

## Afterword

To close this monograph, I offer a few words from students about affordances that LBG offers from their experiences. These students are speaking directly about their experiences in various LBG ecologies. The last one is from a student of mine, while the other two come from other LBG ecologies and teachers. I believe each student represented below speaks to ways students might understand the crippling of labor in their LBG ecologies:

It moved me away from scarcity learning and into wholehearted learning. Labour-based grading took away the fear, academic insecurity and pressure that I often feel, it allowed me to approach readings with a better mindset than just scanning for what I interpret the lecturer will want me to understand and not paying attention to the rest. It also allowed me to prioritise other courses, life events, work some weeks and participate more fully in this course other weeks without feeling like I was getting lost or falling behind. As a minority student, this is the most seen I have ever felt at VUW. (Gibson, et al. 47)

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I wasn't born in the United States, so I came when I was about I'd say nine or ten years old, and it was really difficult because I didn't really know the language at all. And you know that that sort of works against you like you see other kids as being smarter in a way, but that's really not the case, because they know the language. They've been born here . . . getting all the criticism in like in middle school, high school, stuff like that, despite the teachers knowing that, you know, I wasn't really proficient at the time, you know, sort of affects people . . . If I had labor-based grading from the beginning, it would definitely help because you know the teacher would obviously see the effort that I put in the paper and see my specific writing and I would not be marked down. And you know that would obviously help self-esteem, stuff like that. (Lince 27)

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When I first read the grading contract for this class, I remember thinking "Thank god" . . . Instead of being graded on the content of our assignments, we were to be graded on the effort we put into them—the labor. For years, I would spend a frustratingly large amount of time and stress on deciphering the many

varying rubrics of my English teachers. It would take a couple of tries, a few low grades, before I finally figured out how that particular teacher liked to language, and how I could cater my writing to their preferences to receive the best grade possible . . .

I myself have experienced this confusion and discomfort while engaging in the labor processes defined in this class. Even our first assignment, reading the syllabus, was stressful because I naturally resisted the process that was outlined for me. I remember reading the instructions and being thrown off by the first step being, of all things, a mindful breathing exercise. Breathing exercise? Why would I need to do a breathing exercise? For this first assignment, I ignored this instruction (sorry, Dr. Inoue). When it came time to write our first essays, I was a nervous wreck. The previous relief I felt from the lack of explicit requirements evaporated as I grasped at straws for some sort of direction. I didn't know what Dr. Inoue liked, and despite the guarantee that I didn't need to cater my writing to his preferences, I still wanted to, a desire that stemmed from the years I was inadvertently taught to do this as a literacy student. After staring at a blank page for several minutes, I finally came to the novel conclusion that I should probably just follow the labor instructions that were provided to me. I did the breathing exercise. It was (shockingly) helpful in clearing my mind, but it was also uncomfortable. In fact, every step of the instructions were uncomfortable. What do you mean my brainstorming can be in any form? What kind of essay am I even writing? The process didn't come naturally to me and the freedom I so craved was suddenly my worst nightmare . . .

Throughout this class, I have discovered a newfound enjoyment for the process of writing. I've always said this, but I never used to like writing. It was scary, stressful, and took a long time. It still takes a long time, but my mental shift away from trying to create a good product to trying to engage in a thoughtful process makes me want it to take even longer . . . My time in this course has shown me that focusing on writing as a practice rather than a means to a result is what makes it fun and less daunting. Reveling in the process of reading and writing is the single most important experience I have taken away from this class. Who knows? Maybe I will start that zombie novel . . . (Hossain n.p.)