

In the past decade, the professional preparation of graduate students has received increasing attention. In institutions of varying sizes, missions, and reputations, we are beginning to find training programs for Teaching Assistants (TAs) both campus-wide and within departments (Lambert and Tice 5-6). When compared to other disciplines at the post-secondary level, faculty in the humanities lead the way in the professional development of their TAs. According to a study by Nancy Chism, TAs in departments of English receive more teacher training, support, and supervision than graduate students in any of the other disciplines (319). In addition to pre-semester workshops, “most universities nationally require, or strongly recommend, that new TAs take a pedagogy seminar while they are teaching their first course” (Lambert and Tice 79). Here too, composition specialists lead the way, for, as James Slevin has noted, we understand that “faculty development begins in graduate school” (16). This understanding has manifested itself in a variety of studies, ranging from Lunsford, Moglen, and Slevin’s (1989) *The Future of Doctoral Studies in English* and Ed White’s (1989) *Developing Successful College Writing Programs*, through Wendy Bishop’s

*The Next
Generation of
WPAs:
A Study of
Graduate
Students in
Composition/
Rhetoric*

Sally Barr Ebest

(1990) *Something Old, Something New*, and Lambert and Tice's (1993) *Preparing Graduate Students to Teach*, to Robert Scholes' (1998) *The Rise and Fall of English*, all of which explore what is needed to better prepare those students who will comprise the next generation of professors.¹

But what exactly does "faculty development" mean for graduate students in composition/rhetoric? Miller et al. propose that we provide mentors, increase funding, and develop a course or position for a "professional resource coordinator" who would offer workshops on topics such as job market information, conference proposals, or post-degree career options (403). In response to Miller et al., Moneyhun points out that graduate students also need to know how to plan budgets, write grants, and develop curricula, all of which require political savvy (93). Both suggestions are valid, for previous studies have found that when our composition/rhetoric graduate students enter the job market, they can expect to spend at least part of their careers as Writing Program Administrators (Reagan). In this capacity, they will be expected to handle any and all writing problems (Janangelo), and they will have to do so during the 40% course release time they are allotted, even though the job encompasses 60% of their workload (Barr-Ebest 55-57). Of course, they will be required to teach, but to earn tenure and promotion, they will also have to research and publish. Does "faculty development" incorporate all of these elements into the composition/rhetoric graduate curriculum? If not, what is the primary focus of graduate preparation in the discipline? What courses are regularly taught, and how are they preparing our graduate students for a career within the academy?

To answer these questions, I designed an eighty-question survey that elicited responses about demographics; graduate student preparation in teaching, research skills, and writing program administration; and suggestions for pedagogical and programmatic change.² Funded by a WPA Research Grant, I mailed the questionnaire in the spring of 1996 to the 600 members of the Council of Writing Program Administrators. Within weeks, I received 137 replies, a response rate of almost 23%. According to statisticians, responses to mail surveys (as opposed to phone surveys) are notoriously low; to receive a response rate of more than 40% to a mail survey

is considered average, whereas anything above that is viewed as an anomaly. When the response rate falls below 40%, other factors, such as demographic representation, lend validity to the findings. Such was the case in this survey. One-third of the respondents were male WPAs and two-thirds were female WPAs, a figure representative of the current state of the profession in which females represent the majority of WPAs (Johnson). Almost 42% of the respondents were from four-year comprehensive (MA-granting) institutions and 58.2% were from four-year doctoral-granting universities. Although comprehensive universities outnumber research and doctoral-granting institutions within the United States (United States 259), because the latter produce the PhDs who in turn represent the majority of WPAs, their preponderance in this study seems appropriate. Altogether, the respondents' institutions represented every geographical area in the United States and ranged in size from 2000 to over 20,000 FTE. Given these correlations, the findings reported here seem representative of WPAs across the nation.

From these responses, it appears that graduate students in composition/rhetoric are being well-prepared to teach. However, preparation for research and publication seems considerably less structured, while training in the skills and duties required of a WPA is, in most institutions, a matter of chance. In this essay, I will describe the education and training our students are receiving in each of these three areas. This discussion will be followed by an analysis of graduate education in composition/rhetoric; it will close with a summary of the respondents' suggestions for change and my own recommendations based on the results of this study.

Teaching

Whether graduate students are majoring or minoring in composition/rhetoric, or merely fulfilling the requirements of a teaching assistantship, they are being prepared to teach. Of the nine areas listed on the survey as means of preparation for teaching, four received response rates of 50% or higher: 77.4% of the WPAs observe their TAs' teaching, 61.3% provide students with a mentor, and 57.5% hold summer workshops. Moreover, 33% prepare new TAs by having them take two semesters of pedagogy courses, 35.8% tutor in the Writing Lab, and 47.2% observe

others' classes. Among these means of preparation, more than half of the respondents require that TAs have their teaching observed, take the summer workshop and a first semester pedagogy course, and work with a mentor.

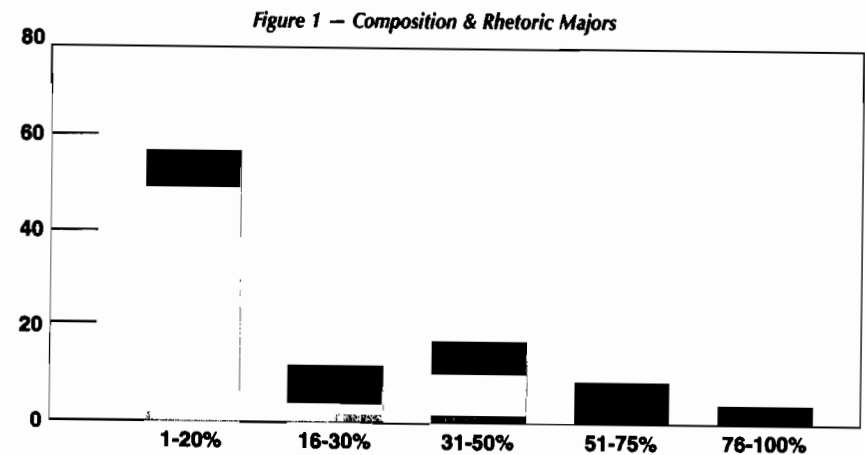
In this regard, it appears that the WPAs are leading the way. When no training is required, only 37.5% of all graduate students choose to take it; among doctoral students, only 6.4% do so. This decision is unfortunate, considering that fewer than 5% of all TAs have prior teaching experience, even though 55% of the time, they must begin teaching in their first semester of graduate school. But again, WPAs and their colleagues in the English department appear to recognize the need for an adequate period of training and acclimation, for surprisingly, 34% of the respondents report that their students do not begin to teach until their second year of graduate school.

When they do begin, almost 90% of new TAs teach first-year composition. Approximately one-quarter work from a departmental syllabus and almost three-quarters use texts selected by a departmental committee. For the 59.2% allowed to design their own syllabi, almost all of them work from models provided by their WPAs. Although first-year composition is the course most often taught by TAs, after their first year, 59.6% are allowed to teach second semester composition courses and 53.8% teach introductory literature courses, while 44.2% may teach basic writing, 42.3% teach advanced composition, 40.4% teach business and technical writing, and 25% have the opportunity to teach writing in computer classrooms. On the average, 41.1% of graduate students in English teach three to four different courses during their graduate careers.

Who gets to teach these courses depends on both experience and personal preference: more than 70% of the time, TAs are chosen on the basis of their experience, their training, or their written requests. After teaching first-year composition, more than half of the TAs design their own syllabi; however, 97.2% of the syllabi are based on models chosen by the departments, thus ensuring a degree of quality control. Half the time, graduate students are given a summer to prepare; one-fourth of the time, they are given a semester's notice. But in 25% of the cases, students have only a semester break in which to prepare. The respondents' opinions were divided as to the fairness of the amount of advance notice: 49.5% believe

the preparation time is similar to that given experienced faculty, while 51.5% feel that graduate students receive "much less time." Timing also may be a factor in determining the types and amount of training TAs receive prior to teaching a new course. Slightly more than 28% of the respondents report giving no training to TAs after they teach first-year composition. However, the other two-thirds provide a variety of follow-up supervision: 29.1% say their TAs work first with a mentor or faculty member, 37.2% offer in-service or mini-courses specific to the subject, and 50% of the WPAs supervise their TAs during the first semester of teaching a new course. This degree of supervision suggests that composition/rhetoric graduate programs remain accountable for preparing their students to teach the basic undergraduate writing courses.

In addition to the practical experience available to all TAs, graduate students in composition/rhetoric also learn about teaching through their coursework. In 1996, 55.3% of the universities represented in this study offered a major or specialization in composition/rhetoric, while 24.8% offered a minor. Among those institutions offering neither a major nor a minor, 35.6% reported requests for one. As Figure 1 illustrates, composition majors and minors represent sizable percentages within their departments.



Doctoral students majoring in composition/rhetoric take an average of sixteen to eighteen hours in the field, while minors take nine to twelve.

At the MA level, majors take an average of twelve to fifteen hours; minors take nine to twelve. As Figure 2 illustrates, the graduate composition/rhetoric curriculum offers a variety of courses, with composition theory and pedagogy the most prevalent.

Figure 2 — Graduate Composition/Rhetoric Curriculum

Types of courses	Availability
Composition Theory	84.3%
Teaching College Composition	78.4
Rhetorical Theory	65.7
History of Rhetoric	61.8
Linguistics	56.9
Composition Research	52.9
History of the Language	44.1
History of Composition	44.1
Teaching Writing on the Computer	27.5
Ethnography	24.5
Grammar	24.5
Reading-Writing Theory	22.5
Politics of Composition	19.6
National Writing Project	18.6
Intro to Writing Process	18.6
Radical Pedagogy	13.7
Reader Response Theory	10.8
Statistics	7.8

(Respondents checked all courses offered in their curriculum.)

Three-quarters of these courses are offered within the English department, but graduate students specializing in composition/rhetoric may also take coursework in Education, Psychology, or Anthropology. This curriculum is most often designed by the composition/rhetoric faculty, although the WPA and graduate committee also play significant roles. The faculty primarily responsible for teaching these courses are either tenured or tenure-track. Needless to say, the size of the faculty varies with the size of the institution, department, and the writing program; however, only 19% of the respondents indicated satisfaction with the level of staffing. This feeling may help to explain why, despite a variety of teaching experience and apparently broad curricula, the respondents did not rate their students' preparation very highly: one-third said their graduates were "very well prepared" and one-third believed their students were "fairly well prepared," but one-third rated them only "somewhat" or "not very well prepared."

When they evaluate their graduate curriculum, male and female

respondents are in close agreement. Fifty-two percent of the females and fifty-eight percent of the male WPAs believe the primary strength of their program lies in developing good teachers. At first glance, this seems to be good news, a positive response to the calls for higher education to pay closer attention to teaching. But good teaching is seldom sufficient for tenure and promotion. At the doctoral level, 63% of the faculty believe research is the "primary criterion for tenure and promotion, while only 26% [believe] that teaching and research [are] equally weighted" (Barr-Ebest 58). In comprehensive, or MA-granting institutions, the expectations for research are not quite so high: 33% of the WPAs felt that teaching and research were regarded similarly, whereas 58% thought teaching was considered more important (58). Nevertheless, in both situations, the underlying belief is that research continued to be the predominant criterion. As one respondent put it, "On paper, they're equal, but in actuality—research gets you tenure and promotion. There is a large difference between what is said...and the actuality" (58).

Research

A glance at the list of courses in Figure 2 suggests the primary emphasis of most composition/rhetoric curricula. Of the eighteen courses listed, only three deal specifically with research methodology: composition research, ethnography, and statistics. Granted, graduate students could also be introduced to additional methodologies in rhetorical theory, history of rhetoric, linguistics, or the history of composition, where they might be expected to conduct textual or historical analyses for their seminar papers. Nevertheless, 60.4% of the survey respondents believe that pedagogy is the main focus of their graduate programs and 56% say theory, whereas 24.2% claim writing and only 14.3% feel the emphasis is on research. In fact, only 53% of all graduate students in composition/rhetoric take one or two research courses before beginning their dissertations, while almost a third take no coursework at all.

Two courses in composition research might seem more than sufficient for graduate students in composition/rhetoric. By comparison, the methodology of literary research is learned in a single graduate course. Yet,

by the time students in literature arrive in graduate school, they have practiced research throughout most of their undergraduate career as an English major; in virtually every literature course in graduate school they continue to practice and refine their methods.

In contrast, students in composition/rhetoric usually enter the field in graduate school, and when they do, they are suddenly introduced to totally alien methodologies. As Gesa Kirsch points out, research methodology in composition/rhetoric is a hybrid, drawing from "literary studies, history, education, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology" (247). Such a broad range in turn has yielded what Kirsch terms "methodological pluralism" (278). To illustrate this range, Kirsch cites Bereiter and Scardamalia, who have classified six different levels, or methodological approaches to research in composition. I quote the passage in its entirety to illustrate this complexity:

Reflective inquiry (level 1) identifies writing problems and phenomena through "informal observation, introspection, and literature reviews." Level 2 leads to "empirical variable testing"; researchers test assumptions and relationships between various factors involved in writing by using "surveys, correlation analysis, and factorial analysis of variance." Level 3 focuses on "text analysis"; researchers use "error analysis, story grammar analysis, and thematic analysis" to study "what rules the writer could be following." Level 4, "process description," tries to account for "patterns or systems revealed in the writer's thoughts while composing" and draws, among other methods, on "thinking aloud protocols and clinical-experimental interviews." Level 5 calls for "theory-embedded experimentation"; researchers ask questions like "What is the nature of the cognitive system responsible for observations? Which process model is right?" They address these questions by using "experimental procedures tailored to [their] questions." Finally, Level 6 calls for "computer simulation and simulation by intervention"; researchers ask, for example, "What range of

natural variations can this model account for?" (Bereiter and Scardamalia 4, qtd. in Kirsch 249).

It is highly unlikely that any of these research methods would have been taught in undergraduate English courses. Furthermore, as Figure 3 shows, most graduate-level research courses in composition/rhetoric focus primarily on qualitative methodology. Included under this rubric are ethnography, case studies, and classroom/action research. Experimental methodology is addressed in half of the courses, with statistics presumably subsumed within that area. But in both Bereiter and Scardamalia's description, as well as in the respondents' reports, there is no mention of nonempirical research methodologies such as that taught through history of rhetoric or history of composition.

Figure 3 — Subjects Covered in Research Courses

	Overall	PhDs
Qualitative methodology	75.9%	43.6%
Ethnography	66.7	37.2
Classroom/action research	66.1	39.7
Experimental methodology	50.0	28.2
Ethics	35.2	17.9
Statistics	35.2	20.5
Publishing	33.3	19.2
Not Applicable	16.7	6.4

(Respondents checked all applicable methodologies.)

Granted, 61.7% of the time, graduate students in composition/rhetoric are encouraged to present papers at conferences. To a significantly lesser degree, 48.4% of the respondents strongly suggest their students

Figure 4 — Types of Dissertations Written by Composition/Rhetoric Students

Theoretical	95.2%
Historical	91.9
Pedagogical	90.3
Case Study	83.9
Ethnographic	82.3
Experimental	62.9
Action Research	66.1
Other	6.5

(Respondents were asked to check all which applied.)

publish those papers. Moreover, the experience of researching and writing a dissertation in composition or rhetoric should help these students to develop and fine-tune their knowledge of methodology. As Figure 4 shows, graduate students are allowed to use a variety of styles and methodologies.

Lacking the structured environment and supervision of research courses, 97.4% of graduate students in composition/rhetoric rely on informal conferences with faculty, presumably members of their thesis or dissertation committees, and 53.6% have the option of working with a mentor, whereas 43.3% rely on what they learned from their coursework. Other sources for support include graduate colloquia, writing groups, research and study groups. The survey respondents' evaluation of their students' research skills suggest that additional training in research methodology might be beneficial, for only 22% believe their graduates are "very well prepared" to conduct research. Somewhat surprisingly, when asked to rank the importance of research skills, the ability to conduct research ranks higher than the necessity of developing students' writing skills (37.4%) and knowledge about publishing (27.5%), yet only 12.5% view writing as a primary strength of their programs.

Writing Program Administration

Anyone who has served as a WPA has experienced the defamation of administrative skills and opposed the concomitant relegation of what is practically a full-time job to merely "service." This mindset may help to explain why, until recently, structured training and coursework in the duties and responsibilities of writing program administration were not only nonexistent, but also deemed unnecessary by half the survey's respondents. Since this survey was conducted, however, those who recognize this necessity have begun to offer coursework or seminars in administration. In the past two years, courses in writing program administration have begun to be offered at Iowa State, Kansas, Arizona, and other major institutions. In the fall of 1998, Shirley Rose at Purdue offered the first seminar in a multi-course sequence for potential WPAs covering topics such as writing assessment and evaluation, distance education/on-line learning, and teaching English as a second language. Course readings and seminar

discussions addressed ethical implications of defining the responsibilities of writing program administrators; rhetorical strategies for documenting writing program administration; and institutional politics of characterizing writing program administration as "service," "teaching," and/or "research." When coursework is lacking, WPA experience may be gained through administrative assistantships. Over one-third of the WPAs report having TAs serve as assistants whose primary responsibilities are to help conduct TA training and counsel other TAs. In addition to serving as administrative assistants, TAs also have the opportunity to be tutors, mentors, and research assistants. In 74% of the cases, they work as tutors, 58.7% serve as research assistants, and 56.7% will work as assistant WPAs. Receiving an administrative position depends primarily on personal initiative and professional foresight. Since these experiences are not usually a formal part of graduate training, students are selected almost completely on the basis of personally-initiated requests. In other words, if graduate students in composition/rhetoric are unaware that a part of their career will probably include writing program administration (and Miller et al.'s report suggests this is the case), it is unlikely that they will receive any training at all.

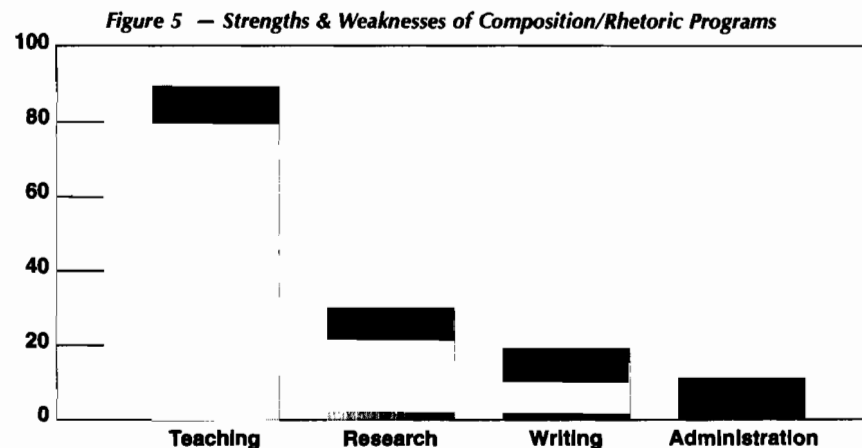
Among the above positions, 74.3% of the respondents consider an administrative assistantship the most essential to the training of future WPAs, with mentoring and tutoring ranked second and third, respectively. The majority also believe that the ability to negotiate with deans and department chairs and to delegate authority are vital skills, followed by the ability to allot time for research and writing. However, when asked which of these skills should be taught, only the abilities to research and publish and to allot time to accomplish them received more than 50% approval. On this subject, male and female WPAs differ to some extent: 61% of the females agree that research and publication should be taught, as opposed to 53% of the males; 60% of the women believe the ability to allot time for research should be taught, as compared to only 50% of the males. WPAs of both genders are almost equally divided when asked if they believe their colleagues would recognize these needs and allow such a course to be offered. Nevertheless, they acknowledge the need for improvement. When asked to rate the preparation of their composition/rhetoric graduates to be

WPAs, the evaluations were rather low and demonstrated little agreement: 17.3% rated their students' preparation as excellent, 23.5% said very good, 16% said above average, 25.9% rated them average, and 18.5% believed their students needed more work.

WPAs need a variety of training because deans and department chairs are not only unaware of the variety within the field of composition, but also ignorant of the fact "that each of these fields has its own scholars and practitioners, its own body of philosophical and theoretical knowledge, its own special interests and concerns, and its own associations, conferences, and journals" (Janangelo 62). Yet, as the above findings indicate, fewer than half of our composition/rhetoric graduates—our future WPAs—will have any administrative experience at all. If we want future WPAs to avoid the burdens of overwork, understaffing, and insufficient funding which so many of us have experienced, we must ensure that our graduate students learn those skills which will help them run a strong and efficient writing program.

Discussion

WPAs appear to be quite cognizant of their program's strengths and weaknesses. When asked to evaluate their primary strengths, 88.6% designated good teachers, while 29.5% voted for good researchers, 17% for good writers, and only 10.2% for producing good future WPAs.



As Figure 5 illustrates, there is a strong discrepancy between teaching

skills and the other elements necessary to professional development. And although recognizing a program's strong points is a good place to start, it means nothing unless steps are taken to improve those areas of lesser strength.

Toward this end, the respondents offered a number of recommendations for change. To prepare their students for their classroom duties, they suggested adding courses in composition theory and pedagogy, history of composition and rhetoric, and rhetorical theory. However, given the preponderance of these courses (illustrated in Figure 3), perhaps a more practical recommendation would be to require that courses in composition theory and pedagogy be taken prior to or concurrent with the graduate students' first semester of teaching. As this study points out, presently, such courses are required in only 56% of the graduate composition/rhetoric programs. What it does not mention is that even these courses may not be adequately preparing our students. According to Catherine Latterell, theory courses are usually too far-removed from the practicalities of the classroom, while pedagogy courses sometimes lack sufficient theoretical grounding to enable novice teachers to understand the history and context of their practice (19). Latterell suggests that the best preparation, and apparently that which is most lacking, is a pedagogy course which contains a combination of theoretical and pedagogical readings.

But even this combination may have problems if theory and pedagogy are not put into practice. (I am reminded, for example, of a pedagogy course attended by one of my former graduate students who found it ironic that her professor *lectured* about the importance of student-centered classrooms.) To teach these strategies to our graduate students, we need what Wendy Bishop terms "participatory seminars." In other words, we need to enact a paradigm shift within the graduate classroom: require response journals, assign multiple papers and multiple drafts, engage the students in peer response and collaborative learning, make the seminar student-centered, and incorporate research projects.

In addition to changing the way we teach, we may need to offer more courses. If we accept the advice of Miller et al. and Moneyhun regarding the need for professional development within the composition/rhetoric

graduate curriculum, then we will need to expand it. Moneyhun's review of the MLA's *Job Information List* found that new PhDs were expected to teach

a variety of undergraduate and graduate classes from areas such as linguistics; discourse theory and analysis; literacy studies and education; literary theory, criticism, and history; cultural studies and theory; multicultural and gender studies; film; creative writing; journalism and communications; professional and technical writing; ESL; English education; history of the English language; desk-top publishing and computer-aided instruction. (92-93)

When we compare this list to the courses offered, for example, at Purdue and Iowa State, only three of the above are included—professional and technical writing, ESL, and computer-aided instruction—which suggests that most programs are not adequately preparing their graduate students for what lies ahead. Obviously, in this era of tight budgets and constricted curricula, not every graduate program can expand to meet these needs. However, as Miller et al. suggest, graduate students could be exposed to relevant syllabi and teaching strategies if their departments developed mentoring programs in which “[s]tudents could observe their mentors as teachers for a term, watching, discussing, and asking questions as those teachers plan courses, prepare classroom activities, and actually teach” (405). If such a mentorship were begun during the first year of the doctoral program, perhaps as a one-credit course per semester, graduate students might have the opportunity to observe ten to fourteen different courses during the five to seven years it takes them to finish their degrees.

In addition to improving their students' teaching, the respondents also recognize the importance of emphasizing research and writing skills. Some of them advocate improving research skills and expanding students' knowledge of research methodologies, while others recommend adding graduate-level writing courses. But here too, we need to consider the content of these courses. Latterell found that in TA practicums, evaluations are based primarily on reflections in a teaching notebook; in teaching methods courses, the most common type of writing appears to be

assignments which mimic those done in first-year composition; and in theory seminars, short response papers and “a single formal research paper” are the bases for evaluation, with “a statement of teaching philosophy” being the most often-assigned paper (17). If we want students to be prepared for an academic career, they need extensive practice and instruction in developing research projects and writing about the results.

Composition research is not only methodologically diverse, but also quite alien to the experience of most graduate students. Accustomed to the literary conventions of an objective voice, prescribed format, and text-based methodologies, they find reflection, the use of subjective evaluation, and the authority and exposure of the personal voice both awkward and uncomfortable, while the freedom and necessity of determining form and drawing conclusions based on their own findings scares them to death. In *The Practice of Theory*, Ruth Ray traces similar problems with her own graduate students during their initial attempts at qualitative research. Ray attributes her students' discomfort to “a final-product orientation toward research. They are the kinds of concerns harbored by students who have been evaluated exclusively on the basis of final papers submitted under the fiction that their research is ‘complete’” (107).

This problem is exacerbated by a number of factors. A composition/rhetoric major requires an average of sixteen to eighteen hours at the doctoral level and twelve to fifteen hours for MA students, which means that half of these graduate students' writing will be for literature courses, where they will improve their already-familiar research skills while neglecting those introduced in their single seminar in composition research. Worse, their experiences in literature seminars may perpetuate their belief that research is merely “another opportunity for faculty to judge and critique them, rather than a means of personal inquiry” (Ray 110). Ruth Ray found that her doctoral students “had not yet considered the possibility that scholarship can be done for oneself, first and foremost, and that scholars can be internally motivated to seek relevant knowledge and personal growth, which leads to keen insight and high-quality research, *thereby* bringing recognition in the field” (110).

Does the present coursework offer sufficient research orientation, or

do future WPAs need a different type of preparation? What types of research are WPAs presently conducting? To answer that question, I surveyed issues of the *WPA Journal* from 1995-97, categorizing the essays using Bereiter and Scardamalia's terms when appropriate, and assigning terms such as "textual analysis" for nonempirical studies. The 1995 Fall/Winter issue contained five articles: one textual analysis, one theory-embedded (empirical) analysis, and three reflective inquiries. In 1996, the Fall/Winter issue included six articles: an analysis of computer applications, four reflective inquiries, and one statistical study. The Fall/Winter 1997 issue ran seven articles, all of which could be classified as reflective inquiry. Although this represents a very small sample, it does suggest the direction which research by WPAs is taking. They are not looking at classrooms, teaching, writing samples, or students per se, but at policy issues such as retrenchment, program development, and educational trends. Moreover, in fourteen out of eighteen studies, they are doing so using some type of reflective inquiry which, according to Bereiter and Scardamalia, entails identifying "writing problems and phenomena through 'informal observation, introspection, and literature reviews'" (qtd. in Kirsch 249). Since most composition/rhetoric majors will at one time or another direct a facet of a writing program, should they be taking coursework which prepares them for such studies, should their preparation be broader, is their present training sufficient—or are such articles possible only after a considerable amount of administrative experience?

In most cases, WPAs will spend only an average of 8.5 years as administrators (Barr-Ebest 54), so it is very likely that they will be conducting research in composition or rhetoric during the remainder of their careers using perhaps a narrower focus or employing different methodologies. To determine the focus of non-administrative research, I examined the December issues of *College Composition and Communication* from 1995-97. In 1995, three out of four articles were reflective inquiries; the fourth concerned rhetorical analysis. In 1996, three out of five were reflective inquiries and the other two were rhetorical analyses. The pattern varied somewhat in 1997, with two reflective inquiries, two textual analyses, and one historical study. In sum, although the context for study was not directly

related to writing program administration, eight out of fourteen of the studies used a format which could be described as reflective inquiry. What does this trend suggest? Are research courses unnecessary, do these essays reflect a lack of training in research methodology, or does publication in this genre evidence the authors' age and experience? I do not have the answer to these questions. I raise them because I think we need to consider how best to prepare our graduate students.

Although research and writing are of primary importance, these skills may not reach fruition unless our future WPAs find a way to balance teaching, research, and administration. To this end, survey respondents recommend developing more administrative internships. Given the fact that only 49.2% of the WPAs report having an assistant, and that only half of these assistants are graduate students, it appears that there is both the need and the opportunity for graduate students to gain valuable administrative experience. When I was in graduate school at Indiana University, my mentor, Marilyn Sternglass, arranged for me to receive one course release time from my teaching assistantship to aid her in the administration of the Basic Writing program. After a semester's experience, I served as interim Director when she went on sabbatical. This experience was invaluable to my understanding of writing program administration and a key element in my marketability. It was also a means of cheap labor for the university. In this era of dwindling resources and tight job market, developing these internships benefits all involved.

Internships need to be supplemented with coursework in writing program administration. Survey respondents suggested a wide-ranging course which might teach budgeting, problem-solving, negotiation, and assertiveness; computer-aided-instruction and writing-across-the-curriculum; integrating teaching, administration, and research; and dealing with departmental and university politics. It is difficult to imagine a course which could accomplish all of this within a single semester. Yet the models offered by institutions such as Kansas, Purdue, and Iowa State can provide useful guidelines. These courses represent the ideal context in which to integrate teaching and administration with research—a combination that would lend credibility and academic integrity to a course which might not

otherwise be deemed acceptable within the department. The key here is to recognize the value and necessity of such coursework, and then to plan how to integrate it within the graduate composition/rhetoric curriculum. If we truly believe that writing program administration merits academic respectability and entails intellectual rigor, it only makes sense to add it to our graduate writing programs.

Expanding the emphasis on research, writing, and writing program administration may also help to address our colleagues' attitudes about composition/rhetoric. Among the repeated recommendations for change was the need to increase departmental support and respect. If our colleagues believe, as Latterell suggests, that composition seminars and practica lack rigor because they require little writing and less research, they will continue to regard our students and those of us who teach them as their intellectual inferiors. Although the Council of Writing Program Administrators has consistently promoted and showcased the intellectual work of WPAs in its conferences and through its participation in panels at AERA, ADE, and MLA, we need to practice what we preach within our own classrooms. If we want our colleagues' respect and support, we must ensure rigor, develop research and writing skills, and instill an attitude of professional pride among our students. In so doing, we may help the next generation of WPAs to avoid the marginalization we have all experienced. What we need to remember is that the key to change—in our programs, in our students, and in our colleagues—lies in what we do best. We are specialists in composition and rhetoric. We have achieved this status not so much because of what we were taught, but because of what we have learned on the job. If we want the next generation of WPAs to avoid the problems and prejudices we have encountered, we need to ensure that they learn what we know *before* they graduate.

Notes

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2. The full survey is available from the author, who will supply it upon request (Ed.).

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