explored. I have suggested ways in which a textbook can be an object of research and inquiry, of interest to both students and discipline-specific faculty. Though there is much more that we need to understand about genres and the relationship of this concept to particular texts, roles and contexts, it still presents rich possibilities for exploitation in the development of academic literacies and in understanding what motivates texts.

4 *Discourse communities and communities of practice*

Membership, conflict, and diversity

> If there is one thing that most of [the discourse community definitions] have in common, it is an idea of language [and genres] as a basis for sharing and holding in common: shared expectations, shared participation, commonly (or communicably) held ways of expressing. Like audience, discourse community entails assumptions about conformity and convention (Rafoth, 1990, p. 140).

> What is needed for descriptive adequacy may not be so much a search for the conventions of language use in a particular group, but a search for the varieties of language use that work both with and against conformity, and accurately reflect the interplay of identity and power relationships (Rafoth, 1990, p. 144).

A second important concept in the discussion of socioliteracies is *discourse community.* Because this term is abstract, complex, and contested,[1] I will approach it by attempting to answer a few of the questions that are raised in the literature, those that seem most appropriate to teaching and learning in academic contexts.

1. Why do individuals join social and professional communities? What appear to be the relationships between communities and their genres?
2. Are there levels of community? In particular, can we hypothesize a "general academic community" or language?
3. What are some of the forces that make communities complex and varied? What forces work against "shared participation and shared ways of expressing?" (Rafoth, 1990, p. 140).

I have used the term discourse communities because this appears to be the most common term in the literature. However, *communities of practice,* a related concept, is becoming increasingly popular, particularly for academic contexts (see Brown & Duguid, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the term *discourse communities,* the focus is on texts and language, the genres and lexis that enable members throughout the world to maintain their goals, regulate their membership, and communicate efficiently with one another. Swales (1990, pp. 24–27) lists six defining characteristics of a discourse community:

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[1] Some of the contested issues and questions are: "How are communities defined?" (Rafoth, 1990); "Do discourse communities even exist?" (Prior, 1994); "Are they global or local? Or both?" (Killingsworth, 1992); "What is the relationship between discourse communities and genres?" (Swales, 1988b, 1990).

1. [It has] a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
2. [It has] mechanisms of intercommunication among its members (such as newsletters or journals).
3. [It] utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.
4. [It] uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.
5. In addition to owning genres, [it] has acquired some specific lexis.
6. [It has] a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise.

The term communities of practice refers to genres and lexis, but especially to many practices and values that hold communities together or separate them from one another. Lave and Wenger, in discussing students' enculturation into academic communities, have this to say about communities of practice:

> As students begin to engage with the discipline, as they move from exposure to experience, they begin to understand that the different communities on campus are quite distinct, that apparently common terms have different meanings, apparently shared tools have different uses, apparently related objects have different interpretations. . . . As they work in a particular community, they start to understand both its particularities and what joining takes, how these involve language, practice, culture and a conceptual universe, not just mountains of facts (1991, p. 13).

Thus, communities of practice are seen as complex collections of individuals who share genres, language, values, concepts, and "ways of being" (Geertz, 1983), often distinct from those held by other communities.

In order to introduce students to these visions of community, it is useful to take them outside the academic realm to something more familiar, the recreational and avocational communities to which they, or their families, belong. Thus I begin with a discussion of nonacademic communities before proceeding to issues of academic communities and membership.

Communities and membership

Social, political, and recreational communities

People are born, or taken involuntarily by their families and cultures, into some communities of practice. These first culture communities may be religious, tribal, social, or economic, and they may be central to an individual's daily life experiences. Academic communities, on the other hand, are selected and voluntary, at least after compulsory education. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on communities that are chosen, the groups with which people maintain ties because of their interests, their politics, or their professions. Individuals are often members of a variety of communities outside academic life: social and interest groups with which they have chosen to affiliate. These community affiliations vary in terms of individual depth of interest, belief, and commitment. Individual involvement may become stronger or weaker over time as circumstances and interests change.

Nonacademic communities of interest, like "homely" genres, can provide a useful starting point for student discussion. In presenting communities of this type, Swales uses the example of the Hong Kong Study Circle (HKSC),[2] of which he is a paying member, whose purposes are to "foster interest in and knowledge of the stamps of Hong Kong" (1990, p. 27). He was once quite active in this community, dialoging frequently with other members through HKSC publications.[3] However, at this point in his life, he has other interests (birds and butterflies), and so he is now an inactive member of HKSC. His commitments of time and energy have been diverted elsewhere.

Members of my family are also affiliated with several types of communities. We are members of cultural organizations, such as the local art museum and the theater companies. We receive these communities' publications, and we attend some of their functions, but we do not consider ourselves to be active. We also belong to a variety of communities with political aims. My mother, for example, is a member of the powerful lobbying group, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The several million members pay their dues because of their interests in maintaining government-sponsored retirement (Social Security) and health benefits (Medicare), both of which are promoted by AARP lobbyists in the U.S. Congress. The AARP magazine, *Modern Maturity,* is a powerful organ of the association, carefully crafted to forward the group's aims. Through this publication, members are urged to write to their elected representatives about legislation, and they are also informed about which members of Congress are "friends of the retired." However, members are offered more than politics: Articles in the magazine discuss keeping healthy while aging, remaining beautiful, traveling cheaply, and using the Internet. AARP members also receive discounts on prescription drugs, tours, and other benefits.[4]

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[2] Note that most communities use abbreviations for their names and often for their publications. All community members recognize these abbreviations, of course.

[3] These written interactions are impossible for the noninitiated to understand, I might point out.

[4] When I asked my mother to drop her AARP membership because of a political stand

Recently, my husband has become very active in a recreational discourse community, the international community of cyclists.[5] He reads publications such as *Bicycling* ("World's No. 1 Road and Mountain Bike Magazine") each month for advice about better cyclist health ("Instead of Pasta, Eat This!"),[6] equipment to buy, and international cycling tours. Like most other communities, cycling has experts, some of whom write articles for the magazines to which he subscribes, using a register that is mysterious to the uninitiated: "unified gear triangle"; "metal matrix composite." Cyclists share values (good health, travel interests), special knowledge, vocabulary, and genres, but they do not necessarily share political or social views, as my husband discovered when conversing with other cyclists on a group trip. In publications for cyclists, we can find genres that we recognize by name but with community-related content: editorials, letters to the editor, short articles on new products, articles of interest to readers (on health and safety, for example), advertisements appealing to readers, and essay/commentaries. If we examine magazines published for other interest groups, we can find texts from many of the same genres.

As this discussion indicates, individuals often affiliate with several communities at the same time, with varying levels of involvement and interest. People may join a group because they agree politically, because they want to socialize, or because they are interested in a particular sport or pastime. The depth of an individual's commitment can, and often does, change over time. As members come and go, the genres and practices continue to evolve, reflecting and promoting the active members' aims, interests, and controversies.

Studying the genres of nonacademic communities, particularly those with which students are familiar, helps them to grasp the complexity of text production and processing and the importance of understanding the group practices, lexis, values, and controversies that influence the construction of texts.

Professional communities

Discourse communities can also be professional; every major profession has its organizations, its practices, its textual conventions, and its genres. Active community members also carry on informal exchanges: at conferences, through e-mail interest groups, in memos, in hallway discussions at the office, in laboratories and elsewhere, the results of which may be woven intertextually into public, published texts. However, it is the written genres of communities that are accessible to outsiders for analysis. We need only to ask professionals about their texts in order to collect an array of interesting examples. One of the most thoroughly studied professional communities is the law. In his *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings* (1993), Bhatia discusses at some length his continuing research into legal communities that use English and other languages (pp. 101–143). He identifies the various genres of the legal profession: their purposes, contexts, and the form and content that appear to be conventional. He also contrasts these genres as they are realized in texts from various cultures.

However, there are many other professional discourse communities whose genres can be investigated, particularly when students are interested in enculturation. For example, students might study musicians who devote their lives to pursuing their art but who also use written texts to dialogue with others in their profession. To learn more about these communities, I interviewed a bassoonist in our city orchestra.[7] Along with those who play oboe, English horn, and contrabassoon, this musician subscribes to the major publication of the double-reed community, *The International Double Reed Society Journal*. Though he has specialized, double-reed interests, he reports that he and many other musicians also have general professional aims and values that link them to musicians in a much broader community. He argues that all practicing musicians within the Western tradition[8] share knowledge; there is a common core of language and values within this larger community. Whether they are guitarists, pianists, rock musicians, or bassoonists, musicians in the West seem to agree, for example, that the strongest and most basic musical intervals are 5–1 and 4–1, and that other chord intervals are weaker. They share a basic linguistic register and an understanding of chords and notation. Without this sharing, considerable negotiation would have to take place before they could play music together. As in other professions, these musicians have a base of expertise, values, and expectations that they use to facilitate communication. Thus, though a musician's first allegiance may be to his or her own musical tradition (jazz) or instrument (the bassoon), he or she will still share a great deal with other expert musicians – and much of this sharing is accomplished through specialized texts.

What can we conclude from this section about individual affiliations

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the organization took, she said, "I can't, Ann. I get too good a deal on my medicines through my membership."

[5] Those of us who are outsiders call them "gearheads." Often, terms are applied to insiders by community outsiders.

[6] Brill, D. (1994, November). What's free of fat and cholesterol, costs 4 cents per serving, and has more carbo than pasta? Rice! *Bicycling*, pp. 86–87.

[7] I would like to thank Arlan Fast of the San Diego Symphony for these community insights.

[8] Knowledge is also shared with musicians from other parts of the world, of course. However, some of the specific examples used here apply to the Western musical tradition.

with discourse communities? First, many people have chosen to be members of one or a variety of communities, groups with whom they share social, political, professional, or recreational interests. These communities use written discourses that enable members to keep in touch with each other, carry on discussions, explore controversies, and advance their aims; the genres are their vehicles for communication. These genres are not, in all cases, sophisticated or intellectual, literary or high-browed. They are, instead, representative of the values, needs, and practices of the community that produces them. Community membership may be concentrated or diluted; it may be central to a person's life or peripheral. Important for the discussion that follows is the juxtaposition of generalized and specialized languages and practices among these groups. Musicians, lawyers, athletes, and physicians, for example, may share certain values, language, and texts with others within their larger community, though their first allegiance is to their specializations. Figure 1 illustrates this general/specific relationship in communities.

In the case of physicians, for example, there is a general community and a set of values and concepts with which most may identify because they have all had a shared basic education before beginning their specializations. There are publications, documents, concepts, language, and values that all physicians can, and often do, share. The same can be said of academics, as is shown in the figure. There may be some general academic discourses,[9] language, values, and concepts that most academics share. Thus faculty often identify themselves with a college or university and its language and values, as well as with the more specialized areas of interest for which they have been prepared.

This broad academic identification presents major problems for scholars and literacy practitioners, for although it is argued that disciplines are different (see Bartholomae, 1985; Belcher & Braine, 1995; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Carson et al., 1992; Lave & Wenger, 1991, among others), many faculty believe that there is a general academic English as well as a general set of critical thinking skills and strategies for approaching texts.

Because this belief in a general, shared academic language is strong and universal, the next section of this chapter is devoted to this topic.

Academic communities

What motivates this section more than anything else is its usefulness as a starting point in the exploration of academic literacies and its accessibility to students at various levels of instruction who need to become more aware of the interaction of roles, texts, and contexts in academic communities. Many literacy faculty have mixed classes of students from a number of disciplines or students just beginning to consider what it means to be an academic reader and writer. For these students, and even for some of the more advanced, a discussion of what are considered to be general academic languages and textual practices is a good place to start their analyses – although not a good place to finish.

In the previous section it was noted that professionals may affiliate at various levels of specificity within their discourse communities. They often share language, knowledge, and values with a large, fairly heterogeneous group, though their first allegiances may be with a specialized group within this broader "club." This comment can apply to individuals in academic communities as well. Faculty have their own discipline-specific allegiances (to biology, chemistry, sociology, engineering); none-

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[9] For example, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and several pedagogical publications are directed to a general academic audience.

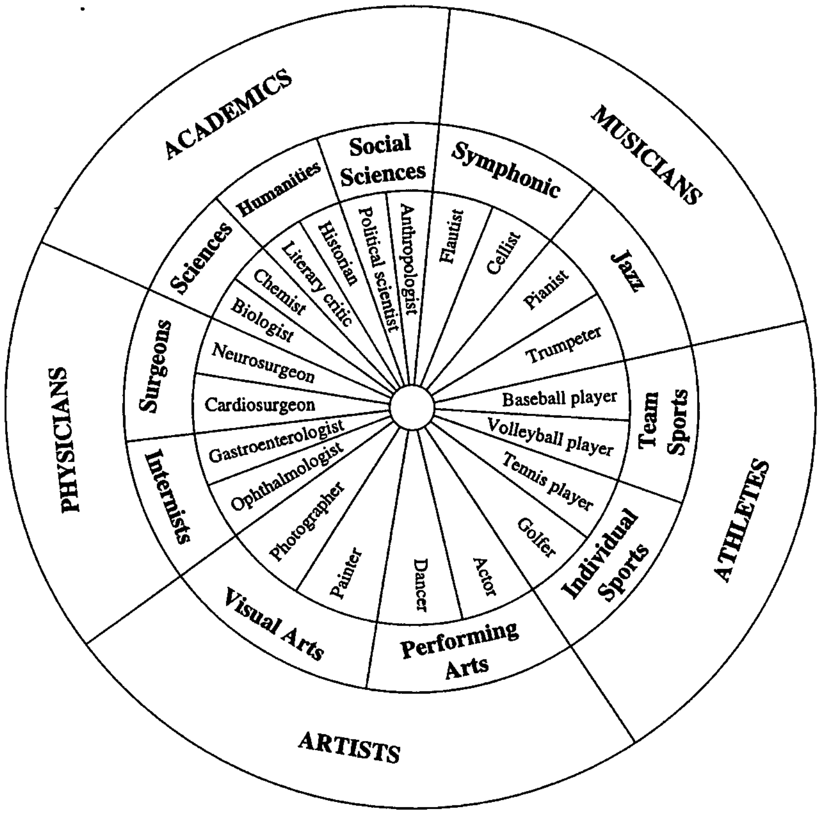
ACADEMICS
MUSICIANS
ATHLETES
ARTISTS
PHYSICIANS
Humanities
Social Sciences
Symphonic
Jazz
Team Sports
Individual Sports
Performing Arts
Visual Arts
Internists
Surgeons
Sciences
Anthropologist
Political scientist
Historian
Literary critic
Chemist
Biologist
Flautist
Cellist
Pianist
Trumpeter
Baseball player
Volleyball player
Tennis player
Golfer
Actor
Dancer
Painter
Photographer
Ophthalmologist
Gastroenterologist
Cardiosurgeon
Neurosurgeon

Figure 1 Levels of community.

theless, many believe that there are basic, generalizable linguistic, textual, and rhetorical rules for the entire academic community that can apply.

Discipline-specific faculty who teach novices at the undergraduate level, and some who teach graduate students as well, sometimes complain that their students "do not write like academics" or "cannot comprehend" academic prose, arguing that these are general abilities that we should be teaching. The discussion that follows acknowledges their complaints and sets the stage for discussions of more specific academic issues and pedagogies in later chapters.

LANGUAGE, TEXTS, AND VALUES

This section on academic textual practices draws principally from three sources: "Reflections on Academic Discourse" (Elbow, 1991); *Words and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Geertz, 1988); and *The Scribal Society: An Essay on Literacy and Schooling in the Information Age* (Purves, 1990) (see also Dudley-Evans, 1995). Elbow and Purves are well-known composition theorists from different theoretical camps who were cited in Chapter 1. Geertz, an anthropologist, has studied academic communities and their genres for many years. All three of these experts live in the United States, and this may affect their views; however, in many universities in the world in which English is employed, these beliefs about general text features are also shared, except perhaps in literature and some of the humanities disciplines. Following is a composite of the arguments made by the three academics about the nature, values, and practices in general expository academic prose, including some commentary on each topic.

1. *Texts must be explicit.* Writers should select their vocabulary carefully and use it wisely. In some cases, such as with certain noun compounds, paraphrase is impossible because specialized academic vocabulary must be used. Citation must be constructed carefully. Data analysis should be described and discussed explicitly. The methodology should be stated so clearly that it is replicable. Ambiguity in argumentation should be avoided.

Comment. Faculty often complain that students are "careless" in their use of vocabulary, in their citation practices, and in their argumentation and use of data. Because many literacy classes value the personal essay and because many readings in literacy classes are in story form or are adapted or specially written for these classes, students are not exposed to the exactness of some academic prose. One of our responsibilities in developing socioliterate practices is to expose students to authentic academic texts and to analyze these texts for their specificity.

2. *Topic and argument should be prerevealed in the introduction.* Purves says that experienced academics, particularly when writing certain kinds of texts, should "select a single aspect of [a] subject and announce [their] theses and purposes as soon as possible" (1990, p. 12).

Comment. Finding the argument in a reading and noticing how data, examples, or narration are used to support this argument are essential academic abilities that are praised by faculty from many disciplines. In like manner, understanding and presenting a clear argument that is appropriate to a genre are writing skills that appear high on faculty wish lists for students, particularly for those who come from diverse rhetorical traditions (see Connor, 1987). Most faculty require that arguments and purposes appear early, generally in an introduction. One of the discipline-specific faculty with whom I work tells her students not to "spend much time clearing their throats." She wants them to "get right down to the argument."

We must be aware, however, that the pressure to reveal topic, purposes, and argumentation early in a written text may be a culture-specific value and apply only to certain kinds of texts within specific communities. There is considerable discussion in the contrastive rhetoric and World Englishes literature about the motivations for text organization and content and the necessity (or lack thereof) for prerevealing information. Local cultures and first languages, as well as academic disciplines, can influence how and where arguments appear.

3. *Writers should provide "maps" or "signposts" for the readers throughout the texts, telling the readers where they have been in the text and where they are going.* By using a variety of tactics, writers can assist readers in predicting and summarizing texts and in understanding the relationships among topics and arguments. Most of these tactics fall under the metadiscourse rubric.

Comment. Metadiscourse is defined in the following way:

> It is writing about reading and writing. When we communicate, we use metadiscourse to name rhetorical actions: *explain, show, argue, claim, deny, suggest, add, expand, summarize;* to name the part of our discourse, *first, second . . . in conclusion;* to reveal logical connections, *therefore . . . if so . . .* to guide our readers, *Consider the matter of* (Williams, 1989, p. 28).

Literacy textbooks for both reading and writing often emphasize the understanding and use of metadiscourse in texts. However, it is important to note that language and culture can have considerable influence on the ways in which metadiscourse is used. For example, in countries with homogeneous cultures, academic written English may have fewer metadiscoursal features (Mauranen, 1993) than in heterogeneous, "writer-responsible" cultures (see Hinds, 1987) such as the United States, Great Britain, or Australia. As in the case of all texts, academic discourses are influenced by the cultures and communities in which they are found, often in very complicated ways.

4. *The language of texts should create a distance between the writer and the text to give the appearance of objectivity.* Geertz (1988) speaks of academic, expository prose as "author-evacuated"; the author's personal voice is not clearly in evidence, because the first person pronoun is absent and arguments are muted. He compares author-evacuated prose with the "author-saturated" prose of many literary works, in which individual voice pervades. As mentioned earlier, this "author-evacuation" is particularly evident in pedagogical genres, such as the textbook. One way to create the evacuated style is to use the passive, a common rhetorical choice for the sciences, but there are other ways as well.

Comment. Discipline-specific faculty sometimes tell us that students are unable to write "objectively" or to comprehend "objective" prose.[10] These students have not mastered the ability to clothe their argumentation in a particular register, to give it the kind of objective overlay that is valued in academic circles. When I asked one of my first-year university students to tell the class what he had learned about academic English, he said: "We can't use 'I' anymore. We have to pretend that we're not there in the text." In many cases, he is right. Literacy teachers need to help students to analyze texts for their author-evacuated style, and to discuss the particular grammatical and lexical choices that are made to achieve the appearance of objectivity and distance.

5. *Texts should maintain a "rubber-gloved" quality of voice and register.* They must show a kind of reluctance to touch one's meanings with one's naked fingers (Elbow, 1991, p. 145).

Comment. For some academic contexts, writers appear to remove themselves emotionally and personally from the texts, to hold their texts at arms' length (metaphorically). The examination of texts in which this "rubber-gloved quality" is evident will provide for students some of the language to achieve these ends. What can students discover? Many academic writers abjure the use of emotional words, such as *wonderful* and *disgusting;* they hide behind syntax and "objective" academic vocabulary.

6. *Writers should take a guarded stance, especially when presenting argumentation and results.* Hedging through the use of modals (*may, might*) and other forms (*It is possible that . . .*) is perhaps the most common way to be guarded.

Comment. Hedging appears to be central to some academic discourses, particularly those that report research. In a study of two science articles on the same topic published for two different audiences, Fahenstock (1986) found that the article written for experts in the field was replete with hedges ("*appear to* hydrolyze," "*suggesting* that animal food"), as scientists carefully reported their findings to their peers. However, the article written for laypersons was filled with "facts," much like those in the textbooks described in Chapter 3. For these and other reasons, we need to introduce students to expert and nonexpert texts; we need to expose them at every level to the ways in which genre, context, readers, writers, and communities affect linguistic choices.

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[10] "Objective" appears in quotation marks because, though academic writing may have the appearance of being objective, all texts are biased.

7. *Texts should display a vision of reality shared by members of the particular discourse community to which the text is addressed (or the particular faculty member who made the assignment).*

Comment. This may be the most difficult of the general academic requirements, for views of reality are often implicit, unacknowledged by the faculty themselves and are not revealed to students. Perhaps I can show how this "reality vision" is so difficult to uncover by discussing my research on course syllabi. I have been interviewing faculty for several years about the goals for their classes, goals that are generally stated in what is called a syllabus in the United States, but might be called a class framework or schedule of assignments in other countries. These studies indicated that most faculty tend to list as goals for the course the various topics that will be studied. The focus is exclusively on content. They do not list the particular views of the world that they want students to embrace, or the understandings that they want to encourage. In a class on "Women in the Humanities," for example, the instructor listed topics to be covered in her syllabus, but she did not tell the students that she wanted them to analyze images of women in cultures in order to see how these images shape various cultural contexts. In a geography class, the instructor listed topics to be covered, but he did not tell his students about his goals for analysis and synthesis of texts. Why are the critical-thinking goals and disciplinary values hidden by most faculty? I don't know. Perhaps instructors believe that students should intuit the values, practices, and genres required in the course; or the faculty have difficulty explicitly stating goals that are not related to content. Certainly content is the most commonly discussed issue at discipline-specific (DS) curriculum meetings, and this may influence faculty choices. In a later chapter I will discuss one of the questionnaires that I use to elicit from faculty the "views of reality" or "ways of being" that my students and I would like to see stated explicitly in the syllabi.

In contrast to DS faculty, we literacy faculty are often most interested in processes and understandings, in developing students' metacognition and metalanguages – and these interests are often reflected in our syllabi. On the next page, for example, are the student goals for a first-year university writing class developed by a committee from my university's Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies:[11]

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[11] Quandahl, E. (1995). Rhetoric and writing studies 100: A list of goals. Unpublished paper, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA.

a. To use writing to clarify and improve your understanding of issues and texts
b. To respond in writing to the thinking of others and to explore and account for your own responses
c. To read analytically and critically, making active use of what you read in your writing
d. To understand the relationships between discourse structure and the question at issue in a piece of writing, and to select appropriate structures at the sentence and discourse levels
e. To monitor your writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to each writing situation
f. To use textual material as a framework for understanding and writing about other texts, data or experiences

No matter what kind of class is being taught, faculty need to discuss critical-thinking and reading and writing goals frequently with students. They need to review why students are given assignments, showing how these tasks relate to course concepts and student literacy growth.

8. *Academic texts should display a set of social and authority relations; they should show the writer's understanding of the roles they play within the text or context.*[12]

Comment. Most students have had very little practice in recognizing the language of social roles within academic contexts, although their experience with language and social roles outside the classroom is often quite rich. Some students cannot recognize when they are being talked down to in textbooks, and they cannot write in a language that shows their roles vis-à-vis the topics studied or the faculty they are addressing. These difficulties are particularly evident among ESL/EFL students; however, they are also found among many other students whose exposure to academic language has been minimal. One reason for discussing social roles as they relate to texts from a genre, whether they be "homely" discourses or professional texts, is to heighten students' awareness of the interaction of language, roles, and contexts so that they can read and write with more sophistication.

9. *Academic texts should acknowledge the complex and important nature of intertextuality, the exploitation of other texts without resorting to plagiarism.* Students need to practice reformulation and reconstruction of information so that they do not just repeat other texts by "knowledge telling" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989) but rather use these texts inventively for their purposes (called "knowledge transforming"; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989).

Comment. Carson (1993), in a large study of the intellectual demands on undergraduate students, found that drawing from and integrating textual sources were two of the major challenges students face in attaining academic literacy. And no wonder. Widdowson (1993, p. 27) notes that

> When people make excessive and unacknowledged use of [another's text], and are found out, we call it plagiarism. When people are astute in their stitching of textual patchwork, we call it creativity. It is not easy to tell the difference. . . . If a text is always in some degree a conglomerate of others, how independent can its meaning be?

Drawing from sources and citing them appropriately is the most obvious and most commonly discussed aspect of intertextuality. As a result, Swales and Feak (1994) claim that citation may be the defining feature of academic discourses. However, there are other, more subtle and varied borrowings from past discourses, for, as Widdowson notes, "Any particular text is produced or interpreted in reference to a previous knowledge of other texts" (1993, p. 27).

10. *Texts should comply with the genre requirements of the community or classroom.*

Comment. This, of course, is another difficult challenge for students. As mentioned earlier, pedagogical genres are often loosely named and casually described by DS faculty. It is difficult to identify the conventions of a student research paper, an essay examination response, or other pedagogical genres because, in fact, these vary considerably from class to class. Yet DS faculty expect students to understand these distinctions and to read and write appropriately for their own classes. My students and I often ask faculty: "What is a good critique for your class?" or "What is a good term paper?" We request several student-written models and, if possible, interview the faculty member about their assigned texts and tasks.

This section has outlined what may be some general rules for academic literacy, most of which are refined within each discipline and classroom. Although it would be difficult to defend several of these beliefs because of the wide range of academic discourses and practices, listing and discussing these factors can prepare students for an examination of how texts are socially constructed and whether some of the points made here are applicable to specific texts.

Of course, we also need to expose students to texts that contradict these rules for academic discourse. We should examine literary genres, which break most of the rules listed. We should look at specialized texts that have alternative requirements for register. In any of our pedagogical conversations, the objective should not be to discover truths but to explore how social and cultural forces may influence texts in various contexts.

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[12] When I showed this point to Virginia Guleff, a graduate student, she said, "So students have to know their place!" Perhaps we should put it this way: They need to know different registers in order to play different roles. The more people use these registers, the more effective they can become and, not incidentally, the more power they can have over the situations in which they are reading or writing.

Community conflicts and diversity

So far, the discussion of communities and their genres has focused on the uniting forces, particularly the language, practices, values, and genres that groups may share. It has been suggested that people can join communities at will and remain affiliated at levels of their own choosing. For a number of reasons, this is not entirely accurate. In some cases people are excluded from communities because they lack social standing, talent, or money, or because they live in the wrong part of town. In other cases, community membership requires a long initiatory process, and even then there is no guarantee of success. Many students work for years toward their doctoral degrees, for example, only to find that there are no faculty positions available to them or that their approach to research will not lead to advancement.

Even after individuals are fully initiated, many factors can separate them. Members of communities rebel, opposing community leaders or attempting to change the rules of the game and, by extension, the content and argumentation in the texts from shared genres. If the rebellion is successful, the rules may be changed or a new group may be formed with a different set of values and aims. There may even be a theoretical paradigm shift in the discipline. In academic communities, rebellion may result in the creation of a new unit or department, separate from the old community, as has been the case recently in my own university.[13] Even without open rebellion, there is constant dialogue and argument within communities as members thrash out their differences and juggle for power and identity, promoting their own content, argumentation, and approaches to research.

Although much could be said about factors that affect communities outside the academic realm, the following discussion will focus on a few of the rich and complex factors that give academic communities their character.

The cost of affiliation

If students want to become affiliated with academic discourse communities, or even if they want to succeed in school, they may have to make considerable sacrifices. To become active academic participants, they sometimes must make major trade-offs that can create personal and social distance between them and their families and communities. Students are asked to modify their language to fit that of the academic classroom or discipline. They often must drop, or at least diminish in importance, their affiliations to their home cultures in order to take on the values, language, and genres of their disciplinary culture. The literature is full of stories of the students who must make choices between their communities and academic lives (see, for example, Rose's *Lives on the Boundary,* 1989). In an account of his experiences, Richard Rodriquez (1982, p. 56), a child of Mexican immigrant parents, wrote the following:

> What I am about to say to you has taken me more than twenty years to admit: a primary reason for my success in the classroom was that I couldn't forget that schooling was changing me and separating me from the life I had enjoyed before becoming a student. . . . If because of my schooling, I had grown culturally separated from my parents, my education has finally given me ways of speaking and caring about that fact.

Here Rodriguez is discussing his entire schooling experience; however, as students advance in schools and universities, they may be confronted with even more wrenching conflicts between their home and academic cultures and languages. In her story of a Hispanic graduate student in a Ph.D. sociology program in the United States, Casanave (1992) tells how the tension between this student's personal values and language and her chosen department's insistence on its own scientific language and genres finally drove her from her new academic community. When she could no longer explain her work in sociology in everyday language to the people of her primary communities (her family and her clients), the student decided to leave the graduate program. The faculty viewed her stance as rebellious, an open refusal to take on academic community values. By the time she left, it had become obvious to all concerned that the faculty were unable, or unwilling, to bend or to adapt some of their disciplinary rules to accommodate this student's interests, vocation, and language.

A graduate student from Japan faced other kinds of affiliation conflicts when attempting to become a successful student in a North American linguistics program (Benson, 1996). This student brought from her home university certain social expectations: about faculty roles, about her role as a student, and about what is involved in the production of texts. She believed, for example, that the faculty should provide her with models of what was expected in her papers; she felt that they should determine her research topics and hypotheses. This had been the case in her university in Japan, and she had considerable difficulty understanding why the American faculty did not conform to the practices of her home country. She tried to follow her professors' instructions with great care, but they chastised her for "lacking ideas." In her view, the faculty were being

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[13] San Diego State's new Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies is composed of composition instructors who asked to leave the Department of English, as well as of faculty from the previously independent Academic Skills Center.

irresponsible; however, some faculty viewed her as passive, unimaginative, and dependent. What she and many other students have found is that gaining affiliation in graduate education means much more than understanding the registers of academic language.

These examples are intended to show that full involvement or affiliation in academic discourse communities requires major cultural and linguistic trade-offs from many students. Faculty expect them to accept the texts, roles, and contexts of the discipline, but acceptance requires much more sacrifice and change than the faculty may imagine. In our literacy classes, we can assist academic students in discussing the kinds of problems they encounter when attempting to resolve these conflicts. However, we can also assist our faculty colleagues, who often are unaware of their students' plight, through workshops, student presentations, and suggestions for reading.

Issues of authority

What happens after a person has become an academic initiate, after he or she has completed the degree, published, and been advanced? There are still community issues to contend with, one of which relates to authority. Bakhtin (1986, p. 88) noted that "in each epoch, in each social circle, in each small world of family, friends, acquaintances and comrades in which a human being grows and lives, there are always authoritative utterances that set the tone."

In academic circles, these "authoritative utterances" are made by journal or e-mail interest-group editors, by conference program planners, and by others. At the local level, this authority can be held by department chairs or by chairs of important committees. Prior (1994, p. 522) speaks of these academically powerful people as "an elite group that imposes its language, beliefs and values on others through control of journals, academic appointments, curricula, student examinations, research findings and so on." It is important to note that Prior extends his discussion beyond authority over colleagues to broad authority over students through curricula and examinations. This type of pedagogical authority is very important, as all students know, so it will be discussed further.

In many countries, provincial and national examinations drive the curricula, and theoretical and practical control over these examinations means authority over what students are taught. In the People's Republic of China, for example, important general English language examinations have been based for years on word frequency counts developed in several language centers throughout the country. Each "band," or proficiency level on the examination, is determined by "the most common 1,000 words," "the most common 2,000 words," and so on.[14] Although features of language such as grammar are tested in these examinations, it is a theory about vocabulary, based on word frequency, that is central. It is not surprising, then, that most Chinese students believe that vocabulary is *the* key to literacy, particularly the understanding of "exact" meanings of words. When I have worked with teachers in China, I have frequently been asked questions such as "What is the exact meaning of the term 'discourse'? What does 'theory' mean?" These teachers requested a single definition, something I was often unable to provide.

The centralized power over important examinations in China, over the TOEFL and graduate entrance examinations in the United States, and over the British Council Examinations in other parts of the world gives considerable authority within communities to certain test developers and examiners. This authority permits little pedagogical latitude to teachers preparing students for these "gate-keeping" examinations. As practitioners, we can use test preparation pedagogies, or we can critique these examinations (Raimes, 1990), as we should; but we cannot institute large-scale change until we gain control and authority over the examination system.

With students at all academic levels, we practitioners should raise the issues of authority, status, and control over community utterances in literacy classes. About their own social groups, we can ask: "Who has status in your clubs and why? Who has status in your ethnic or geographical communities and why? How do they exert control over people, over utterances, and over publications?" When referring to academic situations and authority, we can ask: "Who wrote this textbook? What are the authors' affiliations? Are they prestigious? How does the language of the textbook demonstrate the author's authority over the material and over the students who read the volume?" We can also ask: "Who writes your important examinations? What are their values?" Or we can ask: "Who has status in your academic classrooms? Which students have authority and why?" And finally, we might ask: "How can you gain authority in the classroom or over texts?"

Throughout a discussion of authority relationships, we need to talk about communities, language, and genres: how texts and spoken discourses are used to gain and perpetuate authority. We can assist students to analyze authoritative texts, including those of other students, and to critique authority relationships. Our students need to become more aware of these factors affecting their academic lives before they can hope to produce and comprehend texts that command authority within academic contexts.

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[14] "Most common" appears in quotation marks because what is most common (other than function words) is very difficult to determine. These lists are influenced by the type of language data that is entered into the computer for the word count: whether it is written or spoken, its register, etc. If data are varied, other vocabulary become common.

At one point in my career, I attempted to develop low-proficiency English for Business textbooks for adults using a famous publisher's list of most common words. I failed because the data used to establish the frequency lists were taken from children's books. The common words in children's language and those most common in business language are considerably different (Johns, 1985).

Conventions and anticonventionalism

There are many other push and pull factors in academic communities, factors that create dialogue, conflict, and change. Communities evolve constantly, though established community members may attempt to maintain their power and keep the new initiates in line through control over language and genres. A student or a young faculty member can be punished for major transgressions from the norm, for attempting to move away from what the more established, initiated members expect. In order to receive a good grade (or be published), writers often must work within the rules. Understanding these rules, even if they are to be broken, appears to be essential.

As individuals within an academic community become more established and famous, they can become more anticonventional, in both their texts and their lives. Three famous rule breakers come to mind, though there are others. Stephen J. Gould, a biologist, has written a series of literate essays for the general public, principally about evolution, that look considerably different from the scientific journal article. Gould has broken his generic traditions to "go public" because he already has tenure at Harvard, he likes to write essays, and he enjoys addressing a public audience (see Gould, 1985). Deborah Tannen, an applied linguist, has also "gone public," publishing "pop books" about communication between men and women that are best-sellers in the United States (see Tannen, 1986, 1994). She continues to write relatively conventional articles in journals, but she also writes often for the layperson. Clifford Geertz, the anthropologist, refuses to be pigeon-holed in terms of topic, argumentation, or genre. Using his own disciplinary approaches, he writes texts on academic cultures as well as the "exotic" ones that are typical to anthropologists (see Geertz, 1988). Gould, Tannen, and Geertz have established themselves within their disciplines. Now famous, they can afford to defy community conventions as they write in their individual ways.

Rule breaking is a minefield for many students, however. They first need to understand some of the basic conventions, concepts, and values of a community's genres. Learning and using academic conventions is not easy, for many students receive little or no instruction. To compound the problems, students need constantly to revise their theories of genres and genre conventions (see Bartholomae, 1985). Some graduate students, for example, often express confusion about conventions, anticonventions, and the breaking of rules, for faculty advice appears to be idiosyncratic, based not on community conventions but on personal taste. Some faculty thesis advisers, particularly in the humanities, require a careful review of the literature and accept nothing else; others may insist on "original"[15] work without a literature review. For some advisers there is a "cookie cutter" macrostructure that all papers must follow; others may prefer a more free-flowing, experimental text. Graduate students complain that discovering or breaking these implicit rules requires much research and many visits to faculty offices, as well as many drafts of their thesis chapters (see Schneider & Fujishima, 1995).

It should be clear from this discussion that we cannot tell students "truths" about texts or community practices. However, we can heighten student awareness of generic conventions, and we can assist students in formulating questions that can be addressed to faculty. In our literacy classes, we are developing researchers, not dogmatists, students who explore ideas and literacies rather than seek simple answers.

Dialogue and critique

In any thriving academic community, there is constant dialogue: disagreements among members about approaches to research, about argumentation, about topics for study, and about theory. The journal *Science* acknowledges this and accepts two types of letters to the editor to enable writers to carry out informal dialogues. In other journals, sections are set aside for short interchanges between two writers who hold opposing views (see the *Journal of Second Language Writing,* for example). Most journals carry critiques of new volumes in book review sections, and many published articles are in dialogue with other texts. Academic communities encourage variety and critique (within limits), because that is how they evolve and grow.

Most professional academics know the rules for dialogue: what topics are currently "hot," how to discuss these topics in ways appropriate for the readers of their genres, how far they can go from the current norms, and what they can use (data, narratives, nonlinear texts) to support their arguments. Some professionals who understand the rules can also break them with impunity. They can push the boundaries because they know where the discipline has been and where it may be going, and how to use their authority, and the authority of others, to make their arguments. In a volume on academic expertise, Geisler (1994) comments that there are three "worlds" with which expert academics must be familiar before they can join, or contravene, a disciplinary dialogue: the "domain content world" of logically related concepts and content; the "narrated world" of everyday experience; and the "abstract world" of authorial conversation.

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[15] Since I am arguing here that all texts rely on other texts, I put "original" in quotation marks.

Academic experts must manipulate these worlds in order to produce texts that can be in dialogue or conflict with, yet appropriate to, the communities they are addressing.

This discussion has suggested that communities and their genres are useful to study not only because they can share conventions, values, and histories but because they are evolving: through affiliation of new, different members; through changes in authority; through anticonventionalism, dialogue, and critique. Students know these things about their own communities; we need to draw from this knowledge to begin to explore unfamiliar academic communities and their genres.

This chapter has addressed some of the social and cultural factors that influence texts, factors that are closely related to community membership. Although there is much debate in the literature about the nature of discourse communities and communities of practice, it can be said with some certainty that community affiliations are very real to individual academic faculty. Faculty refer to themselves as "chemists," "engineers," "historians," or "applied linguists"; they read texts from community genres with great interest or join in heated debates with their peers over the Internet. They sometimes recognize that the language, values, and genres of their communities (or specializations) may differ from those of another academic community, though this is not always the case. At a promotions committee made up of faculty from sixteen departments in which I took part, a member of the quantitative group in the Geography Department said of a humanities text, "We shouldn't accept an article for promotion without statistics." And we all laughed, nervously.

Academics, and others, may belong to several communities and have in common certain interests within each. Thus, faculty may have nothing in common with other faculty in their disciplines but the discipline itself; their social, political, and other interests can, and often do, vary widely. In one department, for example, musical interests can be diverse. There may be country-western fans, opera fans, jazz enthusiasts, and those whose only musical experiences consist of listening to the national anthem at baseball games. Recreational interests may also differ. Among faculty, there are motorcyclists and bicyclists, hikers and "couch potatoes," football fans and those who actually play the sport.

A complex of social, community-related factors influences the socioliteracies of faculty and the students who are in their classes. As literacy practitioners, we need to help our students examine these factors by bringing other faculty and students, and their genres, into our classrooms, as well as drawing from our own students' rich resources.

5 *Special roles*

Literacy practitioners as campus mediators and researchers

The role of literacy in academic life has remained largely transparent – unexamined (Russell, 1991, p. 7).

The development of socioliteracies requires interaction and analysis using a variety of texts, roles, and contexts. If we are to encourage socioliterate practices among our students, we must model for them the ways in which these interactions can take place. We must carve out for ourselves unusual, mediating roles, which ensure collaboration with faculty and administrators, promote student and faculty literacy research, and encourage projects that require all faculty to take responsibility for student literacy growth. There are obstacles to be surmounted in these mediating and research efforts; however, if we promote our goals in ways that are consistent with those of influential faculty and campus administrators, we can recruit powerful partners in our literacy efforts.

This chapter addresses the following questions relating to our roles as mediators within academic contexts:

1. What obstacles stand in the way of involving discipline-specific (DS) faculty in the promotion of socioliteracy?
2. What are some of the ways in which we can involve DS faculty in literacy research?
3. In what ways can literacy and DS faculty join in pedagogical endeavors?
4. How are the WAC/LAC programs designed to promote faculty interest in literacies?

Obstacles to campus innovation

Good teaching unrewarded

In many academic settings, DS faculty are not particularly interested in changing their approaches to teaching in order to improve student literacies or critical thinking. Why is this the case? There are a number of reasons. The first is that faculty tend to behave in their classrooms in ways that are comfortable and familiar. When they were university stu-