

Classroom Writing Assessment

We never used to think much about the assessment of writing. We resented all the grading of papers and sorting of students but went about it as a grim duty . . . but those attitudes belong in the past, along with grammar drills and orthography.

–Edward M. White, “The Changing Face of Writing Assessment”

How do we teach English so people stop killing each other? Perhaps, we might ask, how do we judge language so that people stop killing each other? That, I think, is the real question.

–Asao B. Inoue, *Labor-Based Grading Contracts*

Classroom writing assessment always has values and beliefs attached to it and implications for teaching writing. Asao B. Inoue (2015) says, “Classroom writing assessment is more important than pedagogy because it always trumps what you say or what you attempt to do with your students” (p. 9). The first third of this book talks about where teaching writing happens, such as two-year colleges (TYCs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). This section is about what happens in writing classrooms. Each chapter, then, offers conversations about different practices and approaches to teaching writing. I start with classroom writing assessment because assessment should be informed by where we are and what pedagogies we use to teach writing. Writing assessment research asks teachers to consider how assessments are affecting students in local contexts: “Are our assessments affecting students differently? What kinds of changes might we make to existing practices to ensure that all students are assessed in a fair and culturally sensitive manner that is

also context based?” (Inoue & Poe, 2012, p. 1). This localization of writing assessment to institutions and programs and students, and attention to fairness is extremely important for writing teachers. Just because one classroom writing assessment model works in one context, doesn’t mean that it will work as effectively in another.

Writing assessment is theory and practice. It’s multivariate and fraught with attitudes and beliefs that guide and place value on language and student writing. Our focus as writing teachers should be on how assessment can “aid the learning environment for both teachers and students” (Huot, 2002, p. 8). Writing assessment should complement pedagogies and support student learning. Edward M. White (2004) writes that scholarship on assessment is “arguably the most creative and varied in the entire area of composition studies” and adds that it’s impossible to teach writing and be uninformed about writing assessment (p. 110). Research focuses mainly on program assessment (e.g., placement testing, exit testing, portfolios) and classroom assessment (e.g., rubrics, feedback, grading contracts). Program and classroom writing assessment, while separate, should be viewed as interconnected with an understanding that program assessment should help inform classroom writing instruction.

Maybe “grading” is the first thing that comes to mind when we hear about classroom assessment. Grades, though, can be taken up through different systems of assessment. The process of producing and distributing grades is complex. For instance, some teachers might use the A–F scale, points or percentages, while others might use portfolios or grading contracts.² Each form of assessment has its own values and beliefs about learning—and each has its own flexibilities and affordances. When we talk about classroom writing assessment, then, we are referring to the ways in which we are facilitating and measuring learning in our classes. What habits or practices or outcomes do we want to cultivate and promote through our teaching? What resources and means are available to assess student learning? In what ways can assessment reflect our values associated with literacy and learning? All this is to say, classroom writing

2 Portfolios and grading contracts take different forms, too. Which is another reason why it’s important to understand classroom assessment models and variations.

assessment ought to be grounded in theory and should be contextualized to help students ultimately engage in learning.

Teacher response takes different forms, too. A teacher might respond in the margins to offer specific comments to student writing, like about an idea that needs developed more in the writing or a claim that needs supported by evidence. Or a writing teacher might use an end comment to summarize their thoughts and suggest a plan for action and revision. There are different types of feedback: informal (e.g., more conversational), formal (e.g., more direct), constructive, formative, summative, peer-to-peer, teacher-to-student, and self-reflective. As writing teachers, we use different kinds of response on any given assignment, and our feedback comes at various stages of the writing process. For example, response on an earlier draft might ask for substantial content-based revisions, whereas feedback on a later draft might be more concerned with stylistic elements of writing. When writing teachers see grading and response in more nuanced ways, we can explore what classroom writing assessment practices are doing and how students might perceive them in relation to learning.

Writing assessment is a process that occurs across different times, through different modes and mediums, and for different purposes to invite students to participate in learning. The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) position statement on Writing Assessment says:

Assessments of written literacy should be designed and evaluated by well-informed current or future teachers of the students being assessed, for purposes clearly understood by all the participants; should elicit from student writers a variety of pieces, preferably over a substantial period of time; should encourage and reinforce good teaching practices; and should be solidly grounded in the latest research on language learning as well as accepted best assessment practices. (National Council of Teachers of English, 2009, Introduction, para. 2)

Research on best practices for assessment has grown a lot over the last fifty years. There was a wave of books and articles in the 1980s that informed how teachers used writing assessment, such as Peter L. Cooper's (1984) *The Assessment of Writing Ability*, Edward M. White's

(1985) *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff's (1986) "Portfolios as a Substitute for Proficiency Examinations," and Lester Faigley's (1989) "Judging Writers, Judging Selves." Concepts on validity (Cronbach, 1988; Messick, 1989) and reliability (Moss, 1994; White, 1993) became prominent features in writing assessment scholarship. In the 1990s and early 2000s, teachers began re-considering classroom grading (Elbow, 1997) and reimagining theory and practice (Huot, 2003), including rubrics (Broad, 2003). In the late 2000s and early 2010s, grading contracts increased in visibility (Danielewicz & Elbow, 2009) and there was greater attention to how assessment should change to account for race and diversity (Inoue & Poe, 2012). Over the last several years, teachers have been investigating and challenging traditional frameworks and implementing alternative assessment practices.³ This includes conversations on "ungrading," which critically decenters the act of grading itself.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews in this chapter are a small representation of the threads in classroom writing assessment research over the years, specifically teacher response and grading practices. The focus of these interviews and questions is designed to capture the nuances of response, the emergence of technologies that help guide assessments, and reflections on grading practices and values. Noticeably absent are conversations on scores and/or tests which are often associated with institutional admissions and program placement. The interviews indicate how significantly important response is to teaching writing and how teacher and student communication, including making transparent grading practices and values, are the heart of the writing classroom. Through this, we see that response can be used to reflect pedagogical and classroom values, listening to students' perception on feedback is necessary to teaching writing, technologies can help facilitate and provide new directions for research on assessment, and fairness should be at the center of classroom grading practices.

In this chapter, I talk with Nancy Sommers, Chris M. Anson, Jennifer Grouling, and Asao B. Inoue about responding to writing

3 See *The Journal of Writing Assessment* special issue on contract grading (2020).

and attitudes, beliefs, and values associated with classroom writing assessment. For example, Sommers reflects on how she has grown as a teacher in recognizing and understanding the differences between “writing comments to the writer versus writing comments to the writing.” Anson shares how the field continues to evolve by focusing on “student response to teacher response,” and he talks about the tonality and attitude of response through technology-mediated devices, like cassette tapes and screencasting technologies. Grouling shares her research studying the differences between hard-copy and iPad collected papers and response and explains how assessment should reflect the teacher while keeping in mind the institutional context. And finally, Inoue problematizes traditional standards for judging writing and talks about how “labor” is a more equitable measure for classroom assessment: “The labor of the classroom is really the engine for learning.”

Shane to Nancy Sommers: You’ve been a pioneer in research on teacher response. I’m thinking about three articles in particular: “Revision Strategies of Student and Experienced Writers” (1980), “Responding to Student Writing” (1982), and “Between the Drafts” (1992). In “Responding to Student Writing,” you write, “We comment on student writing to dramatize the presence of a reader to help our students to become that questioning reader themselves, because ultimately we believe that becoming such a reader will help them to evaluate what they have written and develop control over their writing. Even more specifically, however, we comment on student writing, because we believe that it is necessary for us to offer assistance to student writers when they are in the process of composing a text, rather than after the text has been completed.” Could you talk more about what got you interested in studying response, and how your thinking has changed since that landmark essay in 1982? [Episode 6: 06:12–11:47]

I started studying commenting as a result of the work I did on revision because it was quite clear that students revised, or their sense of why they should revise, was in response to the comments they receive. So it seemed that I needed to do a companion study about commenting. And as you say, I did the first one, that was a long time ago, and since then

I've done lots of other smaller studies. I did a small study on commenting with Bunker Hill students, and of course, I did the longitudinal study at Harvard to understand the role of comments in student's undergraduate education.

I think it's important to think about comments because when we think about all the time we spend teaching writing, commenting and responding to our students' work is really what we spend the most amount of time doing. It takes a lot of time to write comments, and it takes a lot of time to write a good comment. I think how my thinking has changed is to realize how important comments are to students in ways that I didn't realize before. The first piece I did was looking at comments through the perspective of teachers, much more than students. But when we did the longitudinal study, we started to see comments through the eyes of students. It helped me to see how important our comments are in a deeper way than I understood before.

The way that my thinking has changed is understanding the difference between writing comments to the *writer* versus writing comments to the *writing*. What I mean by that is, that it's very easy when we're reading a student's paper to just circle the things that aren't working, or to say a sentence is confusing, or we're responding to the writing. But when we step back and say, "Well, how would a student use this comment?" Or, "What would the students do with this comment that would make the next draft better?" Or, "How could a student use this comment to expand thinking, or to do something specific, a specific skill?" Then, we're thinking about the writer. We think about it as an act of communication, a dialogue between a teacher and a student, between a reader and a writer.

I deepened my thinking. I've also realized through all the studying and through all the comments I write, how complex it is. It's not simple. One of the things I learned was to start a semester by talking about commenting, and not wait until the first time students received comments to talk

about comments, but to say right from the very beginning that, “I will be giving them comments, and their peers will be giving them comments, and I would like them to use the writing center to work with writing center tutors, so that they can enlarge their world of receiving comments and feedback.” I want them to see the way we learn and that . . . nobody writes in isolation, we write in community. I ask students a couple of questions. One is, why do you think teachers comment on papers? And also, what kinds of comments will help them the most? I want to get students from the first week engaged with the process of commenting. I think it’s really important to think of commenting as part of a pedagogy, and not just that thing you do when students turn in papers.

Shane to Nancy Sommers: I like the idea of commenting as part of a pedagogy. So you’re really talking about responding to student writing as being foundational to teaching—as a primary guide, so to speak, for the class throughout the semester. We all have different pedagogies and teaching styles and values, and we also respond in different ways. What types of comments best complement your values as a teacher? [Episode 6: 11:48–16:00]

I really like that question, Shane. I really like the idea of thinking about how comments reflect values as a teacher . . . that has a lot to teach us in our profession. We could learn a lot by thinking about the ways in which our comments reflect our values. I like that idea a lot. I think that my comments reflect my values because I want to bring a spirit of generosity into the classroom . . . I want students to feel that the voice they hear in my comments is the same voice they hear in the classroom. That it’s not as if I become this other person when I comment. It’s my voice, and it’s the voice they know and trust from the classroom. I try very much always to respond with generosity and compassion.

For instance, a common thing is a student who has written a paper has a scattershot of ideas. So instead of saying, “There are just too many ideas here,” I might start with

positive statements such as, “You have an abundance of good ideas in this paper. Think about which one means the most to you, and pick one, and develop that idea.” You know, any comment we want to write can be phrased in a generous way.

I think also that I want my comments to reflect the classroom. So one of the things that’s always important to me in teaching is that there’s a common language in the classroom, that students and I have a shorthand when we talk about a thesis, for instance. We always talk about the “so what” of the thesis. Why does this thesis have to be argued? Or when we look at a reading, an argument, we always talk about, why does this argument need to be made? So we have this shorthand language of “so what.” I want my comments to reflect the language of the classroom. In fact, I think about commenting as something that begins on the first day of class. So how can I use that language from the classroom in my comments?

I think also, the comments reflect my values, because I think a lot about how students develop as writers. I wouldn’t want to write a comment that a student would just look at and say, “Huh? What am I supposed to do with that?” I want my comments to match where students are developmentally, and I want my comments to say to a student, “You can do this. This is something you know how to do.” So that means that I’m always thinking about where students are in a developmental perspective, and what they can do and can’t do, and I would never overwhelm them. I would never give them 15 things to do between the drafts. I would focus on, “Well, what are the two or three things that would make a difference in the next draft?” That’s where I would want to put students at attention.

Shane to Chris M. Anson: Teacher response has always been a thread through your research. I’m thinking about your article “What Good Is It? The Effects of Teacher Response on Students’ Development” (2012). I’m also thinking about your contribution

to *Twelve Readers Reading* in 1995, which became a foundational collection to teacher response research. Can you talk about how you became interested in feedback, and how you saw a need to focus on students' attitudes and perceptions on teacher response? [Episode 25: 09:16–14:03]

I became interested in teacher response way back as a graduate student. The material that was being published at that time, the research literature, was focused primarily on what teachers were doing, I think in an attempt to theorize, or create models or approaches to teacher response that would be most effective, without really testing out whether they were effective. We saw a number of different articles and research studies looking at what kinds of marginal comments teachers wrote, what kinds end comments they wrote, studies categorizing teacher comments, and the different kinds and so on. There wasn't really much interest in what was happening in the minds of students. There wasn't much interest in the reception of that commentary until more recently. Now, I think we're seeing considerable new research that's looking at student response to teacher response.

I became interested in the student perspective when I started using cassette tapes to respond to my students' writing. I inherited that from my mentor, Michael Flanagan, who was doing that in the graduate courses that I was taking with him. He would record on a cassette tape long analyses of our projects. I started doing that with my own first year writing students. I would ask them to bring in a cassette tape that they didn't want. Many of them would bring in a music cassette tape that they'd popped the little tab out of so it would actually record, there's a protection tab on those. I learned a lot about my students from what they were giving up, what they didn't want to listen to anymore, so that was kind of interesting.

But I would get these tapes—I had bought a little cassette tape holder with a handle on it at Kmart—and I would

go in and collect all the tapes and put them in this little satchel, and then take it back home and read their paper, turn on the tape recorder and record sometimes 20, 30 minutes at a stretch, whole weekends of just me mumbling in my study. I've always done surveys on specific methodologies that I'm experimenting with in the classroom. Not student evaluation surveys, but additional ones. I asked my students to comment on the use of cassette tapes and they really loved it. I learned a lot about what they liked or didn't like about the cassette tapes and how I could refine those a little bit.

I started doing that with almost every class I was teaching until, over the years, cassette tapes started to disappear from use. At that time, because computer technology was replacing things like cassette tapes, there wasn't enough bandwidth to do much with oral recorded response. The flash drives of the time were so small in terms of memory that you couldn't put anything on them just to swap them in class. We didn't have the bandwidth, we didn't have a cloud to be able to send oral comments, so for a few years they just fell by the wayside. I stopped doing oral responses.

And then, obviously, with computer technology getting more and more enhanced and more memory and so forth, when those capacities increased, I went back to doing first oral recordings using computer technology. And then eventually, when I discovered screencasting, I thought this is fabulous. Because not only can I speak to the students, but I can have their paper on screen, and I can refer to certain passages or paragraphs, and highlight things as I scroll, as I'm talking, and that turns into kind of a miniature video that the students can then watch and hear me speaking. I was absolutely enthralled by screencasting, and I did more surveys with my students who said they loved it.

Shane to Jennifer Grouling: In your article, "The Genre of Teacher Comments from Hard Copy to iPad," you talk about how technology allows writing teachers opportunities to comment in different

ways, and how there's not much research that focuses on what that looks like or there's not much that studies the differences in response practices between hard copy and iPad collected papers. What did you notice between traditional, handwritten response practices and comments mediated by technology? And what other directions should we go in research on response and technology? [Episode 18: 06:36–09:32]

So it wasn't real student papers. I actually had a ton of fun writing fake student papers . . . I was trying to do that to kind of control and get high, medium, and low ones in each set. I had five different teachers—TAs and the contract faculty—grade these. Five on hard copy . . . and five on the iPad.

When teachers used the iPad, they used Notability so they could type on student papers, they could highlight, they could write with a stylist in the margins. I thought that was particularly interesting because some teachers who favored handwriting could still take that sort of approach. Really, what I found was there was not that big of a difference in their feedback—length wise, it was similar. I adapted the coding that Straub and Lunsford in *Twelve Readers Reading* used where they code for focus and mode. Is it posed as an imperative or a question, or how is it framed? But also is it about an idea, is it about organization, global organization, sentence structure? What type of things? I coded like that and had a bunch of people code with me and then I got the help of someone who knew actual statistics to run the numbers of the codes. The only thing of statistical significance was there were more imperative comments with the iPad, which was interesting, so more command-driven comments.

Then, when I looked at it for individual participants, because I also did interviews with these people about their process in both modes, what really stood out were the teachers that did not like the iPad. I'm not so sure that the iPad, or that any kind of technology, leads towards a

different type of commenting, but I think if you're less familiar or less comfortable with the technology, it leads you to potentially be harsher with students or frame your comments in a way that maybe is different than what you would in a technology you're more comfortable with.

Shane to Jennifer Grouling: So it sounds like you saw how teachers' attitudes might change depending upon the technology they're using to respond to student writing or how their familiarity or lack thereof with technology affects their response. I'm curious about what sort of future directions you see response mediated through technology taking. What kind of work do you feel like needs to happen so that writing teachers can have a better grasp on the advantages and disadvantages of technology or using technology to respond? [Episode 18: 09:33–12:14]

I think we need to know a lot more about course management systems and how they constrain us . . . I think we make a lot of assumptions about even how students navigate those systems, whether they even know where to look for our feedback, what they see, how they work with it. And then, of course, all the issues with surveillance. I've noticed now we can just track [data], like how many times have they been on the site, how many times have they downloaded this or looked at this page?

You can build rubrics with course management systems. I'm really curious how that's affecting the way teachers or will affect in the future how teachers respond to students, particularly if they're required to use those for assessment. Like when we were using Blackboard, we pulled artifacts from Blackboard through Blackboard Outcomes and that means students weren't even aware that we were pulling their writing for assessment. So, then there's a push that like, "Well, if you aren't using Blackboard, you aren't compliant with the university. So you need to be collecting their papers on Blackboard so we can pull them for assessment. And then we can assess them using Blackboard outcomes." So the technology drives the response in the

assessment in ways that I think we need to really question and look into.

I mean there's probably some advantages, too. You can do audio feedback right on Canvas. I think it's not all bad, but I think it would be interesting to see more how that constrains and changes our feedback. I know one of the reasons I wanted to study the Blackboard feedback, and then was frustrated that they changed up the system in the middle of my study, is that I found myself, when I respond now, not giving as much in the way of marginal feedback. I think that can be good, but part of it is the difficulty of leaving marginal feedback on something like a course management system.

Shane to Asao B. Inoue: One thing that has changed for you over the years is your understanding of classroom assessment and who assessment privileges. You have problematized judging language based on writing "quality," which you say reproduces White language supremacy because those standards have historical roots that privilege whiteness. Could you talk about what led you to question traditional assessment practices and how you came to value labor? [Episode 12: 01:50–05:11]

Classroom assessment is typically yoked to grades and a grading system that's hierarchical. That's point based. That usually judges every student by the same standard, or by the same metric, and then strings them onto a linear line and says, "You are better than this person," or "You get 10, you get 20, etc." I started rethinking classroom assessment by having problems with the products of a system that's hierarchical and that puts everyone on the same line, so to speak. I found that there was no way . . . no matter how I crafted assignments or rubrics or collaborated with my students to talk about my feedback and the grading system, there was no way to account for how much labor they did. And in any classroom, no matter what, every student is going to labor differently. There's going to be different amounts of labor and different kinds or quality of labor.

That is what students do when you ask them to write an essay or to produce an outline or read something and respond to it.

When I really sit down and think about it, the labor of the classroom is really the engine for learning. It's what students take away; it's the experiential thing they remember; it's a bodily thing that they have. I wanted to find a system that would agree better with what I think most literacy and writing teachers understand about the practice of writing which is—it takes time, it takes labor. Ultimately, when we give an assignment, for instance, we're asking students to spend time and to labor. I thought, "Why should I try to grade a product of that just because that's all I have to grade?" I think there might be other things we can establish grades from and that could be labor. For me, the problematic part of the system was that there are a diverse range of students in any classroom and they come to labor differently. I think conventional grading systems don't match up very well.

Shane to Asao B. Inoue: So you started thinking about alternative classroom assessment models (e.g., grading contracts), and you chose to construct a system where "labor" was at the center. You use labor-based grading contracts as a means for complementing anti-racist, social justice-based pedagogies. What are some values embedded in labor-based grading practices that you feel like complement writing pedagogies more broadly? [Episode 12: 13:27–16:14]

It certainly does one thing that I think all writing teachers want to accomplish in their writing classroom: It doesn't punish students for embodying the literacies that they are and that they come from. It doesn't say how you have languaged up to this point is "not right," "bad," "inappropriate," or whatever. I think those are the wrong messages that we want to send. Like [Kenneth] Burke has talked about, human beings are symbol using, symbol misusing animals . . . I think we forget that when we were really young, when we were babies, when we were toddlers, language was a fun

enterprise, but when we get to high school and get to college, often times, it becomes this thing that was so stigmatized and so punished for doing things “wrong,” and you can’t play around with it and you can’t do any of the things that come natural to us as human beings. It becomes this thing we stay away from and that you have these negative associations with. All of that comes from grading based on “quality” and it’s really based on a particular standard—a standard that is not natural or inherent to any group outside of academia.

A lot of students aren’t trying to be academics so why do I want to reproduce that? I want to reproduce language users that use language, that love using language and can play with it and can be critical about it. That doesn’t mean they got to be academics. It just means that they’re going to do it in a different way for us for their own uses. That’s what I care most about. Part of my job in my classes is helping students re-acclimate to a labor-based system. English studies and English classrooms, we give a lot of lip service to this, I think, in different ways, we might not say “labor,” but we care what students do and what they’re reading and how they’re writing. When it comes down to it, if we’re still grading them on the products using a particular standard, they’re going to get another message that’s going to conflict, and they may not know how to understand that conflict, or that paradox.

Shane to Asao B. Inoue: In *Labor-Based Grading Contracts* you write, “Trying not to be unfair is the only way one can ensure equitable and inclusive practices and inherently unfair systems.” So you mention how traditional assessment systems are inherently unfair, how they are exclusive, and how they disadvantage students of color in particular. You suggest labor-based grading contracts as an opportunity to do antiracist and social justice work through classroom assessment. Can you talk about how “labor” is a more equitable measure than traditional standards for judging language? [Episode 12: 08:24–13:26]

When we look at the research on what students say about grading contracts, Spidell and Thelin's (2006) early study on that several years back . . . students were ambiguous about it. But they never described exactly what that contract was. What was the ecology that was set up in the classroom? What are students really responding to? My argument is that it is likely they're not responding to a pure labor-based system. They're responding to a system that trying to do both. It's what [Peter] Elbow and I call a "hybrid" system, or a hybrid contract. Which is up to a B it's based on labor, and after that it's based on judgments of quality.

In mine, in labor-based grading contracts, it's all based on labor. The more work you do in the class, the more time you spend on the labor, the higher your grade. This still is a problematic. The problematic just shifts. It shifts away from the politics of language and the politics of identity in the ways that we've talked about it in literacy circles to the politics of economics and how much time do I have. Am I a working student? Am I a mother and a student? How much time do I have to spend on this class? It doesn't levitate me or the classroom from having a system that is still problematic in some way.

But I think it does offer a fairer system to work from. Labor-based grading contracts takes the one thing that I know everyone can offer in the classroom, or at least that we can try to agree upon, which is how much time do we feel is appropriate for the B? That's the default for us. Then, how much more do we think will require to get a higher grade than that? We determine all those things and then we renegotiate at mid-point because we've had six or 10 weeks or whatever it is to live in the contract for awhile, see how it works on us, see how we work with it, and then we make another decision. My question . . . at that midpoint is simple, "Is this contract still fair enough for all of us? And if it's not, what needs to change?" Then, the contract is set in stone at that point.

Life is so damn short. We've only got so much time on this earth. I am so thankful that over the years I've been able to cultivate a stance in the classroom and classrooms that continually challenge me. I've said it for years: To make a system fair, there's no magic to it like it's a certain method or it's a certain practice. It's all about participation. The more one participates in the system, the fairer they will feel that system is. Fairness doesn't exist in objective systems. There are no objective systems. There are only subjective ones. Fairness isn't really about equality in a system. It's a feeling that we have as people who exist within systems. My job is to help everyone feel that it is fair. I think that is the best, most honest way we can approach assessment . . .
 "Do this work, you get this grade."

DENOUEMENT

Writing teachers should use classroom writing assessment to support students and complement pedagogical values (e.g., feminist rhetorics, multimodality, antiracist practices). Through investigating how writing assessment functions to promote beliefs about language, and by reimagining what assessment does and can do to better support learning, teachers and students can address larger societal issues on race, gender, linguistics, socioeconomics, disability, and power. As Staci Perryman-Clark (2016) writes:

Decisions about writing assessment are rooted in racial and linguistic identity; the consequences for many writing assessment decisions are often reflective of the judgments made about who does and does not deserve opportunities for success, opportunities historically denied to students of color and linguistically diverse writers. Put simply, assessment creates or denies opportunity structures. (pp. 206)

Teachers and students can critically examine writing assessment to uncover implicit and explicit judgments made on language and identity, and to investigate who does and does not have opportunities for success in classrooms and programs.

These reflections often reveal a lot about teaching writing. For instance, if a writing teacher values translanguaging and

encourages students to embrace linguistic variations in their writing, then classroom assessment ought to coexist with these pedagogical values. Teacher response should support these values, too (Wood, 2020). It is important for writing teachers and programs to consider how writing assessment is accounting for all students—the full range of diverse learners in writing classrooms. Therefore, teachers and administrators need to pay close attention to fairness, equity, and social justice in writing assessment practices (García de Müeller & Ruiz, 2017; Perryman-Clark & Craig, 2019; Poe et al., 2018), alongside more traditional concepts of validity and reliability.

I suggest reading journals such as *Assessing Writing* (est. 1994), *The Journal of Writing Assessment* (est. 2003), and *Journal of Response to Writing* (est. 2015) for research on writing assessment and response. Additionally, Norbert Elliot's (2005) *On a Scale: A Social History of Writing Assessment in America* provides a comprehensive history on writing assessment, while Richard Haswell and Elliot's (2019) *Early Holistic Scoring* takes a good look at the history of holistic essay assessment. I also recommend reading *Reframing Writing Assessment to Improve Teaching and Learning* (Adler-Kassner & O'Neill, 2010), *Writing Assessment in the 21st Century* (Elliot & Perelman, 2012), *Race and Writing Assessment* (Inoue & Poe, 2012), and Mya Poe, Asao B. Inoue, and Elliot's (2018) *Writing Assessment, Social Justice, and the Advancement of Opportunity* because it offers future considerations for writing assessment and social justice. For research on two-year college writing placement, read *The Journal of Writing Assessment's* 2019 special issue (vol. 12, issue 1). And for teachers interested in labor-based contract grading, I suggest reading Inoue's (2019) *Labor-Based Grading Contracts*. Teachers and students can use the following questions to examine classroom writing assessment standards, policies, and practices:

How can we ensure writing assessment is meaningful and is being used to complement program and classroom goals and outcomes within our local contexts? How are our assessments helping democratize learning?

How are writing assessment practices valuing diverse students? How is writing assessment and teacher response advocating for linguistic justice and diversity?

How are assessments being used to shift and/or resist traditional power structures and hierarchies? And what are some issues with current and/or emerging classroom assessment models?

What systemic issues circulate in and through writing assessment ecologies that impact how student writing is being perceived, valued, and thus assessed?

What are students saying about assessment, and how might we better listen to them when it comes to grading and assessing their writing?