

STOCKING THE BODEGA: TOWARDS A NEW WRITING CENTER PARADIGM

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You can probably imagine a large, chain supermarket right now—the cereal aisle, the pork chops and steaks packed in cellophane, the piped-in music, the large shopping cart. Less obvious are the maneuvers supermarkets employ to control how you shop. For example, products with higher profit margins are placed at the shopper's eye level, and staples are stocked at the back of the store in order to encourage impulse shopping along the way. Even the piped-in music is chosen to create an ambiance conducive to mindless shopping, like the absence of clocks in a casino. In other words, whereas most of us assume that we use grocery stores, in many ways they use us, even define us, not only as individual shoppers but also as a community. Unfortunately, as Andrew Seth and Geoffrey Randall point out, supermarket groups such as Tesco and Wal-Mart “have undoubtedly driven thousands of small shops out of business, possibly increasing overall efficiency, but reducing choice. They do not always serve the poor and the old well” (179). And yet the consumer is only supposed to think about the freshness of the produce and the low price of a gallon of milk.

I worry that writing centers in the U.S., in their zeal to secure positive feedback from faculty and university administrators, also “do not always serve the poor and the old well,” nor any student who falls outside of the mainstream. Instead, to the background muzak of “just fix their papers” and “what is the writing center for if not to teach students how to use commas?” we too often succumb to a one-size-fits-all philosophy of writing and writing instruction—shrink-wrapped essays and aisles of grammar handbooks—that ignores university demographics that complicate such homogeneity. *Standard* Edited American English, *standard* essay conventions, and *standard* tutoring methods have been marketed to such a degree that we often do not even question their superiority, do not consider other options, other brands.

Of course writing centers support monocultural, monolingual writing models with the best of intentions (i.e. improving the university's bottom line via higher retention and graduation rates). However, we must also consider how globalization has impacted real world writing (we speak now of Englishes,

alternative rhetorics, and of “overlapping interests and heterogeneous or hybrid publics” (Vertovec and Cohen 1); diverse perspectives and voices are more prominent on our campuses. In other words, while knowing the master discourse of the academic community remains valuable, that community and the world at large now have multiple master discourses, depending on the rhetorical situation. Therefore, just as many big box stores have begun stocking “ethnic foods” and hiring staff who speak multiple languages in order to accommodate their customers' demands, writing centers must also adapt to the diverse needs of our students. As Elaine Richardson notes, “Our students have a wealth of knowledge about the world in which they live. Our pedagogies must advance accordingly” (xviii).

To conceptualize this writing center paradigm shift, I propose the writing center use as its model a local market (a.k.a. *bodega*, *colmado*, *tiendita*)—able to adjust quickly and deftly to local needs, or certainly more so than a big-box store. Bodegas, in particular, typify panethnicity and heteroglossia. In *The Empathic Civilization*, for example, Jeremy Rifkin, describing a bodega-like store in Washington, D.C., notes that “it's not unusual to hear three or four languages being spoken at the checkout counter at a neighborhood supermarket. While first-generation newcomers tend to remain tightly wedged in their own ethnic enclaves, their children and grandchildren socialize much more freely with young people from other ethnic backgrounds” (433). Rifkin links this type of local store to “a kind of bottom-up neighborhood cosmopolitanism” (433), which he defines as being open to “the other” and “comfortable amid diverse cultures” (431).

We know that in the past, university faculty also tended to remain tightly wedged in “ethnic enclaves” that favored one “standard” of writing, one type of English. In the 1870's and 1880's, U.S. private colleges, according to W. Bruce Leslie in *Gentlemen and Scholars: College and Community in the “Age of the University,” 1865-1917*, were comprised almost exclusively of Protestants of northeastern European ancestry; “other groups remained outside the pale” (241). In fact, in “Mechanical Correctness as a Focus

in Composition Instruction,” Robert J. Connors argues that the emphasis in English classes on proper usage and grammatical correctness arose from the Eastern U.S. reaction against the “roughness” of frontier America (63). In other words, then, as now, response to linguistic diversity led to a shoring up of “academic” language.

However, it is precisely because tutors and tutees from various backgrounds socialize that a writing center can be an ideal ecology for “bottom-up cosmopolitanism.” For example, in the south Texas university writing center I direct I routinely hear tutorials conducted in Spanish and English or Spanish exclusively; we also have a tutor who is deaf and uses American Sign Language and a Korean tutor who tutors in her home language.

In sum, we need not see the addition of alternative discourses into the academy as a zero sum game—any privileges afforded minorities cost the majority. Tutees can learn “standard” and global Englishes and other languages, traditional and alternative rhetorics, and a variety of literacies. They *should* learn them all because the world today resembles the environment of a panethnic and heteroglossic bodega far more than a monolingual and monocultural big-box store.

The Changing Linguistic Landscape

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the percentage of White students enrolled in U.S. degree-granting institutions dropped from 81.4% in 1980 to 62.3% in 2009. Put another way, university students in 2009 were twice as likely to be non-whites as they were in 1980. (See Table 1.)

While universities are clearly more ethnically diverse, these statistics do not in and of themselves prove linguistic diversity since not all White people use Standard English (or the Language of Wider Communication, to use Geneva Smitherman’s term), nor do all non-White people use an English variety or non-English language. As Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* observes, “you get Blacks who are whiter than the Whites” (144). However, according to the U.S. Department of Education, the number of school-age children who speak a language other than English at home “rose from 4.7 to 11.2 million between 1980 and 2009, or from 10 to 21 percent of the population in this age range” (“Children”). Furthermore, as Paul Kei Matsuda notes, at the graduate level, especially in natural and applied sciences,

it is not unusual to find graduate programs at U.S.-based institutions where the majority of students

are speakers of different varieties of English, if not other languages. The presence of these multilingual and multicultural writers is changing the nature of rhetorical situations in academia; what used to be alternative is now becoming part of the academy. (194)

To complicate writing issues further, with an increasingly diverse, global audience, we are finding that writing conventions, rhetorical choices, and even the English language are changing. In his article in the journal *English World-Wide*, David Deterding argues that

as an ever-expanding number of speakers of English in China become proficient in the language, it is likely that distinctive styles of Chinese English will continue to emerge, and one day a new variety may become established with its own independent identity. . . . When this happens, Chinese English may have more speakers than Britain and America combined, and then it may start to have a major impact on the way the language evolves. (195)

Consequently, although the “standard” variety of English remains important to know, it is not the only variety worth knowing. As Patricia Bizzell, co-editor of *Alt Dis: Alternative Discourses and the Academy*, asserts, slowly but surely, previously nonacademic discourses are blending with traditional academic discourses to form the new “mixed” forms (2). And clearly educators, including writing center tutors, who assume that a student thinks and writes as they do may be quite mistaken.

The necessity of valuing and accommodating student diversity is obvious given the 2011 Arizona House Bill 2281, also known as the Arizona anti-ethnic studies law. Tom Horne, at that time Superintendent of Public Instruction in Arizona, explains his support of the bill in an “Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson”:

I believe people are individuals, not exemplars of racial groups. What is important about people is what they know, what they can do, their ability to appreciate beauty, their character, and not what race into which they are born. They are entitled to be treated that way. It is fundamentally wrong to divide students up according to their racial group, and teach them separately.

Horne’s desire for a homogeneous center leads him to manufacture one—a center in his own image—that he can then funnel everyone into by deracinating them. It’s a big-box philosophy.

The language of the bill itself is also telling as it calls for the prohibition of any class “designed

primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group,” ignoring the fact that instruction in most U.S. schools *is* designed for pupils of a particular ethnic group. As Milton M. Gordon explains in *Assimilation in American Life*, “indeed, the white Protestant American is rarely conscious of the fact that he inhabits a group at all. He inhabits America. The others live in groups. One is reminded of the wryly perceptive comment that the fish never discovers water” (5). Even if proponents of the “melting pot” believe that they are treating everyone equally, they must recognize that people in the U.S. are supposed to melt into a *Eurocultural* model (not an African model nor an Asian model, for example), which means only some people have to give up their culture.

In response to HB2281, as well as Arizona SB 1070 (a bill designed to “discourage and deter the unlawful entry and presence of aliens and economic activity by persons unlawfully present in the United States”) and Oklahoma’s passage of a law declaring English the official language in the state of Oklahoma, the 2010 International Writing Center Association (IWCA) “Position Statement on Racism, Anti-Immigration, and Linguistic Intolerance” declares these legislative initiatives “an attempt to de-legitimize the voices, bodies, and epistemologies of people of color.” As a counter measure, the IWCA’s Special Interest Group on Anti-Racist Activism calls for the movement of “the discourse surrounding race and immigration status into a more honest and humane space, in our own writing centers and in our communities at large.”

To develop these “honest and humane spaces,” writing centers must challenge the outdated one-size-fits-all, or worse yet one-size-*must*-fit-all, model of writing and writing/tutoring instruction, even in the face of pressure to retain existing privileges. As a panethnic, heteroglossic, local *and* global ecology, a bodega is a useful model for writing centers that are committed to the goals set forth by the IWCA, namely the “democratization of education on university campuses” and promotion of “social justice.” As I will discuss, writing centers have already launched programs that exemplify this Bodega Writing Center paradigm.

Stocking the Bodega Writing Center

Consider the iconic bodega with its canary-yellow sign and large, apple-red, often handwritten, letters. Such flamboyance, absent from the big-box store’s “corporate blue,” is an exemplifier of *rasquachismo*, the artistry of Chicanas and Chicanos who have found a

means by which to create beauty (and power) despite their poverty and oppression. Although “*rasquache*” literally means “poor,” “in bad taste,” and “vulgar,” Amalia Mesa-Bains in “‘*Domesticana*’: The Sensibility of Chicana *Rasquache*” explains that “in *rasquachismo*, the irreverent and spontaneous are employed to make the most from the least. In *rasquachismo*, one has a stance that is both defiant and inventive” (156). Writing centers have also traditionally made the most with the least. In fact, I have often thought that my growing up poor is one of the best preparations for directing a writing center.

But equally important is the mindset that *rasquachismo* (*bricolage*) represents, specifically the ability to deconstruct binaries in order to reassign privilege or to refuse to engage in binary thinking altogether. One bodega may stock primarily Latin American foods, and another may stock primarily Asian food, but often there is a mix of several cultures’ foods, oftentimes displayed together in seemingly chaotic ways—soy sauce, tamales, and SpaghettiOs on the same shelf. The front windows reflect a cacophony of voices—posters advertising store specials, handbills seeking help in locating a lost pet, flyers publicizing upcoming community events, banners providing information on how to make international phone calls, and so on. For example, speaking of the bodegas they visited in Corona, Queens, authors Milagros Ricourt and Ruby Danta report that

at one Dominican bodega at eleven on a weekday morning, four Mexican and Ecuadoran men were talking together in front. At another at noon, several Dominicans were watching a television soap opera while three South Americans entered to buy food items. On another day at this bodega, four Dominican and Central American men played dominoes at a small table placed on the sidewalk out front, surrounded by a group of Dominicans and Central and South Americans. (48-9)

The dynamism captured here reminds me of the beehive environment of every writing center I have ever visited. Indeed, if a writing center population is inherently diverse, it is likewise serendipitously accepting of that diversity because, as Daniel Hiebert notes, as a rule, individuals who live in multicultural communities, “especially those who consume multicultural products and services and who interact across cultures, are actively cosmopolitan” (213).

However, even for those who support multilingual/multidialectal/multicontextual instruction, developing praxis can be challenging. In her survey of composition faculty attitudes, for

example, Christine M. Tardy found that “many (if not most) teachers have a limited set of strategies for supporting multilingual students, whether through practices that explicitly incorporate their multiple languages or through English-medium practices that support second language development” (646). Fortunately, others have developed writing center pedagogy and practice that reflect, respect, and encourage the complexity of writers and writing in the contemporary world and that typify Bodega Writing Center best practices: acknowledging and applauding the heteroglossia of our students and the world at large, as well as encouraging cosmopolitanism among faculty and administrators, via *rasquachismo* if necessary.

Heteroglossia

In “Sitting on Top of the World: A Multilingual Writing Center?” Manuel Herrero-Puertas notes that “the University of Wisconsin-Madison alone counts almost 4,000 international students from more than 110 countries, the 12th largest international population in a U.S. campus” and that “UW-Madison offers instruction in roundly 80 different languages, some of which extend to graduate programs in which professional scholars write reviews, articles and dissertations in their target tongues.” Herrero-Puertas suggests that writing centers consider “the possibility of a bi-, tri-, or even a multilingual center.”

At the Texas State University Writing Center that I direct, we showcase the variety of languages spoken by our students, faculty, and staff via an *intercambio* (language exchange). This past term, twenty students from our university’s intensive English program came to the writing center to share their home languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, German, Japanese, Hindi, and French) with tutors and guests. Rather than the writing center functioning exclusively as a vehicle for assimilating non-native English speakers, these individuals became the tutors, the experts.

Furthermore, providing exposure to different languages, even on a limited scale, aligns with the Modern Language Association’s call for developing translingual and transcultural competence (“Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World”). The participants in *intercambios* are given the opportunity to “reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture,” and the American students, in particular, learn “to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others. They also learn to

relate to fellow members of their own society who speak languages other than English.” Each semester during *Intercambio*, the writing center resounds with a variety of languages . . . like a bodega.

Cosmopolitanism

Exposure to linguistic variety and reflection on the experience is essential to shifting the existing bias against linguistic diversity. As John Trimbur notes in “Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning,” “we cannot realistically expect that collaborative learning will lead students spontaneously to transcend the limits of American culture, its homogenizing force, its engrained suspicion of social and cultural differences, its tendency to reify the other and blame the victim” (603). To counter this “homogenizing force” and “suspicion of difference,” Herrero-Puertas discusses writing center blind spots in order to provide a model for tutors as they evaluate their own attitudes and as they seek ways to contextualize faculty expectations and assessments for their tutees. Herrero-Puertas explains that he used to tell his English Language Learners that

native speakers can produce prose as murky and inaccessible as any foreigner’s. I now realize that this approach perpetuates the notion of a proper versus an improper English, a standard code well polished and universally accessible (by “universally” meaning, of course, readable for university instructors) against an illegitimate, hybrid variation that bespeaks awkwardness and lack of revision. In one word: otherness.

To similarly avoid the binary of “legitimate” and “illegitimate” language, the *Valuing Written Accents* project created by the George Mason University Writing Center and the George Mason University Diversity Research Group familiarizes faculty with not only the value of “written accents,” but also the hazards of denigrating them. On a website and in a downloadable monograph (now in its second edition), the project features twenty-six students from “varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds” describing their “experiences and stories as a way to build a bridge between faculty and students by promoting dialogue in the university community.” Because the writing center is providing a platform for students to speak to faculty directly and honestly about the cultural bias of “Standard” Edited American English and Eurocultural writing standards, this project exemplifies the Bodega Writing Center paradigm I have proposed. In effect, this project replicates the private conversations that occur between tutors and tutees in writing centers all

the time. That is, without concern about grades, the students are probably more forthright about their struggles with U.S. academic discourse, and I would hope that faculty would appreciate learning about not only these students' difficulties but also their diverse perspectives, perhaps picking up tips for revising their writing assignments to accommodate their students' diversity.

With a similar goal in mind, we sponsor a literacy journal and a literacy speakers series featuring writers who have had complicated relationships with "standard" discourses. Speakers have included Yvonne Taylor: "Talking White: An African American Perspective on the Social Cost of Speaking the King's English"; Tomás Morin: "No Fun with Dick and Jane: Comics, Soap Operas, and Literacy in a Spanish-Speaking Home"; and Dr. Sandy Rao: "Masala Chat: Of Hinglish, Kanglish, and British English." These three speakers (one staff member and two faculty members) revealed the benefits of multiple linguistic identities but also the hazards when the larger community is hostile toward "betrayals" of linguistic "purity." In the discussions that followed each lecture, students and faculty came together in a dialogue about writing that challenged not only Edited American English but also discrete linguistic boundaries and the problematic nature of attaching value to a language over another.

In concert with the speaker series, the literacy journal has as its goal the showcasing of alternative voices and Englishes. Carter Maddox, managing editor and writing center tutor, explains the philosophy of *Words Work: A Literacy Journal*:

Literacy knows no boundaries; it differs from person to person, lifestyle to lifestyle, language to language. In this issue [of *Words Work*] alone, we hear an African American, a shotboy who works at a gay bar, Iraq war veterans, a disabled woman in and out of her wheelchair, a Tucker Max-ish everyguy and more. Each has his/her own perspective; each has her/his own thumbprinted language.

In the past, the journal has featured texts with accompanying drafts that have been annotated by the author to capture the process behind the final product; a short story written in Spanish; and a text with embedded hyperlinks to create a cross-media experience.

In these endeavors, our goal has been to foster cosmopolitanism on our campus—a mindset, according to Ulrich Beck in "The Cosmopolitan Perspective," typified by "transnational ways of life," including "cross-border private and public networks

and decision-making structures" and "new emerging 'hybrid' cultures, literatures, languages" (80). Such an effort may seem straightforward, but the big-box store has considerable power and considerable interest in keeping that power. To subvert that power, writing centers will have to be strategic. This is where *rasquachismo* comes in handy.

Rasquachismo

In my own experience, when I have attempted to subvert the dominant, monocultural/monolingual university paradigm, more often than not I am accused of abandoning *all* standards, including, interestingly, rules of punctuation, and my perspective is disregarded out of hand. Geneva Smitherman seems to have experienced a similar frustration, leading her to assert, "Let me say this here, if you don't never read it or hear it no mo, nowhere else in life: I know of no one, not even the most radical-minded linguist or educator (not even The Kid herself!) who has ever argued that American youth, regardless of race/ethnicity, do not need to know the Language of Wider Communication (aka 'Standard English')." (142). Instead, Smitherman advocates multilingualism/multidialectalism for all U.S. citizens (141), as do I.

For better or worse, I have had my greatest success in reaching faculty and administrators by employing the *rasquachismo* (defiance and inventiveness) associated with a bodega. For example, I was recently a participant in a university-run multicultural workshop for faculty. Although I was not a presenter, I seized every opportunity—during presentations, during lunches, in my multicultural transformation of a writing class—and every means at my disposal to enlarge my fellow participants' narrow parameters for "good" writing. In this endeavor I was following the lead of Linda Adler-Kassner in *The Activist WPA: Changing Stories About Writing and Writers* and J. Elspeth Stuckey who tells educators in *The Violence of Literacy*,

We must stop being almost hysterically convinced that students who cannot read or write the standard language cannot 'make it.' Students of nonstandard languages in the United States do not fail because of a language failure; they fail because they live in a society that lies about language. (122)

After the institute ended, a social work professor emailed me that as a result of our discussions she had added the following statement to her graduate social work syllabus: "The journals will be graded based on adherence to the guidelines and evidence of the student's depth of thought. Edited Standard Written

English (ESWE) is not required and students may express themselves in a style that allows for maximum self-expression.” According to this professor, her students were “visibly relieved,” and the class launched into a discussion that, in Louis Althusser’s terms, made Standard English “problematic.”

This one instance encourages me that writing centers can extend their influence beyond aligning students to the faculty’s standards; writing center directors may be able to influence faculty to consider the ways in which one’s own culture shapes one’s grading standards and why it is time to adjust to a shifting demographic.

Andy Besa in his essay “The *Nepantla* beyond the Writing Center Door” provides the valuable perspective of a tutor who revels in being *rasquache*. Besa writes,

I imagine my *Cantinflas*¹ self, with a large, razor-sharp, folding knife, slicing juicy wedges of onion and feeding them as my metaphorical morsels to folk in my department who vex me. *Nepantla*² at once questions and assaults me while simultaneously allowing me the freedom of speech that I enjoy. The *nepantla* identity I held as a writing center tutor, freed me to comment as I pleased in every academic situation I found myself in.

Although I am sure that many outside, and quite a few inside, the writing center community might bristle at Besa’s “insubordination” here, many writing center theorists have also challenged the “big-box” academic hegemony. In *Noise from the Writing Center*, for example, Elizabeth Boquet applauds the fact that writing centers are loud, disruptive spaces, writing that “noise works against the idea of normalcy—the writing center as a place to bring aberrant students into line; the scripted session that takes a disorderly student/text and orders it into a pretty (dull) paper; the faculty member who claps her hands to her ears and pleads with us to make it stop” (62). And in *Everyday Writing Center*, Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet criticize the scripting of tutorial sessions (à la the big-box) and advocate instead “shifting familiar patterns and re-articulating order” to “make an attractive site for Trickster to enact ‘cultural hybridity’ and to more easily ‘cross linguistic borders’” (28).

In that spirit, I hope our writing center will be able to build on the *Valuing Written Accents* project by hosting a university-wide institute for the teaching of writing. I envision including university students among the speakers and participants, alongside writing experts and university faculty. Such an institute would

stand in contrast to faculty workshops in which the faculty members are isolated from the students (except when writing center staff speak about student issues) and the student workshops in which the student members are isolated from the faculty (except when writing center staff speak about faculty perceptions). The goal would be the creation of an open, but informed, exchange of ideas among all the key partners involved in university writing. After all, the students are the intended audience for faculty assignments, and faculty members are the targeted audience for students’ written work. We would be shifting academic focus from the production of one hegemonic (big-box) discourse to the acquisition of (meta)knowledge of “standard” and global Englishes and alternative discourses. The writing center as bodega.

Conclusion

In proposing the Bodega Writing Center paradigm, I do not imagine that everyone will agree that 1) a problem exists; 2) that the theory I reference is sound; 3) that the changes I indicate are worthwhile. Many more people shop at Wal-Mart than at the neighborhood bodega.

Of course, U.S. universities *can* defy these demographic changes and demand of our students assimilation or failure. For example, when I was an undergraduate, I was told that I did not belong in college—implicitly by my family and neighbors whose poverty and lack of education had convinced them that such “high falutin” aspirations were “not for the likes of us,” but also explicitly by my professors who found my inability to produce “Standard” English and formal academic writing an indicator of my general ignorance. I did not consider that academic discourse might be too narrowly defined. I also did not grasp that I could remain proud of my home discourse (and myself) while acquiring additional discourses. I just accepted that my “inferior” language needed *replacing*. In fact, in my mind that’s what education was—I had to silence my “ignorant” voice.

Had I visited a writing center back then, perhaps someone would have contextualized this new discourse for me—stressing that my home discourse had value and legitimacy, even if rhetorically ineffective given my professors’ requirements. Such a writing center would align with my vision of a Bodega Writing Center. On the other hand, the tutor might have just “banked” “correct” grammar in me and left it at that as though language were “one size fits all.” Maybe the tutor would have even enjoyed feeling

superior to me. After all, an underlying assumption of U.S. universities, especially back in the 1980s, was that, as meritocracies, they must uphold *the* standard (“Standard” American English) of writing or sacrifice academic rigor. No complicating notions of how that so-called standard is neither as watertight as many would believe nor necessarily preferable given various rhetorical situations. Language at the university was a shibboleth: those who used the “standard” were declared the insiders with obvious stakes in keeping it that way. As Baugh and Cable humorously note, “good English is the usage—sometimes the divided usage—of cultivated people in that part of the English-speaking world in which one happens to be” (347).

Nancy Grimm explains in *Good Intentions*, “as long as writing center workers view themselves as having the expertise the student needs in order to manage academically, their ability to see beyond a needy individual to a less-than-perfect social structure is blocked” (xvi-xvii). Additionally, as long as writing center tutors and administrators perceive themselves exclusively as customer service professionals, the writing center is still peddling what the big-box academy is selling, even when we question its quality.

However, surely someone could have valued my home discourse, *even as* that person was teaching me the rules of the dominant discourse. Had this occurred, I might not have struggled so long with feelings of shame and anxiety, ironically the very emotions that Stephen Krashen has found to be “affective filters” that inhibit learning of a new language (and “Standard” Edited American English is a second language for everyone).

Will the Bodega Writing Center paradigm make a difference? I hope that others will help me find out. For me, language attitudes will be a litmus test. When professors across the university campus believe that no language is *wrong* or invalid in and of itself, I will know that those diversity statements that appear on nearly every U.S. university website are more than mere words.

Notes

1. The actor Catinflas developed the *rasquache* character of *el pelado* (“the clown”), “a homeless type who in dialogue could state the unthinkable and mock everything and everybody” (Castro 184).

2. In *Borderlands*, Gloria Anzaldúa references “nepantlism,” “an Aztec word meaning torn between ways” (100).

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Table 1: Percentage distribution of students enrolled in degree-granting institutions

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Non-resident Alien
1980	82.2	9.7	4.1	2.4	.7	2.0
1990	77.5	9.6	6.1	4.2	.8	1.8
2009	62.1	14.7	13.4	6.5	1.1	2.2

(Source: U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, "Table A-8-3")