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Cover Page Footnote

Sue Hum is Assistant Professor of English at University of Texas at San Antonio. Her research and teaching interests include composition theory and pedagogy, modern rhetorical theory, multicultural and contrastive rhetoric, cultural studies and popular culture, and post-colonial gender theories. Drawing on her experiences as a Malaysian Chinese teaching in American institutions, Hum's recent publications focus on the intersections among identity politics, materiality, and composition theory; she has published in JAC: Journal of Advanced Composition, Style, Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, and Readerly/Writerly Texts.

Idioms as Cultural Commonplaces: Corporeal Lessons from Hokkien Idioms

Sue Hum

“**A**i pang sai kah-lai or kang,” my parents would tell me throughout my adolescence in Malaysia. With rueful acceptance and finger wagging admonishment, they would repeat, “ai pang sai kah-lai or kang.” Roughly translated as “wait until [you] need to pass shit, only to dig a hole,” this widely used Hokkien idiom was my parents’ commentary on my habitual tendency to procrastinate. Whether it was completing homework, practicing before my piano lessons, or preparing the dinner meal, I always delayed until the last moment. Then, with my parents watching in amusement and “ai pang sai kah-lai or kang” waiting in the wings, I would rush around in panic and apprehension, both consequences of my own behavior. Finally, when my circumstances became too desperate, I would solicit help, knowing what I was about to hear: “Ai pang sai kah-lai or kang, Ah Sue.”

My family’s crude, biologically grounded assessment of my procrastination demonstrates how the corporeal body constitutes a metaphor and an acceptable semiotic within which the practices of everyday life are conducted. This commonly used, scatological idiom emphasizes the physical experience of the panic that follows procrastination. It refers literally to being overcome by the breakout-sweats, hand-shivering, gut-wrenching, buttock-squeezing sensations that come from failing to prepare in a timely fashion for defecation. By not planning ahead, a person experiences physical discomfort, anxiety, alarm, and strain: biological and cultural consequences from having not chosen a private spot, not cleared a space of possible impediments, not protected him or herself from possible attack of wild animals (or one’s enemies), not taken out the appropriate digging implement, and not loosened one’s clothing ahead of time. Such an idiom represents perfectly the panic I felt whenever I procrastinated. Fused in this idiom are the natural physical urges and the connotative meanings we impose on those urges that emerge in relation to community and society. In short, with every utterance of “ai pang sai kah-lai or kang,” the material world and the social world fuse with one another.

In this essay, I use idioms, especially Hokkien idioms, to counter the Western predisposition to separate mind and body, bracketing the cognitive from the material, a stance injurious to students and teachers. By failing to recognize the permeable, inextricable relationship between mind and body, semiotic and mate-

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rial, we simultaneously fail as teachers to recognize that many of our students—particularly those from working class backgrounds, marginalized ethnicities, and other countries—must undergo both cognitive and corporeal changes in order to assimilate and acculturate successfully into American academic literacy practices. Not only do these students have to learn an unfamiliar way of speaking and writing, but their bodies must also shift toward an acceptable, usually middle-class, orientation. That is, to engage effectively in the university's discourse conventions, students must assume a white, middle-class, heterosexual body-orientation (see Bloom). However, because of the systematic, historical separation of body and mind in the West, most teachers are blind to the fundamental material changes that necessarily accompany the accumulation of academic literacy. If we as teachers are blind to these changes, then we will be unable to help our students perceive these changes and to help them understand both their own learning and the cost of that learning. I argue that we can use corporeally based idioms, whether they are in English or another language, to provide a valuable contrastive framework, underscoring the mind-body shift that inevitably occurs with the acquisition of academic discourses. I illustrate the power of that approach through Hokkien idioms, which are not simply abstract, exotic, albeit entertaining explorations of a distant culture's ways of speaking and ways of being. Rather, these idioms highlight how the bodies that students bring into their writing classrooms influence and mediate their literacy learning.

I begin with the work of linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson who argue that metaphors—and by extension, clichés, idioms, and aphorisms—govern our everyday functioning, playing a central role in structuring our perceptions, conceptions, and actions. I discuss how our cognitive and conceptual systems are both linguistic and embodied in nature. Building on Lakoff and Johnson, I rescue clichés, idioms, and aphorisms in student writing, frequently treated with disdain by our profession. Rejected as stale modes of thinking and writing, idioms, instead, highlight communal ways of knowing—cultural commonplaces or accepted sentiments—that combine the cognitive with the material. Next, I demonstrate the pedagogical value of analyzing idiomatic prose by exploring some Hokkien idioms. Finally, I provide guidelines for a similar classroom exploration of students' home idioms, which enable us to focus on the confluence between discourse and body habits in the teaching of writing.

Embodied Metaphors

In their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*, which highlights the tenacity and pervasiveness of metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson explain that “[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (3). Countering the belief that metaphors are solely poetic embellishments and/or rhetorical flourishes, Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate how metaphors structure our thoughts and understanding, particularly of abstract concepts. Metaphorical expressions, such as idioms, clichés, and aphorisms, are accepted, fixed, naturalized expressions, part of a community's cognitive, emotional, and rhetorical lexicon. Thus, the study of the metaphors of a community or culture, Lakoff and Johnson contend, provides a window into the cognitive assumptions and beliefs of those participants: “what we call ‘direct

physical experience' is never merely a matter of having a body of a certain sort; rather, *every* experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions. . . . all experience is cultural through and through" (57).

Although less complicated than metaphors, clichés and idioms perform a similar function, encapsulating a commonly held belief in a brief, pithy phrase. Like my family's use of a biological process to refer to and criticize my procrastination, idioms highlight the mundane, everyday nature of concepts, not just the intellectual or the abstract. Because metaphors are used as natural "turns of phrases" or linguistic short cuts, they signify not objects *of* thought, but concepts *in* thought, otherwise known as "functional embodiment" (Lakoff 12, 335). Lakoff and Johnson explain how metaphors operate cognitively: "*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.* . . . the concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured" (5, authors' emphasis). According to James E. Seitz, metaphors ask "that we ourselves identify with the 'world' of its fiction, that we provisionally take that fiction as literally true" (195). We are often unaware of metaphors' filtering and selecting capability, of their ability to construct a schematic of our world, of their tendency to structure our perceptions of reality.

Our bodies and our postures *do* configure language and language use, best exemplified in what Lakoff and Johnson call "orientational metaphors," which spotlight a certain kind of spatial orientation—e.g., low man on the totem pole—arising from "the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment" (14). Lakoff further explains in *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* that "conceptual embodiment" points to "the properties of certain categories [that] are a consequence of the nature of human biological capacities and of the experience of functioning in a physical and social environment" (12). We impose meaning on our experiences of the world in terms of our bodily posture and our bodily experiences. Thus metaphors are not only linguistic but also experiential and material, offering us an understanding of how bodies structure language. In *The Body in the Mind*, Johnson argues that our concrete bodily experiences not only serve as the basis but also constrain our meaning making, imagination, and reason (xv). By examining the metaphors of a language, we can uncover that culture's values, beliefs, and epistemology; at the same time, we learn how bodies operate within a culture, how they influence language and knowledge. Johnson observes, "Our community helps us interpret and codify many of our felt patterns. They become shared cultural modes of experience and help to determine the nature of our meaningful, coherent understanding of our 'world'" (14). In short, we come to recognize the reciprocity between literacy and materiality.

In detailing how literacy is simultaneously linguistic and corporeal, Kristie S. Fleckenstein in *Embodied Literacies: Imageword and a Poetics of Teaching* contrasts the logics of word and image. She urges teachers to stop defining literacy and imagery through a linguistic framework, emphasizing that all learning involves both mind and body. As she works to destabilize the boundaries between imagery and words, Fleckenstein explains that images cohere through metaphoric *is logic*, which functions in the present tense, bears no linguistic markers of modality, and, most importantly, "serves as the grammar by which the reality, the materiality, of our natural world is created" (23). *Is logic*, or ana-logic, fo-

cuses on the “relationships between things—particularly the relationships between self and other, self and environment—not the things in themselves” (“Writing” 291). In addition, metaphoric *is logic* is “corporeal logic,” so that bodies and environments are inextricable from our language use (*Embodied* 24). Drawing on Gregory Bateson’s work, Fleckenstein explains that “corporeal codes stabilize discursive codes and produce a language from pulse beats, memories, and images” (“Writing” 290). Metaphoric, corporeal *is logic* highlights how bodies permeate language and culture, how “there can be no textuality without materiality” (290). Eschewing the isolation of bodies from our literacies, Fleckenstein underscores how our habits of meaning making must involve both mind and body.

Many Hokkien idioms draw on the body’s biological responses; the *is logic* of a narrow, private, individualized realm is inextricable from the generative level of socio-behavioral norms. The idiom “cheak han cheau chai luak” (the person who eats the chilies feels the heat) captures the smoldering, ear-tingling, sudden-break-out-of-sweat sensations a person feels when she or he bites into a hot pepper. The literal heat of the pepper becomes analogous to the heat (or consequences) a person endures for his or her actions. A slight alteration to that idiom “cheak han cheau *beh* chai luak” (the person who eats the chilies, but does not feel/know the heat) refers to an insensitive person, one who is incapable of knowing danger. Since experiencing a pepper’s heat is a natural, biological response, the ability to predict and avoid the consequences of one’s behavior is also presumed to be a biological given. With the Chinese predisposition for indirectness, this idiom allows the speaker to be honestly critical without the harshness of a direct rebuke. This idiom derives its metaphoric perspective from biology, and, at the same time, influences perception by reflecting or revealing a system of accepted social behavior. Thus, social accountability is assumed to be an innate quality of one’s physical existence as a human being.

The above idioms represent an essentialist, legitimate evaluation, serving as a social corrective at the biopsychological-behavioral level. Similarly, the idiom “ae kou hor phang teng teok,” or “deaf-mute stung by bees,” images the feelings of frustration and inaction a deaf-mute experiences when she or he is stung by bees, unable to express his or her pain or announce the injustice of that sting. This idiom highlights the backlash a person must endure without the luxury of complaint due to his or her own foolish actions. To have to suffer in silence is painful indeed, but the appropriateness of the person’s silencing “speaks volumes” of the person’s behavior as judged by the community. The evaluative content of the idiom is based on the similarity of biological responses among Hokkien speakers, if not all humans. The individual must self-regulate and self-police as a responsible member of the public sphere. Here, biological responses serve as privileged metaphors—cultural commonplaces—for defining the expectations of a community.

The *is logic* in these Hokkien idioms demonstrates a lack of distinction between private and public, mind and body, politeness and candor in Malaysian-Chinese culture. The three following idioms, obviously rooted in male physiology, can be used indiscriminately to describe and criticize both men and women. While some of us may never experience the discomfort that comes with “teah tiaui,” or “squeeze your testes,” we can imagine it. The pain to which this idiom refers is long, slow, and drawn out, similar to the ongoing negative consequences arising from a momentary thoughtlessness. Similarly, the physical and social

problematics of speaking without thought is criticized with the idiom “cheh-kong lan,” literally translated as “a hurried penis.” This idiom judges thoughtless speech or behaviors. With the Chinese predisposition for reflection, actions conducted hurriedly are condemned in the most derogatory terms. When a person is “chung theok lan par,” or “caught by the testes,” that person’s weak points have been found out publicly. These three idioms rely on metaphoric *is logic* to emphasize the negative outcomes of imprudent actions. Not only do clichés, idioms, and aphorisms underscore the cultural commonplaces in our ways of knowing, they also highlight the inextricability of corporeality from our discourse conventions.

A Taste for a Plain, Unadorned Style

By focusing on rather than dismissing conventional sayings, we can disinter the social, cultural, and epistemological imperatives that permeate our ways of speaking, thinking, and writing, a first step in helping our students recognize the corporeal and intellectual changes elicited by university education. Unfortunately, much of our training as writing teachers militates against the use of idioms, clichés, and aphorisms, discouraging students from saying they’re as “happy as a clam” or, in the Texan embellishment, “happy as a pig in shit” because these express neither creativity nor individuality, two cherished American virtues. Students’ use of idioms, clichés, and aphorisms—also considered dead metaphors, trite sayings, or tired language—has long been denigrated by writing teachers and the textbooks they use. Many composition handbooks and style manuals criticize their use as unoriginal and inefficient, offering dicta such as “avoid clichés like the plague” and “clichés kill creativity.” In general, a cliché is an “expression made stale and boring by overuse” (Carter and Skates 702). Use of idioms and clichés represent, in many teachers’ minds, conformity, not only in thought but also language, preventing writers from achieving a “freshness in discovery” (Thomas and Turner 57). By contrast, metaphors, usually literary or poetic, are considered “a great achievement” (Williams 169).

Despite the dominant predisposition against clichés, idioms, and aphorisms, the call for accepting clichés in student writing dates back almost thirty years. Published in 1976, Don Nilsen’s proposition that teachers allow the use of clichés because of their communicative effectiveness has gone unheeded. Nilsen distinguishes between the purpose of a dead metaphor, which is basic communication, and a literary metaphor, which is emotional impact, arguing that teachers should be “more *respectful* of clichés and stale figures of speech” because students enjoy reviving these dead metaphors (279, author’s emphasis). Emphasizing the referential function of clichés and metaphors, Nilsen explains that metaphors use “common everyday terms as a way of dealing with new, unfamiliar concepts” (280). Although Nilsen provides solid rhetorical reasons for using clichés and metaphors, he fails to undermine the prejudice against their use.

Dawn Skorczewski extends Nilsen’s advocacy of clichés and idioms, arguing that their use does not necessarily indicate students’ uncreative thoughts, complacency, or stunted critical consciousness. Perplexed by students’ writing that contains evidence of critical thinking and complete acquiescence to cultural beliefs, Skorczewski wonders why students’ conclusions rely on clichés that “contradicted everything they had said” (224). She concludes that clichés function as an anchor in alien waters, not unlike a cultural commonplace, to which students

willingly and readily acquiesce (224). Scorzewski points out that teachers respond in simplistic, if not clichéd ways, to students' use of clichés: "Our own situations and histories can tell us a lot about how we respond and why we say the things we do on student papers, and they can help us understand the reasons for what we perceive as our students' limited vision as well" (236). In short, the prejudice against clichés, idioms, and aphorisms is rooted in a narrow definition of communication, institutional conventions, and social ideology.

Most teachers continue to believe that the use of idioms, clichés, and aphorisms is evidence of poor writing, and, by extension, representative of a conventional mind and an uncultivated sensibility. As "ai pang sai kah-lai or kang" illustrates, an idiom is interpellated with cultural dictates; natural, biological urges serve as a cultural commonplace. However, such an embodied way of knowing conflicts with a civilized American sensibility as inculcated by institutions of learning. By failing to acknowledge these embodied ways of knowing and by disparaging idioms that reflect a cultural-cognitive-corporeal fusion, American teachers unconsciously blind themselves to the cultural and corporeal shifts required of their students as they gain competency in a new discourse register or even a second language. Lynn Bloom persuasively identifies these shifts as reinforcing "the values and virtues embodied not only in the very existence of America's vast middle class, but in its general well-being—read promotion of the ability to think critically and responsibly, and the maintenance of safety, order, cleanliness, efficiency" (655). As students learn to read and write in the sanctioned academic register, they are conditioned slowly, absorbing "a vast subtext of related folkways, the whys and hows of good citizenship in their college world, and by extrapolation in the workday world for which their educations are designed to prepare them" (656). Bloom identifies advice in *The Elements of Style*, for example "Use figures of speech sparingly," as inculcating in students a middle-class sensibility, one that esteems plainness, simplicity, orderliness, and sincerity (662). She cautions teachers against punishing lower-class students for not being more middle class (655; see also Brodkey *Writing* 130). Working-class students, minorities, and non-native speakers of English may encounter barriers to literacy not only in the form of content and subject matter but also in the judgmental disciplining of teachers toward their non-middle-class sensibility and embodiments.

In the process of making students more literate in the ways of the university and the middle-class, this culture of schooling participates in symbolic and corporeal violence. J. Elspeth Stuckey maintains that "literacy is a system of oppression that works against entire societies as well as against certain groups from within given populations and against individual people" (64). Similarly, Richard E. Miller also underscores how educational institutions sanction violence against students, whereby most teachers serve as "functionaries," enacting the goals and beliefs of the institution (18). Miller recounts the ways in which teachers comply with the official description of education and seldom tolerate student resistance and outbursts. Rather, as Henry A. Giroux has pointed out eloquently, schooling is the site of social reproduction, ideological inculcation, and cultural power relations. Giroux concludes that working-class students and, by extension, minorities and international students need an awareness of the "themes that dominate their lives . . . [to] learn to respect their own language and traditions while at the same time learning how to master the knowledge codes and skills appropriated

by the dominant class” (106). Literacy learning is never an innocent or natural activity. Rather, it requires simultaneously a repudiation of home and native ways of knowing and being *and* an internalization of middle-class systems of oppression.

Neither an innate preference nor a marker of social superiority, the “taste” for a plain, unadorned style results from the circulation of culture in relationship with actual bodies. Language learning then involves not only what is expressed individually and personally, but also what is shared socially and culturally. It is crucial that teachers recognize how discourse conventions do create communal membership or alienate individuals, how language teaching is not merely about the accepted ways of communicating ideas, how teachers themselves perpetuate a “false consciousness” about the value of accepted modes of language use. By considering how such conventional turns of phrases circulate, we can recognize the subtle layering of social and cultural imperatives that permeate our ways of speaking and knowing, easing our students’ transition and healing a body-mind split.

Hokkien Idioms as Cultural Commonplace

As teachers, we must realize that the learning of a new language or discourse register involves uncovering invisible networks, framed by tacit institutional arrangements, systems of power, politics of control, and conventions of participation. Idioms offer a starting point for that discovery, especially if we make idioms the focus of investigation, implicitly warranting their presence in the academic classroom. Consider what an exploration of idioms, clichés, and aphorisms might reveal to our students about themselves, their cultural beliefs, and the changes they undergo to enter the academy. Below, I illustrate the tacit cultural frameworks, social values, and communal thought patterns imbued in Hokkien idioms.

In my native Chinese-Malaysian culture, Hokkien idioms are natural, accepted, and even encouraged discourse conventions that illustrate not only a speaker’s cultural knowledge and linguistic dexterity but also his or her rootedness in the community and culture. These idioms express traditional ethical values and social hierarchies in a form understood by everyone. These idioms, while tied to private bodily experiences, evolve into dicta that specify ways in which the individual must act in relationship to the larger social order. These common Hokkien aphorisms—like the idiom on procrastination—illustrate how the Malaysian-Chinese’s attitudes toward reality grow out of the body, particularly normal bodily functions, and how embodiment informs epistemology and socio-cultural behavior.

An oral dialect of Chinese spoken primarily in the north-western part of Malaysia, Hokkien vernacular is part folk-wisdom, part communication shorthand, deriving from and illustrating the way of life of an agrarian, peasant class. Although the Chinese tend to avoid direct discourse, these brutally honest colloquialisms permeate everyday conversation, referring to private body parts, bodily fluids, and clandestine actions. Over time, these idioms entered the larger Hokkien culture so that they are used widely by men and women, rich and poor, educated and illiterate. By employing these idioms, Hokkien speakers discourse frankly and sincerely; by using these shared ways of speaking and thinking, they soften any censure and encourage goodness by reaffirming a shared social identity, one

aimed at communal solidarity and belonging. In short, a dialectical relationship exists between an idiom's embodied foundation and its intricate network of socio-cultural beliefs.

The many social regularities in Hokkien culture are not taught through direct instruction but are assimilated through models, examples, and idioms. While reason is prized in Western civilization, the Chinese attitude is less sanguine: "reason is for questions of means; for your ends in life, listen to aphorism, example, parable, and poetry" (Graham 7). The product of "social mimesis," a person is legitimized by internalizing the indirectly articulated social dicta.

As most Hokkien speakers know, the bodily lower stratum is connected with all sorts of degradation, depravity, carnality, and vice. The waste that is excreted from the lower stratum is equated with the lower level thinking and behavior. A very dense person results when she or he is nourished by excrement or "cheak sai eh" (a person who eats feces). While M. M. Bakhtin might underscore the fecund and regenerative power of excrement in his description of the grotesque image of the body, in Hokkien idioms excrement corrupts, destroys, and defiles.

The source that expels feces represents the seat of transgression. Taking credit for someone else's accomplishments is not only discouraged but also criticized in the most derogatory terms possible: "giah lang eh kah-chui choe bin phoeh" (take someone else's backside as one's face). A person's face is the synecdoche for a person's honor, integrity, and achievement, a concept in which Hokkien speakers, like many other Chinese communities, are invested. "Face gain" involves an external social focus, emphasizing the need to attain respect and distinction before others. "Face loss" entails embarrassment and shame. Thus, to take credit for someone else's accomplishments is both a personal failure and a deviation from acceptable social responsibility. Emphasizing a harmonious social order in which each person fulfilled his or her obligations and responsibilities, the idiom rests its authority on bodily hierarchy—the low and high trading places literally and figuratively.

These Hokkien idioms identify behavioral lapses in terms of transgressing the body-part hierarchy. When the excrescences from the lower bodily stratum invade and corrupt the upper bodily stratum, as in the case "bakchiew hor siow/sai kor" (eyes gummed up by semen/feces), a person has lost his or her discerning faculties and vision. The nature of this blindness is not a personal but a social one. The choice of substance by which the eyes are rendered sightless is telling indeed: not only is sight mired in a socio-material world, but also its failure is considered profane and debased. As social subjects acquire ways of doing and being through language, they also discern deeply ingrained characteristic dispositions from these idioms that derive their authority from biology.

Hokkien idioms highlight an understanding of abstract social relations in terms of body-part concepts. These idioms and their use fulfill two functions. First, they allow speakers to judge social behavior indirectly. Second, they demonstrate how personal and social rules are never interrogated because of the essentialist, normative nature of biological functions and reactions. The material-semiotic domain of these idioms encompasses acceptable and taboo communal behavior in addition to rendering individual (private) bodies public. However, such embodied, pragmatic home knowledges may be lost when teachers insist that students are taught to disavow idioms—cultural commonplaces—and use fresh, creative turns of phrases in their writing.

Idiom Analysis as a Progymnasmata

One way that idioms with their mind-body interface might be incorporated more fully into composition teaching is through a reclamation of the progymnasmata, or classical Greek exercises. Used to hone students' compositional and cognitive skills, the progymnasmata include a commonplace, which requires that students amplify or elaborate on some commonly held belief (Crowley and Hawhee 335). In his composition textbook which translates the progymnasmata for contemporary writing contexts, Frank D'Angelo explains that legal rhetoric fueled commonplace exercises where speakers debated the good or evil of a deed, praising the virtues or blaming the vices in order to "exact a just punishment" (138-39). Commonplaces, or undisputed general statements, not unlike idioms, clichés, and aphorisms, express "a commonplace sentiment that most reasonable people would agree with" (151). Simply, commonplaces reveal cultural ideologies. Like commonplaces, idioms tap into our most basic ways of knowing about and functioning in the world—through our senses and bodies—revealing the tacit, embedded, embodied, socio-cultural injunctions by which we live.

To study idioms as a commonplace exercise, teachers "expose students to authentic forms of learning that reflect the embodied, dynamic, collective and ecological webs of knowing" asking: what does using an idiom do to, and for, an individual or community (Hocking et al. xxiv)? Students could collect idioms in their home culture or subcultures by conducting primary research, i.e., talking with parents, grandparents, friends, etc. Students might keep a "sayings" journal where they record the idioms, colloquialisms, and aphorisms used on a daily basis, ones that they speak or are spoken to them. By so doing, students construct a corpus of idioms, which they can then analyze rhetorically. This journal might also record the circumstances under which those idioms are used so that students can begin by considering the strategic and contextual nature of their language use. By sharing their own compendium of idioms, teachers might purposely point out how idioms underscore or repress our physical bodies and encourage or disrupt social expectations, performing actions and constructing realities. By analyzing these idioms, students develop the critical distance they need to move beyond the personal, to cultivate a conscious, intellectual stake in the language habits they bring to the university.

The study of our most informal, conventional language practices then offers three lessons. First, students develop a better appreciation of how language use cannot be divorced from an ecology of influences, including our embodied understanding of the world. Second, students acquire a concrete way to comprehend their own literacies, including how the literacies (and bodies) they bring may clash with the discourse conventions of the university. Third, students uncover the linguistic links between tangible, material processes and abstract, intellectual concepts. Students might discover how idioms help them communicate their realities to an audience; at the same time, idioms help organize those realities in socially sanctioned ways. In short, students cultivate an appreciation and validation of their home ways of knowing as well as an orientation to those ways of knowing—the academic analysis—that reflects their budding identities as novice academics. Such study positions them on the cusp, enabling them to maintain their home culture while acquiring a sense of academic belonging. ○

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