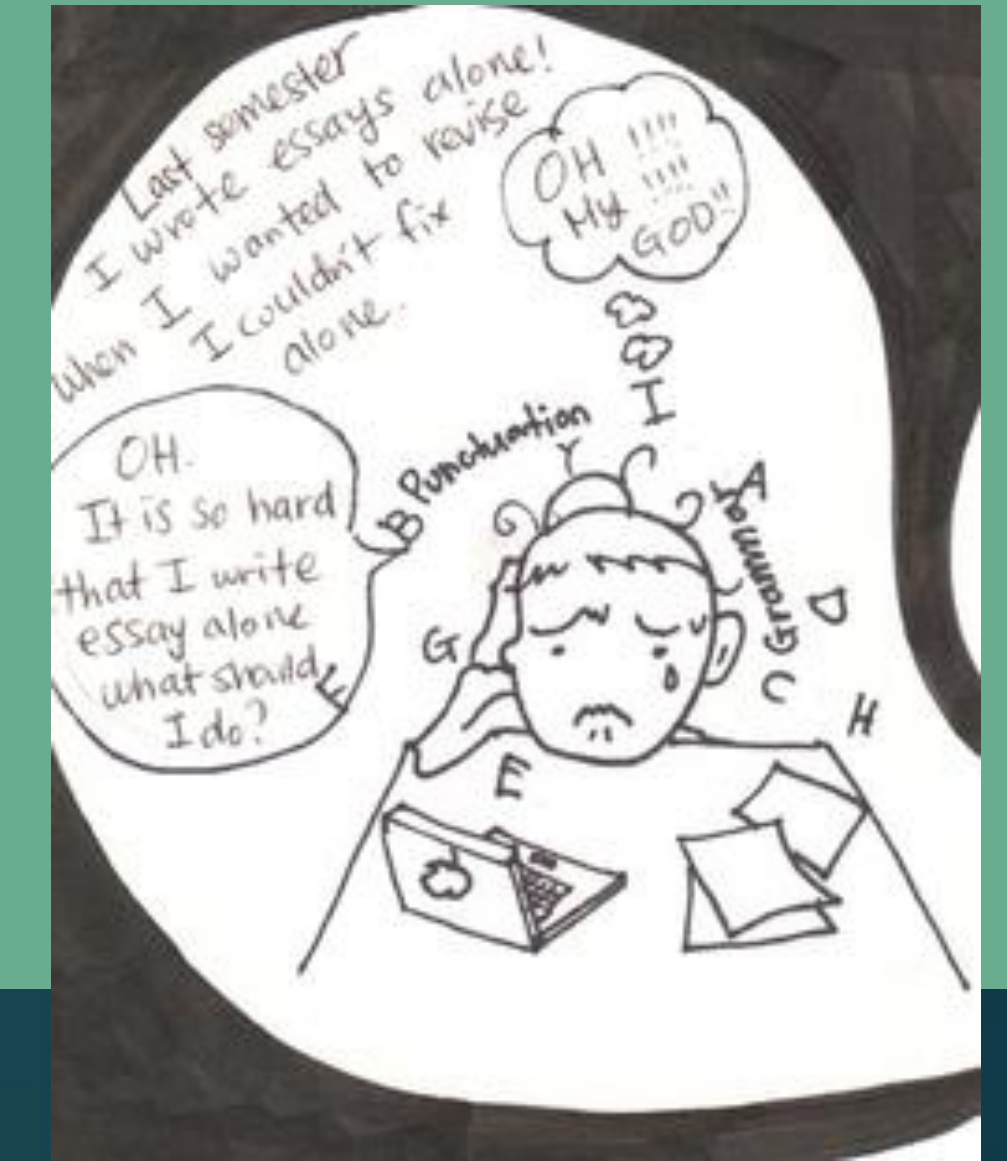
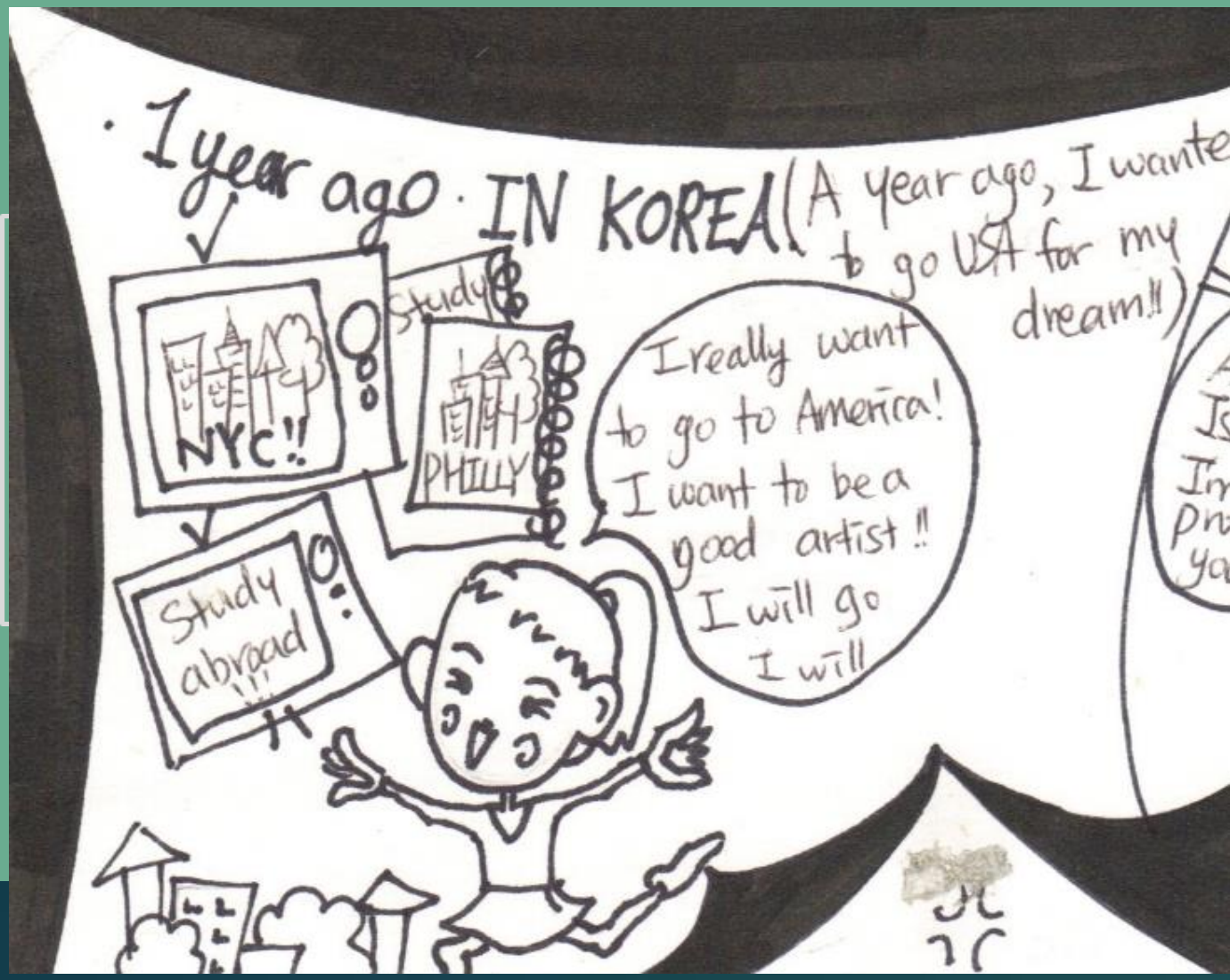


THE GLOBAL IS SOCIAL :

Exploring Worldwide English Literacy on a Socio-local Scale

Brynn Kairis, Jacqueline Manni, and Allison Scherer



ABSTRACT & METHOD


"The Global is Social" is an ethnographic study conducted at a mid-size arts institution in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It explores how academic models, such as the ESL program and traditional composition courses, as well as social models such as social media and the extracurricular affect the acquisition of English language literacy among international students. This research was conducted in hopes of gaining perspective on how English Language Learners perceive the programs designed to teach English, as well as to evaluate what aides English language literacy outside of these programs.

Recordings of interviews were then examined to draw conclusions on shared experiences of what hinders versus helps international students attempting to navigate the English language. Anonymous hand drawn comics and student writing samples were also examined.

MEET THE INTERVIEWEES



Tae Hyun Lee
South Korea
Major: Theatre Design and Technology



Abdul Altamutairi
Saudia Arabia
Major: Film and Video



Sewon An
South Korea
Major: Crafts, emphasis on Metals



Wonju Kim
South Korea
Major: Crafts, emphasis on Fibers

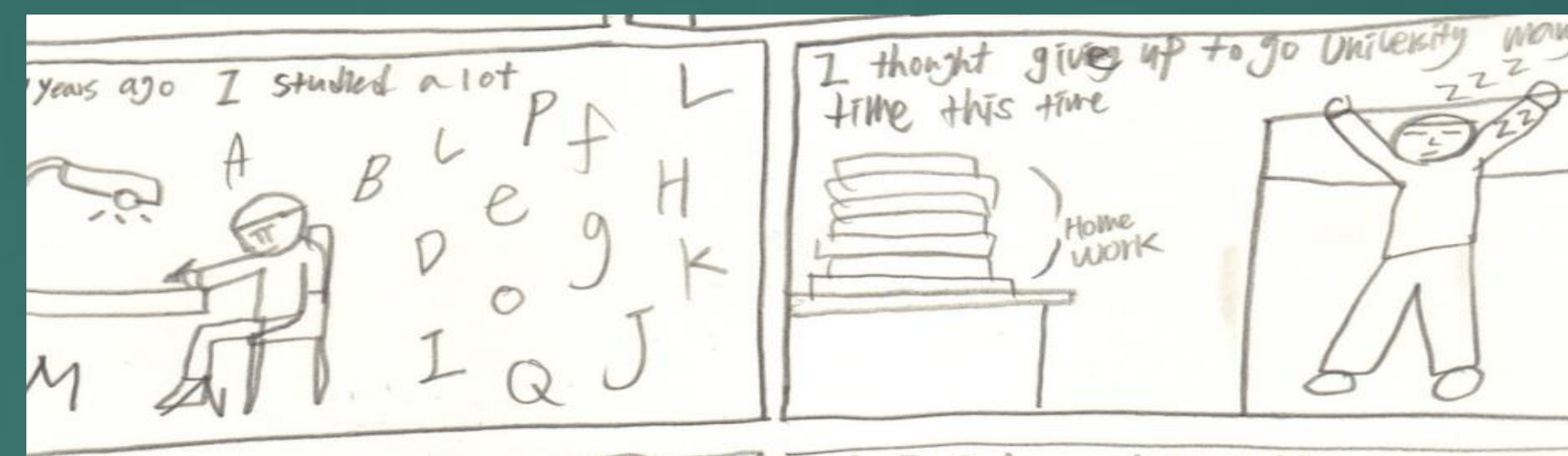


Xin Lu
China
Major: Art Education



Reshma Anwar
Germany
Major: Dance, Minor: Music Business, Entrepreneurship, Technology

RESULTS: SPHERES OF INFLUENCE



Academic vs Social

- ▶ ELL students are immersed in a sea of unfamiliar academic language in the university and are in danger of being intellectually judged based on their literacy skills.
- ▶ The university acts as gatekeeper; both sponsoring literacy and preventing matriculation until satisfactory skills can be demonstrated.
- ▶ Social literacy and voluntary literacy events provide a more accurate picture of students' motivations and progress with English literacy.

Sponsorship Through Relationships

- ▶ English literacy is sponsored by family rather than formal education in home countries as a means to success.
- ▶ This relationship with English literacy is closely linked with intensely personal memories and interactions.
- ▶ The family gains in this sense as well. The success of the individual represents the success of the family group.

The Extracurricular

- ▶ Defined as literacy practices outside of formal education.
- ▶ Prepared for literacy acquisition through ESL and international student programs through various community-based activities.
- ▶ Provides cultural connections that are used as a basis of work on reading and writing skills.
- ▶ Authentic and relevant opportunities for performance and practice.

The Influence of Social Media

- ▶ Provides social glue between home relationships and American friendships
- ▶ A place for connection where students can practice putting their English writing skills to use.
- ▶ Both sponsors literacy and allows ELL students to sponsor their own literacy.

CONCLUSION

In his highly influential book *Lives on the Boundary*, Mike Rose states that a "failed education is social more than intellectual in origin" (225). After interviewing the international students at the University of the Arts, we can modify his statement to reflect that a successful education is more social than intellectual in nature. Literacy acquisition for these international students is overwhelmingly formed by a network of social interaction - a need to communicate in the written and performed word to express and receive ideas, study, and connect. The global is, in fact, social.

The University of the Arts is a space of privilege. Yet we can take our findings and apply them to work with other populations seeking to build their literacy; international or local, rich or poor, elementary school or college composition class. Rose's idea of extending an invitation -- to a Thanksgiving lunch, to tutoring help, to participate in a club, to coffee with a peer mentor -- is shown to accomplish what drilling in grammar or reading a dry textbook does not. Tapping into students' greatest dreams, providing relevant and engaging occasions for English literacy practice, and explicit effort in the service of building bridges and maintaining connections are the strengths we observed at UArts. They are practices that can, and should, be taken to other spheres of literacy learning.

To see the interviews and learn more, please visit us at www.globalissocial.weebly.com



REFERENCES

Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University". *Journal of Basic Writing*, 5.1 (1986).

Brandt, Deborah. *Literacy in American Lives*. Cambridge UP, 2001. "Sponsors of Literacy." CCC 49.2 (1998): 165-185.

Gere, Anne R. "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition." *College Composition & Communication* 45 (1994): 75-107.

Moss, Beverly. "Creating a Community: Literacy Events in African-American Churches." *Literacy Across Communities*. Beverly Moss, ed. Cresskill NJ: Hampton P, 1994. 147-68.

Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared*. New York: Free Press, 1989.