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# A New Direction for Composition Pedagogy: Implementing Perspective Pedagogy in the First- Year Research Composition Classroom

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A NEW DIRECTION FOR COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY: IMPLEMENTING PERSPECTIVE  
PEDAGOGY IN THE FIRST-YEAR RESEARCH COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A Dissertation Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2011

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Title: A New Direction for Composition Pedagogy: Implementing Perspective Pedagogy in the First-Year Research Composition Classroom

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Abstract: This dissertation explores the process I took for developing perspective pedagogy, a pedagogical approach for teaching first-year research composition college courses. Theoretical foundations come from both composition and ethnography scholars and situate the pedagogy within its interdisciplinary walls. Specifically, perspective pedagogy asks that students examine local subcultures from many perspectives: observations, interviews, artifact collections, ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography. From these perspectives, students compose their ethnographies for class assignments. I offer readers insight into my reasons for revising ethnographic pedagogy, along with details of the six-semester process I went through in the classroom to integrate and revise that pedagogy and student writing samples to illustrate what each of the perspectives looks like. The final two chapters ask readers to consider potential future directions for perspective pedagogy and the potential contributions of perspective pedagogy to composition teachers, ethnographers, and educators on other disciplines. Ultimately, perspective pedagogy embraces both interdisciplinary coursework and the idea that undergraduate students should respectfully borrow research methods from across the disciplines, what I refer to as “Researching Across the Disciplines” or R.A.D..

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## CHAPTER 1: WHY PERSPECTIVE PEDAGOGY?

*There I was, standing at my chalk board, scanning over the eyes of my students, which were glazed with confusion. I continued to work out the binomial equation, explaining each step as I executed it on the board. Once the problem had been solved, I again looked toward my students, wondering if they had grasped the solution as successfully as I had. It appeared they hadn't; it was as if their eyes were made of glass, or maybe plastic. Wait, they were; they were my baby dolls.*

Of course, I was only in eighth grade myself, not yet an actual teacher and teaching my dolls out of my own desperation to comprehend algebra. I transformed my basement, which was at times a “doctor’s office,” at times a “library,” to what was then my “classroom.” Teaching algebra to others, even if they lacked the intelligence—and quite literally, the brains—to follow what I was saying, had helped me to learn. For much of that class I hated algebra and cursed the teacher I had for introducing it to me. However, by working slowly through the problems, relying only on myself to shake out the answers, I solved those problems and realized my desire to teach others. Much like the glassy-eyed “eighth grade class” I had in my basement, the students I had enrolled in my section of my college’s English Composition 2 course, a first-year research composition class, were grappling with some problems of their own. My dissertation is the story of my attempt to respond to those problems by revising my pedagogical approach.

This chapter in particular begins with a narrative snapshot of my former first-year research composition class, which employed ethnographic pedagogy, a pedagogy which implements ethnography as a way to approach research writing. I outline the major problems I saw with ethnographic pedagogy that inspired me to make changes. The second section articulates the research questions I designed for the dissertation based on the problems I noticed

with ethnographic pedagogy in my classroom. In the third section, I offer readers definitions of the major terms and concepts to which I refer throughout the dissertation. My fourth section explores the methodology I used to write this dissertation. The fifth section addresses why I chose to resolve those problems with ethnographic pedagogy by adding ethnographic photography, ethnographic filmmaking and performance ethnography. These new ethnographic elements contributed toward the creation of my new pedagogy, which I called “perspective pedagogy.” I will discuss this pedagogy in greater detail in both the definition section of Chapter 1 and throughout the dissertation itself. Specifically in the fifth section of this chapter, though, I address why I chose to add those ethnographic methods to ethnographic pedagogy rather than switch to an entirely different pedagogy. Finally, in the sixth section of this chapter, I explain the structure for the upcoming chapters. Ultimately, my goal for this chapter is to answer the all-encompassing question: why perspective pedagogy?

The upcoming section will set the scene for what was going on in my first-year research composition classes prior to my dissertation work. In it, readers will get a sense of the resistance to and problems with the ethnographic pedagogy I was using at that time that led me to revise it to include photography, film and performance, thereby forming my new pedagogy, which I call perspective pedagogy.

### **Introduction to the Pedagogy I Left Behind: Ethnographic Pedagogy**

#### **Defining Ethnographic Pedagogy**

Before I discuss any of the experiences and problems I had in my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom, I want to offer a definition of ethnographic pedagogy. Ethnographic pedagogy asks students to engage in both primary and secondary resource collection to learn about a specific local subculture, a group of people with shared characteristics (a more in-depth

definition is forthcoming in the definition section of this chapter). Specifically, students engage in both ethnographic fieldwork (observations and interviews) as well as collecting secondary sources on a specific subculture from their community. Students then use these research materials to write ethnographies. While exciting and engaging, students often resist ethnographic pedagogy. The following sections outline some of those areas of resistance.

### **Students Resist Unfamiliar Curriculum**

*Scrawling “ETHNOGRAPHY” on the board, I slowly turned around and gazed into the eyes of my students, noticing the furrowed brows and exchanged whispers.*

*“What’s ethno-graph-e, Ms. Paull?” one student in the front row asked.*

*“It’s pronounced eth-nog-raphy, and it’s what you’ll be studying all semester.”*

*“I thought this was a writing class,” another shouted from the back. The students giggled.*

*“You’ll be surprised to see they’re not exactly as far apart from each other as you think.”*

When I recognized the students’ resistance on the first day of the course, I was prepared and not surprised. As many teachers who have tried using ethnographic pedagogy in the classroom will attest, resistance is expected, perhaps even inevitable from some portion of the students.

One reason that my students resisted ethnographic pedagogy was because they were scared and/or upset when they found out that their class was not going to focus entirely on collecting secondary research methods, such as books, periodicals and, their favorite, “Googling” for website sources. They are familiar and comfortable with secondary research to some extent. Instead, students were also being asked to do their own primary research. Monchinski writes that, “If education is supposed to look a certain way but doesn’t, students can get antsy...By

college and graduate school, when you're paying to go to school, any form of education that deviates from 'the norm' is suspect as it is a possible waste of your own and your parent's money" (120). What Monchinski is saying is that it is not uncommon for students to resist what they do not understand or what they deem as quite different from what the rest of the teachers might be doing for the same kind of class. Rebecca Cox (2009), in *The College Fear Factor*, writes that students expect traditional teaching, i.e., lecturing and professing on the part of the teachers; they parallel that kind of teaching with "learning something." On the other hand, she claims, those teachers who employ less traditional methodologies, such as student-led discussions (and, in my case, student-driven research projects as well), face a significant resistance from students, who often believe that they are not learning anything (94).

In response to student resistance to ethnographic pedagogy, I told my students that I envisioned our class as one that offered them quite a bit of power in their research projects. They had a series of personal choices about who to study, when to study them, how to study them, what conclusions they drew about those they studied, and which elements of their research they would include in their compositions. They had choices with methods, subject material, and composition. Initially, nearly all of the students viewed those choices as things to be feared, but many of them adjusted to the idea as the semester progressed and embraced their abilities to make so many choices about where their research would go from step to step. Students will likely resist the unfamiliar nature of the ethnographic pedagogy classroom. I remind them (and myself) that often times, things that are worthwhile can be a bit painful and challenging.

### **Students Resist Time-Consuming Projects**

When first given the ethnographic project, students generally sigh at the thought of having to complete so much work in just fifteen weeks. As with many research classes, the

thought of having to dig into any project for that length of time, and to produce that much writing, causes some students initial panic which they move beyond while others are so anxious that they struggle to even begin the project let alone finish it. This resistance exists for students in the ethnographic pedagogy classroom, and some will balk at the work load as well as at new research strategies.

One student remarked in her student evaluation of the course that “This project was really time consuming, Ms. Paull! I think you need to remember that this is not our only class or our only responsibility in life. A lot of us have full time jobs and families in addition to classes.” Others wrote comments like, “I spent more time on this project than on any other class this semester.” These two are just a sampling of those who resisted ethnographic pedagogy’s time consumption. However, many “regular” research-based composition courses also take significant amounts of student time and it is worth reminding students of that. What is even more daunting can be the challenge of getting out to the field to do that work as opposed to research projects that students might prefer to do via online databases at any hour of any day of the week.

This resistance to the time commitment necessary to complete this kind of coursework is further complicated by the increasingly more common college student profile who Rebekah Nathan labels the “new outsiders” to the collegian environment. These kinds of students are marginalized because of their focusing on so many things outside of the classroom (work, families, leisure time) rather than working on materials within the class, so that class is seen as a hassle or a distraction. Nathan contends that as a result of this struggle with time management and requirements for course materials, “the new outsiders are practical and careerist in their approach to education...; the degree is seen primarily as a ticket to a better job rather than a better mind” (109). For that reason, what appears as a superficial complaint of not having time is

actually one of much deeper complexity and consequence. If they do not see it as something they will do in their jobs “out there,” they find little motivation to do the work “in here.”

I admit that ethnographic pedagogy takes a significant amount of time. Schmid notes that because of the fifteen-week time period of one semester, limits are necessarily placed on ethnographic projects in order to make them more manageable for students. After all, he claims, “the time available is often inadequate to allow both the collection of a sufficient amount of data and a satisfactory analysis of those data” (29). In line with these limitations, I constructed my course with reasonable workloads for first-year students to complete in a single semester. Specifically, I set students up with a series of smaller assignments with periodic deadlines throughout the semester and made sure they selected easily accessible subcultures who gathered frequently to allow for immense ethnographer access. Despite these attempts to manage the workload, I had to admit to myself that it was unlikely I would get my students to stop seeing ethnographic pedagogy as time-consuming, but what I might be able to do is to get students excited enough about ethnographic pedagogy so that they do not mind taking the time to do it.

## **Conclusion**

Students resisted ethnographic pedagogy in my class for two major reasons: their unfamiliarity with the pedagogy and the amount of time the project took. There were also some smaller areas of resistance such as students’ discomfort entering strangers’ lives and the potential financial challenges with equipment for audio recordings or taking pictures; however, those aspects of resistance were less frequent and generally went away after students got involved in their projects. Once inside the subcultures, students no longer felt obtrusive. Furthermore, most of them discovered that they were willing to take on the usually minor expense of the project



once they had a genuine investment in making the project as impressive to their readers as possible.

### **Problems with Ethnographic Pedagogy**

As Bauer and Rhodes, Nathan, Monchinski, Cox, and Schmid's work in the prior section all indicate, it seems likely that students will resist non-traditional pedagogy in some way. My experiences teaching ethnographic pedagogy further support their conclusions. Despite this potential resistance to the pedagogy, as a composition teacher, I try to focus my energies on my students' writing and researching skills above all else. If their writing is improving, then their resistance becomes less worrisome to me, especially when they do become invested in their research projects. In the upcoming sections, I explore the three problems that emerged while I was using ethnographic pedagogy in my classroom.

#### **Problem 1: Underdeveloped Notetaking**

Students were required to take notes of all kinds from early on in the semester. Some kinds of notetaking, like notes from secondary materials, were usually at least somewhat familiar to most first-year students, even if those experiences are from their high school courses. In addition to those kinds of notes, students were also introduced to taking fieldnotes and notes during their interviews. These new kinds of notetaking approaches were challenging for many students. For example, one student's final reflection read, "Even though I visited my subculture four times, I still didn't come up with more than five pages of notes. It was hard to figure out what to write down, and I thought it was nearly impossible to observe and take notes at the same time." I wondered, was this a result of not visiting their subcultures' sites enough? Were they visiting but not taking notes? Were they not sure what to write down, as that student had written? I was not sure.

When I came across students with underdeveloped notes, I determined that this problem needed to be addressed. Without fully developed notes, students' projects would surely suffer. What could I do to help students develop more thoughtful notes of their primary researching experiences?

### **Problem 2: Limited Triangulated Conclusions**

Perhaps in response to students' underdeveloped notetaking, perhaps due to other factors, another major problem I discovered over the years with students' ethnographic projects was that there was limited, if any, triangulation of data. Quite often, though not always, students described their observations separately from their interviews and vice versa. Rather than synthesizing all of their primary and secondary research as elements contributing toward a single subculture picture, students considered each type of research a separate section only requiring its own conclusion, i.e., "This is what I learned about the subculture from my library research" or "This is what I learned about the subculture from my interviews." Without referring to other elements of their projects, students' compositions demonstrated little ability to triangulate them with each other.

Not only were students not triangulating often, when they were triangulating, they were often coming to superficial conclusions about their subcultures. When conferencing with students about their ethnographic projects, it became increasingly common to hear comments about their recognition that their subculture members are people just like anyone else or, for others, not concluding anything about the subcultures but just writing down a narrative of what happened, leaving the analysis up to their readers. Students often oversimplified what they saw, what they heard, and what they concluded about the subcultures they were studying.

Why was that? Why were they not able to dig deeper under that surface? Why were they not reaching the critical conclusions I was hoping to read? I considered the possibility that they were struggling with triangulation, because they only engaged in one method at a time, in physically different spaces from one another. What I mean by this is that they took trips to the library to search for their secondary sources, observed their subcultures at the fieldsites, and most often interviewed those subculture members in a third space. Did the physicality of the research confuse them when it came to triangulation of those methodological findings? I was not sure. However, I knew that triangulation of information was a cornerstone to effective ethnographic research and to ethnographic pedagogy. It was another problem I hoped to solve.

### **Problem 3: Underdeveloped Essays**

Since ethnographic pedagogy rests upon a foundation of powerful composition, inevitably the problems I was seeing in earlier steps found their way to the composition stages of their research processes. Specifically, their essays were underdeveloped, offering superficial details rather than painting vivid pictures of their ethnographic experiences. One student complained that “It was really hard to come up with ten pages about one group of people. I felt like I was repeating myself.” This student was not the only one who struggled with his researching process and with translating the research into ethnographic compositions. Of course, researching and translating research into writing is challenging no matter what kind of techniques students are using for their research. This challenge is not unique to ethnographic pedagogy, I mean to say. Nonetheless, I was not sure of the exact nature of the issue, but I knew that my composition students needed to be able to more effectively translate their research into ethnographic writing.

## **Conclusion**

As this section shows, I identified three major problems I encountered with ethnographic pedagogy. Upon reflection, I noticed a possible pattern amidst these problems, a sort of ethnographic project domino effect. Underdeveloped notes led to less material to triangulate which led to simplified generalizations of people which resulted in underdeveloped compositions.

As with any kind of pedagogy, it is common to encounter some problems. It is during pedagogy's evolution when assignment adjustments are made to improve student learning and fuel the excitement of teaching. My dissertation traces how I revised my former ethnographic pedagogy in response to these problems. For me, I knew I wanted to continue challenging my students using ethnography in the composition classroom; however, it was imperative that I responded to the resistance and problems. I had to ask myself: what could I do as a teacher, still using ethnographic methods, to help solve these problems?

### **Translating the Problems into Research Questions**

The preceding sections discussed three problems I found in my students' work with ethnography pedagogy. In an effort to solve these problems, I translated the problems into research questions, which I hoped to answer and, in doing so, to improve my students' work in the classroom:

1. How can I improve my students' underdeveloped notetaking skills for their subculture research?
2. How can I get my students to improve triangulation of their research about their subcultures?

3. How can I get my students to develop the details in their ethnographies about their subcultures?
4. I chose perspective pedagogy as my direction for attempting to resolve questions 1 through 3, so I added one overarching question as well: Is perspective pedagogy effective in answering these questions? I will return to this question in Chapter 4 of my dissertation.

### **Definitions of Primary Terms in this Dissertation**

Before outlining my methodology, I want to briefly define the terms and concepts I will be using in my methodological discussion and throughout the remainder of the dissertation. I have arranged them by beginning with terms which serve as the foundation of my dissertation, words that need to be understood before getting to the more specialized terms that appear later in this section. All of these concepts will aid in readers' understanding of the upcoming methodological steps I took to answer the problem questions in my classroom. More developed, detailed discussions of all of the methods appear in Chapter 3 where I trace how they developed over the centuries and ultimately inspired my perspective pedagogy. The definition section here only serves as introductions to the terms and concepts.

#### **Perspective Pedagogy**

Perspective pedagogy is the label I have given to my new pedagogy. I turned to perspective pedagogy to try to solve the problems with ethnographic pedagogy that I outlined in the section above. The foundation of this pedagogy is that by introducing students to additional ethnographic perspectives from which to examine their chosen subcultures, they would have more opportunities to take notes, reflect on those notes, triangulate those notes, and compose essays about those notes. I call it perspective pedagogy because it requires that students examine

their subcultures from a number of different perspectives: as observers, interviewers, ethnographic photographers, ethnographic filmmakers and performance ethnographers.

In some ways, perspective pedagogy is like ethnography in that it integrates many types of ethnographic researching techniques; however, perspective pedagogy emphasizes writing whereas ethnography emphasizes the methodological purpose. Yes, the research processes are vital to their writing up of their findings; however, since the pedagogy is used in a composition course, we work much more intensively on the writing techniques that will most effectively help them reach the purpose of sharing their ethnographic experiences. Perspective pedagogy asks students to use their multiple ethnographic perspectives to enhance their understanding of local subculture through triangulation of those points of view. Furthermore, the pedagogy asks students to question what they think they know or understand about their subcultures, which allows them to engage in thoughtful, critical analysis, researching, and the inherent subjectivity of research and research writing.

Their research methods culminate in compositions written not only about their subcultures but also about my students' experiences with those subcultures. It is through critical narrative inquiry that students of perspective pedagogy are able to express their experiences immersed in a particular culture as effectively as possible.

## **Culture**

Culture is a complex term that has been defined using a variety of points of view. Before offering my definition, I would like to take a moment to review some other theorists' perspectives on the concept. Hall (1977) asserts that "Culture...means personality, how people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved, how their cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems

function and are organized, as well as how economic and government systems are put together and function” (16). While his definition is quite comprehensive, others, such as Barrett and Carter, offer more generalized perceptions of culture. Specifically, Barrett (1984) claims that culture is “the body of learned beliefs, traditions, and guides for behavior that are shared among members of any human society. The key word is *learned*” (54). Similarly, Carter (2000) writes that culture is “learned patterns of thought and behavior that are passed from one generation to another and are experienced as distinct to a particular group” (865). The notion of learning appropriate or normative behaviors resurfaces in Carter’s definition, reminding us of the importance of the humanistic element in developing culture and the need for the members to embrace and pass on the expectations to new members. Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1956) suggest that language is at least in part used to understand our world and life experiences. As a group, then, a culture determines a perspective by which people see things using a shared language and a shared understanding of the world around them (Sapir 209-10; Whorf 221). I agree with their views on the importance of shared language as a means for understanding experience. Without shared language, a culture cannot exist.

Even with many definitions from which to select and adopt, there are still some “sticky spots” with regard to who is considered a culture. Do all “groups” fall into the category of culture? For example, some people see a classroom as a culture, because discourse communities like classrooms share language, location, and some expectations of normative behavior. However, others believe these shared characteristics are not enough to label a discourse community as a culture. Losey (1997) concurs, reminding us that while classrooms share sets of normalcy with respect to their behaviors, all of these behaviors are generally expectations that are decided upon their teacher, not behaviors that are the result of consensus amongst the class

members (88). I agree with Losey's conclusion that a classroom is not a culture, because behaviors considered acceptable in a classroom are typically established and enforced by one person, the teacher, rather than by the group of students. Certainly, there are many student-centered classrooms in which students contribute toward acceptable behavior; however, even teachers in student-centered classrooms set up the parameters by which the students will be able to help structure their classroom. By considering what is *not* a culture, an additional characteristic emerges for the definition of culture: Culture members' behaviors are established by the members themselves, not imposed on them by an outside individual.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I adhere to the definition that a culture is a group of people who, together with one another, have established, passed on, and maintained, a foundation of expected values, beliefs, and normative behaviors.

### **Subculture**

The term subculture refers to a culture derived from another culture. Since subcultures are cultures, the core of the definition adheres to the culture definition described above. The distinction, however, is that, unlike a culture, subcultures are smaller groups of people, a subsection of a larger culture. Some subcultures are formed based on racial or ethnic background, such as Native American tribes. Others are formed based on common interests, such as bingo players who frequent a particular bingo hall or Cleveland Brown fans in the Dawg Pound. A third way subcultures might form is through cyberspace. A growing number of subcultures that may have previously interacted exclusively physically may now interact exclusively online, termed virtual or "portable" (Chayko, 2008), such as online support groups for mothers or video gamers who play MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games) whose members exist internationally and with whom members can interact in real time.



A fourth kind of subculture is hybrid, because it exists both in physical space and in cyberspace through the use of an online chat area or a Facebook fan page where members keep in touch when they are not meeting physically, such as members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Subcultures that are either exclusively online or at least partially online have broadened the definition of subculture, because when a subculture is “portable,” the members being studied could be, and probably are, from different cultures or societies. All subcultures require members to adhere to their collectively-chosen expectations of values, beliefs and normative behaviors in order to maintain membership in the subculture.

### **Ethnography**

Ethnography is another complex term that has been defined in many ways. I will address its complexities in much greater depth in Chapter 3; however, here I just want to offer a general definition for use through Chapter 2. Hoey’s definition most accurately mirrors the ways I use the term ethnography in this dissertation. Specifically, Hoey writes that “ethnography may be defined as a qualitative research process/method (one conducts an ethnography) and as a product (the outcome of this process is an ethnography) whose aim is cultural interpretation” (“What is Ethnography?”).

First, ethnography is a term used to articulate a certain kind of research process. For anthropologists, engaging in ethnographic research involves an extended study of another ethnic group, whereby the ethnographer lives with that culture to understand it from the insider’s perspective. From this definition, sociologists expanded this idea of ethnography to also include research conducted on people closer to researchers’ homes, such as Americans studying other groups of Americans. Both of these approaches involve ethnographic research processes. By this I mean to say that ethnographers engage in or conduct *ethnographies*. In regards to its

methodology, ethnography utilizes different approaches, which includes “the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1). These methods are referred to as fieldwork. Van Maanen notes that fieldwork “asks the researcher, as far as possible, to share firsthand the environment, problems, background, language, rituals, and social relations of a more-or-less bounded and specified group of people,” adding that this kind of approach toward understanding culture can produce a *more* truthful account of the social world (3). In this case, “more truthful” is subjective in that ethnographers seek truths through their eyes as researchers. This is the kind of research in which an ethnographer engages.

It is vital to my dissertation to establish the variations of this idea truth before moving on. Specifically, there are two kinds of truth. First, there is “Truth” with a capital “T” that asserts a monolithic assertion deemed steadfast, uniform, and without room for variations. The second kind of truth is “truths,” plural with a lower-case “t.” Lower-case truths indicate kinds of truths that are malleable, interpretive, and open to variations. It is the latter that fits into ethnography and my pedagogy (both of which will be discussed further throughout the dissertation).

In some ways ethnography and qualitative research methods overlap; however, for this dissertation, I wish to take a moment to distinguish between the two. Ethnography is a research process focused on a goal for researching: to discover more about a particular group of people, a culture of some sort. Qualitative research methods, though, are types of research methods that can be used in any number of ways. Collectively, they do not adhere to a comprehensive goal. Specifically, qualitative research methods are

any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantifications. It can refer to research about persons' lives, stories, behavior, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships. Some of the data may be quantified as with census data but the analysis itself is a qualitative one. (Strauss and Corbin 17)

All qualitative research methods can be considered ethnographic because methods like observing and interviewing are used to study a culture; however, not all ethnographic methods are qualitative, because not all methods used to study a culture are qualitative. Many ethnographers also use quantitative methods to study their cultures, such as conducting survey information for statistical analysis. Since ethnography is a research goal and not a method, any research method could be translated ethnographically, including all qualitative research methods as well as quantitative methods. Therefore, while the goals of ethnographic and qualitative research methods may differ, they do rely on each other.

The second way the term ethnography is used is to refer to the end product: to write an ethnography. This definition emphasizes the need to compose the research, the ethnography that was conducted. Clearly, one definition of ethnography cannot exist without the other. Ethnography is not conducted (as a research process) without ultimately producing an ethnography (the written product). Ultimately, "Ethnographies join culture and fieldwork. In a sense, they sit between two worlds or systems of meaning—the world of the ethnographer (and readers) and the world of cultural members (also, increasingly, readers although not the targeted ones). Ethnographies are documents that pose questions at the margins between two cultures" (Van Maanen 4). The process and the product help ethnographers do just that.

To sum up, ethnography is a process—conducting an ethnographic study—which requires critical thinking to translate that experience from the ethnographer’s own experience to the experience of those being studied, and ethnography is a final product, to write up an ethnography.

### **First-Year Research Composition [FYRC]**

First-year research composition is the kind of course in which I have applied perspective pedagogy for this dissertation. The first-year research composition course is a second-semester composition course that is common in many universities and colleges with composition requirements. Often titled “English 2,” this course is comprised of students who have proven their understanding of how to compose a college-level essay, as determined by either an exam score, such as the SAT, ACT, or COMPASS, to name a few, or by successfully passing a previous prerequisite semester-long composition course.

Students enrolled in this course are typically first-year students, though they can be further along in their education than their first year. Regardless of their status in the college itself, the students do (or should) have a working knowledge of essay writing and college-level thinking.

The class itself is typically driven by research, and builds on an earlier course, which focuses on foundational college-level writing skills necessary for college students. For some schools, research is simply one element in a one-semester required composition course; however, for other schools there is a three-credit course that requires students to understand, analyze and implement research strategies and develop a series of critically-researched papers. It is the latter to which this dissertation refers. While perhaps not every school has a course that exactly matches this sequence of assignments, the notion of such a class will likely be familiar to

readers. The first-year research composition classroom is one in which students investigate the many ways to do research; develop their critical reading, writing and thinking skills; and produce effective and accurate research papers.

With this said, in order to avoid repeating such a lengthy term, from now on I will simply refer to this as “FYRC” rather than “First-Year Research Composition.”

### **Ethnographic Photography**

Ethnographic photography is defined as the use of photographs for ethnographic purposes: to enhance a researcher’s ability to understand a culture. For a photograph to be seen as ethnographic, then, it includes text along with the photo. The text that accompanies an ethnographic photograph situates readers in the photographer’s frame of mind/intention with each photograph. In a sense, then, the ethnographic photograph can be seen as a form of a photo essay, though often photographers utilize shorter captions to reflect these intentions with photographs.

To engage in ethnographic photography, ethnographers shoot and use the photographs to offer an additional point of view to their ethnographic research. They pay particular attention to the choices that they make—including the who, what, where, when and why of the photograph as well as the choices in editing those photographs from cropping to lighting to wide angle versus zoom.

For example, one of my students took a series of photographs of the university’s women’s lacrosse team. She took action photographs of players passing the ball to one another; interacting with their coach; and scoring points against other teams, to name a few. In addition to action photos, she also took shots of their uniform pieces, the ball, and what she concluded was a major component of the culture, physical injuries like scrapes and bruises on the girls’ arms and

legs. When she took the photographs, she took thorough notes about what she photographed. By doing so, she was able to accurately caption all of her photos and connect those photos to her observation notes taken during the same time period. What made her photos ethnographic was the reason she chose to take those photos: to better understand the women on the team. What behaviors were considered normative? What are the values and beliefs of this team that hold them together? She did not take the photos as a journalist looking for visual aids to a story or as a friend looking for pictures in her scrapbook. She was driven to strengthen her research as an ethnographer. That made her photographs ethnographic.

### **Ethnographic Film**

Ethnographic film is the use of film to increase an ethnographer's understanding of a culture. Ethnographic film is challenging and, at times, problematic to define, because it holds so many similar characteristics to documentary film, such as unobtrusive camera positioning and reliance on narrative overlays to contextualize the movements on screen. Ethnographic film remains underdiscussed and, to some extent, under-valued in the anthropological discipline (Ruby, "Is Ethnographic Film"). To distinguish ethnographic film from documentaries, then, it is important to note that ethnographic filmmakers keep in mind their goal at all times: to understand how a culture works. Ethnographic purpose is not a secondary consideration. Therefore, some knowledge of ethnography, its intentions, and its methodologies are imperative if a film is to be considered ethnographic. This methodology includes choices in camera placement, amount of movement by the researcher while filming, researcher involvement on screen, researcher presence during filming, length of film segments, the degree of zooming involved, and editing choices, such as what to include and what to trim out to demonstrate

conclusions about the culture. In Chapter 2, I will outline how this approach is modified in consideration of the first-year level of the course in which it is utilized.

One example of a student ethnographic film project included a student's examination of the horse trainer culture. Specifically, she took many films during her observations of the training sessions with various trainers. In order to get a more complete picture of the entire experience, she kept a wide angle point of view with the camera. By doing so, the student was able to see the horse's movement from one end of the training complex to the other and interaction with the trainer. By choosing to take a wide angle, though, she sacrificed the ability to hear everything being said into the horses' ears during the training sessions. Luckily, most of the training was done with a equipment like a "carrot stick," an artifact of the culture used to guide horses from one action to another. The film was then used by the student to triangulate her film data with information collected through observation and interview notes. What made this film ethnographic was not only that she shot footage of her subculture in action but that she used it with the intent of learning about that subculture, hoping to capture the essence of the people, not for the purposes of, for example, publicity for the training facility or for home movies of a family member in the session. Purpose is what drives any text and, in the same way, drives ethnographic film.

### **Performance Ethnography**

Performance ethnography is a subcategory under performance studies that is largely connected to learning about culture and surrounding life through performance. Since performance ethnography includes many different kinds of performances, my definition here will only address the kind of performance done by my FYRC students in this dissertation. My students engage in performance ethnography that requires them to translate their ethnographic

research into dramatic scripts that are performed (Denzin, *Performance Ethnography*, 2003; Turner and Turner, 2004). They compose scripts written about the life of either one subculture member or the subculture as a whole and is “based on interviews, conversations, self-stories, and personal experience stories” (Denzin, *Performance Ethnography* 39). Since the scripts are composed by my students, the scripts, in essence, join the cultures being studied and the cultures of the ethnographers studying those cultures. As noted previously (definitions of perspective pedagogy and the other ethnographic methodologies), writing ethnographies necessitates that the researchers share their specific experiences researching the cultures, causing researchers to become parts of the research texts themselves.

For example, a student in my class studied “improvisational musicians” as his subculture. He followed them from venue to venue, studied their behaviors and values as musicians, quite different from more formal musicians in a concert band, for example. Once he had observed numerous and varied improvisational musician nights that semester, he composed a script that included not only dialogue between the musicians and MC, but also improvised music done by musicians he had asked to take part in his performance piece. In order to create this script, the student needed to review his notes closely and adhere to the cultural expectations of wardrobe, speech, and structure of the musical nights he had already seen. He worked closely with subculture members to review his perspective of his experiences with that subculture and to help him negotiate the narrative for sharing that experience. The student ethnographer stepped in as one of the performers, as expected for performance ethnography, and experienced what it would be like to be an improvisational musician. We recorded the performance, done in the quad area outside of our building, and watched carefully, taking in what we could learn from the experience. The student ethnographer reflected afterward on his experience and what he had



learned through performance. Using pieces of the performance and his reflection as part of his final paper, this student was able to consider how stepping into the shoes of the subculture members offered him unique insight into being a member of that culture that outwardly observing did not. Because his performance was strictly based on what he had observed during the semester, not a fictionalized account of musicians based on what he thought he knew or had seen on television and in the movies, this student's performance was performance ethnography and not simply an improvisational performance in the quad.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding the terms I use in my dissertation will improve readers' understanding of the sections to come. By referring back to these definitions, readers should be able to familiarize themselves with the concepts and methodologies I address in the remainder of this dissertation. I will address these concepts in much greater detail in Chapter 3, which explores how ethnography's historical development inspired my creation of perspective pedagogy.

### **The Methodology for Writing this Dissertation**

So far in Chapter 1, I have offered insights into what my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom looked like prior to doing my dissertation work, the problems I identified, the problem questions I designed to examine for the dissertation purposes, and important terms and concepts that readers need to know regarding my direction for solving these problems with ethnographic pedagogy. Now, in this methodology section, I chronologically discuss how I wrote my dissertation.

#### **Doing Background Reading: Ethnography's History**

The first step I took was to extensively research the historical development of ethnography. I started with the history because I felt that the history would allow me to gain

insight into how ethnographers did strong ethnography through the centuries. I hoped to learn from the changes in ethnographic methods over the years. More specifically, I wondered how ethnographers' changes in their research methods and composition could help me respond to the problems I saw in my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom.

I began my historical readings with the anthropology section of the library. I read prominent scholars in each area of ethnography, such as Atkinson, Bohannan, Boas, Coffey, Conquergood, Geertz, Glazer, Hymes, Malinowski, and Richardson. I also read earlier ethnographic-like work by the inspirational forerunners prior to the official first ethnography, including Herodotus, Columbus, daGama, and Morgan (1904).

During my ethnographic reading, I realized that each methodological specialty had its own scholars who wrote books about one particular kind of method. In order to get working knowledge of the methods, I needed to explore each methodology from its own set of texts. From this search, I hoped to refine perspective pedagogy by discovering approaches for solving the pedagogical problems I identified from the classrooms where I was using ethnographic pedagogy. Though my reading revealed a rich history of ethnographic methodological work, with observations, interviews and artifact collections, these were methods which my class already used. What the library investigation did reveal, which was not in my pedagogy, was a rich set of methods that would put ethnographic pedagogy on its side in helpful, critical, and thoughtful ways. I was drawn to ethnography as seen through the eyes of scholars in dance, music, photography, film and performance. These were provocative yet also ethnographic perspectives I thought would get students engaged in the research process. These were methodological perspectives that students could tie to their observations and interviews and, as a consequence, aid in their data triangulation. Recognizing the time and length limitations of a

dissertation research project, I could not integrate all five perspectives in one research project. From these five methods, I chose photography, film and performance, because they seemed to build on one another in pedagogically sound ways (which will be discussed further in Chapter 2); these perspectives became “perspective pedagogy.” Once I narrowed the scope of my pedagogical revision from ethnographic pedagogy to perspective pedagogy, I needed to find more information about these three artistic methodologies to inform my pedagogy.

At this point, I moved into resources dedicated to the artistic ethnographies, which were held in different areas of the libraries. I read texts dedicated to performance ethnography, such as Denzin, Ellis, Turner and Turner; ethnographic photography books written by scholars such as Garber, Mead, Pink, and Scherer; and ethnographic filmmaking books by such filmmakers and scholars as Crawford, DeBrigard, Heider, Flaherty and Rouch.

While collecting textual information, I also gathered examples of ethnographic photography, ethnographic films and performance ethnographies, so I could visualize these three kinds of ethnographies more fully. This was, by far, the most difficult part of the researching process. First, it was very challenging to find videotaped performance ethnographies and ethnographic films to view. Second, for those I found, it was challenging to gain permission to take them out of the libraries. Libraries hesitate to check out audio-visual materials. As a result, there was a lot of travel and in-house viewing of the materials. While I found a few clips available online, the selections were limited. However, I did manage to view some films, such as parts of the *iKung* series (1950-1978); *The Hunters* (1957); *Nanook from the North* (1922), *Graffiti Verite: Reading the Writing on the Wall* (1995); *Graffiti Verite 5: The Sacred Elements of Hip-Hop* (2003); *Graffiti Verite 6 (GV6) The Odyssey: Poets, Passion, & Poetry* (2006); *Devil's Playground* (2002); still photos of *Run* (1895); Hornsby-Minor's “If I Could Hear My

Mother Pray Again: An Intergenerational Narrative Ethnography and Performance Ethnography of African American Motherhood” (2004) on Hornsby-Miner’s webpage; and a YouTube upload of *Shoot* (1971).

Throughout the process of viewing the ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography examples, I took the perspective of a compositionist rather than a historian to assure myself and my readers that the chapter would remain focused on the information that was important to my ethnographic pedagogy classroom, a composition course. I attempted to answer specific questions: What can composition teachers learn from reading this history? How might the history of ethnography inform perspective pedagogy?

In order to actually write an organized history chapter, I structured it into three sections, each of which addressed one of the three problems I identified with ethnographic pedagogy (Chapter 1: underdeveloped notes, underdeveloped triangulation conclusions; and underdeveloped compositions). I then paralleled how ethnographic scholars encountered and responded to similar problems with their ethnographic research and indicated how I applied similar resolutions into perspective pedagogy.

To inform my work in the classroom, I also made sure to keep track of scholarship, examples and ideas that I could use to help shape how I presented the information to my students. How might I use the stories that I read about changes to ethnography through the centuries to respond to the difficulties and challenges I had identified with my students’ work in response to ethnographic pedagogy?

My review of ethnographic history also contributed to Chapter 5, the future directions of perspective pedagogy. By considering the directions ethnography as a whole is heading, I collected ideas and methods I felt had possible connections to perspective pedagogy in the

future. I did not include all of these other methods I came across because I needed to keep a clear focus for my dissertation. To make the dissertation work, I could not include every idea I had for revising ethnographic pedagogy. It simply would have been a logistical nightmare to collect that kind of data. Therefore, other methods that I felt had potential were included in Chapter 5, allowing me to address them, albeit in a different context.

Specifically, I identified texts written by dance ethnographers Gell, Kurath, Lu, Roses-Thema, and Thram and drew parallels between dance ethnography and performance ethnography. The dance ethnography scholars inspired my idea that the perspective pedagogy of the future could include a rudimentary introduction to dance that beginning ethnographers could grasp and execute in the short time allotted in my new perspective pedagogy classroom.

In addition to the dance ethnographers, I also read prominent ethnomusicologists, such as Brady, Marshall, Small, and Yates. With students so deeply excited about music, introducing some scholarly work on cultural music felt like a potential area for exploration in the future development of perspective pedagogy as well. It was even more challenging to translate ethnomusicology to a first-year composition student's level for Chapter 5; however, my historical research on these scholars helped quite a bit.

As a whole, my research into the history of ethnographic methodologies informed my approach toward the dissertation in significant ways. While I came to the material as a composer, by using ethnography as my foundation, I was taking on the composition classroom from what I felt was a unique perspective. Rather than focusing entirely on composition from composition scholars' views, I learned how these other disciplines used and understood composition and research and was able to integrate new perspectives into

ethnographic pedagogy, thereby creating a unique approach: perspective pedagogy. After this extensive background reading, I felt prepared to take the next step in my dissertation process.

### **Doing Background Reading: Pedagogical Resources**

In this section I want to discuss the reading I did of pedagogy sources that contributed to my dissertation and to the “pedagogy” part of perspective pedagogy. This reading informed Chapter 1’s work on narrative inquiry and definitions of pedagogies; Chapter 4’s sections regarding perspective pedagogy’s contributions to my own pedagogy and to the field of composition; and Chapter 5’s exploration of future directions for perspective pedagogy.

First and foremost, I examined existing work done by compositionists about their teaching of ethnographic pedagogy in the classroom. Though they did not always use that term by name, nor did they always refer to teaching ethnographic pedagogy in the composition classroom, these sources all discussed ways to incorporate ethnography to some extent in their courses. Having used Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater’s *Fieldworking* textbook to shape my ethnographic pedagogy classroom, I continued to refer to it as a guide for engaging in ethnographic pedagogy in the composition classroom. In addition to Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, I also read the work of teacher-scholars, including Beall, Blitz, Campana, Hawkins, Hurlbert, Kirklighter, Mack, Malley, Moxley, Olszewski, Rupert, Stumbo, Swearington, Vincent, and Zebroski. I used these sources to shape my perspective pedagogy, support my thoughts on student resistance, and connect to Chapter 4 regarding teacher resistance to ethnographic pedagogy.

In addition to direct texts about ethnographic pedagogy, I also explored other pedagogical approaches that I felt could inspire my work on perspective pedagogy and potential future directions for perspective pedagogy. I noticed a trend with multigenre, multivocal texts in both

ethnographic pedagogy and in the current scholarship in contemporary ethnography. In my searches, I found myself following two areas of scholarship: multimodal composition and interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary work. Scholars in theater, photography and film do not mention multimodal composition by name, but there is direct evidence that multimodality exists in ethnography today. The multimodality of ethnography ties directly to the contemporary composition field and also challenges my audience of composition teachers to see how interdisciplinary projects like this one further emphasize the critical ways in which we can use the many modes in critical, research-based ways as well. To build on this element of what might become part of perspective pedagogy in the future, I read some multimodal composition scholars, including Kist, Mack, Pippin, Selfe, and Takayoshi, as well as scholars writing about the value and use of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary assignments in the classroom, such as Bazerman, Davis, McLeod, Miraglia, Moore, Nowacek, Russell, Selfe, Soven, and Thaiss. All of these scholars generated valuable information for Chapter 5 about future directions I imagined for perspective pedagogy as well as ideas for responding to teachers who may resist the use of perspective pedagogy in the composition classroom.

A second common thread that I pursued to inform my pedagogy was one that emerged from all of my earlier reading, both ethnographic and pedagogical. From ethnography's history to ethnographic pedagogy to multimodal, multigenre and interdisciplinary scholarship, ideas about how to teach ethics emerged from many of these scholars. While I certainly addressed ethics while using ethnographic pedagogy, I did further reading about how artistic ethnographic elements might further complicate or at least require new considerations for ethical ethnographic work. I read through scholarship about the ethics with primary research, photography, film and

technology. To help me with this, I read scholars such as Eisner, Haviland, Madison, Mullins, Peterson, and Vicinus.

Overall, my pedagogical background reading helped inform how I revised ethnographic pedagogy with ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography and helped me consider new directions for perspective pedagogy in the future.

### **Taking Steps in the Classroom**

Once I had established an understanding of ethnographic photography, ethnographic filmmaking and performance ethnography and pedagogy from my literature review, I was ready to apply my ideas to the classroom. To do this successfully, I used what I had learned from the challenges that ethnographers had faced throughout the centuries and attempted to avoid making the same mistakes that they had made. From what I had read, the solution to a lot of the problems rested with one major element: triangulation. Ethnographers, including but not limited to Boas, Mead, Flaherty, Heider, Hymes, Malinowski, Pink, Richardson, Scherer, took advantage of either ethnographic photography, film or performance as a means of deepening their own understanding of the cultures they were studying and of providing stronger foundations for society's demands for establishing truths about those cultures.

The pedagogical resources I read, such as Chiseri-Strater, Malley, Vincent and Zebroski, integrated multiple ethnographic research methods into their classrooms. Their educational approaches toward the use of ethnography further shaped my perspective pedagogy by offering the much-needed foundation for its purpose and to reveal what I saw as gaps with ethnographic pedagogy.

Using all of the aforementioned scholars as my points of inspiration, I added the artistic methods in the hope that if students were to integrate ethnographic photography, ethnographic



film and performance ethnography into their ethnographic projects, they would find fewer problems with their underdeveloped notes, underdeveloped triangulated conclusions, and underdeveloped compositions (ethnographies).

I predicted that my students would document their experiences in more thoughtful ways because they would have more visual elements on which to rely. First, as a result of having more ethnographic experiences from which to draw, they would hopefully more fully develop their notes. Second, by engaging in multiple methods in the same physical spaces (such as taking photographs during observations), they would more naturally and consistently triangulate their research and end up with more concrete, thoughtful conclusions about their subcultures. Third, by doing all of these things, they would inevitably write more fully developed compositions. Ultimately, I felt that these three artistic ethnographic approaches might solve the problems I had laid out with my students' work while using ethnographic pedagogy in our classroom.

My next step was to apply what I had read to my curriculum. I asked myself, if I were using these methods in my own classroom, how would I break down this information so that first-year undergraduates could both understand it and enjoy it? What kinds of assignments would I use? I took the information I had gathered into my classroom and tested its ability to solve the problems I found with my students' work while using ethnographic pedagogy. Over the course of the next three years, I added artistic ethnography projects to my FYRC classrooms.

During the entire process, I kept a detailed teaching journal, reflecting on the experiences I had in the classroom, both good and bad, and my students' reactions to the projects as well. I kept copies of many student projects in either hard or digital formats. The last general method I used during the classroom experiences was to collect and categorize student evaluations and

remarks done in writing over the course of the six semesters I did the perspective pedagogy projects.

The first semester, I integrated an ethnographic photography assignment into my classroom that required students to take ethnographic photographs during their observations of the subcultures they were studying. To prepare them for the assignment, we read essays about ethnographic photography like the “Photography in Ethnographic Research” chapter from Pink’s *Doing Visual Ethnography* book; Scherer’s “Ethnographic Photography in Anthropological Research”; and some quotes from Mead’s various essays about ethnographic photography. We also looked at examples of ethnographic photography like Bateson and Mead’s *Balinese Character*, and the sequence of Sanchez photos in the Pink chapter. Details on the process for pedagogical integration, student responses, and student examples are all coming up in Chapter 2.

In my second semester, I introduced ethnographic film using the same structure that I did for ethnographic photography. The ethnographic film assignment required them to enter their fieldsites with video cameras and record what they saw while they were also taking observational fieldnotes. To prepare them for this assignment, we discussed some reading by Heider and DeBrigard about ethnographic filmmaking and viewed portions of *Nanook of the North*, *Graffiti Verite: Reading the Writing on the Wall*; *Graffiti Verite 5: The Sacred Elements of Hip-Hop*; *Graffiti Verite 6 (GV6) The Odyssey: Poets, Passion, & Poetry* and *Devil’s Playground* to discuss elements of ethnographic film.

I will discuss the specifics of the process for integrating ethnographic film in the classroom, student resistance to it, and my thoughts on that resistance in Chapter 2, but suffice it to say at this point, students found this assignment more challenging, so I put off my integration of the third method to work on responding to the problems. In response to these struggles, for

my third semester of trials, I made a few alterations to this element of the ethnographic project, such as allowing students to self-select either photography OR film for their projects. I had much greater success. Details regarding the results of these changes are forthcoming in Chapter 2.

Once I had refined the video option for the course, for my fourth semester of perspective pedagogy I added performance ethnography to the classroom. With the student resistance to ethnographic filmmaking in the back of my mind, I attempted to predict how students might react to the performance ethnography perspective in the classroom and how I might avoid the problems I ran into with the ethnographic film part of the project. As a result, rather than requiring every student to do performance ethnography as a required perspective, I added performance ethnography as a third perspective option from which students could select. However, to truly embrace the perspective pedagogy, I felt it was important for students to integrate at least two methods in their research. That meant that I required them to select two of the three artistic methods for their projects: ethnographic photography, ethnographic film or performance ethnography. To inform our understanding of performance ethnography, I assigned some reading, including Turner and Turner's essay "Performing Ethnography" as well as theoretical information and performance ethnography examples from Denzin's *Performance Ethnography* book. Though performance ethnography was listed as one of three options, most students selected photography and film. I will explore my thoughts on why they refrained from performance, offering some student anecdotes and examples in Chapter 2.

In my fifth semester of perspective pedagogy, I responded to the lack of interest in performance ethnography by designing in-class assignments that required all students to write playscripts based on their observation notes from that semester. We discussed their strengths and weaknesses as a class, and each group selected the best playscript in their group. They then

engaged in the performance experience by reading, practicing and performing the scripts selected by each group for the class.

This leads me to my sixth and final semester of perspective pedagogy research for this dissertation. During this final semester, I felt I had the assignments adjusted to a workable level and integrated all three artistic ethnographic methods for all four sections of my FYRC classes. The entire narrative of my experiences is in Chapter 2.

### **Deciding to Use Narrative Inquiry as my Methodology**

For my dissertation method, I chose narrative inquiry, teaching stories, because I felt they would most effectively show readers my experiences in the classroom, giving voices not only to my experience but also those of my students, through my eyes as their teacher. For this section of the methodology, I want to speak to that decision.

As composition instructors, we understand that when carefully selected and constructed, narrative carries great power to persuade, illuminate, and emotionally carry an audience. On the other hand, though, narrative is equally subject to scrutiny in terms of its authenticity and usefulness as a methodology. Similar to the challenges faced by ethnographers, who share their ethnographic experiences in narrative-like composition, using narrative in the dissertation format has its challenges as well. The dissertation should be a technical document that shares a creative research project. For me to use narrative inquiry, then, it was important that I understood and embraced questions concerning my methodological choice.

One area of scrutiny of narrative is its subjective nature, i.e., its ability to translate truth in experience. The idea of truth with a capital “T” brings me back to my earlier comments about the different kinds of truths that might be found through ethnography. Narratives face similar challenges. Jerome Bruner reflects on the limitations of narrative when he writes,

we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative-stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on. Narrative is a conventional form, transmitted culturally and constrained by each individual's level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleagues, and mentors. Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only achieve 'verisimilitude.' Narratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and 'narrative necessity' rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness, although ironically we have no compunction about calling stories true or false. (5)

I recognize that my teaching stories are *my* translations and interpretations of the experiences I had in my classrooms. They are "truths" not the "Truth." In order to garner their power, my narratives necessitate a relationship between my readers and me as the storyteller. Having a readership of composition teacher-scholars, I felt hopeful that my use of narrative inquiry would likely be accepted, as there are composition instructors and scholars who value the narrative genre for sharing research experiences and it is a common method for composition dissertations. With that said, though, as Pagnucci brings to light in *Living the Narrative Life*, dissertations continue to be a location of structure and documentation. He comments regarding how dissertation students are asked to review the current literature seeking some kind of "gap in research," because the collective academic community has agreed it will as such. He goes on to write,

What if, instead of telling doctoral students, 'Look for a gap in the research,' we said, 'Look for a story that needs to be told'? If we said, 'Look for the stories,'

that's what people would find. How we construct the research task heavily shapes the research outcome. Instead of trying to build a wall of knowledge, we could be asking people to add to the world's collection of stories. (Pagnucci 23)

Pagnucci's text reveals the potential for narrative inquiry to fill gaps in current dissertation writing expectations and, if more scholars accepted its value and importance, to not only dissertations but to all kinds of academic writing.

Throughout my dissertation writing process, I had to carefully craft my narratives to avoid some of the challenges I am discussing here. For example, one common error with teaching narratives in particular can be that even when outlining a failure, they commonly reveal the narrator (the teacher) as the hero of the scenario (Ronald 258). Readers are not going to believe that a classroom exists where nothing goes wrong and when the teacher always comes up with a way to make things run perfectly. Instead, readers of narrative want to read about the bumps and bruises along the way and what a teacher learned from those bumps.

Therefore, in my dissertation, in order to persuade readers of the truth of my experience with revision of my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom, I had to be careful about the narratives I chose so as not to make the stories more positive than they really were. Embracing failure makes me a good teacher. I learn from my mistakes. What would each experience contribute toward my own understanding of the applications of ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography as well as toward my readers' understanding of that pedagogy? As a result, the narratives I included are stories of triumph and success as well as stories of confusion and resistance from students and teachers. Fueled by theoretical support, the narratives in these cases served as illustrations of how I responded to conflict in and out of the classroom as well. As with any pedagogy, addressing why people may not agree with it would

make my argument stronger. I used the teaching experiences, student projects and student testimonials to bring my teaching experiences to life.

## **Conclusion**

Ever since I started using ethnographic pedagogy, despite its challenges, I have always felt it was rewarding for my students and for me. Therefore, when faced with the problems with my students' research and writing while using "ethnographic pedagogy," I immediately felt that the best way to answer these questions was to revise my approach toward the ethnographic pedagogy classroom. I emphasize the role of revision to my students in their writing; why not emulate that same model in my pedagogy, I asked myself?

As my methodology demonstrates, I was immediately drawn toward learning even more about ethnography and the variety of methods at my disposal, making inquiry about how ethnographers deal with problems in their methods and composition and how I might learn from them to teach my students to be better ethnographers and writers. I stand by this choice.

While revising ethnographic pedagogy was the approach I chose to take, other teachers reading this dissertation may think that the problems with ethnographic pedagogy are more trouble than they are worth and that my best decision would have been to drop ethnographic pedagogy and adopt a new pedagogy instead. The upcoming two sections address my responses as to why I chose not to and instead attempted to fix the problems I was having with ethnographic pedagogy.

### **Why Perspective Pedagogy Not Something Else?**

#### **Why Not Place-Based Writing?**

Some reading this dissertation might be asking, wouldn't dropping ethnographic pedagogy and adopting place-based writing solve these problems in your classroom? Place-based

writing is one direction people may encourage me to go rather than to revise my old ethnographic pedagogy. Mathieu defines place-based writing as compositions that “focus on neighborhood spaces, ask students to create meaningful and often lasting documents of those spaces and blur the lines between classrooms and the streets” (4). For example, Derek Owens (*Composition and Sustainability*) has his students engage in projects relating to sustainability that include both written and photographic elements that ask students to explore their local communities through oral history as well as historical textual research. Nancy Mack asks her students to do a variety of multigenre and multimedia projects that reflect their knowledge of familial or community-based folklore (Mack, “home page”). In *Letters for the Living*, Blitz’s students from urban New York and Hurlbert’s students from western Pennsylvania collected and shared stories about their respective neighborhoods and then designed plans for how they might be able to create better ones. Via e-mail, mail and instructional conversations, these students collaborated to produce a single manuscript. Perhaps one of the most famous and long-standing place-based projects is the Foxfire Project which works “to fulfill the mission of recording and preserving the language, culture, and heritage of the people of Appalachia” (Cook xvi). Pedagogically speaking, this project believes that students benefit from “having a voice in their own learning” and that it “is often more effective when young people produce a real, tangible product” (Nix xvii).

Place-based writing and ethnographic pedagogy both embrace the idea of sending students “to the streets” (Mathieu) to better understand the cultures around them. The most obvious difference between these two pedagogical approaches is that place-based writing does not have an ethnographic foundation. Yes, students examine the communities that surround them; however, their goal is not to do so ethnographically. Place-based writing does not look at



these people as cultures or ask the students to triangulate their data in the ways that ethnographic pedagogy does. Instead, those engaged in place-based writing focus on the collection and transcription of that information. There is a beautiful authenticity in the end project, nearly untouched by the researchers who collected those words. On the other hand, ethnographic pedagogy asks that students translate the information ethnographically to draw conclusions about how this culture ticks and triangulating each point of view that they use. Rather than students directing their efforts to focus on the locations, the spaces, where their subculture connect with one another, perspective pedagogy asks that students remain ethnographically-focused on cultural elements in order to resolve the issues with ethics, triangulation and development of notes and ideas. My students faced problems with my students' underdeveloped notetaking and resulting compositions. I do not feel that place-based writing solves any of those problems. Instead, this pedagogy would send them off in an entirely different pedagogical approach. Would students doing place-based writing take more developed notes, make more developed triangulated conclusions and subsequently more developed compositions? I could not be sure, but I did not feel that changing pedagogies would be the solution. I wanted to revise my pedagogy. My view was that asking students to engage in multiple methods in common fieldsites (like examining photographs ethnographically while interviewing subculture members) would make them more likely to engage in triangulation and develop research findings than they would by using place-based writing pedagogy. It is these ethnographically-unique dimensions that convinced me that an artistic ethnographic direction would resolve the issues of triangulation by increasing their methodological approaches and resulting in more opportunities for deepened notetaking, detail collecting and triangulating.

## **Why Not Service-Learning Projects?**

For other composition teachers, the logical choice might be to move from ethnographic pedagogy toward service-learning projects. Both service-learning and perspective pedagogy projects create relationships between students and their surrounding communities; require keen observation, listening, and attention to detail about how that group works; and lead to thoughtful compositional work. However, there is a major distinction when it comes to intent and goals with these kinds of projects. At the heart of a service-learning project is the goal of students somehow providing a service to a specific group in their surrounding community. When service-learning students engage in their service, they learn about civic duty and about becoming productive members of their community by making an impact on the people around them.

These are admirable and worthwhile skills for students to attain; however, would using this pedagogy solve my problems with underdeveloped notetaking, data triangulation, conclusions, or ethnographic compositions? No. Instead, I envisioned that service-learning would bring to the table a new set of processes and products for students. It would take the emphasis off of self-reflexive pedagogy of perspective pedagogy to ask them to focus on their duty to the community, giving more power to the community than to themselves as researchers. I felt keeping ethnographic pedagogy in some form would allow me to maintain this more personalized approach toward research.

### **Structure of Upcoming Dissertation Chapters**

As Chapter 1 comes to close, I will give an overview of the goals and content of each of the following three remaining chapters.

Chapter 2 will accomplish the overlying goal: how do I do perspective pedagogy in the classroom? To answer this question, first, I will detail the artistic steps of the ethnographic

research project in my FYRC classroom. During each step, I will offer details about the strategies I used for explaining the various stages of the process; quotes from student projects to illustrate how they wrote in response to the assignments; and sections from the assignment sheets (where appropriate and/or needed). In the second section of this chapter, I will explore the many reasons why I do this kind of pedagogy in the FYRC classroom.

Chapter 3 will explore the ways in which ethnography's history inspired the "perspective" part of "perspective pedagogy." It traces how I identified struggles that ethnographers had with ethnographic research and composition that were similar in ways to the problems I identified with my students' experiences with ethnographic pedagogy. Specifically, I will break down the third chapter into three sections, each dedicated to my journey through ethnography's history to solve one of the three problems I identified with ethnographic pedagogy in my FYRC classroom (underdeveloped notes, underdeveloped triangulated conclusions, and underdeveloped compositions/essays).

Chapter 4 will explore the many ways that perspective pedagogy contributes to the teacher-scholar field. The first section discusses how perspective pedagogy contributes toward my own pedagogy. The second section explores the ways in which my pedagogy adheres to the institutionalized pillars of composition program goals as well as offering insights into the gaps that this pedagogy might fill. The third section addresses ways in which perspective pedagogy might contribute to the work of ethnographers. The fourth section explores that ways that educators in disciplines outside of composition might use perspective pedagogy. The fifth and final section of Chapter 4 returns readers to the overarching question introduced in Chapter 1: how effective is perspective pedagogy?

Chapter 5 will look back to where the dissertation has been up to that point as well as consider the potential future directions of perspective pedagogy. The first section reflects on the dissertation's development as a whole, beginning the concluding goal of the final chapter. The second section offers multiple potential avenues for how perspective pedagogy might change and evolve through the years. The third section discusses the theoretical framework for my dissertation. The fourth and final section of Chapter 5 considers what I learned through the experience of writing this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER 2: WHAT DOES PERSPECTIVE PEDAGOGY LOOK LIKE?**

In Chapter 1 of the dissertation, I identified three predominant problems with my students' research and writing with my use of ethnographic pedagogy that I hoped to solve by revising my pedagogical approach to the classroom. After doing extensive research on ethnography and composition, I designed a strategy for attempting to answer those questions by integrating ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography into ethnographic pedagogy. Chapter 2 is a narrative about my experiences with adding the artistic elements to ethnographic pedagogy, thereby creating what I have termed perspective pedagogy. I write this chapter as a critical inquirer, aware that I share only one perspective on the goings on in the classroom. Based on what I know, or at least what I think I know, I have pulled together what I see as a helpful narrative regarding those experiences and what I believe my students might have gotten from those experiences.

I want to begin by giving a brief overview of the ideas covered prior to the introduction of these methods to my students, just enough to get readers situated in the classroom but not so much so that readers feel overwhelmed with details. My chapter's goal is not to explain again my old ethnographic pedagogy. Specifically, readers will notice that I do not go into great detail about the more traditional or typical ethnographic methods that teachers of ethnographic pedagogy typically teach, including observations and interviews; instead, I focus on the new methods I taught to my classroom that make my perspective pedagogy classroom unique.

After my introduction to the classroom, I structure my remaining sections chronologically, tracing each methodology as I added it into my classroom. Each of the methodological sections follows the same organizational pattern: first, I discuss how I introduced the method to the class; second, I break down the assignment details I gave students; third, I

share some student responses to the assignments they were given; and fourth, I analyze the impact each method had on my pedagogy. Overall, my goal with this chapter is to answer the question: what does perspective pedagogy look like?

### **The Journey to Solve the Problems with Ethnographic Pedagogy**

#### **Situating the Perspective Pedagogy Classroom**

At the start of each of the semesters I taught the perspective pedagogy in class, I introduced the ethnographic assignment as a whole to students by defining ethnography (see Chapter 1's definition) and offering them an overview of their semester-long journey. I told my students that they would each "conduct ethnography" by using multiple research methods, including field observations; interviews; document collection; secondary published resource collection that contextualized their local subcultures with the rest of the world; and whatever artistic ethnographic method(s) I was using that semester. I emphasized that by comparing information from a variety of perspectives (a variety of methods), their results would become stronger and the conclusions more impressive. Triangulation, I told my students, is what would make their ethnographic projects successful.

I completed my introduction to ethnography by addressing how they would "compose ethnography" utilizing ethnographic narrative tales, which encompassed storytelling qualities. They would be responsible for writing shorter pieces periodically during the semester to reflect on the research they had gathered up to those points, allowing them many opportunities for reflection during their ethnographic experiences. Then, toward the end of the semester, after finishing all of their primary and secondary research, I told my students that their final assignment was a more extensive, 10-page hypertext research essay that pulled together all of their research submitted via CDs. By submitting digitally, students would be able to share their

subcultures' stories in full color, sound and movement. [Since the final essay only changed in that it was submitted digitally instead of hard copy, to accommodate the different kinds of methods, I am not addressing how I teach the final assignment either. Instead, my focus is on my integration of the ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography assignments.]

Once my students were introduced to the projects themselves, they selected local subcultures to study and got consent from those subculture members to be researched, processes which I will not review because my readers are likely to understand. Students learned the following primary researching techniques: taking observational fieldnotes, conducting interviews, typing up transcripts and interpreting artifacts. With this foundation, students were prepared to be introduced to new artistic ethnographic methods.

### **Adding the Ethnographic Photography Assignment**

The first method I introduced to the perspective pedagogy classroom was ethnographic photography. I felt college students would be most comfortable taking photographs, because they had taken pictures before and most were comfortable having pictures taken of themselves. To show its applicability in the ethnographic research process, I introduced the method early on as one that would work in conjunction with their observations as well as with their interviews, not something to be done all on its own at a separate time or in a different space than interviews or observations.

I then discussed how taking photographs while at their fieldsites would likely strengthen and shape those observations. To deepen their understanding of ways to use ethnographic photography in their research, I turned to Banks, who writes about “visual data” types by stating that the two most commonly used are the “visual records produced by the investigator, and visual

documents produced by those under study.” However, he goes on to write that “this dichotomy between the observer and the observed has begun to collapse (as it has across the qualitative social sciences more generally) and a third kind of visual record or, more accurately, representation has emerged: the collaborative representation” (*Social Research Update*). I explained to my students that they would use these three categories to shape their research, too. They would take photographs of their own; discover existing photographs of their subculture members from either the subculture or from other resources like library books; and collaborate with their subculture members to decide what to photograph to best capture the essence of the subculture being researched and which photographs should be included with their compositions.

I set them up with some questions to think about: *What kinds of visual representations of your subculture might you make via photography? Where might you go to identify and review already existing photographs about your subculture? And finally, what kinds of experiences might you prepare for where you can create photographs alongside your subculture members?* My focus at this point was to help them understand that to make photographs ethnographic, students should not focus on the photograph itself, but more importantly on how that photograph can be analyzed ethnographically.

When introducing ethnographic photography, I made clear how to use photography from this new point of view and offered it as a new motivation: to uncover culture. Not all photographs are inherently ethnographic, because not all photographs are taken to better understand culture. This kind of photograph is quite different from pulling out their cameras or picture phones to snap a funny shot of a friend. These kinds of photographs are not taken with ethnographic goals in mind, though. On the other hand, “ethnographic photography may be defined as the use of photographs for the recording and understanding of culture(s), both those of



the subjects and of the photographers” (Scherer 201). What this means is that if students gazed at photographs with the goal of learning more about a subculture, analyzing components which reveal aspects of said subculture, then those photographs would become ethnographic.

We reviewed professional examples of ethnographic photography, including portions from Bateson and Mead’s *Balinese Character* and a series of photographs of a female bull tamer from Pink’s *Doing Visual Ethnography*. As we viewed the samples, we discussed both the choices the ethnographers made to compose those photographs and their analyses of the photographs. Specifically, we considered how the ethnographers made their choices about angle, distance, cropping/trimming, and subject material of their photographs. Each choice the ethnographers made told a different kind of story about that subculture and, consequently, needs to be consciously considered during the process. After the first student ethnographic photography responses were submitted to me, I added some student examples of ethnographic photography to this part of my introduction to ethnographic photography as well. Our discussions mirrored those we had for the professional ethnographic photography examples I mentioned above.

Knowing the definition of ethnographic photography and having examined and discussed examples, our class began discussing the specifics for their course ethnographic photography assignment. In the ethnographic photography assignment, I required that students triangulated and analyzed their fieldnotes and/or portions of their interview transcripts with ethnographic photographs of their subculture to share their subcultures’ stories as they understood them at that point in the semester. Having already discussed observation and interviewing techniques, this was one more method by which to triangulate data. I encouraged them to take photographs while observing, thereby supplementing their fieldnotes and aiding in their review of fieldnotes after they left the fieldsite. They were told to use the photographs to verify their fieldnotes and, at

times, clarify or revise or question, their fieldnotes. Did they observe what they observed? How might the photographs challenge what they saw or perhaps bring up questions about what they observed that needed clarified during an interview?

We also addressed the role of photographs during their interview processes. Specifically, to encourage safety, trust and reciprocation of ideas, when students went to interviews with subculture members, they could take some of the photographs they took of the subcultures. Showing them to the subculture members could serve as “ice breakers” at the interviews, particularly those photographs about which my students had questions. I encouraged my students to go to the interviews with the pictures and prepare open questions to ask the informants about each of the photographs. Moreover, I urged students to ask their subculture members to bring whatever photographs of their subculture experiences that they wanted to share. Ethnographic photography was not limited only to those photographs taken by my students, after all; any photograph could be examined ethnographically. This photographic dialogue, I told them, would likely create more comfort between subculture members and the student ethnographers, making a deeper connection between the subculture members’ experiences and my students’ experiences with those subculture members as told visually through the photographs.

With that said, the notion of using photographs that were not originally intended for their ethnographic projects brought to light some invigorating and important discussions regarding the ethics of their projects. Students had been told that they could not use copies of photographs with subculture members without already having a consent form signed. They did get consent from members prior to beginning the project; however, if they collected photographs with additional members and wanted to use those images in their assignments, they could only do so after collecting additional signed consent forms. While at times a little frustrating for students who

would find photographs of alumnus for whom they could not find contact information, they learned the limitations of copyright and ethics with regard to ethnography. As with all of their research, the ethnographic photography assignment was required to be shared with the subculture members as well, one final ethical consultation to assure accuracy of representation.

The ethnographic photograph assignment sheet read as follows:

Select 5-7 photographs that must include photographs you have taken but might also include some photographs collected from informants. These photographs will be:

- Mounted somehow so they don't move (glue, computer, scrapbooking corners, something)
- Arranged with a specific order or positioning in mind. (Chronological? Thematic?)
- Cited (including the names of photographers, including yourself, & publishing info, if applicable)

**Then, compose an analysis:** What does this collection tell us about your subculture? Why did you choose each element? How did you decide it was a visual piece that best told the story of the subculture that you wanted to tell? Why did you choose this order/arrangement? Imagine your audience hasn't seen anything but this piece. Be as specific as you can. This analysis should also make connections to your previous research: Does it confirm your previous observations and/or interviews? Maybe you now question your previous research? (Paull, ethnographic photography assignment)

The assignment sheet also outlined a recommended process for collecting, reading, analyzing and writing through their experiences with ethnographic photography. For example, the assignment sheet included a series of questions that they should consider as they took and/or collected photographs their subculture research. These questions applied to themselves as the photographers as well as to any photographs they collected from subculture members. Either way, the assignment sheet emphasized that it was vital that students collect the correct information about the photographs' logistics (photographer, date, ritual). Doing so would allow

them to situate their narration about those experiences with logistical accuracy and citations of those materials. Those questions read as follows:

- What is/was the intention of the photographer when taking it?
- What is the photograph's history (how was the image used in the past)?
- Ask yourself the journalistic inquiry questions: Who is in the photo; what are they doing; where are they doing it; when are they doing it; why are you taking the photo; and how are they doing it?
- How does this photograph support or challenge others you have? (Paull, ethnographic photography assignment)

For students to answer these questions, they faced a series of choices which required them to be aware of what they were doing as they were doing it. Specifically, they had to make conscious choices about who to photograph, what to photograph, and, most importantly, what my students felt those photographs revealed to them about the subcultures they were studying and their experiences with those subcultures. Similarly, they needed to examine the photo they collected from others critically, keeping their subcultures in mind the entire time. Ethnographic photography analysis required independent critical thinking and reading skills but also collaborative ones. The confidence necessary to ask the subculture members questions about the photographs would come in particularly handy when using this method, I told them.

The final stage of the ethnographic photography assignment required students to conduct an analysis of the importance of the photographs in revealing information about their subcultures and information about their experiences with those subcultures. Specifically, the assignment

handout included the following questions for students to ask themselves prior to photographing anything during their observations and about the photographs after they took them:

- What can I learn about my culture from each element?
- Who are these people in this subculture?
- What are their common rituals and/or behaviors?
- Which members seem favored or marginalized? Why?
- What is the role of the fieldsite in defining that culture?
- What was my experience like with this subculture?
- (Paull, ethnographic photography assignment)

To reiterate that research and writing is a process, after we were done discussing the assignment, students were told to take some preliminary photographs and return to class for a discussion about ways to interpret their photographs ethnographically. My intent here was to help students with their analysis and triangulation. They were given a date when they were told to bring their photographs arranged in an order they thought would help their audience understand their subculture best, along with preliminary captions for each photograph, and be ready to share in groups.

Overall, I found that the students' ethnographic photography responses were successful. I determined "success" here based on the fact that most students' volume of notes increased with the addition of photography to their research process. I found students noting when they took pictures of things described in their fieldnotes or interviews. Students seemed to produce more developed notes and offer more thoughtful triangulation when they were able to review the photographs alongside their observation notes. With traditional ethnographic pedagogy, if a fieldnote was unclear, they were faced with the possibility of having to discard it; however, students using perspective pedagogy with their photographs often found that their photographs jogged their memories of those experiences which produced more developed written products. It is important here to emphasize the "often" part of that sentence. Certainly there were students

who snapped photographs without much afterthought, doing so only to fulfill a requirement for the course. There were also students who did not make those important connections between photographs and fieldnotes. Did ethnographic photography affect every student's work? Is it possible that my students that semester consisted of a significant number of visual learners? Perhaps. I cannot be certain. However, after reviewing their photography analyses, I can say that there were some strong pieces of writing in that stack. What might have contributed toward that strength?

For example, one student studied the women's softball team for her project. In our class discussion about their ethnographic photography experiences, she discussed being faced with decisions about perspective, knowing that taking a photograph of one softball player at bat would focus viewers and the researcher entirely on this person's stance, actions, and reactions to the experience. However, if she zoomed out to consider the context of her experience by including the pitcher, catcher, umpire and even other players, the entire interpretation and amount of information would change to a point of view which considered more subculture members and a broader context. This student had to ask herself which point of view she wanted or needed in her ethnographic exploration of university softball players. When it came time to write her ethnographic photography assignment, she noted:

Before starting practice, the team stretches as a group. Each player gets a turn in the middle of the circle, being the leader for the day. When the team is done with all their stretches, they do jumping jacks that spell out E-A-G-L-E-S! I was fortunate enough to capture them while they were executing this. When a person looks at this picture, he or she can see the girls synchronized with their

movements. This shows that everyone puts in a good amount of effort even for the littlest things and they are able to work as a team.

By photographing the entire team, she was able to show teamwork and united enthusiasm, something that would not be reflected had she zoomed in on only one or two key players of the team.

Another student studied local farmers as his subculture and used his ethnographic photography to help him illustrate and understand the processes for bagging corn and how the process was representational of his farmer subculture as a whole:

While \_\_\_\_\_ is tying a loaded wheat bag with a small, partly flayed piece of rope, \_\_\_\_\_ is fitting the corners of an empty bag around a metal rack that lies under a cloth sock (See Appendix D, photo #1)...Their jobs seemed to be very deep rooted, making any need for verbal instructions go away completely. These reactions seemed automatic; each person was completely in sync with the other. To me, all this suggests that the couple has learned to bond on a level that goes beyond their marriage; they're not just husband and wife, they are a team.

Without the photographs, his explanations would lose some clarity to an extent. To a measureable degree, it was this student's use of photographs that allowed him to paint a more accurate and "thick"er description ritual behavior of his subculture. A third student examined the subculture of actors and wrote:

A metamorphosis is taking place and the \_\_\_\_\_ Theater is being transformed into the main stage of the \_\_\_\_\_ Theater. The chairs and tables in the center of the room used to represent the stage set are slowly replaced with items that will be used in the \_\_\_\_ Theater (see Appendix D—Photo 5). It is

helpful to the cast and crew to have these items to work with while rehearsing... They are much appreciated by the actors and seem to help with their characters' transformation and positioning.

This student writer took notice of the changes by taking photographs of the “before” and “after” of the spaces and of the actors' reactions to those changes, as outlined in her fieldnotes. She made connections between multiple kinds of research she had done and was able to draw conclusions about how the actors' rituals take shape.

While some of the student projects were effective, others still demonstrated the same problems I had seen before with superficial conclusions and oversimplification of the subculture conclusions. As I noted earlier in this section, not every student embraced analyzing their photographs ethnographically. There were some who used the photographs as visual aids: “see the picture of the pizza” to “prove” that there is pizza at a pizza place, for example, rather than analyzing the elements of those pictures that reveal elements of their subcultures. To some extent, this superficial writing reminds me of the earlier problems I saw with my students' writing in the ethnographic pedagogy classroom. Students did not take on the project from the ethnographic perspective that the project required; instead, they went through the motions and forgot about intent. What could I have done to help those students take the ethnographic photography assignment more seriously or at least more thoughtfully? Why did some students embrace the photography assignment while others seemed to perpetuate the same kinds of problems I had seen in my students' work prior to the introduction of perspective pedagogy?

One student who struggled to use ethnographic photography to build her fieldnotes wrote an essay titled “Getting to the Root of It All,” an ethnographic exploration of the hair salon subculture, which explored the rituals of the hair salon. In it, she used her photographs as



simplistic visual aids, only offering pictures of a curling iron, hair dryer and stool. While artifact analysis could be helpful with the use of pictures, she did not truly embrace the potential of ethnographic photography to triangulate what she learned about the people and about her experiences with those people.

Not only did some of my students conduct underdeveloped research on community subcultures, but some students also missed the mark with their ethnographic photography assignments. For example, one student's ethnographic photography assignment discussed her project researching the subculture of resident advisors and only used the photographs to show us inanimate objects like doors or bulletin boards, describing exactly what she saw on those boards like names of people on duty, without analyzing their significance to the subculture as a whole. Though prodded to do so, this student resisted what I had seen as a project that could potentially investigate the language markers of this subculture. The resident assistants' reliance on text via bulletin boards and notes was shocking to me, noticing how little they seemed to speak to one another. Though the project had lots of potential, this student, like some others, struggled to unpack the complexities through the photography project. Finally, some students, it seemed to me, shot their pictures at the last minute or perhaps just did not value the assignment enough to think through it prior to taking the photographs and, as a result, had few pictures with cultural value.

Despite some difficulty, the ethnographic photography assignment as a whole was far from a failure. I believe that, just as with any assignment, there were those who embraced its potential and got excited by the power of the visual element. When it came time to present their photography assignments, students were enthusiastic about their different presentation styles (varying from PowerPoint slide shows to embedded photographs in the essay to collections put

together in scrapbooks); their creativity with catchy captioning of their photographs; and their ability to make connections between their photographs and fieldnotes and interviews.

In addition to being an assignment that seemed well received by my students, the ethnographic photography assignment was also successful in resolving some of the problems from my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom. Specifically, by having the photographic materials to review, some students were able to build on their notes about their subcultures and reflect on what they were learning about their subcultures after they left their fieldsites. What might have been a small line or two in some students' fieldnotes was possibly developed with thick description with the reference back to their photographs.

As a result of having more notes from which to write, some of my students' triangulation abilities improved as well. Multiple students cited their own fieldwork in their research, linking me to their fieldnotes, transcripts and photographs, which brought about a more informed awareness of *why* we cite sources. I noticed a significant increase in many of my students' in-text citations that included multiple sources (fieldnotes 4; appendix D, photo A), for example. As Malley and Hawkins write in "Ethnographic Inquiry as Writing Pedagogy," ethnographic pedagogy serves "to promote student understanding of the relationship between primary and secondary data" and "to actively probe the ethics of research in personal terms." Students became one of their cited resources for their work. As a result of becoming a source on their research lists, many students took pride in giving credit to their work consistently and correctly.

Admittedly, with having to become primary researchers and sources for their projects, the ethics of ethnographic photography involved experiences that were quite different from what some students were expecting. For some, the ethnographic photography component of their project further complicated their ethnographic processes by putting their photographs or their

triangulations on hold because they could not use certain photographs in their projects. As with any research project, though, I expected some challenges and felt these were important to their learning experiences as researchers and writers and to my experiences as a teacher.

### **Adding the Ethnographic Film Assignment**

After the semester in which I added ethnographic photography into the curriculum, I added an ethnographic film assignment to the classroom. I began this unit by defining ethnographic film. Using the definition from Chapter 1 as my inspiration, I discussed with students the complexity of defining ethnographic film and differentiating it from other kinds of films like documentary films. To illustrate the challenge in defining the ethnographic film, we turned to renowned ethnographic film scholar Heider, who argues in his 1974 book *Ethnographic Film* that, “In the broadest sense, most films are ethnographic—that is, if we take ‘ethnographic’ to mean ‘about people’. And even those that are about, say, clouds or lizards or gravity are made by people and therefore say something about the culture of the individuals who made them (and use them)” (1). However, this definition simplifies what ethnographic film is and, consequently, asks little of filmmakers in order to create an ethnographic film.

In “Is an Ethnographic Film a Filmic Ethnography?” Ruby directly responds to this quote: “Apparently, Heider feels that because human beings make films, that act-all by itself-is somehow to be considered ethnographic. By the same logic, one could argue that all writing (from novels and poems to love letters), painting (from Miro to Norman Rockwell) and composing (from Bach to Randy Newman) are also equally ethnographic” (“Is Ethnographic Film” 106). Ruby refutes Heider’s definition by distinguishing ethnography from all things made by people about people by stating that in order to truly make an ethnographic film, the filmmaker must have ethnographic knowledge and intent (“Is Ethnographic Film” 107). I agree. Students

are able to shoot film footage of their subcultures without knowing what ethnographic film is; however, in order to write ethnographies using that film, students need to learn about what ethnographic film is and how they can translate that film in ethnographic ways in order to do that footage justice using perspective pedagogy. At this stage in the ethnographic project, my students had a cursory understanding of ethnography, so they were prepared to build on that understanding with knowledge of filmmaking at a rudimentary level.

When discussing the potential for ethnographic film, we took apart DeBrigard's three purposes and considered the potential in asking their informants to bring films that they had taken, that were part of the subcultures' archives, or perhaps footage that was somehow a part of the subculture members' personal possessions. The authenticity of these kinds of films are often much stronger than anything students might film of the subcultures, since the films from subculture members are shot by insiders of other insiders. Understandably so, subculture members are much more likely to have rapport and, consequently, show a different side of themselves in the films.

Even though my students had collected consent from all subculture members to be filmed and photographed, I noted that if students wished to use clips from videos that they did not shoot themselves, they needed to obtain additional consent from those included in the films who had not already signed consents. For those students only planning to refer to information gathered through video, we decided it was most appropriate to create pseudonyms for those who did not sign consent forms and keep specifics to a minimum, not allowing information to be revealed that would in any way upset their subculture members. A third layer of protection was added to our writing as well when students were required to submit copies of their ethnographic film assignments to the subculture as well. The subculture was asked to consult on the authenticity of

the information as a whole and offer any feedback or requests for revision or removal. These precautions turned out to be sufficient for my students to use ethnographic film ethically and with a reduced fear of negative consequences.

Before sending students off with cameras, I asked them to view segments of ethnographic films while we addressed the challenges that ethnographers faced then and continue to face by having to film others, including the level of discomfort they might feel, the kinds of choices they would make as filmmakers, and how they might edit those films.

To highlight the difficulty of these choices, and what happens when questionable choices are made, we viewed clips from *Nanook of the North*, an ethnographic film directed by Robert Flaherty. Prior to viewing the clip, I only told students that Flaherty was, and still is, considered the father of ethnographic film and that this footage was taken of the Yukon Eskimos in 1922. Then, after watching the film, we discussed what we thought we learned about the subculture, generating a list of characteristics of the subculture learned by this silent, black and white film, contextualized only with occasional captions at the bottom.

Once a list was generated and our discussion was moving along nicely, I revealed to my students the real story behind *Nanook of the North*. Flaherty, I told them, after years of research in the Yukon, worked diligently to complete the editing of his film only to have his studio struck by a structural fire that destroyed all of his film. In response to this, Flaherty returned to the north to “re-shoot” his film. Confident of his conclusions about this Eskimo culture, and eager to use certain clips in the final film, he had the natives re-enact certain things that he had filmed during his first visit. In class, we engaged in an important conversation about what happens when artistic ethnography goes wrong and discussed the ethical implications of Flaherty’s choices to

“reshoot” what was supposed to be an ethnographic film. Is *Nanook of the North* truly ethnographic or do the reenactments make it more of a fabrication, I asked them?

In addition to *Nanook of the North*, we also viewed the documentary *Devil’s Playground*, exploring the differences between ethnographic film and documentary as well as the role of mixing footage of personal interviews with footage of ritualistic behaviors of the subculture being studied (in this case, Amish teenagers engaged in the ritual of Rumspringa). The power of using the subcultures’ voices to tell their stories, not the voices of the students studying them, was illuminating to consider juxtaposed with the silent film of *Nanook*. During our viewing, we discussed how Walker’s film choices for *Devil’s Playground* influenced her end product in important and powerful ways. To further complicate the idea of film and “truth” we also viewed a clip of *Fahrenheit 911*, certainly not an ethnographic film, by Michael Moore. I chose to first view this film without any sound, asking students to freewrite directly afterward about the powerful film edits and choices he made. What was the story of the 9/11 culture he was trying to show us? Then, we viewed that same clip with sound, noting how his choices of music and narrative overlays attempted to persuade and upset audiences. What happens when film is edited and how does that particularly impact our ethnographic conclusions?

As a class, students not only recognized that editing the ethnographic film alters the subcultures’ stories but also that film itself is inherently and unequivocally subjective in its shooting, editing, and analysis. That was something that none of us could or should ignore. If students could embrace the subjectivity of ethnography as a method and as a composition they could potentially employ a more playful, creative dimension to their writing. Having the freedom to share their interpretations of their cultural experiences might help them to produce more developed narratives about those experiences. Despite its subjectivity, though, ethnographic

filmmaking needed to be distinguished from other kinds of filmmaking in order to still allow students to see how severe editing and manipulation can turn the film into something else.

To place this idea in context, I turned to Grimshaw, who writes in “Teaching Visual Anthropology” about her undergraduate anthropological filmmaking class, which she found challenging to teach, particularly in the twenty-first century, primarily because of students’ struggles to understand the difference between anthropological filmmaking and what she terms docusoaps or today’s fascination with television shows outwardly labeled documentaries but edited and presented more as soap operas (see *The Real Housewives* series or *Jersey Shore* as examples). In Grimshaw’s article, she unpacks the complexities and limitations of filmmaking from an anthropological standpoint when she writes that “A central objective of the course is for students to encounter the limits of observational filmmaking, to challenge its claims, to ask what is revealed and what is concealed by working in such a way. Observational cinema is the starting point for, rather than the summation of, their anthropological filmmaking” (245). Students in her class, like my students in mine, must triangulate that data with other kinds of data like archives and interviews, before creating what they conceive as an anthropologically-accurate film. My students face similar challenges in their efforts to produce thoughtful representations of their perspectives of the subcultures they are studying. At the same time, students work toward recognition that even each subculture members’ perspectives on their subculture will be different from other members’ perspectives. Rather than attempting to film the impossible, an “untouched” film product, students needed to accept the limitations of a film project just as I, their teacher, needed to allow for the necessary flexibility and subjectivity that ethnography and filmmaking require. In fact, interpretation and subjectivity can sometimes make their filmmaking and subsequent analysis even better than just looking at raw footage. The heart of perspective

pedagogy is not just asking students to look at their subcultures from various perspectives but to write from those varied perspectives as well. By reflecting on the perspectives holistically, they can begin to make connections between the film footage and other conclusions they are drawing about their subcultures. After all, just like many other kinds of researching projects, perspective pedagogy contains a self-reflective element. When researchers are encouraged to reflect on their researching and writing experiences, they are able to engage in the organic processes of both. This self-reflection, dovetailed with the inherent subjectivity of ethnographic filmmaking and the resultant ethnographies that my students wrote about those films, mirror the intentions of perspective pedagogy just as they should: one student's perspective of their experiences researching one particular subculture. Students seemed immediately intrigued and interested in the concept of using ethnographic film in research as a whole and seemed quite engaged with our viewing of the films clips; they showed even more enthusiasm in subsequent semesters of the ethnographic film project once we could view and discuss student film assignments. Seeing "what I can do" helped students put the assignment in context of this course, an element the first semester of students lacked (understandably so). Once my students understood what ethnographic film was, I introduced their ethnographic film assignment for the course. In some ways, our process for ethnographic film mirrored that of the ethnographic photography assignment in that the ethnographic film assignment asked them to write an essay that connected their film footage to other research they had done, including their observations and/or their



interviews and/or their photographs. Specifically, the assignment sheet required them to do the following:

In a 3 to 5-page essay, discuss what we are seeing in your film and why we are seeing it. What does this video tell us about your subculture? Why did you choose this video as representative of your subculture? Then, connect what you learned about your subculture through this video with earlier research you have done on them. How does this video confirm your earlier conclusions about the subculture? Or, maybe, how does it make you question things you thought you already knew and/or understood about the subculture? (Paull, ethnographic film assignment)

Like the unit on ethnographic photography, the ethnographic film unit was discussed as a method students could use during the observing and interviewing processes. In our discussions of ethnographic film, we considered how filming interviews can offer insight into subculture members' feelings about the questions being asked. For example, students may notice, after viewing a video clip, how a particular subculture member seemed uncomfortable while answering certain questions, which could be revealed through the member failing to make eye contact, shuffling in his chair, or enacting a nervous habit like biting finger nails or twirling hair. These could indicate either a partially-fabricated or hesitant answer. Others might hear something in the playback that they had missed while taking notes live during the interview. Film footage could serve many elements for triangulation of their research and greater accuracy in their conclusions, I noted, and could offer a new perspective that ethnographic photography

could not by showing us the subculture in motion. To help them in their decision process for what to film, their assignment sheet asked them these questions:

- What could I film that would help me better understand my subculture?
- What kinds of rituals or behaviors am I permitted to film?
- When are the rituals or behaviors going to occur? Does their schedule match mine?
- What behaviors are complicated and could benefit from be viewed on film (slow motion, stop action, repeatedly)?

While I encouraged students to choose their filming carefully, they were not expected to be or encouraged to be Hollywood filmmakers. In fact, I discouraged my students from editing their films, emphasizing the complexity of doing so and the repercussions they faced from taking out pieces of the rituals or lives of the subculture members. In this discussion, I emphasized that their ethnographic projects, and I, required them to respect their subculture members' interactions, not editing with the intent to alter events or take out some things that happened that might skew whatever conclusions a student might be making about his/her subculture. With that said, both my students and I also needed to consider my earlier comments about the subjectivity of filmmaking and visual analysis. Each of us would view any given film from our own perspective and, as a result, "see" and write about a different truth. Students with extensive footage (an hour or more) sometimes edited down their films to help audience members focus on those specific behaviors about which the students wrote in their ethnographies. However, most students left their footage intact and simply spent their ethnographies discussing what they saw as the most important or relevant scenes of the film for their class projects.

When it came time to collect the ethnographic film projects, I found many students who embraced the experience for what it was: a chance for them and for readers to see the subcultures

in action and, perhaps more importantly, observe them repeatedly, which should offer chances to see different things upon each review. Just as with watching their favorite movie thirty times, every time they watched the footage, they had the potential to “discover” something new. If they watched the footage after collecting new data that connected to it, their perspective changed and, subsequently, their interpretation of the film would change. Changing perspectives needed to be celebrated, respected and expected by both my students and by me.

For example, one student shot film of horse training at the local training facility where she was studying her subculture of horse trainers. She used her film to enhance her understanding, as well as the understanding of her readers, of the types of horse training that occurred there:

Although \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_’s dogs are not training horses, they do have their distinctive roles. To further explain, \_\_\_\_\_ an Australian Shepherd is the dedicated canine helper. For example, he alerts everyone with a bark or two when someone is coming up the lane and also \_\_\_\_\_ helps by fetching halters, ropes, horse brushes, and even horses for all the members of the subculture who ask for his help.

Her reference to the video as a parenthetical citation shows readers that she used the video to contribute to her conclusions about the roles of the dogs in the subculture. Their roles are equally important to examine as elements of this subculture despite or maybe even because of the dogs’ linguistic limitations.

Another student studied jazz musicians as his local subculture and utilized video footage to bring aural and visual elements to his analysis of the music as well as the ways that the

subculture members interacted with one another through music. Without ethnographic film, this students' understanding of musicians would have been less.

Not everyone's ethnographic film projects were as successful as these two, though. One student, for example, filmed the basketball pick-up teams one night in a very noisy and potentially dangerous gymnasium where it was difficult to gather a clear shot or any zoom shots, as the bleachers were not pulled out for seating and the only places to stand were at the sidelines. While interestingly authentic, as if he were on the sidelines ready to "go in" for a team, it was challenging for him to engage with the film and gather information. People ran back and forth in front of the camera and one ball even hit him and knocked him off his feet. His written ethnographic film assignment still managed to help him tell the story of the games in more vivid ways, though editing the footage was challenging.

With that said, the ethnographic film assignment, when it came time for submission, took a significant step away from my experiences with ethnographic photography. Specifically, most students did not complete the assignment. Getting all kinds of reasons from students, ranging from lack of time, difficulty finding the equipment, and subcultures rescinding the offer to be filmed, students chose not to submit the assignment. I cannot be sure if these excuses were accurate or if students simply chose not to do the project. It required time and effort that perhaps their schedules did not allow or students did not wish to give. I could not be sure. This project caused me to return to my earlier problems with the old ethnographic pedagogy classroom and student resistance to unfamiliar. After all, as Bishop notes, "Ethnography changes the ethnographer. Conducting a first ethnography changes our relationship to the field, to research methods, to our own authority, and, often, to our research subject(s)" (207). If this holds true,

and I think it does, student ethnographers in my course were faced with a life-changing experience and one that was, quite frankly, uncomfortable, I imagine.

If I based this assignment's ability to resolve problems from the old ethnographic pedagogy classroom solely on the quantity of results, I would say that the assignment failed. However, if I based its success on the quality of the submissions I did get, I would say it was a resounding success. Once other students saw the ethnographic film assignments that were submitted, they recognized the power of ethnographic film. The limited completion rate led to important dialogues between students, too, asking "How did you get the nerve to film them?" or "Where did you get the equipment?" or "Didn't they feel weird being filmed?" Sparking a discussion like this in the classroom acted as a really important forum for addressing the power of triangulation, methodological discovery and the consequences of missing out on a particular method in this assignment.

Once I had student samples to share with future semesters of students in my new perspective pedagogy classroom, the completion rate increased, though it was still not 100%. Due to this intense resistance, ethnographic film became an optional methodology in the classroom. I will discuss what I feel might be the potential for this artistic method in Chapter 4, placed in the context of the increasingly common use of film and loosening expectations and desires of privacy for today's students versus those I was teaching even just a few years ago. Perhaps today's students would not resist as much as these students did.

### **Adding the Performance Ethnography Assignment**

After adding ethnographic photography and film into my classroom, I moved on to add a performance ethnography assignment. To begin our unit on performance ethnography, I defined the methodology to students (much like I defined it in Chapter 1's

definitions section) and then expanded upon that definition by using what Turner and Turner say about this assignment's purpose, which is

to aid students' understanding of how people in other cultures experience the richness of their social existence, what the moral pressures are upon them, what kinds of pleasures they expect to receive as a reward for following certain patterns of action, and how they express joy, grief, deference, and affection, in accordance with cultural expectations. (265)

This project necessarily came later in the semester, because students needed to be comfortable enough with their subcultures as well as with themselves as researchers of those subcultures to perform the subcultures' rituals and use their subcultures' languages. Unlike photographing and videotaping, the performances neither occurred repeatedly throughout the semester nor did they start early on in the project. In order to create performances that were based on a comprehensive set of perspectives of their subcultures, students were told to wait until the end of the semester to fulfill this requirement. According to Gallagher, "Live performance offers a complex way to 'see' research. Researchers must therefore ask certain questions: 1) How does the stage 'instruct'? 2.) What are the scientific, artistic, and pedagogic risks/gains? 3.) What are the artistic limits of performed ethnographies?" (109). These were the kinds of questions I and my students asked about performance ethnography in both its parts, the composition of the performance ethnography scripts and the performance of those scripts.

Goffman feels that performance ethnography allows researchers to reimagine aspects of life that are staged (73-74). What he meant by this was that we should examine those moments in our lives that are ritualistic, that feel staged in some ways, and ask ourselves how the reality of those actions compares to the appearances of those actions to others. In essence, we perform in

our daily lives for many real-life, real-time audiences. By being staged, researchers can view the fieldsite rituals and behaviors yet again, as interpreted by the performers. In addition, performed ethnography can “create spaces for the merger of multiple voices and experiences” (Conquergood, “Performing Moral,” 10). When ethnographic products became dramaturgical—a term the theater community defines as researchers viewing life as a series of performances/theatrical experiences—the texts developed narrators, rather than simply authors, and physical action rather than photographs or films of action. For example, Turner and Turner write that

Often we selected either social dramas—from our own and other ethnographies—or ritual dramas (puberty rites, marriage ceremonies, potlatches, etc.), and asked the students to put them in a ‘play frame’—to relate what they are doing to the ethnographic knowledge they are increasingly in need of to make the scripts they use ‘make sense.’ (266)

While performance ethnography is intended to be liberating and exhilarating for students and ethnographers as a whole, it does carry with it some challenges, so I included those in my introduction to performance ethnography as well. Some may question performance ethnography’s authenticity and see it something that creates caricatures of subculture members rather than realistic interpretations of the subculture members’ experiences. I agree that there are critical challenges that come with asking students to reflect on and express their experiences with a group to which they do not belong. hooks explores this notion in that classroom when she writes that “When we write about [or teach about] the experiences of a group to which we do not belong, we should think about the ethics of our actions, considering whether or not our work will be used to reinforce and perpetuate domination” (*Talking Back*, 43). Students in the FYRC were

certainly faced with this, especially being novice ethnographers in the field. By having them return to their notes, films and photographs, though, my hope was that their performances would reveal their perspectives on their subcultures without perpetuating a colonizing voice. Like ethnographic filmmaking, performance ethnography was subject to my students' interpretations, which had the paradoxical capacity to replicate unflattering and inaccurate stereotypes of subcultures or fostering spectacular student ethnographies and performances. Ultimately, what I found most important was to regularly remind students in my classroom that their writing was but one possible perspective on that subculture and that those perspectives of their subculture members needed to be respected through active dialogue with those members throughout the process of writing, filming, photographing and now performing.

Performance ethnography also introduced a new perspective on their research, the audience of their performances. Gallagher reminds us that

Actors are urged to respect the text, to almost intuit the intent of the playwright. What might this mean for researchers respecting the words and worlds of their research participants if they intend to act like artists who also *imagine* and *create* in some measure? With what questions, then, are the performers of those words/worlds confronted? What is the nature of the artistic engagement for the audience? Should the meanings —explicit and implicit—in the performance be opened up for debate with the audience? When does it become activist theatre of one genre or another? (Gallagher 112)

What Gallagher seems to be saying here, and what I was faced with in my classroom using performance ethnography, is this idea that even when playscripts are copied verbatim from their recorded observations of a subculture (which is rare, in the sense of line-by-line perfect



transcriptions being done), readers and viewers bring their own interpretations and literal voices to the stage, which inevitably transform that text, too, further reinforcing the subjectivity inherent in performance ethnography and, quite honestly, with ethnographic research as a whole. As viewers and/or readers of the performances, too, we are forced “to resist the passive consumption of research while moving ‘audience’ closer to the role of ‘spect-actors’ as Boal conceives it (Feldhendler), referring to the activated spectator, with choices and potential involvement” (Gallagher 114).

Once students had a handle on the definitions and purposes of performance ethnography, they read over professional performance ethnography examples to get a sense of what their final written products might look like. We began with a professional example from Turner and Turner who describe a contemporary Virginian wedding, a subculture one of the students in their class had been studying all semester. Each of their students was assigned a particular role (mom, dad, bride, groom, etc.), which were each described simply on little sheets of paper stuffed in a hat. They spent weeks preparing for their roles as well as setting up the fieldsite, a fake church in an auditorium. Their performance was quite elaborate, taking place on the main theater’s stage at the university. The students each performed their role, in costume, reflecting their understanding of the ritual, behaviors or beliefs of that subculture. In the end, performance ethnography is an “attempt to put students more fully inside the cultures they were reading about in anthropological monographs” (Turner and Turner 270). If students could attempt an authentic interpretation of what they had been researching all semester, they would be better able to articulate those conclusions in their final text as well.

In addition, to illustrate the creative approaches performance ethnography can take, we discussed Joni Jones’s article about the performance ethnography piece she and some colleagues

did at the Jones Center for Contemporary Art in Austin, Texas. Inspired by her ethnographic work in Nigeria, she wanted to share her experiences with that subculture with others. She chose to utilize some scripted pieces and other improvisational ones. Since she had done research there, she also had access to authentic costumes and artifacts for the piece. While students may or may not have that (for example, cheerleaders may allow their uniforms to be used for a performance piece), this certainly added an additional layer to Jones's performance. In addition, she ran video clips and hung photographs of her experience in the background of the facility. Allowing the audience to see other visual and aural elements for comparison and contrast can contribute to the audience's sense of authenticity.

Meanwhile she and other women spoke in two sets of monologues. The first was as Yoruban women, who actually "represented an amalgamation of Yoruba women we met, studied, observed" (Jones 3). The second type of performance was as themselves where "In the monologues, one woman talked about her admiration for 'precocious little girls,' another discussed her ambivalence around motherhood, another talked of her love of opulent cloth, and another described her sexual coming of age" (2-3). The use of two-voiced monologues illustrates the purpose of ethnography beautifully, reminding the audience (and my students in the midst of our discussion of this performance) that the performers are researchers experiencing this culture and not actual members of this culture, which some audience members may forget if the performance goes well enough. Jones' performance helped students move forward with their own performances by establishing another concrete example of the directions that they might take their performance ethnographies.

In the semesters after my students completed performance ethnography projects for my class, I added in some student examples to the introduction of the assignment to students in later

semesters. Just as I found in my earlier units, having student examples definitely helped students see the kinds of work they should “shoot for” in their own performance ethnography assignments.

Once students had a firm foundation for what performance ethnography was, it was time for them to hear about their own FYRC performance ethnography assignment. Based on the many problems with the ethnographic film assignment the semester before, I made the performance ethnography assignment one option for artistic ethnography in the classroom that semester. Perhaps this was not the right choice to make, as a researcher or as a teacher, shying away from resistance of students. I cannot be sure. However, I wanted students to complete the work. Therefore, I required them to select two of the three artistic ethnography methods: ethnographic photography, performance ethnography and/or ethnographic film. I hoped this would remove some pressure from students and ask them to do one thing which pushed them beyond their comfort zone but not necessarily two (film AND performance). Having addressed the ethnographic film assignment in the previous section, I will simply discuss the performance ethnography assignment here.

As with ethnographers in the field, students were given the power to choose which methods they felt would work best for their projects, though. From what I saw, they generally chose methods based on ease or comfort with the methods themselves. Looking back, perhaps I took the easy way out pedagogically-speaking; however, I felt that my real job as an instructor of perspective pedagogy was to mentor students through their ethnographic experiences while empowering themselves as writers and critical thinkers. What kind of experiences were those going to be if they were going to demonstrate even more resistance to the pedagogy than they

had to my old ethnographic pedagogy? After all, my goal with these new methodological infusions was to alleviate or at least resolve those problems to some extent, right?

The performance ethnography assignment for the course required that, essentially, students use any combination of their observational fieldnotes, interview transcripts, photographs and videotapes, to write a script that would become an actual performance. The script needed to reflect their interpretations of their subculture research. While they were not to comprehensively fictionalize the subcultures, their projects would naturally offer their perspectives on their own ethnographic experiences. Understandably so, this assignment brought to light a common debate with not only compositionists as we compose narratives and are challenged to define it as fiction or fact, but also with ethnographers. That is, the idea that

the writing of ethnography involves telling stories, making pictures, concocting symbolisms, and deploying tropes is commonly resisted, often fiercely, because of a confusion, endemic in the West since Plato at least, of the imagined with the imaginary, the fictional with the false, making things out without making them up. The strange idea that reality has an idiom in which it prefers to be described...leads on to the even stranger idea that, if literalism is lost, so is fact.  
(Geertz, *Works and Lives*, 14)

What Geertz seems to be saying here is that ethnography, like most composition, is at some level based on our perspectives, our choices, and our sense of what happened, so, ultimately, there is some form of fiction in all of it.

Just as the subjectivity of ethnographic film could make the compositions more powerful than attempts to transcribe so-called Truth, performance ethnographies in both script and performed genres could be even more compelling than the original so-called authentic subculture

experience. What I mean by this is that the process of composing playscripts for the performance ethnographies allows students to step into the subculture's experiences in a more personal manner. By becoming a subculture member while serving as an actor in the play, students come to understand the subculture in these increasingly powerful ways. As a result of the performance ethnography writing assignment, then, students' ethnographies gain a personal texture that is likely new to and different from the rest of the perspectives of their projects. To do this assignment as effectively as possible, students needed to remember that "ethnographic reporting involves 'telling' the life of the researcher as much or more as the life of the studied culture" (Bishop 228). Students should feel the potentially-liberating power of performance ethnography. To tell those stories, this assignment emphasized the importance of choice about which primary and secondary research would contribute most effectively toward the scripted world of their subcultures. To encourage and spark imaginations, the assignment sheet encouraged creativity with venue and approaches for the performance ethnography assignment when it states:

- What site will you use for your performance?
- Will you perform live or videotaped?
- What subculture experience(s) will your performance share?
- What do you want your performance to tell readers about your experience researching this subculture?
- What kinds of authenticity elements should you include (costumes, sets, props)? (Paull, performance ethnography assignment sheet)

I told students they could perform their scripts with friends or other classmates; with a live audience in front of their classmates or remotely by sharing a recording of the performances; with or without music; and with low-budget or pricier costumes and sets. Their choices likely depended on their levels of expertise in these areas or on budgetary constraints or subculture limitations for site choices. As with all ethnographic assignments, they were faced with many

choices. The performance ethnography assignment handout instructed students as follows:

1. Select a ritual or behavior you find interesting that you have had a chance to observe this semester.
2. Write up a script that tells that scene, including descriptions of actors, actions, words, setting and costumes necessary.
3. Perform that play with the necessary actors. This may be done live during class time or prerecorded and played for class.
4. Write an analysis that reflects on how the performance experience impacted your understanding of your subculture. What have you concluded about who this subculture is? How do these people represent that subculture in a way that is challenging and intriguing to you? How did this performance experience further support earlier fieldwork you have done with this subculture? Or, perhaps, how did the scripting and performing experiences put into question some of your earlier work? How did you ultimately negotiate between these contradictions or questions in your research? Consider your textual, aural and visual experiences thus far. (Paull, performance ethnography assignment)

To help them prepare and visualize what the assignment might look like, I created a performance assignment where everyone was required to create a playscript of a short scene of only two pages of dialogue and movements, based on the students' experiences with the subcultures. By asking FYRC students to write scripts, they explored a new genre of writing and researching. Once they had all finished a short 1-2 page playscript for their groups to read, the groups each picked one to perform in class, without costumes, sets or props, and performed in front of the rest of the class. This experience helped students unpack this complicated idea and address questions they had about the composition of performance ethnographies.

When it came time to submit performance ethnographies, there were a few who got excited about the project. For example, one student spent his semester studying the local coffeehouse subculture. In conjunction with his observational fieldnotes, this student also videotaped a lot of activities there, including lots of interaction between employees and customers via the front counter as well as special activities like open mic night. He interviewed multiple people in the subculture, including a table of regular coffeehouse-goers as well as two

employees from the local coffeehouse. All of these methods contributed toward his performance ethnography.

As a result of viewing and reading all of his primary research and reviewing his secondary research on coffee culture, this student came to some conclusions about the types of patrons he saw, the language of the coffee shop, and the atmosphere of the place. Then, he wrote up a play script of the ordering process at the coffee shop, highlighting the types of language used and the behaviors commonly observed in the shop. This was all based on fieldnotes he had taken, the photographs he shot, the videotape he took, and his interpretations of the subculture's story using those perspectives.

In addition to trying to include authentic subculture language, such as the types of drinks and the fancy labels for their cup sizes, he also used the photographs and film footage he had gathered of both daytime and nighttime rituals to help him design the clothing of subculture members and recreate the artifacts used during what could be labeled "counter culture," the rituals that occurred while ordering drinks at the counter. Complete with oversized coffee mugs and espresso machine (actually a cheap, stained Black and Decker coffee pot), he and his friends "staged" their performance of this "counter culture" at the coffee shop (one of the other actor's apartments).

In his performance ethnography essay, this student reflected on how his coffee house subculture performance ethnography experience helped him to gain insight into this heavily caffeinated and social subculture that he had previously not encountered in his own hometown. His close observations of the types of coffee drinkers specifically translated into his replication of their language, actions and reactions with coffee shop workers. Prior to this experience, this student's understanding of the subculture was through recording other people's movements and

sharing his experiences while observing and recording that information. Becoming a member, even if only for a day or two through performance, allowed him to understand their language from a new perspective and understand the employee's reactions to customers after having to deal with them himself. Also, being asked to design the setting and costumes challenged him to examine both much more closely and consider the reasons why coffee house culture used the bigger mugs or how interacting with scalding hot beverages can be quite challenging and stressful.

For his audience—me and his classmates—his performance helped us to understand the subculture through his perspective of that subculture. As a teacher, comparing his DVD of his performance alongside his other ethnographic work including fieldnotes, photography and interviews, allowed me to determine the ways in which his performance paralleled his conclusions from his other ethnographic experiences with that subculture. As a teacher, I found it exciting to read through and view my student's work, attempting to see the subculture through his perspective. As I have already mentioned in this section and earlier when addressing the role and expectations with narrative inquiry, there is no all-encompassing, singular Truth but rather a spectrum of possible perspectives on experiences, a multiplicity of truths, with a lower-case "t." That is the inherent beauty of narrative inquiry, in ethnographies and in perspective pedagogy. As a reader of my students' inquiries, my role is not to assess its validity per se but rather to enjoy the narrative qualities of the playscript and of his earlier ethnographies, the written composition, and identify parallels between them. If I did not let go of the unattainable expectation for him to "prove" his experiences were "real," I could not truly appreciate ethnographic narrative or perspective pedagogy for what it was at that point and what it continues to be: one person's perspectives on a subculture.



After reviewing his assignment, there were parallels between his documentation and the performance DVD and script as well as some fictionalized elements to help create a more cohesive narrative thread, like his main character being followed from the moment he woke up in the morning. This student had not actually observed any subculture members in their homes prior to entering the subculture's fieldsite. He fictionalized that part of his character's life to help the audience connect to him as a person in a "day in the life" storyline, an attempt to translate his perspective of the coffee subculture through the eyes of a singular character to represent "Joe Coffee Subculture Member" of sorts.

Another student who composed a play script for his performance ethnography assignment wrote a script that included five "improvisational musicians" equipped with costumes, instruments and the class as "audience" in the quad, replicating the "open mic night" culture on campus. By involving us as subculture members, viewing the performance in multiple ways, as audience members we engaged in the performance ethnography experience, creating a dialogic experience with the scripted performers and walking away with a different kind of understanding. This live performance, juxtaposed with our in-class viewing of their rehearsed and videotaped performance of the same script, complicated and challenged us to consider the value of being audience members as well. It is these kinds of artistic ethnographic experiences that enhanced our community's learning and understanding of ethnography, research, and composition.

Overall, the performance ethnography assignment was not the most popular new ethnographic assignment for students, i.e. compared to ethnographic film and photography. Most of my students retreated from the idea of performing their work. However, there were quite a few who immediately were excited by the *idea* of writing a play, which was a genre quite

different from the others they had written. Once they engaged in the actual *composition* of it, though, some struggled and ultimately quit the attempt all together.

Meanwhile, those who wrote performance ethnographies brought to light one of the largest challenges of perspective pedagogy: the careful balance between subjective interpretation and pure fictionalization of their experiences. Performance ethnography, like other ethnographic narratives, put identities of the subculture members and the students into question. As Atkinson says,

Through narrative the ethnographer – like the historian, the biographer, or the novelist – shapes individual and collective action, character, and motive. The ethnography embeds and comments on the stories told by informants, investing them with a significance often beyond their mundane production. It includes the ethnographer’s own accounts of incidents, “cases,” and the like. They too are transformed and enhanced by their recontextualization in the ethnography itself. These narrative instances are collected and juxtaposed in the text so that their meaning (sociological or anthropological significance) is implied by the ethnographer and reconstructed by the reader. (13)

As this section regarding performance ethnography has shown thus far, while my students embraced this idea of perspective or interpretation of their experiences, as perspective pedagogy necessitates, there are nuances between interpretation/perspective and fiction. This assignment brought that to light how important it is that I teach my students not to fictionalize their playscripts but rather to share their perspective on the subculture’s lives and their own experiences researching the subculture’s lives.

Some students saw their playscripts as fiction to a degree and, subsequently, saw their performance as “acting” at its purest level. To some extent, identifying the assignment as a “script” may have been part of that challenge. Although that is what the performance ethnographers call their texts, perhaps I should have considered calling the assignment something else to avoid the confusion with the word itself. If the assignment seemed a little less like creative writing and a little more like some of their earlier writing, ethnographic narrative to be performed, perhaps they would have considered the assignment for a longer period of time. It also seems worth mentioning the distinct possibility that some students chose not to do performance ethnography, because they encountered simple self-consciousness with performing in front of others. I cannot be sure why, but students definitely displayed hesitancy to select performance ethnography as an ethnographic methodological option for our course.

While the students who did the playscripts seemed to have taken the performance ethnography experience quite seriously, that does not necessarily free them from these perhaps unintentional interpretations of the subcultures as acts of disempowerment for the subcultures being studied. What I mean by this is that students should not use their writing to assert power over the subcultures being studied or use their performances to attempt to replicate what they think are the perspectives of the subcultures’ members. In this way, perspective pedagogy mirrors liberatory pedagogy, because perspective pedagogy asks that students examine their own social experiences to help them think critically about those experiences rather than being handed knowledge by the teacher, the supposed “center of all knowledge.” Perhaps more accurately, perspective pedagogy is reminiscent of hooks’ engaged pedagogy, which combines anticolonial, critical and feminist pedagogies and asks us to challenge and reinscribe our understanding of systems of domination (*Teaching to Transgress*, 84). My students’ becoming primary

researchers asks them to reconsider their supposed dominant role as researcher “over” their “subjects,” i.e., the subcultures they are studying and instead, create a system of collaboration with them whereby they consider each other’s perspectives as one of many ways to translate the experiences with that subculture.

As my students and I have discussed while using other ethnographic methods, students needed to see performance ethnography as *their* perspective of *their* experiences with those subcultures. Ethnography by its very nature is subjective. It is just one version of experience, one version of truth, and not to be considered the only version or interpretation of that subculture. Students needed to understand how to approach writing narrative inquiry as well as the consequences of their writing and performing.

When the sixth research semester came to a close, student success rates were noticeably higher than in previous ones when students did not submit their projects at all. By “success” here, I mean first in a quantifiable way, because approximately 80% of my students completed both artistic ethnographic projects as assigned, which was average for any given course considering the retention rates at my university at the time and, as I noted above, higher than the semester when only a handful of students completed the ethnographic film project. I believe that this success was due, at least in part, to students being given time to select the appropriate and most accessible methods for their subcultures which allowed for much more room for creativity and exploration. By being able to select the methods that best fit their subculture members and rituals, students felt they were leading and constructing their own research experiences. Pink suggests that ethnographers hold off on deciding on their methods until they are in the field, in the moment, of research (4). I suggested the same thing to my students. Rather than determining from the start of a project exactly what methods the students might want to use, they were asked

to choose the ones that work best or are most relevant to the students or the subcultures being studied. To aid in their decision-making processes, I gave students many handouts and student examples of strategies for collaborating with their subculture members about the strongest methodological choices for the subcultures they are studying.

## **Conclusion**

As this section comes to a close, I want to return to the broader question that I proposed earlier in Chapter 1: Did perspective pedagogy solve the problems I identified in my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom? Student notetaking increased dramatically by having more methods by which to generate those notes; that is, students generated more notes by doing more research. As a result of this increased volume of notes, students were able to generate more thorough and exciting triangulation of data. They found themselves recognizing things in their interviews that they had also seen in their films, for example, or in the fieldnotes and their photographs. Based on the writing and projects I saw, the fact that students generated more thoughtful conclusions about their subcultures subsequently increased students' confidence in their writing which resulted in more essays with thick descriptions that referred to their many ethnographic methods, artistic and otherwise, as demonstrated in this chapter. While perspective pedagogy certainly helped me resolve some of the problems I saw in my old ethnographic pedagogy classroom, these methods also introduced new problems with student resistance and the complex questions concerning fiction versus ethnographic narrative. Overall, though, I would consider my perspective pedagogy to have been a worthwhile experience and one worth continuing to refine in future semesters (some of which I address in Chapter 4, where I consider potential new directions this pedagogy might take as well as revisions to the approaches here in this chapter).

Now that readers have gotten a glimpse into my perspective pedagogy classroom, Chapter 3 will offer some insights into how the historical development of the ethnographic methods, artistic ones in particular, informed this pedagogy.

## **CHAPTER 3: HOW DID ETHNOGRAPHIC SCHOLARS INSPIRE PERSPECTIVE PEDAGOGY?**

After getting a picture of perspective pedagogy in Chapter 2, I now want to discuss how I became inspired to revise ethnographic pedagogy to become perspective pedagogy. Readers might recall that my old classroom used ethnographic pedagogy, a pedagogy which asks students to identify and research a local culture using such methods as observations, interviews, artifact collection and secondary source collections. Before I could revise ethnographic pedagogy, I studied ethnography's historical development. I did so because I hoped that ethnographers through the years had run into problems similar to those I saw in students' work in my classroom, so tracing ethnographers' responses to problems with ethnography might uncover ideas for solving the problems I identified with ethnographic pedagogy in my classes. Because I am dealing with historical issues, I will supply dates as necessary for readers in order to situate them within the historical contexts of people, places and concepts addressed in this chapter. During my historical journey, I discovered means by which that ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography could empower ethnographers. By sharing this chapter with my readers, I hope to illuminate how the history revealed potential solutions to my classroom problems that inspired my perspective pedagogy.

In Chapter 3, I offer three sections, each based on investigating one of the three problems I found with ethnographic pedagogy in my classroom: underdeveloped notetaking, limited triangulated conclusions, and underdeveloped essays. I begin each section by describing one problem I found with my students' work (research and/or writing). Then I draw parallels between their problems and those I found with ethnographer-scholars' work in ethnography's history. Once those parallels are drawn, I trace the ways that ethnographers attempted to solve

those problems. Finally, I wrap up each section by reflecting on how I applied the ethnographers' solutions to perspective pedagogy on which this dissertation is based.

### **Investigating the Problem of Underdeveloped Notes**

One of the problems I identified in my classroom where I used ethnographic pedagogy was that my students' notes were not as fully developed as they need to be for thoughtful ethnographic research. Becoming a fieldnote writer is not intuitive for students, since they are much more familiar with taking notes from texts that are static and able to be read, reviewed, and reread, unlike the people being observed in the field. I hoped to find approaches for developing students' notetaking capabilities and turned to ethnographic history to find some suggestions for doing so. My turn to history stemmed from my belief that the strongest ethnographic notetakers would likely be ethnographic scholars themselves, since their notetaking techniques would be the most grounded in prior scholarship and first-hand practice. As I began my investigation, I asked myself, what notetaking problems did ethnographers encounter through the centuries and how might their approaches toward notetaking help me improve my students' notetaking?

Prior to ethnography even having an official name (it was first called "ethnography" in 1851), early researchers of foreign cultures faced many challenges. DeGerardo (1969) notes there were many flaws with early reports from explorers, such as incomplete reports, probably because they only observed other new places or people for brief moments in their lives. Moreover, he noted that these reports had "the division of their attention, and the absence of any regular tabulation of their findings" (65). Readers of these cultural narratives wanted to see improvement in ethnographers "findings" to verify that the research had been done. For example, Morgan seems to be the only ethnographer prior to 1900 that even observed natives first-hand (though certainly not in extended circumstances like today's ethnographers do and, as a result, is



not generally seen as someone whose research should be revered) whereas Tylor and Frazer did not do any fieldworking themselves (DeGerardo 65). In response, researchers in the late 1800s and early 1900s sought ways to “prove” their research to others. One approach was to move away from their researching desks and move into the field themselves. Ethnographers such as Boas and Malinowski encouraged open-air ethnography to replace armchair anthropology in the mid-to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Armchair anthropologists were labeled as such because they did very little if any fieldwork themselves but rather researched cultures from their library chairs, using the work of other anthropologists to draw their conclusions about cultures instead of doing the fieldwork for themselves [see Tylor’s *Primitive Cultures* (1871) and Morgan’s *League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee or Iroquois* (1904) for two examples of armchair anthropology].

As I read through this information about armchair anthropologists, I recognized that just as early ethnographers were not always entirely dedicated to the field of ethnography, my students were not always entirely enthusiastic about throwing themselves into their ethnographic research projects. I discovered parallels between these early ethnographers and my own students, all of whom faced similar problems in that if they were resistant to literally entering the field and engage in active, hands-on fieldwork, they were not likely to produce developed notes. Ethnographers learned that it was important to enter the field in order to write up the most detailed, authentic notes. For my classroom, I translated this idea by requiring students repeatedly enter their subcultures’ fieldsites in order to develop thoughtful notes as well. This parallel was the first of many that helped me begin to see potential ways to reconcile the problem with underdeveloped notetaking that I was seeing in my classroom.

One way that ethnographers began to develop their notetaking approaches was by introducing additional research methods from which to add to their existing observational

fieldnotes. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century was coming to a close, researchers added a new perspective through the use of the phonograph. This new recording device helped ethnographers in the field gather more accurate information than their earlier experiences based primarily on memory or note-taking. For example, using it to keep a clear record of their interviews from the field alleviated the pressures of having to rely on one-chance transcription opportunities based on single listening experiences. Instead, they could transcribe their recordings based on multiple opportunities to listen to them.

Boas (1888), Fewkes (1890), and Fletcher (1893) were just some of the ethnographers who supported using the phonograph in their research. These researchers and others like them considered it a standard for researching in the beginning of the twentieth century. The phonograph “could expedite fieldwork undertaken under pressure, produce a body of data conforming to contemporary notions of scientific objectivity, [and]...compensate for skills many collectors lacked in written transcription of music or phonetic texts” (Brady 86). Furthermore, phonographs allowed for slower and more careful transcription of things heard and provided “a convenient and practical means to document the forms of verbal and musical expression considered the essential units of a community’s traditional culture” (88). It is clear that Boas and others believed there was value in gathering information by using a variety of methodologies.

Like Boas, ethnographic pedagogy advocates for the use of aural evidence in the classroom, as illustrated by students conducting interviews, though it does not specify the necessity of recording those interviews. Auditory evidence makes professional ethnographers’ work stronger and, in turn, I concluded, might make my students’ research stronger as well. Ethnographers attempted to resolve their challenges with fieldnotes by having additional kinds of research that contributed to their fieldnotes. It seemed to me that my students would also benefit

from pulling from more than just their observations in the fieldsites. They would not use the phonograph, of course, but these early works established a foundation for the importance of aural evidence. With access to ever-changing technology, I revised this earlier use of auditory evidence into potential types of recordings that my students could do of their subculture members. Specifically, my students could use their cell phones, MP3 players, I-pods, or hand-held tape or digital recorders to record interviews with members and subsequently submit those recordings as part of their assignments' documentation.

Despite some researchers' enthusiasm about the phonograph's use in ethnographic studies, it faced its share of resistance in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by such researchers as Krehbeil (1914), who questioned its ability to accurately record sound due to lack of clarity and limited pitch abilities. Interestingly, though, according to Yates, others such as Cecil Sharp (1908) questioned the phonograph's use because it was *too* accurate, not allowing for human interpretation (268). Yates (1982) concurs when he writes this about those who used the phonograph: "just as a photograph is generally inferior to a painting in conveying a scene, a phonographic recording is inferior to an auditor's rendering of a performance in standard notation" (269). While on the surface it may seem like ethnographers would be more likely to rely on the accuracy of the phonograph, their ability to translate that recording into the ethnographers' understanding of the truth of that recording seemed to be more important than the recording itself.

As a result, ethnographers using phonographs needed to use their equipment carefully and as a supplemental tool, not as the documentation of an inexplicable cultural Truth [see Alice Fletcher (1893), Frances Densmore (1910), and Marius Barbeau (1918)]. What was Truth, with a capital "T," and what modes or transcription methods would best or most accurately represent

that Truth? Did this concrete capital-T Truth even exist for ethnographers? As this dissertation has noted before, what ethnography rests upon is the notion that Truth does not really exist. Instead, ethnography invites researchers to offer but one interpretation, one perspective on one of many truths. Ultimately, trust and truths both rest with human interpretation and analysis of the recordings over technology's recordings themselves.

Another way that ethnographers developed their notetaking was through photography. As with the use of the phonograph, ethnographers came to realize how reviewing and writing notes on photographs could deepen their understanding of a culture. For example, Malinowski and Ellis, in *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea* (1929), make regular references to the nearly 100 photographic prints included in their book as evidence of the fieldsite and culture in action. Though their book is about sexuality, in the introduction to the book that Malinowski pens, he remarks that none of the photographs are erotic or sexual in any manner, which he indicates is a “gap” in his research but an unavoidable one. Because sexuality in this tribe “takes place in deep shadow literally as well as figuratively, photographs could only be faked, or at best, posed—and faked and posed passion (or sentiment) is worthless” (*The Sexual Life* xxvii). What Malinowski's introduction demonstrates is he and Ellis' commitment to accuracy and authenticity, and his belief that the use of photography should be held to the same standards of his fieldnotes and narratives.

After reading about the development of ethnographic photography, I recognized the value in taking photographs to help ethnographers document their research and field experiences as a whole. By reviewing their photographs alongside their fieldnotes, ethnographers' notes became more fully developed and a bit more reliable. No longer did ethnographers need to rely solely on

their recall and notetaking abilities. Instead, they could use photography to verify and clarify their fieldnotes and to develop their recollection of their subculture experiences. In my revision of ethnographic pedagogy, I decided to integrate the use of ethnographic photography in the hopes that my students would review their photographs in order to build on their underdeveloped notes of their field experiences, to add more sensory details to their notes, and to verify their notes if they were not legible or too brief to follow.

A third way that ethnographers attempted to develop their ethnographic notes was to shoot ethnographic film. In the 1920s and 1930s, when ethnographic film emerged on the scene (DeBrigard 26), filmmakers did not have formal anthropological backgrounds or extensive, if any, fieldworking experiences; instead, their primary roles were as “travelers, adventurers, and scientific missionaries intent on documenting the last traces of vanishing cultures” (Russell 12). Their focus on documentation reiterates the emphasis on scientific documentation of the Other from this artistic point of view that was prevalent during the 1920s and 1930s [see Regnault (1895) and Flaherty (1922)].

In the 1950s, “ethnographic film became an institutionalized scientific field, with recognized specialists and a body of criticism” (DeBrigard 14). In fact, in 1958 Griaule “distinguished three film types: archive footage for research, training films for anthropology courses, and public education films (including, occasionally, ‘works of art’)” (qtd. in DeBrigard 30). Griaule’s categories invited researchers to become experts in a variety of film types, allowing more expertise to be sought with these kinds of cultural films. Despite their intentions to use film to enhance their ethos as ethnographers, researchers challenged and questioned the theories behind these new categories as well and pressured filmmakers to become even more scientific in nature and, subsequently, less artistic (Russell 12). This debate about objectivity

versus subjectivity and issues of realism and representation of the Other in film lead to questions about veracity and the ideas I have presented earlier about the ways in which ethnography offers but one potential version of truth, one perspective on that subculture being studied. In the case of film, ethnographers were faced with what appears as “Truthful” film footage yet even films can be interpreted from various perspectives [See Marshall’s *I Kung* series that spanned from 1950 through 1978]. It is vital to both ethnographers and those using ethnography in the classroom to all come to terms with the subjective nature of ethnographic methodology and recognize it for its ability to empower those using the methods. By our realizing that there are many perspectives through which culture can be seen, ethnographers, including students in my perspective pedagogy, can take command of their interpretations and ethnographic work.

It was important for ethnographic filmmakers to distinguish themselves from the fictional Hollywood films. In response to that need, Jay Ruby (1975) outlined four criteria for a film to be considered ethnographic. Specifically, he said that “they should be films about whole cultures, or definable portions of cultures; informed by explicit or implicit theories of culture; explicit about the research and filming methods they had employed; and using a distinctively anthropological lexicon” (“Is an Ethnographic Film”). Heider wrote a similar conclusion in *Ethnographic Film* (1976) when he stated that ethnographic film should be about “whole bodies, and whole people, in whole acts” (75). As a result, ethnographic filmmakers became more responsible and recognized researchers, just like ethnographic fieldworkers had done in the social sciences.

As ethnographic film continued to change, so did the reasons audiences had for not trusting what they saw in these films. What I mean by this is that many contemporary visual anthropologists and ethnographers specifically trace the more contemporary “popular and political dissolution of the truth-value of visual culture to the Rodney King trials (1992-1993), in

which the self-evident ‘proof’ captured by a home video camera was interpreted very differently by different ‘sides’” (Loizos 19). This “home movie” was projected all over the country for American audiences to not only see but record, review, and analyze on their own. The ability to record and reconsider the film allowed many audience members to question its validity and attempt to translate the film through their own personal lenses of experience. With earlier films, audience members were limited, because they could not repeatedly view the films, could not make their own recordings of those films and, subsequently, could not watch scenes at slow motion speeds or pausing sections along the way. However, when audiences had more power during the reviewing process, they were able to challenge what they saw.

Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, experimental forms of ethnographic film emerged. These kinds of films embraced the ability of films to be revised and edited to produce any number of realities from the footage. This was quite unlike earlier ethnographic films, as I mentioned, which wanted to be considered documentation of cultures that adhered to the Truth of a culture as much as possible. While contemporary ethnographic films tend to be more post-modern in their skepticism about a single “Truth,” they still try to have the culture members tell their perspective on the truths of their subcultures in the films while the filmmakers remain as silent and invisible as possible, only making their political intentions clear at the start of the film (Minh-Ha 39).

While I found it provocative and interesting that ethnographers try to use ethnographic film to enhance their body of research, my research seemed to show that there were a number of issues-questions about veracity, accuracy, “truth”—which I would need to consider in order to integrate film into my FYRC classroom. Despite these challenges, I decided that there was still potential in the use of ethnographic film as one area for revising ethnographic pedagogy in my class. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, to help my students keep their film more accurate, I asked

students to film what they saw without editing their footage, which I hoped would be the best way to keep their ethnographic films as authentic as possible, while also keeping in mind the indisputable subjectivity within ethnographic filmmaking. To help them consider the use of film as one among several perspectives for developing their notes, I recommended that they play back the film in slow motion, pausing and/or rewinding the footage as necessary to reflect on the cultural movements they saw. As a result, I hoped to see them add more details to their notes. This information provided me with a foundation for understanding ethnographic film and its capacity to solve the problems with underdeveloped notetaking.

Like ethnographers I discuss here, students in my ethnographic pedagogy classes faced challenges with representing their chosen subcultures as closely to their perspective of their experiences as possible. By my studying how ethnographers through the centuries grappled with accuracy and development of their fieldnotes, though, I took my first steps toward revising ethnographic pedagogy. I recognized that I could not make ethnographic methodology more truthful, since its very nature conjures up many perspectives and versions of truths about subcultures. Instead, what I did was recognize that I needed to address questions about the multiple truths inherent in ethnographic work and, therefore, about perspective pedagogy and my students' work. In my perspective pedagogy, then, I emphasized the necessity of building their research more fully. In this case, students were not only relying on their notetaking skills both in and out of the field but were now able to use notes from photography and film.

While working on my revisions to ethnographic pedagogy, I worried that my students might rely too heavily on their artistic collections of photographs and films as a bases for their research rather than working on making themselves stronger fieldworkers. What I mean by this is that I feared that this inclusion of aural evidence could backfire on me, causing students to



continue to take underdeveloped notes because they believed they could just take notes from their recordings instead. Perspective pedagogy also addresses the need for students to recognize the limitations of and the power to persuade with interpretation of what they hear or think they hear.

For example, ethnographic photography is an exciting way to examine the nuances of behavior, such as facial expressions and body language, that a novice ethnographer might not notice on his or her own in the field. However, if students relied only on photography to reach conclusions about a subculture, they would find gaps in their understanding. They would only know the story told by pictures without considering as fully as they might what had occurred in between shots. Therefore, photographs would not give the dynamic, interactive details that field observations would offer them.

To avoid this, I stressed that perspective pedagogy is an approach that maintains the importance of taking many kinds of notes, not relying on one kind of method over another to completely. (This will be discussed further in the upcoming section regarding triangulation.). No single type of evidence should stand entirely on its own if students hope to avoid misinterpretation of the evidence they collect. The history outlined in this section of my dissertation inspired my revision to the ethnographic pedagogy's approach toward students' notetaking to include ethnographic film and photography as new notetaking elements.

### **Investigating the Problem with Triangulating Data**

The second major problem I identified with my students' ethnographic pedagogy work was with their data triangulation. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, their conclusions produced superficial overgeneralizations, oversimplifications, or stereotypes, or, in a worst case scenario, they produced no triangulated conclusions at all. I used what I learned about ethnographic

scholars' struggles to develop a potential strategy for improving their data triangulation and revising the ethnographic pedagogy I had been using in my FYRC classroom. In the following paragraphs of this section, I offer details about my research into ethnography's history to discover my approach toward improving students' triangulation data.

Although generally accepted by audiences, early travel narratives dating as far back as 3 B.C. still had their skeptics, those who challenged the accuracy of those supposed historical documents. For example, many contemporary researchers wonder if Herodotus (3 B.C.) ever even visited any of the places he wrote about or if, perhaps, he made up these stories (Marincola xxxi; Lateiner & Macaulay xv). Without any kind of congruent narrative to verify the text of another narrative, the "histories" were really only folklore.

One of the challenges with ethnographers' conclusions about cultures was their tendency to write from colonizing positions, thereby drawing conclusions that were, in essence, condescending and stereotyping toward those cultures. Despite centuries of anthropologists' acceptance of natives as "savages" who needed to be controlled and managed, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century a new perspective emerged and was widely accepted: "the noble savage." While still perpetuating the offensive, dichotomous nature of the term "savage," the noble savage was a phrase used by colonizing researchers to indicate that they saw the primitive nature of these so-called savage cultures as more virtuous because they were untouched and uncorrupted by the rest of the world. Marc Lescarbot's *L'Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (1609) is given credit as the first to use this phrase when he described the hunting by the Micmac people in Canada. When he attempts to explain his reasoning, he notes that "Hunting, then, having been granted unto man by a heavenly privilege, the savages throughout all the West Indies do exercise themselves therein without distinction of persons" (267). From his position as a French lawyer, Lescarbot

knew only that in France hunting was an activity for the noblemen. He therefore concluded that the Micmac must also have elements of nobility.

Lescarbot's initial use of the term is unlike looser definitions of the term that were used later on history, some of which even referred to cannibalistic tribes as inherently noble. Ellis reflects on the undocumented connections between Rousseau and the phrase "noble savage" in fascinating ways that leave readers wondering where the use of the phrase "noble savage" originated or how it developed through the centuries. Referencing everything from the *Oxford Dictionary* to Dettwyler, Stocking and Alvard, Ellington brings to light how the use of the phrase "noble savage" retains its place in ethnographic history and how the concept of the "noble savage" helped others to see that less sophisticated did not automatically imply less civilized (2-3). However problematic the concept of the noble savage may be, it helped pave the way for later ideas like cultural relativism, i.e., that no culture was inherently "better" than the other based on religious, moral, political or legal elements but rather that the cultures that they were studying had many redeeming characteristics worth researching (Broce 12-13).

I found the tales of ethnographers' struggles to avoid imposing their colonizing perceptions of those they studied familiar. While my students did not necessarily think that they were "better" than the cultures they studied, as my dissertation's research questions reflect, they did find themselves stereotyping and overgeneralizing based on their research findings. Seeing that their struggles with this were not unique to student ethnographer work made me more confident that I could address the situation if I kept researching the development of ethnographers' triangulation techniques.

One way that ethnographers attempted to enhance their data triangulation was by taking cameras on their adventures to help them verify their accounts of these cultures. On the surface,

ethnographers during the late 1800s and early 1900s claimed that photography's "objectivity would allow the most accurate record of people and places they were exploring" (Hannavy 499) [see Morgan (1904) and Tylor (1871) for additional examples]. However, at a deeper level,

The control over those photographed enforced by the photographer was a part of the white upper class westerner power over the other. The power needed to make people pose to the photographer was a part of the wider colonial or ruling class power. The eye of the photographer and the eye of the camera were analogous to the eye of surveillance needed to ensure control over lower class and colonial people. (499)

This raised questions both about power and about accuracy of depiction.

As the use of ethnographic photography increased, though, its use became less colonizing and more empowering. One example of visual ethnographers who recognized the power and importance of composition in their research occurs in the work of Bateson and Mead. Like many ethnographers in the early twentieth century, Margaret Mead began her career outside of anthropology, as a psychologist; however, she discovered a passion for visual ethnography. From 1936 to 1938, Mead worked in Bali with Gregory Bateson, which ultimately led to *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis* (1942). This publication integrated text with ethnographic photography, something neither Bateson's nor Mead's previous work had done. In the introduction, Mead reflects on the importance of composing captions to pair up with her analyses, as photographs could not be fully understood on their own ("Introduction" xii). This awareness of the limitations of photography and, at the same time, the power of composition in the translation and audience understanding of photography, set a standard and foundation for visual ethnographers to come. Like users of the phonograph had come to discover, ethnographic

photography was helpful but garnered more power when triangulated with other methods, i.e., text via captions.

Even with captions and discussions accompanying the photographs in *Balinese Character*, Mead recognized the limitations of using English words to reflect on another culture, emphasizing “their weight of culturally limited connotations” and that “the words which one culture has invested with meaning are by the very accuracy of their cultural fit, singularly inappropriate as vehicles for precise comment upon another culture” (“Introduction” xi). It is precisely these limitations of textuality that led Bateson and Mead to integrate photography and video in their research (though they never did find a means for sharing the film footage in their book). Visual elements like photography and film require a different kind of interpretation, different from textual interpretation of secondary resources and fieldnotes. In addition to interpreting the pictures themselves as representations of their subculture experiences, researchers of a culture will need to compose captions for those photographs and perhaps to their films, which both serve as linguistic interpretations of the visual elements. From the captions, photographs and films, researchers triangulate those visual materials with linguistic ones. Mead writes, “By the use of photographs, the wholeness of each piece of behavior can be preserved, while the special cross-referencing desired can be obtained by placing the series of photographs on the same page” (xii). The use of photographs, she hoped, would alleviate earlier challenges to her writing style, such as her original journalistic style which was “accused of being so synthetic that it became fiction”; despite her attempts to revise that style, her second method was “branded as too analytical” (xii). While she did not indicate exactly who made these accusations, her introductory comments reflected the importance of composing concrete yet creative captioning text with the series of photographs to create a visual narrative. However, she

admits that to present photography and captions “together in words, it is necessary either to resort to devices which are inevitably literary, or to dissect the living scenes so that only desiccated items remain” (xii). Mead’s and Bateson’s decision to triangulate the material to create an illustrated narrative of Balinese culture reflects the transformative power of ethnographic composition to adjust in order to embrace many methodologies. This triangulation between text and ethnographic photography set the stage for many ethnographers to come.

Mead and Bateson were not the only researchers to address the importance of text when it came to ethnographic photography. Rony (1996) touted the empowering nature of ethnographic photography to enhance and connect to ethnographic text. Photographs were usually accompanied by text because ethnographic photography is above all a signifying practice accompanied by words and narrative strategies to convince the reader of its ethnographic authority. Images are slippery: although the image must contain visual signifiers of authenticity, captions are still often needed to explain, convince, and keep order. Consequently, detail is not only tamed cinematically, but textually as well (Rony 61).

From these historical findings, I revised my pedagogy to include not just ethnographic photography but also, and perhaps more importantly, to include appropriate captions and discussions of those photographs in their essays. Without the use of text, history had shown me, photographs were only going to offer a limited amount of help with students’ triangulation. As a result, I revised my pedagogy to include work with captioning and using the caption texts to articulate or reiterate conclusions that they drew using other kinds of research techniques, such as their interviews and observational fieldnotes.

A second way that ethnographers tried to enhance their data triangulation was through the use of ethnographic film. However, just as photography faced challenges about its authenticity,

ethnographic film faced similar challenges by the public. The first noted ethnographic film was done by Félix-Louis Regnault's when he filmed the *Exposition Ethnographique de l'Afrique Occidentale* in Paris (1895), an exposition of native performances created by anthropologists to allow others to view the "savage" cultures (Rony 37). These "savages" were on display engaging in their dances and actions (from slaughtering animals to weaving baskets). This film was the first to capture cultural performances by actual culture members rather than reenactments done by people who were not members of the culture (Rony 36). Having authentic actors for the performances created a more authentic performance and believable narrative. The exposition was out of its natural context, the Sudan, but this filming experience inspired Regnault's multiple future fieldsite films of West Africans, such as *Run* in 1895. This fascination with recording cultural rituals by natives in action increased the level of trust in ethnographic experience and performed narrative.

While initially colonizing in its nature, visual ethnographic methods slowly moved into a more empowering role when visual ethnographers in the 1920s and 1930s garnered help for their triangulation of data by collaborating with the cultures' members. Often without any anthropological training, researchers in these aural and visual areas faced the uncertainty of what behaviors they were recording. For instance, Flaherty's (1922) Inuit subjects not only helped him by being the film's subjects but also helped him develop the film and select appropriate rituals for the film (Ruby, "Aggie Come First" 58). The idea of collaboration was groundbreaking, since up to this point the ethnographer was the all-powerful singular point of view. As a result of endeavors like Flaherty's with film and Boas' with the phonograph, ethnographic narratives were a result of triangulating multiple voices, interpretations, and meanings for audiences.

Reading through this historical development of collaboration with culture members caused me to revise my pedagogy in important ways as well. As Chapter 2 noted, my students were required to collaborate with their subculture members in a myriad of ways, including having subculture members review their photographs and film footage to discuss what they saw while watching as well as a foundation for discussing the findings and conclusions that my students came to as a result of looking over the photographs and films. Thus, students' triangulation also included the voices of their subculture members helping to verify their findings.

In addition to taking photographs and film, a third way that ethnographers tried to deepen their triangulation was by following the advice of Malinowski and Boas who encouraged their students to move away from the armchair approach toward an "'open-air' ethnography" which urged "students to stop relying on second-hand reports for the analysis of culture (native pen-pal) and to go to the field themselves to collect their own data" (Van Maanen 17). Not only did they encourage others to get into the field, but Boas and Malinowski themselves went into the field. In fact, Malinowski is well-known for his own research including traditional fieldwork as well as pictures of himself in the tents of the tribes where he stayed, which created visual evidence of his presence [see Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* 1922]. This evidence, paired with his empirical goals and his observations, helped him to differentiate himself from other types of people who had visited these cultures as missionaries, colonizers, and tourists (Prosser 132). His encouragement to researchers to take ownership of their research was the first step toward a more creative, self-aware, and personalized approach toward ethnography.

When it came to classroom applications of these historical adjustments of professional ethnographies, I too encouraged my students to take ownership of their research in the hopes that



my students would become increasingly reflective and thoughtful in their ethnographies. Specifically, I added a requirement for students get out into the fieldsite as much as possible in order to assure that they gained comfort with the subcultures' rituals, behaviors, language and members. I felt that the more that students visited their subcultures in the field, the more comfortable and authentic their data collection would be. Quite simply, more visits would produce more fieldnotes, more photographs, and more films.

A fourth way in which I noticed that ethnographers attempted to deepen their data triangulation occurred when Geertz (1973) introduced ethnographers to “thin” and “thick” description and the difference between a “twitch” and “wink” [a concept he openly borrowed from Gilbert Ryle (1949), a prominent British anthropologist (Atkinson, Bohannan and Glazer 530; Prosser 133)]. More specifically, Geertz's analogy is that

The difference...between a twitch and a wink is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have had the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating, and indeed communicating in quite a precise and special way: (1) deliberately, (2) to someone in particular, (3) to impart a particular message, (4) according to a socially established code, and (5) without cognizance of the rest of the company. (*The Interpretation of Cultures* 6)

If ethnographers applied these ideas to their interpretations of their observations, each ethnographer would produce a different interpretation. By taking careful and critical fieldnotes on cultural actions and reactions, ethnographers were able to translate those observations in important ways, into what he called “thick description” or extensive sensory details as opposed to only writing up generalizations, a verbal twitch so to speak. Specifically, Geertz's thick

description allowed outsiders of the cultures to step into the cultures feeling as if they were insiders.

From this information regarding the wink and the twitch, I thought that if I applied these concepts in my classroom perhaps my students could wind up with deeper triangulated conclusions. At the foundation of composition, after all, is the belief that critical thinkers, readers, researchers and writers are able to articulate their findings and ideas sufficiently in writing. For my class in particular, students could benefit from a greater emphasis on the composing process and the inherent value of deeper, more critical composing of their subculture research. Translating their more extensive notes with more extensive triangulation would likely lead to more developed compositions. It seemed to me that the greatest challenge for students would be to make that distinction between the wink and a twitch. I wondered what I could do to help them notice the winks in their studies.

A fifth way that data triangulation improved with ethnographers was by composing and performing performance ethnography. By analyzing performances as texts that reflected the lives and behaviors of studied cultures, ethnographers could begin to feel closer to their research subjects (Denzin, *Interpretive Ethnography* 103). This closeness, I concluded, would create a clearer sense of who they were studying and ultimately improve my students' conclusions. Performance ethnography also, in and of itself, was a combination of science with art because it borrowed scientific ethnographic studies from the social sciences and performances from the humanities (Denzin, *Performance Ethnography* 30). Despite some scientific elements, performances are inherently political in nature. I say they are political because they required performers to give physical action and power to people generally in disempowered positions;

they allowed ethnographers to analyze Others' oppressive situations; and they invited them to compose strategies for breaking down those constraints (30).

Based on this information, I decided to add performance ethnography to perspective pedagogy. If ethnographers found this approach helpful in understanding of those cultures being studied, perhaps my students would glean similar benefits in their projects. If students engaged in the physicality of performance ethnography, they had a unique point of view added to their research. Unlike photography or film, which both held them at an observer's point of view as ethnographers, performance ethnography would invite my students to see those cultures from within; even if the fieldsite and experiences were not exactly genuine, students would be looking at their cultures from as close to the inside as they were likely to get.

For example, in Chapter 2, I shared a student's experience stepping into the culture of improvisational musicians. Until he engaged in performance ethnography, he had only listened to the music, recorded shows, and looked at the performers from the audience's position. Once he was able to quite literally get on stage and perform, he saw that subculture from a new point of view and was better able to consider what it might be like to be in that subculture. This seemed to me, as I was putting together revisions to my ethnographic pedagogy class, an important addition. Perspective is everything, I wanted to emphasize.

A sixth way that ethnographers improved their data triangulation was by embracing the notion that ethnography is not *the* "Truth" (that monolithic concept I introduce in Chapter 1 and have returned to throughout my dissertation) but rather just one *version* of truth (the lower-case "t" truth which refers to a multiplicity of possible interpretations or perspectives). Contemporary ethnography (1990-present) seeks "criteria that might prove evocative, moral, critical, and rooted in local understandings" (Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 3). All texts,

whether prose, photographic, film, or performance, are expected to become more personalized and interpretive. Denzin and Lincoln (2001) write, “The present moment [in ethnography’s history] is defined by messy, experimental and multi-layered texts, cultural criticism, new approaches to the research text, new understanding of old analytic methods, and evolving research strategies” (*The Qualitative Inquiry Reader* xi). Having few boundaries or limitations can be daunting for some; however, Handwerker (2001) articulates that “Ethnographic analysis transposes matrices, turning them onto their sides” and that rather than being scared by this messiness, we should consider these as approaches “so we can see the connections, similarities, and differences among our informants” (11). In other words, triangulation empowers ethnographers, because it allows them to acquire an increased awareness of perspective, the process of interpretation, and its impact on differences regarding their research. Triangulating allows researchers, both professional and novice (like my students) to work through their research closely, carefully and thoughtfully. The meshing of interpretations in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and current 21<sup>st</sup> century ethnography reveals liberating “valid paths to knowledge besides reason...including the emotions and the intuition” (Grenz 7). Questioning Truth is not new to ethnography, as I discovered during my historical reading; however, it is not really until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that ethnographers, in fact, *embrace* lower-case, malleable, interpretive truth, the kind of truth that is not singular or uniform. Ethnographers understand that there is no one single interpretation of what a culture is or the importance of what they do; instead, there are many valid interpretations of many cultures, i.e., that there are many valid truths.

Within this discussion of Truth versus truths, I wish to stop for a moment to address two aspects of the foundation of perspective pedagogy. As my dissertation has shared already, I started my journey toward the revision of ethnographic pedagogy with ethnography. My

research then led me to the idea and name “perspective pedagogy,” a pedagogy whose foundation is based on the idea that there is no single Truth but rather many perspectives, many truths to be discovered and considered. I would be remiss if I were not to admit that the “perspective” part of perspective pedagogy is at least partially grounded in Frederick Nietzsche’s idea of perspectivism. In *The Will to Power*, he wrote:

the value of the world lies in our interpretation (--that other interpretations than merely human ones are perhaps somewhere possible--); that previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life... The world with which we are concerned is false, i.e., is not a fact but a fable and approximation on the basis of a meager sum of observations; it is “in flux,” as something in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for—there is no ‘truth.’ (616)

Nietzsche’s perspectivism is reflected in perspective pedagogy by its adherence to this same idea that our world is not a singular, definable thing but rather something which is interpreted and understood in a variety of ways. Not only is this idea of perspectives emulated in Nietzsche’s work; I want to also note perspective pedagogy’s foundation in postmodernist thinking. As noted through ethnography’s history and again here, perspective pedagogy is postmodern in its execution by its acceptance that there is not a singular Truth to be understood or found but rather that the joy is in embracing its uncertainties as postmodernists embrace. Ultimately, by considering many perspectives in perspective pedagogy, teachers and students gain greater understanding of the subjectivity and impossibility of Truth but the probability of truths. Despite postmodernism and Nietzsche lending me philosophical foundation to perspective pedagogy, I

feel that a discussion of either is really beyond the scope of my project at this time. Instead, I simply want to mention their influence and thank them for that.

While application of postmodern thought like this to ethnographic research can be provocative, it is also important to address that it brings challenges for ethnographers by “asking them to be more self-conscious about claims to authorship, authority, truth, validity, and reliability. Self-reflexivity brings to consciousness some of the complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing. Truth claims are less easily validated; speaking for 'others' is wholly suspect” (Richardson, “Evaluating Ethnography” 254). In Conquergood’s “Rethinking Ethnography” (1991), he scrutinizes Truth claims and replaces them with the idea of perception, subject position, moving “from authority to vulnerability” (357). His article epitomizes the transformation by which Truth has become truth in ethnographic terms.

Since ethnographers today embrace using many methodologies for drawing conclusions and do so with great ethnographic success, I decided to do so as well in perspective pedagogy. For perspective pedagogy, it is not only important to impart the knowledge of *what* students will do, but also *why* they are doing it. By “transposing matrices” (Handwerker 11) they are, in effect, challenging themselves and their readers to rethink the subcultures they are studying.

To resolve the problem with underdeveloped or missing triangulated conclusions, I added new ethnographic methods from which students could reach their conclusions. Specifically, I recognized the power that photography, film and performance had for giving ethnographers new perspectives and a stronger foundation for understanding the cultures they were studying. If I asked my students to recognize that their versions of the truth about the subcultures that they are studying are not the “Truth” but rather one of many possible truths, their triangulation gathers even more power and importance than ever. Ethnographers have and continue to struggle with

truth. My students who engaged in ethnographic pedagogy struggled with truth, as I have reiterated throughout this dissertation. Ethnographic scholars and I both seemed to have come to the same conclusion: artistic ethnographic methods can help ethnographers grapple with issues of authenticity and truth. This is a consistent thread of ethnography's history (textual, aural, and visual) and one that serves as a pillar of my pedagogy itself. If my students could manage to translate twitches and winks live, on film, in photographs and into their performances, their conclusions about their subcultures might vastly improve. It seemed that historically-speaking, data triangulation improved through these changes to ethnography.

### **Investigating the Problem with Underdeveloped Ethnographic Narratives**

The third problem that I identified with my students' writing in the ethnographic pedagogy classroom was with underdeveloped ethnographic essays. After reflecting on the three problems my students were having, I was confident that they were each intertwined with one another; underdeveloped notes led to underdeveloped triangulated conclusions which led to underdeveloped texts about those subcultures. My students' ethnographic tales were not conveying the stories of the subcultures as powerfully or convincingly as they could. As an audience member, I was also not entirely confident that their tales were as critical and convincing as I felt ethnographic tales should be. As I traced ethnography's history and its relationship to writing, I recognized that the writing was not necessarily a "problem" or that ethnographers had underdeveloped writing per se. Instead, ethnographers seemed to grapple with their authorial voices: should they be scientific or narrative? I saw how ethnographers have come to understand what "good ethnographic writing" is and felt that perhaps if I identified some primary characteristics of ethnographic narrative, I could begin to emphasize those in my classroom to get my students to write more developed ethnographic tales.

I realize that underdevelopment in college students' writing is not unique to ethnographic writing. Underdevelopment is, in fact, a common characteristic in student writing as a whole. Marcia Dickson is one of many who asserts that college writers tend to compose "underdeveloped or meaningless texts" (70). Worley deepens this discussion by asserting that these underdeveloped compositions often result from misguided instruction by teachers who ask their students to imagine writing as a formula (introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion) rather than focusing on developing the more important skills of content, which can be learned through observing, "a skill left behind very early in school curricula" (139). For, as Berthoff reminds writing teachers, "The reason for a writer to have a lot of practice in looking is not to gain skill in amassing detail to be deployed in descriptive writing...The real reason for beginning with observation is that looking—and looking again—engages the mind, and until that happens, no authentic composing is going to take place" (3). Ethnographies combine these ideas, with an emphasis on observing, developing and writing. Despite its potential for developed writing, though, the reality is that many students struggle with developing their writing. Within that characteristic of underdevelopment exists a whole host of additional, more specific writing characteristics to unpack. Some students' writing was underdeveloped because they lacked the powerful conclusions from their research. Other students' compositions were underdeveloped because they lacked the necessary background research. Still others' writing was underdeveloped because they lacked the attention to stylistic details.

It is important to note here that my recognition of my students' underdeveloped compositions was not entirely unique to ethnographic pedagogy. However, as a compositionist, I felt it was imperative that I directly tied my dissertation back to composition pedagogy and the ways in which perspective pedagogy would improve my students' writing. Composition



instructors will likely have been through some similar struggles in their own classrooms with underdeveloped compositions of other kinds. My work here, though, will tie the notions of developed ethnographies to my perspective pedagogy in direct ways. Specifically, this section will share the predominant characteristics of strong contemporary ethnographic composition, according to ethnographic scholars. Doing so will help readers notice the kinds of characteristics I hoped to see form in my students' writing in my own classroom. After I address the historical changes in ethnographic composition, I will address the ways I integrated those characteristics of strong ethnographies to my assignments in an attempt to get my students to develop their compositions.

Starting as far back as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, not long after the formal label of “ethnography” was given to ethnographic texts, writing was considered a means to an end. It was the only way (save oral storytelling, of course) for travelers to share their stories with others. However, there was not any special or conscious attention paid to the writing process for cultural texts. This idea of writing as method for conveying ideas held on from Herodotus (3 B.C.) through Malinowski (1929), who wrote that anthropological writing “must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader” (*Sexual Life of Savages* xxiii). Ethnographers distanced themselves from the cultures they studied through scientific writing styles. They hoped to project a more objective and credible feeling to their writing. While this utilitarian purpose for ethnographic composition originated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was something with which ethnographers struggled over many centuries. Reading about these early expectations of ethnographic composition allowed me to juxtapose this writing with contemporary writing. The scientific characteristics of early ethnographies are markedly different from the more playful,

personal and vivid ethnographies written during the last two decades. By reading older ethnographies along with newer ones, I could more sharply identify what I saw as important and positive transformations in ethnographic composition and, thankfully, transformations that worked in my favor as a composition instructor.

The four primary characteristics of strong contemporary ethnographies (1990 to present) are that they: use a narrative structure; saturate their writing with vivid details; cross boundaries between genres, possibly “intermingle literary, poetic, journalistic, fictional, cinematic, documentary, factual and ethnographic writing and representation. No one form is privileged over the other” (Denzin and Lincoln, *Sage Handbook*, 7); and adhere to ethnographer’s purpose to persuade readers that their conclusions about any given subculture were a result of their having been present in the culture. It is liberating for researchers to have all of these methods and genres available to them for understanding culture.

As ethnography progressed, the power of narrative began to carry over to artistic ethnographers, such as ethnographic filmmakers. Considered the first truly ethnographic film by many, *Nanook of the North* (1922) is a narrative about the Inuit Eskimos in the Yukon. By filming their movements in Canada and living with them for nearly fifteen months, Flaherty produced a ground-breaking ethnographic film. Despite the controversy over Flaherty’s restaging of some of the Inuit’s “scenes” due to a studio fire that burned up the original film (see Chapter 2), Flaherty is still quite well-respected by documentary and ethnographic filmmakers as not just an ethnographic filmmaker but often as “Father of Documentary Film” (Christopher 3; Danzker 5: Ruby, “Aggie Come First” 66). More specifically relevant to the history of ethnographic narrative is that

One of Flaherty's most significant and least well understood contributions was his use of the narrative form in *Nanook*...The idea that non-fiction film should not be narrative stems from the recognition that narrative is a structuring and interpretive device and from the naïve assumption that non-fiction films should not be interpretive. The exclusive association of narrative form with fiction leads to the misconceptions about the distinctions between narrative, fiction and non-fiction. *Nanook* is narrative film. The recognition of Flaherty's use of narrative in no way diminishes the film's value as a documentary. (Ruby, "Aggie Come First" 67)

Reminiscent of earlier questioning of textual and visual ethnography, Flaherty's challengers brought to light the serious issue of the value of not only ethnography as a methodology but of narrative as a genre through which to tell their ethnographic tales.

Beginning in 1986, ethnographers began to express "a concern for literary and rhetorical tropes and the narrative turn, a concern for storytelling, for composing ethnographies in new ways" (Denzin and Lincoln, *Qualitative Inquiry Reader* 173). Narrative continues to gain momentum, which further suggests the relevance of perspective pedagogy in the world of composition. Specifically, in the area of performance ethnography, Birringer (1993) writes that there are

nearly invisible boundaries separating theatre performance from dance, music, film, television, video, and the various performance art 'disciplines'. This means that the performance text is situated in a complex system of discourse in which traditional and avant-garde meanings of theater, film, video, ethnography, performance, text, and audience all circulate and inform one another. (93)

These “nearly invisible boundaries” can be seen in Denzin’s “Redskins and Chiefs” (2002), a performance with over fifty voices, including an obligatory audience voice to be spoken by audience members. In it, Denzin discusses the use of Indian images by white institutions (his university as one example) and whether this appropriation should be acceptable. This performance, complete with narrator, multiple separate voices, sometimes spoken in poetics, challenges the notion that “White people with good intentions believe they have the right to honor persons of color. White people can do this by appropriating symbols, images, and meanings that are associated with another group and its way of life. If the intentions of whites are honorable, then their actions are beyond reproach” (Denzin, *Performance Ethnography* 136). For example,

**Voice 4:** Just when you start to think, ‘This is a town that honors its

Native American heritage’ you hear this voice:

**Voice 5: Second Red Lodge Resident:** That totem pole is an insult! (188)

The voices in Denzin’s text above challenge the appropriateness of displaying Indian figures in white communities. In effect, he is asking his audience members to negotiate within themselves what they find appropriate and acceptable. Involvement of so many voices further challenges both performers and audience members (who are performers themselves, too). “Redskins and Chiefs” is one of many examples of these characteristics of contemporary ethnography that I have been writing about in this section of Chapter 3. It uses many genres including scripted performance and poetry; it explores the role of narrative in sharing ethnography; and it asks everyone involved to negotiate truths about the use of Native Americans in white communities. Within the context of this search for truths, it is also important to stop to notice the ways in which colonization might factor into Denzin’s playscript. As noted earlier, students and

professional ethnographers alike struggle when composing ethnographies with the negotiation of systems of domination and colonization. This playscript is no different.

For performance ethnographies, the texts and performances reflect this negotiation between author and subjects, because performance ethnography actors project one potential truth, rather than being viewed as traditional “actor,” i.e., that they are performing scripted fiction. Their content is based on the ethnographers’ perspectives on actual experiences, but Denzin writes that the actors do pretend in some ways: overt script-reading, playing more than one character, talking to characters that are not really there, playing make-believe with the set designs, and pretending elements are there that are not really there. He goes on to say that audience members learn from what they hear and experience through the performance and not through elaborate sets and actors. Perhaps it is exactly this honesty that reminds audience members that they are seeing performance ethnography and not an entirely fictionalized play (Denzin, *Performance Ethnography* 41). Since there are few rules, performance texts also take on a variety of genres themselves, from personal narratives to poetics to scripts to monologues. There are no rigid rules when it comes to contemporary performance ethnographies.

As I have mentioned throughout my dissertation, ethnographic work is subjective, but it is not fiction. Geertz (1973) was the trailblazer for this notion that ethnographers were not seeking to share concrete facts but rather that “all anthropological writings are interpretations of interpretations,” meaning that the ethnographers do not have “the” interpretation but rather one possible interpretation (Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* 15).

While creating perspective pedagogy, a revision of ethnographic pedagogy, I felt it was important to have students compose narratives in many different kinds of genres, writing from different genre perspectives in addition to researching from many different perspectives.

Therefore, in my revised pedagogy, I decided to teach my students how to compose photographic, filmic, textual and performance narratives. Through perspective pedagogy, students would be able to see the many ways to share a story and how each kind of narrative contributes toward the cultural tale as a whole as well. Their essays, then, are not so much “chapters” in a collection (each telling a distinctively separate story) but, instead, they are contributions toward the omniscient view they seek as ethnographers. With this new perspective pedagogy, I decided to try to convey to them the power behind infusing many different points of view of their subcultures to allow them to better understand those subcultures.

A second characteristic of strong ethnographic narrative is the inclusion of the ethnographers in the ethnographies themselves. Rather than only writing down what the subculture members did, when they did them, and how they did them, an almost attempt at complete objectivity of the experience, ethnographers began to literally include themselves and details of their own experiences during their researching processes as part of their ethnographies as well. This created a more personalized ethnography than earlier ethnographies were. While in some ways, personalization further complicated the idea of the multiplicity of truths I have been discussing throughout my dissertation, it also served to reinforce the inherent subjectivity of ethnographies. This turned out to be a great benefit. Instead of struggling with providing some kind of monolithic Truth for readers, ethnographers could more honestly explore their own truths of their experiences and audiences/readers could accept those ethnographies for the critical inquiry that they were.

In the 1970s, ethnographers like Gregory Bateson, Antonio Gramsci, and Paull Willis wrote themselves into their ethnographies, offering specific details from their own fieldworking experiences and using a first-person point of view to do so, resulting in a more direct personal

voice in those texts. For example, Willis' *Profane Culture* (1978) shares Willis' ethnographic studies of many of the cultures prevalent in America in the 1970s. One of those cultures was the "mod" culture. He begins by identifying one characteristic of the mod culture when he writes that "The crucial 'mod' characteristic for them seemed to be what they took as *femininity*." Having established that characteristic, as his study continues, he later reflects on reactions of the mod culture members to him by writing that Willis' own "lack of assertiveness, for them, was close to 'cissiness' which was taken as a prime 'mod' characteristic. In the course of my research I met other groups who had quite different, often contradictory, images of me" (21). Rather than writing only about what he observed about the "profane" cultures like the mod culture, Willis places himself in his own ethnography, utilizing their conclusions and reactions to him as a means for understanding them as cultures. His use of "me" and discussion of what the culture members thought about the way that he presented himself created a new kind of ethnographic narrative, not exclusively focused on the culture members themselves but now including the experiences of the ethnographer and interactions with them, i.e., how he fit into the culture or, in Willis' case, did not fit into their culture.

As I worked on creating perspective pedagogy, I was sure to emphasize to my students the importance of including themselves in their ethnographic narratives. It was, after all, their own experiences with that subculture that they were sharing and not an all-encompassing Truth. By using first-person and sharing their interactions with the subculture members in their narratives, their research would become more personal and hopefully more reflective than it might have been had they only been asked to share their experiences from a third-person, detached perspective. Furthermore, when considering issues of ethics, encouraging students to record and articulate the subjectivity of their ethnographies could lead to more honest, developed

ethnographies. Students would not be hesitant to share details if they understood that they were being asked whatever they experienced rather than what they had to determine was Truth. The concept of Truth is a staggering and overwhelming one for both students and ethnographers. Do we know the Truth? Can we know the Truth? If we are not entirely positive that what we experience is Truth, is it acceptable to write it down and share it with others? With the inclusion of these characteristics as important to the composition assignments, students could move into a deeper level of critical inquiry.

A third important characteristic for a more fully developed ethnographic tale is the playfulness of style, common to the postmodern-era from which it emerged, and which included such choices as words, punctuation and sentence structure. Van Maanen's *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (1988) spoke to these choices when he wrote about the stylistic choices ethnographers make, like "choice of metaphor, figurative allusions, semantics, decorative phrasing or plain speaking, textual organization." He indicates that it is a matter of choice "when the experimentalist writes in a self-conscious, hyper-realistic, attention-grabbing dots-and-dashes fashion—where, for instance, ellipses are used to simulate (and stimulate) the effect of a ...skipped heartbeat—as when the traditionalist falls back on the neutral, pale-beige, just-the-facts fashion of scientific reporting" (5). The stylistic playfulness embraced in this kind of ethnographic composition reflected the major rhetorical transformation of ethnography and its acceptance that was both more creative and more powerful through its ability to stimulate sensory responses from audiences.

An ability to make stylistic choices is a sophisticated characteristic expectation for any first-year composition student; however, as I developed perspective pedagogy, I reminded myself of the importance of my students sharing their own ethnographic experiences through



their narratives which must, consequently, reflect their personal voices and writing styles. In my new pedagogy, then, I asked students to envision their ethnographic compositions as tales (like VanMaanen tells us to do) and, therefore, consider themselves and the subculture members as characters in those tales, the fieldsites as “settings” for those tales, and their experiences as moments along the plotlines. By seeing their research in this more playful manner, I hoped students would compose in a more creative way than they maybe would have done in a more formal academic writing style requirement.

A fourth important characteristic of more fully developed, strong ethnographic narratives is to keep in mind its persuasive purpose. In 1988, Geertz published *Works and Lives: Anthropologist as Author*, in which he asserts that the goal of any ethnography is for the ethnographers to persuade readers that their conclusions about cultures came as a result of their having “penetrated (or if you prefer, been penetrated by) another form of life, of having, one way or another, truly ‘been there’” (4). Composition skills are the means by which ethnographers were going to reach that goal, Geertz went on to say (5). Accordingly, Geertz concluded that those ethnographers who were most effective with their composition skills would be the ones to find the most trusted audiences/readers of their ethnographies. The prose of ethnographers like Clifford, Marcus, VanMaanen, and now Geertz all point toward the persuasive abilities of ethnographic writing, convincing audiences that the ethnographers’ perspectives on cultures could be trusted. In Gaines’ *Teenage Wasteland* (1991), she writes:

Like any other ‘Other,’ the kids at the bottom, who everybody here simply called burnouts, were actually a conglomerate of several cliques—serious druggies, Deadheads, dirtbags, skinheads, metalheads, thrashers, and punks. Some were good students, from ‘good’ families with money and prestige. In any other setting

all of these people might have been bitter rivals, or at least very separate cliques. But here, thanks to the adults and the primacy of sports, they were all lumped together—united by virtue of a common enemy, the jocks. (93)

Gaines' attention-grabbing writing style pulls readers into the lives of these teenagers in very engaging ways. Her use of accessible language, familiar to her American readers, helps her to gain an audience who trusts her. Furthermore, she offers some specific comparisons to cultural generalities about cliques but then applies those generalizations to her experiences with youths in appropriate and believable ways.

In conclusion, then, reviewing ethnographic scholarship's history helped me resolve some of the problems with underdeveloped ethnographic narratives. From this review, I came to recognize the increasing reliance on composition for sharing cultural knowledge and also the changing ways in which ethnographers were able to compose ethnography. When reviewing the ethnographic pedagogy I used before this dissertation began, I knew I wanted to revise the ways in which I taught the composition of ethnography, too. For my revised pedagogy, perspective pedagogy, my students were asked to explore their subcultures' narratives through these many methods. As suspected, improvement of one area of their ethnographic experiences created a domino effect of improvement for many of my students in my revised classroom approach. Their use of the artistic ethnographic methods and composition styles not only improved their notes and triangulation but ultimately their ethnographic composition as well. By seeing how these contemporary notions of ethnographic narratives emerged, I was able to transform ethnographic pedagogy in some really important ways and into a new and exciting pedagogy of its own. While ethnographers may not have exactly had the problem of underdeveloped ethnographic narratives, they did struggle to find the appropriate voice and details for sharing

those experiences. I found, by tracing the development through the centuries, I was able to see not only what the changes were but why they were powerful in their ability to enhance and improve ethnographic writing.

It is the intermingling of the genres and methods that perspective pedagogy embraces. In perspective pedagogy, I encourage my students to consider all genres for expressing their research. The idea for doing so is supported by contemporary research in the areas of ethnography, especially in the last twenty years. Furthermore, perspective pedagogy does not prefer one narrative form over the other, but rather allows students to choose which methods; subsequently, students also have choices for which kinds of narratives to write, basing their decisions on which genres are best for expressing their cultural experience. As a result, students engaging in perspective pedagogy are taught to take authorial responsibility for their narrative choices and to value all kinds of writing equally, rather than situating all of their writing in one kind of all-encompassing “academic discourse.”

### **Conclusion**

In many ways, the narrative of ethnography’s history parallels that of my own narrative experiences leading to my creation of perspective pedagogy. Both the history of ethnography and perspective pedagogy embrace multigenre work; both celebrate the role of critical narratives; both embrace multiple interpretations of truth; and both bring to mind the goal of scholarship (whether professional or student), which should always be “messing with your head” and “should be *dangerous*. It should *expand your mind*. It should open locks, provide pathways, and offer a language capable of inspiring personal, social, and institutional liberation. I think it should help people think and behave differently, if they choose to. *Writing that doesn’t mess with your head isn’t very good writing*” (Goodall 194). In order to make this kind of difference,

research should challenge people's perspectives on life's truths. With regards to my revision of ethnographic pedagogy to become perspective pedagogy, I believe that my research into the scholarship of ethnographers educated me about some exciting methods and perceptions of ethnography through the centuries. By doing this research, and now sharing it with my readers, my decision-making process should be much clearer to everyone as to why I decided to solve my problems with my old classroom by adding new perspectives through artistic ethnographic methods and new narrative techniques. The process for identifying the problems was laid out in Chapter 1; the process for attempting to solve those problems was outlined in Chapter 2; now, here in Chapter 3, I attempted to show how some of my approaches were inspired by ethnographic scholarship.

It is clear that I am excited by using ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography in my FYRC classroom and that I feel it is worthwhile. However, there are some colleagues who resist this approach toward the FYRC classroom. In the upcoming chapter, Chapter 4, I articulate those points of dispute and respond to them in a defense for perspective pedagogy in the FYRC classroom.

## **CHAPTER 4: WHAT DOES PERSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTE TO MY WORK AND THE WORK OF OTHERS?**

In the first three chapters of this dissertation, I outlined the problems I had with ethnographic pedagogy in my classrooms; my strategies for trying to solve those problems through the use of perspective pedagogy; and my research into ethnography and composition to inspire and shape perspective pedagogy for the FYRC classroom. Together, the first three chapters helped readers see my process for developing perspective pedagogy from brainstorming through to my implementation of that pedagogy into my classrooms.

Using those chapters as my foundation, Chapter 4 will address ways in which perspective pedagogy may contribute to my own pedagogy; commonly-shared goals of composition programs; the work of ethnographers; and the pedagogy of educators in other disciplines. By unpacking the many ways that perspective pedagogy contributes to both my work and the work of others, this chapter will illustrate this pedagogy's potential effectiveness and applicability for teachers and students.

### **How Does Perspective Pedagogy Contribute to My Own Pedagogy?**

First and foremost, I want to address what I see as the major contributions that perspective pedagogy has had on my pedagogy, with regard to the ways in which I approach teaching composition.

One way that perspective pedagogy has contributed toward my pedagogy is by bringing to the surface one of the foundational elements of my teaching: the organic nature of teaching and learning. As I have already mentioned, perspective pedagogy was born out of a personal need to improve the ethnographic pedagogy that I had been using in my FYRC classrooms, but more broadly, it developed in response to my general concerns as a teacher-scholar, wanting to

make my classroom as powerful and productive as possible. Only through questioning and a willingness to change my pedagogy was I able to adapt and reconsider how I teach, what I teach and how my students react to the ways I teach. These ideas are central to my feelings about and passion for the teaching profession. During the “rewriting stage” of my pedagogical writing process, I questioned why my students were struggling with note taking, triangulating and essay writing. From there, I asked myself how I might revise my approach to the class to make those things better. As a result of my willingness to ask those questions, I managed to make some valuable changes resulting in the perspective pedagogy described in this dissertation. Despite the fact that some of those questions were difficult and disheartening, because they often made me feel unsuccessful as a teacher, the pedagogy was better for it in the long run.

As a result of my work with examination of what I saw as weaknesses and gaps in ethnographic pedagogy, as well as the ways in which perspective pedagogy might alleviate some of those problems, I recognized the importance of not abandoning a pedagogy simply because it carries some challenges or problems in the classes, an approach I may have taken earlier in my teaching career; instead, I faced ethnographic pedagogy head-on and found a means to refine and revise it to work more successfully for me in my classrooms. That is a lesson I will continue to carry with me as a teacher.

In addition to perspective pedagogy revealing the organic nature of pedagogy development, it also affirmed my classrooms’ student-centeredness. By asking students to engage in so many different perspectives, I was essentially forced to loosen my grip on the structure of the course, allowing more time for students to share and discuss their work.

Perspective pedagogy also influenced my personal pedagogy by revealing the multiplicity of avenues for exploration in addition to those directly linked to composition theory. What I

mean by this is that perspective pedagogy opened me up to the influences of ethnography scholarship as well as more discipline-specific ethnographic work from scholars in the areas of ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography. It also gave me permission to break the boundaries and create something on my own, pulling together ideas from many different directions, directions that did not exist in text before.

The last contribution of perspective pedagogy to my pedagogy is that it makes me recognize a solid purpose for using multimedia and performance in the classroom. When I first explained my plans to others for this dissertation, some immediately reacted by saying, “People already use media in the classroom. How is this any different from them?” Good question, I thought. Teachers use media for so many different reasons, I could not really purport to know everyone’s motivations; however, I can speak to some major differences.

For some, media contributes toward their multimodal pedagogy. A multimodal assignment “treats all modes as equally significant for meaning and communication” (Jewitt and Kress 2) and “characterises communication in classrooms beyond the linguistic: language, in speech and writing, is only one mode of communication among many. Other modes can include image, space, gesture, colour, sound and movement, all of which function to communicate meaning in an integrated, multilayered way” (Stein 1). Perspective pedagogy uses multiple modes in its production; however, the purpose for perspective pedagogy is to analyze culture, whereas multimodal composition hopes to offer students “new strategies and approaches which can be productively applied to their efforts at composing more traditional written compositions” (Takayoshi and Selfe 5). Both approaches for using media elements in the classroom are valid and effective; however, it is clear that they are also quite different from one another.

Other composition instructors may use media in their classrooms as visual aids for their essays, which bears some similarities to perspective pedagogy but differs in its purpose. The photographs, films and performances in perspective pedagogy are not only visual aids; their use is deeply embedded in the researching, writing and learning processes as well. They may end up in positions similar to visual aids, but they carry much more central roles in perspective pedagogy than those who include charts and graphs to clarify a point in their essays.

Some other composition teachers may not have any clear-cut purposes. Especially in the last five years when access to media elements have grown exponentially, it seems that there are some teachers who use media solely because they have access to them. Students generally enjoy those kinds of projects and teachers think they are fun as well, but there are some dangers as well. We must remember our purpose as composition instructors and to refrain from using media simply because we can. Perspective pedagogy's use of media asks students to use their photography, film and performance for very important reasons and to keep those purposes in mind throughout their processes. As a whole, perspective pedagogy made me realize that there are a lot of exciting and pedagogically-stimulating reasons to use all three. Their inclusion in *my* classrooms has overt, helpful roles in students' ethnographic perspectives. They help my students strengthen their research skills and produce more developed essays than the students who were in my classrooms when I was using ethnographic pedagogy.

Even since finishing the experimental work for this dissertation, I have continued to reconsider my pedagogy (see Chapter 5 for future directions I am considering), always questioning and improving as a teacher, helping my students to get the very most out of their FYRC experiences.



### **How Does Perspective Pedagogy Contribute to Composition Program Goals?**

As the section above indicated, perspective pedagogy influenced my approach and feelings toward pedagogy. However, perspective pedagogy also connects to some of the basic goals of most composition programs. While there are likely going to be some goals that might be unique to a program, most composition programs share a core number of program goals. This section of Chapter 4 will address what I have determined as four shared goals of composition programs and how perspective pedagogy fulfills those four goals.

To identify these goals, I sought out texts that shared similar purposes and objectives and could therefore be compared on those bases. In particular, since my goal was to draw some conclusions about the goals of composition programs, I sought out texts that addressed composition pedagogies. Targeting graduate students and composition teachers in particular, I wanted to find texts that offered compositionists insights into ways we can and should instruct students in composition courses. There are certainly many other texts that I could have included, but I felt it would behoove me to simply select 5-10 that could serve as a representative sample. When I spoke to my dissertation committee about what texts I might include, we all immediately mentioned *Cross-Talk*, *The Writer Teacher's Sourcebook*, and *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* as texts that needed to be included. My committee members and I recognized them immediately as influential in our teaching, as including many prominent and important composition scholars, and as texts that covered the gamut of composition pedagogies, all of which were characteristics I was seeking for this list of sources. From there, we brainstormed about other directions I might travel. Since the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) and The Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) are nationally-recognized organizations to which compositionists turn for guides on composition programs, we added those

two to the list of necessary sources to include as well. I ended up with sources that are widely recognized by compositionists as places to which we turn for advice and ideas about composition course development. To sum, my list read as thus: *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* edited by Corbett, Myers and Tate (2000); *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* edited by Tate, Rupiper and Schick (2000); *Strategies for Teaching First-Year Composition* edited by Roen, Pantoja, Yena, Miller and Waggoner (2002); *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader* edited by Victor Villanueva (2003); *The Council for Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition* (2008); and The National Council for Teachers of English's (NCTE) "NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing" (2004).

To identify the core goals of composition programs, I began my process by reviewing the section headings each of the texts. I did so because I felt that the section headings would identify characteristics that the texts found most important to composition teaching. The composition program goals of "Writing is a Process" and "Refine essays for stylistic and mechanical coherence" emerged immediately as they were section headings in all six sources in some way [NOTE: I discuss the relevant texts below in the sections using the same titles as I do here].

Since reading section headings for the texts helped me to successfully identify the first two goals, I used the section headings from the online sources to find the other two goals. The online sources were more concise than the anthologies of essay and structured their goals using bullet points about composition program goals. During this second reading of the section headings, I noticed two other parallels between NCTE's and WPA's categories of knowledge for composition coursework. Both of these online resources indicated the importance of students "using writing to reflect critical thinking skills" and "composing for a variety of rhetorical situations." After noting the similarities between the two online sources, I turned to the

anthologies to see if they too included those two goals in their texts. Perhaps the anthologies would follow the same categories as the websites, I thought to myself. I was right.

Not only did this process of reviewing the online sources require choices for what *to* include; it also required me to consider what goals *not* to include as basic composition program goals in my dissertation. Exclusion was just as challenging as the process of inclusion. My dissertation committee and I felt that it was important to focus on just four major composition program goals rather than including every common goal I could find. By streamlining my discussion in this chapter to only four goals, I allowed myself enough time to explore how perspective pedagogy fits into the composition program goals without having to consider every potential composition program goal. As composition instructors know, composition programs are increasingly becoming creative and innovative. It would be impossible for me to cover every possible program goal. Instead, this section serves as a foundational discussion of four of the goals of composition programs as whole.

One example of a goal I chose to exclude is the use of technology in some way for the composing process, which appeared in four of the six texts: Hawisher and Selfe's "The Rhetoric of Technology and the Electronic Writing Class" (Corbett, Myers and Tate), "Composing in Electronic Environments" (WPA), "Composing Occurs in Different Modalities and Technologies" (NCTE), and "Suggestions for the Computer-Mediated Classroom" (Roen, et. al). Despite the fact that this goal appeared in multiple texts in my collection, I did not end up using "Writing with the use of technology" as a composition program goal, because I felt like it was being negotiated and considered in these articles rather than being expressed as something with which all teachers would consider a pillar of composition program goals.

I returned to my purpose for this section and discounted any shared topics that were not comprehensively discussed in all texts. Doing so was challenging and I recognized the potential consequences for leaving technology out of my list for a 21<sup>st</sup> century dissertation. However, I stand by my choice by noting that all of the goals I ended up with could be implemented through the use of technology. Technology, after all, contributes to writing as a process, complicates the critical thinking process, alters the stylistic and mechanical choices we make as writers, and offers another rhetorical situation to consider.

The process for creating this list of composition program goals was quite challenging. Ultimately, I decided on these four goals for composition programs:

1. Students should recognize that writing is a process.
2. Students should be able to use writing to reflect their critical thinking skills.
3. Students should be able to compose for a variety of rhetorical situations.
4. Students should be able to refine their essay for stylistic and mechanical coherence.

I acknowledge that the four goals I ended up using here lack the pizzazz and excitement that is present in a lot of composition pedagogies. There are likely some readers who are saying that what is missing from these goals is “the cool stuff,” the excitement that is present in composition programs. To those readers, I want to take a moment to express my purpose in identifying and sharing these goals: to identify the institutionalized, traditional goals or hallmarks of composition programs with which most if not all teachers would likely be familiar and apply in their classrooms in some way. I acknowledge that composition programs have moved beyond these four goals and there are a myriad of new, exciting, creative and innovative directions that composition instructors have taken composition programs. In fact, it is in this area beyond the hallmarks where perspective pedagogy fits. Keeping my goal in mind to identify the

common ground rather than the creative, innovative and 21<sup>st</sup> century directions in which composition teachers might head, I wish to focus on these four institutionally-accepted goals for the purposes of my investigation into the parallels between perspective pedagogy and what composition teachers will recognize as their goals as composition teachers.

### **Recognize That Writing is a Process**

One goal of composition programs that these texts share is that students should recognize that writing is a process (see page 132). The sources I reviewed fell into two large areas of scholarship. One category of scholarship addressed what that process might look like, including variations of the terms prewriting, writing and rewriting, emphasizing that students should engage in a writing process whereby they actively change and reflect on their own writing (see Burch, Burnham, Cahill, Emig, Hesse, NCTE's "Writing is a Process" section, Reither, Roen's Chapter 7, Ryder, Sommers, Tobin, and the Council of Writing Program Administrators' "Learning to write is a complex process" section). In addition to the general idea that there needs to be a process, there were also a significant number of essays that addressed the role of outside response to the writing. Some writers addressed the role of peers in this process (see Cahill, Howard, Miller, Paton, Roen, and the Council of Writing Program Administrators); others wrote about the role of the teachers in their students' writing processes (see Elbow, Tobin, Horvath, Kahn, Moneyhun, Stancliff's "Why Student Conferences," and Straub); and the last group of authors focused their energies on writing center consultants and/or tutors (see Harris, Jackson, Murray's "The Listening Eye," and Shannon).

Overall, these authors address the existence and complexities of many stages of the writing process, thereby indicating that they believe that writing neither occurs in a vacuum nor can it be completed all at once by the author. While each author offers different insights about

the writing process, the texts as a whole affirm that process is a substantial part of the foundation of a composition course and, by correlation, of composition programs. Students' writing becomes stronger when time and consideration is given to it through a process. These sources work well together to illustrate my reasons for selecting "Students will recognize that writing is a process" as the first shared goal of composition programs.

Just as process is a foundational element of composition programs and pedagogy in the texts discussed above, process is also an important aspect in perspective pedagogy. Specifically, perspective pedagogy embraces the notion of writing as a process by its reliance on students immersing themselves in the subculture they are studying for an entire semester and from multiple perspectives. Each of those perspectives invites students to engage in a new stage in their writing process to consider how new information might factor into their compositions. To assure time to reflect as they move through their writing and researching processes, we discuss one kind of research at a time and also compose one kind of writing at a time. This approach allows students to stop to think about the characteristics needed for each kind of text and spend time speaking to me and to their classmates about their compositions. In many ways, this approach in the classroom mirrors Donald Murray's layering technique, having students composing new texts but not without reviewing their earlier writing and research to do so, building or layering each essay on top of the earlier one.

For example, one of my students wrote her project about a local horse trainer subculture. She began her project by reflecting on her subjective positions regarding horse trainers, acknowledging the potential for her past experiences seeing abusive horse trainers to taint her ethnographic investigation of them for our class. Hoping to revise that perception, she observed the horse trainers in action, taking substantial fieldnotes, snapping many photographs, shooting

multiple films of training sessions, and interviewing subculture members. After each research experience, she submitted an ethnography sharing her experiences with the subculture using each perspective and reflecting on what she learned, questioned, verified or understood about her subculture as a result of each perspective. In her final ethnography, she writes, “The Broken Rope members observe a horse’s behavior and describe what they see...and everyone states the same thing as the other without knowing what the other said, I observed this happening several times with many different members. Hence, I truly believe that occurs because they all have such a very deep understanding of horses (name, fieldnotes; name of informant interviewed).” This passage shows how she triangulates her interviews with multiple subculture members, her previous fieldnotes, and her ethnographic films. It is only by going through a researching and writing process that she is able to work through the triangulation process required to produce this kind of writing.

As this student example and other examples in my dissertation demonstrate, perspective pedagogy asks that students consider many perspectives by reflecting on each perspective, writing their reflection down, and sharing their experiences through various modes, including text, photography, film and/or performances. Their writing assignments are situated in a sequence, with each one unpacking the work they have done to that point in the semester and what they see as the importance of that work. The culminating final paper epitomizes this writing process at its final stage because it is a synthesis of all of their perspectives in a single text. Perspective pedagogy could not work without process.

### **Use Writing to Reflect Critical Thinking Skills**

A second shared goal in composition programs that I identified in the six aforementioned composition texts is that students should be able to use their writing to reflect their critical

thinking skills (see page 132). The authors in these texts offer a variety of ways to connect writing with critical thinking, including the ways in which certain types of writing assignments challenge students' critical thinking skills. For example, some authors write about the overall connections between critical thinking and critical writing (Bizzell's "Cognition, Convention, Certainty," Tobin, NCTE, and the Council of Writing Program Administrators). Some authors address the ways writing reflects critical thinking in researched arguments that synthesize their thinking with critical readings of other texts (Braun and Prineas, The Council of Writing Program Administrators, Fahnestock and Secor, George, George and Trimbur, Larson, Matalene, and Stancliff's "Importance of Framing"). Other composition scholars consider the ways that students can use their own personal experiences to become critical thinkers of their experiences, including the use of narrative essays, journaling, reflections, and portfolio compositions (Burnham, Cahill, Kyburz, NCTE, and Peckham). The diversity in perspectives illustrates the complexity and importance of writing in conjunction with students' critical thinking skills in composition courses.

Without question, ethnographies reflect the second goal of many composition programs, which is to help students express their critical and analytical thinking abilities through their writing. Perspective pedagogy is one of many approaches for helping students to do so. My pedagogy enhances and refines students' critical and analytical skills in a number of ways, many of which were outlined in Chapter 2 when I discussed how I teach perspective pedagogy in the classroom.

For instance, perspective pedagogy has students examining subcultures from multiple perspectives. Whenever a new perspective is introduced, we discuss the power of that perspective to reveal new details about their chosen subcultures, such as the aspects of a



subculture that a photograph or film can reveal that a straight, one-time observation might miss. Those students who critically “read” their cultures, an action that requires critical thinking, will produce essays that reveal that same level of critical thinking. In order to help students do this, though, I begin my work by having them discuss and review different approaches toward note taking and the benefits of each for developing their critical thinking skills.

For example, we spend quite a bit of time discussing double-entry notes, which allow for expansion, as does their transferring hand-written notes into computer documents, allowing them to take the time to translate the literal notes but also reflect on what they are realizing about their subcultures as they type up those notes. I have found that perspective pedagogy encourages students to make increasingly complex triangulations amongst each perspective they engage in as the class progresses. The ability to read notes, view photography and film, and compose performances that all reveal information about the people they are studying takes complex critical thinking skills. It is not enough to write what they saw. One student spent her semester studying the subculture of the girls in an all-girls dormitory on our campus. In her third ethnography, after having done fieldnotes, interviews and ethnographic photographs, she had this to write:

The tenth picture consists of Amy and Alicia interacting together. This is one of my favorites because Amy is pointing to the computer screen where she is trying to show Alicia something about the paper she’s writing (cites photograph).

Interacting with others is something that needs to be learned when they arrive to college as a freshman dorm dweller. They have to learn to interact and live with others that are strangers to them. These girls were afraid to talk to each other when they first arrived here, but now they can interact, talk, and help each other.

During one of my interviews, Amy told me that she likes living with another person because they can do things together as opposed to doing things by herself, such as eating together and watching movies (cites informant interview). This shows us that this subculture has many obstacles they must overcome when they arrive here.

The student who wrote this ethnography demonstrates her critical thinking skills through her triangulation of earlier research (interview) with her more recent research (photographs), noticing how their relationships have changed over the course of the semester.

To demonstrate the composition program goal of “Use Writing to Reflect Critical Thinking Skills,” students must have a keen eye for details in those observations. It is not enough to just take photographs or shoot film footage. They must learn to identify similarities between those photographs and/or film sequences and their other research in order to reach conclusions. Starting with the smaller, low-risk assignments like note taking, prior to having them design the higher-risk formalized ethnographic essays prepares them for the necessary critical writing I expect from them. By moving students through this critical and analytical process step by step, perspective pedagogy asks students to analyze slowly, thoughtfully, and critically.

### **Compose for a Variety of Rhetorical Situations**

Based on the six composition texts noted earlier (see page 132), I determined that the third shared goal for students moving through the college composition program is that they should be able to demonstrate their ability to compose for a variety of rhetorical situations. Many of the essays offer sage advice regarding the idea that there is not a single formula for writing all texts but that students instead have to become familiarized with the intent, the purpose of a text in order to design its content and voice, that is, the composition triangle (Britton, The

Council of Writing Program Administrators, Covino, D'Angelo, Hesse, Larson, NCTE, and Villanueva). Other authors focus on the rhetorical strategies related to specific types of essays, including the collaborative writing assignment (Bleich), the narrative (Morgan), argument essays (Fahnestock and Secor; Lamb), and literary analyses (Tate).

As these essays show, it is important that students in college composition programs are able to write for a variety of rhetorical situations. Rather than making assumptions that there is one type of essay or even one thing that constitutes “the academic essay,” or “the research essay,” students should be exposed to a variety of writing situations to help them begin to understand how to write appropriately and effectively for those situations. Furthermore, rather than envisioning our roles as composition instructors to teach to *all* possible situations, this particular composition program goal is merely stating that students need to have awareness that diversity exists and be asked to learn to recognize differences in disciplinary discourses as they venture into new composition assignments in their lives.

Perspective pedagogy requires that students compose for a variety of rhetorical situations. Primarily, their rhetorical situation is one where they are sharing how they have come to understand a subculture with an audience comprised of people who are “outsiders” of that subculture. While they prepare their writing assignments, they integrate a sequence of choices regarding their rhetorical situations.

For example, in what ways might they use narrative inquiry and description to share the stories of their subcultures in vignette format? When writing playscripts for their performance ethnographies, how might conversational word choices and scripted formatted prevail over vignette narrative structure? How might perspective pedagogy students use a variety of research types (e.g., secondary source collection, observations, interviews, photographs, films, and

performances) to produce appropriate texts for their rhetorical situations? What kind of stylistic choices must they make when they are writing their ethnographic compositions versus writing their performance ethnography playscripts versus writing their analyses about ethnographic film footage they shot?

For example, when writing performance ethnographies, students would likely consider the importance of dialogue, sentence length and pace to engage their audiences in the scripts. On the other hand, when composing the captions for photographs, students would benefit from using shorter sentences, direct language and a more formal tone since the rhetorical situation demands clarity of ideas over creativity of word choice. Each situation differs but also contributes to the same overarching purpose—to share the story of the subcultures.

Along with the kind of stylistic and mechanical choices students need to make in response to a rhetorical situation, at the heart of perspective pedagogy is students' exposure to and use of diverse primary and secondary source types. There is great responsibility when students negotiate the ways they use sources in ethnographies. Moreover, as Malley and Hawkins write about ethnographic pedagogy, use of both types of research methods encourages students to come to see the relationship between them ("Ethnographic Inquiry as Writing Pedagogy"). Perspective pedagogy builds on their understanding of the relationship between source types by immersing students personally into their research experiences. One of the goals with my pedagogy is to introduce students to the idea of becoming one of the sources they cite, one of the sources they credit in their compositions.

By citing themselves, I hope that students will appreciate the ethical implications inherent in not citing sources. If they recognize the hard work that they have done to gather the information they have, they may begin to recognize the importance in citing credit for

intellectual work by other people as well as by themselves. In class, we engage in thoughtful discussions about how my students would feel if someone used information from their ethnographic work but did not give them credit for that research. They emphatically say that they worked really hard to come up with that research and writing and it would not be fair if someone neglected to give them credit. As a result, students are more likely to be cautious with their citations of other people's work in their compositions as well.

Once students have assessed the rhetorical situation and gathered the necessary source materials, they will then need to consider the most appropriate genre. Most college composition courses have students reading materials that may originate in other discipline areas and may, consequently, expose them to discipline-specific genres. In a similar vein, perspective pedagogy asks students to design writing assignments that rely on other disciplines' rhetorical situations, like playscripts for performance ethnography. Laying out the assignment is difficult for the teacher; in turn, composing a response to that assignment can be quite challenging for a student. Interdisciplinary courses and more traditional composition courses alike require careful consideration and knowledge of rhetorical situations that each may call for any number of appropriate genre choices. Bazerman writes,

genres are what people, as groups and as individuals, recognize them to be. The names people attribute to genres helps strengthen socially shared perception of categories, but there is even some range of meanings and examples people would attribute to a single fixed name. They are social in that the categories become shared through exemplar, instruction, naming, meta-talk and other modes of typification. But they are also individual in that each person's attribution of

category affects their orientation towards a text and thus their reading and writing behavior and thought. (92)

Genre selection is a complex process. Which genre is the most appropriate choice to execute a particular rhetorical situation? Why might a performance ethnography work best as a straight script versus a script mixed with poetic verse? Or, why might our work with ethnographic photography work best read through an ethnographic vignette versus a sequence of captioned photographs in a visual gallery? In some ways, the choices with which writers are faced are what make composing so exciting and composition courses so diverse in their content. Perspective pedagogy, in that respect, provides students with a variety of rhetorical situations, which also ask that students demonstrate their abilities to compose utilizing a variety of genres.

For example, one student spent her semester studying male college basketball players. For her observation report, she crafted an ethnography that shared her subculture experience. Specifically, she wrote:

the air was filled with excitement as people filed into the gymnasium. The sounds of sneakers scuffing the hardwood and encouragement accompanied by the smell of musk, rubber, franks and popcorn filled the gym as the players took turns warming up and shooting baskets. People's eyes search the court for familiar numbers so they can shout out their support. Songs like, "Ballin" by Jim Jones and "Give it To Me", by the late great Rick James are being played to help set the tone for the game...The whistle sounds and everyone scurries to their seats, excitement gripped the stands as they prepared themselves for another game. Everyone's focus is on the game or their favorite players while mine usually would be also, but my attention is elsewhere (cites fieldnotes).

By sharing her sensory and ethnographic experiences as a fieldworker, the student becomes part of that rhetorical situation, not as an objective recorder of other people's movements but also as a recorder of her own. This kind of situation is unique to ethnographies in that it combines what might be seen as traditional research as data collection with personal experiences. The situation also calls for a narrative sequence of details to set the "scene" for readers in her ethnography.

To conclude, while our understanding of composition varies from discipline to discipline, as does my understanding of ethnography, photography, film and performance, our understanding, i.e., our *perspectives* on these disciplines and genres should not be dismissed but embraced. I think that it is my experiences with this interdisciplinary pedagogy that has allowed me to develop as a teacher, a scholar and a learner.

### **Refine for Stylistic and Mechanical Coherence**

The fourth and final composition program goal that the sources I mentioned earlier shared was that students should be able to refine their essays for stylistic and mechanical coherence (see page 133). The scholarship on this goal covers all kinds of style and grammar choices, but they all emphasize the importance of both in composition programs. Many writers emphasize that there are specific rules of style and mechanics that students can learn and apply to their writing (The Council of Writing Program Administrators, Golson, Karoldilis, Licklider, Mutnick, NCTE, Vaught-Alexander, and Weathers). In addition, there are also quite a few essays that assert that just because there are rules for strengthening stylistic and mechanical coherence does not make them lower-order concerns; in fact, the label of them as lower-order concerns creates a misleading assumption that they have an unimportant role in a strong composition (George, Hartwell, Ohmann's, Rankin, Roen's Chapter 13, Rose, and Tobin). No matter the approach toward instruction of first-year composition, teachers in these collections instruct their

students on the importance of refining their compositions with an eye for stylistic and mechanical coherence. The choices that students make in these areas might situate them with a variety of compositional voices, which will vary depending on the rhetorical purpose of a piece of writing. Therefore, students' ability to refine their essays for stylistic and mechanical coherence is the fourth composition program goal for this section of my dissertation.

Perspective pedagogy takes into consideration stylistic and mechanical choices of ethnographers. In my class, we read about these choices in texts written by ethnographers. For example, VanMaanen writes about the “choice of metaphor, figurative allusions, semantics, decorative phrasing or plain speaking, textual organization” and stylistic choices, such as “when the experimentalist writes in a self-conscious, hyper-realistic, attention-grabbing dots-and-dashes fashion—where, for instance, ellipses are used to simulate (and stimulate) the effect of a...skipped heartbeat—as when the traditionalist falls back on the neutral, pale-beige, just-the-facts fashion of scientific reporting” (5). What VanMaanen emphasizes here is that stylistic and mechanical choices like punctuation frame ethnographic writing just as they would in a composition with any other rhetorical purpose. The diversity of stylistic choices for ethnographies reflects the ways in which ethnography encourages ethnographic writers to take chances with sentence structure, word choice and mechanics. The same stylistic discussions that VanMaanen and other ethnographers discuss in their work about ethnographic composition inspire my teaching of perspective pedagogy in the classroom.

Along each step of the researching process in my classroom, we discuss the stylistic and mechanical choices with which they are faced. For example, if they are writing playscripts for their performance ethnographies, we discuss the importance of keeping in mind the oral qualities of the words they choose and sentences they put together. The words have to flow naturally in



conversational English to sound believable. On the other hand, if they are writing about observations they have made, integrating first-hand observations with their ethnographic photographs, I will ask them to work in the kinds of storytelling characteristics described by VanMaanen while still trying to have them adhere to an essay structure. Combining these elements allows me to rest easy that they are reaching the goals of a composition course while still experimenting with the rhetorical choices that ethnographers make.

No matter what the assignment is, though, if their ideas are not conveyed clearly, audience members will take them less seriously or may choose to not read the text at all. In the most raw sense, it is with issues of clarity where choices with and attention to mechanics matter. I emphasize to my students that just because they are sharing stories they are not awarded leeway to break mechanical rules or impair the readability of their essays. Similar to other narrative assignments first-year students are given, some students feel that ethnographic narrative assignments expect a more casual style and adherence to Standard Written English than other kinds of writing assignments expect. As a result, students may determine that narratives need not follow any style or mechanics expectations. This brings my mind back to my earlier discussion in Chapter 1 about my decision to engage in narrative as a mode for critical inquiry and the potential resistance from scholars about that choice.

In my methodology section of Chapter 1, I discussed the reservations that some scholars hold about narrative inquiry, viewing it as an approach that is less formal than other kinds of research and, consequently, perhaps less able to produce valid conclusions. Once again, I return to this notion of a supposed scientific, monolithic Truth versus narrative's inherent subjective truths. Just because something is interpretive and subjective does not mean that it does not require and expect sophisticated rigor of stylistic and mechanical choices. At some level, perhaps

because of some audience's need to challenge narrative discourse, students and scholars alike should pay even closer attention to those choices to assure that audiences take those texts as seriously as they deserve to be taken.

Students find themselves attaching the assignment to other kinds of narratives they have done in the past, which are generally "What did you do last summer?" kinds of contexts, carrying less weight in their minds with regard to serious purposes. My hope with perspective pedagogy is to encourage my students to re-see narrative discourse to value it differently. It can be a challenge for some students. They may feel that they should be able to write their essays quickly and easily because they tell stories to their friends online and face-to-face. It can be challenging for some students to see the distinction between telling a story to some friends and using narrative to reflect critical inquiry. Casual narratives shared between friends can often have characteristics like informal word choices, the prolific use of vague word choices like "stuff," "things" or "good" rather than more concrete word choices in their writing. Students who do not take narrative writing seriously might also feel their stories do not need to be "properly punctuated," because their only concern is that they get the overall facts conveyed. As a reader, I feel as if some students write their narratives at the last minute. I attribute some of their relaxed approaches toward narrative writing to their belief that writing based on their experiences is "easier" than writing expected in something labeled as a "research report." A report by its very label carries with it this context of formality, precision and a foundation based in cited secondary research.

In one student's ethnography about street hockey players, he has this to write about the photographs he took: "One of the pictures is of the home net. I felt this was an important picture because this is the most important part of the entire game. The goal is where all the scoring takes

place, which determines who wins the games.” This kind of information is quite obvious about the subculture and does not add anything unique to the ethnography. It further emphasizes how some students might not take the ethnographic photography assignment very seriously. In this student’s case, he took a picture of a hockey net rather than exploring the ways in which the subculture members interacted with one another. Another student further emphasizes my point about students not taking the assignment seriously when he writes, “The second and third pictures are of the pool table and the pool balls. The pool table is not anything special and neither are the pool balls.” By asserting that what he took pictures of is not important, he takes away the strength of his ethnography. When responding to students’ submissions like this, I considered it important to emphasize the need to include vivid details as well as pay careful attention to photography selection.

In addition to the challenges I face convincing students of the critical power that comes with narrative discourse, students in my FYRC classroom also take into consideration the power of their audience including the members of their subcultures. The members of the subcultures they are studying function as an additional set of eyes beyond the traditional audience of teacher and classmates; subculture members are an audience of readers who wants to see that my students take pride in their essays about those subcultures. Members of these subcultures might feel that if my students do not take care in their writing that they also have a limited commitment to the composing process and, in some ways, the subcultures themselves.

### **How Does Perspective Pedagogy Contribute to Ethnographers?**

While the previous section addressed the ways in which perspective pedagogy might reflect the goals of composition programs, I would also like to consider the possible contributions perspective pedagogy might make for ethnographers. As noted earlier in this

dissertation (see Chapter 3 in particular), perspective pedagogy is deeply rooted in many different disciplines. Ethnographers have always relied on composition for expressing their ethnographic experiences, but exponentially so since the publication of *Writing Culture* in 1986 (Clifford and Marcus). It was *Writing Culture* that emphasized the centrality of composition for ethnography in exciting ways, moving composition away from its earlier utilitarian purpose. As a result, many ethnographers and publications on ethnography since then have investigated the role of and approaches toward composition of the ethnographic experiences. Since 1990 or so, when postmodern ethnography emerged, ethnography has begun to embrace ethnographers' ability to move between genres, at times appearing multimodal in their presentation. Ethnographers "intermingle literary, poetic, journalistic, fictional, cinematic, documentary, factual and ethnographic writing and representation. No one form is privileged over the other" (*Sage Handbook*, 7). Perhaps reading my dissertation will allow ethnographers, who generally do not have formal composition backgrounds, to consider the elements of strong writing and how perspective pedagogy's approaches are taught and learned by other composition novices, my students. After all, all the works that are written about ethnographic composition are written by ethnographers at this point. Perhaps seeing composition through the eyes of a discipline-specific expert on composition might reveal things about the composing process that ethnographers have not considered. As a result of examining ethnographic composition through a compositionist's perspective, ethnographers might gain insights about structure, style, organization and mechanics that are not emphasized in their own discipline but could still make their writing even stronger.

To address these differences among disciplines' views of composition even further, I want to take some time to discuss the role of writing scholarship in other disciplines. It is important to encourage writing in classes outside of the English department and reveal to

students its role in life beyond the walls of a composition course. In addition, I would like to see more students become exposed to the different kinds of writing that are valued in other disciplines that are not emphasized or considered privileged in English composition courses (like conciseness in the hard sciences or the use of second person “you” in business writing). Some teachers may struggle with the process of translating assignments that are specific to their disciplines for students they have who are outside of that given discipline. As Chapter 2 of my dissertation outlined, I found translation of ethnographic photography, performance ethnography and ethnographic film all challenging to explain to my composition students. By this, I certainly do not mean to imply that ethnographers would not have the solid foundation on which to teach ethnography; instead, what I am trying to say is that ethnographers might find it helpful to read my stories about how I translated ethnographic researching methods and the correlating compositions. I imagine that their experiences reading my dissertation about teaching perspective pedagogy to first-year composition students would be as enlightening as I have found reading about how teachers who do not instruct English approach teaching their students to compose for whatever courses they teach. Just as my students are asked to embrace the importance of seeing things from many perspectives, ethnographers seeing ethnography from the perspective of a composition instructor and her students may serve to broaden ethnographers’ appreciation for the applications of ethnography to other academic areas. Again, my emphasis here is not to assess whether or not someone’s approach is “better” but simply to emphasize the importance and value of perspectives, both in and out of the classroom.

In conclusion, ethnographers who read my dissertation will hopefully gather a new perspective about ethnography, a compositionist’s perspective, which will illuminate for them some of the ways we might instruct students on the composing process of ethnography. My

attention to details about the writing process, word choice, paragraph structure, narrative inquiry, and mechanics might not be the same kinds of things that an ethnographer emphasizes when writing ethnographies or teaching others how to write ethnographies. In addition to my emphasis on composition, ethnographers reading my dissertation might also enjoy reading about my approach for tying traditional observation and interviewing techniques together with ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography, because, as evidenced by my research in earlier chapters of this dissertation, the scholarship of these methods are currently still compartmentalized.

### **How Does Perspective Pedagogy Contribute to Educators in Other Disciplines?**

So far, I have examined how perspective pedagogy might contribute to my own pedagogy, to composition programs, and to ethnographers. In this section, I suggest how perspective pedagogy might be useful to educators in other disciplines. Specifically, I want to focus on one particular general education application of perspective pedagogy that is not composition-based: perspective pedagogy asks students to engage in interdisciplinary research, what I term “Researching Across the Disciplines” or R.A.D..

As my dissertation has already shown, perspective pedagogy is interdisciplinary, including the visual arts (photography, in particular); communications (ethnographic filmmaking); theater (performance ethnography); anthropology, archeology, sociology and history (throughout its history, content, and research approaches), and philosophy. It involves students thinking about ideas from so many different disciplines and asks students to consider the ways in which their learning might be enhanced by those ideas from other disciplines. More than just interdisciplinary, though, perspective pedagogy involves interdisciplinary research.

Many composition pedagogies ask students to consider ideas from other disciplines like sociology, philosophy and history through the assigned reading or research projects; however, what is unique to perspective pedagogy is that it asks teachers to train their undergraduate students to think about research methodologies from other disciplines. Most students do not encounter this kind of exposure to varied research methods until graduate level courses. Why is that? Perspective pedagogy asks teachers and students alike to rethink the value of learning interdisciplinary research methods.

Some research methods used in perspective pedagogy are being used in different disciplines from where they originated. For example, performance ethnography is being used in disciplines outside of its theatrical home. Nicholson writes that,

Scholars in the fields of education, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies have, in recent years, turned to theatre as an arts-based mode of representation and dissemination of research. Theatre, broadly defined, has been exploited to express a range of ethnographic, auto-biographic, and case-study research findings...These researchers are ‘committed to harnessing drama to cultural engagement, social intervention and educational change.’ (Nicholson 119)

What Nicholson’s article reveals is that many disciplines are already considering way that they might transform traditional genres of documenting their research findings. This indicates an openness toward and willingness to new research methods. I may interpret this to also mean a potential open-mindedness about perspective pedagogy as well. Despite these exciting possibilities, Gallagher notes the inherent limitations of theater’s role in other disciplines:

To be sure, not all research would benefit from a ‘theatrical’ rendering, but as new methods of qualitative inquiry and post-positivist epistemologies gain momentum,

the tidy, linear research reports of more positivist paradigms may not satisfactorily express the postmodern theoretical complexities and creative research methods of current educational research. (Gallagher 107)

Gallagher reminds us that theater is not the answer for all research in all disciplines. It would be naïve of any of us to believe that all perspectives are applicable to all disciplines; however, a willingness to consider and try other discipline's research methods could open doors for undergraduate student researchers.

Though there may be some limitations, theater and performance ethnographic methods remain influential to educators in other disciplines, so it stands to reason that perspective pedagogy might offer methodologies for their students as well. Perspective pedagogy, after all, includes performance ethnography as one of its perspective. If one perspective can be this valuable and inspirational, then it makes sense that more perspectives may increase that critical thinking in those same ways.

Using perspective pedagogy emphasizes the value in looking at students' research from multiple perspectives rather than just one like performance ethnography. It engages students in a sequence of choices about the most effective methods they feel they should use in order to produce the most provocative subculture research projects. None of these perspectives used in perspective pedagogy should stand on their own as the singular perspective for learning about a subculture. Therefore, students in other disciplines using ideas from perspective pedagogy will likely find some limitations to the methods' applicability to their research in those other disciplines as well.

It is important that I take a moment to also address an area that is deeply entrenched in research methodology as a whole: ethics. Perspective pedagogy offers many opportunities for



students to encounter ethical dilemmas and to discuss the ethical implications of doing research. Malley and Hawkins, in their article “Ethnographic Inquiry as Writing Pedagogy,” assert that one of the goals of ethnographic inquiry in the writing classroom is to “ask students to actively probe the ethics of research in personal terms” (“Ethnographic Inquiry”). Perspective pedagogy has students asking themselves ethical questions about the ways in which they should cite their own research, whether it is their photographs, films, interview transcripts or performance scripts. Students using these interdisciplinary research methods will likely engage in fruitful discussions about the power of citing and taking ownership of their own research, just like the authors of their secondary sources take pride in their research and writing up of that research. Perspective pedagogy engages students in ethical discussions that are unlike the discussions about research projects that are solely based on secondary resource collections. It asks students to consider the ethical implications of engaging in fieldwork, producing compositions that reflect those fieldworking experiences, and sharing films and photographs of their experiences.

In conclusion, educators from other disciplines can utilize perspective pedagogy in engaging, thoughtful, and productive ways by considering one of its unique hallmarks: applying research methods from across the disciplines. The introduction and immersion in interdisciplinary research methods will encourage critical thinking, decision making and composing.

### **Conclusion: How Effective is Perspective Pedagogy?**

The last three sections of this chapter have presented some thoughts on how perspective pedagogy has the potential to make a positive impact on my own pedagogy, on composition programs, on ethnographers, and on educators outside of the English department. Those three sections have brought me to the next consideration: is perspective pedagogy effective for use in

the FYRC classroom? I find that question difficult to definitively answer, since “effective” is so subjective. Perspective pedagogy can impact students in numerous ways. From this pedagogy, students demonstrated their abilities to be engaged, thoughtful, and developed writers. Is this possible with other pedagogies? Certainly. Is perspective pedagogy the only way to get students to approach research from many different source directions? Certainly not. However, I do feel that this pedagogy is a worthwhile endeavor for composition instructors and for campuses to consider in a broader, interdisciplinary manner. As Chapter 2 in particular demonstrated, students under the direction of perspective pedagogy enhanced their note taking skills, their critical thinking, their triangulation capabilities, and their writing out of their research experience. Overall, I call that effective.

Despite the successes noted above, when using perspective pedagogy, I still encountered imperfections. First, my students’ enthusiasm dwindled when faced with the ethnographic film and performance ethnography projects. I had hoped that they would have been excited and jumped in with both feet. However, as Chapter 2 noted, that was not the reaction of all students. Had the students been more enthusiastic about these perspectives, their writing and researching would have been augmented. The second challenge that perspective pedagogy faced was with the results in my students’ work. While I had aimed for more thoughtfully developed work than I saw in my students’ writing when I was using ethnographic pedagogy, some students in the perspective pedagogy classrooms struggled to demonstrate the deep critical thinking and composition development that I had hoped to see. Despite these imperfections, I would not say that the pedagogy was a failure.

Overall, I would conclude that this pedagogy is effective in helping my students work toward meeting the goals of the research composition course, in developing their exposure to a

variety of research methods, and in challenging them to become people able to examine things from a variety of perspectives. As with any pedagogy, perspective pedagogy is not without its need to be revised, revisited and reconsidered. Those elements that I would consider failures or at least elements that need to be revised (like my approaches toward introducing and implementing film and performance) are really just steps in my journey as a teacher, not something that stops me from continuing to work through the stumbling blocks and refine my pedagogy. My academic mentor since graduate school once told me that the moment a teacher stops questioning herself as a teacher is the day she should pack up and retire. I still believe that philosophy. I take this to mean that we as teachers should continue to question and challenge our pedagogies in the classroom as students change, as we change, as our class dynamics change and our colleges' needs change. If we remain stagnant, we may wither away as teachers and as humans. If this holds true, and I believe that it does, perspective pedagogy is successful. Paula Mathieu writes that pedagogies that have students venturing out "to the streets" (out into their communities) require

admitting failures, seeing one's work as insufficient, and recognizing that success to some constituents might look different to others...In order to establish credibility with the people on the streets where we work, we need to conduct our work with humility and a critical eye...The perpetual challenge of hope is the need to keep our work open, changing, and continually evolving. This need stands in opposition to desires for our research to offer clear methodologies and data, create long-term projects, make permanent change. (19)

If perspective pedagogy continues to be read with a critical eye, I believe that educators in other disciplines, ethnographers, and composition instructors like myself can all benefit from

perspective pedagogy. Education is not without its chaos, its messy moments, its lack of clarity and its frustrations. That is at least partially why I became a teacher. These messy moments or, more specifically, our abilities to respond and revise based on those moments, are the foundation of successful teaching.

In some ways, perspective pedagogy might be seen as a liberatory pedagogy, because it asks students to become cultural critics in many ways but also to be self-conscious about their actions and their world around them. I realize that the classrooms I discuss in this dissertation were not filled with oppressed students like Freire's; my students were not struggling for freedom from oppressors nor were they part of the underprivileged classes. The students I discuss in this dissertation were fairly homogenous with regard to their being predominantly middle class Caucasians. However, their experiences with perspective pedagogy still asked them to step outside of their comfort zones with who they think they know and who they thought they were as people as well, since ethnographies require students to share their experiences with those subcultures in addition to the subcultures' lives themselves. Like liberatory pedagogy, students in perspective pedagogy were faced with challenges, questions and distinctive breaks from the lives they lived prior to entering the ethnographic experiences. Freire and Horton remind us that "there is no creativity without *ruptura*, without a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision" (38). To them, I respond, "Bring on the conflict."

## **CHAPTER 5: WHAT DOES PERSPECTIVE PEDAGOGY MEAN TO ME AND WHERE MIGHT IT GO IN THE FUTURE?**

For the fifth and final chapter of my dissertation, I want to reflect on my experiences writing the dissertation and teaching perspective pedagogy and to look outward, beyond the scope of this dissertation toward directions that perspective pedagogy might go. My goal with this chapter is both personal, giving me a moment to mull over the power of this experience, and audience-driven, asking my readers what they might take away from my experiences and how they might make perspective pedagogy their own. Chapter 5 functions as the dissertation's conclusion chapter.

### **Where I've Been So Far in This Dissertation**

The story of my dissertation has been a bumpy, challenging and at times frustrating, much like my teaching experiences as a whole since I first taught in 1998. Through my teaching and writing of this dissertation, I have come to question and then validate my role as a teacher and facilitator in the classroom. As a whole, my earlier chapters present details about my dissertation thinking and action processes. In this section, I want to begin by reminding readers of the content I have covered in this dissertation.

Chapter 1's first two sections detailed the ethnographic pedagogy I used in my classrooms prior to starting this dissertation and the weaknesses in it that I wanted to address in order to strengthen my pedagogical approach to the first-year research composition (FYRC) classroom. Specifically, I identified three major problems with my students' work while using ethnographic pedagogy: underdeveloped notes; underdeveloped triangulation; and underdeveloped compositions. In the third section of Chapter 1, I translated those problems into problem questions and then, based on the perspective pedagogy I developed, added a fourth

question: How effective is perspective pedagogy? The fourth section of the chapter defined the primary terms I used in my dissertation, such as ethnography, culture, and the new ethnographic approaches I used in perspective pedagogy (ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography). These definitions laid the ground work for subsequent chapters' use of those terms and introduced readers to some of the concepts that I would be working with later on in the dissertation. The fifth section of Chapter 1 unpacked my methodology for the dissertation, indicating the kinds of reading, researching, writing and teaching I did along the way both in the composition field and the ethnographic disciplines that play a part in perspective pedagogy. Once readers were familiarized with my plans for the dissertation and the pedagogical approach I was going to discuss, the sixth and final section of the chapter addressed some typical responses to my decision to refine ethnographic pedagogy into perspective pedagogy instead of just selecting a new pedagogy all together. I not only mentioned which pedagogies people may have suggested I use instead (place-based writing and service learning) but also why I did not think that those other pedagogies would have resolved the problems with ethnographic pedagogy; instead, I felt that switching pedagogies all together would only put me back at pedagogical square one, so to speak.

Chapter 2 told the story of my integration of perspective pedagogy in my first-year research composition classroom. In particular, I did not begin with “day one” of the semester; I left out my introductory work with students about ethnography, observations, and interview techniques, because I assumed these were elements with which my readers would be aware. Instead, I began my pedagogical discussion with the three new artistic perspectives that define perspective pedagogy (ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, and performance ethnography). By offering readers a chance to see the process of inventing and applying

perspective pedagogy in my classroom, they saw the successes, struggles and failures along the way as well as my reactions toward those experiences that led to adjustments in that pedagogy in future semesters. Working through the pedagogy's development over a sequence of five semesters allowed me to embrace my processes as a writer and as a teacher. Readers learned about who I am as a teacher-scholar more so in that chapter than any other one in the dissertation, in my opinion.

Chapter 3 described my researching process in an effort to answer the problem questions from Chapter 1. To answer them, I discussed my research into the history of ethnography as a whole as well as the history of ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography. In order to tie the chapter directly to earlier chapters, I organized the chapter into sections, each based on one of the three problem questions for my class noted in Chapter 1. I used ethnography's history, then, to discover how ethnographers through the centuries had refined their researching and writing approaches in an attempt to find strategies for improving my students' work in the classroom. By tying together ethnographic history and theory, my third chapter showed readers the true interdisciplinarity of my pedagogy's foundation.

Chapter 4 addressed potential ways that perspective pedagogy may contribute toward four different areas. Initially, I address ways that perspective pedagogy contributes toward my own pedagogy. Following the personal contributions, Chapter 4 breaks down ways perspective pedagogy contributes to composition programs by fulfilling four primary goals for composition programs. My third piece of the chapter describes what perspective pedagogy contributes to ethnographers. The final contribution discussion moves my focus a bit wider to its contributions to educators in other disciplines. Using those four sections as inspiration, the final chapter section returns to my overarching question posed in Chapter 1: How effective is perspective

pedagogy? By returning to that question in Chapter 4, readers and I have had a chance to really take a look at what I do, why I do it, and how what I do contributes to my work and the work of others. Answering that question, then, helped pull all of that information together for readers.

Now that readers have had an opportunity to review what the dissertation has done up to this point, the next section will explore some directions to consider for future development of perspective pedagogy.

### **Call for Future Research**

While this dissertation brings to light the directions I took with perspective pedagogy in my classrooms, there are many potential other directions to consider as well. This section will address some of the potential directions for future research with perspective pedagogy.

#### **A Future Direction with Dance Ethnography**

One future direction for perspective pedagogy is the addition of dance ethnography. Dance ethnography is “the scientific study of ethnic dances in all their cultural significance, religious function or symbolism, or social place” (Kurath 235). To do this kind of ethnography, researchers must listen carefully to the music, observe the dances carefully, and, a major component of this ethnographic field of study is the transcription of the dance movements. The use of photography and film can be helpful perspectives to add to students’ understanding of the dance; however, just like the rest of perspective pedagogy reminds students, no one perspective is sufficient for understanding a subculture. In this case, photography cannot capture the kinetic elements of the dance and film produces only one two-dimensional perspective on the dance (Kurath 247). If dance ethnography were introduced into perspective pedagogy, it is important that students use it in conjunction with active fieldworking to observe the dances live in addition to any visual elements like ethnographic photographs and ethnographic films of the dances to



draw their conclusions. Just as I have learned about other ethnographic perspectives contributing toward perspective pedagogy, dance ethnography will need to adhere to the core concept that students will learn more during both the researching and writing processes if they are able to examine their subcultures from many perspectives. To rely solely on their fieldnotes to discuss a dance or solely on photographs of that dance would create boundaries and limitations to their abilities to tell that dance's story within the context of the subculture.

Those interested in considering adding dance ethnography to perspective pedagogy will likely review the two widely-accepted approaches toward transcription of dance ethnography: Labanotation and the Benesh Movement Notation methods. Both of these transcription methods transcribe movements in "frames," that mark one movement at a time, in very strategic, precise manners. Admittedly, these two methods are very complex and difficult to write and read, especially for novices like the FYRC students. They both situate the body on a staff of sorts, similar to that of a musical staff for musical compositions. On that staff, both transcription methods use a variety of symbols to represent movements across that staff. In order to compose or translate the transcriptions of movements in these methods, readers must learn that language of symbols. This process can be very time consuming as is learning any new language.

For the purposes of perspective pedagogy, a non-expert ethnographic exploration of subcultures, teachers should explore approaches that are friendlier for nondance ethnography experts. I recommend they examine the work of Gell who illustrates a nonexpert approach toward transcribing dance that is much more workable for use in perspective pedagogy, an approach intended for ethnographic novices. Specifically, in his essay "Style and Meaning in Umeda Dance," Gell illustrates a form of transcription worth exploring for purposes like ours for perspective pedagogy (189). To envision this coming into play in perspective pedagogy,

imagine a student was studying cheerleaders as her subculture. She could transcribe the dances and cheers to determine the types of movement and who does each of the movements. If students feel comfortable with the material and capable of meeting teachers' expectations with the material, like anything else, they are much more likely to try it.

### **A Future Direction with Ethnomusicology**

Another potential future direction for perspective pedagogy is the addition of ethnomusicology to perspective pedagogy. It is increasingly common to use music in the composition classroom for a variety of purposes. For perspective pedagogy, I can see great potential for the use of ethnomusicology. Specifically, The Society for Ethnomusicology defines ethnomusicology as follows:

Ethnomusicology encompasses the study of music-making throughout the world, from the distant past to the present. Ethnomusicologists explore the ideas, activities, instruments, and sounds with which people create music...

Ethnomusicologists generally employ the methods of ethnography in their research. They spend extended periods of time with a music community, observe and document what happens, ask questions, and sometimes learn to play the community's types of music. Ethnomusicologists may also rely on archives, libraries, and museums for resources related to the history of music traditions. Sometimes ethnomusicologists help individuals and communities to document and promote their musical practices. ("What is Ethnomusicology?")

What I particularly appreciate about ethnomusicology is how it serves to not only observe and listen to it but to have ethnographers help the cultures "promote their musical practices." This kind of proactive approach toward ethnography would work quite nicely into perspective

pedagogy. Like I noted in the dance ethnography section above, some subcultures will lend themselves to this kind of ethnographic research, including research projects I have seen in my past experiences (and one I even mentioned in Chapter 2 as an example). For example, one student studied the subculture of improvisational musicians for his project; therefore, a study of the elements of their music that might make it distinct from other kinds of formalized music would be a worthwhile endeavor. Students who investigate professional musicians or organized musicians like concert bands or marching bands as well as those studying subcultures where music plays a major role like dance teams, would all benefit from using this kind of perspective in their projects. With the study of music comes a similar struggle that those considering dance ethnography will encounter: transcription. To truly study music, transcription is necessary. Therefore, this is an area that will need to be considered prior to implementation in the perspective pedagogy classroom. In conclusion, ethnomusicology might be an area worth exploring for a future direction for perspective pedagogy.

### **A Future Direction with Multimodal Pedagogy**

A third potential future direction for perspective pedagogy is to add elements of multimodal pedagogy. Selfe asserts that “the history of writing in U.S. composition instruction, as well as its contemporary legacy, functions to limit our professional understanding of composing as a multimodal rhetorical activity and deprive students of valuable semiotic resources for making meaning” (“Movement of Air” 617). What Selfe goes on to clarify is that composition is part of the long-standing tradition of language arts and that composition scholars need to begin to understand that language is composed in more ways than the text. Therefore, educators should consider ways to expand perspective pedagogy to embrace this sensory composition that multimodal pedagogy encourages. Perspective pedagogy already uses visual

(photographs, film, performance), aural (films, interview recordings, and performances), and textual (essays for each ethnographic perspective) elements, all of which allow students to reflect on their research using many different modes of literacy already. However, the introduction of multimodal pedagogy could inspire new ways of sharing that information beyond the textual to include, for example, hypertext like websites, wikis, blogs, or privatized e-portfolio software, to name a few possibilities. After all, “if our profession continues to focus solely on teaching only alphabetic composition—either online or in print—we run the risk of making composition studies increasingly irrelevant to students engaging in contemporary practices of communicating” (Selfe, *Multimodal Compositions: Resources for Teachers*, 72). Multimodal pedagogy could create a new dimension for expressing and sharing the ethnographic materials that perspective pedagogy does not currently include.

### **A Future Direction for a First-Year Seminar**

A fourth potential future direction for research with perspective pedagogy is for it to become a first-year seminar, establishing for first-year students the interdisciplinary nature of learning and curriculum. Currently, first-year seminars are used to introduce students to the university experience, to refine their academic skills, such as studying, reading, and critical thinking, and to improve student retention rates by aiding their transition to the college lifestyle. However, what I envision with perspective pedagogy’s future is a first-year seminar experience course that introduces students to the interdisciplinarity of curriculum. What I see is unlike a first-year seminar purpose and more like the capstone course purpose. Moore writes that the capstone course “fosters interdisciplinary partnerships among university departments and helps cultivate industry alliances and cooperation” (“Capstone Courses”). Like a capstone course, perspective pedagogy first-year seminar could introduce students to the integrated nature of

college curriculum by having them engage in the different perspectives of ethnographic research. This may reveal to them the ways in which the visual arts like ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography can become married with archaeology, anthropology, sociology, history and composition. Furthermore, having students exploring their local communities both on and off campus could foster a sense of belonging and might lead to increased retention rates and improved peer connections with those in their classroom as well as those in the subcultures they are studying. Having students engage in a variety of source collection and triangulation of research may also improve their reading, writing and thinking skills, the foundation of all great study skills. Therefore, designing a first-year seminar using perspective pedagogy is the final potential future direction I am offering for educators to consider in this section.

As readers can now see, there are many potential future directions where scholars may decide to build upon perspective pedagogy. Some of the ideas are for developing the curriculum while others are for directions in which to implement that pedagogy in other areas on campus. My hope by offering these future directions is to help readers to continue thinking about the pedagogy behind the scope of the dissertation.

### **My Theoretical Framework for Perspective Pedagogy**

As my dissertation reaches its close, I want to take a moment to focus briefly on the theoretical framework on which I relied to develop perspective pedagogy. Earlier sections have illustrated the inherent process on which the pedagogy creation has relied and will continue to rely on if taken in any of the aforementioned directions in the future. My work to develop this pedagogy is deeply immersed in being a reflective practitioner. In order to learn from my

mistakes, encourage development of my successes, and strengthen myself as a teacher-scholar, I had to rely on reflection from beginning to end.

When I teach composition of any kind, I remind students of the invaluable component of reflection. Unless they are able to stop periodically to consider the impact of the choices they made as writers to supposedly improve their compositions, they may end up missing the importance of the changes they are making. In a similar vein, when designing this pedagogy, I had to be consciously aware of the rigorousness of the process of asking and attempting to answer the many questions about what makes an effective pedagogy. Schon's ground-breaking work (1987) on reflective practitioners asserts that teachers should "move into the center of the learning situation, into the center of their own doubts" (83). By using the theoretical readings as a springboard, I did just that. Rather than standing at the edge and theorizing what might happen if I applied these ideas to my classroom, I became the center of my experience, questioning my decisions and applications all along the way.

Self-reflection is an exhausting process and not one to quickly dismiss as automatic in teachers or natural while in the experience of teaching and learning. Rather, reflective practice requires an awareness of the need and rigor in the documentation of the process as well. From my teaching journal throughout the experience and my regular sessions of reviewing those entries and making appropriate classroom adjustments, I managed to make the necessary revisions to my classroom applications of perspective pedagogy, which is most clearly outlined in my discussions of the six semesters of teaching with perspective pedagogy in Chapter 2.

More than once, I found myself wondering if the revisions were worth it. For example, in Chapter 2 I shared my struggles with student resistance to ethnographic film and performance ethnography. Instead of cutting those perspectives from my teaching, I reflected on what their

resistance taught me, steeping all the while in my self-doubt as a teacher. After careful consideration and adjustment, I was able to revise the pedagogy and try a new approach in the classroom the following semester. It is my choice to do the latter that taught me so much as a teacher-scholar.

Initially, the consistent questioning and self-doubt was challenging to accept as a teacher-scholar; however, it was only through becoming a reflective practitioner that I grew as a professional, a characteristic I will carry with me for the rest of my career. As a graduation requirement, writing this dissertation was initially an assignment I labeled as something to prove my worthiness to continue doing my work as a teacher. Because of this perception of the dissertation, self-doubt and reflection initially appeared to be signs of weakness. However, now that I am done with the process, I have come to recognize not only how reflection and doubt are helpful in the process but that they are necessary.

### **Final Remarks: What Did I Find Through Writing This Dissertation?**

Like any complex research project, writing this dissertation brought up as many questions as it set out to answer. Perhaps that is a good thing, asking myself and the readers of this dissertation to question my authority and the effectiveness of perspective pedagogy for first-year research composition students. Ultimately, through writing this dissertation, my discoveries could be categorized in two ways: pedagogy and process.

The first category of discoveries is pedagogical. I investigated the complexity of ethnographic inquiry and the power of ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography to illustrate and further complicate that inquiry in deeply critical and thoughtful manners. In particular, my research into the history of ethnography set a foundation for understanding those complexities that I had never imagined and inspired perspective

pedagogy. I realized the breadth and depth of research necessary to lay the foundation for a pedagogy. It really was not until I began my research that I realized that while they all were types of ethnography, because of their discipline specialties, there are not texts that addressed them all together. It was daunting at first, of course, to realize that my research would splinter into four directions: ethnography, ethnographic photography, ethnographic film and performance ethnography. However, eventually the pieces fell into their places on a single timeline as well as in my dissertation writing. I discovered patterns between the ethnographies and, as a result, I think made me perhaps more of an expert on the ethnographies than if I had found many anthologies that covered all of the ethnographies together.

The second category of discovery was with the process I took for writing my dissertation. It taught me a lot about myself as a teacher, a thinker, a researcher, a writer and now a scholar. For example, I allowed myself to be self-critical in a productive manner, embracing the richness of narrative inquiry. Prior to and even while writing this dissertation, I found many moments where my “editing hand” stopped me from writing about the failures, challenges and moments of classroom and pedagogical chaos. Through the dissertation writing process and teaching experiences, though, I came to discovered the inherent power in those moments. Stenberg and Whealy write that,

there is no student-centered pedagogy without chaos. We know that no matter how firmly grounded we may be in our pedagogical visions and values, our students do not always experience or respond to our teaching as we hope. And if we take advantage of those nebulous moments as opportunities for reflection—rather than squelch them—we are able to rethink our pedagogies, to change our minds. (685)



While I had read these kinds of statements many times before, it was not until my dissertation experience that I wrote through those chaotic classrooms and saw what writers like these meant. Teaching is not concrete; it is complex, messy and unpredictable. Most importantly, all those things are to be embraced and considered as we continue our journeys as teachers. I recognize that through my experiences, good and bad, other teachers might learn both from my mistakes and from my accomplishments. After all, in our embracing of narrative as critical inquiry, we as readers and writers of it must accept its subjectivity and its humanity.

During my experiences teaching perspective pedagogy, I hit walls with students' resistance to the process, student discomfort getting so close to other human beings in this manner, and difficulty garnering the enthusiasm about the experiences that I personally had about the pedagogy. Initially, I felt that these moments marked my failure as a teacher. If the pedagogy did not go on "without a hitch," it must not work, I kept saying to myself. I did not give up, though. My exposure to increasingly more teaching stories, whether published (see Bishop, Bruner, Blitz and Hurlbert, to name just a few) or through verbal discussions with my colleagues, I came to the realization that no pedagogy is perfect and that by defining my pedagogy's success by perfection was impractical and unrealistic. From my experiences teaching this pedagogy for six semesters in a row, I gave myself a license to revise my pedagogy, learn from it, and allow for imperfections. I also recognized that there was value in learning from what I did wrong or could have done better just as much as there was to learn from what I did well in and out of the classroom.

Ultimately, I found independence to stand on my own two feet pedagogically, confident in my knowledge and preparedness to teach perspective pedagogy.

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