，更是這兩個自我互相干擾、辯論、爭權的過程。我注意到自己在思考時的語言跳躍性，在自我思辯的過程中，有時候兩個我站在不同的立場，一句中文一句英文地對話著（這若拍成紀錄片應該很有趣）。剛到紐約的那幾年努力想讓英文變好，甚至和某些台灣朋友講話時也用英文，還以英文寫日記。近幾年則是發現中文能力退化得令人害怕，開始在生活中多開闢一些中文的領土，包括開始以中文寫部落格，練習在講中文時不夾雜英文字（這是個比想像中要困難一些的挑戰）。這樣的轉變，並不只是擔心落入留學生口中「英文沒學好，中文卻變差」的陷阱，應該還因應著更深沈的擔憂：新的自我認同尚未鞏固，便和過往熟悉的自己漸行漸遠。

These reflections make me think that this experience is not a seemingly Schizophrenic phenomenon, but the history of my two (or more) selves fighting, debating,

and taking each other's power. As I think, sometimes my English-speaking self and my Chinese-speaking self are standing on different sides of the brain, having dialectic conversations (which can be really funny if it's made into a documentary). When I first moved to New York, I wanted to improve my English so much that I talked to some Taiwanese friends only in English. I also kept my

早晨我用羅馬尼亞文和室友問安（她以中文相對回應，這是我們互相學習的方式），在地鐵上總是充斥著各種聽得懂或聽不懂的語言，到了學校則自動轉換為全英文，即便只是自言自語。

journal in English. In recent years, however, I found my Chinese speaking and writing ability is spookily declining. I decided to let my Chinese-speaking self occupy more space, so I started to blog in Chinese. I try to avoid English words when speaking Chinese (more difficult than it seems). I made these changes not only because of my fear of losing my Chinese fluency, but in response to a deeper anxiety: I don't want to alienate my old, familiar self before establishing an integrated, new identity.

然而萬花筒再如何千變萬化，裡面包含的畢竟還是同樣的面鏡和色片。用不同語言來表達，其實都是了解自己的不同途徑。目前的掙扎或許只是尚未掌控好旋轉萬花筒的頻率與角度，待技巧嫻熟之後，但願我能夠在使用不同語言的自我之中轉換自如，甚至樂在其中。

No matter how many patterns a kaleidoscope can make, it's composed of the same mini-mirrors and colored beads. Using different languages to express myself can be seen as different approaches to understanding different parts of me. Maybe I just haven't mastered playing with the kaleidoscope of my life yet. Hopefully, one day, I will be able to switch between my different selves more comfortably, and enjoy the various patterns I create.

PRÓRROGA AND OTHER POEMS

JUAN NICOLÁS TINEO

Introduction to Juan Nicolás Tineo's Work

Jacqueline Davis

Juan Nicolás Tineo, a graduate from the MSED in Spanish at Queens College, has been a full-time Spanish teacher at the Susan B. Anthony Middle School for eight years. Juan completed his BA in the Dominican Republic and is a published author of collections of poetry, a novel, and a short story, all in Spanish. He founded and is Executive Director of the Hispanic and Latino Cultural Center of NY, an organization that promotes cultural activities related to Spanish literature. Last September his organization offered the well attended "Feria del Libro Hispana y Latina de Nueva York" in honor of Dr. Gregory Rabassa, Distinguished Professor from Queens College.

Prórroga

Prórroga pido al día
a la navidad
que nuevamente ya vendrá.

Prórroga pido a la rutina
al Año Nuevo
que aquí otra vez está.

Prórroga pido al afán
al trabajo
a la agonía diaria.

Prórroga pido
—y sé que no obtendré— al día
porque no hay ser humano
que haya podido escapar
al umbral de la muerte.

Hasta en los buenos días alguien muere

Hoy será un buen día.
Azotó la última tormenta del invierno, quizás
quizás mañana podamos despejarnos de la ropería
hoy como ayer, los poetas
y hasta soldados, por la vida
mueren sin algarabía.

Ayer fue como hoy,
mañana será como siempre
hoy salió el sol, hasta en los buenos días alguien muere
quizás, quizás mañana sea un buen día...

Errante

Desdibujar el tren que no pasa
mientras, disfruto ver saltar las ratas por los rieles.

Olvidar que me dieron un ticket
Saber que el canal del tiempo anunció una tormenta
para mañana.

Estar pediente que a final de mes hay que pagar la renta
las credit cards
el celular
el student loan.

Comprar las tarjetas de llamadas prepagadas,
asegurarme que mi familia no me olvide en la República...

Llegar a casa, sentir que no quiero hablarle a nadie
necesitar más espacio
saber que no quepo con nadie.
¡Ni conmigo!

Seguir la rutina diaria es el aporte,
la huella más profunda de mi existencia en esta tierra...

Tierra ajena.



STUDENT HAIKU

俳句

わらうひと
こえのあやしき
もいとほし



oh, the laughing man
he who has a strange voice
yet is still lovely

- Mia-Ju Wang

かはやいき
このうたよみて
くそうまる



went to the toilet
having written this haiku
the crap has been born

- Tony Yang

おやこどん
こどもとははなり
とこしえに



chicken-and-egg rice
child and mother hand in hand
together always

- Max Wang

せんせきに
げんむのむしゃの
しのびねす



an old battle field
visions of warriors past
lingering whispers

- Jakub Jozwiak

ふあふあと
いちごだいふく
たべたいな



oh puffy puffy
the strawberry rice cakes mmm
I want to eat them

- Carol Chen

生徒の俳句

CREATIVE WRITING AND LITERARY TRANSLATION

NICOLE COOLEY, English, Director, MFA in Creative Writing Program

This year, the English Department at Queens College welcomed the new Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing and Literary Translation. Ours is the first MFA program in the borough of Queens and offers areas of study in poetry, fiction, playwriting and literary translation. We have twenty-three students in our first class of graduate students. As MFA program director, I am thrilled to be part of this wonderful collaborative venture that has brought faculty throughout the English Department, and the college, into conversation about writing and literature.

. . . A CRUCIAL PART OF BECOMING A WRITER IS BELIEVING THAT YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE . . . HAS VALUE AND CAN BE WRITTEN ABOUT. FOR MY STUDENTS, WHOSE VOICES HAD ALREADY BEEN DISENFRANCHISED AND SILENCED, ANONYMOUS WORKSHOP INVALIDATED THEIR EXPERIENCE.

All of us on the faculty have been talking a great deal about how creative writing intersects with language and culture. This, I believe, is what makes our new MFA unique. Throughout the United States, there are many MFA programs. Since the 1930s when the first creative writing program, the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, was founded, interest in creative writing at the graduate level has continued to rise. In fact, in the past twenty-five years, the number of MFA programs has grown from 15 to well over a hundred. (And this statistic does not even include creative writing MA and PhD degrees.)

Yet, typically, most of these MFA programs are cast very narrowly. Most programs still offer degrees only in poetry and fiction. Many do not focus on the study of literature. And almost none offer a track in translation. With more

than 160 languages spoken in Queens, whose population we serve, our new MFA is ideally situated to offer a diverse population of students training in creative writing and to nurture an important generation of writers. Our program is groundbreaking not only because it is the first in the most multicultural county in the United States, but because it is one of the first creative writing programs to raise questions about the writing and translating of multinational literatures.

As one of the authors of the proposal that helped to launch the MFA, I was able to imagine what shape our MFA might take. As I reflected, I kept returning to an experience I had when I began teaching undergraduate creative writing at Queens College. My first semester here, I employed a pedagogical strategy—the anonymous creative writing workshop—that I'd used effectively in another liberal arts college with a homogeneous student body. Student texts circulated in my creative writing classes with no name on them—only I, the teacher, knew who had written the work. I explained to my students that this strategy emphasizes that we are discussing the writing, not the writer, and ensures that the writer can't defend his or her work.

At first, this teaching method seemed, again, to work well. But something troubled me: In this class, composed primarily of students who were recent immigrants from the Philippines, several Soviet breakaway Republics and Afghanistan, there was a curious lack of character and setting in the students' work. Places, people, landmarks were not named. There was a flatness in the stories the students wrote, and even an odd similarity in their narratives.

To understand the problem, I invited students to come to my office hours to talk about their work. Over and over, they told me they had left out all references to place and time so that no one could identify them as the author. They explained: If they named their native countries, or used words from their native languages, everyone would have known they wrote the story. If they told a story located in the worlds they knew, derived from their own experience, they told me they would have done the assignment wrong.

I realized that a crucial part of becoming a writer is believing that your own experience, your own

background, has value and can be written about. For my students, whose voices had already been disenfranchised and silenced, anonymous workshop invalidated their experience. The students in my class believed that they should erase individual difference—language, culture—in favor of the creation of a “universal” narrative in order to be good writers.

This experience forever changed my thinking about creative writing pedagogy and has played a large part in my hopes for our new MFA. The teaching of writing, I learned firsthand, is inflected by language and culture in complex ways. A single, universal narrative is not the goal of a creative writing class. And thus, the inclusion of translation and the focus on serious literary study in our MFA program became central. Training our students in creative writing and multiple literatures and languages, using our campus-wide interdisciplinary resources, is a way to give our students the freedom to write their own stories and to show them that their stories matter.

Thus, our program seeks to bring together the translation and creative writing tracks of our MFA. Student translators will take workshops in their genres and attend readings, but the other students in poetry, fiction and playwriting will try their hand at translation exercises, attend our “Trends in Translation” series of talks, and participate in this lively aspect of our writing community.

Finally, for all of us in the MFA program, translation is not simply the transformation of one language to another but a way of thinking about language. Our MFA focuses on translation across cultures, between continents, between and among theoretical approaches to literary texts, between and among various cultures that make up the diverse and varied landscape of Queens.

TRANSLATION AS PRESERVATION: A CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR RIGOBERTO GONZÁLEZ

KEN NIELSEN, CUNY Writing Fellow

On an early December afternoon in 2007 I sat down to talk with Rigoberto González, prize-winning author of

Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa, about the translation component of the new MFA program in creative writing at Queens College (described in the previous article). The following is based on this conversation—it is, true to its topic, my translation, interpretation, and compression of our talk. The inspiration is Rigoberto González’s; any errors are mine.

The MFA program and translation at Queens College

Starting our conversation, we began talking about the MFA program as such and its position within Queens College as a multilingual campus, answering questions such as: What is the function of the MFA program at Queens College? What is the relation between creative writing and translation? What is the art of translation? How does working with translation prepare students to work in the academy in general?

The philosophy behind the MFA program is to combine a “traditional” program of creative writing with a program in literary translation. The literary translation program distinguishes the Queens College MFA program from other creative writing programs on the East Coast, allowing for students to focus on the relation between the “original” work, its translation, and the production of both, all within the same program. In this way the program has the potential of working not only on the students’ knowledge of translation theory and practice, but also on their literary abilities, combining literary translation as a teachable practice and as an art. The program currently has about 30 students primarily focusing on prose and poetry. However, playwriting and translation will eventually be core elements of the program as well, and the translation program will start accepting students in the fall of 2008.

In the current American educational system, bilingual academic programs traditionally operate within an English / Spanish paradigm, but the translation program at Queens wishes to work with other languages as well because of the large multilingual component of the college and the borough itself. Insisting on a truly multilingual program might also—and this is definitely the wish of the program—keep writing alive in the many local languages in Queens by translating some of these non-English works into English.

The MFA program—as of now—has mostly native speakers and monolingual students, primarily native English speaking students, enrolled. However, the translation program wishes to develop the entire student body in a more multilingual direction in order to create a space for several languages working within the same classroom. Working with undergraduates on issues of translation and forcing them to work in several languages will also ultimately help them as graduates. When working on issues of translation, students are forced to pay much closer attention to the English that they read and write in other classes and, ultimately, pay closer attention to their own economy of language. By having worked with each and every word while translating a text, students will have gained the important knowledge of choosing the right words that best and most concisely describe what they are aiming to say.

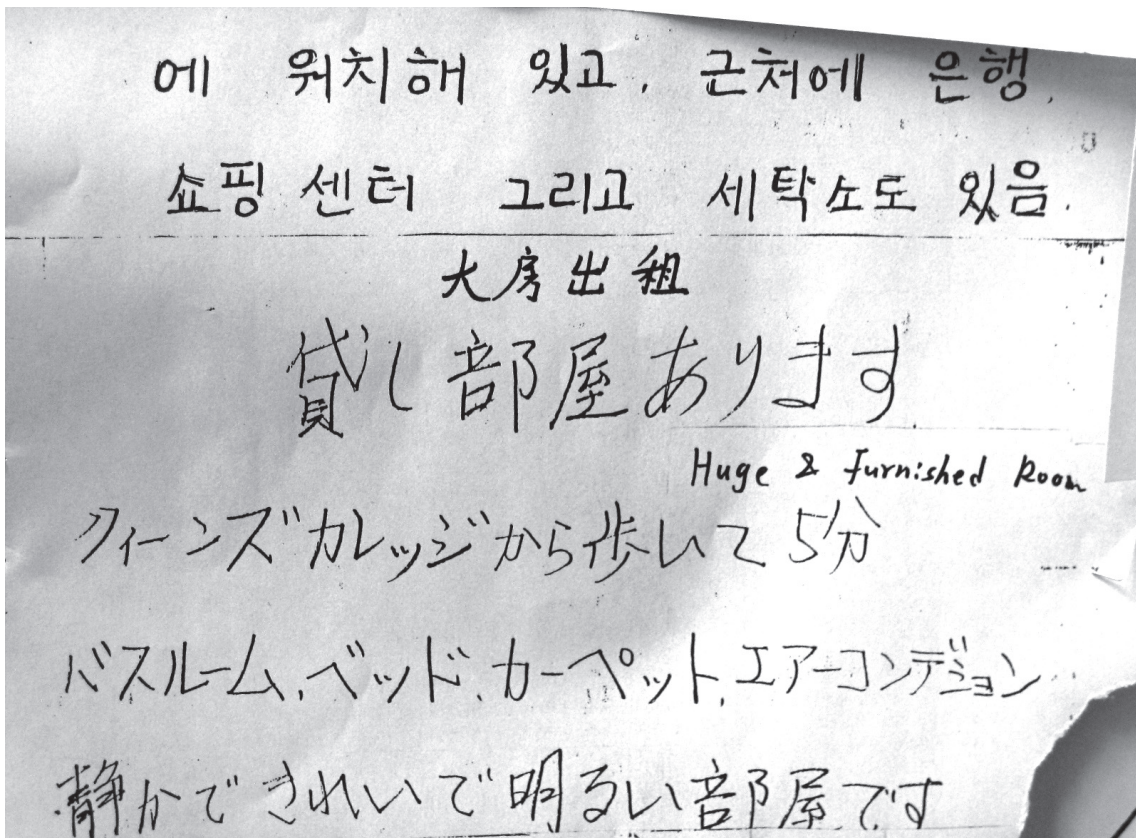
Translation within CUNY and the Borough of Queens

Following this discussion, our conversation turned specifically to translation within CUNY, Queens College, and Queens as an incredibly ethnically and linguistically diverse borough. Questions discussed were: What is the potential for the MFA

program in translation within the CUNY system? Are there particular qualities that Queens College students have in relation to an MFA translation program?

For the program to become truly multilingual it cannot be an insular program. So the program intends to help identify professors throughout the CUNY system who will work with students in different languages and cultures. Consequently, a multilingual program in translation at Queens cannot exist only as a multilingual program, but must also be a multi-disciplinary program—having translation majors work with professors from a wide variety of different schools, programs, and disciplines. In this way, Queens College and the MFA program in creative writing can serve as an example of how languages can work across campuses—helping to establish solidarity between campuses, within the CUNY system, and, ideally within multilingual New York.

A large number of students at Queens College already have tremendous experience in working with issues of translation. For example, many students will have experience with naïve translation—translating on the spot for family members who do not speak English, translating contemporaneously in class, and so forth. Multilingual or bilingual people will almost all recognize a situation in



Huge and furnished room in a multilingual house: for rent to QC students.

which naïve translation is needed. However this impressive ability often remains under-utilized in writing—be it creative or academic—because when translation is defined as an art or a scholarly task instead of a lived practice, it becomes hard for some students (and others) to do. In order to utilize this already existing ability to translate, the students in the translation program will be working with a wide variety of documents: textbooks, advertisements, legal documents, official letters and so forth. Many students will have experiences working with such materials and will therefore be truly able to investigate the purposes and strategies of different kinds of documents. One of the difficult elements in translating some of these documents, as in any translation, is to be able to find the right tone, which is of course not just a question of language but is also always culturally determined.

Translation as Preservation

From this point, our conversation turned to the question of translation as preservation. Can translation be considered linguistic archaeology in which something new emerges from the artifacts of the old? In her article in this issue, Nicole Cooley writes that “Our MFA focuses on translation across cultures, between continents, between and among theoretical approaches to literary texts, between and among various cultures that make up the diverse and varied landscape of Queens,” and my conversation with Rigoberto González touched on this aspect as we slowly centered in on the notion of translation as an act of preservation.

The Queens program in literary translation wishes to tap into the population of Queens and thereby elevate the value of literature written in other languages, expressing different cultures. This process can happen by translating local literatures into English. For example, it would be helpful to have English translations of Middle Eastern protest poetry. Such work would allow students and faculty at Queens College to get another view of how Middle Eastern poets, whether in Baghdad or in Bay Ridge, respond to the war.

Having a translation program at Queens College is a perfect combination in a creative writing program. Queens is a tremendously diverse borough—both linguistically and culturally—and still has very insular cultural pockets. As gentrification takes place throughout the outer boroughs, languages and cultures disappear or lose their specificity. Working within these cultures before they disappear can help preserve their texts and develop literary practices. Sending students out to work with local cultures can serve the function of preserving these cultural

identities. The translation program wants to participate in these communities and to foster bi- and multilingual creative communities, not just inhabit the land of Queens and the language of English. It is a goal of the program to educate students who will keep discussing “the word” in multiple languages and keep translating texts into a multitude of languages. Keeping these unknown bodies of foreign words, produced either globally or locally, alive through giving them life in another language is an important act of multilingual literary preservation.

MY LIFE AS A LINGUISTIC CONTORTIONIST

ANNA OBRAZTSOVA, CUNY Writing Fellow

Speaking more than one language is often seen as an asset, especially in a multi-cultural, multilingual environment like New York City. At Queens College, linguistic diversity is only as far away as the next study group or classroom: Everywhere on campus one overhears conversations in languages other than English. Many students separate

Я аспирантка факультета психологии и сейчас заканчиваю работу над диссертацией.

their English and non-English activities gracefully and seamlessly, and yet sometimes this split leads to a tricky linguistic “multiple personality disorder.” In the spirit of this year’s edition of *Revisions*, here is a passage I wrote in my native language about the experience of being a “multilingual” psychology student.

Я аспирантка факультета психологии и сейчас заканчиваю работу над диссертацией. В этом месте я могла бы (должна была бы!) написать название темы, в работе над которой я провожу немало времени, но, как это не тяжело признавать, моего словарного запаса не хватает, чтобы объяснить, что такое «проспективная память» и как я ее исследую в своих экспериментах. Можно долго объяснять, что проспективная память -- это способность вспомнить запланированное на будущее дело тогда, когда это будущее настает. Честно говоря, я не уверена, что непосвященный человек в состоянии понять это предложение даже со второй

попытки, не говоря уже о моих коллегах-психологах. Каждый раз, когда русскоговорящие друзья и родственники спрашивают меня о диссертации, я начинаю краснеть, пыхтеть и стараюсь перевести разговор на такие темы, в которых я чувствую себя более свободно. Мне кажется, что у многих студентов, которые знают несколько языков (но при этом уровень владения языками варьируется в зависимости от темы и жанра), возникают похожие ощущения: мы легко объясняем на одни темы на одном языке и с трудом связываем несколько слов на другие на этом же самом языке.

In the paragraph above I struggled to describe the topic of my dissertation, and must admit near defeat: My inadequacy as a speaker of “psychology Russian” is blatantly obvious, even though, given enough time, I would [or could?] probably succeed in making myself understood. At the same time, I have no trouble expressing myself and thinking about the subject of my dissertation in English: My work is in the area of prospective memory, or “remembering to do things in the future”. I do not know the proper translation for the phrase “prospective memory” and even remembering the word for “remembering” makes me feel like a linguistic

contortionist. For this reason, conversations with my Russian-speaking parents and friends about “what I do” are often embarrassingly short and end in my confused effort to steer the conversation onto some other topic (have you seen any good movies lately?). I imagine that this experience is familiar to many multilingual students: In a situation where the language of communication does not match the language of expertise, one is at a disadvantage that is nothing short of frustrating. And yet, I must find a way to make myself understood to others in a way that it all makes sense in my head—this is often tough work! The lesson I am learning is this: When someone starts explaining something to me and I do not understand it, I give myself another chance to listen. I only hope that others give me the same benefit of the doubt.

THE ART OF TRANSLATING DATA: EXPERIENCES FROM INTERVIEW RESEARCH IN SOCIOLOGY IN JAPAN AND THE U.S.

NORIKO MATSUMOTO, CUNY Writing Fellow

安定。うん。要するに、何だろう。その会社が、安定しているかどうか。別に給料はめちゃくちゃ高いとか、そんなのは別に俺どうでもいい。とにかく、職を失わずにいたい、うん。それが一番。

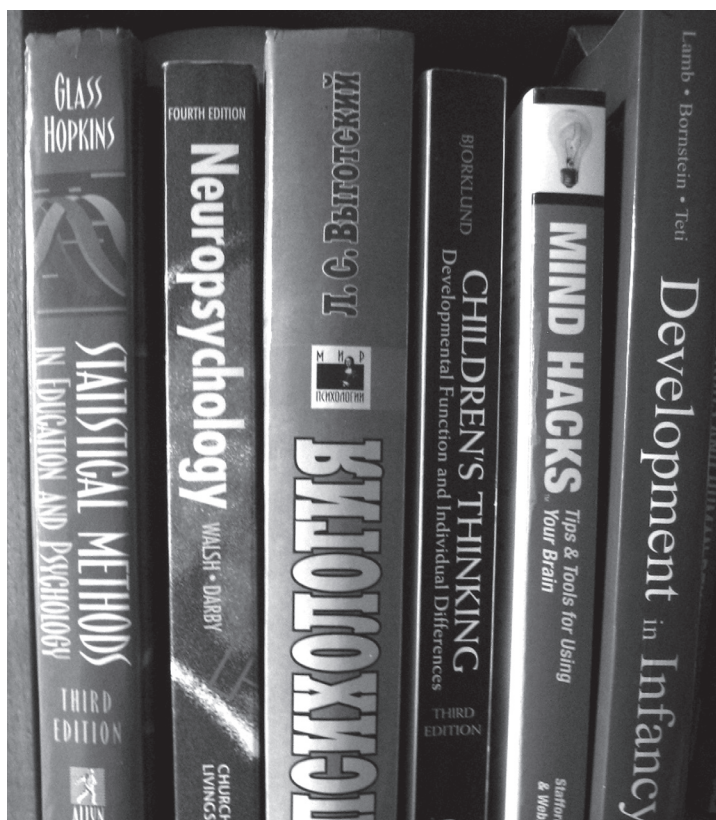
Antei. Un. Yōsuruni, nandarō. Sono kaisha ga, antei shiteiruka dōka. Betsu ni kyūryō wa mechakucha takai toka, sonnano wa betsu ni ore dōdemo ii. Tonikaku, shoku o ushinawazu ni itai, un. Sorega ichiban.

Stability. Yeah. In short, what would be. That company, whether being stable or not. Particularly salary is way high or not, that, particularly I don't care. Whatever, job want not to lose, yeah. That number one.

Stability. Yeah. In short, how'd you say, whether the company is stable or not. I don't care if the salary is way high or not. Whatever, I don't want to lose my job, yeah. That's number one.

(Thirty-year old male, High School graduate, worker at a waste combustion facility.)

Involvement in two American-based research projects in sociology in Japan has offered me the opportunity to interview over seventy native “informants.” These projects aimed to gain information about contemporary social issues, such as family relations and youth employment. Field work involved extensive interviewing of “informants”



Among contemporary textbooks of psychology, a volume by famed developmental psychologist L. Vygotsky, in the original Russian.

in Japanese, transcribing audiotaped interviews (the “source text”), and, ultimately, translating (into the “target language”). Personal accounts gained from the interview process reveal how individual experience is both unique and general. The interview brings a realization of the power and weight of the human voice, as does the transcription and translation necessary for scientific analysis.

安定。うん。要するに、何だろう。その会社が、安定しているかどうか。別に給料はめちゃくちゃ高いとか、そんなのは別に俺どうでもいい。とにかく、職を失わずにいたい、うん。それが一番。

Spoken language is often incomplete, ambiguous, and contradictory. Translating the spoken word (*la parole*) naturally poses both structural and contextual complexities. First, Japanese tolerates much greater ambiguity than English. Words—even phrases—are frequently omitted in conversation (the prime example being the subject) without leading to incomprehension in Japanese. Second, informants understandably make continual cultural references in dialogue. Given that the “target” text is to be analyzed in an American academic context, it is imperative for the translator to interpret native knowledge, which, though freely spoken, lies deeply rooted in the speaker’s “source” culture, and can thus be elusive to the reader. A further complexity has to do with the degree of vagueness (sometimes deliberate), informality and inconsistency of spoken Japanese. Since the spoken language is often a reflection of the social conditions of an individual (class, education, gender, etc.), an effort to retain the nuance of the informant’s “voice” is necessary for sociological analysis.

In going through reams of transcriptions, I have adopted three strategies which have proved useful in approaching the challenges in this kind of linguistic/cultural transmission. The first is to correct and refine the vague passages of the “source” into a coherent text in English. This becomes necessary when faithful, word for word translation produces an incomprehensible passage. The second strategy is to leave words or phrases as they are actually spoken. In this case, retaining the original may be judged best because of cultural specificity or significance. In such cases, I would either transliterate the original Japanese, or translate literally and include a translator’s interpolation to explain the background. The third approach—which I employ less frequently than the first two—is to omit minor words or phrases (such as unclear utterances or sentence constructions in the original) with the aim of achieving clarity for the English-speaking reader. The three approaches should be balanced within the translation, but clearly require creativity and selection in the production of the “target” text.

The art of translating social data resides in the balance between “making sense” and maintaining culturally specific meanings in the target text. Translation may be viewed as instrumental or simply as a means to convey pragmatic information from one language to another. But the act of translation is as creative and enriching as the act of writing. In transmitting information, the translator recreates the worldview constructed by a person in the “source” culture within the “target” language—while remaining as true to the person as possible. Indeed, the practice of the interview as a social research method should be an effort to get beneath both the clichés we use to express ourselves and the way we view others (Bourdieu [1993]1999). The translator of social data aims to reproduce the original voice—conveying the emotions, values, and prejudices of individuals—while shedding light on other cultures and histories. The process is fulfilling because it is a communicative exchange that is deeply human.

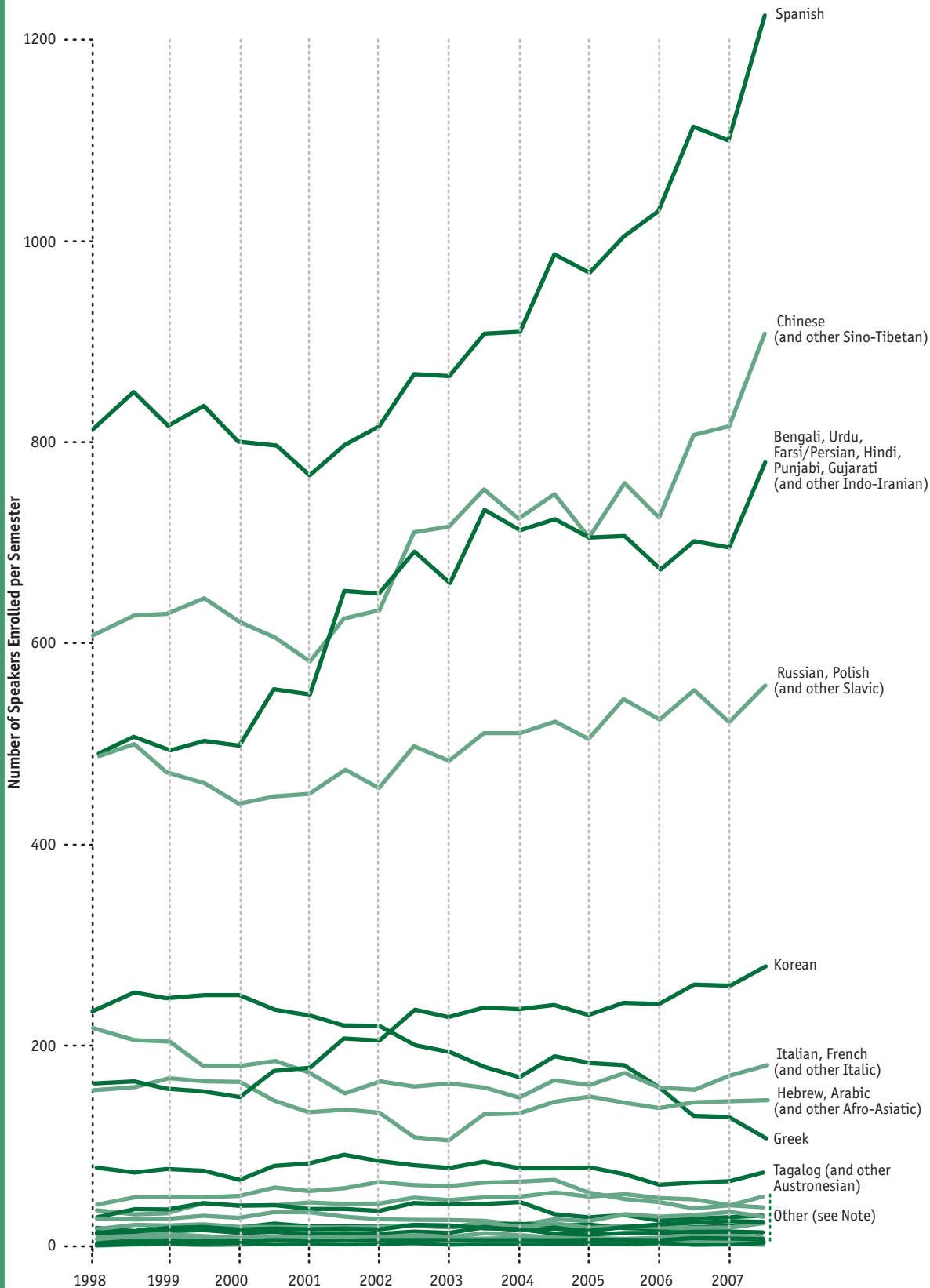
Reference

Bourdieu, P. (1999). Understanding. In Bourdieu, P., et.al. *The Weight of the World* (1993). Stanford, CA. Stanford University Press.

Languages Other Than English

at Queens College, Spring 1998 to fall 2007

Data provided by Margaret McAuliffe, Institutional Research



Note:

Remaining lines represent the following language families, ordered from largest to smallest mean number of speakers: French-based Creole, Niger-Congo, Albanian, Japanese, Austro-Asiatic, Armenian, Altaic, Germanic (other than English), Uralic, Tai-Kadai, Kartvelian, Baltic, Tupi, Aymaran, Panoan, Hmong-Mien, Quechuan, Artificial language, Celtic.

Disclaimer:

On average, information is missing or unknown for 49% students enrolled in a given semester; the numbers reported here are therefore conservative.

WHAT LANGUAGE DOES MY BODY REMEMBER? SIMPLE MEDITATIONS

ON THE LANGUAGE OF A MULTILINGUAL QUEEN AT QUEENS

KEN NIELSEN, CUNY Writing Fellow

The question at hand is: Is there such a thing as homosexual language and can it be considered a non-native language of its own? Speaking homosexual is an acquired behavior in any language, but it raises specific issues for people living in multiple cultures. Anybody who has seen episodes of *Will and Grace* or *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* will recognize the representation of gay men as sharp-tongued, witty and—dare I say—bitchy men consumed by a seemingly overwhelming linguistic desire to comment on everything from weight gain to hair loss to fashion choices (particularly the bad choices made by others) to world politics, all while downing endless bottles of Merlot. Hvem taler dette sprog? What is this language of one-liners and vulnerable cynicism and where on Earth did these handsome representations of a lived identity learn that language? (Notice how I, in one broad sweep, managed to detach myself here. How delusional can a writer be?) What genuinely American school for queens did these stereotyped men attend?

When I announced to a group of friends over cocktails one night in the late spring of 2007 that I was to become a Writing Fellow at Queens College, the acid-tongued group amused themselves endlessly on my behalf. How appropriate that I of all people should be working at a college named Queens. The jokes seemed as endless as the gin and tonics. Admittedly, I think it's funny as well.

Der er så mange forskellige måder at benævne sig selv? To put a linguistic label on oneself means so much more than that particular word. Am I a queen? Am I queer? Am I a gay boy rapidly approaching my mid-thirties at which time in American culture a gay male, maybe, can start thinking of himself as a man removed from the frantically youth-obsessed physical and linguistic culture of gaydom? Hvordan kan min krop genkende sig selv i et sprog der ikke for alvor er mit? How can my body recognize itself in a language that is not really mine? En hel verden af betydning eksisterer i rummet mellem ordet og eksistensen, mellem ordets betydning for mig and its larger contextual meaning. The queer words might

mean something unknowable to me rolling off the tongues of others.

I don't hang out with my friends. I hang out with “the boys”—also, at times, affectionately known as “the ladies.” This use of the female form to describe gay men is part of a historical strategy of reclaiming words that were used to oppress us for a long time. *Queer*, and its contemporary use as a badge of honor, as a rejection of straight society's demands that we be, so to speak, normal, is an American creation that has spread all over the world. These days, *queer*, an old derogatory word, is used for self-identification in remote parts of the world. Does it still have the same connotations in foreign cultures? And, what happens when these words do not mean much to the gay foreign language student entering the American educational system and who has learned “straight” English and now must learn to also speak homosexual in a foreign language?

Da jeg først flyttede til New York med mit allerbedste skoleengelsk—komplet med dansk accent—kendte jeg ikke alle disse slangudtryk for homoseksuelle mænd. Jeg kendte naturligvis de danske og kendte, nærmest fysisk, deres betydning. Jeg vidste at jeg ikke var en svans eller en fisselette. Kunne aldrig betegne mig selv som sådan, men vidste også at de havde betydet meget for Bøssernes Befrielsesfront. At overtage ondskabens og hadets betegnelse for en selv er en grundlæggende frisættende handling. Paa amerikansk kan jeg være alle de ting jeg ikke kunne på dansk. På amerikansk kender min krop ikke betydningen af fordømmelsens ord.

We are called and call each other (and here the question of who has the right to call whom what is absolutely essential) so many different things: *flaming queen, rice queen, drama queen, opera queen, theatre queen, size queen, snow queen, drag queen* and so on. Among all these different kinds of queens I definitely embody some and yet remain, in my own definition of my identity, a gay man. I have been called a *queen* (often in combination with *drama*), men jeg remain i bund og grund en homoseksuel mand. I have been called a *faggot*, a *fag*, and I have called my friends the same with love, trying to undo the hateful actions hidden in the looming shadows of those words. I have been attacked with the same word and wounded by it as a linguistic weapon. I have picked fights because of it! What did you call me? Disse ord er handlinger i sig selv.

Jeg er bøsse! I know exactly what I am in Danish, but it has taken me a long time and years of studies of identity theory to figure out which American label might describe my identity correctly. In Danish my body knows (because the body remembers the language of hate, remembers the feeling of physical danger when in high school a gay boy is bullied) the meaning of derogatory words that it doesn't know in English. My body has no memory of childhood in the English language. This lack of bodily meaning sets my mouth free to identify the body that carries it around as the body of a multilingual queen. My body speaks Danish but whispers in English.

And through my whole linguistic life as a gay man runs Adrienne Rich's observation from her poem "The Burning of Books instead of Children" that "this is the oppressor's language / yet I need it to talk to you."

THE LANGUAGE OF LAW

KENNETH H. RYESKY, Department of Accounting & Information Systems

As an academic discipline, the subject of Law has its own unique attributes. The legal process does not operate like the scientific process, and the body of legal literature does not develop in the same manner as the literature of other disciplines. Accordingly, law courses present significant linguistic issues and challenges for students and instructors alike.

As with most disciplines, the legal literature has its own jargon. An understanding of certain historical events is necessary in order to adequately appreciate the legal jargon. Many phrases used in the legal discipline are in Latin, a relic of the two centuries of occupation of the British Isles by the Roman armies, and also, later, the subsequent role of the Catholic Church in the legal system.

The law has its own unique genres of literature. Like most academic disciplines, it has its textbooks, treatises, and scholarly articles. Unlike most academic disciplines, the legal textbooks, treatises, and scholarly articles are not considered to be primary sources; that role is fulfilled by constitutions, statutes, regulations, and judicial opinions. Indeed, because the Anglo-American legal system depends on precedents established in prior judicial opinions, the limited availability of judicial opinions in America during the Colonial period had a profound impact upon the development of the law in America.

The law addresses problems from all aspects of society, and therefore must be applied to emerging trends and

technologies. Accordingly, the legal jargon associated with real property ownership contains terms such as *fee simple*, *reverter*, *quitclaim* and many other archaic English words and phrases in common use when real property laws evolved centuries ago, while much jargon associated with legal issues of computers and the Internet includes modern phraseology unknown a generation ago.

Faculty needs to explain the historical background behind many legal terms. For example, the term *Statute of Frauds* refers to a provision requiring certain agreements to be set in writing in order to be enforceable. The term *frauds* is not necessarily related to any wrongdoing by any of the parties but derives from the Statute for the Prevention of Frauds and Perjuries, enacted by the British Parliament in 1677, a time when, unlike 21st Century America, most of the population was illiterate and when parties to a contract were not permitted to testify regarding the contract. Accordingly, a legal proceeding involving a contract would often deteriorate into a contest of whose witness could tell a better lie to the court about who said what to whom. This promoted dishonesty before the tribunals, which had a corruptive effect upon the integrity of the courts. Parliament addressed the problem by requiring that certain agreements be reduced to writing in order to be enforceable.

Many legal terms, such as *antitrust*, can likewise be confusing without a historical context. Why would "trust" be something Congress would seek to oppose? The term *antitrust* arose with the Sherman Act of 1890, whereby the United States Congress sought to control abuses by the monopolists in the large industries such as steel, mining, transportation, and petroleum. The monopolists controlled the giant corporations, not through direct ownership of stock but by controlling trusts which were the legal owners of the corporate stock shares. Trustees of any trust have a duty to proactively assert the interests of the trust beneficiaries. The Sherman Act put to rest the monopolists' argument that the trustees had no choice but to restrain trade, lest they be disloyal to the trust beneficiaries.

The law, then, must be studied—and taught—with regard for its unique language and literature.

THE LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE

JASON KRELLMAN, CUNY Writing Fellow

Another multilingual community, the Society for Neuroscience, held its annual meeting last November.

Over thirty thousand neuroscientists from all over the world attended this five-day collection of lectures, poster presentations and special-interest socials. Most official meeting activities are conducted in English, but a stroll through the convention center's halls during breaks would, without fail, allow an attendee to hear an astounding variety of languages being spoken among his or her fellow Society members. There's no guarantee that any two attendees would be able to communicate effortlessly about the weather, the lunch menu, or the accommodations at the local hotels. However, the proverbial math changes when attendees gather to hear a scientific lecture or huddle together to examine a presenter's poster. As they read or listen to and critically evaluate the presented information, this motley group of individuals from every corner of the world all understand.


They understand because they all speak the language of science.

In this issue of *Revisions*, some forms of communication not traditionally thought of as “language” have been considered. Mathematical equations, for example, generally represent relations among physical objects or forces that could also be expressed in words (see “The Language of Mathematics,” this issue). This fact, the bane of many self-proclaimed “left brained” students, also has the fortunate consequence of articulating with equal clarity mathematical relations to those who speak different languages.

In addition to using mathematics, science also frequently uses statistics to objectively test assumptions and express research results. For example, the statement “ $t(20) = 5.01$, $p < 0.001$ ” conveys a wealth of information about the results of an experiment, including the statistical analysis used and the probability that the results reflect a treatment effect, without the need for words. This statement indicates that the difference between treatment groups on some outcome measured in this experiment is substantially more likely due to the effect of the treatment than to chance alone. Thanks to the universal nature of statistics and its symbolic representations, scientists from a variety of countries and spoken languages would undoubtedly recognize this result.

Equally comprehensible and not dependent on written language are graphic representations of scientific data. Given an understanding of the principles underlying the data being presented and perhaps only a handful of words, a scientist who speaks most any language can grasp research findings represented by a graph or other similar

visual display of data. A graph with a tall bar representing the average sleep quality of participants who received an experimental drug and a short bar representing that of participants who received a placebo can demonstrate with almost pictorial universality the benefit of the drug for participants' quality of sleep, just as color change on a topographic map of the human cornea represents reduced corneal curvature that will provide a test patient with better post-operative vision.



... A COMMON SPOKEN OR WRITTEN LANGUAGE IS OFTEN HELPFUL AND SOMETIMES VITAL FOR TWO SCIENTISTS TO TRULY APPRECIATE THE NUANCES AND COMPLEXITIES OF EACH OTHER'S WORK.

Scientists who speak diverse languages are also brought together through the common use of terms that originate from a variety of languages and have found their way into the lexicon of the multilingual scientific community. The term *vascular endothelial growth factor*, or *VEGF*, which refers to a protein involved in blood vessel formation in the mammalian nervous system, is known to interested scientists on both sides of the Atlantic, as is *umami*, the term for a distinct food flavor made possible by specific chemical receptors in the human tongue discovered by Japanese researchers.

Science has developed and made use of forms of communication not completely reliant on written or spoken language. This has helped to foster a common understanding among individuals from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, which itself has allowed terms originating in one language to permeate numerous others. The result is a language of science that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries, one that should be impressed upon students of science as not only an intriguing fact but also as a motivator for them to discover and find their place in this multilingual community.

Nevertheless, a common spoken or written language is often helpful and sometimes vital for two scientists to truly appreciate the nuances and complexities of each other's work. At the very least, though, the mathematics, visual representations, and terms that constitute the language of science can be a springboard for effective communication between individuals of different linguistic backgrounds via the use of traditional written or spoken language.

DEMYSTIFYING WRITING EXPECTATIONS FOR MULTILINGUAL WRITERS

SUE LANTZ GOLDHABER, English/CESL

The rules of language are as varied as the number of languages in the world. In Chinese there are no articles (*a/an/the*). In Spanish, one adds the plural “s” not only to nouns but to the adjectives that precede them. In Hebrew, there is no verb equivalent of “be.” Interestingly, the “be” verb (and all of its forms) is generally the first verb non-native speakers of English learn. Think of all the sentences one can generate with this verb alone! What does “s” generally represent in the English language? The *plural* form. So why would a student add “s” to the third person *singular* (He/She/It/The family runs.)? Why not add “s” to children or homework? Indeed—a transition used and misused frequently by my students with Asian linguistic backgrounds—is it any wonder that multilingual writers who still struggle with fluency in English make the errors they do in writing? What can we do to help them transform their papers into ones we wish to read?

Faculty can demystify writing in several ways. Students must understand that writing is a process. We can share with students the process involved in writing our own papers/articles. Let students know that the struggle to

transform ideas into a coherent piece of writing requires writing multiple drafts, sharing ideas with others, and even changing major portions of what has already been written.

We must teach the conventions of writing in our particular disciplines. Offer students an outline of expectations from documentation style and types of introductions (direct/indirect) to the types of discussion/argument/examples/illustrations that will meet the requirements of the assignment. Stress the difference between revision (changes in content) and editing (correction of errors in grammar and punctuation). Help students work on their drafts. A 15-minute conference can help both the instructor and student clarify ideas and expectations. Even a few minutes after class to review one paragraph of a draft can lead to major improvements in the final draft. This is often more efficient than using written comments to convey the same information. Peer editing with a half dozen guided questions will offer *all* students an opportunity to learn from the writing of others and learn to read with a critical eye. Peer reviews can be collected as a reference if needed.

Once a paper or draft is submitted, consider the following: First, *read the paper for content*. In other words, *read past the errors*. Was the assignment followed correctly and accomplished? Are all of the required elements present in the paper? What is the quality of the research? At this point, *comment only on the content*. What worked and what needs to be added or revised? To avoid confusion, offer specific comments. Next, *read the paper for form*. Where does the language interfere with the reading? Where does it lack coherence? Are proper transitions being used? Consider the surface errors (grammar/punctuation) last. Some of these errors take many semesters to eliminate, but you can contribute to the process in the following way. **RESIST THE URGE TO CORRECT ALL OF THE ERRORS OR MARK UP THE ENTIRE PAPER.** Instead, select *three* key errors that most interfere with the smooth reading of the essay and have students edit these errors to keep or improve their grades.

Writing is an ongoing process, so requiring drafts of your students will encourage them to develop their ideas and produce clearer writing. Let students know that you will collect an earlier draft of their papers. These can be used as a quick reference to help you determine where their



“The melting pot of QC CDC afterschool program”: installation in Kiely Hall.

weaknesses lie, but they needn't be graded. For weaker students, require two drafts to be submitted with the final draft. Emphasize to the students that an early draft should be substantially different from (not simply shorter than) the final draft.

RESIST THE URGE TO CORRECT ALL OF THE ERRORS OR MARK UP THE ENTIRE PAPER. INSTEAD, SELECT THREE KEY ERRORS THAT MOST INTERFERE WITH THE SMOOTH READING OF THE ESSAY AND HAVE STUDENTS EDIT THESE ERRORS TO KEEP OR IMPROVE THEIR GRADES.

Finally, don't forget to encourage your multilingual students. Offer constructive criticism. A positive comment offers encouragement to students who face the daunting task of delivering an academically sound paper in English, their second, and more often these days, their third or fourth language. Our students must meet the challenge of learning the language of the academy, the language of various disciplines and of improving/perfecting their ability to express themselves in English. In that respect, *all* of our students become multilingual in college. Let us rise to the challenge by expecting high standards and enabling our bright, eager students to meet these shared goals.

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES IN ENGLISH 110

JACK NEWHOUSE, Student and Teacher's Assistant

Before I even entered Queens College, I had meticulously planned my four-year academic itinerary, consisting mainly of English and Science classes. My plan seemed set in stone, but unexpectedly I found myself teaching for an English 110 class as a student. OK, so I was just a Teacher's Assistant (TA), but the experience of viewing the classroom from the perspective of a teacher has helped me understand the struggles of the numerous multilingual students in my science classes, students who not only have

to learn the difficult information but also interpret it using their second language. Looking around the room in my science classes, I was never surprised that the class was more representative of a UN meeting than a Jane Austen book club: In my mind, science is a universal language.

Despite the fact that at Queens College the courses are taught in English, the complex ideas of science are common to every culture, so I did not expect the ESL students to be at any disadvantage. After my tenure as a TA, however, I found this assumption to be faulty. Until the ESL students became accustomed to the professor and his manner of speaking, it was very difficult for most to follow along, but as the semester continued, all understood the course requirements and how to fulfill them. As a result of my experience as a TA, I am now able to appreciate how hard it is for ESL students to succeed: not only by struggling with the complex ideas behind scientific theorems, but also by having to do so through the prism of standard English.

THE DECLINE OF, LIKE, YOU KNOW, LITERACY?

BOONE B. GORGES, CUNY Writing Fellow

I hear the whispers: "My students are totally illiterate."

In back alleys: "If I hear 'you know' or 'like' out of their mouths one more time...."

In muted tones: "The email said 'culd u plz send 2days homework.' It makes my blood boil!"

As educators, it's our job to recognize our students' academic weaknesses and work toward their improvement. Furthermore, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in Standard English is arguably the most important skill to be gleaned from an undergraduate education. So a certain degree of frustration with our students' English is to be expected. But there are good ways to approach the challenge, and there are inappropriate and inefficacious ways. We should strive to avoid stigmatizing the ways our students speak and write. We should not draw unwarranted connections between our students' fluency in Standard English and their level of intelligence.

And we should teach our students to appreciate the power of language and rhetoric, so that they can harness their linguistic creativity to their benefit.

The first step is to establish a little empathy for our students. The kind of English we want them to speak, so-called “Standard English,” is a rough amalgam of a variety of grammatical and lexical features. Depending on how you delineate it, Standard English is the native dialect of very few English speakers, and perhaps of none at all. I, for instance, grew up in the Midwest, and, upon moving away, I quickly learned (through the ridicule of my pitiless friends) that what I knew as a “bubler” was properly called a “drinking fountain” and that the lilt of my Wisconsin diphthongs made me sound like a Canadian. Like nearly all other educated people, my ability to use Standard English is very much an *acquired* one. The native dialects of Queens College students, who have by and large been raised in an urban environment characterized by extreme linguistic diversity, are still further removed from Standard English. Thus we should not be shocked and aghast when Queens College undergraduates lack the Standard English vocabulary and syntax that we ourselves have honed only through many years of education and practice.

THE KIND OF ENGLISH WE WANT THEM TO SPEAK, SO-CALLED “STANDARD ENGLISH,” IS A ROUGH AMALGAM OF A VARIETY OF GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL FEATURES. DEPENDING ON HOW YOU DELINEATE IT, STANDARD ENGLISH IS THE NATIVE DIALECT OF VERY FEW ENGLISH SPEAKERS, AND PERHAPS OF NONE AT ALL.

Moreover, it’s crucial to remember that Standard English is only “standard” by convention. Just as, for example, French enjoys no greater depth of expressivity than Spanish, there is nothing that makes Standard English inherently better suited to academic discourse than the varieties of English that our students speak. The standard’s only advantage is that there is an established convention to use it in particular settings, thereby establishing a common mode of communication between thinkers. Yet a lack of facility in Standard English by itself says nothing about the intelligence of the speaker, and we would be amiss to let such a thought creep into our judgment of student work.

One might argue that the problem of youth literacy is deepened by modern forms of communication like email and text messaging, where initialisms, abbreviations, and various orthographic funny business preponderate. It is of course hard to deny that thumbing out a message on the keypad of a cell phone is likely to encourage typographical shortcuts, and it might very well be the case that an increasing majority of the English prose that our students read and write is of this less-than-Standard variety. Thus, the argument goes, students can’t help but to let their linguistic laxity creep into the classroom: It’s a result of our modern age.

Let’s assume this argument is sound: Young people are becoming less and less able to conform to the conventions of Standard English because of their overwhelming exposure to non-standard usage. A pessimistic educator might toll the bell for traditional literacy. But is all hope really lost? One could instead argue that students are incredibly enthusiastic about new media. On MySpace and Facebook, students are producing and consuming huge amounts of prose on their own, without the inducement of Writing-Intensive syllabi or English 110 requirements. Through these media, our students are developing an organic sense of authorship, an awareness of audience and tone that, without the Internet, probably would not have taken root. Of course, this sense of authorship is rough around the edges, far from what we expect of sophisticated writers. Yet it is far easier to teach the details of Standard English to someone who is interested and engaged than to someone who isn’t, and we have new technologies to thank for the seed of this engagement.

These observations suggest several strategies for teaching our students the mores of Standard English. By implementing new and evolving technologies in our courses—the very technologies for which students have an already-existing affinity—we can harness that enthusiasm and get them to care about the writing they produce. What’s more, the interactive, collaborative and public nature of technologies like blogs and wikis is ideal for getting students to think about whom they’re writing for and what purpose they’re trying to accomplish. The one-way dialogue of traditional essay writing, on the other hand, does not so explicitly encourage awareness of audience and motive. With their attention drawn to the essentially interactive nature of writing, students will have a practical motivation for mastering the rhetorical devices that Standard English provides.

Another, more general teaching strategy involves practice, and lots of it. The pessimist argues that the student is so inundated with bad English that their bad habits get

deeply ingrained. If this is true, then exposure to a huge amount of reading and writing—with a focus on “good” English—has the potential to dislodge these habits. Provide samples of student writing that you’d like them to emulate, both in content and in style. Assign low-stakes writing assignments, like journals, so that students get used to the process of putting their thoughts on paper. Those explicit lessons that you give about the finer points of grammar and punctuation will be reinforced both by seeing the rule being followed in sample texts and by practicing the rules themselves.

Above all, be patient. The conventions of Standard English put Robert’s Rules of Order to shame for their complexity and sheer number, and they take many years and much practice to master. Angry whispers to your colleagues about the decline of literacy are less likely to excite change than prudent pedagogical practice.

LES TABLES RENVERSÉES

JOHN TROYNASKI, Director, Writing Center

J’ai toujours pensé que j’étais compatissant aux difficultés de mes étudiants dont les langues maternelles n’étaient pas l’anglais. Mais j’ai vraiment découvert moi-même la réalité de leur situation quand je me suis trouvé dans une école de langue française à Aix-en-Provence en juin 2006.

J’ai eu un examen le deuxième jour de mon arrivé à Aix. Mais ce qui l’a rendu encore plus difficile c’est que la veille j’avais eu un long trajet de Paris par le TGV (train grand vitesse). J’avais beaucoup de problèmes d’aller de la gare de TGV à Aix proprement dit, et après de la gare routière, à mon appartement loué. J’étais très fatigué et donc, parce que j’avais des problèmes à trouver l’école—j’étais un étranger à Aix—je suis arrivé en retard là-bas, mon premier jour, le jour des examens écrits et oraux.

L’examen écrit était très dur avec beaucoup de questions sur les temps des verbes, certains que je n’avais jamais étudié! Tous les verbes irréguliers! Les pronoms difficiles! Les constructions grammaticales complexes! J’étais totalement découragé. Puis on m’a pris dans une salle pour l’examen oral. Cet examen était un peu mieux parce que les questions étaient ouvertes: Qui êtes-vous? Où habitez-vous? Quelle est votre occupation? Pourquoi êtes-vous ici? J’avais donc plus de facilité avec mes réponses. À ma surprise j’ai été placé dans une classe intermédiaire.

Après ce premier jour, les choses se sont améliorées, mais je restais inquiet tout le temps. Tout était en français.

À l’école, dans les rues, dans les magasins, et dans les restaurants je devais écouter intensément. C’était épuisant! Les différences culturelles, les différentes coutumes, les différentes suppositions sociales me confondaient très souvent.

J’AI TOUJOURS PENSÉ QUE J’ÉTAIS COMPATISSANT AUX DIFFICULTÉS DE MES ÉTUDIANTS . . . MAIS J’AI VRAIMENT DÉCOUVERT MOI-MÊME LA RÉALITÉ DE LEUR SITUATION QUAND JE ME SUIS TROUVÉ DANS UNE ÉCOLE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE À AIX-EN-PROVENCE EN JUIN 2006.

Même les petites choses devenaient un grand projet. Par exemple, une sangle de mon sac à dos s’est cassée. Je devais la faire réparer. Aux États-Unis je l’aurais pris à un “shoemaker/shoe repair shop.” Quel est le mot français pour *shoemaker*? Je vais à mon dictionnaire. <<Ah, c’est le cordonnier.>> Je cherche dans les pages jaunes pour un cordonnier. J’en trouve cinq. Je trouve les adresses sur mon plan d’Aix et je les marque. Je marche à la première. Elle n’existe pas! La deuxième et la troisième sont fermées. Pourquoi? Je ne sais pas. La quatrième est ouverte. Mon sac à dos a peut-être besoin de six points. Le cordonnier réparera-t-il ce sac à dos maintenant pendant que j’attends? Non. Je dois retourner dans deux jours. Deux jours! La vie était comme ça pendant un mois.

Pendant cette période d’un mois j’ai beaucoup étudié chaque jour et j’ai beaucoup appris. Et j’attendais le temps où je penserais en français quand je le parlais. Le temps n’est pas arrivé. Sauf la fois dans un restaurant en Avignon où le serveur n’a tenu aucun compte de moi pendant une demi-heure et je lui a dit <<!*#@?!*#@?!..!>> sans y penser.

L’expérience de ce mois m’a rendu un meilleur professeur de beaucoup de manières. Je suis maintenant même plus compatissant aux difficultés de mes étudiants dont les langues maternelles ne sont pas l’anglais parce que je sais très bien les problèmes qu’ils confrontent. Mais, plus important, comme étudiant d’une langue étrangère, j’ai appris beaucoup de choses: des théories d’apprentissage, des pédagogies, des jeux de langue qui aident les étudiants à apprendre une langue étrangère.

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WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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WAC Faculty Partners work in division-based teams, with CUNY Writing Fellows who serve as research assistants, consultants to individual courses, and tutors for students. The teams will function in a variety of ways, depending on the discipline. In general, they:

- Identify the needs of departments and individual faculty offering W courses within their divisions.
- Work with department chairs to conceive discipline-specific writing goals and with the WAC Director to foster pedagogical innovations that will help faculty achieve these goals with their students.
- Host faculty workshops in the division.
- Devise methods for assessing the outcomes of W courses.
- Develop teaching resources to enhance W courses.
- Participate in an ongoing seminar on writing and learning with CUNY writing Fellows, other Faculty Partners, and the WAC Director.

Please contact the Faculty Partner(s) in your Division if you have questions about teaching writing. See the WAC web site for more information: <http://qcpages.qc.edu/Writing/facultypartner.htm>. Contact Jason Tougaw (jasontougaw@qc.cuny.edu), Director of WAC, if you are interested in becoming a Faculty Partner during future semesters.

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