



Recursive Writing/ Recursive ITL

Revisiting Dr. José Bowen in 2015

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“Teaching Naked” with José Bowen

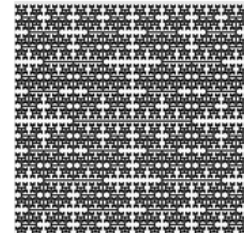
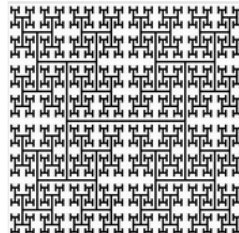
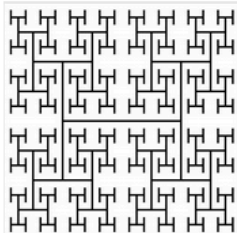
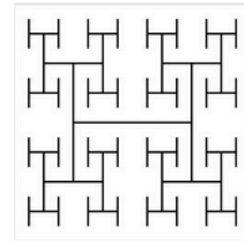
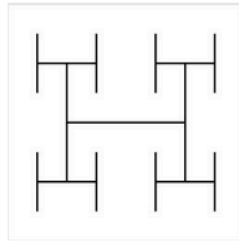
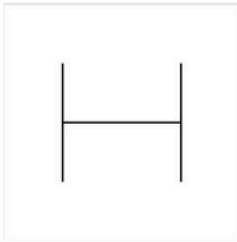
- Integrate technology to teach content outside of class.
 - Support students getting content from elsewhere.
- Move away from content delivery in class.
- Let students learn through failure.
- Homework/readings with purpose.
 - “Read for _____”
 - Find a personal connection
- Low-stakes evaluation of comprehension.
- Faculty availability via social media enables student contact.

What is “recursive writing”?

- Part of the “process movement” of writing wherein writers:
 - Move freely back and forth among the steps of researching, planning, producing, revising, and editing;
 - Discover new arguments and clarify relationships;
 - Try new things while moving through steps by experimenting with information.

What is “recursive writing”?

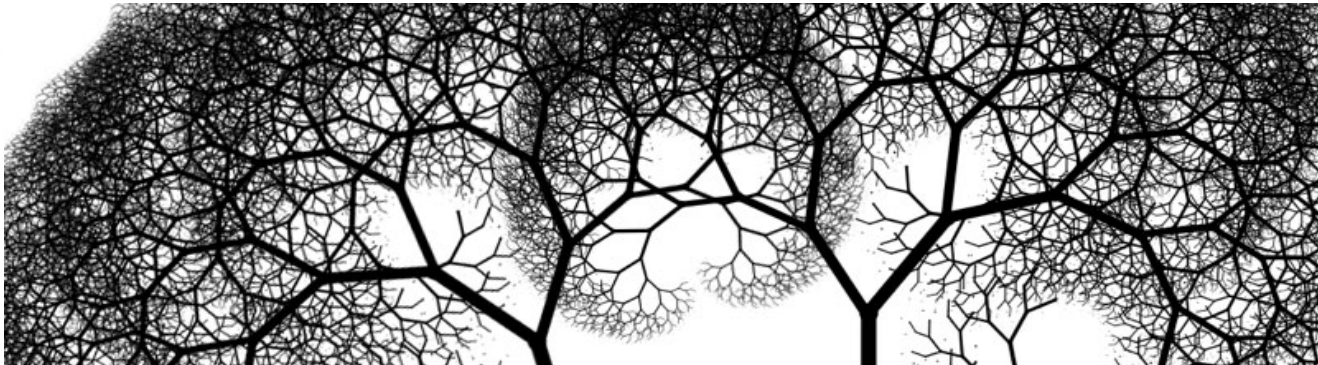
- Mostly, it’s about the possibilities that come from multiple sites of contact with ourselves as we change and grow, as well as others who have different perspectives.
- Asks, “What happens when we apply rules an infinite number of times?”



Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*

- Writing is growing.

Growing is certainly a proper word for what people and other living organisms do to arrive at a “grown” or “mature” state. They go through a series of changes and end up more complex and organized than when they started. It is no metaphor to speak of a person in the following way: “He really grew. Of course he’s the same person he was, but he’s also very different. Now he thinks, behaves, and sees things differently from the way he used to. I never would have expected him to end up this way.”



Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*

- Writing is cooking.

GROWING is the overall larger process, the evolution of whole organisms. Cooking is the smaller process: bubbling, percolating, fermenting, chemical interaction, atomic fission. Cooking drives the engine that makes growing happen. It's because of cooking that a piece of writing can start out X and end up Y, that a writer can start out after supper seeing, feeling, and knowing one set of things and end up at midnight seeing, feeling, and knowing things he hadn't thought of before. Cooking is the smallest unit of generative action, the smallest piece of anti-entropy whereby a person spends his energy to buy new perceptions and insights from himself.

As Teachers of Writing...

- We expect our students' writing to improve and grow over time.
- We give students feedback so they can revise.
- We hope for “macro-level” growth changes, in addition to more particular “micro-level” cooking in response to the thoughts of others.
- Students' “words are able to grow,” as are the practices and approaches that they develop over their time in our courses.

Mapping It Onto Pedagogy

- Revisiting ideas throughout the course and over years of teaching,
- Thinking about how and why I communicate information,
- Paying attention to the various needs of my diverse and changing audiences,
- Being thoughtful about the examples I use to explain things.

Fall 2014 – Trying Something New, or “Growing”

An Attempt at “Teaching Naked”: Implementing José Bowen in ENGH 302

OCTOBER 2, 2014 / WRITING CAMPUS / EDIT



By Caitlin Holmes

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Dr. José Bowen, President of Goucher College and author of *Teaching Naked*, came to George Mason's [Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference](#) sponsored by the

- First attempt
- Directed reading
- Low-stakes in-class writing
- Consistent implementation of low-stakes writing for reading homework.

<http://goo.gl/dMoRZ2>

Spring 2015 – Growing

- Made self available via Skype from the beginning of term.
- Assigned more YouTube/independent Google work.
- Made reading with purpose into an actual lesson to shape future low-stakes assignments.


I introduced Bitzer as a reading assignment on the first day of class. Remembering José Bowen's suggestion from last semester to have students read with purpose, I told students to read the article to try to identify the words Bitzer uses to define the rhetorical situation. "You don't need to understand his argument perfectly," I said. "You only need to look for the words he uses to define what 'the rhetorical situation' is." Even though I verbally delivered these instructions and their reading assignment appeared on the course calendar (shown below), I also wrote the instructions on the board, as some students prefer to take pictures of my instructions to record the assignment.


Week	Topics of Discussion	Readings +Due Dates
1 1/20, 22	T: Introduction to the Course, Go over Research Resource List, Discuss rhetorical academic writing. R: Go over SW #1; communicating for different audiences across media	R: "The Rhetorical Situation"
	T: Academic Life Online	T: "We need to talk about


I received four emails over the next 48 hours asking for further instructions on the reading. One student wrote, "We need to take notes about how he's setting up his argument and focus on his writing correct? I don't know why I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around this assignment but any help is appreciated." Another


<http://goo.gl/FDHeXJ>

Fall 2015 - Cooking


 [Redacted] 9/11, 2:19pm
Professor Holmes, I wanted to just mention something about the assignment due today.

 [Redacted] 9/11, 2:24pm
It's really just a personal note. My recent decision to pursue a new career and go back to school was a huge one. I still question if I am going to be able to continue it. Something cosmically must be trying to encourage me because twice now your writing assignments have covered topics that have personal meaning to me. I just find it so ironic and felt like sharing that with you. Thanks 😊

 **Caitlin Holmes** 9/11, 2:43pm
Hi [Redacted] - thank you so much for sharing this with me! I've had a crummy week, so it's lovely to get notes like this. I'm so glad that you're pushing forward even with all of the things going on in your life! 😊

 [Redacted] 9/11, 2:46pm
I appreciate knowing I gave someone a smile. This week has been brutal on my too and it's been hard to smile myself.

A side note of the mentioned Irony: [Redacted] referenced in my assignment happens to be my son's counselor at his new school as well as her being a Mason Adjunct Professor in my field of study.

 **Caitlin Holmes** 9/11, 3:17pm
That's great!! Can't wait to read it. 😊

- Began teaching online in addition to face-to-face.
- Created required Facebook groups and online messaging chats.
- Available via Skype for conversation
- Gave bonus points for asking and answering questions on thread.
- Framing reading assignments and discussions with independent, online research.
- Submitting chat transcripts for group participation credit.

9/11 Facebook Message Conversation

Fall 2015 - Cooking

██████████
I've found that it has some interesting parallels to some of the fallout surrounding the "Code of Conduct" issues the opal project had a few months back.
It also further confirms my belief that twitter is a terrible format for anything but consuming information. Length provides context in a written format.
anyone else have any thoughts?



12:21pm

██████████
I agree but I believe it can provide an avenue for further discussion or information
Like a preview for more



12:23pm

██████████
I agree with ██████████ Maybe if Salaita had done a lengthy article on the subject instead of a couple of sentences his views would have been better recieved and it would have come out less extreme.

Fall 2015 - Cooking

Writing Exercise



- Think of a time when you disagreed with something. This disagreement could be a big, controversial issue, or something between friends.
- In 200-250 words, describe the issue (claim and reason), and then identify the warrant. Why didn't you agree? What was wrong with the warrant that made you disagree?

Example:
Took in-class
discussion online
into low-stakes
writing exercises.

Fall 2015 – Cooking

About a year ago, I was involved in a heated discussion at work. A few of my coworkers approached me and inquired if I was attending the annual Gay Pride Festival that weekend. I responded that it was unlikely seeing as I already had plans and didn't currently have the funds to justify an impromptu road trip.

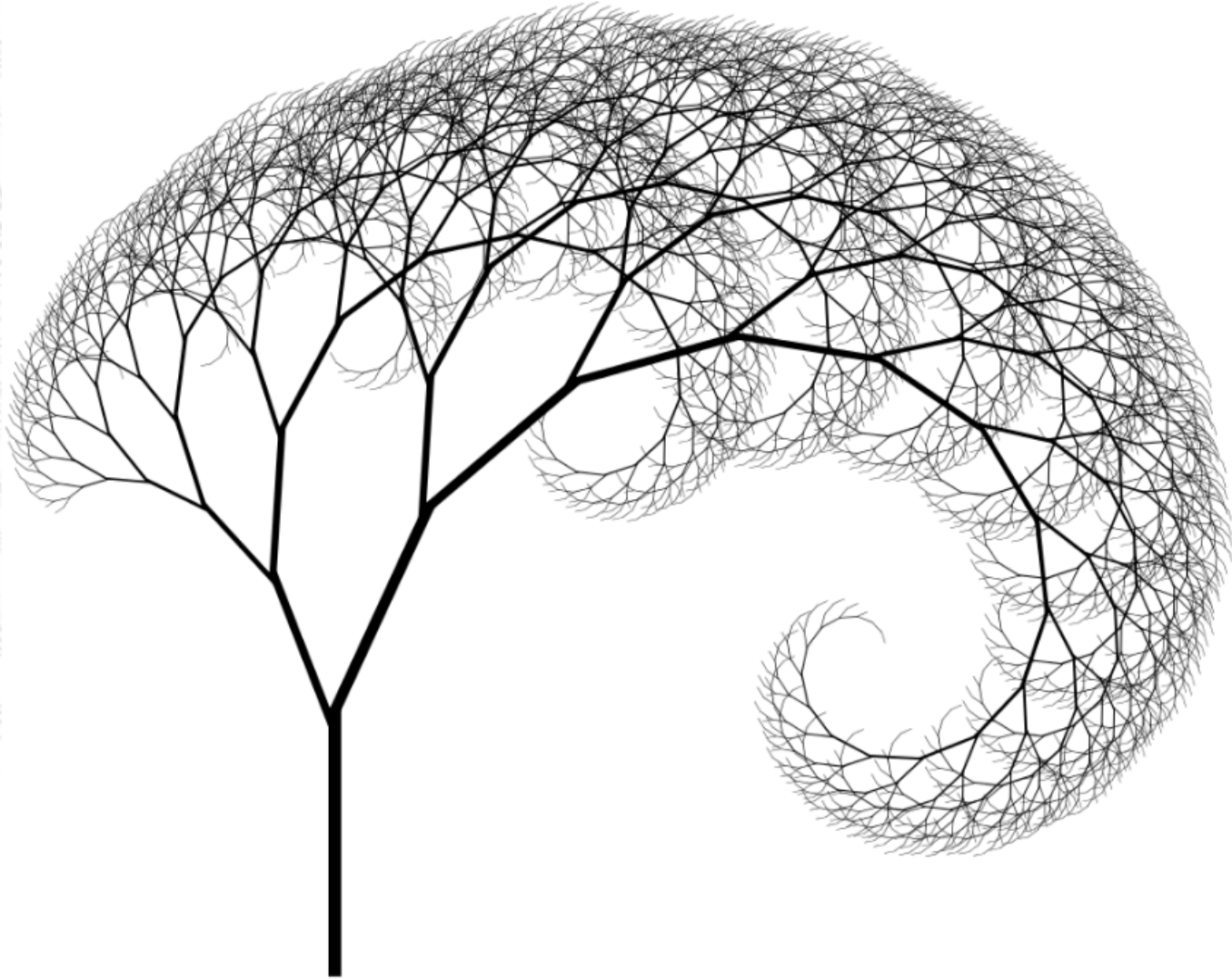
My coworkers seemed taken aback at my response and informed me that they were all attending in order to support another coworker of ours. Upon asking how attending the Pride festival supported [...], I was told that he had recently come out and had invited the whole staff to come to the festival to celebrate with him. Later, I approached [...], ecstatically congratulated him, and apologized for not reserving the date, explaining that I must've missed his email somehow. He thanked me with a hug and then sheepishly informed me that he hadn't invited me because he had been afraid I would judge him.

He then continued to say that he had heard me mention going to church and thus assumed I wouldn't be supportive. The claim and reason of this situation is: "you will judge me for being a homosexual because you attend church." The warrant supporting this untrue belief is "all Christians are judgmental."

Recursive Bowen

- Experimenting with my pedagogy required both growing (generating more and more activities) and cooking (refining activities over time).
- Resist the tendency towards static instruction – push toward alternations between growing and cooking.
- Aim to integrate technologies that work for my students, but also push them to figure things out independently.

Why Recursion Works



Post-Process Writing & Pedagogy

- There is not one process, either of writing or writing pedagogy (Dobrin & Breuch).
- Cannot predict the conditions under which our students' knowledge is produced, but we can help students become aware of them (Freire).
- Our own systems of knowledge are bound up in disciplinary power and norms that our students often do not recognize or understand yet, but that we assess them on (Foucault).
- Sites of repetition and adjustment (both for teacher and student) create sites of self-awareness (Deleuze).