

Book Review—*Writing Across Cultures* by Robert Eddy and Amanda Espinosa-Aguilar

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If Asao Inoue's 4Cs 2019 speech marked the beginning of a new chapter in composition studies, Robert Eddy and Amanda Espinosa-Aguilar's *Writing Across Cultures* would be one of the first rhetorics to represent the values moving the field forward: radical inclusivity, adaptability, and thoughtfully proposed *praxis*. Composition instructors at all stages of their academic career would benefit from reading this 246-page rhetoric that is forward thinking: quick to acknowledge the future of the professions first-year writing students are preparing for along with the changing demographics of US classrooms. At the center of this forward-thinking rhetoric is Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar's focus on racial identities and white privilege. This rhetoric's primary purpose is to prepare future professionals to deal with issues of race, power, privilege, and authority in the writing process in their desired careers. Adding to that primary purpose, *Writing Across Cultures* prepares writers to identify, analyze, and evaluate the relationships among language, knowledge, and power, then synthesize those findings with their own writing habits and preferences. *Writing Across Cultures* utilizes the Eddy Model in its structure for the text, where each chapter represents a stage in the framework Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar offer. In employing the Eddy Model of Intercultural Experience, an intercultural communication model Eddy has been using for decades, this text accomplishes its purposes by proposing a framework for composition instructors to use with plenty of example assignments, instructor notes to students, and student samples to show the Eddy Model in action.

With the end goal of adaptability in mind, the Eddy Model, which is the driving force of *Writing Across Cultures*, is a recursive, six-stage process that both covers and guides the target audience, composition instructors of all levels of experience, through the behavior, intercultural experience, and writing processes developed for each stage. The stages of experience mark an individual's progress through this framework: Preliminary, Spectator, Increasing Participation, Shock, Adaptation, and Re-Entry. Each stage is marked by behaviors and writing practices that are familiar to all composition instructors. The Preliminary Stage is marked by vague ideas of approach and deciding on invention strategies through brainstorming sessions. The second stage, the Spectator Stage is where students must interact with others in the class to identify false starts, misunderstandings, and oversimplifications in a first draft. In the Increasing-Participation Stage, students must understand interactions in class, developing more confidence in their credibility within the target community. In the fourth stage, students must create a role acceptable to the class by conquering their fears of change and writer's block in The Shock Stage. As the writer enters the fifth stage, The Adaptation Stage, the self becomes the center of communal responsibility as the individual must choose where in the spectrum of assimilation, resistance, separation, and pluralism they will fall. Finally, writers are in The Reentry Stage when they conduct purposeful reflections that identify, analyze, and evaluate

their process as they begin again in the Preliminary Stage. In developing this six-stage process, Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar map out a framework for the difficult critical thinking process involved in authentically adapting to academic discourse, where composers can choose from a spectrum of assimilation, resistance, separation, and pluralism based on self-analysis and self-evaluation.

Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar begin with the text's goals, themes, motivations, and challenges within the Eddy Model and its creation in the Introduction. In Chapter 1, "Home Culture(s), Academic Discourse, Critical Reading, and the Eddy Model of Intercultural Experience," the authors acknowledge the difficulties of intercultural communication, emphasize the importance of critical reading strategies, and summarize the stages in the Eddy Model. The authors take the reader through the "Entrance to the Preliminary Stage" of the Eddy Model in Chapter 2, which emphasizes invention and prewriting techniques that value metacultural awareness through the Eddy Model and its parallel, the Kluckhohn Model, an intercultural communication process similar to the Eddy Model. In Chapter 3, "The Preliminary Stage, Part 2: Prewriting Using the Eddy Method," the authors use the invention methods developed in Chapter 2 to compose a brainstorming draft and to practice reflection. The reader will enter "The Spectator Stage" of the Eddy Model in Chapter 4, discussing prewriting tactics with peers and entering into academic discourse through a working draft. Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar are quick to point out that the Spectator Stage may be full of false starts, which is why writers enter The Increasing-Participation Stage in Chapter 5, "The Increasing-Participation Stage: Working Drafts and Revision." This stage of the Eddy Model is focused on "organic revision" that emphasizes full engagement with the target culture where "writers must become dual ambassadors, knowing when to talk and share and when to listen and keep silent" (10).

Chapter 6, "The Shock Stage: Writer's Block and Fear of Change," explains The Shock Stage, which acknowledges the fear every writer has in changing and adapting to the culture they wish to enter and offers techniques to guide writers through their revision process. The authors suggest role-playing for revision as a writing activity for student authors to combat writer's block in The Shock Stage, providing students' work and instructor responses to make these strategies accomplishable and practical. Chapter 7, "Convincing the Audience by Using Edited American English," focuses on writers' adaptation to Edited American English and best practices in adapting to academic discourse, where we see some refreshing honesty, disagreement, and reflection in Espinosa-Aguilar's argument for code switching and Eddy's stance in code meshing. The authors take the reader to Chapter 8, "The Adaptation Stage," which develops the ability to identify, analyze, evaluate, and eliminate undefined abstractions, logical fallacies, and unexamined alternative explanations in order to work towards the final draft. Chapter 9, "The Reentry Stage: Future Compositions and Dissonant Voices," takes the reader to the final stage of the Eddy Model, The Reentry Stage, which asks writers to reflect on the ways they are balancing their home culture with their target culture, specifically with how and why knowledge systems create and disseminate truth(s). Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar offer their final reflections in Chapter 10, "Cultural Meshing or Switching in Poly- or Intercultural Writing Classes." Both Chapters 9 and 10 are the most forward thinking chapters of this rhetoric, explaining the benefits for both instructor and student reflections as they begin again at The Preliminary Stage in this recursive framework and discussing what this intercultural communication process means for

the minority majority of the future.

This book strikes the perfect balance between theory and practice, offering just enough theory to qualify the Eddy Model as a pedagogical framework for First-Year Writing, while presenting enough examples to see how participants in the Eddy Model develop writing strategies that emphasize adaptability. The Eddy Model describes the tumultuous challenge first-year writing (FYW) students face in having their identities shaped and reshaped in order to adapt to academic discourse, while offering practical steps to make FYW students engaged communicators, not just a product of detached processes. There are more than twenty activities within *Writing Across Cultures* that scaffold in ways that should be familiar to most composition instructors. The topics for these activities vary in the skills students practice and the difficulty level. For instance, one activity asks the writer to reflect on their key cultural assumptions, while another activity identifies and evaluates the use of logical fallacies. Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar pair every stage of the Eddy Model with student samples, and the authors provide detailed notes, feedback, and analysis so the reader can identify specific areas of growth in students' writing. In doing so, *Writing Across Cultures* helps composition instructors at all stages of experience through thoughtfully proposed *praxis*. Beginner composition instructors can develop strategies to identify and evaluate growth in students' writing in cross-racial and cross-cultural contexts, while more experienced composition instructors can add effective strategies for cross-cultural and cross-racial communication to their toolbox through the Eddy Model.

Writing Across Cultures represents the inclusivity and democratization that marks the social justice turn in composition studies after Inoue's 4Cs speech. While most rhetorics look at the past to shape composers' strategies, Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar aim towards a future of empowerment and freedom, "acknowledge[ing] student rights to their own language and to ideologically position themselves" (20). The entirety of the text focuses on inclusivity and democratization, but Chapter 10, "Cultural Meshing or Switching in Poly- or Intercultural Writing Classes," challenges readers and future writers to reflect on their own racial identities and white privilege as scholars and teachers. Specifically, Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar present a set of thirteen questions for the reader to reflect on; questions like "How do I romanticize whiteness?"; "Has my teaching perpetuated the exploitation of people of color by reifying myths, such as saying things are getting better over time?"; and "In attempting to become more intercultural in complex multiracial settings, how should I alter my critical gaze?" force the reader to reflect on their identity as a composition instructor and how it relates to their racial identity and/or their white privilege (205). In doing so, the Eddy Model of Intercultural Experience uncovers the unconscious and habitual processes culture has conditioned composers in, while giving people the freedom to choose the polycultural ethos they wish to occupy with a keen sense of what and how they're negotiating their language and, therefore, their identity in various rhetorical situations. The resulting radical inclusivity and democratization from *Writing Across Cultures* is what makes this text particularly important and timely for the future of composition studies because it gives writers the ability to make informed decisions on the ways in which they adapt to various rhetorical situations while having continuously to reshape their identity to practice *ethos* in different knowledge-structures.

Finally, what makes this text particularly unique is its refreshing honesty, reminding the

reader of the difficulties and contradictions that come with teaching composition. Throughout this book, Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar embody the careful consideration of and sensitivity to various positionalities composition instructors must take on in order to empower composers to authentically adapt. The authors respond to student writing in different ways, they disagree with each other, and they openly admit the difficulties and complexities of teaching composition courses in 2019. The authors particularly disagree on how to handle adaptation to Edited American English in Chapter 7. Espinosa-Aguilar values code switching because it promotes the credibility of the author in academic contexts, while Eddy believes in code meshing because it maintains the writer's authentic adaptability, as long as it is purposeful and effective. The honest reflections throughout this book, especially in the final chapter, make the reader understand that difficulties and failures are part of the ongoing process to teach and to adapt, and that's okay. This honesty is particularly helpful for beginner composition instructors as they themselves go through the Eddy Model, adapting to this level of academic discourse. For the more experienced composition instructors, *Writing Across Cultures* is a strong reminder that composition instructors constantly need to evolve.

Ultimately, this book accomplishes its main goal of proposing a *praxis* for teaching First-Year Writing Courses that embody a commitment to the complex needs of social justice and a polycultural future. For any composition instructor teaching in 2021 and beyond, this rhetoric is a must-read. *Writing Across Cultures* strikes the perfect balance of theory and practice to help the reader best understand this framework. Most importantly, this rhetoric encourages writers to critically analyze and evaluate social actions and how they relate to their racial identities and white privilege, then make an informed decision from a spectrum of assimilation, resistance, separation, and pluralism in how they wish to proceed. In 246 pages, Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar offer a perspective to a conversation that will undoubtedly continue in the years to come. In ten years, when scholars trace the history of composition studies, *Writing Across Cultures* will stand out for representing the values of the Social Justice Era of Composition: radical inclusivity, adaptability, and strong *praxis*.

WORKS CITED

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