

Writing Program Administration

*Journal of the
Council of Writing Program Administrators*

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Council of Writing Program Administrators

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WPA: Writing Program Administration publishes articles and essays concerning the organization, administration, practices, and aims of college and university writing programs. Possible topics include the education and support of writing teachers; the intellectual and administrative work of WPAs; the situation of writing programs within both academic institutions and broader contexts; the programmatic implications of current theories, technologies, and research; relationships between WPAs and other administrators and between writing and other academic programs; placement; assessment; and the professional status of WPAs.

The previous list is meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive, but contributions must be appropriate to the interests and concerns of those who administer writing programs. The editors welcome empirical research (quantitative as well as qualitative), historical research, and theoretical, essayistic, or reflective pieces.

The length of submissions should be approximately 2000 to 5000 words, although the journal occasionally will publish shorter or longer pieces when the subject matter warrants. Articles should be suitably documented using the current MLA Style Manual. For citations of Internet resources, use the *Columbia Guide to Online Style*. Please submit three copies of manuscripts, with the author identified only on a separate cover letter. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like a copy returned. Submissions are anonymously reviewed by the Editorial Board. The editors aspire to respond within three months after the receipt of the submission.

Authors whose works are accepted for publication will be asked to submit final versions in both print and electronic form, following a style sheet that will be provided. Articles should be saved on 3.5 inch disks as rich text format files (files using the extension .rtf) or as MS Word files (using the .doc file extension). Tables should be saved in the program in which they were produced; authors should indicate program type on the disk. Illustrations should be submitted as camera-ready copy. Authors will also be asked to submit a 100-word biography for inclusion in the "Contributors" section of the journal.

Reviews

WPA publishes reviews of books related to writing programs and their administration. Publishers are invited to send appropriate professional books to Marguerite Helmers, who assigns reviews.

Announcements and Advertising

Relevant announcements and calls for papers will be published as space permits. Send them in electronic format to David Blakesley (blakesle@purdue.edu) by October 15 (for the Fall/Winter issue) or March 15 (for the Spring issue). Advertisers should contact David Blakesley for deadlines, publication rates, and specifications.

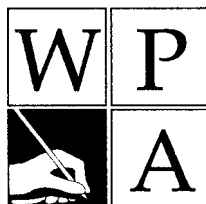
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Letter from the Editors

Learning Throughout the Curriculum

After a tragic fall in national and international events, we are happy to have regained our footing to bring you this issue of WPA. We are titling this issue “Learning Throughout the Curriculum” because of the varied nature of the subjects of these articles, and the many audiences that they address. Each of the pieces in this winter issue of WPA addresses a specific departmental program or component of a program, such as placement, the role of handbooks, and the use of technology. These essays could be framed also as examples of programs that work, for they all specifically treat the work being done in writing programs at individual colleges and universities. The authors address different types of student learning styles, teaching issues, and instructor training. And finally, these essays deal with assumptions about administration and teaching writing that are often invisible to us. Together, they provide WPAs with a look at the broader issues in writing program administration and the minute particulars.

We open the issue with an article by Diane Boehm, Eric Gardner, Deborah Huntley, Andrew Swihart, and Gary M. Lange on the possibilities for a writing center to enact collaboration between disciplines and operate as an instrument of change at the university level. The research that is represented in this article derives from a WPA research grant. The piece stages several voices on writing: that of a chemistry professor, an instructor of psychology, and a teacher of biology. All of these instructors worked in the writing center for a time, learning about the relationship between dialogue and writing as problem solving and a process of thinking. Each of the instructors was nervous at the start of their internship as a tutor, but, as the teachers talked about helping students modify their ideas, they themselves realized they were modifying their own ideas about writing.

Mary E. Hocks also provides insight into the power of collaboration between disciplines, and, in her case, the collaboration between technologies. She addresses interdisciplinary research that positions rhetoric as a “visual, verbal and oral persuasive activity.” She argues that students must be offered assignments that use a diverse array of media, from pencils to PowerPoint, but also that teachers must be offered sustained faculty development opportunities to realize the potential of many media to enhance teaching and learning. A “design-based pedagogy,” she stresses, is an active learning strategy that calls students to address the presentation of material for various audiences.

From these two essays that frame the university as a learning community, we move to Richard C. Raymond's essay on a freestanding writing department. Describing the separation of the rhetoric and writing department from the English department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Raymond expresses the freedom and liberation that department members gained when they could collaboratively plan their program with a similarity of purpose and mission. The members of the new department were careful not to replicate the hierarchies of older university departmental models: all instructors are committed to teach in the lower-level courses and are dedicated to a notion of fluidity in course planning, course scheduling, and pedagogy. The model presented here is inspiring for its record of how a group of people can share ideas and governance. But Raymond also questions the role of the WPA in such a transformation, for, in a model of shared governance, the intellectual work of the WPA seems less overt, less quantifiable, less individual.

Also probing the assumptions behind WPA work is an insightful essay by Jessica Williams and Jacqueline Evans on composition handbooks. Their concern is with the most promising and useful handbook for ESL students, but they don't make specific recommendations of particular books in this piece. Rather, they engage the readers in a discussion of what issues the teacher must consider when selecting a handbook that will assist ESL students. Therefore, they reframe the question of how handbooks can help students to question how handbooks can assist teachers. One of their immediate conclusions is that handbooks can help to "formalize teachers' intuitive knowledge of grammar, especially in areas that are problematic" for ESL writers who lack the language skills to identify and describe complicated grammatical rules.

We hope that the enthusiasm of these writers for their work is contagious. Past president of WPA Charles Schuster has often reminded WPAs that they are experts at creating work for themselves, yet, as he admits, the work we produce is based on our desire to learn and to teach and to make the university a better place. We must always question, investigate, and propose new solutions. In the trying times since September 11, these essays strike the right tone: they promise change while maintaining a commitment to the human values that the university treasures.

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