

Mobile Learning as Pratt's "Linguistic Utopia"

Leveraging Mobile Devices to
Democratize Composition Instruction

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Point of Need

Composition does not happen solely in fixed locations. “Mixed Reality” learning in *the* world vs. *a* world of classrooms, labs, libraries, etc.

Mobile tech allows students to **directly occupy places of rhetorical activity** to research, write, and publish on location.

Mobile tech **frames student agency as intersubjective** and encourages multiple perspectives on shared contexts.

60% of pilot study students claimed to **already write on their mobile device between 2-10 times per day**, 30% write more than 10 times per day.

Linguistic Utopias in Action: Sidler's Perspective

Using online forum tech in mobile learning creates virtual “democratic spaces, what Mary Louise Pratt might call a ‘linguistic utopia’ within which **cues of gender, race, and socioeconomic status are minimized; students speak without interruption; and marginalized individuals can acquire more central voices.**” It is an empowering space.

Sidler, Michelle et al. Computers in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008. Print.

Pilot Study: *Write Lounge* in a Summer Intensive English Program (SSB)

- ❖ 46% of SSB users claimed to be **more likely to use specific, classroom-focused mobile technologies** over traditional classroom materials such as textbooks and desktop course management software like Blackboard.
- ❖ 61% of SSB users claimed to **feel more connected to their classmates** when using *Write Lounge*, roughly the same number said they would be **more likely to submit their daily homework** using mobile devices.
- ❖ 57% of SSB users claimed to be **more likely to complete daily readings** on their mobile devices.
- ❖ 46% of SSB students claimed to **likely write more for daily activities** when using mobile tech than hand-writing the same activities.

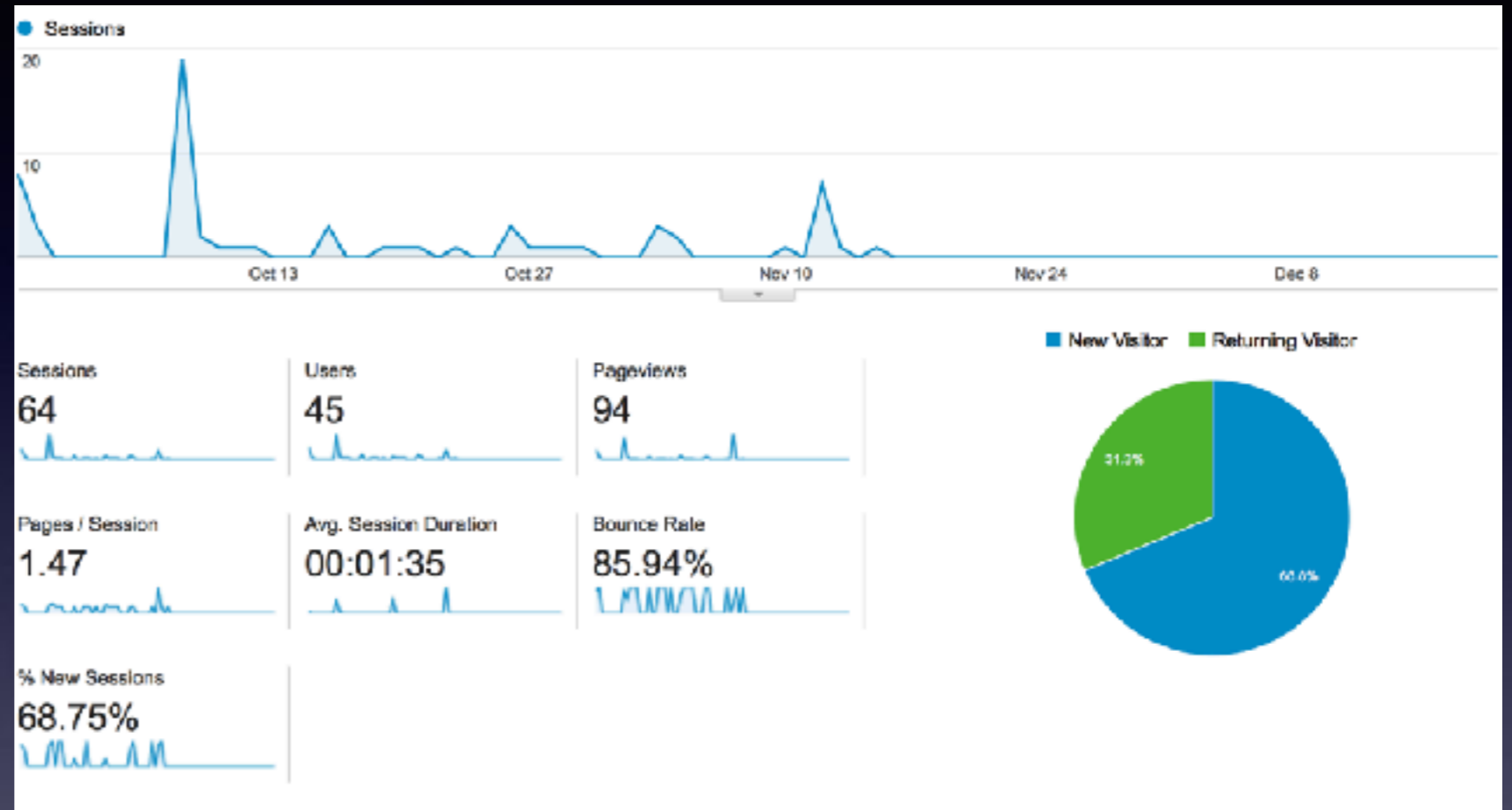
Linguistic Utopias in [in]action: Pratt's Perspective

“The ‘linguistics of community’ ...as a **utopian project that postulates unified, idealized social worlds** ...it will not be altogether surprising to find that it has **dystopic versions** as well, in which the unified social worlds are discovered, then **denounced as claustrophobic and degraded.**”

Pratt, Mary Louise. “Linguistic Utopias.’ Found in: Fabb, Nigel, et al. The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between language and literature. Manchester University Press. 1987.

Pilot Study: *Write Lounge* in a FYC Sequence

- From 129 students (Fall FYC group)
- Direction and context are **critical**.



User Type ?	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Sessions ? ↓	% New Sessions ?	New Users ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages / Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?
	64 % of Total: 100.00% (64)	68.75% Site Avg: 68.75% (0.00%)	44 % of Total: 100.00% (44)	85.94% Site Avg: 85.94% (0.00%)	1.47 Site Avg: 1.47 (0.00%)	00:01:35 Site Avg: 00:01:35 (0.00%)
1. New Visitor	44 (68.75%)	100.00%	44(100.00%)	81.82%	1.59	00:02:06
2. Returning Visitor	20 (31.25%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	95.00%	1.20	00:00:28

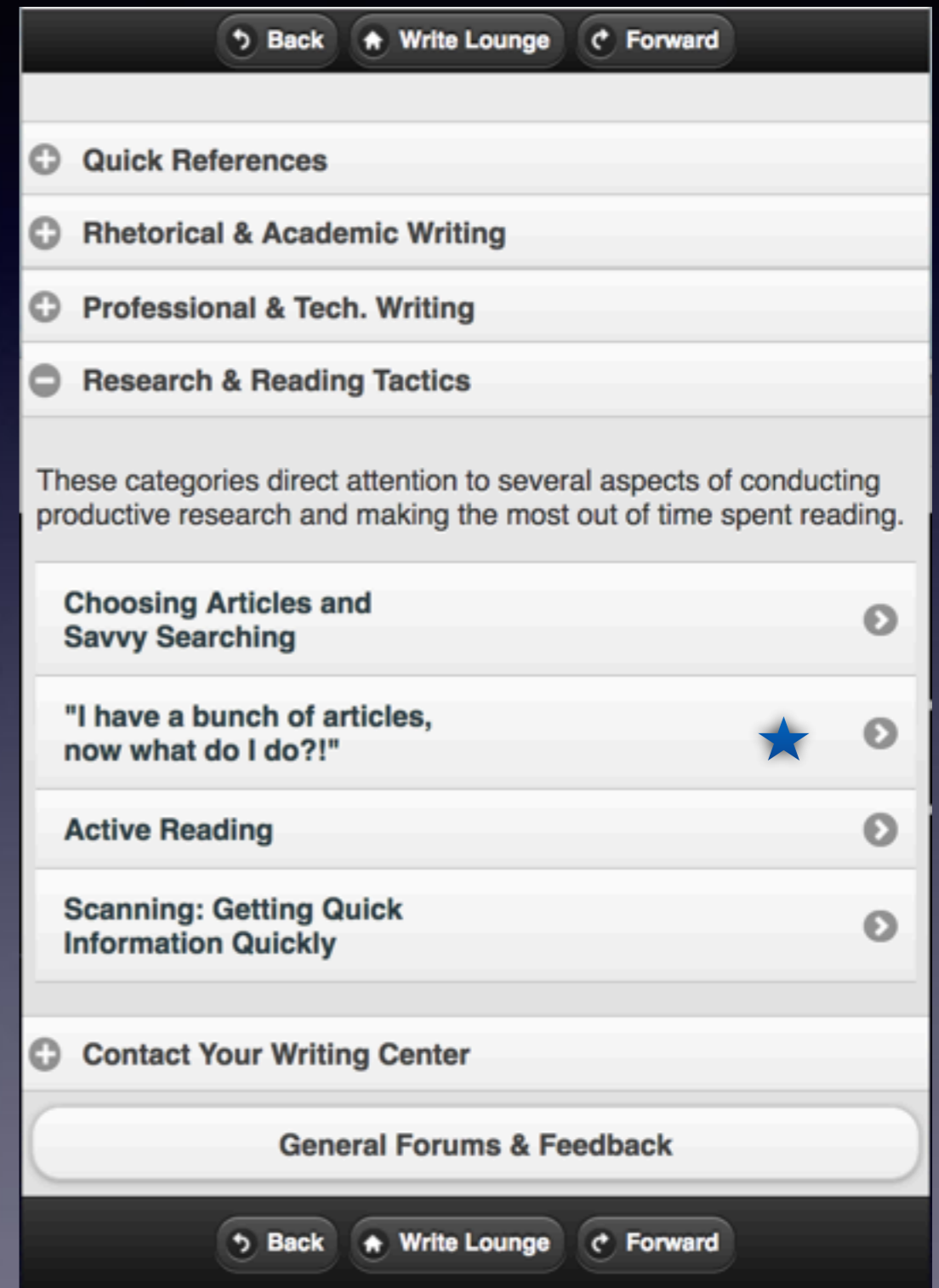
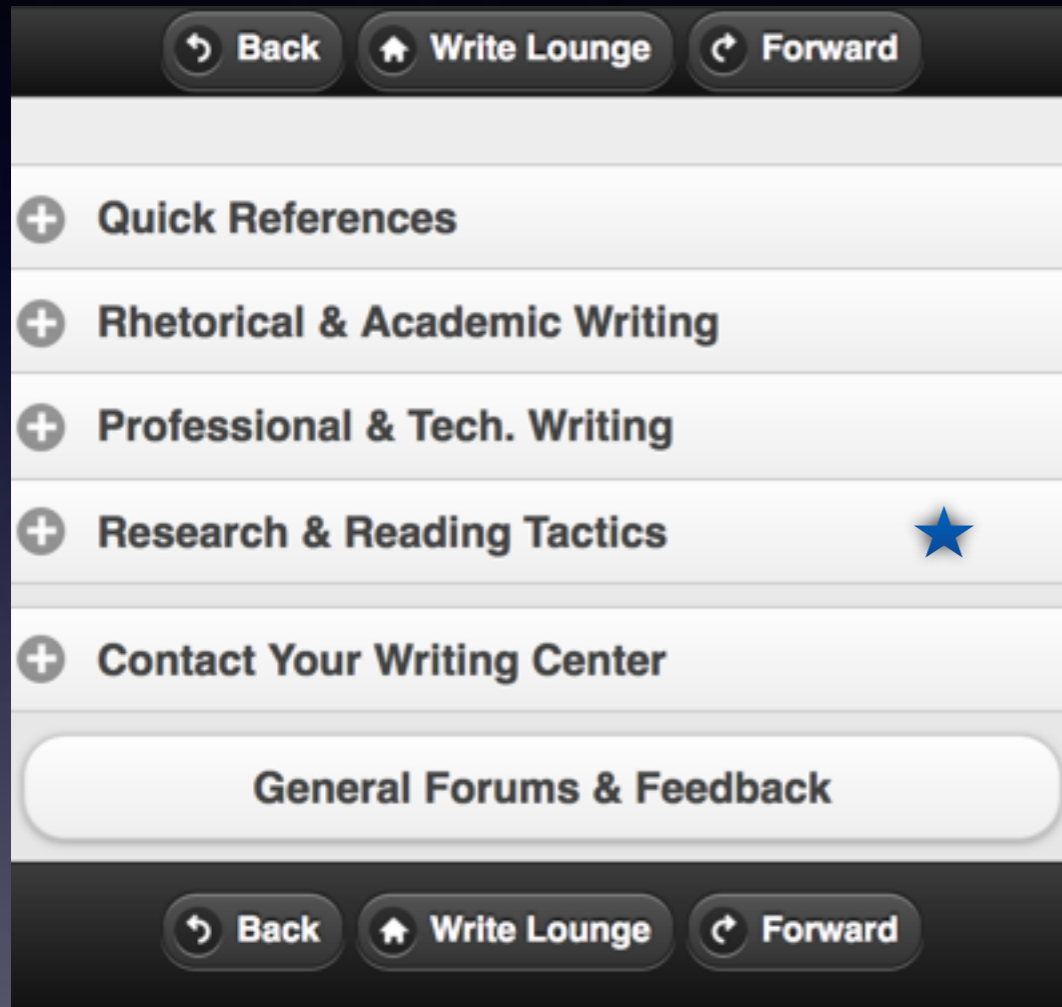
Democratic Design Elements

- **Logical IA:**
organic hierarchy for
metalanguage development;
accessibility (VO) means
reliance on functions
- **Platform agnostic UI:**
scalable (responsive*),
stable, and simple
- **“Identity-free” collaborative
spaces means NO:**
sign-ups, personal information,
required networks



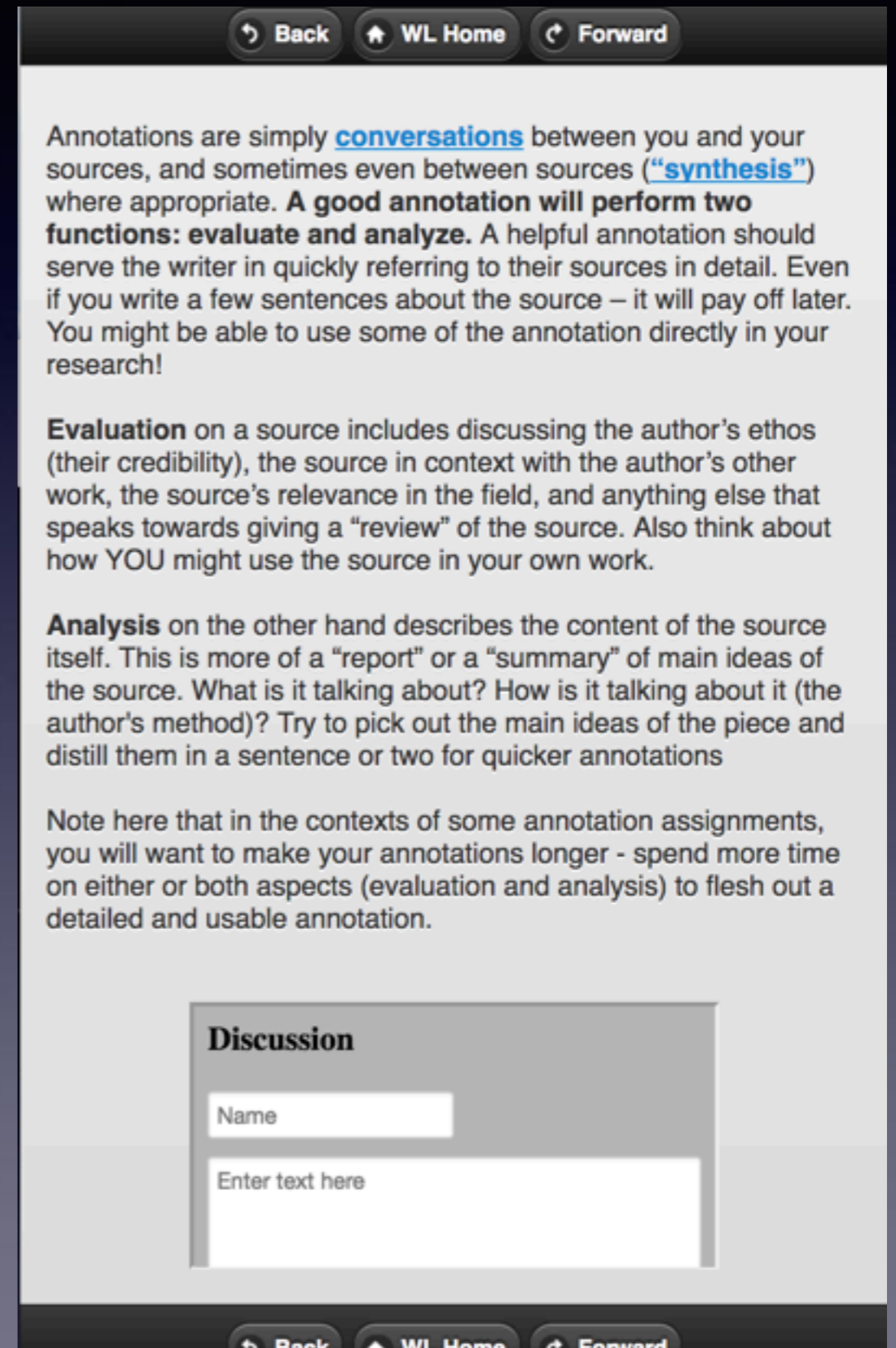
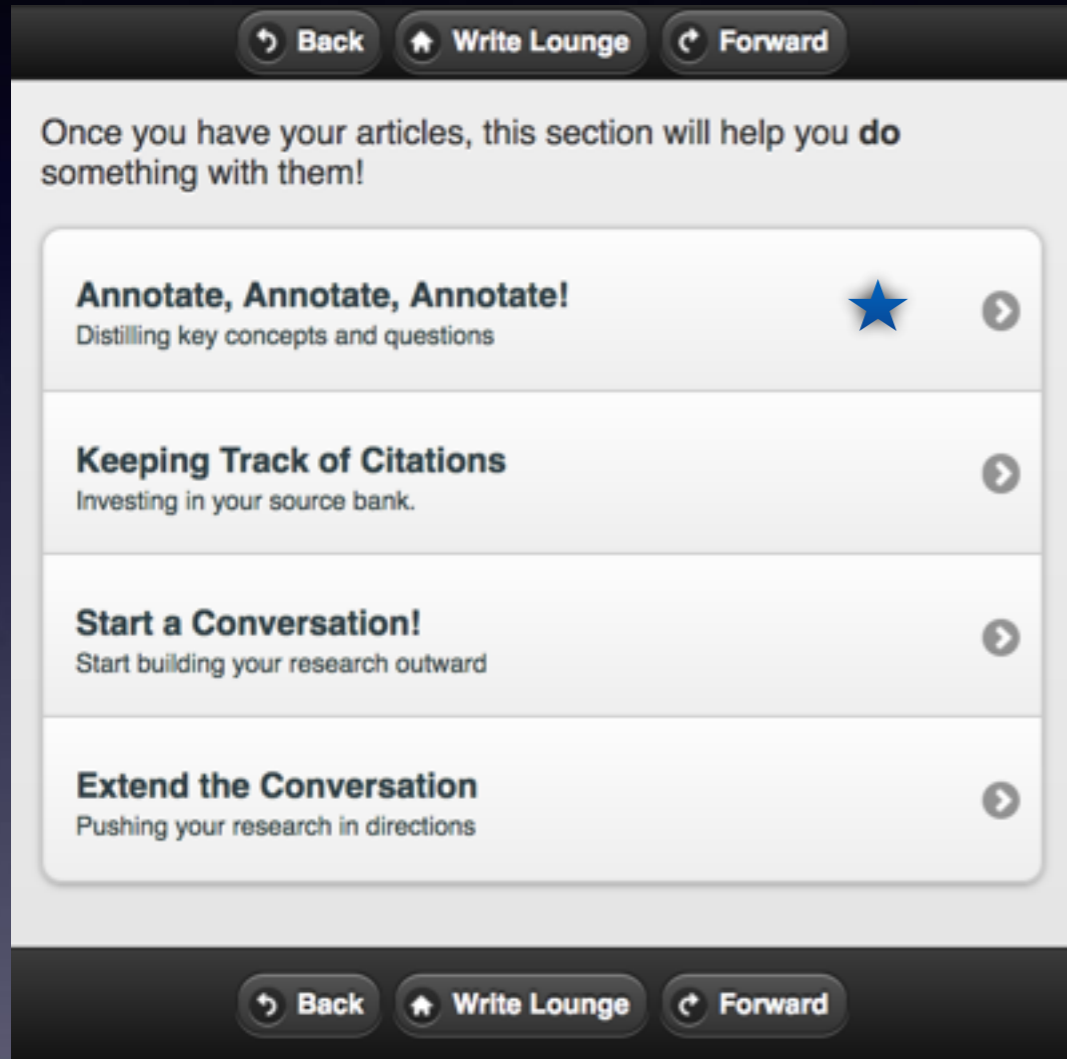
UI Workflow Example

MWA version found at robertcalton.com (research)



UI Workflow Example

MWA version found at robertcalton.com (research)



Democratic Elements of an ELL-Focused Peer Review Mobile [Web] App

- No geographical boundaries
- No device type boundaries
- App can be used by students from anywhere in the world and across time zones

Example: Students who have established a network in an English language learning classroom in the U.S. and go back to their home countries can continue to give each other feedback and improve their writing, and do so regardless if they have an Android or iOS device.

Democratic Elements of an ELL-Focused Peer Review Mobile [Web] App

- Move the learning experience from teacher-centered to **student-centered**
- Foster student agency and independence
- Promotes a mindset not restricted to the classroom (assignment, grade) —> Students collaborate in real world contexts for interpersonal goals.

Democratic Elements of an ELL-Focused Peer Review Mobile [Web] App

- Less inhibition to give critical feedback (1)
- Lowers writer's apprehension and creates a mindset focused on free writing; writers and reviewers can be anonymous (2)

Example 1: Many ELLs are unfamiliar with the concept of peer reviews in their home cultures. They are reluctant to criticize their friends.

Example 2: Many ELLs are not used to being in mixed gender classrooms. They feel uncomfortable working face-to-face with the opposite sex.

Needs Analysis Study



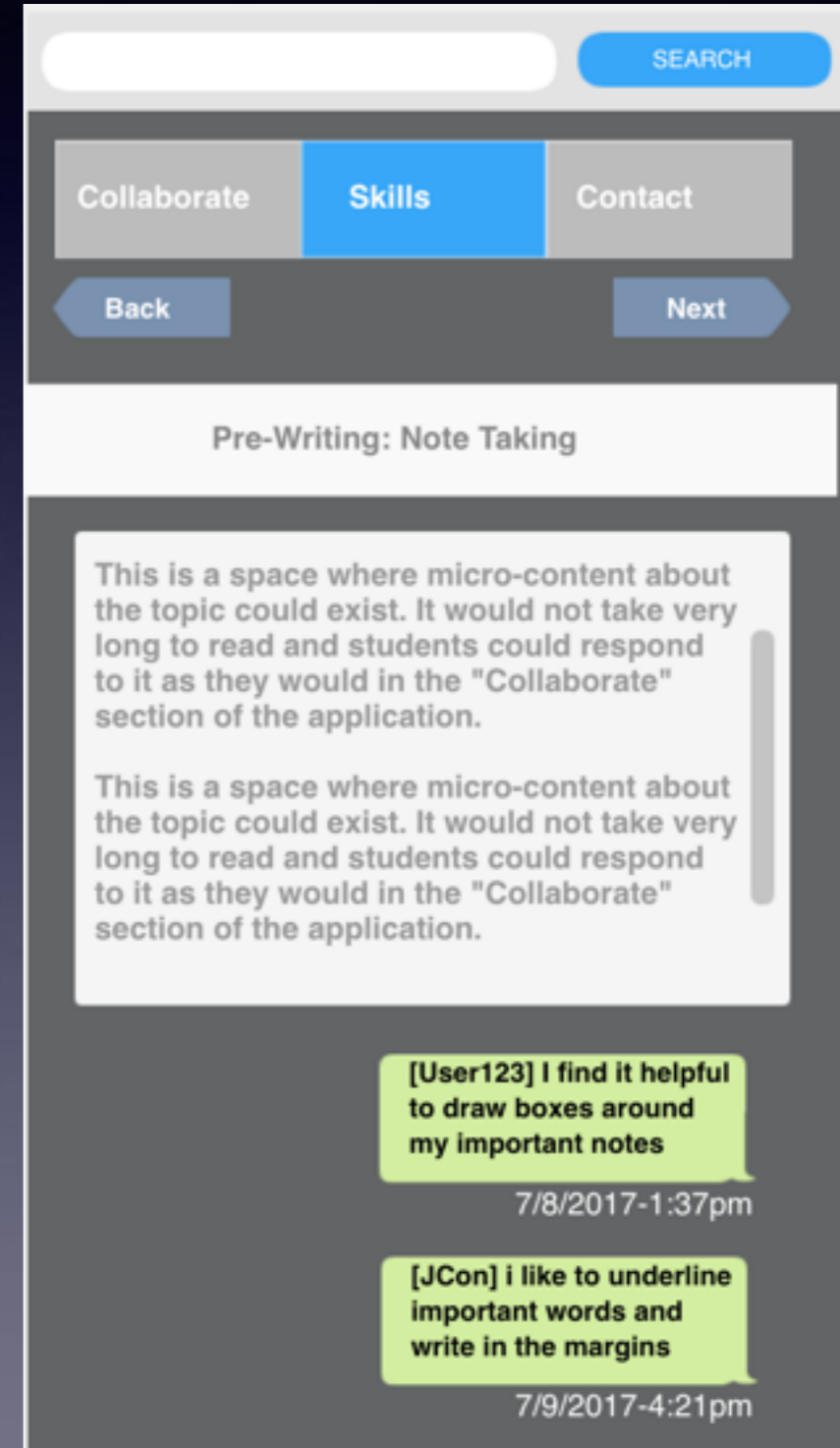
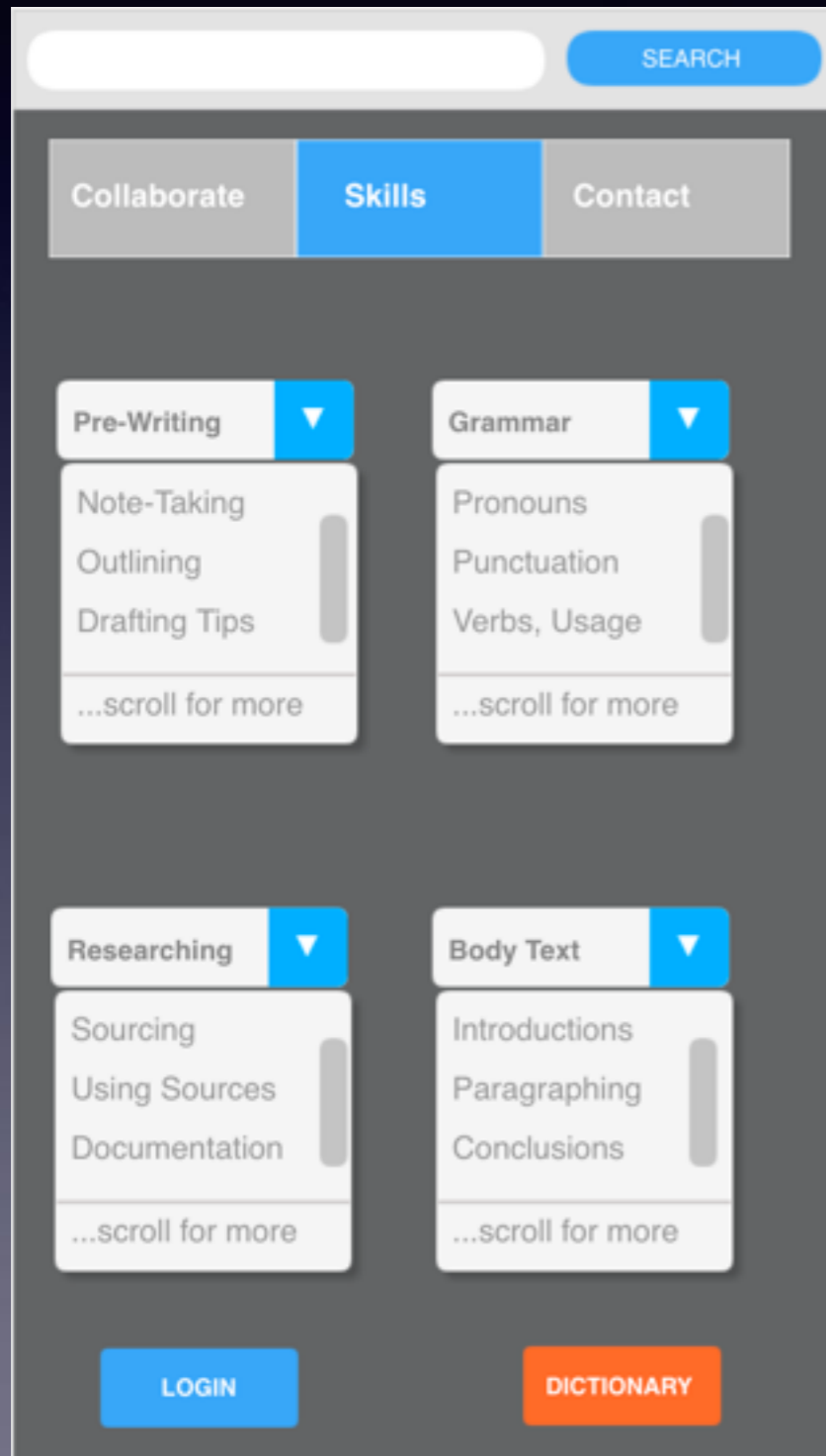
Research Questions:

1. What functions would English language teachers like to see implemented in a mobile peer review tool that **are already considered best practice for classroom peer review?**
2. What design features are ELLs more **inclined to find helpful and to use** in a mobile peer review tool?

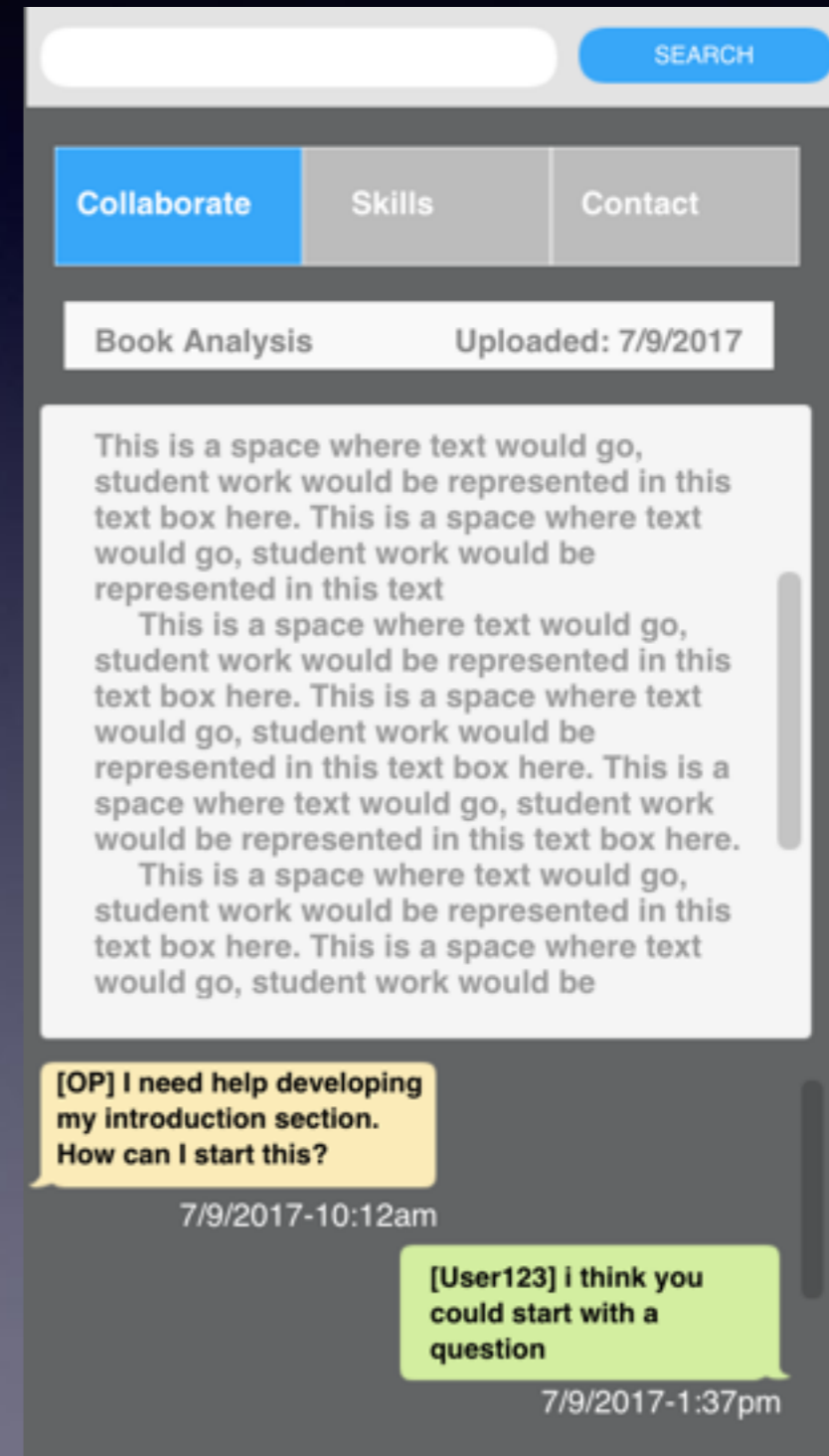
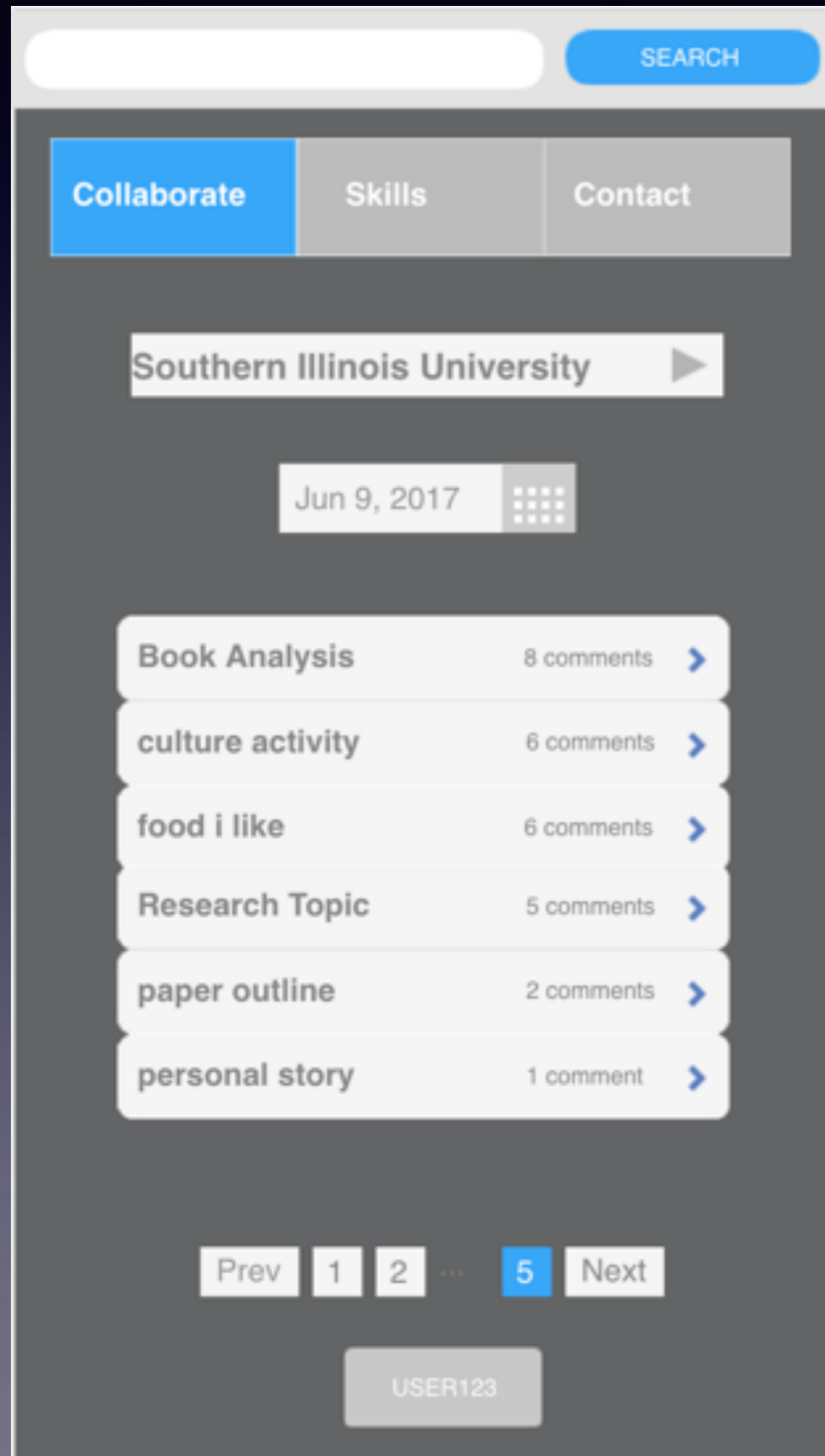
Benefits of a Needs Analysis Prior to Launching Mobile [Web] App

- Finding out what design and feature elements teachers and students find useful and would actually use
- Likely to have a higher usage rate, a lower bounce rate, and less user attrition when the app is released
- Minimized risk of having to re-design app shortly after release and then launch subsequent version(s) based on feedback

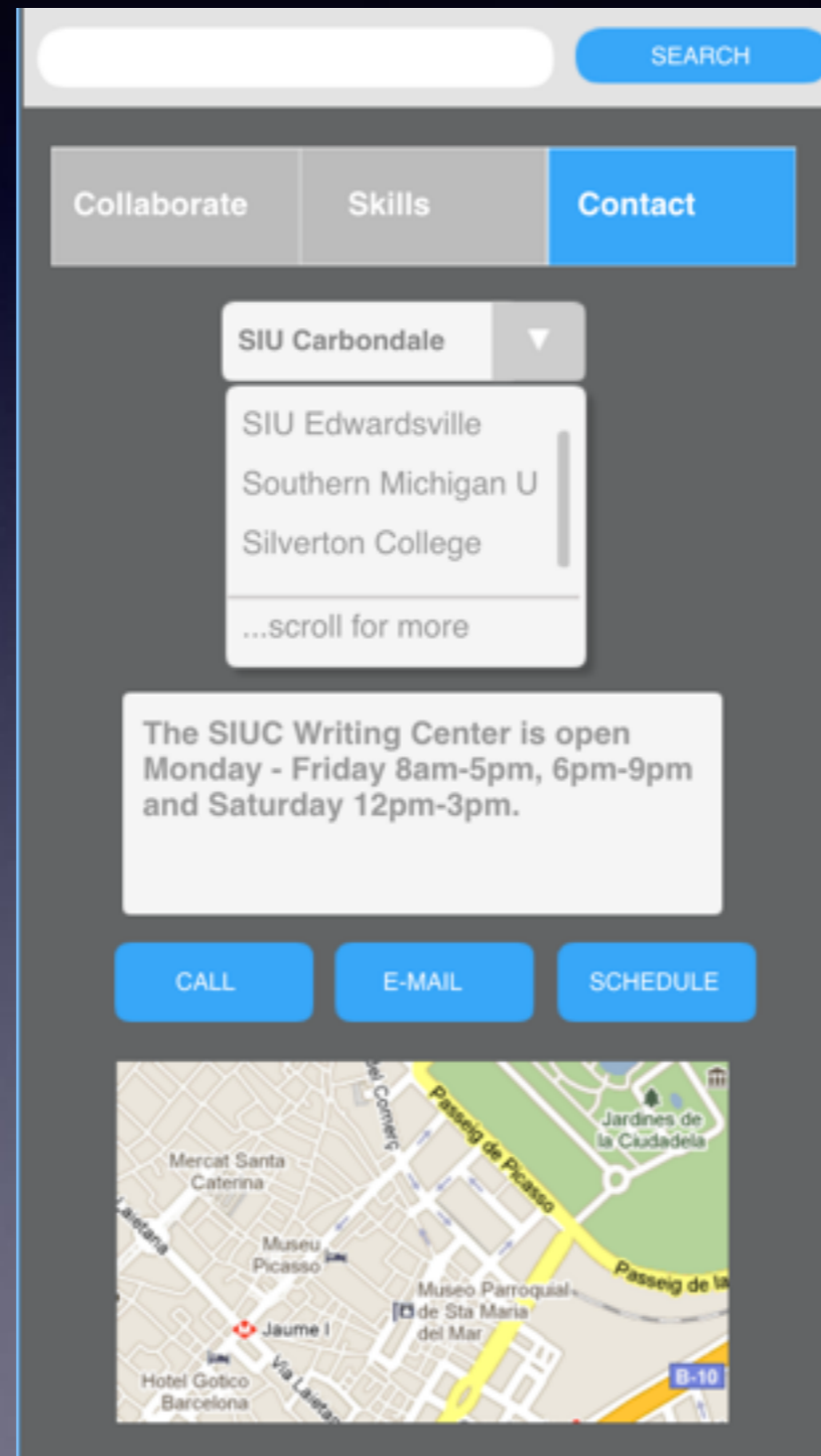
What might such an ELL Peer Review Mobile [Web] App look like? **Skills** section



What might such an ELL Peer Review Mobile [Web] App look like? **Collaborate** section



What might such an ELL Peer Review Mobile [Web] App look like? **Contact** section



Mary Louise Pratt's Idea of a “Linguistics of Contact”

“Imagine, then, a linguistics that **decentered community**, that placed at its centre the operation of language **across lines of social differentiation**, a linguistics that focused on modes and zones of contact between dominant and dominated groups, between persons of different and multiple identities, speakers of different languages, that focused on how such **speakers constitute each other** relationally and in difference, how they enact differences in language. Let us call this enterprise a *linguistics of contact...*”

Pratt, Mary Louise. “Linguistic Utopias.’ Found in: Fabb, Nigel, et al. The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between language and literature. Manchester University Press. 1987.