TOWARD A TRAUMA-INFORMED PEDAGOGY

By

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ABSTRACT

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Trauma-affected students are in our writing classrooms—whether or not they've self-disclosed, and whether or not we recognize them. If we refuse to acknowledge trauma or refuse to approach trauma as a pedagogical issue, we risk marginalizing these students by adhering to ableist pedagogies that dishonor differences in bodies, minds, and abilities. But when our pedagogies, our classrooms, and our faculty become trauma-informed, we can anticipate, embrace, and welcome the insights that trauma and disability offer.

As educators, we may be looking for solid and certain plans for working with trauma-affected and disabled students and for overcoming pedagogical hurdles. But, students, classes, trauma, disability, and issues of access are not standard or universalizable. Working within a disability studies framework, this project considers how to make learning accessible for trauma-affected students by 1) analyzing composition pedagogy through the lens of disability, and 2) building on Stephanie Kerschbaum's concept of critically considering anecdotal relations of disability in composition classrooms to include trauma. The project suggests a turn toward uncertainty--acknowledging that we don't know, or need to know, everything--and listening to stories that welcome trauma and disability into the composition classroom to enable us to develop new relationships with trauma and cultivate trauma-awareness.

I argue that relationality--building relationships with students based on respect for their lived experiences with trauma and violence, as well as respect for their differences in bodies, minds, and abilities--is inherent to a trauma-informed writing pedagogy. I further argue that we

must work collaboratively with students to recast our understanding of trauma, negotiate access, and implement moves that make our writing classrooms accessible. Finally, I theorize and lay out a flexible framework for enacting a trauma-informed pedagogy to dismantle the ableism that persists in our classrooms and to begin establishing cultures of access and authentically support student success.

To the One who gives me life and breath.

“Let all that you do be done in love.”

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Stephanie Kerschbaum claims that disability is often understood negatively via an "imagined or hypothetical presence" in the composition classroom. She argues that this negative imaginary does not come from a disabled standpoint, but, rather, from an ableist view that frames disability as a problem. However, this negative imaginary cannot be considered critical because it automatically casts disability as negative—as a threat to an "imagined (ideal) classroom," a problem of classroom management, as disruption, or as suffering (Kerschbaum). In order to examine problematic anecdotal relations created by stories of disability that are not critically examined, Kerschbaum suggests we orient to uncertainty—meaning we stop assuming we know everything—and instead listen to stories of disability that "welcome disability in[to] the composition classroom." Ableist anecdotal relations, which Kerschbaum defines as "relations that are created and disseminated through [negative] narratives people share about disability," are embedded with ableist themes that can cause barriers to welcoming and understanding disability. To combat these ableist narratives of disability, Kerschbaum calls for us to critically examine the negative anecdotal relations we have built. She suggests we work to "critically recast" our ableist understandings of disability through "learning with disability," which allows us to "enrich, complicate, and challenge" by triangulating our understanding of disability through personal experience, professional training, and interactions with disabled people (Kerschbaum).

Just as Kerschbaum warns against wholesale and uncritical acceptance of anecdotal relations, Royster too, in her influential essay "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own" reminds us that subject position matters, and she suggests that we remember our "home training" and respect other viewpoints (29-30). Royster admonishes that our interpretations, coming from our particular subject positions and our distinct analytic lenses, may be very off.

Throughout this dissertation, I try to remember my home training and intentionally learn with disability in order to create a trauma-informed pedagogy. One of the ways I do this is by offering stories. I attempt to complicate and critically recast stories of trauma and disability in the composition classroom in an attempt to triangulate my understandings of trauma through personal experience, scholarship, and interactions with trauma-affected people. I do so to learn with disability and to create a trauma-informed imaginary. What is different about a trauma-informed or disability imaginary in these stories is that if suffering is involved, that suffering is foregrounded as an occurrence that emerges from social structures that make university life inhospitable to disabled and trauma-affected students. The analyses connected to these stories don't dismiss incidents (disruption) as "that one student," but instead try to imagine an environment that welcomes those students and that harnesses that disruption as part of the fabric of the classroom. I share stories of moments in time that served as interventions and as the beginnings of my own building relationships with trauma and disability. It is my hope that these stories will recast negative anecdotal relatings and add to a body of disability culture, as well as create trauma-informed imaginaries in terms of the anecdotes that circulate around composition classroom practices and trauma.

This dissertation is infused with story for several reasons. First, I want my dissertation to be accessible and useful to people across fields and to non-academics. To do this, I modeled my writing after respected disability studies scholars Jay Dolmage, Margaret Price, Melanie Yergeau, and Stephanie Kerschbaum, who all successfully use narrative and story in their broadly accessible work. Second, disability studies places a high value on "foreground[ing] individual narratives" (Yergeau "Authoring" 26). So, because my dissertation uses a disability studies framework (more about this in Chapter 2), I thought it appropriate to honor the practices

respected and accepted by the field. Third, I offer stories and personal narrative in an attempt to build relationships with my readers and invite them to consider these anecdotes as one point in their own triangulations for understanding and complicating trauma and disability. And finally, I offer stories "placed one against another against another [to] build credibility and offer … a litany of evidence from which a call for transformation in theory and practice might rightfully begin" (Royster 30).

1.1 Origin Story

I'm 15 years old, and I'm asleep in my room on a Thursday night. I awaken to rapping on my window. Confused, and a little disoriented, I go to the window to find my friend outside. They [1]are looking for a safe place to spend the night because their stepfather got drunk again, and we both know that means trouble. I go to the door and let my friend in and set up a spot on the floor for them to bunk down for the night. When I get up in the morning to get ready for school, my friend tells me they won't be going to class today, because they don't think they can concentrate on algebra, American history, and British literature. They are too worried about what will be waiting for them when they finally return home.

It's Tuesday afternoon, and I just got out of my math class at the community college. I meet up with a friend to hang out in the hallway between classes. They tell me about how they have problems in class. Sometimes, when the topic is upsetting, they just zone out and miss most of the lecture. You know...they are there*, but not* there*. They say they wish all teachers were like this one teacher they have. He doesn't know about their awful home life, but he does know how to just let them be when they feel upset. The teacher lets them sit on the floor in his office in*

[1] This dissertation uses "they" as a non-gendered singular pronoun throughout.

between classes and do homework. They feel safe there, on the floor of his office. And they feel safe in his class, because he gets it. And feeling safe makes them better able to understand what's being taught. And this makes them want to learn more. They get really good grades in his class, but they struggle in their other classes. Too bad all professors aren't like that, they say.

It's Sunday night, and my dad has just finished packing up after working all day at a flea market in my neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. He invites me to have dinner with him and the young high-school-aged guys who work for him. As usual, we all meet up at a mediocre Chinese buffet, and I tell the guys I'll drive them home when we're done because they live just one block east of me. I ask the guys if they are ready for school in the morning. One tells me he isn't going tomorrow and that they are all considering dropping out. I tell him I don't understand why he would do that, as he only has two years left. He explains that every day after school, a gang from a different neighborhood picks one kid to beat the crap out of, and if he isn't in school that day, he knows it won't be him.

It's the Fourth of July, and I'm at a Portillo's in a south suburb of Chicago. I'm meeting up with a close family friend for the first time since they returned from several tours in the Middle East. We walk into the crowded restaurant and place our order, then hang back to wait until our number is called. I notice they subtly move to the back of the crowd and lean against the wall, their eyes darting here and there. I try to engage them in conversation, but they are distracted and unable to focus. I say, "Hey, have you been diagnosed with TBI[2]?" They instantly focus and

[2] The Mayo Clinic offers this information about TBI: Traumatic brain injury (TBI) usually results from a violent blow or jolt to the head or body. Traumatic brain injury can have wide-ranging physical and psychological effects. Some signs or symptoms may appear immediately after the traumatic event, while others may appear days or weeks later. These injuries can result in long-term complications or death.

look at me wide-eyed. "Yeah," they say, "What do you know about all that?" I explain that I've been doing research on how to make learning more accessible to trauma-affected students, and they open up. Turns out, they've been diagnosed with the two "signature wounds" (Wood "Signature") with which so many of our returning soldiers are diagnosed: traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They tell me it feels good to be able to talk to someone who gets it and then tell me that people don't really understand the implications of the diagnoses and that makes things hard—especially in school. They've gone back on the GI Bill, but the TBI and PTSD make classwork—and being in class—difficult. Their teachers don't get it either. But they're tough, and they'll stick it out, because it's a free education, and they want to get a good job to support their family.

As I think about these stories and other stories of trauma at the fringes of my life—far, far more than I have room to tell within these pages—I understand that the trauma of those around me—friends, family, people I love and care about—has irrevocably shaped me. The life I've lived, the people I know, the places I've been, the things I've seen have all caused me to recognize that trauma isn't something that happens in the lives of *those other people over there*. Rather, trauma and its effects are ubiquitous in *our* lives as well as in the world at large.

If trauma is ubiquitous in our lives and in the world at large, then it is also ubiquitous in the lives of our students. Certainly trauma-affected students regularly show up in my classroom. For example, there is the student whose mother died of cancer two months ago, the student who just found out their father is not expected to survive until the end of the semester, the student whose father was shot and killed last year, the student whose roommate was killed over spring break, the student who was the victim of an armed robbery over the weekend, the student who was assaulted at a fraternity party last week, the student whose teammates were "treated" by Dr.

Nassar, the student whose family lost everything in the hurricane, the student who can't go home because ISIS has taken over their hometown, the student whose family home burned to the ground and they had to serve as the family's advocate with insurance companies because insurance agents didn't speak the parents' native language, the student whose family is being deported, the student faced with an unexpected pregnancy, the student who just saw on the news that a bomb hit their Syrian neighborhood, the student who is dealing with domestic violence on a regular basis, the student who left Sudan as a child and has been separated from family since, the student who worried about family during the political upheaval in Turkey. And so on, and so forth, ad nauseum, ad infinitum.

Most of these students did not share their stories because they particularly *wanted* to confess traumatic moments, or to have someone witness their trauma, or to try to work through their traumas. Rather, they shared as a way of explaining their self-perceived academic deficiencies. Some wanted me to know why they were distracted in class. Others needed extra time to finish an assignment. And others simply want to let me know that their trauma, which they name as sadness/grief/loss, was affecting their intellectual processing. What these examples have in common is that each portrays a trauma-affected student's experience navigating higher education. And these stories are neither isolated nor extraordinary. Trauma-affected students are in our writing classes, whether or not they've self-disclosed and whether or not we recognize them.

Borrowman and White suggest that teachers have always unknowingly and unintentionally encountered trauma, as it is an "ongoing condition," and not a rare occurrence (199). And, based on my own experiences in the classroom, I would concur. Borrowman and White also argue that, "trauma has always been a part of learning and teaching…[because] as

teachers, we teach through our own traumas, the individual traumas of our students and the shared traumas of the nation" (182). In other words, simply the fact that we are humans, teaching other humans, in a world in which violence, natural disasters, and disease run rampant, means we will encounter trauma in the classroom. Because of these stories and these students, I have come to understand—out of necessity, through experience, and on the fly—that any one of the students coming into my classroom could be trauma-affected. I have come to understand that students don't need to be from a particular place or act in a particular way or fit a particular demographic to be affected by trauma. And I have also come to recognize that the effects of trauma can impact "the entire human experience" (Evans and Coccoma 1).

I'm in Eastern Uganda, in a tiny village—so tiny that is not on the map—called "Mirembe," which means "peace." I've just finished my third day teaching nearly 200 students crammed into one room. After class, I'm approached by a former child soldier who explains that, as much as they want an education, they simply cannot endure being in a crowded classroom. They tell me they think something in them broke when they were younger, and they don't know how to fix it. Having no training at all with this sort of thing, but wanting to include this student as much as they want to be included, I improvise, and together, we come up with a plan: they will sit by the window just outside the classroom so they can hear the lessons, and I promise to call on them if they raise their hand. They do this for a few days, and then move to the windowsill, feet dangling inside the classroom. Slowly, slowly, they integrate themself with the other students. They are still skittish, and their eyes go wild sometimes, but they know they can leave the classroom any time they need, and I think that helps.

I believe this change occurred because they were able to reframe their conception of the classroom as a space that was welcoming to everyone—*including them*. While that particular situation turned out well, not all of the moves I made in that classroom were good ones. In fact, upon reflection, I'm relatively certain that several moves caused the same kind of harm inflicted on some students in the therapeutic composition classrooms discussed in Chapter 3 that facilitate writing-as-healing practices that may inadvertently harm the students professors are aiming to help. While it was not my intent to cause harm, *ignorance and intent do not influence outcomes and consequences*.

As ignorant as I was, it's not like I didn't prepare. Before I left for Uganda, I did everything I knew to do. I was inoculated against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, cholera, and yellow fever. I read up on tropical diseases, learned emergency first aid, and collected medical supplies. I learned some Swahili, which is used as a common trade language uniting Ugandan people who speak 43 different languages. I read all I could about the Lord's Resistance Army and Kony and about child soldiers forced to fight. I sought out reading recommendations from my advisor who assigned lists and lists of books and articles devoted to the cultural considerations and praxis of teaching writing to ESL and EFL speakers. I bought a mosquito net and started taking anti-malarial medications. I collected a small library of books to donate to the school at which I would be teaching. I packed a ton of paper and pencils and pens and chalk. I wrote lesson plans based on the test scores sent to me by the school's headmaster. I packed light and airy clothing that I could wash in a bucket. I felt confident and adventurous.

And then I arrived, and everything I'd done to prepare felt like a drop in the proverbial bucket. I realized almost immediately that I was in way over my head. I prayed and cried and wished I were back in Chicago. I floundered and flailed. I agonized and improvised. I changed

all my lesson plans after the first day of school, when I discovered my students' English language skills were not as adept as had been represented by their test scores. When I found out that my students didn't understand my American English, I spoke with a fake British accent—which felt ridiculous, but miraculously worked. And when the oldest and toughest student in the school decided neither he nor any of the others needed an education because all they were good for anyway was being soldiers and "thugs," I rose to the challenged showdown—and won. But, for all these successful adaptations, I was still completely unprepared to deal with the challenges of teaching 200 trauma-affected students. My students' very raw and unattended trauma left me grappling first with vicarious trauma [3]and then with compassion fatigue and empathy fatigue[4].

And when I left Uganda, along with vicarious trauma and compassion and empathy fatigue, I also took with me the firm knowledge that I simply didn't know how to deal with trauma in the classroom. I hadn't prepared for it because I didn't even understand that it was a thing. But I did learn that even though I didn't know how to pedagogically approach the challenge of teaching students affected by trauma, I understood that *trauma affects learning*. It was only after hearing stories from American teachers of their (in)experiences teaching and relating to refugees in their American classrooms that I realized the value and privilege of having worked with my Ugandan students in their place and space. That time in Uganda, as challenging

[3] Hill defines vicarious traumatization as a "normal, inevitable aspect of working with individuals who experience trauma and should not be perceived as a personal weakness, shortcoming, or illness" (25). In other words, it is not pathological, but, rather, a "transformation of a helper's inner experience as a result of empathic engagement with [people] and their trauma material" (Hill 25).

[4] Compassion fatigue is the "inner experience as a result of empathic engagement with and responsibility for or commitment to help traumatized individuals" (Hill 27). Referencing Figley, Hill states that compassion fatigue is the cost of caring. Empathy fatigue "results from a state of mental, emotional, social, physical, spiritual, and occupational exhaustion that occurs as [one's] own wounds are continually revisited by their [students'] life stories of chronic illness, disability, trauma, grief, loss, and extraordinarily stressful events" (Hill 27).

as it was, afforded me a unique perspective on trauma in the classroom. I had been able to see—firsthand and distillated—the effects of trauma on communities and on individuals. And because of this bequest, I knew I needed to figure out how to approach the challenge of enabling trauma-affected students' learning—for myself, for other teachers, and for trauma-affected students themselves.

I'm at the International Conference on Teacher Education and Social Justice held in Chicago. I've just finished my research presentation entitled "Barriers to Teaching Toward Social Justice in (Post)Colonial, (Post)Conflict Uganda," and now the panel is taking questions. An audience member shouts at me and questions my authority to speak on these things, citing my whiteness and my Americanness as disqualifying factors. An elderly woman in the audience asks the questioner what she knows about Ugandan politics and education. When the questioner indicates that she doesn't know anything about either, the elderly woman politely asks her to sit down and stop yelling. I am confused. I know I have a fairly unique perspective on what's going on in Uganda because of the time I've spent there and the relationships I've built. I also know my research has been met with resistance from some in academia because of my position of privilege. I'm not sure how to reconcile my positionality with my experiences and with others' valid concerns about someone who looks like me doing research involving issues that affect people of color.

When I first started doing this research, I wanted to work with refugees, either here in the U.S. or abroad, because the need was immense and the problems were obvious. But, as I moved deeper into my work, I received criticism from some in academia—because my whiteness could make my work seem sensationalist and like I was working *on* communities of color instead of

with them. This caused me to reflect on my positionality and privilege, and I became more and more discomfited and questioned whether or not I could continue with my work. I am white, and I recognized that I have the privilege of moving through the world in a way people of color cannot. I also recognized that I could never know the lived realities of people of color. I floundered, because I knew the work I was doing had value, but I struggled to make my way through the complexities of doing work in marginalized communities that were not my own. In Uganda and here in the U.S., I have seen firsthand what can come of ignoring these issues and just charging ahead in arrogant ignorance, and I knew I didn't want to follow those models. So, I knew what I didn't want to do, and I knew I needed to learn alternate ways of thinking and moving through the world if I wanted my scholarship to do anything decent or good.

I'm in my research colloquium class with Bill Hart-Davidson and the other three students in my cohort. While we are sharing our academic dreams and discussing our research goals to prepare us for revising our research precis, part of my attention is turned to my cell phone because my grandmother is critically ill, and I want to be able to pick up if my family calls with bad news. Meanwhile, I share my goal with my colleagues, which was directly influenced by my time in Uganda: I want to engage in peace-building efforts by working with the U.S. State Department or the United Nations in war-affected developing countries to implement literacy programs. One of my colleagues is speaking when my phone begins to buzz. I see that it is my dad, grab my phone, excuse myself from the class, and brace myself. He's not calling about my grandmother, but he does have terrible news: Gama, the kid who works for him, one of the guys I had dinner with every Sunday night at the Chinese buffet, the one who told me he was thinking of dropping out of school because of the threat of gang violence, has been shot in the head while

playing soccer in a local park. He's dead, and it's all over the news. His family, friends, and the neighborhood are all devastated. I am devastated. I return to class, stunned. Bill asks if I'm okay, and I tell him and my colleagues what I've just learned. Because I'm in class, and because I tend to use logic to process emotion, I start thinking about what has happened to Gama in the context of my work in Uganda. It is then that I realize that I don't need to go anywhere *to do the peace-building work I want to do. I can simply return to my Chicago neighborhood with its violence and its child soldiers and its child casualties and its trauma. This changes everything for me.*

When Gama, someone I knew well, was murdered in *my* neighborhood, his death caused me to make a critical turn toward realizing that problem of peace and trauma—and the problem of trauma affecting learning—were not just located in Uganda or the Middle East, or in places far from home in cultures not my own. It was located in *my* culture and on my city block. As both an academic and a Chicagoan with roots that go deep down into the violent, blood-soaked soil of Chicago's South Side for four generations, I suddenly recognized that this—the very real problem of violence and trauma and the necessity of figuring out how to make learning accessible to trauma-affected students—was a challenge located, quite literally, in my own backyard. It was something happening in my neighborhood, within my culture, with people I knew. It was part of my own lived experiences. I realized that, because of my positionality, at that moment in time, researching trauma and learning, I was uniquely positioned to write this particular dissertation.

In addition to my own lived experiences, I've learned much from working with my students and colleagues of color, both in Chicago and Uganda and elsewhere abroad. And something I've learned—through my relationships with students and colleagues of color, through

critically considering anecdotal relating (Kerschbaum), and through scholarship—is that trying to work toward a trauma informed pedagogy inherently means working toward anti-racist and anti-ableist pedagogies. Certainly, as composition instructors, we *want* to create welcoming and inclusive classrooms that respect diversity. And, while our field should be commended for its work in creating spaces that are inclusive of differing genders, sexualities, and races, difference in ability is often neglected, and some of our pedagogical moves make classrooms and learning inaccessible to trauma-affected students.

Some in composition are proactively working toward making learning accessible to trauma-affected students. For example, Alison Kafer recognizes that audiences can be composed of traumatized people who bring with them their own histories of trauma and that spaces and communities can be affected by histories of trauma (3). She argues that access is "not only how a space is designed, but also what happens within it," and claims that even if a lecture is in a physically accessible space, the content of the lecture could potentially make the space "no longer habitable—or habitable only under certain conditions" (Kafer 2-3). And Angela Carter discusses accommodations as "access to opportunity for a more livable life," and argues that we must consider access and accommodations in order to make learning equitable for all. She suggests we approach trauma as a pedagogical issue in order to "reach beyond inclusion and toward shifting the pervasive and intersecting forces of inequality" (Carter). If we refuse to do so, we risk marginalizing disabled students by adhering to pedagogies that don't honor differences in body and/or mind.

So, rather than focusing on fixing or medicalizing or healing our students, as some in our field attempt to do, with pedagogies I will argue can be dangerous and inappropriate, we must actively seek to not retraumatize our students in the classroom. We should instead focus on

compassionate accessible teaching that allows us to open space for students to learn and to be and to have voice and agency. And being attentive to trauma and its effects on learning—becoming trauma informed—can help us do just that. It is my hope that this research, built from my lived experiences, scholarship, and relationships with a broad range of people will benefit trauma-affected students—from my neighborhood and from farther afield. One goal of this dissertation is to help others understand how to create accessible, inclusive, welcoming learning environments that respect trauma, disability, and diversity so trauma-affected students can more effectively learn.

In the forthcoming sections of this chapter, I offer a broad overview of trauma, as well as a working definition of trauma for this dissertation, and explore how trauma can affect learning. Next, I offer research suggesting that trauma-affected students are in all our classes, making issues of accessibility of paramount importance. I then discuss the affordances of a trauma-informed approach in the composition classroom. Finally, I inventory the major claims, arguments, and contributions of this dissertation and offer an overview of chapters.

1.2 Discussion of trauma

School shootings, 9/11, American military response in the Middle East, and the return from Iraq and Afghanistan of U.S. combat veterans have served to propel trauma into the public consciousness. Thus, trauma, and how we deal with it, has become political and social, which, according to Ringel, increases "the magnitude of traumatic experiences in everyday life" (10). Trauma is *not* simply a place/site of study or a thing to witness, as some in composition would treat it. So then how are we to understand trauma?

1.2.1 What is trauma?

Depending on what we read, who we talk to, and our own lived experiences, individuals can have very diverse understandings of what trauma is. To explore the concept, I begin by pulling threads from literature in different fields, including neuroscience, mental health, social work, rhet/comp and trauma studies to get a broad overview of trauma, in part because disability studies demands interdisciplinarity and capaciousness. This broad overview suggests trauma can be, among many things, a lived experience; a specific event or a state of being that exceeds an event or moment in time; a psychological state; a response to stress or horror; a medical diagnosis; the state of a community; and more. While this exploration yields many possible understandings and definitions, for the purposes of this dissertation we will define trauma as an indelible mark on the bodymind as a result of being harmed by something or someone. This definition is intentionally expansive, because disability studies is less concerned with diagnosis than it is with identity, affect, experience, and relationships. So, creating and adopting an inclusive definition ensures that people don't fall through the cracks, and it also accounts for those between spaces, like people on the threshold of a diagnosis.

Interpreting trauma as an event, perhaps with a clear start and finish, is not uncommon, especially among those working within a trauma studies framework (e.g. rhet/comp scholars Anderson, Allen, Bender, Murphy, Pennebaker). However, this way of thinking oversimplifies the concept of trauma, even though trauma *can* sometimes occur as a single event, or as Bateman et al. call it, a *single incident trauma* (Bateman, Ursano, Evans, Rosenfeld et al.). The more comprehensive term "complex trauma" was introduced by Courtois to explain the "inability to self regulate, self organize, or draw upon relationships to regain self integrity" (Ringel 6). Courtois claims complex trauma is "associated with histories of multiple traumatic stressors and

exposure experiences, along with severe disturbances in primary care giving relationships" (qtd. in Ringel 6). Bateman et al. also suggest that a complex trauma "occurs as a result of traumatic stressors that are interpersonal—premeditated, planned and perpetrated by one human being on another…[and] is cumulative and repetitive" (8). Bateman, et al. further claim that complex trauma survivors usually have "histories of physical and/or sexual abuse as well as chronic neglect and/or protracted emotional abuse, witnessing domestic violence, unrest, refugee and combatant trauma" and a high likelihood of a "diversity of mental health and co-occurring problems such as poor physical health, substance abuse, eating disorders, relationship and self-esteem issues, suicidality and contact with the criminal justice system" (8). The terms "PTSD" and "psychological trauma" are used by the DSM to identify and explain immediately resultant symptoms of "combat experiences, rape, domestic violence, and child abuse" (Ringel 6). And Herman introduced the term "complex PTSD" to "address multiple origins of trauma and their impact on all aspects of a person's life" (qtd. in Ringel 6). Each of these definitions acknowledges that complex trauma is often the result of mistreatment at the hands of others and that the symptoms can be pervasive, indiscriminate, and debilitating.

Sophie Isobel, a mental health clinician specializing in the integration of intergenerational trauma prevention into mental health services, discusses trauma as an "effect rather than [an] event" that "alter[s] neurobiological structures" and "affects all functioning" (589-90). She defines trauma as "the psychological and neurobiological effects of circumstances or events, primarily interpersonal and often sustained or cumulative" (Isobel 589). Park & Ali offer a more visceral explanation of trauma, which might help us better understand what's at stake. They explain that "trauma involves the violation or 'shattering' of [a person's] global meaning" (qtd. in Rosenfeld et al. 307). And Evans and Coccoma categorize trauma into five categories:

"personal trauma; trauma as a result of political situations; trauma in refugee populations; recovery from terrorist attacks; and the environmental trauma such as natural disasters," and claim that each category of trauma can affect people in discrete ways (9-10).[5]

Stevens, a critical trauma theorist, interrogates and critiques the meaning and common definitions of trauma. He suggests we consider trauma not as a spatial or temporal event that has a beginning and ending point, but, rather, as a thing unto itself, "a cultural object whose meanings far exceed the boundaries of any particular shock or disruption" (Stevens 3). Stevens also argues that trauma doesn't just name or describe but it also creates an experience (3). In other words, trauma can be de-linked from its original stimulus to become autonomous, with a life of its own. Trauma itself can traumatize and become traumatogenic. Stevens also recognizes institutionalized racial violence as trauma. In his critique, he claims that some current understandings of trauma manifest as "sets of practice" in institutions—clinical, academic, legal, cyber, and popular. He includes in his short list of charges the "inability to recognize traumatogenic institutions like enslavement, genocidal cultural contact [...and...] non-spectacular racial violence and micro-aggressions" as well as the propensity of Westerners to "force diverse peoples into the culturally specific rubric of trauma to the exclusion of local knowledges" (Stevens 2-3). Bateman, et al. make an important move in recognizing trans-generational trauma as a result of colonization. These recognitions broaden the scope of trauma to include institutionalized racial/ethnic violence and the traumatic aftermath left in the wake of the

[5] According to Evans and Coccoma, environmental traumas can be compounded if survivors experience loss of property or employment, and, because the event can affect entire communities, community systems of support may also be devastated and the entire community trauma-affected (16). Personal trauma can are often experienced in isolation, which can "contribute to feelings of shame, depression, and anxiety" (Evans and Coccoma 11). Children who survive political trauma often experience disrupted relationships, and thus, experience "long-term attachment difficulties" (Evans and Coccoma 12). Refugees may suffer cultural loss, which can increase trauma symptoms and hinder recovery. In addition, many refugees experience multiple kinds of traumas, further compounding the trauma experience (Evans and Coccoma 13).

violence of colonization, which can leave unrecognized, yet indelible marks on millions of people. Bateman, et al. and Stevens' critical examination of the concept of trauma also leads us to the understanding that some socio-cultural structures can create or originate "acute traumatic episodes," thus engaging in unperceived and obscure abuses or violences against people, which can create trauma.

1.2.2 How does trauma affect learning?

Evans and Coccoma describe the effects of trauma as "emotional, cognitive, and physical" and theorize that trauma, and attendant diagnoses like PTSD, involve changes to the brain that can affect the whole body. Thus, trauma's effects can be disabling and can affect a student's ability to learn. Some of the somatic effects of trauma include: dysregulation of neurochemical reactions; damage to the hippocampus; and posttraumatic symptoms including "flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, nightmares...hyperarousal, insomnia, agitation, irritability and anger...numbing, avoidance, withdrawal, confusion, derealization, dissociation, and depression," as well as exhaustion (Sherin and Nemeroff 264). Any of these symptoms, alone or in combination, can have a potentially disabling effect on students who experience them (Sherin and Nemeroff, Evans and Coccoma, Carter, Kafer, Ringel, Stevens, Wood, Gorman, Butler, Ursano, Price).

While it would be a flattening of the diversity experience to claim that everyone who is trauma affected is mentally ill, some who are trauma affected do identify as "mentally ill" or "mentally disabled." This being said, it is important to note that not all people who have experienced or witnessed potentially traumatizing events are traumatized. Some of these people could be considered "trauma-affected" or "distressed." This does not necessarily translate to mental illness or psychological "conditions" or pathologies. Rather, it means that trauma has

played a role in their lived experiences and has affected their lives. Evans and Coccoma recognize that, while most people who experience trauma do not have diagnosable or pathological trauma, symptoms of trauma "can interfere with social and occupational functioning" (1). In other words, even people who do not display overt trauma symptoms can still experience disruptive symptoms as an effect of trauma.

And some of the effects of trauma have a direct affect on learning. *Helping Traumatized Children Learn: A Report and Policy Agenda*, commissioned by the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative in collaboration with Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law School suggests that students who are trauma-affected may struggle with any of these common trauma effects:

- Be distracted and unable to focus on learning or on classroom tasks
- Have trouble with reading, writing, and verbal communication
- Have challenges with executive functioning which can affect organization, goal setting, planning, and follow-through
- Have trouble processing information
- Experience negative somatic responses upon encountering new or surprising information
- Reacting rather than responding
- Exhibit perfectionist tendencies
- Expect failure

While this isn't a complete list of ways in which trauma can negatively affect learning, it is clear that students struggling with any of these effects of trauma may also struggle academically. This can be further complicated when these effects are not recognized as effects of trauma, but are read instead as laziness, complacency, inattentiveness, or even as simple resistance to learning

("Helping" 22-31). But it's not laziness or complacency or inattentiveness or resistance. It is both the effects of trauma as well the disablingness of academic structures, as discussed in Chapter 3, that facilitate the disablement of trauma-affected students. As such, we must consider how to make learning accessible for trauma-affected students.

1.3 Trauma in the classroom

Statistics from the National Center for PTSD claim that about 60% of men and 50% of women experience at least one trauma in their lives; seven to eight percent of Americans are diagnosed with PTSD in their lifetimes; and about 8 million American adults are diagnosed with PTSD each year ("How Common"). The National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reports that 57.7 percent of children and young adults were exposed to violence in 2014[6]. Ten percent of the 57.5 percent were exposed to five or more episodes of violence. Forty-one percent of children and young adults experienced physical assault the year of the survey. 41.2 percent of older teens experienced child maltreatment, and two percent experienced war. Nearly four percent of children and young adults were exposed to school bombing threats or threats of attacks in their schools ("National Survey"). Given these statistics, which don't include children and young adults living outside of America, it should be obvious that *trauma-affected students are in our classrooms*. And, some of these students could be considered not just *trauma-affected*, but *traumatized*. Research suggests that veterans, current and former foster-youth, LGBTQ students, refugees, and other marginalized populations may be more at risk for current or past traumas (Davidson 9-11).

[6] The most up-to-date survey year is 2014.

Not only are traumatized and trauma-affected students coming to college, but *being at college can cause trauma*. Research shows that college students are at a higher risk of experiencing potentially traumatizing events including sexual assault and other forms of physical violence, life-threatening illnesses, community violence, unexpected loss of loved ones; natural disasters, and accidents (Galatzer-Levy, et al. 543). In fact, research done by Galatzer-Levy, et al. suggests that 50.6% of students are exposed to a potentially traumatizing event in their first year alone (559). Research also shows that students' responses to trauma can be positively influenced by support from the university community. Such support could include trauma-aware approaches by faculty, staff, and administration ("Helping" 21). Research shows that a "compassionate or trauma-sensitive learning environment" can benefit trauma-affected students as well as students who "may be impacted by the sharing of experiences or behavioral responses of their trauma affected peers" (Smithgall 5). In other words, trauma-informed classrooms have been determined to be universally beneficial.

Unfortunately, the converse is also true: trauma-affected students can be negatively affected by university communities that are not trauma-aware. For example, De la Ysla, a composition instructor, recounts an experience with a student vet, for which she was entirely unprepared. Her student vet writes a vivid article about war and killing for her class; before she can work with the student to offer revision suggestions to make the piece appropriate for a public audience, the essay is published in the local paper, with dire consequences for the student. De La Ysla admits that, although she was able to "listen," she didn't have the tools to help this student (101-103). De La Ysla claims that when we read "emotionally laden" student work, we are "transformed...into the role of what in emergency medicine is called a 'first responder.'" Unfortunately, though, she admits, medical first-responders are trained in dealing with these

situations. We are not. Howard too, in her insightful article “Faculty on the Front Lines," recognizes that faculty are often first responders. She argues that, while some faculty recognize signs of distress and psychological crises in students, they need to be adequately trained to know what to do when they recognize that students need help. Both Howard and De la Ysla recognize that faculty are often on the front lines and should be trained in how to respond to students in crisis. In these cases, and in the stories I’ve told, the message is clear: faculty need to know how to respond to trauma and trauma-affected students in the composition classroom. Given the prevalence of trauma, as well as the high stakes and potentially harmful pedagogical missteps some in composition appear to be making, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that teachers receive rudimentary training in trauma basics, even if just to help teachers avoid doing harm.

Based on my research, I would argue that it is not enough to train faculty to respond individually to trauma and trauma-affected students. Among the academic community, trauma is often understood as the personal, emotional, or medical problems of individual students. This puts the focus on accommodation and the responsibility of accommodating squarely on the shoulders of individual faculty. So, what if, instead of treating trauma and trauma-affected students as singular anomalies to be dealt with individually, we considered trauma a communal universal/university responsibility? What if the university community worked communally to respond to trauma and trauma-affected students? Flintoft and Bollinger claim that universities can help students better engage in learning when the universities themselves, and the people employed by the universities “act with an ethic of care” (24). To Flintoft and Bollinger, this means “focusing on providing appropriate mental health care support, communicating openly and honestly with learners, enhancing staff and faculty development, and rethinking [...] pedagogical approaches” (25). Some suggestions they make for engaging in a comprehensive

ethic of care include engaging holistically with students and staff and recognizing their humanity, as well as supporting students' wellbeing (Flintoft and Bollinger 24). Much like De La Ysla's and Howard's arguments, Flintoft and Bollinger advocate for faculty and staff to receive training regarding trauma and potential triggers, in addition to training in pedagogy that responds to the needs of trauma-affected students (29).

These are all good steps in getting the university community on board with supporting trauma-affected students. And approaching trauma in this way aligns with disability studies rhet/comp scholars who advocate for treating mental disabilities as a communal/community issue (e.g. Kafer, Carter, Dolmage, Price, Kerschbaum, and Yergeau). But what if we took this one step further and our classrooms and our faculty and our pedagogies became trauma-informed? And what if the university became a *trauma-informed system* "in which all components of the system have been reconsidered and evaluated in the light of basic understanding of the role that violence and trauma play in the lives of people" (Bateman, et al. 41)?

From open door admissions and the basic writing movement, composition has always been fundamentally interested in issues of inclusion and accessibility to the university. Historically, accessibility discourse was focused on underprepared and socio-economically disadvantaged students, and more recently, the field's discourse has broadened to include discussions of accessibility for those with physical and mental disabilities. Even so, the field does not yet broadly consider trauma in terms of accessibility. But, if we are invested in creating welcoming, ethical, and inclusive writing classrooms that respect diversity—including diversity of ability—we must consider how to make learning accessible for students who experience disruptive symptoms of trauma, whether or not they have diagnoses. This project theorizes a

trauma-informed pedagogy for the writing classroom that recognizes and understands trauma as disability.

1.4 Toward a trauma-informed pedagogy

As good educators, we recognize and expect the diversity of our students (e.g. ability, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.), and we design inclusive classrooms with difference in mind. So too must we also recognize and expect that our students' lived experiences could include "violence, victimization, and other traumatic experiences" (Carello and Butler 156). Professionals in the fields of neuroscience, mental health, and social work (e.g. Evans and Coccoma, Bateman, Carello and Butler, Isobel, "Trauma-Informed Approach") suggest a trauma-informed approach, trauma informed care, or trauma informed care practice as a practical response to the "centrality of trauma in the lived experiences and lives of people" (Bateman 28). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines a trauma-informed approach as a methodology that "recognizes the widespread impact of trauma...recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma...responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seeks to actively resist *re-traumatization*" (emphasis theirs) ("Trauma-Informed Approach").

It is important to note that a trauma-informed approach is not a clinical intervention, but, rather, a framework that recognizes the effect of trauma on people's lives. SAMHSA explains that a trauma-informed approach is not a treatment or a clinical intervention, and "can be implemented in any type of service setting or organization" ("Trauma-Informed Approach"). Isobel, too, assures us that trauma-informed care is not a clinical intervention or even a way of facilitating healing. Rather, trauma-informed care is a way of interacting with people "around a central organising principle that trauma is a possibility" (Isobel 589). In plain English, trauma-

informed care is a way of working with people that assumes they may have been, as Bateman puts it, "harmed by something or someone;" the effect of trauma-informed care is that we avoid retraumatizing trauma-affected persons with whom we interact (Isobel, Bateman, ""Trauma-Informed Approach," Evans and Coccoma, Carello and Butler). As such, the incorporation of trauma-informed care into non-therapeutic settings—which includes classrooms—is strongly supported by practitioners in neuroscience, mental health, and social work (Bateman, Carello and Butler, Isobel, Evans and Coccoma).

A trauma informed approach can be used not only to inform practice in relation to serving *individuals* but also to setting up *systems of practice* that are universally designed and universally applicable (Isobel, Bateman). Carello and Butler explain that "to be trauma-informed...is to understand [trauma and its effects] and to apply that understanding to the provision of services and the design of systems so that they accommodate the needs and vulnerabilities of trauma survivors" (156). The possibility of systematizing a trauma-informed care approach makes it applicable as a pedagogy. For the purposes of a trauma-informed pedagogy, we can define the primary goals of a trauma-informed care approach as 1) to recognize that trauma is widespread; 2) to help us to recognize trauma in the classroom; and 3) to help us create accessible classroom practices that do not re-traumatize.

Trauma-informed care makes sense for the composition classroom. When looking at current writing studies scholarship and writing classrooms from a disability studies perspective, as this dissertation will do, it is clear that writing pedagogy can sometimes be harmful and inaccessible to trauma-affected students. Rather than trying to make trauma-affected students better fit into the writing classroom as it now exists, we need to change our focus to a design that considers more holistically trauma's impact on those it affects. So, when those of us who teach

writing begin to consider that our students' lived experiences may include trauma, we can begin to create a trauma-informed imaginary. And this trauma-informed imaginary, this communal trauma-informed approach, can help us make our writing classrooms accessible to trauma-affected students.

1.5. Major claims, arguments, and contributions

The main goal of this dissertation is to create a trauma-informed composition pedagogy that makes learning accessible for trauma-affected students. It is my hope that the counter-hegemonic pedagogical moves will serve as a framework of sorts for helping us enact a trauma-informed pedagogy to transform access and dismantle the ableism that persists in our classrooms. Part of the work of this dissertation is to identify specific pedagogical practices that work in favor of creating accessible classroom spaces. This dissertation also shows how story operates as both a powerful and a dangerous tool in this framework—not just in disability studies generally, but with trauma specifically. One of the other contributions I make is to extend Kerschbaum's concept of anecdotal relations to consider what this approach means in an environment in which trauma is present. Although Kerschbaum talks about disability, anecdotal relating is especially relevant to trauma.

1.6. Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 lays out the methodological framework that I use throughout the dissertation and discusses the affordances of disability studies as a framework. I then discuss the analytic I created to examine some core questions and premises of trauma-informed pedagogies, especially as they relate to access and inclusion. I begin this analytical work by looking at pedagogical pieces from major composition publications. From there, I move on to briefly discuss Stephanie

Kerschbaum's method of identifying and critically considering anecdotal relations, which points us directly to the work of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 uses Kerschbaum's "Anecdotal Relating: On Orienting to Disability in the Composition Classroom," to extend the analytic work of Chapter 2. I make the argument that anecdotal relating can be expanded to include trauma, and I use Kerschbaum's concept to provide concrete analytic practices for understanding stories of trauma and disability to theorize access in composition classrooms.

Chapter 4 theorizes and lays out a flexible framework for enacting a trauma-informed pedagogy based on responsive flexibility, negotiated access, and relationality. This chapter argues that we must work collaboratively with students to negotiate access and implement moves that make our writing classrooms accessible. The chapter also claims that building relationships with students based on respect for their lived experiences with trauma and violence, as well as respect for their differences in bodies, minds, and abilities is inherent to successful collaboration and accessibility.

Chapter 2: Methods of Reading and Analysis

In this chapter I lay out my methodological framework. I then discuss the disability studies analytic for reading that I created to guide my reading and help me examine some core premises of trauma-informed pedagogies, especially as they relate to inclusion and access. Next, I analyze two works of composition scholarship using the reading analytic. Finally, I briefly discuss Stephanie Kerschbaum's method of identifying and critically considering anecdotal relations.

My dissertation is fundamentally a theoretical project in which I work with a body of interdisciplinary literature to design a trauma-informed pedagogy for the writing classroom predicated on understanding trauma as disability. The desired outcome of my research is to remake a writing pedagogy that invites trauma-affected students to participate as full citizens of the writing classroom, complete with equitable rights, privileges, and opportunities for engagement. To do so necessitates considering access and inclusion in a way that centers disability, and a disability studies framework will allow me to do exactly that. For example, Simi Linton, a renowned disability studies scholar and disabled activist, suggests that a disability studies approach, which is based on a social model of disability, can turn the lens "toward…institutional structures…to discover what kinds of analyses and interventions can reconstruct" those expectations and social structures to better accommodate—or fit—students with disabilities (518). Linton advocates for using disability studies to rethink how institutions do things in order to better accommodate students with disabilities. In this project, I take this one step further to consider how disability studies can help us rethink the writing classroom.

2.1 Framing My Methodological Approach with Disability Studies

Many composition scholars concerned with trauma (e.g. Allen, Anderson and MacCurdy, Batzer, Bloom, Bender, Goggin and Goggin, MacCurdy, Moran, Murphy,) approach the concept of trauma itself—as well as the concept of working with trauma-affected students—from a literary theory perspective via trauma studies. This could be because literary studies boasts a long history vis-a-vis trauma studies in ways that rhetoric and composition does not. Trauma studies is grounded in the work of 19th century researchers who studied shock and hysteria (e.g. Freud, Breuer, Janet, Charcot, etc.) and uses psychoanalytic ways of thinking that are outdated in clinical study today. The field is concerned with how psychological trauma is represented by/in language (in literature, etc.) and how memory shapes individual and cultural identities (Balaev). In James Berger's "Trauma Without Disability, Disability Without Trauma: A Disciplinary Divide," the author explains that trauma studies "is primarily a hermeneutic whose goal is to read traumatic-symptomatic *texts*" (565 emphasis added). Berger explains that the field views trauma as a social and historical phenomenon, and trauma studies practitioners diagnose artifacts of traumatized cultures by exploring the impact of trauma on cultural products (e.g. novels, films, etc.) (Berger 565). He claims that trauma studies, as a discipline, universalizes trauma because it looks at individual responses to trauma as "instances of broader cultural symptoms" and doesn't focus on individual behaviors or people (Berger 564).

In the context of making learning accessible to trauma-affected students, a literary trauma theory/trauma studies framework is problematic for multiple reasons. First, because trauma studies does not focus on trauma's impact on individuals but rather on its impact on traumatic-symptomatic texts, film, and other representations of culture, the field has a tendency to universalize and generalize trauma (Berger, Schönfelder) rather than focus on the specific and

concrete ways that trauma impacts individuals, classrooms, and learning. Second, many scholars in mental health, education, and disability studies consider trauma studies' adoption of the psychoanalytic unproductive, harmful, and even dangerous to trauma-affected and disabled students (e.g. Evans, Gorman, Carello and Butler, Brown, Carter, Kafer, Pryal, Shaw-Thornburg, Wood "Overcoming"). Disability scholars in particular maintain a healthy skepticism of psychoanalysis because of the field's tradition of abuse, oppression, and infantilization of disabled people and other marginalized populations (Goodley, Yergeau, Rodas). For example, critical autism studies scholars and mad studies scholars often identify psychoanalysis as a modality that reduces neurodivergent people to libidinal drives. These theories are diametrically opposed to views in medicine that consider neurology, as well as to moves in disability studies that understand neurodivergence as a complex sociocultural reality, rather than a pathological Freudian phenomenon. Though some composition scholars approaching trauma through a trauma studies lens do try to distance themselves from psychoanalytical treatment of trauma (e.g. Allen, Anderson, Batzer, Brand), disability studies scholars are quick to note that trauma studies' lexicons and ideologies are inseparable from the psychoanalytic and bear the residue of pathology. For example, Lennard Davis writes, "In fact, it is hard to imagine the existence of psychoanalysis without the concept of normalcy" (8).

The third reason a literary trauma theory/trauma studies framework is problematic in the context of making learning accessible to trauma-affected students is that trauma studies espouses a medical model of disability, which disability studies largely disavows. A medical model of disability positions disability as an illness, as an "abnormal" state that needs to be cured, as something that is "wrong" with the person. Disability studies scholars adamantly argue that a medical model of disability de-autonomizes, alienates, others, and marginalizes trauma-affected

and disabled students, expecting them to either find a cure, "bootstrap," get over it, or remain invisible. A medical model of disability has also been employed in service of eugenics, racism, sexism, heterosexism, cis-sexism, and trans-antagonism (Wood, Price, Yergeau, Dolmage, Siebers, Linton).

This dissertation theorizes a culture of access and then offers practical suggestions for enacting a trauma-informed pedagogy. As such, I am interested in evaluating the ways in which institutions might change their pedagogies, policies, and social structures to create cultures of accessibility for trauma-affected students rather than expecting individual students to bend to fit into the institution's own rigidly constructed rules and expectations. A disability studies framework[7] allows us to examine trauma in terms of access and inclusion. Dolmage explains that disability studies is "grounded in disability rights and foreground[s] the experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities" (5). He further explains that disability studies approaches disability as a "political and cultural identity, not simply a medical condition" (Dolmage 5). Disability studies assumes a social model of disability, as opposed to a medical model, and seeks to foreground discrimination and oppression while also paying attention to the embodied experience of being disabled. The social-disability perspective recognizes that we need to understand disability "as both a physical, material experience and as a socio-cultural positioning mediated by the dominant-hegemonic discourse of ableism" (Wood "Signature" 158). This example may help differentiate between the social model and the medical model: When a wheelchair user is confronted with stairs, the medical model locates disability in the

[7] Some outside disability studies might argue that disability studies is more a framework or a lens, and not a methodology. While it is not within the scope of this project to oppose that position, to establish a disability studies framework, I turn to the work of those prominent disability studies scholars--Schalk, Minich, Kirschbaum and Price, Berger and Lorenz, Lester and Nusbaum, Robinson--who argue that disability studies is is indeed a methodology.

user's body and inability to climb, whereas the social model locates disability in the stairs and the built environment lacking a ramp.

Because it takes into consideration the disability experience as individual, cultural, and social, as well as the power structures that affect those experiences, a disability studies framework allows me to consider trauma and disability as both an individual *and* a collective issue. For example, Schalk contends that a disability studies methodology can help us understand how systems of race and disability historically worked together to dehumanize and exclude (4). And Heisinger-Nixon characterizes a disability studies methodology as interdisciplinary and coalitional. Minich explains that a disability studies methodology "involves scrutinizing...the social norms that define particular attributes as impairments, as well as the social conditions that concentrate stigmatized attributes in particular populations [i.e. race]." Minich asserts that a disability studies methodology is both a research and a teaching methodology "enacted in and through a commitment to accessibility." Minich further claims that a disability studies methodology disrupts systems and ideologies that assign different values to different bodies and minds, and that it must also pay attention to concepts of illness, health, and disease, and the ways in which these concepts affect and are affected by race and class.

Williams and Mavin suggest a disability studies methodology based on methodological priorities from disability studies literature and Barnes' core principles of emancipatory disability research. According to Williams and Mavin, a disability studies methodology is comprised of these key components:

1. Links should be maintained between the academy and the disability community, and researchers should maintain accountability to the community

2. Researchers should adhere to the social model of disability; researchers should recognize their own positionality and its effect on objectivity
3. Researchers should be transparent about their ontological and epistemological positions; researchers should recognize that choice of research methods and how they are used are value-laden
4. Research should be emancipatory or participatory, and disabled people should be empowered as active partners and should not be positioned as passive research subjects
5. Research should result in practical outcomes that contribute to and show commitment to the disability community.

My dissertation builds a pedagogical framework by working with relevant literature in disability studies and composition. In addition to composition scholarship, I have been immersed in the last 20 years of disability studies literature from across a variety of fields and disciplines. I worked with texts that were published between 1999 and 2019, including special issues of major journals like *Disability Studies Quarterly* that made field-defining moves, as well as texts by respected theorists (e.g. Simi Linton; Lennard Davis; Dan Goodley; Siebers' *Disability Theory*; Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson's *Embodied Rhetorics: Disability in Language and Culture*; Dolmage's *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education*; Scuro's *Addressing Ableism: Philosophical Questions Via Disability Studies*). Then I read texts by other scholars and by members of the disability community outside academia. Each of the scholars I reference above, as well as so many others, have served to cultivate my understanding of the field and have helped me discern how disability studies could function as a methodological framework for my dissertation research.

I am both relational and systematic in the way I think, so for me, that means I make lists and maps. I used listing and mapping to help me gain an understanding of disability studies as a field. As I read, I identified and maintained lists of major concepts and claims intrinsic to disability studies. Then I mapped them to find connections and overlaps, which helped me define parameters of a disability studies framework effective for theorizing a culture of access for writing classes. I built on and extrapolated from the works of the disability community. Here, I suggest a disability studies methodology based on common principles from disability studies literature and core ideas from disability studies and disability rhetoric scholars. For the purpose of this dissertation project, I suggest a disability studies framework that is comprised of the following key concepts:

1. Anticipates and imagine disability as always present.
2. Adheres to a social model of disability.
3. Is relational and collaborative
4. "Nothing about us without us"
5. Allows for and encourages uncertainty
6. Considers inaccess for one an injustice for all
7. Considers disability constructive and embraces and welcomes the insights disability offers
8. Critically examines ableist perceptions
9. Is broadly applicable (can transform space/pedagogies/fields/etc.)

This framework allows me to focus on questions of access and cultures of access in the writing classroom, and was also instrumental in the construction of the reading analytic discussed in the section below.

2.2 Methods for Reading

For this project, I created an analytic based on disability studies principles to aid me in textual analysis of pedagogical scholarship. My goal is to critically read and analyze composition pedagogies through a disability studies lens to consider how the pedagogies serve—or don't serve—trauma-affected and disabled students. Toward that end, I created an analytic to: 1) Identify pedagogical moves in the writing classroom that enable or disable trauma-affected students; and 2) Determine how writing pedagogies accommodate students or how writing pedagogies expect students to change to accommodate classroom structures and pedagogies.

As discussed above, my dissertation is fundamentally a theoretical project in which I will work with a body of interdisciplinary literature to design a trauma-informed pedagogy for the writing classroom predicated on understanding trauma as disability. Linton argues that using a disability studies approach to consider institutional structures can result in finding the "kinds of analyses…[that] can reconstruct" (518). Building on Linton's argument, my premise is that by looking at composition pedagogies through a disability lens, I will be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses with respect to access and inclusion and, using the information gleaned from analysis, I then construct a trauma-informed pedagogy.

2.2.1 The Analytic (or How I Read the Literature)

I developed a disability studies analytic for reading so that I could read scholarship on trauma and composition pedagogy more intentionally and systematically using a disability studies framework to identify pedagogical moves and attitudes that would foster a culture of access. Getting to the analytic was a long and messy process. I revisited some of the disability studies texts discussed above, this time, specifically focusing on Linton, Minich, and disability rhetoric and pedagogy scholars (e.g. Dolmage, Kerschbaum, Yergeau, Price, and Wood). I then

made lists of ideas, questions, and commitments I thought priority considerations for reading and critiquing. Once I had my lists, I mapped them to surface overlaps and connections. Then, I revisited the disability studies framework in the section above to map categories onto the questions to ensure connection and overlap. Finally, I selected categories of questions that, when used in textual analysis, elicit productive conversations about how specific composition pedagogies serve trauma-affected and disabled students.

Ultimately, I designed the analytic for depth, rather than breadth and with the assumption that I would not answer every single question. Instead, each category is a line of inquiry, based on disability studies principles, that helps me see the strengths and weaknesses of composition pedagogies with respect to access and inclusion. Certainly, the questions offered by this analytic are not exhaustive—nor are they meant to be. And the two texts I examine below are intended to provide an example of how I used the analytic. The primary outcomes of my reading work are found in Chapters 3 and 4. These categories of questions—and the texts I examine—are important for allowing us to consider pedagogy in terms of access and inclusion. The analytic, then, directs our gaze as readers to the following issues in any pedagogical literature.

Presence of Disability

- Does the text recognize that disabled students are in our classrooms?
- Is difference in ability foregrounded or of concern?
- Is disability acknowledged as of pedagogical concern?

Attitude Toward Disability

- Do the writers theorize from a social or medical model of disability?
- Does the text challenge able-minded and able-bodied normativity?

- Is there an expectation that disabled bodies and minds should conform to classroom practices?
- Does the article productively critique accepted norms regarding how bodies and minds "should" perform in classrooms?
- Is difference of ability honored and considered constructive? Are the insights disability offers embraced and welcomed?
- Is disability considered something non-generative and as a threat to normativity?
- Are any common disability myths invoked or acknowledged? For example, disability as pathology; overcoming and compensation; disability as-object-of-pity and/or charity; disability as isolating and individual; accommodation-as-advantage; etc.
- What is the nature of the imaginaries narrated in the text? Does the article theorize a curative imaginary? A disability imaginary?

Access and Accommodation

- Are access or accommodation discussed?
- Is there a commitment to accessibility?
- How is access understood? Is it about more than making documents and videos accessible to consumers? Is it more than ensuring compliance with laws and regulations? Is it considered a communal/community issue, or is the burden on the disabled student?

Agency and Representation

- Who is authoring the piece?
- Who is being cited?
- Does the author assumed that teachers/WPAs know best for disabled students?
- Is there evidence of collectively negotiating access?

- Does the pedagogy weave disabled students into the fabric of the class? Is there evidence that disabled students are considered full citizens, complete with equal rights, privileges, and opportunities for participation?

Language/Rhetoric

- How is language being used?
- Is it used to exclude, dismiss, and make inaccessible?
- Or is language used to empower, center, and provide access?

2.2.2 Selection Rationale

To choose the pieces for the analytical work of my project, I began by surveying the last six years of all the major journals in the field--*College Composition and Communication*, *Composition Forum*, *College English*, *Journals in Composition Studies*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*--and pulled anything that might point to what composition scholars were saying about trauma. I also looked at core texts in the field that related to trauma, trauma studies, veteran studies, and disability to further understand the field's conversations around trauma. If the essays and texts didn't talk about trauma overtly, I attempted to identify potential connections with interrelated topics (e.g. student veterans, refugees, anxiety, or depression). Later, I also considered the articles in which disability rhetoric scholars show us something about trauma or about access. Next, I surveyed the last three years of major pedagogy and higher education journals--*Journal of The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*, *The International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *Designs for Learning*, *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, *Pedagogy*, and J*ournal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*--looking for anything on trauma, disability, access, or veterans. Finally, in addition to surveying journals, I systematically reviewed edited collections and monographs in composition studies that focused

substantively on trauma as a topic or line of inquiry. These texts were far fewer in number, and the most notable exemplars I found were *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*, edited by Borrowman, and *Writing and Healing: Toward an Informed Practice*, edited by Anderson.

Based on these searches, I initially landed on twelve articles. Those twelve are fundamental to the work of the next two chapters. For purposes of demonstrating method here, I will analyze two that were representative across time periods and readership: "Presence in Absence: Discourses and Teaching (In, On, and About) Trauma," by Peter N. Goggin and Maureen Daly Goggin, a chapter from *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*, a collection edited by Borrowman, and published in 2005, and "Cripping Time in the College Composition Classroom," by Tara Wood and published in 2017 by *College Composition and Communication.* I chose the Goggin and Goggin piece because it is explicitly about trauma, and it was part of an emerging conversation about trauma and writing that developed in composition after the events of September 11. Goggin and Goggin employ a trauma studies framework, which I see as an early framework in composition's discussions of trauma. Because they engage with trauma studies rather than disability studies, they speak to that audience. I decided on the Wood piece because it is more contemporary and an exemplar of a more emergent direction in composition in terms of thinking collectively about disability and trauma. Wood's piece adopts a disability studies framework, which I argue is where composition's conversations are/should be heading vis-a-vis trauma.

2.2.3 Looking at Composition Pedagogy Through a Disability Lens

Goggin, Peter N., and Maureen Daly Goggin. "Presence in Absence: Discourses and Teaching (In, On, and About) Trauma." *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing.* State University of New York Press. NY. 2006. Pp. 29-51. Print.

Text's main claim/argument: "Presence in Absence: Discourses and Teaching (In, On, and About) Trauma," written by Peter N. Goggin and Maureen Daly Goggin in the wake of September 11th, claims that the role of trauma is "virtually inescapable" in teaching and writing (38). They also claim that "writing during trauma is unavoidable" because we are "already always in trauma" (39). The authors are concerned with understanding and conceptualizing trauma and discourses of trauma and with issues and questions "concerning the teaching of writing trauma and of writing (about and during) trauma" (30). They frame their pedagogy around a combination of literary theory, activity theory, and a pedagogical model based on Cope and Kalantzis' "new learning" theory of learning, which is constructed of the following concepts: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice.

Presence of disability: Nowhere in the text is disability or difference in ability foregrounded. Nor does the text overtly acknowledge or allude to disability or access in the composition classroom. Disability and disabled students are invisible.

Attitude toward disability: While access, disability, and disabled students are not a topic of conversation, using the analytic yielded insights with regard to attitude toward disability. First, the authors reveal ableist norms about bodies and minds when they argue that the classroom is "relatively secure for most students" (39). Interestingly, they're not talking about safety in the context of making classrooms spaces safe for marginalized students, but, rather, of safety in terms of keeping the outside world at bay and keeping the classroom "hermetically sealed off from the world in which it is situated" (39). Working from a trauma studies perspective, Goggin and Goggin claim that trauma is only "made present" when it has been spoken or written about and "can only be constituted by the language [a rhetor] produces" (32). However, the idea that trauma only becomes reality when it is discursive is linguistocentric in that it assigns a primacy

to writing and language ability. This framing of trauma is dehumanizing as it purports that only those who can write, speak, hear, and see can experience trauma and that nonspeaking or intellectually disabled people cannot experience trauma.

Access and accommodations: Goggin and Goggin state that their model offers "a flexible framework to consider writing course designs that by their very nature must be localized, to meet both kairotic conditions of time and place, diverse student needs, and particular institutional and departmental missions and sources" (30). Goggin and Goggin also acknowledge in this passage that students' needs are diverse, but the authors later specify that the kinds of diversity to which they refer is "diverse in terms of age range and experience" (42). Accommodations are discussed solely in the context of accommodating discursive practices: "We then explore a pedagogical model robust enough to accommodate the complicated web of discursive practices that both are generated by and surround various kinds of trauma" (33).

Agency and representation: Peter Goggin is a literary theorist and Maureen Daly Goggin is a composition pedagogy scholar. Their work here is grounded in trauma studies, and they lean heavily on the work of trauma studies scholars LaCapra (cited 16 times throughout the article) and Caruth (cited seven times). Ironically, although they acknowledge the problematic nature of whose traumas are recognized and represented in cultural products, they don't recognize the marginalization of trauma-affected *students*: "Political, institutional, social, and cultural (*pace* rhetorical) conditions permit some to speak while eclipsing others, permit some views while silencing others, and permit some forums while ignoring others. In short, who gets to speak and be heard, who has access to public forums, when and where this happens, and what can and cannot be said and heard are crucial rhetorical questions that problematize in important ways the understanding of trauma and writing (about) trauma" (33). They cite work from *Rhetoric Society*

Quarterly, *JAC*, *Written Communication*, and *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics,* as well as from multiple trauma studies monographs and collections.

Language/rhetoric: Goggin and Goggin use LaCapra's work to define trauma as "a disruptive experience that disarticulate[s] the self and creates holes in existence," and they describe trauma as "demanding and resisting discursive construction" (30). As discussed above, Goggin and Goggin's summoning of LaCapra indicates an association with literary trauma theory/trauma studies. The language used in Goggin and Goggin's chapter also indicates they are working from a literary trauma theory/trauma studies perspective. For example, the words "disability," "disabilities," "disabled" do not show up at all, but these hallmark concepts of trauma studies do: "testimony" and "testimonies" (28 times); "witness" and "witnesses" (28 times); and psychoanalysis (2 times.)

Evaluation of pedagogy's strengths and weaknesses with respect to access and inclusion: Goggin and Goggin's work relies on a trauma studies framework, which, according to Berger, universalizes trauma and doesn't acknowledge "current injustice or ideological distortions" (577). Moreover, the trauma studies frame theorizes a medical model of disability antithetical to cultures of access. The authors' complete neglect of the possibility of disability in the classroom is concerning. As such, the attitudes of this pedagogy are not conducive to creating access and inclusion and therefore would not serve disabled or trauma-affected students well.

Wood, Tara. "Cripping Time in the College Composition Classroom." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 69, no. 2, Dec. 2017, pp. 260–286.

Main claim/argument: In her article "Cripping Time in the College Composition Classroom," Tara Wood argues that "normative conceptions of time and production" can have a

negative effect on student performance. She "critically reconceptualizes time" in writing pedagogy and claims that normative assumptions of time and of how students produce can cause dis-access and obstruct access for non-normate students. Wood quotes Margaret Price to offer a definition of crip time: "a flexible approach to normative time" (264), and then later further explains that cripping time is "approaching the construction of time in writing classrooms in such a way that doesn't rely on compulsory able-bodiedness (269). She suggests that a pedagogy framed by the concept of crip time could make writing classes more accessible not only to students disabled students, but also for students with "other marginalized identity markers" (261).

Presence of disability: Disability is present in Wood's article, from the abstract through the works cited pages. The entire premise of her article is that we need to make writing classes accessible for disabled. She uses the words "disabled," "disabilities," and "disability" 104 times in the article. She also uses other phrases that could refer to disability, including:

- "Students whose experiences and processes exist in contradiction to such compulsory measures of time" (260-261)
- "Students whose bodies and minds don't adhere to expectations for commonplace pace" (261)
- "People on the autism spectrum" (266)
- "Students with registered disabilities" (266)

Disabled students' writing processes are the focus of research, and disabled students' voices are foregrounded (as discussed further in "agency and representation").

Attitude toward disability: Wood's attitude toward disability is positive. She treats disability in the composition classroom as generative and constructive, claiming that attention to

disability perspectives can lead to new knowledge and new ways of doing things. Wood also refers to authors who consider "the ways in which rhetorical theory can be meaningfully enriched by accounting for disability and disabled ways of knowing" (262). She draws on Dolmage and Walters to suggest that access for disabled students can benefit all students. She counters specific disability myths such as the "seeking-accommodation-as-advantage" myth, and posits that students are "trying to succeed and have honorable intentions" (263). As well, she values the lived experiences of disabled students (discussed below in "agency and representation").

Access and accommodations: A search of the text reveals that Wood uses the words "access" and "accessibility" 35 times and the word "accommodations" 21 times. In fact, the focus of Wood's entire article is access. She complicates the idea of compulsory normative timeframes and suggests that cripping time can make the composition classroom accessible--not only for disabled students, but also for other marginalized students (261).

Agency and representation: Throughout this article, Wood insists that "the perspectives of disabled students must be included or, better yet, foregrounded in all discussions of pedagogies aimed at improving access and inclusion" (266). She discusses her commitment to agency and representation in her methodology section and spends approximately 600 words discussing why the mantra "nothing about us without us" is essential to disability studies work (265-268). She explains that a disability studies methodology insists that researchers work with--and not speak for--the disabled community. She even goes so far as to ensure "that all assigned codes...emerged from the student's contributions... [so that] the codes...connect directly to the language of the participants themselves" (267), and she insists that disabled students themselves should "inform any argument intended [to improve] access for disabled students in college

writing classrooms" (265). She examines her own positionality as a researcher and states, "Disability researchers (like many qualitative researchers) are deeply resistant to 'speaking for' participants in a given study, and critical self-reflection is paramount to testing the limitations of our positionality as researchers" (265). Wood also references the work of other major disability studies scholars, citing such notables as Bruggemann, Charlton, Lennard Davis, Dolmage, Dunn, Heilker, Kafer, Kerschbaum, Kuppers, Lewiecki-Wilson, Anne McDonald, McRuer, Nishida, Price, Vidali, Walters, Wood, and Yergeau. She cites from *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Composition Studies*, *Composition Forum, Kairos*, *CCC*, and multiple disability monographs and collections.

Language/rhetoric: Woods language Wood's use of the word "crip" itself is a rhetorical positioning signifying insider status in the disability community. The once-solely-derogatory term, has been reclaimed by disability scholars and activists and is used as an all-inclusive term for every kind of disability. By using this terminology, Wood allies herself with disability studies. Wood's article also indicates she is working from a disability studies perspective. In addition to the words shared above, a search of Wood's text also yields the following words which indicate a commitment to both disabled students and to pedagogical concerns:

Crip/Cripping: 53

Pedagogy/Pedagogies/Pedagogical: 29

Anxiety: 26

Normal/Normative/Normativity: 32

Ableist: 7

Representation: 7

Evaluation of pedagogy's strengths and weaknesses with respect to access and inclusion: Wood's article is focused on a commitment to accessibility, and foregrounds difference in ability and access an issue of pedagogical concern. She honors the insights disability offers--both in research and in the classroom--and considers it constructive. She also theorizes from a social model of disability and challenges able-minded and able-bodied normativity. As such, the attitudes of this pedagogy are conducive to creating access and inclusion and therefore could serve disabled or trauma-affected students well.

Final Thoughts on Readings and Analysis

The two texts I examine above provide examples of how I used the analytic I created to intentionally, systematically, and critically read composition pedagogy scholarship through a disability studies lens. Using this analytic to break down each of the two pieces above shows us fundamentally different conceptualizations of trauma, disability, and access. While I didn't write responses for every text I read, the results of reading and analyzing pedagogies through a disability studies lens deeply influences the following chapters. Based on the reading and analysis I've done, I claim that a disability studies framework allows me to consider trauma and disability as both individual and collective issues, which, in turn, allows me to consider writing pedagogy in terms of access and inclusion.

2.3 Anecdotal Relations

As discussed in Chapter 1, Stephanie Kerschbaum argues that the stories teachers tell about disability in the composition classroom reveal their position toward and perception of disability. Often, these stories are negative, and based on anecdotal relations, a phrase Kerschbaum uses to describe "relations that are created and disseminated through narratives

people share about disability." So, anecdotal relations of disability are stories teachers tell—teacher lore—that often reflect the kinds of relationships they imagine they have with disability. These anecdotal relations often come from an ableist view that frames disability as a problem. Kerschbaum suggests critically considering narratives—the ones we hear and the ones we tell--in order to recognize when they are negative or ableist. She then suggests that we "build productive relationships with disability" to recast our understanding of disability in service of creating classroom spaces that welcome disability.

Kerschbaum's concept of critically considering anecdotal relations of disability in composition classrooms provides concrete analytic practices for understanding stories and attitudes of ableism. I make the argument that anecdotal relating can be expanded to include trauma. Chapter 3 integrates the work I did using the analytic and Kerschbaum's method of critically considering anecdotal relations. I use her method of identifying and critically considering anecdotal relations to provide concrete analytic practices for understanding stories of trauma and disability in the composition classroom. I then recast those stories by applying information/research that arose from work with the analytic to theorize access.

Chapter 3: Identifying and Analyzing Anecdotal Relations to Cultivating Trauma Awareness

> "For teachers to create accessible classrooms that enable a wide range of learners to learn, develop, and grow also necessitates relationship-building as both students and teachers learn new ways of moving and communicating"
>
> Stephanie Kerschbaum

Kerschbaum claims that identifying and considering anecdotal relations with disability in the composition classroom is critical to building real, productive relationships with disability. For how do we design something for a community we don't have connections to, we don't understand, or that we understand based on a negative imaginary? How do we design an effective pedagogy without input and participation from all the bodies in the class? Kerschbaum pragmatically encourages us to build relationships between teachers and students and disability in order to "learn new ways of moving and communicating." She is convinced that this will assist composition instructors in "creat[ing] accessible classrooms that enable a wider range of learners to learn, develop, and grow" (Kerschbaum). And that makes perfect sense: When we get to know disability, we can better understand access, and getting to know our students allows us to become better teachers because we can better understand what motivates them and how they learn. Simply put, Kerschbaum advocates for building relations with disability by using a critical approach to telling and interpreting stories of disability in the composition classroom.

In this chapter, I expand Kerschbaum's concept of anecdotal relating to include trauma, and I argue that critically considering anecdotal relations with trauma in the classroom help us develop

new relationships with trauma and cultivate trauma-awareness. Based on the analysis of scholarship on trauma and composition pedagogy along with my own experiences as a student and a teacher, as well as others' stories I've borne witness to, I identify anecdotal relations with trauma and disability in the composition class. Each section explores different anecdotal relations and begins with a story, including some of the common ones that emerge when disability and trauma enter the fray: "trauma doesn't exist," or "I never have trauma-affected students in my class." The section titles are analytical outcomes--of reading and analyzing the disability studies and composition literatures--and name areas where pedagogical work is necessary. Section headings are my imagined potential responses/modes of re-seeing/re-storying to those ableist relations. Bringing these stories to light—and then critically considering and recasting them—will help us better relate to disability, and, in so doing, unlock the productive potential for "welcoming disability [and trauma] in composition classrooms" (Kerschbaum). It is my hope that building these relationships with trauma and disability will spur us to re-imagine and redesign our writing classrooms with an eye toward inclusion and access.

3.1 Trauma is a possibility in the lives of all our students.

After a presentation on trauma-informed teaching, I'm approached by a fellow conference-goer and first-year writing instructor. They say to me, "Your work is really interesting, but I've never had a trauma-affected student in any of my classes." Obviously, they are joking, so I start to laugh. They aren't joking.

Anecdotal relation of trauma as rare or non-existent: "But I've never taught a trauma affected student."

We may not all encounter people who tell us stories of war and ethnic cleansing, or of being kidnapped and forced to fight for rebel armies, or of losing their entire family to an

earthquake. And perhaps, if someone asked you if you've ever taught trauma-affected students, you may have answered in the negative like the conference-goer in the story above. But trauma isn't always accompanied by dramatic stories. Hill defines traumatized students as "students who are exposed to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, community violence, domestic violence, homelessness, and disruptive loss of loved ones" (Hill 17). While he conflates *trauma-affected* with *being traumatized*, and his definition of trauma is different than what was discussed in Chapter 1, this passage is useful in imagining trauma in less spectacular ways. Most of us know someone who has suffered in the ways Hill outlines, and this familiarity with less dramatic trauma can allow us to imagine trauma in our own classrooms.

As discussed in Chapter 1, trauma is ubiquitous, and research suggests that veterans, current and former foster-youth, LGBTQ students, refugees, and other marginalized populations may be more at risk for current or past traumas (Davidson 9-11). In addition to students who arrive at college already trauma-affected, research shows that college students are at a higher risk of experiencing potentially traumatizing events (Galatzer-Levy, et al. 543). So, while composition teachers may say they've never taught trauma-affected students, whether we realize it or not, and whether they self-disclose or not, we need to imagine trauma-affected students are in our classrooms. Because they are. And, as discussed in Chapter 1, research shows that students' responses to trauma can be positively influenced by trauma-aware approaches from faculty, staff, and administration ("Helping" 21).

It's the end of the semester, and I'm meeting in my office with a student during finals week. They share their story with me of surviving genocide. I am calm on the surface, and I listen, and I

thank them for sharing with me. Inside, I am freaking out, because I realize that I have shared 30 class sessions with this student, and I had no idea that they were trauma affected.

Because of my own lived experiences and my relationships with trauma-affected people, I just assume trauma-affected students are in my classes. And, while I'm not surprised my students are trauma-affected, I am sometimes surprised when they disclose specific traumas, and I'm sometimes surprised by who discloses trauma. The student in the story above gave no indication that they were trauma-affected, and I never would have known if they hadn't told me. During that last meeting during finals week, they also disclosed that sometimes they missed their family who, as refugees, were scattered across the world, and it's hard not having a support system in a new country. While this student successfully completed my composition class, it was not without difficulty. This is an important point because, as discussed in Chapter 1, most people who experience trauma do not have diagnosable or pathological trauma. Even so, trauma can still cause disruptive symptoms (Evans and Coccoma 1) whether or not they are apparent, and whether or not we recognize them. For this reason, I teach toward a trauma informed imaginary. I resolve to teach every class as if my students could be trauma-affected, because trauma isn't always obvious, and you just never know.

3.2 Trauma can be disabling.

It's Saturday morning, and I'm teaching a writing class for returning adult students. It's a very small workshop-style class and only three of the usual six students are present. One elderly African American student sits all the way in the back of the class, and I invite her to sit closer, as there are only four of us in the room. She starts to visibly shake, and tears pool in her eyes. She just closes her eyes and shakes her head and begins rocking in her seat. I can almost hear her

silent keening. My eyes go wide, and I'm not sure what to do. One of the other students, a younger white woman, slips to the back of the classroom, sits close to the older woman, and puts her arm around her, murmuring. Everyone else goes silent, and we look at one another and at the scene playing out at the back of the classroom. The tension is palpable. After a couple of minutes, I announce that we are going to take a short break. No one leaves. I walk toward the back of the classroom and ask the older woman if there is there something I can do to help. The other students gather around her offering support. She then tells us that she was the first black student to be integrated into a grade school in the south in the 60s. She was brought in under armed guard. The teacher told her to sit in the back of the classroom and to shut up and to not say anything ever. And that's how it went until she graduated high school. She tells us she is terrified of white teachers, and when I invited her to sit closer to the front of the room, her head began replaying all the ugly epithets all of her white female teachers had hurled at her for all of those years.

The trauma this student experienced in the 1960s was still very much present in the classroom more than 50 years later as they experienced what is called "memory intrusion," a common symptom of trauma, which can be explained as memories being perceived as current instead of receding into the past (Evans and Coccoma 22). The student was responding to the traumatic memories of events that occurred in her childhood. Clearly, trauma played a role in this student's lived experiences and affected their life. Carter advocates for writing instructors to "incorporate the effects of trauma into our understanding as a mental disability," and then situates discussions about trauma and learning as an issue of access. For this student, the effects of trauma, combined with ableism of higher education and the classroom's dis-accessibility, served to co-create a classroom that was inaccessible to the point of inhospitality, and the student

was disabled. This student's disability was also invisible, which is a hallmark of trauma. And in academia, invisible disabilities can be particularly difficult for those affected by negative anecdotal relations. As Dolmage clams, "students with [visible] disabilities are already routinely and systematically constructed as faking it, jumping a queue, or asking for an advantage" (117). In other words, if students with obvious disabilities are suspected of asking for more than they should, disabled students, whose bodies and minds appear "normal" come under even greater suspicion and scorn. So, even if the student in the story above had requested some sort of accommodation, she may have been both disappointed and shamed.

While it is clear that trauma can be disabling (as discussed in Chapter 1), we cannot know the exact trauma-effects our students experience, and we cannot know the extent of disablingness that occurs in composition classes that are not trauma-aware. For this reason, Kerschbaum argues that it is important to imagine disability "as always present…even if the specific ways that disability takes shape may not be immediately evident" (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). We don't need to understand the disability. We don't need to recognize the disability. We don't need to fix anything. But, if we wish to create inclusive classroom cultures, we *do* need to be aware that disability exists in our classrooms and that it "emerges in all kinds of ways in all kinds of settings" even when it "doesn't announce itself" (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). It is also useful to remember that, as Dolmage reminds us, "all of us will become disabled at some point in our lives" (62). While we *should* be willing to consider and recognize others' disability regardless, this powerful reminder can serve to help us to see things from different perspectives and recognize that denying disability harms *everyone* (Dolmage 62).

3.3 What is ableism?

I'm a grad student doing research with an office outside my home department. When I arrive on time for a 2 p.m. meeting, I am told that this will be a walking meeting, as everyone wants Starbucks. I've disclosed my disability issues to them in the past, so I tell them that I am not sure I can make the walk. They assure me that we will walk slowly. I'm upset, but, since I've already voiced concern twice, and this is an important meeting, I walk. We get to Starbucks, and vertigo sets in. I try to casually clutch at a wall to steady myself and not make a scene. I am unable to actively participate in the meeting because I'm too busy trying to keep myself upright. We start back to the office and my colleagues exclaim that this was the best meeting ever and that we should do it again. I get back to my office, collapse into a chair, and feel angry with myself that I went along with a plan that caused me physical harm. I also feel angry with the person in charge for not hearing me.

Jay Dolmage defines ableism as "mak[ing] able-bodiedness and able-mindedness compulsory" (7). In other words, able-bodiedness is the defacto state of being and is considered "ideal, normal, and the mean or default" (7). What I experienced in the story above was ableism: everyone was assumed to be able-bodied and I was expected to fit in with the norm of the group. Dolmage would argue that this "mandated able-bodiedness" is part and parcel of academic ableism, which also mandates able-mindedness and "other forms of social and communicative hyperability" (7). McRuer suggests that able-bodiedness means "being capable of the normal physical exertions required in a particular system of labor" (McRuer qtd in Wood "Cripping" 279). So basically, we value bodies that can work in particular ways within particular systems. I encountered issues because my body didn't work as it was expected to, and my body, my disabledness—I—was not acceptable. The story above has elements that are both anecdotal *and*

uncertain. While the story I shared is a snapshot of a particular moment in my life, it is also just one story among many about compulsory able-bodiedness and the presumption of normate colleagues and students. And my body presents my colleagues with uncertainty. They push back when confronted with my needs, and my attendance, indeed, my very existence, disrupts their fun plans and makes their lives--and their lattes--feel unpredictable, out of control, and uncertain.

I'm a grad student attending a participatory workshop at a major conference in the field. The day of the workshop, I request a simple accommodation: Could the organizers please move my group to a table toward the back of the room? There isn't as much noise and distraction as there is at the table I'm assigned to in the middle of the room. I am told that accommodating my request will "ruin it for everyone." I stand my ground. The organizer finally offers the exact accommodation I've been asking for and asks nastily, "Will that make you happy?" I say that it doesn't make me happy, but it does enable me to participate in the event. The organizer glares at me throughout the event, and I observe them pointing me out to another organizer. I do not attend the afternoon event because I don't have the energy to deal with this all over again.

Ableism and disableism are problematic because they idealize and norm able-bodiedness and "negatively construct disability," which can result in negative attitudes about or treatment of people with disabilities (Dolmage 7). Dolmage's introduction defines disableism [8]as a "set of assumptions (conscious or unconscious) and practices that promote the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities" (Campbell qtd in Dolmage 6). This perspective devalues disabled bodies and minds and considers them inferior. The story

[8] Although some disability scholars distinguish between ableism and disableism, for our purposes, we will discuss them as one and the same.

above is an example of both ableism and disableism. Participation in the event mandates able-bodiedness and able-mindedness, with no structure set up for diversity or inclusion (ableism). The event coordinator made assumptions about my participation in the workshop, which, due to their negative view of my disclosed disability, was devalued. I was considered a "problem" instead of a fully participating member of the workshop. This led to unequal treatment, as well as anger toward and disdain for me. My ability to participate was not important enough to move my group to a table toward the back of the room. So here, ableism's negative perspective resulted in a disabled person being treated unfairly because of ableist values.

In the story above, my disability was understood as something disruptive and counterproductive, as something that would "ruin it for everyone," and as a "private, individual failure" (Dolmage 56). But, looking at this from a disability studies perspective, it could be argued that my disability was not what caused my dis-access to the workshop or to the meeting. While the university and academe might consider disability a "private, individual failure," and the university may not consider itself responsible for partially causing disability and dis-access, Dolmage argues that we need to recognize that our ableism does create dis-access, inaccessible situations, places, and texts (Dolmage 56). I argue that if, as instructors, we consider disability as something non-generative and as a threat to the normativity of our classrooms, rather than as something constructive, we may reify our ableist beliefs and refuse to cooperate with trauma-affected and disabled students in building productive and accessible classrooms.

3.4. This is what ableism looks like in a composition class or a first-year writing program.

It is my first week as a graduate teaching assistant. We have a break in between orientation sessions and I spot the WPA. Trying to be proactive, I ask how we handle accommodation

requests and what the department does in the way of making learning accessible to students with disabilities. The WPA shuts me down: "Oh, we don't need to worry about any of that."

To this day, I am still appalled that a WPA would make such a proclamation. Perhaps it was a miscommunication, and their heart and intent didn't match what came out of their mouth. Or maybe it was just ignorance, and the WPA thought they had never taught disabled students and weren't aware of any disabled students taking first-year writing classes. If that was the case, then Kerschbaum suggests that what they really mean is that hadn't taught students "that they immediately perceived as having a disability" ("Anecdotal"). Or perhaps it was ableism at its ugliest, making a declaration that we don't need to worry about any of that because all bodies and minds *here at our university* should work in specific and expected ways, and if they don't, then they don't matter. Dolmage claims that "ableism is not a series of bad or sad anomalies, a series of discrete actions…And it requires agents...actions and intentional inaction" (46). The inaction of the WPA in the story shared above was ableist and served to deny the existence of disabled bodies and minds. I argue that, as composition instructors, we absolutely do need to "worry" about making learning accessible for our trauma-affected and disabled students, and to do otherwise is ableist. Many of us in composition "worry" about things like gender and race when building our classes and our pedagogies, and Jones, in her article "For Us All," suggests that we may be better able to recognize our ableist ideals if we "spend as much time thinking about disability" as we do those other issues. This is especially noteworthy because racism, sexism, and ableism are intersected issues. And it makes sense that just as we recognize the effects of institutional racism and work to disable the structures that support it, we would do well to recognize the realities of institutional ableism and actively work to resist its pervasive influences. If we look at ableism as "a series of entrenched structures…[and] not just the actions

of an individual or of individuals," then maybe we can more easily approach the systems of oppression (Dolmage 53).

I'm at a faculty retreat for first-year writing instructors. During discussion, one of my colleagues says that they are unsure of how to deal with students' anxiety and that they are "frustrated to infinity" with anxious students. Another colleague responds: "We are getting students who are practiced in anxiety. It is now cool to say you suffer from anxiety. Come on. Just get over it." The retreat organizers, one of whom is the WPA, nod their heads in agreement.

When one teacher in one class denies or erases the presence of disability, as did the WPA and my first-year writing colleagues in the stories above, studies show that students tend to base future interactions with other teachers and in other classes on that experience, so the effect can be far-reaching (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). If one of those frustrated instructors discussed above expressed their frustration to a student with anxiety disorder, that student may now be conditioned to not interact with their professors and to not ask for accommodations, thus serving to deny and erase disability further. And this denial and erasure of disability effectively stifles possibilities for building positive relationships with disability. Wood suggests that not talking about or acknowledging disability and issues of access in the classroom "can have the same effect as denying the accommodation" because students may perceive the classroom to be "hostile to their ways of moving" or of being or of thinking or of communicating (qtd. In Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). In the story above, we see negative and ableist anecdotal relations playing out in a writing faculty retreat. All it took was one person to get the conversation started, and suddenly, a group of first-year writing teachers exposed their ableist assumptions and indignation, along with their scorn, contempt, and judgment toward disabled students. A trauma-informed pedagogy works against systems of oppression by first acknowledging that disabled

students are in our classes, and then building relationships with students that open the way for creating access and inclusion (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal").

3.5 A culture of access and inclusion resists ableism and helps re-shape our writing pedagogies.

I'm at a university-wide workshop on accessibility, and I'm excited about what I'm going to learn. The presentation begins, and it is clear that, as far as these presenters are concerned, accessibility applies to documents and not to spaces/places--or even what happens in those spaces/places. I am disappointed at the narrow treatment of access. The presenters talk fast and show some images in a PowerPoint presentation. I am confused because this workshop on accessibility is, ironically, not accessible.

This workshop smacked of ableist apologia, which, as Dolmage explains, is when faculty are seen as attempting to accommodate and "play along with the game of accessibility and inclusion," all the while knowing their own ways of learning and being are not stigmatized (45-46). In other words, faculty remain comfortable and safe in their privilege while seemingly embracing inclusion by attempting to make documents accessible. The ironic fact that the workshop itself was not accessible was telling. Perhaps disabled people were expected to be consumers of the access and not full participants in the access-creating process. Or maybe, as Dolmage argues, because in higher education, disabled people are usually thought of as research subjects and not as teachers with agentive status. In any case, my experience at the university-wide workshop on accessibility drove home the fact that my university operates within a culture of ableism. In fact, when I've heard the word "accessible" used in conversation in my own department, people are usually talking about exclusively about texts or videos in the context of whether blind students, students with low vision, or deaf and hard of hearing students can access

the materials[9]. One of the problems with the workshop discussed in the story above was that the only focus was on making texts accessible, which Brewer et al. argues positions those requesting access as "consumers, as bodies in need of help from those more abled and privileged" (151). Brewer et al. further clarify that thinking solely about consumptive access, or how to allow students access to texts or spaces is narrow in scope. They claim that we should instead pursue transformative access, which allows for a "culture of participation and redesign"(Brewer et al. 153). In other words, transformative access begets a culture of access.

Another issue with the workshop in the story above was that the focus was on following the rules, compliance, and meeting regulations. The workshop privileged rules over people. According to Brewer et al., the field of composition studies hasn't yet established a culture of access (153). They argue that our field's understanding of access is problematic in that it "has more in common with helping the Other consume inaccessible texts than it does with radical transformation of the profession" (Brewer et al. 153). And we see exactly that in the story of the inaccessible accessibility workshop above, where, as Brewer et al. claim, access was "a concept that sound[ed] promising on its surface yet…offer[ed] little more than empty gestures" (151). But access is about much more than making documents and videos accessible to consumers or ensuring we are in compliance with laws and regulations. Alexander and Rhodes define access as "a culture of transformation, as opposed to a culture that 'flattens' access as rehabilitation, or as inclusion for the sake of increased consumption" (summarized in Brewer et al. 151). Alexander and Rhodes clearly understand access as more than documents and more than a matter of compliance. They get that accessibility is a culture, not just a series of moves.

[9] To be clear, these are necessary practices, and deaf and blind students--as well as faculty and staff--are routinely excluded from some of the most fundamental spaces and conversations in academic life. However, document compliance alone is not a fully realized version of access.

It's week 11 of the semester, and I stay after class to speak with a student who has stopped turning in assignments. They come to every class. and sit in the front row doodling or drawing. I commend the student on being in class, and I tell them that their contributions to discussion are valuable, but that I'm not sure they can earn a passing grade because they haven't turned in some major assignments. The student tells me that they know they are not going to pass the class, but they don't want to stop coming because they feel comfortable here and they like "hanging out and being chill." They tell me that their parent was murdered that winter. No, they haven't seen a therapist, but they think they probably have PTSD.

I intentionally build a culture of access in my classroom by, among a host of other things, inviting students to collaboratively negotiate access, making personal writing optional, making disability a topic of conversation, and advocating for students within university systems. (See Chapter 4 for more on this.) Because my classroom embraces transformative access, the student in the story above *wanted* to be in class, even though they were unable to complete the assignments. For this student, the culture of access translated to inclusion. Kerschbaum claims that "making moves towards social inclusion and welcoming can be difficult to enact, even for the most well-intentioned teachers, and they involve more than following minimum standards or implementing specific accommodations communicated through the disability services office" ("Anecdotal" 7). She recognizes that even if we desire to build a culture of access, transformative access can be challenging because it necessitates working beyond compliance with regulations and beyond the commands of other agencies/departments. Creating a culture of access means being proactive and considering--from the beginning, and then recursively and constantly--how our classes might be inaccessible to students. If I had merely waited for someone to request an accommodation and focused on changing my approach once I was aware

of individual students' disabilities, or if I had merely followed the approved and mandated accommodations on a student VISA from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), my class would have been inaccessible to this student who didn't have a formal diagnosis and who probably would not have reached out to request accommodations.

The kind of transformative access that needs to happen in composition classes must come from a desire to make learning accessible for all. And Womack argues that this is "the most basic act and art of teaching" (494). She claims that the things we do to adapt our classes for students and the things we do to promote learning is "the process of teaching itself" (Womack 494). Basically, if we consider ourselves teachers, we must also desire to work toward making learning accessible to all students. This is a tall order, but Kerschbaum claims we can do this by building relationships with students to help us learn "new ways of moving and communicating" (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). As discussed in Chapter 1, Kerschbaum advocates for welcoming disability in the classroom and then building relationships with disability in order to create accessible learning for teachers and for students (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). In other words, we need to anticipate disability and embrace and welcome the insights disability offers. Doing so will allow us to transform our teaching, our teaching culture, and our institutional spaces to make room for diversity and inclusion that respects ability in addition to race and gender.

3.6 Access should be participatory and negotiated.

I'm in San Antonio for a conference. A friend has flown in to meet me there and to hang out. We decide to take a walk to the Alamo. Because of mobility issues, I scope out the easiest path for me and tell them that I need cross at a particular place. They resist. "No. This is the best place for you to cross, because it is the shortest distance." "No," I say, "I know what I need, and I need to cross here." They continue insisting that they know what is best for me. I then feel forced

to launch into a long explanation of why the shortest distance isn't best for me...there are other factors to consider, including the terrain, the number of curbs and steps, etc. They still don't understand, and they still insist they are right. I argue, "I'm the one with mobility issues, and I get to decide where it is best for me to cross. You don't live in my body, so you don't know."

One of the major precepts of disability studies, which shows up on t-shirts and protest signs, in academic and community writing, and as a slogan, motto, and call to action in the disability community is "Nothing about us without us" (Wood "Cripping" 266). And, as disability activists assert loudly and often, disabled people do not wish to sit passively by allowing abled people to assume they know best for disabled bodies and minds. The idea here is that disabled people rightly want a place at any table that purports to speak for them. Unfortunately, the scene in the story above, although played out on a city street, is not uncommon in institutions of higher education. Except, in the classroom, students don't usually feel comfortable speaking out against the mandates of their instructors and disability services. So, where a trauma-informed pedagogy is concerned, we must not deign to speak *for* our trauma-affected students; we must instead work *with* them to figure out how we can best make learning accessible (Heilker, Wood, Price, Walters, Yergeau, Kerschbaum).

Although she is talking about race in particular in her article "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own," Royster's voice can serve to remind us that marginalized communities are often ill-positioned to speak out against those in power (32). Royster argues that we must teach *across* boundaries with students "instead of for, about, and around them," otherwise, we risk silencing, regardless of our intentions (Royster 38). I build on Royster's work to claim that, when thinking about creating a culture of access, we need to figure out ways to teach *across disability and trauma,* because, regardless of our intentions, our silencing, negative anecdotal

relating, and an assumption that we know best for students with different lived experiences and differences in bodies and minds is both arrogant and unconscionable.

It's the second week of class, and a first-year writing student stops in during office hours to disclose that they deal with severe anxiety that sometimes affects their class performance. They are worried because the syllabus states that 10% of students' grades is based on participation. I instantly feel defensive, like my pedagogy is being questioned. Then I feel guilty because I've placed a point value on students speaking up in class-—and because I feel defensive. Then I feel supremely uncomfortable because I'm the teacher, and I don't know what to do. Do I make an exception for this one student? Do I push the student to participate in class? Do I re-think the point value I've assigned to participation? Do I just give up on participation altogether? None of the options seemed like good ones. I tell the student that I hear what they are saying, and I acknowledge that the way I've presented the participation requirement of the course could be problematic. And then I tell them that I am not sure how to fix it. The student offers some suggestions, and we agree to revisit the discussion. I talk myself out of my guilt and defensiveness, and then I talk with a disabled disability studies scholar and activist colleague, and we throw some ideas around. Once I come up with a plan that might work, I meet with the student again, and together we make some more tweaks to the newly minted section of the syllabus (Blackburn "WRA 101"). In the end, I've learned a lot, the student knows that any future accessibility concerns they have about my class will be met with respect, and my syllabus is more accessible for everyone.

Kerschbaum recognizes that teachers might be feel fearful or uncomfortable about changing how they teach and that they may not know how to practically negotiate inaccessible

and exclusionary pedagogical issues, and, as in the story above, I experienced these very real and valid concerns ("Anecdotal"). But the good news here is that, as instructors, we don't have to do all the work of accessible-izing ourselves. As we experience disability in the classroom together with our students, Kerschbaum suggests we "invite and create productive relationships with disability…[by] challenging the orientations to disability as personal or as threatening" (Kerschbaum "Anecdotal"). In other words, the classroom relationship between students, teachers, disability, and ability are all interdependent, thus, we must approach the relationship with an attitude of openness, grace, and collaboration. Instructors are not solely responsible for making their classes accessible, rather, they should facilitate the process of making classrooms accessible and foster environments in which students feel comfortable embracing critical self-advocacy. Once I was able to orient to uncertainty--and feel comfortable with not knowing how to do everything--I was able to work interdependently with my student to negotiate access, and my student gained "a sense of agency, the ability to claim themselves, and to change or develop as interactions proceed" (Kerschbaum). In other words, when I was able to approach the situation with an attitude of collaboration, co-learning, and humility, everyone benefitted (Kerschbaum, Womack 512-516, Wood "Cripping" 278). My relationship with disability in the classroom was transformed by my relationship with a disabled student.

Many other disability studies scholars argue that the process of *accessible-izeing* should be collaborative and collective, incorporating the voices of disabled students (Dolmage, Kerschbaum, Yergeau, Womack, Wood, etc.) And that makes perfect sense, because disabled students are the experts where disability is concerned, and they can teach us much if we let them. Mogendorff argues that "disabled people's experiential knowledge of living with impairments in an ableist world optimally positions them to provide unique insights...that may be useful to both

disabled and non-disabled" students. And Mogendorff is right: we don't live in our students' bodies or minds, and it is arrogant to assume we know what is best. Instead, Mogendorff suggests that we create dialogue "between ableist and alternative views…[to] create space for change" (Mogendorff). For us to do so requires a move from normativity and "releas[ing] our own pedagogical approaches from…limiting constructs" (Wood "Cripping" 273). Based on feedback from students and our ever-evolving relationships with trauma and disability as we negotiate access collectively, we may also have to reimagine what our classroom could look like and think critically to identify our ableist assumptions.

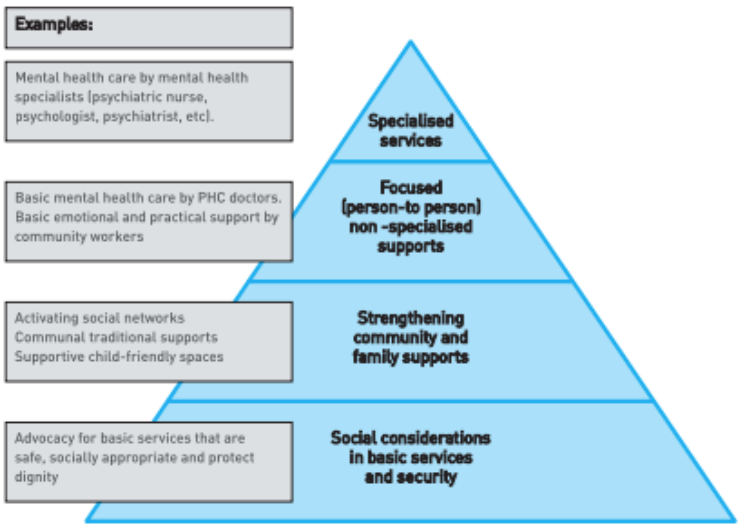
3.7 Access is a collective issue.

It's mid-semester, and I'm reading through a stack of students' research journals. They keep these journals to record notes, brainstorming, freewriting, reading responses, to-do lists, and any other kind of work that has to do with anything in this FYW class. (See Appendix A for complete research journal assignment instructions.) Each student is their own intended audience, and the assignment instructions state that the purpose of the journal is "to help you with your projects, to ask questions, to help you sort through new ways of thinking and of approaching problems, to guide you through writing challenges, to make visible your writing process, [and] to reflect on your learning." Students understand they can use the journal as they see fit for anything that has to do with our writing class. After being asked, I've given the go ahead for them to write personal entries if it will help them get through personal situations and into the academic writing they're doing for class--with instructions that, if something is personal and private, they may fold the page over, and I won't read it. Anyway, I'm reading through one of these journals that has a few folded pages. I skip those, and then come to an entry addressed to me, which is rare, given that I am not the intended audience. The student tells me that they are

struggling because their roommate/friend was killed in a car crash and they had to help the roommate's family pack up all of their belongings. On that journal page, they detail their feelings of shock and loss and of being left alone staring at their roommate's empty bed for the rest of the semester. It happened several weeks prior, but this is the first I heard about it. I pencil a note in the margins of that entry inviting the student to office hours so we can discuss resources available to them to help them get through this.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the United Nations' agency for coordinating inter-agency humanitarian assistance, recognizes that teachers are often on the front lines as first-responders to traumas and disasters and includes teachers in the mental health and psychosocial support systems (MHPSS) pyramid. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Intervention Pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies.



While the top two layers of the pyramid--"specialized services" and "focused non-specialized supports"--belong specifically to trained mental health practitioners, the third layer of support in the pyramid--"community and family supports"--specifically references teachers. The World Health Organization also recognizes teachers as community supports and specifically references

them in their publication "Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers" meant to help community members such as teachers offer support to distressed people without causing harm to themselves or others. The theory here is that educators, in both formal and informal educational settings, are key to community support systems, and that these community support systems can offer stability and support to trauma-affected students (IACS 11-12).

As a first-year writing instructor, I teach small classes (27 students), and I know students' names. At my university, small classes are not the norm, and students often tell me that I am the only faculty member who knows their names during their freshman year. While they can slip in and out of lecture classes somewhat anonymously, my composition class is different. As someone with whom students interact closely for approximately four hours per week, it's not uncommon for me to recognize when students are struggling--with the college transition, with family issues, with relationship issues, with mental and physical health issues, or with loss and grief as in the story above. As a composition instructor on the "front lines" (see Chapter 1) and a de facto part of a community support system, I am often afforded the first opportunity to identify and reach out to students in my class who are struggling in order to connect them with the help they need.

Certainly, it is not sustainable for composition instructors to serve alone on these front lines without departmental and university support. Writing classes--given their size, content, and assignment practices--facilitate disclosures and re-traumatization. So, as I do in the story above, I'm learning to direct students to resources, including support services like the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services, TRIO, Migrant Student Services CAMP), Office of Supportive Services (OSS), etc.—to help students navigate trauma, disability, and the inhospitality of the university for students with trauma-affected and/or

disabled bodies and minds. It is important to note that, while these resources are crucial for supporting first-year writing students, they are usually located in departments outside of first-year writing, and unfortunately, I don't always feel confident that the resources that are supposed to support trauma-affected and disabled students actually do so without causing more harm. Pryal suggests that disability services offices are not always appropriately supportive of students with psychiatric disabilities (e.g. PTSD), so it can be difficult for students to obtain rightful accommodations. And, as discussed throughout these pages, Dolmage--and other disability studies scholars (e.g. Price, Kafter, Carter, Yergeau, Kerschbaum, etc.)—claims that institutes of higher education "valorize perfection and stigmatize anything that hints at intellectual (or physical) weakness" (Dolmage 3). Dolmage argues that universities are inherently ableist because "disability has always been constructed as the inverse or opposite of higher education" (3). This ableism enables the creation of barriers and disadvantages which manifest as exclusion, marginalization, dismissiveness, and inaccessibility. And this exclusion, marginalization, dismissiveness, and inaccessibility can create further trauma for already-trauma-affected students.

I argue that if we want to authentically support student learning, our programs and institutions must do so collectively, and first-year writing needs to be part of this collective. Wood argues that awareness of disability is the responsibility of the program, and I would argue further that it is the responsibility of the university community at large ("Cripping" 262). And Womack argues that "[e]ven accessible pedagogy becomes inaccessible to instructors when institutions do not support the mission, when programmatic structures are inflexible, [and] when standardized policies are driven by norms" (521). Womack also notes that there is often scant institutional support provided for those of us who work with disabled students, and that this

"send[s] the message that pedagogical changes should affect only individual students instead of professors [and] institutions" (Womack 496). So, basically, no matter how hard we work to make our courses accessible to students, we cannot individually create cultures of accessibility; we need buy-in from our universities and our departments. I know that when I've tried it, I've become burned out and exhausted from banging my head against the proverbial brick wall. I claim that a culture of access, then—real and supported/ive access—is created collectively within trauma-informed and disability-informed university systems.

3.8. Representation, agency, and engaging students holistically

It's the day before the first class of a new semester. I get a call from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) to let me know that a deaf student is enrolled in one of my sections and has asked for accommodations. On the phone, I assure the RCPD specialist that I am committed to accessibility and will work with their office and with the student to ensure the class is fully accessible. Then I hang up and totally panic because my class is most certainly not accessible for hard-of-hearing or deaf students, and now I need to accommodate this student.

Unfortunately, once students disclose their diagnoses, disability services offices often match the medical diagnoses with a checklist of stock accommodations deemed appropriate—as if disability is fixed and the needs of each student are the same (Dolmage 90, Wood "Cripping"). But both Dolmage and Wood argue that disability does not completely define identity and we can't simply apply specific accommodations to their corresponding disabilities in order to fix everything. Instead, Dolmage insists we must go beyond offering the stock accommodations and the "blanket or rubber-stamp accommodations" often advocated for by disability services offices, and work collaboratively with students to negotiate access and implement moves that make our writing pedagogies accessible for disabled students--and maybe even for all the students in our

classes (91). It seems that if we wish to honor all learners in our writing classes, we must go beyond the minimal requirements--of the law, of compliance, of disability services—and espouse a commitment to equity.

The epilogue to the story shared above is that I immediately met with people from the RCPD for an emergency training in Zoom (used in the classroom to provide ASL translation for deaf and hard of hearing students). I also did a crash training in how to do closed-captioning and how to use the microphones provided in each classroom. And then I reached out to the student, who, as it turned out, didn't want any of those accommodations. Instead, we negotiated seating arrangements and, at her request, I promised to repeat anything she missed. Dolmage reminds us that disabled people have a right to "define their own relationships with disability" and that we should not define them through their disabilities (Dolmage 5). If we want to show respect for students, we must engage them as whole people, and not simply as singular representatives of the disability that is a *part* of who they are.

In the example of deafness, we think complexly about how our writing pedagogy respects those needs. Though this story relates deafness as an example, these same strategies have a clear carry-over for trauma as well, and these strategies are especially pertinent to how we conceptualize and accommodate trauma in the writing classroom. For example, an accommodation checklist for people with PTSD suggests the following: allowing support animals in the classroom; allowing telephone calls to doctors or counselors; allowing additional time for assignments; allowing students to take breaks from class; avoiding triggers (Clemans). But those suggestions are not very helpful if those are not the accommodations the student needs. What if, in this imaginary, a student with PTSD needs is to sit with their back to the wall so they feel safe? "Allowing" all the time-outs and supportive phone calls from counselors and therapists

will be pointless if the student is in constant crisis state because other students are sitting behind them and the student with PTSD feels unsafe. And it makes no sense for me, or a psychologist, or a disability services point person, or really anyone who is not the student, to determine what will make a classroom accessible. As this chapter argues continually, if we are not collectively working with students--deaf students, students with PTSD, and trauma-affected and/or disabled students--to negotiate access, we could be creating dis-access and doing a disservice to our students.

3.9. Of accommodation, universal design, and access

[Part two of the story shared earlier in this chapter about requesting access at the conference workshop] I'm registering online after receiving the invitation to the participatory workshop. As I'm filling out the digital form, I look for the place to submit an accommodation request. There isn't one. I hope that, after I submit my registration, I will receive a follow-up message inviting accommodation requests. I do not. A week before the conference date, I send a message to the contact person for the workshop, requesting the simple accommodation. I receive a response saying that it is too late to accommodate my request, but that I should instead speak with the organizer on the day of the workshop. And, after reading the story above, we all know how well that worked out.

This story could have played out a lot differently if the event organizers had asked participants for accommodation requests when they registered for the event. But instead, organizers proceeded in an ableist fashion, expecting all bodies and minds to operate according to their own idealized expectations. And, as discussed earlier, as a student, the burden of access should not have been my sole responsibility, nor the sole responsibility of the event contact person, nor even of the organizer. Rather, had the large institution sponsoring the workshop had

guidelines in place, and support to help organizers, they could have created a culture of access, which would have signaled that the conference and events were accessible and inclusive. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case, and I was stuck begging for accommodations at the last minute.

Womack defines accommodation as "an adaptation or adjustment of...an exemplary original" or "a deviation from [a] norm" which couches accommodation as changing something to account for body or mind judged as not-so-perfect (Womack 496-497). For this reason, I theorize that the idea of accommodating can be problematic from the get-go, as it centers an idealized imaginary. In the story above, the expectation was that the perfect body and the perfect mind was expected to function perfectly in the idealized situation presented at the workshop. Because I couldn't work in that idealized situation, I was forced to ask for accommodations, which left me feeling marginalized and alienated. To be clear, I didn't feel marginalized or alienated because my body and mind work in non-typical ways. I felt that way because my neurodiverse ways of being were not considered—or considered valid—and my accommodation request was treated as a problem that was met with resistance. As writing instructors, we should critically consider the normative and ableist assumptions that support our pedagogies, for example, assuming all students can work within a normative time frame (Wood "Cripping"), over-privileging the physical act of writing (Womack, Selfe, Howes, Patricia Dunn and Kathleen Dunn De Mers), over-privileging speaking out in class (Womack), and over-privileging mandatory personal writing assignments (Kafer, Wood, Kraft, Orem). After carefully considering and identifying normative and ableist underpinnings, we must then work proactively to create learning environments in which students can, as Dolmage puts it, "claim difference

without fear of discrimination" (Dolmage 85). And that difference must include difference in ability.

I suggest above that the workshop event would have been different if organizers had included space for accommodation requests during the registration process. And I further argue that it would have been even better yet if organizers had *incorporated ideas about access when initially planning the event*. Disability studies scholars assert that access should happen from the inception of design and not be added in on the end as a retrofit (e.g. Kerschbaum, Yergeau et al., Dolmage). What if, when considering our writing pedagogies and when creating our syllabi, we consider access from the beginning instead of trying to change the idealized original to fit our students' needs or trying to add, as Wood puts it, "individual fix-its applied to specific students in specific situations"? (Wood Cripping 262) For example, what if we assume trauma-affected students are in our classes, or embrace crip-time[10], or build in to the syllabus different forms of participation that don't privilege verbal classroom discussion? Womack argues that approaching access in that way "centers the experiences of disabled students within a universal design framework to create more inclusive pedagogy" (498). In some ways, this chapter has been talking about universal design all along, without naming it explicitly--for example, when I argue that access is not about checklists or compliance, etc.

Many disability studies scholars (e.g. Dolmage, Womack, Yergeau, Brewer, Selfe, etc.) advocate for universal design, but understand that, while universal design tries to anticipate a universe of users and to anticipate disability, because bodies and minds are individual, the "universal" part of universal design is impossible. Womack states: "Planning alone, as with

[10] "Crip-time" as defined by Price, "refers to a flexible approach to normative time frames ("Mad" 62). This concept will be discussed at more length in chapter four.

universal design, generalizes about people and can't contain all individual users. Reacting alone as with individual accommodations, assumes a fictional normal and doesn't integrate difference into pedagogy. Over-relying on either produces the same result: students are excluded" (Womack 521). Womack and other scholars remind us that neither over-dependence on universal design or on reactionary accommodations for individual students will produce accessible pedagogies. And I argue further that creating a culture of access is not a solo endeavor and can only become a reality when we work collectively and collaboratively-- with students, with departments, and with universities.

3.10 Wrapping up the Chapter

What many of these anecdotal relations show is that there is an ableist configuration to how trauma is perceived. While stories and anecdotes are often fraught with uncertainty, it is that very characteristic of stories that makes them productive and crucial in helping us dismantle oppressive structures. And, in order to dismantle the oppressive structure of the university—and the composition classroom—we must work to recast our negative anecdotal relations with trauma and disability. We've made a start in this chapter by critically examining ableist perceptions of trauma and disability in the classroom and then re-narrating stories to develop new relationships and cultivate trauma-awareness. The process of making accessible is always ongoing, and often uncertain.

One of the major undercurrents of the chapter has been the idea of access, and one of the stories this chapter attempts to re-narrate is that of access as a static condition or a fixed state of being that, done once, is complete. The storying and analysis in the chapter build a new relationship with access, which I claim should be understood as a culture and a process that relies on collaboration and collectivity and recognizes that disabled and trauma-affected students are in

our classrooms and that their lived experiences and expertise offer critical insights that can transform our spaces, our pedagogies, and our field.

Chapter 4: A Praxis of Relationality

While Chapter 3 identifies anecdotal relations with trauma and disability in the composition class, and then responds and recasts them using insights gained from applying a disability studies lens to composition pedagogy scholarship, this chapter builds on that research to theorize and lay out a flexible framework for enacting a trauma-informed pedagogy. But first, a story:

It's Thursday night, and I'm in my "Writing Center Theories and Pedagogy" class that is required for anyone working in the University Center for Writing-based Learning. The professor has invited a professional from disability services to speak with us about neurodiversity and its possible effect on peer-to-peer consulting. This is my first introduction to neurodiversity, and I am utterly fascinated by the different ways brains work. I want to know more. I keep asking questions--about biology, about autism, about Tourette's syndrome, about ADD, about neurology. This introduction to neurodiversity feels overwhelming, and I'm struck by how much I don't know.

I asked all of these questions because I wanted to be an effective peer consultant, and I figured that the more I knew, the better able I would be to work with students whose brains work differently than mine. I was hoping for a road map, an instruction book, something to give me more insights into how to adjust my approach and how to adapt my writing center practice to better serve neurodiverse students. I thought that if I asked the right questions, I would arrive at clear and concise answers as to how to accommodate students. That isn't what happened, though. Instead, I began realizing that my questions simply led to more questions and to feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy.

As educated professionals, it is not uncommon for composition instructors to want to know what to *do* with/for/about students with disabilities. We might expect a solid, certain response, or

perhaps a list of things to do. We may even expect disability-specific checklists--here's one for autism, here's one for deaf and hard of hearing, here's one for anxiety and depression, here's one for ADD, etc. And it is understandable that we might be looking for these kinds of definitive, concrete, readymade responses to pedagogical challenges. But this quest for certainty can be counterproductive because it doesn't account for the fact that students, classes, disability, trauma, and issues of access are not standard or universalize-able. While this uncertainty can feel odd and uncomfortable for those of us expecting certainty from a pedagogy, we must embrace uncertainty in order to work collaboratively with students to make our writing classrooms accessible. Chapter 4 theorizes and lays out an uncertain framework for enacting a trauma-informed pedagogy based on relationality, responsive flexibility, and negotiated access.

4.1 Relationality

In research I published in 2012, I introduced the concept of "organic and responsive pedagogy." I then grappled with describing what this meant: "Teaching is relationship (instructor-to-student; student-to-student; instructor-to-text; text-to-student; instructor-and-student-to-space, and so on) and, since relationships are dynamic, so too must our teaching be" (Blackburn and Cushman "Service"). I claimed it was unreasonable to assume we must follow carefully laid plans when in the classroom. Instead, I argued that instructors should engage in organic and responsive teaching strategies to maintain flexibility and to honor stakeholders in classroom relationships (Blackburn and Cushman "Assessing"). I didn't have the words back then, and I hadn't yet been introduced to disability studies or concepts of universal design and accessibility, but I now recognize that I was responding to the dis-access I recognized in my own inflexible and rigid classroom policies and assignments, as well as my own inadvertent expectations that students should bend to accommodate my teaching. I think I developed the

concept of organic and responsive teaching to remind myself that if I wanted to be effective, and if I wanted my students to learn, my teaching must respond to their needs and abilities.

I now recognize this as my own turn away from certainty. While my vocabulary has changed since then, my understanding of effective teaching has deepened, and I have further developed my pedagogical concepts, I still believe relationship is important to teaching. I now argue that relationship and respect are *inherent* to a trauma-informed pedagogy because such a pedagogy requires us to build relationships with students based on respect for lived experiences with trauma and violence as well as respect for differences in bodies, minds, and ability.

4.1.1 Why is relational teaching important in a trauma-informed pedagogy?

Relationship plays an essential role in trauma-informed pedagogy. First, it is through relationship that we can begin building productive and practical understandings of trauma and disability in the classroom. Second, research shows that students' responses to trauma can be positively influenced by supportive and compassionate learning environments. Research further shows that safe, positive relationships can deactivate trauma-responses and better enabling learning (IASC, Smithgall, "Helping"). And third, it is through relationship that we can activate the five principles of trauma-informed practice in our classrooms--safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment (IASC 65). The inverse is also true, as an atmosphere of safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment and can create good relationships that contribute to the cultures of access necessary to teaching trauma-affected and disabled students. (Smithgall, "Helping").

But classroom relationships can be fraught if instructors don't understand the role that violence and trauma play in the lives of trauma-affected students. And if instructors perpetuate a

negative imaginary about trauma and disability as disruption, instructors' ableism could get in the way of relationships--and of negotiating access. Kerschbaum reminds us that learning from students about trauma and disability can allow us to re-imagine relationships with trauma and disability ("Anecdotal"). This is especially important in a trauma-informed pedagogy because attempts at improving access and inclusion should center trauma-affected and disabled students' perspectives (Wood "Cripping" 266).

And Kerschbaum argues that "authentic and genuine engagement between teachers and students" builds relationships that create access and inclusion ("Anecdotal"). Establishing respect in this way can contribute to the construction of productive relationships that in turn pave the way to greater accessibility. Kerschbaum suggests meeting students "with a spirit of generosity and openness" ("Anecdotal"). When we meet students with this attitude, we convey respect and trust, both of which I claim are necessary for cultivating productive trauma-informed relationships and supporting a culture of access that encourages inclusive and accessible learning communities

4.1.2 What are some practical ways I can engage in relational teaching?

In addition to the suggested practices and techniques in "Crip-Time," and "Content Notes," in later sections of this chapter, here are some practical suggestions for building the relationships necessary to a trauma-informed pedagogy.

Value disability as a critical insight. As discussed in Chapter 1, trauma and disability are often understood as problems in the composition classroom. Kerschbaum would suggest this is because of a plethora of negative stories we hear about disability. If we want to enact relational teaching with trauma-affected and disabled students, Kerschbaum suggests we "learn with disability" by first acknowledging we don't know everything about trauma and disability and then

listening to stories that “welcome disability in[to] the composition classroom.” Once we "build productive relationships to disability" (Kerschbaum), we can then build productive relationships with our trauma-affected and disabled students, which allows us to create more accessible and inclusive classrooms.

Collaboratively negotiate office hours. I change office hours weekly in order to accommodate the largest number of students during the semester. If the posted office hours for a particular week don’t work for students, we negotiate an alternate time. I offer appointments--between --students can sign up on Google docs for 10- to 30-minute slots, they can stop by during drop in office hours, or they can drop in to write or ask questions or just hang out “writing workshop time,” which I host in a computer lab. If requested, I will also offer virtual office hours or office hours in other campus locations. Students appreciate being able to choose how, where, and when to meet. But I don’t always wait for students to sign up for appointments or to show up at my door, as I’ve learned students can feel scared of making that first move. Rather, I reach out with invitations, because office hours offer the perfect opportunity to check in with students who are struggling to see how the class is going for them, ask what is and isn’t working for them, and negotiate access.

Build relationships with campus resources. If, as discussed in chapter four, composition classrooms are considered the “front lines,” then the office hours of a trauma-informed instructor could be considered triage, because it is here, during one-to-one conversations, where students who are struggling reach out to request accommodation or support. As discussed in chapter four, in order to create a culture of access, we need to collectively support students navigating trauma, disability, and the inhospitality of the university; therefore, knowing where to refer students is crucial. I set out to intentionally get to know campus resources and the people involved in those

support roles: disability services, counseling and psychiatric services, various student support services, RAs, campus police, etc. My goal is to directly network people needing support with those who can provide it. If possible, I try to either personally walk students to the offices I refer them, or make a personal introduction via phone or e-mail. Often, simply facilitating a meeting between a student and someone who can offer assistance at once enhances the trust relationship between the student and the instructor and builds a new relationship between the student and the person offering assistance.

4.2 Responsive Flexibility and Negotiated Access: Crip-Time[11]

"What Is Time?" an article in *Science Daily*, suggests that "[t]he concept of time is self-evident," consisting of seconds and minutes and hours and days and months and years. But, while the concept of time might be obvious, the article claims its "fundamental nature" is more complex. One of those complexities is that time "is measured by motion and it also becomes evident through motion." We're likely not experts in natural science or physics, but I'd like us to consider here that perhaps, if time and mass and motion *are* connected, as scientists the world over theorize they are, then perhaps it does make sense to consider that the abled and disabled ways in which people move and time are connected. For example, Kafer suggests that "depression slow[s] down time," and "illness and disability [can] cause time to slow, or to be experienced in quick bursts" or even "feelings of asynchrony or temporal dissonance." Here, crip and non-normative ways of moving/thinking/being affect time in non-normative ways. While composition instructors aren't time wizards who can change the rules of physics and step out of

[11] Crip time is used as both a noun (where "crip" is the adjective that modifies the noun "time") and a verb (where "crip" is the verb, and time is the object). For clarity, when used as a noun, the phrase will be hyphenated. This is useful to this paper, but is not standard to disability studies.

time [12]with our students, as instructors, we *can* allow the students and the energy that comprise the classroom to affect, oscillate, and vary time. We can then collaborate with time in service of access, thus allowing for a cripped theory of time.

Price defines crip-time as "a flexible approach to normative time frames ("Mad" 62), and Kafer defines it as, "flex time not just expanded but exploded...requir[ing] reimagining our notions of what can and should happen in time, or recognizing how expectations of 'how long things take' are based on very particular minds and bodies"("Feminist" 27). Kafer also suggest that crip-time bends the dictates of time to accommodate disabled bodies and minds ("Feminist" 27) And disability activist Samuels suggests that one aspect of crip-time means that "we're late all the time—maybe because we need more sleep than nondisabled people, maybe because the accessible gate in the train station was locked…" Walters references Zola and Gill when he states that disability theorists "explore 'crip time' as a way to acknowledge the flexible approach to normative time that disability occasions and the understanding that disability can redefine time" (Walters). Cripping time in the writing classroom is a recognition that normative time often excludes trauma-affected and disabled bodies and minds. But, as Price reminds us in her access announcement, crip-time is not just for trauma-affected and disabled bodies and minds, rather it "recognizes the ways that anyone, regardless of disability status, would benefit from a cripped form of space and time" ("Access"). In other words, crip-time is for everyone.

For the purpose of a trauma-informed writing pedagogy, I created this definition:

crip time

[12] Richard Muller, Professor of Physics at UC Berkeley explains one aspect of our relationship with time thusly: "Nothing that contains energy is 'outside of time.' The reason is that the energy of any object is linked, by quantum physics, to the rate of oscillation of its wave function. Thus, if you have energy E (including any rest energy mc2), then your quantum wave function is oscillating with frequency f=E/h where h is Planck's constant."

/krip tīm/

noun

a recognition that trauma/disability affects time and what we can do in said time; a theory of time that allows disabled bodyminds to oscillate, vary, and collaborate with time

usage: “our class operates on crip-time”

verb

to cause time to bend to accommodate non-normate bodies and minds; to allow trauma-affected and disabled bodyminds to oscillate, vary, and collaborate with time

usage: “our writing pedagogy will crip time”

4.2.1 How is crip-time a matter of access?

Wood suggests that to crip time in composition pedagogy “requires inquiry into the effects of normative time frames as well as into the tacit curative imaginaries [read: ableist assumptions that all disabled people want to be cured] that undergird our classroom practices” (Wood Cripping 264-5). What Wood is suggesting here is that forcing trauma-affected and disabled students to conform to normative time in writing classes--or, really, in any classes--is ableist. Likewise, Walters suggests we “productively challeng[e] accepted norms in classrooms regarding how bodies and minds "should" perform” (Walters). In other words, we need to carefully and critically consider how we think about time and bodies and minds and the expectations of how those bodies and minds should move within time. For example, we can ask ourselves if our pedagogical practices demand that disabled bodies and minds conform to the linearity demanded of academic culture, thus upholding compulsory able-bodiedness which is ableist and antithetical to crip-time (Wood “Cripping” 263). Or do our pedagogical practices crip

time, allowing for oscillation, variance, and collaboration with time, thus honoring all bodyminds and contributing to a culture of access.

Crip-time is a powerful concept in a trauma-informed pedagogy as it can "enhance access through allowing disabled students to compose in their own ways, rather than by normative standards of performance and production (Wood "Cripping" 281). Those who are (or want to be) trauma aware will recognize that crip-time is about much more than deadlines and time extensions--it is about resisting ableism and normativity and "releas[ing] our own pedagogical approaches from...limiting constructs" (Wood "Cripping" 273). Accessible writing pedagogy, created within a culture of access, should be concerned less with upholding rules and deadlines and more with ensuring student access, collaboration, inclusion, and participation.

4.2.2 How can crip-time inform my composition pedagogy or my teaching?

In the research she conducted on the effects of anxiety on issues of access in writing classes, Wood concludes that, for the most part, instructors want to be flexible and want to ensure access to their students ("Cripping" 271). So, the good news is that most of us want to create accessible pedagogies and crip time for our trauma-affected and disabled students; the question now is how can we do so.

For starters, we need to think about how, as Wood contends, "normativity may be privileged in some of the commonplace pedagogical practices of a writing classroom" (Wood Cripping 281). Once we do, we may be able to recognize some specific writing practices that can make our classes inaccessible to trauma-affected and disabled students. For example, these common practices may dis-access the writing class for trauma-affected and disabled students because they force bodies and minds to bend to the arc of time:

- non-negotiable paper deadlines

- timed in-class writing prompts
- timed in-class readings
- timed in-class peer review--which involves timed reading, timed thinking, *and* timed writing.

For transparency's sake, I'll share here that my writing pedagogy was rife with these commonplace pedagogical practices. This wasn't working so well for trauma-affected and disabled students, and I was able to recognize that fact because I was continually bombarded with accommodation requests.

So, in an attempt to grapple with the dis-access created by my own "ableist underpinnings" (Wood "Cripping" 280) I had to reimagine my classroom's ideal relationship with time. Instead of allowing my pedagogy to be ruled by the certainty and rigidity of Universal Time[13], I stepped into a more flexible uncertain *collaboration with time* and began negotiating crip-time with my students.

4.2.3 How can I crip time in a trauma-informed classroom?

Due to outside influences--such as federal mandates, scholarships, student loans, funding, semester and quarter systems, arbitrary university rules, timed degree programs, etc.--cripping time is not always feasible. So, if we are committed to creating cultures of access and trauma-informed systems, that means part of our job is to advocate for students at an institutional level, especially those of us in WPA roles or in deans' offices or in student life offices. For those of us teaching in the classroom, many opportunities exist for cripping time in service of access and inclusion. Changing our relationships with time can feel uncertain and uncomfortable, but once

[13] NASA defines Universal Time, or UT, as "the precise measure of time used as the basis for all civil time-keeping...measure[d] based on the rotation of Earth on its axis with respect to the stars.

we experience the affordances and freedoms of crip-time, the ability to oscillate and vary and respond organically can be exhilarating. Here are some specific examples of practices that have nurtured a culture of access in my own trauma-informed classrooms.

Offer flexible due dates. Price argues that it is the "notion of flexibility (not just 'extra' time) that matters" in crip-time (“Mad” 62). One way we can be flexible and respond to the oscillations of the class is to give due date *ranges* instead of making firm deadlines by which all students must submit and then promise to grade them in the order in which they are received. Students appreciate the flexible due date range which allows them a sense of autonomy, which is important for trauma-affected students. Flexible due date ranges also benefit me because, instead of getting a daunting influx of essays in one day, they trickle in evenly paced--in class, under the door of my office, to my mailbox--or are hand delivered during office hours. This extended submission time allows me enjoy reading my students’ essays because I don’t feel overwhelmed by the Sisyphean task of reading and responding to 400 pages at once. This flexible extended submission time benefits everyone. I will also offer what I call “grace periods,” or “catch-up days” during which students can turn in for full credit specific assignments they’ve missed. I usually do this with smaller assignments (like reading responses) meant to help students learn writing concepts. Since my main goal is to facilitate learning, sometimes I don’t care when that learning happens, as long as it does. And when learning can happen …

Crip the class period. On some days, especially those days when I’m feeling under par or the energy of the class is off, I may ask students to identify the thing they think would be most productive for them to engage in. They often state that they need to catch up with assigned readings, or write, or revise, or discuss their writing with me or with their peers. I don’t go by majority rule, but, rather, invite students to engage in activities that will help meet whatever

course learning goals we are focusing on that week. This cripping of class time gives students autonomy, allowing all bodyminds to oscillate to their own wavelengths. It also offers me the opportunity to interact one-on-one with students to address individual learning goals or challenges, as well as to build relationships. Students report that they appreciate these class periods because they are better able to relax into their learning and they are more invested because they are afforded autonomy.

Crip the course calendar. I show up the first day of class with an access statement, a syllabus, and a skeletal course calendar. I explain to students that, while I've populated the first two weeks with assignments, readings, and in-class activities, I want to get to know students better and get a sense of what they need before filling in the rest of the semester's calendar. I share with them that this organic way of teaching can lead to a bit of uncertainty as far knowing the specific details of each class period months in advance, but it allows me to respond to the needs of the class. I assure them that I'll never move due dates up without first negotiating with them and that I'll ask for feedback on due date ranges throughout the semester. I also invite them to let me know when the uncertainty of the calendar stresses them out so we can set dates collaboratively. I do set up a complete generic course calendar so that I can envision our progress with course learning goals, but that calendar is for my use and is merely suggestive.

Crip absence policies. I can't remember if it was standard for the department, but when I first started teaching, the absence policy in my syllabus read: "Regardless of the quality of their work, students who miss more than five classes will not earn a passing grade. Promptness is also important, and late students will be marked as tardy. Three tardies equal one absence." This attendance policy was finite and linear, with no latitude or possibility for variance, and certainly no accommodation for non-normative bodies or minds. I remember grappling with what to do

when trauma-affected and disabled students missed more than the allowed five classes. Sometimes I guiltily broke my own rules and "gave" the students passing grades, but other times, I assigned failing grades to students whose bodies and minds just couldn't work within the firm normate boundaries I had set up. I was open to change, but I didn't quite know how to reimagine the absence policy. From where I am now, this feels positively draconian and embarrassingly ableist, and it--I--routinely failed trauma-affected and disabled students. I've since reconfigured and cripped my absence policy. Cripping doesn't meant ditching, but it does mean building in language that allows for enhanced access. The absence policy I use now reads: "Missing more than two classes may affect your engagement grade; missing five or more classes may result in receiving a non-passing grade for the course. In case of an emergency or unavoidable occurrence, contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations" (Blackburn "Syllabus"). In this version, I've qualified the guidelines with the words "may," and I've included and invitation to discuss accommodations. Even these simple changes can help cultivate a culture of access and allows for more flexibility to enable trauma-affected and disabled students and everyone else.

4.3 Responsive Flexibility and Negotiated Access: Content Notes (AKA "trigger warnings")

Carter defines *being triggered* as "mentally and physically re-experienc[ing] a past trauma in such an embodied manner that one's affective response literally takes over the ability to be present in one's bodymind...when this occurs, the triggered person often feels a complete loss of control and dissociation from the bodymind" (Carter). In other words, re-experiencing a trauma--sometimes a result of "being triggered"--can cause somatic reactions and throw the cognitive mind out of the driver's seat. Shaw-Thornburg argues that words or images can be "as capable of triggering hurt or delivering violence as a fired gun." And Pryal defines triggering as

"an anxiety reaction, a post-traumatic reaction or any other reaction to material (e.g., text, film, music) that causes an involuntary response in your brain and your body" (15).

4.3.1 What is a "trigger warning?"

Access-aware rhet/comp scholars argue that trigger warnings, also referred to as "content warnings," "content notes," "accessibility statements," and "inclusion statements" allow students the autonomy to choose whether to engage with potentially triggering materials. For example, Margaret Price couches the inclusion statement, as "a matter of access rather than avoidance," and claims that "the trigger warning is about making the content of the talk accessible to anyone who wants it" (qtd in Kafer 2). Finch defines a content warning as "a very simple statement...that lets the audience know that something potentially distressing will appear in the content." They (Finch) state that trigger warnings "allow [people] to opt out or brace themselves before they have a traumatic reaction to it."

4.3.2 How is a content note a matter of access?

Many rhet/comp-DS scholars discuss trigger warnings *as disability accessibility*. For example, Pryal claims that trigger warnings don't "protect students from challenging material," rather, they help disabled (and traumatized and trauma-affected) students participate fully in the class (13). Pryal takes issue with the assumption that by triggering, we are talking about feeling challenged and calls out the ableist discourse used by critics of trigger warnings. She suggests that professors who vehemently oppose trigger warnings are creating disabling environments and might not actually be suited to serve as teachers (Pryal 15). Price argues that "trigger warnings serve to prevent panic attacks or flashbacks that impeded one's ability to engage in discussion...they are intended to enable everyone to remain present and alert enough to be

challenged and discomfited" ("Literary"). And Slade argues in an informational comic about trigger warnings, that "they give us a right to our trauma and control over our healing."

A quick google search for "trigger warnings" yields 31,500,000 results in 0.46 seconds. And if we click on the first four results, "Death Knell for Trigger Warnings? A new study says trigger warnings are useless," "The Real Problem With Trigger Warnings," "Harvard Study: Trigger Warnings Might Coddle the Mind," and "What's All This About Trigger Warnings?" we can read all about how snowflakes want to censor free speech and academic freedom because they don't want to discuss difficult topics that will offend them or make them feel uncomfortable. We will also be warned that coddling students by providing trigger warnings will make students more fragile and less resilient.

But Carter shifts the ever-contentious conversation to a deeper one about trauma as an issue of social justice. While she acknowledges that trigger warnings can be used inappropriately and exploited to "censor difficult topics" or to "create an atmosphere where dissidence will be silenced from fear of institutional reprimand," Carter reframes the argument as one about access, claiming that many fail to understand trauma as a disability issue. As discussed in chapter 4, disability services offices are not always appropriately supportive of trauma-affected students or students with psychiatric disabilities (e.g. PTSD), so it can be difficult for students to obtain rightful accommodations. In addition, students who feel stigmatized by a diagnosis of psychiatric disability may not seek accommodations.

Orem and Simpkins argue that trigger warnings allow students "who might experience a flashback or panic attack from a graphic depiction of rape or suicide [to] allow that event to unfold in a place of his or her choosing" rather than being surprised by content that can cause a negative bodymind response in the classroom. Those who are (or want to be) trauma aware will

recognize that access is about much more than documents and space--it is also about "making room for people's experiences of trauma" (Mingus paraphrased in Kafer 3). And I argue that the issue of content notes is particularly important to writing classes. It isn't just about giving them for assigned readings, but about creating a classroom culture where students practice assigning content notes to their own writing. For example, peer review is a space where these issues are often highlighted. Thoughtful writing pedagogy should be accessible pedagogy, created within a culture of access, concerned less with "fixing" and more with ensuring student access, inclusion, and participation. Content notes are a powerful tool in a trauma-informed pedagogy as they enable participation and directly serve access.

4.3.3 How can I incorporate content notes in my own classroom?

Obviously, trauma reactions are not conducive to effective learning, but the effects of these potentially disabling responses can be mitigated if writing instructors consider this an access issue. Writing content notes might feel daunting at first, but once you start doing it regularly, it becomes easier. Here are some tips:

Keep it simple. Offer enough detail to inform, but not so much that the graphic nature of your content note itself traumatizes. Something as simple as "Content note: This book/essay/film/discussion will contain content on eating disorders" or "Content note: eating disorders" is sufficient.

Autonomy is key. Remember that content notes are meant to return autonomy to trauma-affected/traumatized students so they can be in the driver seat. Your job, as a builder of access culture is to offer information so students can make decisions that benefit them. You are not your students' mental health professional, so it is not your job to shield students by implying or insisting they leave the classroom. Nor should you prescribe ways of dealing with the material.

Consider rhetoric. What you call a trigger warning/content warning/content note/activation warning can make a difference. Some scholars advocate substituting the phrase "content warning," or "content note," as they argue that the word "trigger" can actually *be* a trigger to those who have endured war, military violence, police violence and other forms of gun violence (Finch). And the word "warning" can have connotations of impending doom or cautionary advice. I like to use "content note," as it feels objective and neutral, and lets students decide for themselves if the content dangerous or threatening to their mental health.

Timing is important. Content notes should be shared ahead of time so students can prepare in advance--their own space and in whatever way they deem necessary. Revisiting the content note again in an announcement prior to actually delving into the potentially triggering content is also a good followup practice.

Collaboratively negotiate access. As with trauma and disability in general, we must assume that each person experiences information in different ways and can react to different provocations, so we shouldn't be the sole arbiters of what might retraumatize. The good thing is that we don't have to be. We can collaborate with our students, the experts of their own traumas and disabilities, to negotiate access. This can be done in a multitude of ways. As one example, Melanie Yergeau asks students to fill out an anonymous online survey based on questions generated collaboratively in class to "collectively shape [the] experience of the class, the room, and discussion."

Use already-existing resources. Many respected disability and rhet/comp scholars have dedicated time and energy toward research in this area. Educate yourself by reading what they have to say and then applying what you learn to transform your own classrooms into cultures of access.

4.4 Relationality: Consider the ethics of personal writing

Many composition instructors assign personal writing. In fact, my own FYW program is predicated on personal writing as a way of valuing students' prior knowledge and experiences and engaging our students in learning. But I argue that mandating personal writing in the classroom or engaging in writing-as-healing exercises is akin to forcing ourselves into the lives of our trauma-affected and disabled students and compelling them to self-disclose, self-reveal, and self-expose. Some disability studies and rhet/comp scholars, too, suggest that we should question the ethics of assigning personal writing. For example, Wood believes that assigning personal essays does a disservice to students with disabilities because instructors often promote "a rhetoric of overcoming," which places trauma-affected and disabled students in a situation of having to write stories of overcoming their disabilities (Wood "Overcoming" 38). Wood argues that a rhetoric of overcoming reifies a medicalized and ableist perspective and puts down those who haven't overcome ("Overcoming" 44). Schwartzlander, et al. argue that mandating personal writing is ethically questionable because it 1) valorizes self-revelation and self-exposure; 2) exposes women and other marginalized populations (LGBT, minorities, etc.) to more risk for paying the price when revealing personal information to professors; and 3) can be problematic for students who, due to boundary violations (i.e. sexual assault or incest) may not have a keen understanding of what kinds of self-exposure are appropriate.

4.4.1 What are the ethical considerations in regard to personal writing?

Just this past semester, a colleague asked the department at large how we might assign personal essays in a way that doesn't elicit "those kinds of stories." I suspect this discussion came about because my colleague was uncomfortable about having been positioned as an unwilling witness, which can be an effect of personal writing that self-discloses (Wood 41). But

suggesting students not write about trauma or disability is definitely not the answer, as we don't want to treat trauma or disability as a private matter or one to be avoid entirely. So, how might we deal with the issue of personal writing in a culture of access? Those of us who are trauma-aware, are not surprised that students' lived experiences include trauma and violence, nor are we surprised that students write about those experiences when they are assigned personal writing. So, one way to deal with personal writing it to not assign it. If that is not possible, or if we choose to assign personal writing, we should remember that the nature of personal essay writing can privilege self-revelation surrounding trauma. So, in order to resist a curative imaginary or give primacy to the "normal" body, we can also engage in critical discussions of disability narrative (Wood "Overcoming" 41-49).

One option for assigning personal writing is to design writing assignment prompts that don't specifically encourage students to deal with their emotional issues via classroom assignments (Schwartzlander, et al). Another option is to collaboratively write assignment prompts. Because the program I teach in mandates personal writing, I work with students to create assignments that give them options. For example, I assign a "scholar narrative" that asks students to "reflect on [their] student and scholarly self and project into the future to set goals and/or a mission statement for [their] time at MSU" (Blackburn "Scholar Narrative"). (See Appendix C for assignment prompt.) Before assigning the essay, students are asked to develop possible lines of inquiry into the assignment, and then we collaborate to make a list of questions for the "help getting started" section. Once students determine they have room to move around freely within the constraints of the instructions, we finalize the prompt. Collaboratively negotiating the assignment prompt gives agency to students and contributes to a culture of access.

4.4.2 How should I respond to students' personal writing?

If we do assign personal writing, we must also carefully consider how we will respond to our students' stories, especially if they self-reveal or self-expose. Wood suggests that teachers who will evaluate students' writing cannot serve as evaluator-allies and compares this dynamic to a therapist grading a therapy session (Wood 47). Some compositionists would suggest that we should focus on the texts generated by students, and discuss these texts *as if the students and their narratives are completely separate* (MacCurdy, Anderson and MacCurdy, Allen, Batzer). However, such an attempt to depersonalize students' writing can marginalize and isolate. A trauma-informed pedagogy advocates for seeing students holistically, and not simply as their traumas or disabilities--or their text, so I usually address the student first to acknowledge the disclosure. I write some along the lines of: "I'm so sorry that happened to you," "That sounds so difficult," or "Thank you for sharing that with me. Are you okay? Can I help you find resources to help you deal with that?" Once I address the disclosure by relating to the student as a human being, and not just attending to the textual production, the student may be more receptive to comments regarding the text itself.

It is also important to note that if our students' disclosures fall under the auspices of mandatory reporting, we must also contend with that. In the past, I've wrestled with feelings of guilt, betrayal, and disloyalty when mandatory reporting. So, I added a section to my syllabus, "limits to confidentiality," that lets students know I'm a mandatory reporter (Blackburn "WRA 101"). (See Appendix B) If I read something that requires a report, I contact the student first to let them know what I'm doing with a short email something like this: "Hi! I'm touching base with you to let you know I just read your essay. Thank you for sharing with me. It looks like you are dealing with some really difficult things. I wanted to let you know that I'm going to connect

you with support services so they can get resources that will help you." This eliminates the element of surprise when they are contacted by the university. If they begin to disclose verbally, I usually stop them to remind them that I am a mandatory reporter. This allows them a moment to consider the consequences of disclosure: "I want to remind you that I'm a mandatory reporter. If you tell me what I think you are going to tell me about assault/violence/self-harm/etc., I will reach out to the university so they can connect you with resources that will help you." This quick disclaimer respects students' autonomy and establishes a culture of access and care.

4.5 Wrapping Up the Chapter

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggest that, as compassionate educators, we may be looking for solid and certain plans for working with trauma-affected and disabled students and for overcoming pedagogical hurdles. But, as we explored above, students, classes, disability, trauma, and issues of access are not standard. Instead, I argue that we must embrace uncertainty and relationality to create cultures of access. To do so requires building relationships with students based on respect for their lived experiences with trauma and violence, as well as respect for their differences in bodies, minds, and abilities. As differences in bodies, minds, and abilities are honored, we can then begin building productive and practical understandings of trauma and disability in the writing classroom. And once we do, we can begin transforming our writing classrooms into accessible learning communities.

As discussed in chapter four, in previous service-learning research I claimed that "teaching is relationship" (Blackburn and Cushman). I also argued that we needed to "move toward a methodology that values relationship above research, or organizing, or activism in order to show concern for the welfare of fellow human beings—regardless of their status or affiliation" (Blackburn and Cushman). I now argue that we need to move toward a trauma-informed pedagogy that values relationship and values disability as a critical insight. But, as I have articulated throughout this dissertation, trauma and disability are often understood as problems in the composition classroom. Kerschbaum would suggest this is because of a plethora of negative stories we hear about disability. Throughout this dissertation, I have expanded Kerschbaum's concept of anecdotal relating to include trauma, and to argue that critically considering anecdotal relations with trauma in the composition classroom can help us recast our ableist understandings of disability, develop new relationships with trauma, and cultivate trauma-awareness.

In this project, I have suggested that a turn toward uncertainty can help us learn and build productive relationships with trauma and disability in order to enact relational teaching with trauma-affected and disabled students. We can make this pivot by first acknowledging that we don't know everything and then by listening to stories that welcome disability and trauma into the composition classroom. This shift opens the door to building productive relationships with our trauma-affected and disabled students. And that opportunity, in turn, allows for us to be responsively flexible and to work collaboratively with students to negotiate access, thereby creating more accessible and inclusive classrooms.

Furthermore, it is my hope that the stories offered throughout these chapters will create trauma-informed imaginaries in terms of the anecdotes that circulate around trauma, disability, and composition classroom practices. And that these stories, "placed one against another against

another," raise awareness that trauma-affected and disabled students are in our writing classrooms, because they are--whether or not they've self-disclosed, and whether or not we recognize them. For if we refuse to acknowledge trauma or refuse to approach trauma as a pedagogical issue, we risk marginalizing students by adhering to ableist pedagogies that dishonor differences in bodies, minds, and abilities. But when our pedagogies, our classrooms, and our faculty become trauma-informed, we can anticipate, embrace, and welcome the insights that trauma and disability offer, thereby honoring difference. In so doing, we can begin transforming our teaching, our teaching cultures, and our institutional spaces to make room for diversity and inclusion.

The main goal of this dissertation was to create a trauma-informed composition pedagogy that makes learning accessible for trauma-affected students. It is my hope that the pedagogical moves discussed herein will serve as a framework for helping us enact a trauma-informed writing pedagogy and to dismantle the ableism that persists in our classrooms. However, it is not sustainable for composition instructors to go it alone, for cultures of access cannot thrive without programmatic and institutional support. If we want to *authentically* support student learning, rather than expecting individual students to bend to fit into the institution's own rigidly constructed rules and expectations, we must do so collectively, and first-year writing needs to be part of this collective.

Epilogue

It's very late Thursday night, and I'm physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. I can't rest because I'm furiously working on final revisions of this dissertation. I am thinking that there is no way this dissertation is worth all the time and energy I've put into it. I'm despairing because it is late summer, the next semester is just around the corner, and I haven't gotten to enjoy even a single sunny, beautiful day the entire summer. I haven't seen my mother in seven weeks, because theorizing and thinking and writing consume my every waking moment. I've turned down invitations to the beach and the pool. I've turned down invitations to go strawberry picking, and I canceled my annual trip to California to see my brother. Instead, I have been in writing jail--my living room—seated in a royal blue velvet chair at a vintage typing desk all day, every day. I feel sorry for myself, and I think (okay…maybe I even say) swear words. I take a moment to daydream a summer that didn't involve hours and hours in writing jail.

I take a break to check e-mail and see a response from a student I am working with to extend some deadlines, look at revisions, and point out some things that may have seemed obvious. The student's e-mail discloses that they were diagnosed that week with a disability that affects their learning. No wonder school has always been so hard, they say. They thank me for my help and for being willing to work with them. And they tell me they are not giving up. At that moment, I am reminded again that the work I'm doing for this dissertation is work that has consequences in the world. The students I am advocating for in this dissertation are my students, and they are your students, and they have names and faces and dreams and goals. And they are not giving up. I realize again this work isn't just about theory or pedagogy. It is about people and relationships and justice, and that's why it matters.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Journal Instructions

WRA 101: WRITING AS INQUIRY

Research Journal

250 points

Purpose

To develop and fine-tune your inquiry, discovery, and writing practices, you will engage in a variety of daily, weekly, and semester-long writing in your research journal. Unlike a personal journal or private diary, the writing you do here will be research- and writing-based, messy, and in-process. You are the primary audience, but you will share your work with your professor and possibly with your colleagues.

These assignments are for your benefit—to help you with your projects, to ask questions, to help you sort through new ways of thinking and of approaching problems, to guide you through writing challenges, to make visible your writing process, to reflect on your learning, etc.

Audience

Your primary audience for this assignment is yourself. Secondary audiences are your professor and your colleagues.

Instructions

Assigned Research Journal Entries

Journal prompts will be assigned regularly—some will be in-class writing assignments, and some will be homework. These may be reading responses or smaller assignments intended to

assist you in thinking about, researching, and composing the major projects. At other times, you will be invited to engage in open or free expression.

Self-Guided Research Journal Entries

Journaling will help you develop a daily writing practice, which is one of the habits of very effective writers. In addition to assigned journal entries discussed above, you will write in your journal an additional three to four times per week. On your own, you may choose to respond to a reading, brainstorm for a writing project, work through a writing challenge, plan your paper, take research notes, etc. Throughout the semester, I will offer ideas for suggested self-guided research journal entries. I'm also available to help you strategize to make your journal optimally useful to you.

Tips for Organization

1. Date each entry
2. Title each entry
3. Optional: Devise a labeling system to differentiate assigned and self-guided journal entries.

Reader's Letter Entry

You will submit your journal for response three times this semester. Each time you submit your journal, you will write a reader's letter. The reader's letter is written directly in the journal and addressed to me, to help me understand the journal contents and draw attention to key entries you want me to read.

* If something you write is personal and private, you may fold the page over, and I won't read it.

Appendix B: Syllabus

WRA 101: Writing as Inquiry
Welcome to WRA 101 Section 068
Spring 2019

About WRA 101-068
The goal of the FYW curriculum is to help students develop transferable writing knowledge—about concepts, processes, strategies, and practices. In other words, what you learn in WRA 101 will be useful to you throughout your academic career and in your professional career as well.

WRA 101 will teach you the skills to understand and adapt to new writing situations you will encounter throughout your lifetime by giving you the means to ask the kinds of questions good writers ask: What is the purpose of this writing? What is the task? What does it ask of me? What is the larger context? Who is my audience, and what are its needs and expectations? What kind of language is appropriate for the work this writing must do? What do I already know, what do I still need to know, and where can I find useful resources?
To do this, we will write, reflect, discuss and converse, peer-review, read, think, learn collaboratively, learn alone, ask questions, talk with people outside the classroom, explore, discover, create new ideas, write some more, and present the things we write.

Course Information
Instructor: Lorelei Blackburn
Office: 163 Bessey Hall
Mail Box: 235 Bessey Hall
Office hours: In order to accommodate students, office hour appointments will be offered on varying days and times throughout the semester.
Class meets: T/Th 10:20 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. EBH 105
Class website: Google Classroom
E-mail: lorelei@msu.edu (Please note that office hours are the best way to get in touch with me.)

Instructor/Student Communication
Take advantage of my office hours. Stop in to introduce yourself, say hello, ask a question, tell me something interesting, or work through a concept. I want to get to know you as a scholar and a human being. Office hours will be posted on Google Classroom by Monday morning of each week. If you are not available during scheduled office hours, contact me to set up an alternate appointment time.

Required Materials
The following texts are required for the course:

- *Bedford Researcher* with access to *LaunchPad Solo*
- (ISBN: 978-1-319-20795-3)
- *They Say, I Say*, Third Edition
- (ISBN: 978-0-393-93584-4)
- Readings and materials posted on Google Classroom
- In addition, the following are also required:

- Research journal (9.75 x 7.5 inch)
- Printing money for Project 4 ($12)
- Printing money for some readings
- and assignments
- Mini stapler (recommended)
- 2-pocket folder (optional)
- Set of markers/colored pencils (optional)

Assignments
This class moves quickly, and each assignment builds on the last, so you are encouraged to complete writing and reading assignments on time. In case of an absence, you can submit your assignment for full credit before class. Students may submit late major projects and research journal submissions for 75% of original points no later than one week after the original due date. Missed quizzes and small assignments cannot be made up.
In case of an extraordinary occurrence, contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss an extension.

Major Projects
Project 1: Scholar Narrative Project (75 points)
Project 2: Disciplinary Literacy Project (125 points)
Project 3: Cultural Literacy Project (125 points)
Project 4: Remix Project (100 points)
Project 5: Reflective Learning Narrative (75 points)

Total: 500 points

Collaboration
Collaboration and peer review are an important part of your learning. You will work in groups to learn new concepts and new ways of writing. You should expect to read and respond to peers' work in insightful and respectful ways. In return, you will receive comments on your own work that will give you an outside perspective on your writing for the purpose of revision.

Total: 100 points

Engagement
I hope you actively participate in this course, as it is the best way to engage in learning. Some examples of ways in which you can engage with the class and with your learning include: participating in discussions; preparing for class; asking and answering questions; taking notes; reading assigned texts; responding to peers; meeting with me during office hours; participating in class activities; etc. If you have other ideas for how you'd like to engage in learning for this class, I'd love to hear about it.

Total: 100 points

Research Journal

To develop and fine-tune your inquiry, discovery, and communication practices, you will engage in a variety of daily, weekly, and semester-long writing in your research journal. This writing will:

- Help you with your projects
- Guide you through writing challenges
- Help you sort through new ways of thinking and approaching problems
- Allow you to reflect on your learning
- Help you track your writing process
- Give you space to practice new skills you are learning in class

Total: 250 points

Quizzes and Exams
To help you gauge your understanding of the theories, skills, and concepts you are learning, expect regular quizzes and two exams.

Total: 50 points

Grading Scale
During the course of the semester, you will be given assignments with a point total of 1000. Here is the scale for final grades:

1000-950:	4.0
949-900:	3.5
899-850:	3.0
849-800:	2.5
799-750:	2.0
749-700:	1.5
699-650:	1.0
599-0:	0.0

Course Etiquette
With everyone's cooperation, we can create a classroom atmosphere that promotes learning and is welcoming, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening. You are invited to enter the classroom with an attitude of respect for all.
If you would like to use a name or pronoun different than those provided by the University, please let me know.

Attendance
I hope you come to every class so you can invest in your education. In case of family events, oversleeping your alarm, serious illness, emergencies, etc., you are allowed two excused absences. Missing more than two classes may affect your engagement grade; missing five or more classes may result in receiving a non-passing grade for the course.
In case of an emergency or unavoidable occurrence, contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations.
Please note: So you don't miss important announcements, turning in your assignments, quizzes, and class activities, it's a good idea to arrive on time

For religious observance, it is your responsibility to make arrangements in advance.

Title IX
Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at www.titleix.msu.edu.

Limits to Confidentiality
Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues based on external legal obligations or that relate to the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others

These reports may elicit contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

University Resources

The English Language Center
International students enrolled in academic classes at MSU can receive free tutoring from trained ESL writing consultants at the English Learning Center ESL Lab: elc.msu.edu/ or 517-353-0800.

The MSU Writing Center
The Writing Center staff consults with writers at all levels of proficiency, at all stages of the composing process, and on a wide variety of composing projects including essays, resumes, presentations, websites, and digital movies. Visit our website at writing.msu.edu to set up an appointment at one of our various sites across campus, including all neighborhoods, the main library, and online. When space is available, all locations take drop-in clients on a first-come, first-served basis.

Peer Research Assistant Program
Student Peer Research Assistants (PRAs) staff four of the neighborhood Engagement Centers. You can schedule an appointment, or get help on a walk-in basis: libguides.lib.msu.edu/engage.

MSU Tech Support
You can reach MSU Tech Support Phone: (517) 432-6200 or toll free (844) 678-6200 24 hours a day, seven days a week except on university holidays. You can also email them at: ihelp@msu.edu. In-person help is available at the MSU Technology Store at the Computer Center.

MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services
Counseling support is available to MSU students anytime, anywhere. Students can speak with a counselor in their native language. Call 517-355-8270 or email at caps.msu.edu. For emergency resources, visit caps.msu.edu/emergency/index.html.

Student Veterans Resource Center
The Student Veterans Resource Center is dedicated to promoting the educational, career, and personal advancement of service members and veterans at Michigan State University: veterans.msu.edu/.

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)
Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.
*If you need accommodations and have not yet registered with the RCPD, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible so we can work together to accommodate your learning.

Appendix C: Scholar Narrative Assignment

WRA 101: WRITING AS INQUIRY PROJECT 1
Scholarly Narrative Project
75 points

The Project

Project 1 is an exploration of you. You will reflect on your student and scholarly self and project into the future to set goals and/or a mission statement for your time at MSU. The student/scholarly narrative project expects you to do some deep thinking and research regarding the type of student/scholar you are and the type of student/scholar you want to be.

Your work should:

- Have introductory and concluding sections
- Contain paragraphs that develop your narrative
- Reflect on the past for insight/analysis
- Look to the future for goal/mission setting
- Be 1000 to 1200 words in length (3 to 4 double-spaced pages) and formatted using MLA style

Learning Goals

This essay is an exploration; you will inquire (ask questions) and analyze (answers to those questions) to discover. Unlike many other essays you've written, you do not have to argue or persuade or convince your reader of an idea. In fact, you shouldn't even have all the answers as you begin engaging in inquiry, discovery, and writing, because those actions will lead to discovery. You should share details of your discovery as evidence to support claims you make, and you should arrive somewhere at the end of your paper, even if it is at a place of uncertainty.

Rhetorical Purpose

Your exploration, inquiry, and analysis will help you generate new knowledge about yourself and maybe even help you discover your purpose. This will help you set goals and/or a mission statement for your time here. Knowing why you are here and what your goals are can help you remain focused and may encourage you during the tough times.

Audience

You, your instructor, and your peers are the audience for this assignment.

Definitions

As discussed in class, it may be useful to create a definition/understanding of the words "student" and "scholar" for the purpose of this project. I've posted a google.doc in Google Classroom to facilitate discussions of these terms.

To Help Get You Started

Project 1 gives you the opportunity to reflect on your personal and scholarly self and project into the future to set goals and (maybe?) identify your path. As discussed in class, you'll be doing research by engaging in self-reflection, then analyzing that reflection to lead you to discovering new things about yourself.

Considering the following lines of inquiry will help you enter into deeper discussion with yourself. I recommend that you respond to three or four of these questions as research before writing your paper. Try writing in your journal for about ten minutes for each question you choose. Then analyze what you discover to help you write your paper.

1. How do past experiences affect how I see my future?
2. What life challenges could affect my education?
3. What is my network like? How can/does my network influence me?
4. What risks am I willing to take? What risks have I taken to get here?
5. What do I care about?
6. How do I define “success?”
7. How have life experiences influenced where I am today and where I want to go?
8. Do I anticipate any challenges?
9. What challenges have I already encountered and how did I deal with them?
10. What advantages do I have?
11. What drives me?
12. Who/what inspired me to get an education?
13. Which classes will be a priority?
14. How will I study?
15. What are my strengths and weaknesses?
16. How will I turn my weaknesses into goals?
17. What will I spend my time doing at university?
18. What kind of work feels personally and professionally fulfilling?
19. Who will my education serve? Who am I doing this for?
20. Did anyone sacrifice for me to be here?
21. What am I willing to sacrifice to get where I want to be?
22. What is my biggest fear regarding education?
23. What will I major in?
24. Why am I at university?
25. What kind of impact do I hope to make on society?
26. How will my education make a difference in my family/ community/world?

27. Do I feel “called” to do something in particular?

28. What are my hopes and dreams? Am I already on the path to realizing them?

29. Who has created or influenced my goals?

30. Is there anyone to whom do I feel obligated?

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