

Fall Interview 2013— Dr. Donna Strickland

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BZ: Is everyone here?

MD: Yeah, I think so.

BZ: Ok. So, again, thank you for taking the time to sit down with us. Today, whenever we have a visiting scholar, we like to sit down with them and just ask them about their own experiences in the field, just what sort of shaped their perspectives, and their practice and theory. So, we usually keep it pretty informal. So, there are follow-up questions that naturally arise. I think I saw one question that Joe had put forth that's off the standard list of, maybe, questions...

JC: We'll see.

BZ: So, if we get to that, we get to that. If we get involved in other points of conversation, that's great too. So, let's get started.

DB: I think I'm first, and my question is, how did you get into literacy studies?

DR. STRICKLAND: Can you tell me who you are? [laughs]

DB: Sorry, yeah: I'm David Bedsole. I'm a second-year Ph.D student, interested in assessment and multimodality.

DR. STRICKLAND: Ok, great, great. So how did I get interested in this field? Umm. When I originally went to graduate school, I was admitted to studying literature, and then I ended up getting a degree in creative writing, and was also studying literature, and of course was teaching composition as part of my, you know, graduate package, right. I got, like, maybe three or four days of training before I taught composition the first time, and no class, so I pretty much didn't know what I was doing. [laughs] And as a result, I didn't really like it very much, right, because I didn't really know what I was doing and I thought, "well this is just ridiculous. I'm not helping anybody." [laughs] And, you know, nobody really seems to care that I'm not helping anybody, so this seemed really futile, right. So I was, at that time, at Indiana University, and there was a summer bridge program for first-generation college students. So students would come in who would otherwise not have been admitted—some of them would otherwise not have been admitted; I think some of them were fine, actually, in terms of test scores—but at any rate, the idea behind the bridge program was to get them ready over the summer, right, before they started college in the fall. So they took a version of composition—they still had to take the regular composition in the fall—but they took a version of composition and some other classes, right. So anyway, I ended up teaching in that program. And there were different levels, there were like three different levels, and I was teaching the second level, right, so there students who—they

weren't students who were considered to be most at risk, but there were somewhat at risk, right, of not succeeding in college. And what struck me is that, actually, this matters. [laughs] Right? I mean, I was thinking, "oh, this composition stuff, it doesn't even matter, no one seems to care,"—I felt like, "no, this actually matters, because these students may not succeed," right, I mean they really need to, sort of, write better. Right? They need to learn how to write better. And we actually had pretty good training in that program. We observed each other's classes, which was really helpful, I found, and did a lot of, sort of, professional development. And I sat in on this one woman's course, and she was actually specializing in literacy—that was actually the track there, it was called, "Language, Literacy, and...something," "Literature," maybe, I don't remember—so she, you know, really put a lot of thought into her teaching of composition. I had never encountered somebody [laughs] who had put a lot of thought into the teaching of composition. And she did a lot of metacognitive work with her students, so she really had her students reflect on what they were doing, and talk about why they were doing things in a certain way. I had never heard anybody—anybody—talk about their writing in such an intelligent way as her students were doing [laughs]. Right? I mean, they really had this language, this vocabulary to talk about what they were doing as writers. And I thought, "I want to be able to do that." Right? And so, I became, you know, really invested in the teaching of composition after that, and even though I did all the coursework for a Ph.D in, you know, American literature and all this, I thought, "I really don't want to do this. This literature stuff doesn't make sense to me. I really want to do rhet/comp." And so, I left and did rhet/comp. So, that's the story [laughs].

MD: All right, so, which scholars in the field have most influenced your work or your thinking?

STRICKLAND: Oh boy [laughs]. Scholars who have most influenced my thinking... So, I mean, there are different levels of that, right? I mean, because there are people who've influenced me as a teacher, and there are people who've influenced me in my scholarly work. And sometimes they're the same, and sometimes not, right? In my teaching, I would say that I was very influenced by critical pedagogy; so, I read a lot of--well, I mean, you know, Paulo Freire, right? And, and Ira Shore and people like that. And also feminists who were critiquing critical pedagogy. I came of age at a time when, you know, the expectation was that really the composition class was a political space, a social space. And so, you know, the expressivist people like Peter Elbow were really, like, marginalized, and so, even though I kinda liked Peter Elbow, I sort of, like, never really would talk about it, because I felt like, you know, people wouldn't accept this if I talked about how I liked Peter Elbow. So, those were people who were really influential in my teaching. In my scholarship, you know, because I'm interested in labour issues, you know, people like Eileen Shell who actually graduated from the same program I did but before I was there. You know. Her work was really important to me. Um, certainly people outside of composition, right? I mean, have really influenced the way that I think about composition; I mean, so, you know, I mean, Foucault has always been really important to me; Marxist theorists of various kinds have been very important to me; feminist scholars, feminist theorists, especially feminists geographers who've been important to me. Um, yeah. It's so hard to talk about who's the most important--who are the most important people to me, because I feel like there are so many people, right? Who have been important to me but those--those come to

mind. Now, I will say that at--recently I really kind of had a shift in orientation, and this is something that I know I don't know--I may or may not talk about in my talk; I'm not sure; we'll see what happens. But when I was writing my book, I, uh--it was hard. It was hard to--it was hard to finish because it's based on--my book is based on my dissertation, right? You know, and my dissertation was fine, Right? I mean--and in a way I almost had a book ready, but I had a really hard time finishing it. And in part it was because I was so used to working to deadline right? I mean, so, you know, seminar papers due at the end of the semester? Boom, I do it, right? And even my dissertation, I had a job, so it was, like, "OK, there's a deadline; I got to finish it," right? And there was a deadline for finishing my book, too, because I had to finish it in order to get tenure, but it's like: that was a little bit, you know, like "but OK, you have to get it done in six years," but that wasn't urgent enough, right? I mean, it was urgent because I needed to do it to keep my job, but it wasn't, um, urgent in the same way that finishing a seminar paper, right? At the end of the semester was. So, so, I really struggled with that. And a colleague of mine said, "Oh, Donna you should read this book about Robert Boice. He, you know, gives a lot of advice on, you know, how to manage the writing process, and he talks about breathing and you're really into yoga--I think you'll really like him." And I was, like, "no." I don't have time to read a book about writing. And how ridiculous is that? For me, you know, I'm like, this--I mean, she was too--but, I mean; "I'm a composition person; I don't need to read a book about writing: what are you talking about?" Then, you know, a few months later somebody else from another university mentioned the same person--this Robert Boice who's written a book called, he's written several books but this was a book called *How Writers Journey to Comfort and Fluency: A Psychological Adventure*. It was published in the 90's. She said. "I'd like you to be in my writing group, in my online writing group, but you have to read this book in order to be in my online writing group. I'm, like, "fine, I'll read this book." Changed my life. It really changed my life because he talks about, you know, finding a manageable way to write. He's, he's a psychologist. Although actually in the 80s and 90s he was publishing in Rhet/Comp journals, but then of course, there was a the paradigm shift, and nobody was interested in psychological approaches to writing anymore. Uh, so I mean, if I think about who's really influencing me now, in my thinking both about how I approach teaching and how I approach my own writing, and even the things I want to write about, it's actually Robert Boice, who isn't somebody who is really circulated in rhet/comp these days, but has really changed the way that I think about my own writing and also how I want to help students with their writing.

CM: The next question is kind of an extension of that, so thinking about how maybe your life experiences—this could be personal or professional, or maybe both—how they've influenced your thinking? Either—and currently, what you do or in the past if you have specific experiences that you reflect on like that.

DR. STRICKLAND: Yeah, uhm, well I think, as I've sort of been communicating, a lot of what I do has been motivated by life experiences, right? I mean, so—You know, getting in to the field was sort of motivated by a feeling that I had no idea what I was doing as a teacher and then realizing “Oh, there's this whole field that actually helps me – you know, would help to me think

about who I am as a teacher. Gosh, maybe I want to do that.” And then, yeah, more recently, my own writing experience, struggling with that and realizing that all of these beautiful approaches to pedagogy really weren’t helping me at all, and that’s not at all to say that they’re not useful or worthwhile. But, I really kind of needed to go back to the writing process and think about it differently. Uhm, so yeah, other life experiences: I mean, we were talking at lunch—Martha was asking me what had led me to write my book, like did I have some kind of experience as an adjunct or something was like that? And I do, um, I did work as an adjunct a couple of different times, for just a short period of time. You know, one year in each case. You know, and I guess that, to some extent, attuned me to labor issues in the university, but actually I think that I say this in my book, but I think that the experience of being a graduate student WPA and seeing the different situations that people were in because they taught composition, right. And on the one hand, you have the graduate students who are teaching one or two courses and then you have these adjunct faculty, some of whom are teaching up to four classes, and then I actually had the experience of teaching as a non-tenure track faculty member at a two-year college, teaching five classes, right? And just seeing how different people’s experiences teaching composition are, I think that that in part has led me to think about writing programs as workplaces and how can we talk about writing programs as workplaces, not just as places where pedagogies are enacted, but they’re these material places in which people’s lives are affected. Yeah, so, those are some various life experiences that have influenced me.

CM: Has your—quick follow up question—has your, uhm, your work experience been solely within the academic community?

DR. STRICKLAND: Uhm, almost? Yeah, that’s a good question, yes, isn’t that funny? Yes, almost exclusively, with the exception of little tiny jobs here and there, you know, over the summer, like working in an office one summer, working in a library, you know some summers, but yeah, I mean in terms of full time work, yeah.

JE: Uhm, so, to lead us back into teaching, for the next question: What classes do you teach, which are your favorite, and why?

DR. STRICKLAND: Uhm, so right now I am in an odd situation in terms of teaching, because the standard course load in my department for tenure line faculty is 2-2 and because I’m the WPA now, I just have a 1-1 teaching schedule and I always teach the pedagogy course, the required course. So that’s one of my courses, so I have one other course, so I teach the course, it’s called Theory and Practice of Composition for the new TAs, and actually, you know that’s a course that I’ve been teaching for a long time now. I taught it at Missouri almost every year I’d been there. I taught it at Southern Illinois University before I was at Missouri, and it was a class that I initially had a great deal of enthusiasm for and a great deal of commitment to because I remembered how I was as a TA and I didn’t have a lot of training, and I was totally, you know, miserable teaching because I didn’t know what I was doing, right? And so I really, um, had this

sense of mission of like, ‘No look! There are tools, there’s a vocabulary, there are things you can draw from. You can actually know what you’re doing as a teacher.’ And so I felt really motivated to teach that course. Um, over the years, I would say it’s not my favorite course to teach. [laughs] You know, and it really has to do with the fact that, um, I think it’s just, it’s just, it’s always a hard course to teach. A lot of people don’t want to be there because it’s required. People who aren’t in rhetoric and composition often think ‘This isn’t what I want to do with my life. I want to teach literature. I want to teach creative writing.’ And even though I strive to help people see the ways in which what they are learning there can help them, whatever they’re teaching, they aren’t always persuaded that that’s true, right? And so, I’ve gotten a little worn down teaching it after so many years. Um, the other course that I teach pretty regularly now is a class called “Mindful Writing,” which is based on Robert Boice’s approach, Robert Boice who wrote *How Writers Journey to Comfort and Fluency*. And his approach, when I read his book, I’m a meditator, and when I read his book, I thought ‘This approach feels a lot to me like meditation, a lot like mindfulness.’ In fact, I found out later that he sometimes does refer to approach as a mindful approach to writing. Um, so, I teach this class “Mindful Writing.” I teach my students to meditate [laughs]. We meditate, and we use Robert Boice’s approach to writing, you know, which is you write everyday, for a little bit everyday, you pause while you’re writing to pay attention to your body, to pay attention to the comfort of your body, um, to refocus your awareness, right, to refocus. Um, and it’s a class totally devoted to the process of writing. I don’t grade any, I don’t, um, I don’t grade them on any actual production of writing. Their grade comes completely from enacting processes. And, uh, I love it.

BB: Next, I have a completely random question. And I do preface this with the idea, please just try to answer with whatever comes to your mind, whatever is there. What book or books are on your nightstand right now?

DR. STRICKLAND: Well, I primarily read electronically now. So I don’t literally have anything on my nightstand, but, um, so, I, um, partially because Robert Boice, I mean partially, because Robert Boice is from a background in Psychology, right, so he’s like my new guru. Or not so new anymore, it’s been several years now, but his background in Psychology. I’m also really interested in mindfulness, and there’s been a lot of research done in mindfulness, mostly in Psychology. I’m really interested in Psychology, Psychological research now, so I, um, have been reading a lot of books about Attachment Theory, which is a kind of, um, more empirically based version of Psychoanalytic Theory. So, where Freud sees, you know, the whole story of a person’s life coming from, you know, their sexual attraction to their parents [laughs], um, and it’s kind of a fantasy, right, something that is going on in people’s heads, Attachment Theory says, ‘No, actually people are attached to their parents, but it’s not this psychosexual fantasy, right? It’s, um, it actually happens through communication. Attachment to one’s parents actually happens through communication. So I’m really pretty fascinated by this, by the implications it could have for thinking about rhetoric, right? And how we relate to people. So I’ve been reading a lot about Attachment Theory, that’s like, that would be on my virtual nightstand.

AJ: To shift over to students in rhet comp, what do you think is the most important question that students in rhet comp should be considering today?

DR. STRICKLAND: The most important questions that people...that students in rhet/comp should be considering today...um...well...you know...really I can't get over...the issues...you know... issues that are similar to ones I talk about in my book and that I actually am going to kind of talk about this afternoon, but that is that on the one hand we...um...are gaining a lot of knowledge about writing, a lot of knowledge about teaching. We are developing really wonderful pedagogies...um...pedagogical approaches...um...that excite me, that stimulate me, and yet most of the people who teach composition are not trained in composition, are not paid very much, and so ethically and practically how can I ask people to do those things? I can do them, and that's great. I mean, I don't have a problem with that...right...but I just...I just am not sure what to make of...you know...I am not sure how to reconcile those things...right...that we have this intellectually rich discipline...and that we continue to...um...um... do really well in terms of getting jobs and, you know, being marketable as a profession. We continue to do that. We continue to do really well professionally, primarily because people continue to want first year composition to exist...right... and um...so for me that raises all kinds of questions about...you know...about labor issues, ethical issues, as I am going to talk about this afternoon, self care issues...um. I think those are really important questions. And one's that I don't want people to overlook right...I mean as we...it's not that I just want people to say "okay, well, fine close up shop. We are not going to think anymore about pedagogy or, you know, develop any new theories." It's not that I want that...it just that I sort of...I want that other question to always be there..."but what about the labor issue"...you know what about that...

BZ: Well I guess this one sort of connects to it because...um...the next question is "where do you see the field of literacy studies, rhetoric and composition going from here?" So it might kind of overlap a little bit but...

DR. STRICKLAND: Well...um...I mean...I don't know if that's where it's going. That's where I...you know...I mean...that's where I... Those are questions that I think are important... you know...whether or not people are going to take them up...you know...I don't know... um...you know...I think that...um...I mean certainly a trend that's happening...I mean I think all...I mean it sounds like from talking to all of you that...and also here we are in this digital... you know... digital room...right...I mean that the digital and looking at...you know...new domains in which literacy and rhetoric are happening is a really big trend in the field and I think it's a really exciting trend...right...I mean understanding that...um...um...alphabetic writing... uh... is in fact not the primary rhetorical means...right...though which people communicate... um...I think those are really important questions...and actually, you know, maybe that's even a part of undermining, um, the grip of this really awful labor system, right. Is that, you know, I don't know, maybe we don't need first year composition, right. Maybe we just need to be a field that does this other stuff, and maybe first year composition, I mean, is there a way of like saying to places, we don't need first year composition? We need to think about writing in these other ways, but not in this required way that, that uh demands, you know, cheap labor.

BZ: Well are there, um, approaches that might appeal to you in a certain way? Sort of, um writing in the disciplines? Writing across the curriculum? Writing about writing? Um,

DR. STRICKLAND: That would appeal to me...?

BZ: Just, in terms of if we did for whatever reason move away from first year composition, as the course that sort of connects everything, that do you see possibility in those, um, other avenues, of writing studies, or do they have risks that might not be apparent, or I guess just your general impressions of these approaches?

DR. STRICKLAND: Um, so one thing that I've been doing since, um, I started teaching this mindful writing class is, that I also offer workshops for faculty in mindful writing, faculty across the curriculum. Um, and um, so one thing that personally is very appealing to me is, um, is that movement, of actually helping faculty across the curriculum to think about their writing, um and to think about writing more broadly. I mean that's something that can happen in writing across the curriculum programs. Um, but because writing across the curriculum programs tend to be focused on you know, student writing, right, there isn't necessarily the faculty development component, and so, the faculty development component is pretty, um, understudied in rhetoric and composition, right. Um, so that's something that I think is really interesting and that I, you know, isn't tied, right, to first year composition and a labor system. Um, so personally that's one thing that appeals to me. I mean the other things you mention, um, I mean, I think those are all things, that you know, certainly could be, could continue to be developed and they don't demand, they don't intellectually demand a first year writing program tied to them, right. I mean, developing digital writing, um studying rhetoric, all of those things don't demand a first year writing program, right. It's just that the field, this is what I argue in my book right, the field has grown, has been made possible, I argue because of first year writing. So what happens if we get rid of first year writing? Do we still have a discipline? I don't know.

CM: What do you think of, kind of the upcoming shift in first year writing, that we focus not only on writing but on reading and like reading critically and those strategies, do you think that, I guess what you think of it, and that also do you think that it is a sign or a symptom that the face of first year writing is changing and or dissolving?

DR. STRICKLAND: Um, because of the focus on critical reading?

CM: Ya, that the, shift not, cause I'm not quite sure if that means we focus equally on writing as we have been and now we also focus on reading, or if we, our focus on reading takes away from the focus on writing.

DR. STRICKLAND: Um, I mean I guess in my experience, um there's the focus on reading isn't necessarily new. It kind of, kind of waxes and wanes and it also kind of depends upon um you know, just the program, and what, you know, um people have chosen to emphasize. Um, because, like when I was, you know, well when I first started teaching first year comp, the

textbook we used actually was ways of reading. I mean this was 28 years ago, or 20 something years ago, arrrrrh. Right, ya. It was the first edition, right, and now it's like in it's tenth edition or something right. Ya, so um I mean in my mind there's sort of, I've always sort of seen this, been trained to see this connection right between reading and writing, um, and um you know I don't, um I'm so easy going when it comes to approaches to teaching composition. I mean because I just feel like there's so many ways of getting at better writing, right, right. I mean and certainly critical reading is one of them, right, because it's that engagement with language that I think can be helpful, and uh I think you get that in one's own language and one's own language use. Um, but as I, you know, as I maybe communicated already, I also think it's unfortunate that the field sees itself as post-process. Uh I don't really know what that means exactly. Um, does it mean that we really don't teach a writing process? That we...um...encourage students not think about [laughter] the writing process. You know I'm not really sure what that means. And so, I guess, that, for me...um...it's actually quite beneficial to continue to explicitly teach some sort of writing process. And so...and so, if...um...you know...um...if there's...um...um...a desire to get away from that. Which I think has been happening with the last many years, decades maybe. Then, yeah, I do kind of oppose that. Right. Because I think that...um...continuing to teach a writing process. I think that's something that actually can be taught [laughter]. You know, that can actually be taught. And I'm not saying it has to be the same, right. I'm not saying "you must do this, you must do this." But, but to teach people that "oh you know what, writing is something you don't just do when you sit down at a desk and like dananananet." Right. It's actually kind of...um...um...It's...I'm trying to think of a better word than process [laughter]. Another thing other than process. It's something that builds. It's something that builds. Right. Um...and actually, I mean I think that one of the things that incorporating digital composition into first-year writing. I think it actually has helped to reinforce the need for process, right. Because digital composing sort of has to happen in steps. Um...and...ah...and...and the editing dimension...ah...of the digital project is so tact...ah...well, not really tactile [laughter]. It's material in a way that...um...um...um...I think...can help students to see that "Oh, this is what is supposed to happen in writing." It's not just this slap-dash thing. It's actually something that you build.

CM: Mmm hmm

DR. STRICKLAND: And build up to. So, yeah.

(long pause)

JC: So, this is kind of off the track of questions, but I thought...

DR. STRICKLAND: Everybody says that!

JC: I know [group laughter]. Ah, so, I guess my question...so we're in the process of reading your, your book.

DR. STRICKLAND: Mmm hmm

JC: Um...and so I guess, and this, this is a question I ask my, my freshman students in comp. So will see if it works for this...[laughter] I don't know about the process of writing books. But, if you had more time...

DR. STRICKLAND: Ah huh

JC: ...is there anything you left out that you wish was in the book [laughter] or seeing stuff now, that looking back, you're like "maybe I should of, maybe changed a little somethings here and there." What kind of stuff would you put in or change?

DR. STRICKLAND: Umm...

JC: Or is it perfect?

DR. STRICKLAND: It's, it's peeerrrrfect! [group laughter] Ah...let's see. Well, actually, I mean, like originally, there was going to be a whole chapter befo...before what is now the first chapter that was going to be about...um...the 19th century. And about the rise of management. The rise of management theory. Um...and...um...actually one of the persons who is connected with...um...early management theory is Charles Babbage. Do you know who that is? Babbage. He was also...he created like the first computer. Um...and so...um...in my head, I had this very ambitious idea [laughs] that I was going to talk about Charles Babbage's theories of management, right. And, and also talk about the fact that he created the first computer and that was going to be my first chapter. And somehow at the end I was going to come back to digital writing...um...and...um...somehow tie that all together. But you see, I don't know how I was going to do that [group laughter]. But it would have been beautiful, right? [group laughter].

CM: Next book?

DR. STRICKLAND: Yea...that's right. My next book. So anyway, there was going to be more about the development of management theory. There was that for sure. And then, there was this...I mean, that was more thought-out. I had actually had done work on that. Um...but, it was just too big. It was too much. Um...so I just got rid of it. And...um...yeah...and then there was that pipe dream about somehow doing the...[group laughter].

JC: (inaudible)

DR. STRICKLAND: Yeah, yeah. (laughter)

CM: Do we have time for another one? I'm interested in the pedagogy course that you teach.

DR. STRICKLAND: Ah huh

CM: Um...and how...how you approach that. Especially given your pres...the perfective in your book that...um...WPA work can...is or can be managerial work.

DR. STRICKLAND: Mm hmm

CM: Um...does that...I'm, I'm assuming that informs kind of how you approach the pedagogy course, or does it?

DR. STRICKLAND: Well it does in that...um...(coughing)...I...um...am very keen on...um...the course being a place for everyone to reflect on their pedagogy rather than a place for me to say "this is the correct way of doing things." Right. Um...and the one thing that I've really struggled with, I guess over the years, is trying to also think about the work load of that course. Um...

CM: Is it a one credit course? Or do they...

DR. STRICKLAND: No it's actually 3 credits. Right. I mean, so it's like any other seminar that they take. Um..And so early on my thought was, well this is a seminar: and so we're going to read a lot, like you would in any seminar. We're going to read stuff, you know, we're going to read composition theory, we're going to read you know other theorists who sort of inform composition pedagogy. You know, I mentioned Foucault, Freire...right? We're going to read Foucault and Freire...I mean whoever right. Um...Bourdeaux was somebody who I used to read in that class as well. You know because I wanted people to think about larger issues, I wanted them to think about, um, you know, class issues. We read some, you know, bell hooks, too, race issues. I wanted them to think about all kinds of issues. Right? And so it was just stuffed full that class, and there were two issues with that. One is it made it, I think...you know, the grad students felt like it was so much that they couldn't get a hold on anything, So I started cutting back for that reason, trying to stream line things. But also, you know, grad students would say 'this is connected to my work. I feel like not only am I teaching but also I'm being asked to do all this sort of professional development, and I'm not actually getting paid for this part of my work; in fact, I'm having to pay for it.' Um. I don't really know exactly what to do with that, I mean, because it is such a complicated issue that also has to do with the fact that, you know, everyone in the English Department wants our graduate students to teach Composition because it is a way of funding their education. Right? But, um, there's some resistance among the faculty to the idea that they should take—that students should take a course in it. So it's very complicated. So I don't have like great answers to that. But it's something that I do think about a lot. Right? Because, I want it to be a seminar, just like any other seminar, and I think it makes sense for anybody in English to take a seminar in Composition Theory. Right? I mean to me, it makes as much sense as it makes for them to take any other course, right, that's English Studies related. But perceptually, it's so connected in their minds to their work that they see it as part of their work. So, yeah, how do I negotiate that? It's something I'm always thinking about and always coming up with new strategies for, but I don't have one strategy. [laughs]

CM: Right, it is interesting, of what I've read of your book so far, because I help with the pedagogy course here. And it's kind of complicated that for me because I've been thinking then about these are, like you said, these are students, learning about Comp Theory is important, especially for Rhet/Comp students. But then at the same time, you're in a sense producing these Composition instructors. I mean, do you think about producing composition instructors, even though they are still students? And they may or may not pursue this as full-time work?

DR. STRICKLAND: Well, right, I'm very sensitive to that issue. Really, how I try to think about it and present it to them is this is professional development, even if you don't go into Composition. Right? I mean, if your intention is to teach, this is helpful for you. Right? I mean it's going to help you. And, I explicitly like to give them, I mean one of their assignments is to design a syllabus for another course, not a Composition course, right? But using what they've learned to develop another, you know, another kind of course. Um, so I try to resist that, right, I mean, I try to resist the idea that, um, I am just producing people that can teach in the Composition program. Um, but, again, their perception is not that, their perception is that this is training for comp theory, you know for teaching composition, and 'teaching composition is something I want to get out of.' I mean I should say that's always the case, but there is always a critical mass of people for whom that is the case. Yeah. That you know 'this is a class I'm taking because I'm teaching Composition, but the truth is I'm going to get out of teaching Composition as quickly as possible.' Um, and so, there's a... I think that there's a felt sense that this is kind of oppressive.

CM: Hmm... Mmmhmm.

BZ: Well, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us about this; it was really interesting. [background agreement]

DR. STRICKLAND: My pleasure.

BZ: And um, we all look forward to your talk.

DR. STRICKLAND: Thanks.

