

Writing Program Administration

*Journal of the
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. Please double-check all citations. 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

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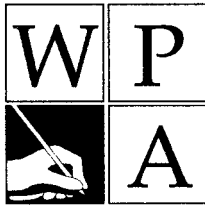
ADDRESSES

Address articles and editorial correspondence to Dennis Lynch, Co-Editor, *WPA*, Humanities, Michigan Technological University, 1400 Townsend Drive, Houghton, MI 49931. E-mail: dalynch@mtu.edu.

Address book reviews to Marguerite Helmers, Co-Editor, *WPA*, Department of English, 800 Algoma Blvd., University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI 54901. E-mail: helmers@uwosh.edu.

Address advertising and production questions to David Blakesley, Production Editor, *WPA*, Department of English, Purdue University, 500 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47907. E-mail: blakesle@purdue.edu. Fax: (765) 494-3780.





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Extending an invitation to join the
Council of
Writing Program Administrators

The Council of Writing Program Administrators offers a national network of scholarship and support for leaders of college and university writing programs.

Membership benefits include the following:

- A subscription to *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, a semi-annual refereed journal
- Invitations to the annual WPA Summer Workshops and Conferences
- Invitations to submit papers for sessions that WPA sponsors at MLA and CCCC
- Participation in the WPA Research Grant Program, which distributes several awards, ranging from \$1000 to \$2000
- Invitations to the annual WPA breakfast at CCCC and the annual WPA party at MLA
- Information about the WPA Consultant-Evaluator program

Annual Dues

Members: \$30

Graduate Students: \$10

Libraries: \$40

To Join

Send your name, address, institutional affiliation, and dues to

Jennie Dautermann, WPA Secretary
Department of English
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056

Letter from the Editors

Often WPAs feel as though they are pulled from more sides than they knew they had by the issues facing them and demanding informed attention. The articles in this issue reaffirm such feelings: they offer advice and plans for dealing with program assessment, GTA resistance, dual-credit initiatives, the WPA mind-set, and, well, the experience of having had Ted Kaczinsky in a composition class.

In “Defining Assessment as Research: Moving from Obligations to Opportunities,” Peggy O’Neill, Ellen Schendel, and Brian Huot make a strong case for treating writing assessment as “a central concern of WPA work” for the simple reason that “assessment has material effects for us as well as our students.” Their point is that WPAs tend to think of assessment—when they do think of it—as an administrative task rather than as a “knowledge constructing” activity, which to their minds is more than just a missed opportunity, it is a potentially dangerous choice. The scope of their argument is deceptive, as it reaches beyond the technical aspects of assessment into the identity of the WPA.

In “When Graduate Students Resist,” we turn to yet another broad area of concern for some WPAs, how best to prepare graduate students for the profession. Based on ten years of “action research,” Sally Barr Ebest tests two theories about graduate student resistance to new pedagogical approaches and draws conclusions that should be useful to WPAs and graduate faculty with similar mentoring responsibilities. Theoretically grounded in recent educational theory, Ebest uses the distinction between rhetorical, pedagogical, and epistemological forms of resistance to classify specific behaviors she observed in her graduate students and to organize her approaches to dealing with such resistances.

In a move similar to the one made by O’Neil, Schendel, and Huot, Nancy Blattner and Jan Frick ask us to overcome our doubts about dual-credit composition courses and instead, when faced with such initiatives, take critical ownership of them. The authors know the arguments against such courses, but they also know—all too well—the economic and political forces driving such trends, and for those WPAs in states with similar initiatives on the table, Frick and Blattner offer a good administrative model. “Seizing the Initiative: The Missouri Model for Dual-Credit Composition Courses” provides both a local view and a state-wide view of the issue, explaining a program that joins the University of Missouri – Kansas City with West Platte High School in Weston, MO, and describing the genesis of a set of state-wide guidelines for the delivery of dual-credit composition courses.

In “Are We Having Fun Yet? Necessity, Creativity, and Writing Program Administration,” Lynn Z. Bloom asks the question, “Are We Having Fun Yet?” Based on selected email from colleagues and her reading of recent edited collections about WPA work, she concludes that, yes, we are having fun, albeit with a few qualifications. Not intended to be an answer to Laura Micciche’s discussion of WPA “disappointment” in the March 2002 issue of *College English*, Bloom’s essay weaves a number of familiar voices into an account of the joys and satisfactions that can accompany being a WPA.

“Dangerous Reading: The Unabomber as College Freshman” is, in the author’s words, more of “a short journalistic piece.” Edward M. White reveals that he taught first-year composition to Ted Kaczinsky at Harvard in 1958, and though, after 44 years, White understandably can’t remember much about the experience, he nevertheless feels compelled to ponder what role he may have played in Kaczinsky’s intellectual development and the extent of his responsibility as a teacher of composition.

We hope you find the range of WPA scholarship represented in this issue itself as engaging and provocative as the individual essays.

Dennis A. Lynch
Marguerite Helmers
David Blakesley



Defining Assessment as Research: Moving from Obligations to Opportunities

Peggy O'Neill, Ellen Schendel, and Brian Huot

Writing assessment is a large and complex part of the administration of a writing program; however, many writing program administrators (WPAs) are not prepared to work with assessment. This lack of preparedness among WPAs is most saliently illustrated by the number of frantic posts sent to the WPA listserv (WPA-L) requesting help in arguing against an assessment already in place or in working through the complexities of setting up an alternative assessment system. The post below typifies this kind of request:

Can you help settle a difference of opinion between essay placement graders and our tests and measurements people? We currently give a 35-minute essay prompt during pre-freshman placement testing during the spring and summer. There are seven different testing dates and we like to supply seven different prompts to be administered. The essays are administered on Saturday and graded holistically on Sunday. There are anywhere from 1200 to 1800 students taking the essay at any given time.

The tests and measurements folks want to reuse a prompt for two sittings in order to determine reliability. Our graders feel that if they have to grade 3,000 essays on the same prompt they will go nuts, glaze over, and, consequently, that this will affect their reliability. It seems to me that they will lose the ability to discriminate sufficiently well by the time the prompt is repeated, but [the] tests and measurements [people] are adamant that only by repeating the prompt can reliability be assured. They are willing to listen to expert opinion, however.¹

In this example, what the WPA identifies as “a difference of opinion” is really a difference in values and theoretical perspective. He seems not to understand the psychometric concept of reliability and the role it plays in the validation of an assessment. He does not seem to understand the concepts and values of the “tests and measurement” specialists, and yet he finds himself responsible for designing and administering the test. This lack of knowledge makes his job as a WPA more difficult and keeps him from communicating with the testing and measurement specialists on his campus effectively and persuasively about the specific needs of writing assessment. In short, while he may have expertise in writing program administration and writing theory—experience that should be of primary importance in the design and implementation of any writing assessment system—he is shut out from being an integral force in shaping the assessment to the particular context of the program, and he lacks the knowledge and discourse necessary to communicate with the other assessment stakeholders on campus.

Here is a second example of a rather typical WPA-L post in which a new WPA is overwhelmed as her department works to design a new placement test:

Here I am—new member and already asking for a favor. Several members of the English department feel we have a window of opportunity (this fall) to institute an essay placement exam. We have been using ASSET. I have relatively little time to put together a proposal for administration and am woefully lacking in assessment expertise. Any ideas would be most gratefully received.

In this second example, the WPA is, in her own words, “woefully lacking in assessment expertise,” and yet responsible for proposing a new placement test. Convincing upper-level administrators and one’s own colleagues that a new assessment system will be better can be difficult. Actually developing a system that is better than the one in place takes time, careful planning, and expertise; convincing others that the system works also takes time, and, as the post makes clear, there is no time to properly assess the assessment situation in order to identify alternatives.

This third example addresses the political aspects of assessment that often influence—or dominate—college writing assessment and underscores the fact that WPAs are expected to participate in the design of large-scale writing assessments whether they have the expertise or not:

My university started a large-scale portfolio assessment project without much of a plan of how they were going to assess the data. Now that the project has been under-

way for four years and the archives are bulging, the assessment committee wants to begin scoring, and they're looking around (with increasing anxiety) for help. They want to examine student outcomes, more specifically, to determine whether or not students become better writers over the course of their undergraduate experience. [. . .] I have no training in large scale assessment, and I'd appreciate any thoughts you have.

In all of these posts, writing assessment is positioned as an administrative activity, not a knowledge-constructing one. In some ways, this positioning is understandable because writing assessment is often seen as an unpleasant task—irrelevant at best and punitive at worst—that is imposed on us and controlled by someone else—a task that WPAs often have to approach without much preparation or expertise. Add to the mix the fact that assessment can cost quite a bit in terms of time, money, and human resources, yet seemingly produces few benefits to individuals within a writing program and can have many detrimental effects (Moss 10-11).

As illustrated by these WPA-L posts and reinforced by our experiences at conferences, discussions about assessment tend to emphasize practice and pragmatics over theory and assumptions, which some assessment scholars lament. It is not uncommon for a panicked message like this one to appear on WPA-L:

I'd like information ASAP (we're meeting next Monday on this!) on the following: 1) If you have prompts that you've used successfully for timed essays that would work for a large scale portfolio assessment, I'd love to see them; 2) If your department has developed useful criteria for such prompts, I'd love to see them; 3) If you know of a good article that addresses this issue, send me the citation!

Other subscribers to WPA-L usually rush to the rescue, citing relevant articles, offering to fax documents related to the assessment procedures at their own universities, referring readers to an appropriate website, directing the person to the WPA-L archives, or offering this-is-what-we-do-here suggestions to help the colleague who is in "trouble." The implication of this sort of response is that WPAs who now find themselves in charge of writing assessment need only to follow the models of assessments in other contexts and read an article or two to know enough about assessment to establish an effective system for the institution.

Focusing solely on writing assessment's technical aspects (e.g., designing a prompt) and the logistics of processing data (e.g., organizing a scoring session) often reinforces a simplistic approach to writing

assessment. While the composition community's generosity in helping each other is laudable, what is often lacking in these exchanges is an acknowledgment that there is more to assessment than knowing how to gather and score student writing. And even when that is acknowledged, the immediate demands and short time frame usually require that the WPA in need of help jump into the assessment process without time for careful planning and research. Although we may help each other satisfy our immediate needs in responding to calls for help, we are also promoting an uncomplicated, practical approach to the assessment of writing that cannot only belie the complexity of assessment but also make ourselves, our programs, and our field vulnerable to the whims of administrators and politicians because issues of power, values, and knowledge-making converge on assessment sites, with very real consequences to all stakeholders.

While the work of WPAs certainly encompasses more than writing assessment tasks, assessment needs to be considered a central concern of WPA work because the effects of writing assessments on students, teachers, and curriculum are far-reaching: assessments define good and bad writing; they promote certain pedagogies and discourage others; they have real-world consequences for students and teachers; they function to endorse certain positions or sites with authority; and they define our values—whether accurately or not—to others. Writing assessment does have many administrative aspects to it, but there are other aspects as well. It has the potential to contribute even more toward establishing the discipline of composition and changing the realities of teachers and students. Writing specialists need to be knowledgeable about assessment theory and practice whether or not they are involved in administration because assessment has material effects for us as well as our students; however, WPAs must have this knowledge to participate in assessment's intellectual work and to ensure the validity of writing assessments.

Recasting the role assessment plays in writing programs and in composition studies requires that WPAs revise their own approaches to assessment theory and practice. Richard Haswell, Michael Williamson, and William L. Smith are among those who have done scholarly work in assessment that acknowledges its complexity and potential, but these scholars are not a representative sample of those who are responsible for creating, implementing, or overseeing most college-level writing assessments (Murphy et al; Huot "Survey"); the dominant view of writing assessment among WPAs seems to be that it is only an administrative obligation.

We argue here that by conceptualizing writing assessment as research, WPAs will be able to engage in intellectual work that makes knowledge about writing, writers, programs, and pedagogy. Further-

more, by acknowledging that writing assessment is a form of social action because it results in real-world consequences for people and programs, we can promote our values and theories while limiting the costs of assessment to ourselves, our students, and our programs.

ASSESSMENT AS RESEARCH: ASKING QUESTIONS, FINDING ANSWERS

In writing assessment—as with other areas of assessment—the emphasis has been on the technical aspects, such as calculating interrater reliability, designing prompts, organizing norming sessions, and running scoring sessions. This focus on the technologies of writing assessment has affected the way it has been used and studied. For example, until quite recently the overwhelming objective in writing assessment was to produce scores that approximated a certain level of interrater reliability—that is, consistency of scores on the same essays from independent raters. Interrater reliability is a problem that has plagued—and preoccupied—writing assessment since the 1910s (Starch and Elliott; Cherry and Meyer). Over several decades, procedures such as the construction of a scoring guide or rubric and the training of raters on that rubric became common practice, and it is through these procedures that we have been able to produce consistent scores. These procedures—what Brian Huot calls the technology of writing assessment (“Toward”) and what Edward M. White calls “the machinery of holistic scoring” (96)—have been the main concern in writing assessment, and their predominance leads to the fallacious but widespread conclusion: If we follow these procedures—or recipes—and produce enough consistency in scoring, then we have done a good job and our assessment is valid. Validity, however, is a much more complicated and contentious concept that is not the property of a particular test. Arguing for validity may include addressing reliability issues, but reliability is not the only issue involved. In fact, Pamela Moss argues that in writing assessment, we can have validity without reliability. Many WPAs, however, don’t demonstrate a nuanced understanding of validity and its central role in assessment and therefore overemphasize or misconstrue issues of reliability.

By viewing writing assessment as research, as a way to ask and answer questions about our students, their writing, our teaching, our curricula, and the other factors that constitute effective writing instruction, we can move beyond reliability and toward constructing a validity argument. This different orientation also provides a way to reimagine writing assessment. Instead of it being something imposed upon us, something we have to do or have done to us, assessment becomes a way we can research answers to legitimate questions about how instructors, students, administrators, and programs are doing. In this approach, emphasis on

technical concerns such as reliability is reduced, although that does not mean that we should ignore the importance of scoring consistently. In fact, we might start to rethink what is meant by consistency, as William L. Smith did (“Assessing” 187-97). From over a decade of research on placement at the University of Pittsburgh, Smith discovered that raters who teach similar classes and have similar experiences often agree at a greater rate than those only trained on a holistic scoring rubric (“Assessing” 189-92; “Importance”). Based on his findings, Smith abandoned holistic scoring and developed alternative assessment methods that relied on the raters’ teaching expertise. His research points to an understanding of consistency that is based in a teaching community’s consensus of what counts as successful writing rather than individual readers’ ability to come to agreement via a rubric. While Smith’s work gave rise to new assessment methods, the real significance of his research is that it highlights the need to revise our approach to assessment. Instead of focusing on how to maintain the kind of standardization necessary for training raters to agree (a focus on the technology of writing assessment), we should ask other questions about reliability (questions focused on assessment as inquiry and ethical practice): How can we be fair to students? How can we produce consistent decisions that are fair? What kind of reading environment helps to produce consistently fair scores?

Smith’s research grew out of his understanding of assessment practices and technologies as well as his commitment to posing questions and looking for answers (“Assessing”; “Importance” 314-16). By approaching assessment as research—as an opportunity to learn more about programs, pedagogy, students, and writing by asking questions—we can make valuable contributions to the field and contribute to the formation of composition as an academic discipline. The assessment research that Smith conducted involved articulating the purposes and content of each of the different courses the program offered; designing and testing prompts to determine if they appropriately sorted students for the courses; examining how variables such as location, proctoring, and time affected student performance; examining methods of reading and scoring of essays; determining factors that influenced readers such as the most recent course taught; and tracking students through various courses to determine the effectiveness of the courses (“Assessing”; “Importance”). As mentioned above, Smith’s research depended on his nuanced understanding of concepts such as reliability and validity as well as theories about writing, but he also relied on a variety of research methods, including surveys, interviewing, think-aloud protocols, and participant observation. He conducted double-blind studies so that student writing was read and sorted various ways to test how reliable the sorting mechanisms were (“Assessing”). As with other types of research,

much of what Smith learned along the way created knowledge useful not only to him but potentially to the field. He discovered that his readers actually placed students, instead of scoring essays; that is, instead of focusing on the text as an artifact to be assigned a number, the readers used their knowledge of the course and the students in the program to determine which class would best serve the students' needs. This process is very different than merely assigning a number from a rubric to an essay. Smith also concluded that adequacy of placement could only be determined through multiple data sources, such as the number of students moved, student grades, teacher impressions of students' placement, exit exams or post tests (when used in the program), and student satisfaction surveys gathered after the end of semester. All of this information is useful to WPAs not only in planning a placement test but also for program and faculty development.

Because Smith did not just administer the placement test but made the evaluation of it a central and ongoing research concern, he was able to refine the system over time, making valuable contributions to the field's understanding of placement and to the knowledge about assessment and research in general. Smith's work exemplifies the potential in assessment as research. Other composition professionals, such as Richard Haswell, have also approached assessment this way, but many WPAs and writing programs have yet to see the potential in assessment research.

Viewing assessment as inquiry as Smith and Haswell have done also changes the options available in constructing assessments to suit our particular contexts. For example, if we see assessment as research, then it is no longer appropriate to determine the adequacy or validity of a placement program merely by looking at whether or not we have the necessary number of students in developmental courses versus first-year composition or whether the raters have agreed with each other enough. Rather, we need to explore what actual benefits students receive from their placement: Do students who are placed into basic or remedial non-credit-bearing writing courses benefit from this instruction? Do they remain in school? What kinds of grades do they receive when they enter intermediate and advanced courses? These sorts of questions not only refigure assessment as research, they also contribute to the validation of an assessment's results. In this paradigm, validation inquiry is about building an argument using multiple sources of evidence to demonstrate that the results of the assessment improve teaching and learning. Furthermore, data gathering and evaluation are integral parts of the entire writing program, not something calculated at the end of the scoring sessions to justify the placements.

Reconfiguring assessment as research also has the potential to change the power dynamics inherent in assessment. Often, assessment reinforces a hierarchical structure where assessment is done *to us* (teachers, students or programs) by *them* (experts, upper administration or governing boards) contributing to an overall sense of surveillance or dominance. By focusing on assessment as inquiry, these relationships of power can be substantially changed, in several ways:

More people are qualified to do assessment: While most writing programs have no one who is an assessment expert, most do have people with experience and expertise in empirical research.

Multiple methods of assessment are available: No longer does the holistically scored timed essay, a portfolio, or another student-generated product that gets scored become the primary data gathering tool. Multiple methods of data gathering are available depending on the questions asked.

Standardized testing becomes limited: Outside assessments purchased from testing companies have limited value because programs must document how well they can answer questions they wrote that are specific to their program.

Everyone participates in the assessment's design and implementation: Assessment cannot be left in the hands of a few people in a department; it takes an entire community to know what needs to be asked and to provide answers to those questions.

The technological aspects of writing assessment are de-emphasized: Posing questions is the primary task because the questions determine what methods are needed. Technical aspects of an assessment become secondary to the asking and answering of questions a community deems important. Technical issues such as reliability are still included but are not the driving force of the assessment.

Issues of power and authority, while present in any program, are especially significant in writing programs where most courses are taught by contingent labor (i.e., adjuncts, lectures, graduate students). While it is impossible to alleviate these power differences, assessment can help subvert or undermine them. For example, at the University of Louisville, the writing program conducted a self-assessment as part of an accreditation review that included all instructors from tenure-track faculty to adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants.² All instructors created a course portfolio for every class they taught. The portfolios included the syllabus and all course handouts, samples of student work, and a short

introductory reflection about the class. All materials were identified only by the course and section; instructor names were not on any materials. These portfolios were read by a small representative group of instructors who taught the course, whether they were tenure-track faculty, adjuncts, or graduate students. The groups also determined their own process for reading the portfolios within very general guidelines established by the department's composition committee. Each group documented its reading in a report that included a general description of the course, its goals, and the student work. The reading reports identified strengths and weaknesses from the portfolios as a group and also described the method the readers used to accomplish the task. From the individual course reports, the WPA created the overall program assessment document identifying the overall strengths and weaknesses of the program. In this system, all instructors participated by collecting materials, and their voices were included through the course documents and self-reflections; many others were also included in the reading groups (which consisted of three or four instructors, depending on the number of sections of the course offered), although the WPA compiled the reports and synthesized the data. The process extended over almost a full academic year and was messy at times; however, the results not only satisfied the accrediting agency but also provided information useful for the program that led to changes, such as criteria for those teaching business writing.

Ultimately, reimagining assessment as Smith, Haswell and others have done changes the focus of assessment from the *products* of scores and consistency of scoring to the *process* of assessing writing and writing programs. In this approach, stakeholders are forced to confront questions about what needs to be addressed in a program, what information is crucial to improving teaching and learning, and why assessment data matters by using appropriate research methods to respond to the questions and document findings as in any type of research project. Assessment, then, is no longer a machine through which to run our students and their writing, but a fundamental disciplinary activity; it becomes a process for inquiry and reflection, a way of knowing who we are, how we're doing, and where we want to go.

CONSEQUENCES OF ASSESSMENT: PERIL OR PROMISE

Most teachers and WPAs have stories that attest to the ways that assessment drives what we do in our classrooms and how it complicates our purposes and goals for the teaching of writing. Being told by administrators or accrediting agencies that a program must assess writing through psychometric, nonsensitive instruments or scoring guides can put WPAs in an ethical and professional dilemma. Such standard forms of assess-

ment will not measure the success of the program—because they will not treat students as writers—and therefore the results, which may be widely shared with administrators, colleagues in other departments, and even the public, could implicate students and teachers in unfair, even dangerous ways. However, it could be politically risky for the WPA to refuse such an assessment—such a refusal wouldn't even be an option in many circumstances.

But while WPAs may not be able to refuse mandated assessments, they do have an obligation to respond to them appropriately. The problem is that in order for WPAs to establish credibility for their programs, their assessment techniques must be such that they produce convincing, useful results while also treating students, teachers, and the practice of writing with sensitivity and respect. This problem becomes more complex when an administrator or outside agency is demanding accountability of the writing program or data to prove that quality teaching and learning are happening within a program.

Understanding writing assessment as a means of research or inquiry is an effective way to reimagine writing assessment because it puts assessment to work for us, rather than us to work for the sake of assessment. It also forces us to ask different kinds of questions in creating assessments, such as these: What work is the assessment doing to improve teaching and learning? What are the consequences of the assessment for individuals (teachers, students, the WPA) and the program at large? And, importantly, what does the way we assess our programs reveal about what we value about literacy and education?

After all, writing assessment, which is undoubtedly political—ideologically informed and often tied to public policy—is a means of contributing to university-wide or public discourse about what is happening with our composition programs. As such, it is a form of social action—whether or not we acknowledge it as such—because its consequences have far-reaching effects on teachers, students, classrooms, and writing programs. For example, the data generated during a program assessment can have positive or negative consequences for real people, individually and collectively. If the methods of assessing the program are invasive and threatening to students or teachers (for example, a student's graduation status could be affected by his or her participation in the assessment; or an instructor's job security may hang in the balance based on the results of the assessment), it may not support good teaching and learning (Hillocks; Madaus 96-97). Moreover, if the assessment data are gathered in a way that does not accurately reflect what happens in the program (pre and post-testing, for example, in a program in which many instructors use a process approach to writing and portfolio grading), the results could do more than disrupt the teaching and learning

going on in the program; the assessment might also actually give results about student writers and teachers that are inaccurate and damaging, especially if those results become the impetus for sweeping changes. Assessment results could even lead a WPA to fear for his or her job or tenure status.

And the damage to a program doesn't end with what happens to students, teachers, and the WPA(s): the results of an assessment are often discussed across campus, by colleagues in other disciplines, by administrators, and often with accrediting agencies. The failure of a WPA to control the design and direction of an assessment—whether it be a program evaluation, a placement exam, or an exit assessment—could damage his or her credibility and that of the program.

By seeing assessment as an opportunity to research a program, however, much of the fear of assessment and the problematic consequences can be eliminated. In the example cited above from the University of Louisville, the course portfolio assessment design reflected the values of the program: that all teachers—not just the WPA and one or two others—have important contributions to make to the program; that the successes of a course can best be documented by diverse artifacts from the course; that what is actually happening in classrooms can best demonstrate what a program is doing well and point out what might need improvement; and that the conversation about what is particularly successful or problematic about a course must happen not between two or three people, but across a program or department.

On a local level, writing assessment can have a positive impact on teaching and learning if we view it as an opportunity to inquire into our programs and then proactively respond to what we discover. At the school or program level, we can view assessment as an occasion for teachers to discover and share with each other what they value in writing instruction, giving both teachers and curriculum an opportunity to change. We not only should construct writing assessments by talking as a program about what we want to know, but also by talking about how the design of the writing assessment will support or positively challenge the writing curriculum and the pedagogies of the teachers in the program. If we reconceive of writing assessment as an occasion for conversation, we can view assessment as an opportunity to know more about what the various stakeholders—students, teachers, administrators—think about writing instruction and assessment, enlarging the dialogue and expanding our understanding of how writing assessments impact the people who teach and learn in our programs. For example, by analyzing how writing is assessed, we can view assessment as a means of ensuring that our programs and schools respect diversity (Mountford) and encourage the concept of multiple literacies by asking questions

such as these: How do the designs of our assessment systems value or not value diverse literacies? How can we as a writing program ensure that a broad range of literacy practices is respected and incorporated into the assessment system?

But these benefits to programs and universities extend beyond academia. Once we view writing assessment both as research and as an occasion to be proactive within our institutions and programs, it becomes an opportunity for change on our own terms rather than a means for control from outsiders. However, making writing assessment a priority issue in our work as administrators isn't enough: we must effectively communicate our findings to all stakeholders, and even use the data we generate to enter into more public discussions about literacy education. Peter Mortensen's "Going Public" argues that believing "our work—our teaching, researching, theorizing—can clarify and even improve the prospectus of literacy in democratic culture" means that "we must then acknowledge our obligation to air that work in the most expansive, inclusive forums possible" (182). That is, if WPAs and teachers of writing want our work to connect to the culture outside of academia, then we must engage publicly the conversations about literacy and education that circulate through the media, local school board meetings, civic events, and casual discussion. Information we gather about our programs, teachers, and students—about the rich work that goes on in our classrooms—can show others how what we do is relevant and important. And it can, potentially, help to change the tenor of the conversations already going on about the work we do in teaching college-level writing. As Mortensen argues,

Journalists, essayists, polemicists, policy analysts, and others are writing about the same literacies we study. Indeed, sometimes they critique our teaching and research practices as part of their efforts to locate their observations and arguments in culturally and historically familiar territory. [. . .] [F]or in failing to [learn from these public discussions on literacy], we consign ourselves to mere spectatorship in national, regional—and most importantly—local struggles over what counts as literacy and who should have opportunities to attain it. (182-83)

While "Going Public" focuses mainly on literacy research, what Mortensen writes applies also to the data we generate through writing assessment and the decision-making we go through in practicing writing assessment ethically. As a method of inquiry, assessment can give us important knowledge about literacies as they are practiced within our institutions. As research reports, the results of our assessments

are presented to administrators, faculty from other disciplines, and the public at large as statements about what we value and why. And as public documents, they have the potential to begin important, localized discussions in communities about the roles of literacy in culture and in higher education. But re-envisioning writing assessment as an opportunity for public discussion means thinking about writing assessment locally, contextually, and as a public articulation of values.

By taking control of writing assessment in their own programs and institutions, WPAs can meet demands for assessment head-on, with data that is useful to compositionists and to those who demand assessments, and with knowledge that allows them to talk publicly about the practices and theories valued by the composition community. By staying informed of public policy initiatives and public opinion on writing assessment, and by joining organizations such as the NCTE and CCCC committees on assessment, WPAs can keep abreast of new assessment innovations (theories as well as practices) and how they fit with or undercut compositionists' goals for writing instruction.

WRITING ASSESSMENT AND THE DISCIPLINE OF COMPOSITION

The connection between the assessment of writing and the field of composition studies has been demonstrated by scholars such as Robert Connors, James Berlin, John Brereton, and others. Historically, assessment has had a long-lasting effect on writing, pedagogy, and the development of composition studies by identifying writing (especially first-year composition) as a gatekeeping activity, by positioning college composition as a remedial course, by situating assessment as an administrative apparatus, by establishing writing as a decontextualized activity instead of a communicative act, by promoting writing as a private exchange instead of a public activity, by defining "good" writing as that which is devoid of mechanical and grammatical errors, and by cultivating the notion that just about anyone can teach and evaluate writing. Furthermore, writing assessment has shaped the academy since it has been used to deny access to particular groups of people, such as minorities, women, and working class students (Agnew and McLaughlin; Moss; Sternglass).

Despite writing assessment's problematic place in the history of composition and the academy, it offers us opportunities, opportunities to make knowledge about writing, writers, and the teaching of writing. Changing our perceptions about and uses of assessment requires that we resist the idea that assessment is something done to us *by them* or done by us *for them*—and *them* could be accrediting associations, state legislatures, or institutional administrators. Assessment is about asking questions and looking for answers. It is research and inquiry. It demands

theoretical and practical knowledge. It requires the systematic collection of data. It needs rigorous analyses through a variety of lenses, from various perspectives. And it needs to be grounded in an informed notion of validity, not a narrow interpretation of reliability. To realize this new definition of writing assessment as action research that is central to the administration of a writing program, compositionists need to

- read and review assessment literature critically, including work outside of composition studies, so that we understand the complexity of concepts such as reliability and validity;
- understand qualitative and quantitative aspects of research;
- demand evidence for claims of reliability, validity, and “success” instead of relying on self-reports or our own “intuitive” sense;
- include formal instruction in assessment as part of graduate work;
- provide opportunities for WPAs and others who may not have had previous preparation in assessment to participate in theoretically informed professional development; and
- encourage and support ongoing research into our assessments by those not directly invested in the assessment or its results.

While some of these suggestions are beginning to happen—the Council of Writing Program Administrators attached a one-day assessment institute to the 2002 annual conference—there still needs to be a sustained effort by practicing WPAs and their composition colleagues to develop theoretical as well as practical expertise in writing assessment. Conceptualizing assessment as research rather than an administrative, bureaucratic activity is one way to encourage WPAs to engage seriously in writing assessment as a disciplinary activity. After all, research is not only what defines a discipline but also what is often most privileged in academic institutions.

Redefining assessment as research and re-envisioning the role that assessment plays in composition studies can also address some of the problems with the field that Richard Haswell mentioned on the WPA-L listserv. Haswell explained that “a large part of the comp/rhet world in the last twenty years has systematically resisted the development of a research agenda and body of research that the rest of the world can recognize as befitting a serious disciplinary study.” Haswell continued by way of explanation: “[. . .] imagine the body of professional medical journals consisting of 95% editorial opinion and 5% research studies—and contrafactually imagine the body of rhet/comp journals consisting of

5% opinion and 95% research studies.” Haswell wasn’t referring specifically to writing assessment, but his comments seem particularly relevant to writing assessment, where we often depend more on opinions than empirical evidence in making decisions or drawing conclusions.

Haswell went on, referring to Robert Scholes’s point that “many college and university teachers of language and literature would be embarrassed if they had to explain to their legislature or trustees exactly what methods [. . .] they are advocating in class.” Again, Haswell isn’t referring specifically to assessment, but there is a connection because writing assessment offers a way to investigate and explain what we do in our classrooms. Writing assessment is a means of building our theories and pedagogies around research-based work. However, for it do this, we must imagine writing assessment as systematic and rigorous inquiry into what we do—inquiry that has real-world consequences for stakeholders both within and beyond the academy— instead of just another bureaucratic nuisance that gets in the way of our “real” work. Assessment is our real work.

Once enough compositionists begin to reimagine the possibilities for assessment, perhaps frantic posts like the ones which open this article will disappear and be replaced with a disciplinary conversation about writing assessment theory and practice, one focused on posing and answering questions about writers, writing, and pedagogy. In fact, there may be some movement in this very direction with a recent WPA-L discussion on a portfolio assessment moving beyond responding to someone’s request for practical assessment materials to more substantial issues about the theories informing the suggested practices. For this type of change to happen on a larger scale, we need to make a sustained effort—as individuals and as a field—to not only value assessment research but to reposition assessment as research.

NOTES

¹ This and other posts are from the WPA-L archives available at <<http://lists.asu.edu/archives/wpa-l.html>>. We purposely are not identifying them by author, date, or subject heading because we are not trying to criticize individuals but rather illustrate the type of responses that are posted to the list. The unidentified posts were selected from a long list of posts that resulted from several searches of the archives conducted 11/12/99 and 5/31/00 with search terms that included *placement*, *assessment*, and *test*.

² Two of the authors participated in this program as members of the Composition Committee at the University of Louisville from 1995 to 1996. The overview presented here draws on their experiences as well as the committee’s minutes, reports, and correspondence.

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When Graduate Students Resist

Sally Barr Ebest

Anyone who subscribes to *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, reads the WPA-L listserv, or attends the WPA conferences knows that preparing graduate students for their future careers is an important issue. Indeed, the past decade has seen a plethora of books and essays on the subject.¹ For the most part, these works can be divided into two genres: “how to prepare” and “why to prepare.” What we don’t have are (m)any books or articles on “what to do when graduate students resist” our attempts to prepare them.

Over the past decade, as I introduced the strategies advocated in the “how to” manuals, I discovered that approximately 25 percent of my graduate students resisted these attempts. As a result, I began conducting action research, studying my graduate students in the pedagogy seminars they took with me in an attempt to discern why they resisted, how resistance might be manifested, how these feelings might be overcome, and why, despite my best efforts, some students could not cease resisting. After five years of collecting data, I generated a range of theories, two of which are presented here.

1. Graduate students resist pedagogical innovations when such changes contradict their personal construct and sense of self-efficacy.
2. Graduate students who initially resist nontraditional pedagogy because it threatens their sense of self-efficacy can overcome their resistance if they have developed a strong personal construct.

In this essay, I explain each theory and illustrate its generalizability to the graduate students I have taught over the past ten years. I follow by discussing how my growing awareness of these theories helped me to change my own pedagogy, and I conclude by suggesting how these theo-

ries might help other WPAs and graduate faculty to anticipate, address, and understand similar behaviors among their own students. I begin with the story of my research.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In the summer of 1990, I began what I thought would be a one-semester study of the effects of collaborative learning on my graduate students' teaching, learning, and writing.² My goals were modest: I wanted to illustrate how small group work benefitted female graduate students. So during an eight-week Reading-Writing seminar, I collected all of the students' writing and observed their interactions during group work. I also intended to tape-record the groups' discussions, but one student protested so vehemently that I limited myself to observations and analysis. This young woman's resistance so confounded my hypothesis that I felt I had to continue the project, for social constructivism was one of the theoretical bases of our writing program. If female graduate students were resisting it, what were the males doing? If all the TAs were resisting, how did these feelings affect their teaching? As WPA, I needed to know more.

Five years later, I was still collecting data. During this period, my focus evolved from an examination of the effects of collaborative learning to a larger view. Collaboration, I realized, was not the only teaching strategy differentiating my graduate seminars from others in the English department. In addition to working in small groups, I was also asking my students to reflect on their teaching, the readings, their research, and their writing processes; to write and revise multiple drafts of personal and researched essays; and to design and teach lessons based on the class readings. In return, I responded to the students' weekly journals; designed in-class activities to help them teach and develop their own essays; set aside class time for peer response to their drafts; provided feedback on their writing and their teaching; and encouraged further revision by requiring students to submit all of their work in final portfolios.

My reasons for teaching this way were threefold. Despite the findings of my first study, I believed such pedagogy was empowering for students of both genders. The assignments calling for reflective writing offered new TAs opportunities to develop their ideas and explore their feelings about writing pedagogy, while participating in small groups revealed both the value of peer response and the challenge of making collaboration a positive learning experience. These perennial overachievers had reached graduate school regardless and most likely unaware of their teachers' efforts. For the most part, they had learned individually and

independently; because this had worked for them, I feared they would assume this model applied to everyone, for I had felt the same way. Even though I specialized in composition, I remained skeptical of collaborative learning until I experienced this pedagogy as a participant-observer during my dissertation research. This led me to believe that graduate students unfamiliar with composition pedagogy might be even more likely to resist. Unless they participated in peer response, reflected in their journals, and consciously wrote and revised multiple drafts of their papers, I assumed they would neither appreciate these strategies nor understand how to use them. Without this engagement, most of them would leave my seminar and teach as they had been taught.

Since I was responsible for their teaching, I wanted to make sure they were prepared; since I believed strongly in this pedagogy, I wanted to trace its effects. And so my research questions evolved: How did participants in peer response groups develop an understanding of collaborative learning? What effects did peer response have upon graduate students' composing processes and final products? What role did reflection play in enhancing graduate students' understanding of composition pedagogy? How did engaging in action research contribute to their teaching skills?³ What type of students were likely to resist these activities and how could I address their concerns? In sum, this methodology reflected Peter Elbow's argument that "our success in pursuing and increasing theoretical knowledge usually depends on respecting and trusting practice for a while and afterward interrogating it as a rich source for new theory" (*What Is English?* 87).

To answer these questions, I continued to collect all of the students' writing during the semester they took Teaching College Writing, the required course for new TAs, and in any subsequent seminars they took with me. I triangulated these data by observing the students' interactions during in-class small group work, recording my thoughts and observations after each class meeting, and (with the students' permission) tape-recording the discussions during peer response. At the end of each semester, I asked the students to submit their work in portfolios; at the end of each school year, I organized, analyzed, and reflected on the new data. After drafting the case studies, I followed Patti Lather's guidelines regarding feminist empirical research: whenever possible, I practiced reciprocity by sharing the drafts with my student-participants so as to ensure "dialectical theory-building" and avoid "theoretical imposition." This process not only helped establish validity for this type of research, but also enabled those involved "to change by encouraging self-reflection and a deeper understanding of their particular situations" (56).

Through ongoing analysis and reflection, I discovered fairly quickly that the resistance I observed in the first round of research was neither anomalous nor gender-specific. Nevertheless, my methodology remained situated within a feminist perspective. “From this perspective,” Ruth Ray argues, “the writing of teachers is just as important to knowledge making in composition as the model building of formalists, the controlled studies of experimentalists, and the abstract conceptualizing of philosophers and critics” (41). The theory emerging from this approach—what Elbow terms *active theory*—“is both an intellectual and a practical engagement done for the sake of self-understanding and promoting change in schools and classrooms” (Ray 18). In the next sections, I illustrate the theories regarding resistance.

RESISTING CHANGE

In his study of *Theory and Resistance in Education*, Henry Giroux argues that students’ responses to learning fall into one of three categories: accommodation, resistance, or opposition. Students who *accommodate* accept what they are taught. Students who *resist* refuse to learn because they believe the classroom ideology infringes upon their personal beliefs. In contrast, students who are *oppositional* fail to learn because they “refuse to engage in behavior that would enable them to learn” (Chase 15). Giroux views these concepts as political; consequently, he seems to dismiss those students who accommodate as submitting to the “dominant ideology,” whereas those who resist have a “revealing function, one that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and for struggle in the interest of self-emancipation and social emancipation” (108-9).

Giroux defines the dominant ideology as traditional pedagogy, one-way teaching which does not take into account the students’ ideas, interests, or beliefs. However, as Ira Shor has demonstrated, students may express resistance in both authoritarian and democratic classrooms. A decentered classroom might incite resistance if students perceive it as imposing what Shor terms an “alien culture” (139). And to many graduate students, a dominant ideology which respects and encourages reflective practice, writing as a process, and collaborative learning may indeed seem alien. The students’ ability to overcome this resistance depends on their personal constructs and their perceptions of self-efficacy.

Personal construct is comprised of an individual’s prejudices, beliefs and practices developed from the confluence of home environment, parental influence, interactions with peers, and educational history. This system of beliefs is a result of experience, which is in turn colored by perceptions of those experiences, which may or may not be accurate.

By the time students reach their college years, their personal construct is pretty well established. This system of beliefs can affect what and how students learn; in fact, it is so internalized that college students may ignore or disregard certain theories or pedagogies if they are inconsistent with their personal construct. When this happens, it can disrupt classroom interaction and affect the students' subsequent learning (Ormrod 285). Instructors can sometimes facilitate conceptual change by identifying and discussing misconceptions, convincing students that their conceptions are erroneous, and motivating them to understand new ways of thinking (295). Research suggests that this is best accomplished by moving from traditional ways of teaching which impact individual construction of knowledge toward social constructivist pedagogy.⁴ Yet these efforts may fail if the students' beliefs are exceptionally strong, impervious to reason, or if change represents too great a challenge to their belief systems—in other words, if these students lack the requisite feelings of self-efficacy.

Feelings of self-efficacy are influenced by three factors: how individuals behaved or performed in the past, how others behave toward them, and what others expect of them. In other words, both internal and external factors influence one's sense of effectiveness positively or negatively (Ormrod 101-2). Unlike personal constructs, which are internal and fairly stable, feelings of self-efficacy are context-specific. Student ability, class size, teachers' feelings of expertise, and definitions of their role all affect how they feel about their teaching (McLeod 378). By the time they enter graduate school, students' sense of self-efficacy is fairly stable and therefore "increasingly resistant to change" (Ormrod 103). Because of this stability, these students' performances will be consistent with what they believe they can achieve. Students with strong feelings of self-efficacy will look for positive feedback, whereas those with weaker feelings tend to look for affirmation of those negative beliefs. To achieve change, students need "modeling, guided performance, and self-directed mastery experiences"—in other words, the pedagogy they might experience in a graduate teaching seminar (Bandura qtd. in Ashton 164). However, if students lack a strong sense of self-efficacy, these approaches will have little effect, for such students will most likely refuse to engage in behaviors that would help them learn. The following examples, drawn from case studies I developed through action research, characterize those students who may be unable or unwilling to overcome their resistance.⁵

Barbara was a forty-something former housewife who delayed college until her children were grown. Her personal construct is illustrated by the following traits: she was

a politically conservative, outspoken anti-feminist, authoritarian teacher. With regard to writing, her feelings of self-efficacy were based upon a tortuous composing process. She believed herself a good writer because she labored over every page, perfecting it, then printing it before writing the next page. Her resistance to change was obvious, manifested by refusing to participate in peer response by deflecting discussion, refusing to revise (because her work was already “perfect”), and continually disrupting classroom discussion by “playing dumb,” i.e., asking the same questions over and over, asking for instructions to be repeated, subverting the focus of the class, or undermining the teacher’s authority (Shor 138).

Bob, a forty-something high school English teacher, also held fairly traditional views. A former pastor, he referred to female professors as “Mrs.” and males as “Dr.” He once burned a spider in front of his high school students to illustrate “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Bob’s feelings of self-efficacy were low: he felt powerless to change his teaching because his students were “stupid and irresponsible”; he hated theory because it was “useless and obtuse”; and he felt belittled and targeted during discussions of feminist criticism. Bob’s resistance was manifested by refusal to participate in peer response and class discussion or to reflect in his journals.

Melva, a black female administrator in her mid-thirties, viewed herself as a successful professional woman and liberal activist. Her feelings of self-efficacy were mixed. Proud of mastering the conventions of academic language necessary for her job, she was also harried from juggling graduate school, work, family, and political activism. Her resistance was evident in her domination of peer response and failure to heed advice or to complete assignments on time; acceptance of the paradigm shift in theory but rejection of its practice; anger at the instructor and ultimately, refusal to accept responsibility for adequately completing course requirements.

These thumbnail sketches were distilled from individual case studies averaging twenty pages apiece. Although the total number of students who could not overcome their resistance was small (four out of 40 or 10 percent), their characteristics were amazingly consistent. Indeed, Phyl-

lis Kahaney, who has conducted numerous teacher training workshops over the years, maintains that although an average of 20 percent of the participants make significant changes in their teaching and 60 percent make moderate changes, 20 percent will resist change altogether (192). Kahaney attributes the ability to change to three factors: “a) the ability to articulate a problem [. . .] b) access to a benevolent authority (a text, a teacher) that reflects the shape of the resistance back to the change maker; and c) a community in which change can take place and in which the new behavior can be practiced and reinforced” (192). These case studies suggest that even when the above factors are present, they will not facilitate change unless they in some way correlate with the individuals’ personal constructs and sense of self-efficacy. In his analysis of elements contributing to teacher change, C.T.P. Diamond concludes that when personal construct is taken into account, we need to realize that learning to teach, especially to teach in different ways, “is often hard and sometimes costly” even with sufficient modeling, support, and engagement. Each teacher must compare new ideas and approaches with his or her own beliefs and determine what to accept or reject. In other words, changing teaching is “not the easy reproduction of any ready-made package of knowledge but, rather, the continued recreation of personal meaning” (64). For some graduate students, the effort simply isn’t worth the risk. But others may overcome their resistance if they are willing and able to take those risks.

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

Overall, resistance typified the initial behavior of one-quarter of the graduate students I encountered in Teaching College Writing. Within this cohort, twice as many males as females exhibited initial resistance; moreover, the men’s resistance differed in duration and degree. As a rule, the women’s resistance, evidenced by questions or refusal to participate, began to subside after the first peer response session and disappeared by midsemester. In almost every case the men’s resistance was more extreme—characterized by anger, sarcasm, or inappropriate language—and persistent, usually lasting much of the semester. However, by following their reactions, I found that these behaviors were only starting points on a learning curve that eventually led to a degree of understanding. By analyzing their resistance, I discovered that quite often its source could be correlated with the students’ age and writing experience, which in turn related to their feelings of self-efficacy.

Ray’s classification of resistance into rhetorical, pedagogical, and epistemological reasons is particularly applicable here. Ray uses these terms to summarize the resistance Carol Berkenkotter, Thomas Huckin,

and John Ackerman describe in the case study of “Nate.” In Nate’s case, *rhetorical* resistance was exemplified by his hesitance about joining the academic discourse community, and *pedagogical* resistance emerged as a result of his former teaching experiences, while *epistemological* resistance may have resulted from his markedly different writing experiences prior to his admission to Carnegie Mellon (Ray 154-55). As I followed my graduate students’ learning, I found that resistance for rhetorical reasons was a common trait among young, inexperienced writers new to the graduate program. These students appeared to question the new theories and pedagogical approaches to writing largely because of their uncertain status and relatively conservative approaches to writing. Insecure about succeeding in graduate school, they were afraid to take risks, to tamper with what worked before. These approaches challenged their feelings of self-efficacy. In class, their resistance was obvious—they disliked freewriting, agonized over drafts, resented working in groups, and openly expressed their anger and frustration. These graduate students felt that by requiring multiple drafts and asking them to participate in peer response groups, I was trying to change their writing style. Because they believed their students should not be subjected to something with which they felt personally uncomfortable, they tended to avoid these methods in their teaching.

Gail’s and Paul’s cases illustrate these feelings as well as their gender differences. Both students were literature majors in their mid-twenties, unfamiliar with writing theory and pedagogy but possessing well-established approaches to writing. Gail’s composing strategy as an undergraduate had been to “find out what the teacher wants and give it to him” in a single-draft process. Little wonder, then, that Gail believed “basing class discussions on my own freewrites is hell [. . .] and introducing a new cure-all theory of education is like sending an earthquake through a place that was always home.” However, her feelings of self-efficacy were restored after the first peer response session when she saw that both she and her partner benefitted from their exchanges. Paul took a little longer and expressed his feelings more directly. He dismissed freewriting as “artsy fartsy” and claimed collaborative learning would lead to “anarchy” in the classroom. He chose a German nun for a peer response partner so he wouldn’t have to talk or listen to her comments. In his drafts, he vented his frustration asking, “What am I supposed to do about this class, huh? I’m really fed up. [. . .] I have to write about a subject I can’t look up in a book, can’t fake my way around, and have no experience of. [. . .] OH WHAT THE HELL! DAMN THIS ASSIGNMENT TO HELL. BEGONE WITH IT. BURN IT!” Needless to say,

Paul's resistance was stronger than Gail's. It finally subsided during peer response for the final paper, when he worked with a group of males he considered his intellectual peers.

Students who resisted for *pedagogical* reasons were experienced but superstitious writers generally in their late twenties. They believed that good writers were born, not made; that good writing was the result of inspiration; and that to question or disturb the "muse" was blasphemous if not disastrous. Resistance of this type was sometimes difficult to reconcile because it was illogical yet deeply rooted in the writer's process and personality. In group work, these students seemed to ignore their peers' suggestions and appeared to do little or no revision between drafts; however, upon closer examination, I found that for this type of writer, revision connoted expansion because they had already labored over each word in the previous draft. These students were perfectionists in both their writing and their teaching. Afraid of losing control in the classroom, they maintained a teacher-centered class, often avoiding group work because they believed their students could not write well enough to profit from collaboration. Correlating good writing with good thinking, they assumed that those students who did not measure up were either lazy or dumb.

Susan and Jeff fell into this category. Both were somewhat experienced writers—she was a former real estate appraiser and he was a creative writer—and inexperienced teachers. Like the TAs Christine Farris studied, they taught writing "as a limited function of who they are; what they value; what they have read, taught, and been taught, and whom they teach" (152). In other words, their personal construct strongly influenced their teaching and their writing. Because Susan's composing process could be described as "procrastinating perfectionist," she believed writing was a hard, solo process. Consequently, she initially dismissed her basic writing students as "Neanderthals" and similarly regarded group work as too advanced. Day after day, her teaching logs began "I spent most of today lecturing." Jeff too was a perfectionist, uneasy allowing students a voice in their discussions or in editing their peers' papers. As Wendy Bishop found, these feelings and experiences are not atypical (*Teaching* 201), yet they seemed contradictory in light of Jeff's training as a creative writer. Even though his primary experiences as a writer had been in workshop settings, Jeff had difficulty believing the same approach would work with expository writing, in part because he did not view composition students to be the same caliber as creative writers, but also because he did not believe himself competent to teach composition. Susan McLeod maintains that "a teacher's sense of efficacy will determine the amount of effort she puts into her teaching, her task

choices, her degree of persistence when confronted with difficulties, her motivation to continue” (377). Because Jeff perceived himself an inadequate teacher, he resisted anything requiring him to move beyond the podium.

Both Susan and Jeff required tangible evidence to overcome their resistance to collaborative learning as a pedagogical strategy. Susan began to accept it when she had to rely on her co-workers to learn a new job; she ultimately embraced it after taking a course in feminist pedagogy in which the class of five functioned as a permanent small group. Jeff was shocked into acceptance the day he called his students to his desk to discuss revisions and discovered they already knew what to do because their peer editors had pointed out the same problems he had observed. “In the space of fifty minutes,” he wrote, “I had turned from a peer editing naysayer into a peer editing supporter.”

The writers who resisted composition theory for *epistemological* reasons fell into another category: pragmatic and experienced professionals in their mid- to late-thirties secure in their own process. Because of their prior successes, these graduate students were skeptical of theories of writing and learning at odds with how they wrote and reluctant to engage in activities such as peer response, dismissing them as intrusive and unnecessary. They displayed their resistance by playing what Elbow describes as the “doubting game,” arguing, questioning theories, trying to poke holes in them, raising objections, and quibbling over minor points (*Writing* 177). Nevertheless, because they were mature and confident writers, these graduate students were somewhat more willing to try freewriting, drafting, and collaborative learning in their classrooms. Again, such behavior knew no gender.

Former journalists in their mid-thirties, Pattie and Ken were skeptics and cynics. Pattie had been publishing since she was ten, and Ken had won both academic and professional awards for his writing. Always polite in class, they expressed their doubts about process-writing and collaborative learning in their journals. “To be involved in a group of my peers does not give me a feeling of comfort,” Pattie wrote. “How can I possibly consider them to be credible judges of my work when they are in the same situation as I am and I don’t know what I am doing?” But after Pattie’s group members helped her break through a writing block, her resistance quickly receded. Ken’s resistance followed gender-specific patterns, expressed in scathing criticism lasting most of the semester. “Look!” he wrote in one entry. “I want to give collaborative learning my best effort. But the very heart of me is built out of ideals of individualism I can’t abandon. I can’t.” Like many of his peers, Ken conflated collaborative learning with collaborative writing. He believed that working in small groups would result in people other than the author writing

the paper or coercing the author to change his content or point of view. Despite his years of working with editors, Ken did not equate that process with peer response. Not until he actually participated in the process did he began to grasp the epistemological tenets, yet his resistance did not wholly subside until near semester's end. As he described it:

[T]he feedback from [his group member] Melanie was the most useful thing. Actually, she kept hammering away at the conclusion, saying it was weak, until I broke down and rethought it. Until that point, I'm not sure that I exactly knew what the conclusion was supposed to be. This, to me, is ideal collaboration, in that the conclusion is mine—she never really said how to change it—but just her stubborn insistence that it was insufficient pushed some, I don't know, competitive buttons and caused me to work harder on it.

Ken and Pattie represent one of the biggest problems experienced writers bring to teaching: they write well, but they have seldom considered how they learned or what they know, so they tend to believe that writing cannot be taught. For too many TAs, this ignorance causes amnesia, if not cynicism. Their personal construct leads them to doubt the ability of younger, less-experienced writers and to question the validity of any theories positing change. Such feelings are reinforced by a well-established sense of self-efficacy regarding their writing that leads them to reject composition theory and pedagogy because these were not conscious elements of their learning processes. Thus they approach teaching believing they have always known how to write or that their writing abilities must have come naturally. Because graduate students are experienced readers, this latter statement contains an element of truth.⁶ However, without a conscious awareness of their writing process—of its sources, strengths, and weaknesses—it is very difficult to empathize with, let alone analyze the processes of inexperienced writers to help them develop their own strengths. For these reasons, participatory classrooms are essential in overcoming these graduate students' resistance. As Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff point out, "writers learn the most by becoming students of their own writing processes" (446).

APPLYING THEORY

For WPAs, Elbow and Belanoff's statement might be rephrased to read: "WPAs learn the most by becoming students of their own teaching processes." I realized the truth of this statement two years ago when the TAs' required course—Teaching College Writing, my favorite, longest-

running, and most-successful seminar—turned into a war zone. Cosmo, a returning student in his forties, was rarely prepared. Although he was an experienced grant writer, he seldom brought drafts for peer response, his journals were usually half the required length, his essays always late. Jack, also in his forties, was always prepared and his papers excellent, for he had supported himself through his writing, yet he rarely participated in discussion. He just sat there, a virtual storm cloud hovering over his head. Three of the most vocally resistant students were young women in their early twenties. Two of the three were often unprepared, having failed to complete the readings, misunderstood the assignment, or forgotten to bring a draft. They complained incessantly: “This theory doesn’t help me teach.” “You assign too much writing.” “My group doesn’t help me revise.” “Why do we have to revise our work for portfolios?” “This is the hardest class I’ve ever taken in my life.”

The most chronic complainer was Eddie, a poet in his late twenties. He deemed the first essay assignment, a collage of personal narratives about learning experiences, “useless.” The second essay, analyzing his composing processes, taught him nothing. The final paper, a semester-long action research project focusing on his teaching, had been “the most frustrating experience” of his life. The complaints climaxed the night we discussed elements of the final portfolios. As I explained the process, Eddie’s face reddened and he began muttering; he slammed out of the classroom, then returned to protest, “It doesn’t really matter what we think, does it? You’re the one who assigns the grade. We have to do whatever you tell us!”

What was going on? Why couldn’t these students “get it” when all my former students had? Throughout the following semester, I continued to seethe, but gradually my anger subsided and I began to reflect. I thought about the students’ comments and wondered if they were true. Then one day, I remembered this research project I had been working on for ten years. Suddenly, the proverbial light bulb clicked on and people started falling into categories. Cosmo, my perennially late, nontraditional student, fit the patterns established by Barbara, Bob, and Melva: conservative, overworked, trying to write in a new context about an unfamiliar subject, he simply could not handle it. Jack, his unhappy fellow TA, reminded me of Ken. Both were cynical, skeptical, highly successful writers who’d internalized a process they had never closely examined. Their sense of self-efficacy damaged, they needed time to see how this process might work in the classroom. Two of the three young women could have been Gail’s sisters, for all felt overwhelmed by the workload, the unfamiliar theories, and the type and frequency of writing. But once the semester was over and they realized they had survived, their animus receded and their self-efficacy revived. Then there was Eddie, the poet.

Like Jeff, he was a creative writer who labored over his craft and initially perceived no connection between that process and the expository writing required in our graduate seminar. These beliefs helped to explain Eddie's frustration throughout the semester over the writing assignments and his anger when he learned he'd have to revise these maddening essays AGAIN.

Mired in the frustrations of my own classroom, I had forgotten everything I learned from my research. But theory is useless unless it's applied. So my first step was to reexamine the syllabus and decide how to make the seminar useful for graduate students of all ages. I added Douglas Hesse's "Teachers as Students, Reflecting Resistance" to the first week's readings about current composition theory and pedagogy to help my students see that their feelings were natural. In their journals, I asked them to compare these readings to their undergraduate experiences. In class we discussed their common feelings, then I explained how the readings, journals, and essay assignments were designed to alleviate these fears, engage them in learning, and thus develop two skills requisite for success in the academy: their teaching and their writing. Then we applied these issues to their teaching so they might similarly meet the needs of their own students.

Next, I replaced a highly theoretical research text with Bishop's *Ethnographic Writing Research*. Used throughout the semester, this text provided the rationale, guidelines, and caveats for every aspect of action research. I linked these chapters with the students' response journals and research logs. For example, after reading about selecting topics, observing classrooms, collecting data, and writing field notes, the students described their research interests and the types of data they'd collect; this focused the project. After the chapter on interviewing, they developed questions for their student-participants and wrote up the results; this resulted in the "background" section of the final paper. Throughout the process, I read and responded to their weekly logs, raised questions, and suggested supplemental readings.

To complement Bishop, I added chapters from Jan Zlotnik Schmidt's *Women/Writing/Teaching*. This edited collection simultaneously addresses TAs' fears, offers teaching tips, and provides models for their action research projects. Depending on the focus of their research, I asked my students to choose models from either Schmidt or Bishop best reflecting their style or subject and to organize their papers accordingly. When the first drafts of their research project were due, I asked everyone to bring copies for the entire class; these became the text for the next class meeting, during which we all offered feedback on every paper. If they had not already understood, this process underscored the value of peer response for these fledgling TAs.

By this point, I had long ceased formally researching my graduate students' learning, so I am unable to offer more than anecdotal accounts of that semester. I can report, however, that this was a happy class, a group who appreciated and benefitted from the pedagogy, so much so that they relayed their feelings to the angry group of the previous year. "I'm so jealous," said one formerly discontented TA. "Why wasn't our class like that?"

EPILOGUE

In undergraduate classrooms, we engage students in freewriting, explaining that they must learn to write reflectively, to explore ideas without fear of censure, to discover what they want to say. In undergraduate classrooms, we ask students to write drafts and share them with their peers. Writing is a social process, we tell them; language development is a matter of social construction, we say. In undergraduate classrooms, we ask students to take their drafts and their peers' responses and rethink, revise, redraft. Writing is a process, we remind them. The more you write, the better you get. In undergraduate classrooms, we assign response journals to ensure that our students will better comprehend their reading and assimilate the conventions of texts. We do so because writing about reading gives students a voice; it promotes interaction with the text; it helps them take new and difficult material and make it their own. In undergraduate classrooms where these strategies are practiced, we maintain that students emerge better thinkers, readers, and writers. Yet in graduate seminars, we assume these strategies are unnecessary.

Perhaps because of ingrained beliefs about postsecondary teaching, because graduate students are more mature than undergraduates, because many of us do not consciously freewrite, draft, journal, or reflect (or have the time to do so), we have overlooked a few things. Graduate students aim for perfection. They rarely freewrite, believing they must labor over every sentence. Because of this process, they often lack the time to reflect and revise. In competition with their peers, they are unlikely to indulge in any form of peer response. Overburdened with teaching and preparing and grading and reading and writing and attending classes, they don't have time to reflect on their reading, even though the texts they encounter in their pedagogy seminars may be unlike anything they've ever read before. The end result? Too many TAs exit their pedagogy seminars without fully developing an understanding of their writing or their teaching. Composition studies remains a boring, blurry subdiscipline while their own literacy skills stutter or stagnate.

Despite its ubiquity, the role of writing is rarely discussed in relation to graduate students' professional development. This focus is important, however, if we are to adequately prepare these students for a profession which demands the ability both to teach, and to produce, writing. Too many graduate students are like those described above, fearful, rigid, superstitious, or cynical. We can help them overcome these crippling apprehensions by engaging them in those strategies our research has found effective—collaborative learning, reflective practice, and writing as a process. By adopting these strategies in the graduate classroom, we foster our students' abilities as future scholars. These same strategies are not only a service to this next generation of professors, but also to their future students, for our pedagogical theory and practice answer the calls for change in higher education.⁷

If graduate students are to understand and implement these strategies, they must experience them. When they do, research suggests that many will resist. We need to anticipate such resistance, recognize its causes, and realize that the majority will eventually understand and accept the paradigm shift in composition. Writing may be the catalyst for TAs' resistance, but it also holds the key to change.

NOTES

¹ See for example, Bishop, *Teaching Lives*; Bleich; Fulkerson; Gebhardt; North; and Pytlik and Liggett.

² See Sally Barr Reagan (Ebest).

³ These questions are explored in Ebest, *Changing the Way We Teach*, forthcoming 2003.

⁴ See for example Bleich; Bruffee; or Hillocks.

⁵ All of the quotations attributed to these students were taken from their writing completed during their graduate seminars with me. The students were informed of the research, signed a consent form, and indicated whether they wished to be referred to by their given name or by a pseudonym.

⁶ For a thorough explanation of these correlations, see Smith.

⁷ Useful critiques and analyses include Gardiner; Haworth and Conrad; and Kolodny.

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Seizing the Initiative: The Missouri Model for Dual-Credit Composition Courses

Nancy Blattner and Jane Frick

Over half of the members of the 2002 graduating class at West Platte High School in Weston, MO, had already completed a dual-credit college composition course when they received their secondary diplomas last spring. During the school's 2001 fall semester, 35 of the school's 63 seniors (55%) signed up for Grade 12 Advanced Composition, and because they each paid \$141.48 in tuition fees to the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC), their high school coursework also counted as ENG 110, Freshman English I, the university's first-semester composition course. If the dual-enrolled students scored at the Proficient or Advanced Levels in communication arts on their eleventh-grade Missouri Assessment Program exams, they were eligible to receive a \$120 state tuition refund, but even without the rebate, the students paid just a third of the fees they would have been charged for the three-credit course if they had waited to enroll in it as first-year students on the UMKC campus ("High School/College Program Changes in Enrollment Procedures"). The students also paid no book fees because UMKC provided the high school with texts for the course: a university-prepared publication describing ENG 110 requirements, a college rhetoric, and an essay reader.

The students, divided into two sections of 17 and 18 students each, attended class daily for 54 minutes, completing reading and writing projects as prescribed on the ENG 110 departmental syllabus, as well as additional coursework assigned by their teacher. At the end of the semester, the students' course grades were recorded as Advanced Composition on their high school transcripts and as ENG 110 on official UMKC transcripts, making it extraordinarily difficult to identify their course work as a dual-credit offering should the high school students transfer their composition credit to another university.¹

The Advanced Composition/ENG 110 instructor at West Platte is a master teacher with excellent credentials. The chair of the school's English department, she has completed an MA in English with additional graduate course work in composition, including participation in two National Writing Project Invitational Institutes. She receives no additional pay for teaching the dual-credit classes, but is released from her teaching duties to participate in biannual professional development meetings at UMKC for dual-credit composition teachers. UMKC also provides her a 75% tuition rebate for any course work she might complete at the university.

The West Platte/UMKC partnership is representative of a rapidly progressing, nationwide paradigm shift in the delivery of first-year college composition. College writing program administrators (WPAs) throughout the country are now faced with the challenge of collapsing one or more of their institutions' composition courses into junior and/or senior English taught by high school English teachers. Offered on high school campuses during regularly scheduled periods, these dual-credit classes (also called joint or dual enrollment, depending on the state) are a "double dip" for the hundreds of thousands of teenagers enrolled each term; the students earn college composition and high school English credits for completing a single course. The participating institutions also "double dip" because the high schools and universities both claim the student enrollments for the composition course for accounting and/or funding purposes.

Prior to 1980, only a handful of dual-credit composition programs existed. These were similar to Syracuse University's Project Advance, with admission to dual-credit courses restricted to the most academically talented of the college-bound seniors in a few, selective high schools (Lambert and Mercurio 28). During the Reagan era, however, policy statements such as the 1983 *Nation at Risk* report describing the paucity of academic rigor in our secondary schools and calling for a college preparatory curriculum for all students in an increasingly technological and literate society—including four years of high school English—received wide dissemination, affirmation, and state-by-state implementation (Russell 1-3). High schools shifted their focus toward academic subjects in their curricula, and increased percentages of graduating seniors—estimated to be 75% for the class of 2001—matriculated to post-secondary institutions (*Raising our Sights* 22).

Legislators, policy makers, and higher education governing bodies nationwide have endorsed dual-credit offerings as an effective and economic means of creating a seamless learning environment, grades K-16. The 2001 report of the National Commission on the High School Senior Year, for example, recommended that states "align the academic content"

of grades 11-14 so that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds who are “ready for post-secondary work” could complete college work while in high school (*Raising our Sights* 32). Demand for college credit offerings in high schools, including dual-credit composition courses, has escalated. By fall 2001, at least 40 of 50 states allowed for college composition to be delivered as a part of high school English.²

Using Missouri as a chronological model of the paradigm shift, we note that in 1986 the State Board of Education increased high school graduation requirements with a recommended college preparatory curriculum that included four units of English. In 1990, legislation permitting dual credit was passed. By 1994, so many first-year students were arriving on the state’s postsecondary campuses having already completed one or more of their composition courses while in high school that we began to collect data about the dual-credit composition programs in the Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment’s (CWA) annual “Missouri Writing Survey.”³

Early in 1997, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education added academic benchmarks, including the availability of and the percentages of students enrolled in dual credit and AP courses, to school districts’ re-accreditation criteria; subsequently, dual-credit composition enrollments and programs mushroomed. Our CWA survey’s 1998 results showed that 4,800 students at 184 high schools were co-enrolled in college composition and junior or senior English courses—taught by their high school teachers as a part of their regular high school day. This was an enrollment increase in dual-credit offerings of 63 percent over the 1994 survey, with nearly 70 percent (22) of the 32 responding two- and four-year institutions brokering dual-credit composition courses to high schools within their geographic area (“Missouri Writing Survey Conducted” 8).

While on-campus composition enrollments remained relatively stable during the 1990s, WPAs responding to the CWA surveys noted an increasing bipolar split in their on-campus offerings: more first-year students enrolling in developmental composition at open-door institutions (students who did not complete dual-credit composition in high school) and more students bypassing one or two first-year writing courses (students who did complete dual-credit composition).

A larger and more comprehensive survey also conducted in 1998 by the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education confirmed the state-wide proliferation of dual-credit courses. Thirty-four of the 41 responding colleges and universities reported that they had dual-credit programs in place with high school teachers teaching courses to their high school students totaling 125,128 college credits. Composition I was the second-most frequently offered dual-credit course in Missouri,

following college algebra. Enrollments in dual-credit offerings in the state are expected to continue to increase. In his 2001 keynote address at Missouri's Annual Transfer and Articulation Conference, the Commissioner of Education called for a doubling of dual-credit offerings to "implement integrated standards and assessment" in our secondary and college classrooms (King).

Part of the growth in dual-credit courses can be attributed to the economic and staffing incentives they provide over the traditional on-campus composition delivery system. The college/high school course is a wise investment for students and their parents in that participating students usually pay substantially-reduced course fees or, in a few states, no tuition at all (Russell 90-91). In Missouri, dual-credit students are usually charged one-third to one-half of the credit-brokering institution's regular tuition, with either the college or high school providing textbooks ("Missouri Writing Survey Completed" 15). Despite offering these courses for no or substantially-reduced tuition charges, however, colleges and universities make substantially more profits than on-campus offerings because the instructional facilities and teachers' primary salary and benefits are provided by participating high schools.

From a staffing perspective, dual-credit composition course offerings could also be perceived as an improved delivery system. Poorly-paid, marginalized faculty teach most on-campus first-year composition courses, constituting "an enormous academic underclass [. . .] which many consider the worst scandal in higher education today" (Conference on College Composition and Communication). A fall 1996 survey conducted by the Association of Departments of English revealed that only 16.5% of the nation's first-year writing courses were staffed by tenured or tenure-track faculty at BA-granting institutions and that only two percent of first-year writing courses at PhD degree-granting universities were taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty (18-19). The CWA's "2001-2002 Missouri Writing Survey" results showed that 70 percent of Missouri's on-campus first-year composition teachers were graduate teaching assistants or part-time faculty members receiving no benefits; ironically, the teaching assistants' mean per course salary of \$2,627, which did not include tuition stipends, was considerably higher than the \$1,945 mean per course salary for part-time faculty, a trend which has existed for more than ten years (Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment, "2001-2002 Missouri Writing Survey Results"). In contrast, the high school teachers teaching dual-credit courses were senior staff members in their schools, receiving full-time salaries with benefits.

By the mid-nineties, WPAs participating in the CWA recognized the futility of attempting to shut down the ever-increasing and ever more popular dual-credit offerings in the state; instead, they decided to work

collaboratively to shape the policies and guidelines for administering such programs. Missouri WPAs unanimously adopted the CWA's "Guidelines for the Delivery of Dual-Credit Composition Courses" at the Colloquium's 1995 meeting (Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment, "Guidelines"). While beginning with a declaration that its members "oppose[d] the collapse of the college freshman composition course into the high school senior English course," the policy statement established parameters for the structure and content of dual-credit composition courses, qualifications for the high school faculty instructing the classes, and procedures for assessing students enrolled in dual-credit coursework. The CWA document revolved around several key tenets:

College teachers, whenever possible, should be the instructors of dual-credit courses.

Syllabi in dual-credit composition courses should be approved by and mirror those used in the English departments of institutions granting the dual credit.

Students taking dual-credit should be screened using a direct measure of their writing ability.

A liaison from the postsecondary institution's English department should be appointed to work with the high school faculty member teaching the course.

Dual-credit teachers should be provided with support services.

Dual-credit classes should be discrete; that is, students should be in classes composed only of other students taking the course for dual credit.

Assessment of student work should be shared by the high school teacher and the college or university liaison.⁴

The delivery of dual-credit courses should be the joint responsibility of the participating high school and the institution granting college credit.

Recognizing that college faculty would rarely, if ever, be the teacher of record in a dual-credit course,⁵ the policy statement included an appendix recommending that high school teachers should have a master's degree in the discipline of English and be approved for teaching college composition by the English Department of the post-secondary institution granting the dual credit. In order to facilitate the approval process, high school teachers interested in becoming dual-credit instructors were asked to prepare a packet of materials including, but not limited to, a

vita; complete transcripts; a letter of recommendation from the principal; a letter of application from the teacher, discussing experience and background work in teaching composition, the teacher's general philosophy of teaching composition, and his/her expectations of students likely to enroll in the course; and a description of the training the teacher had received in composition theory and evaluation of student writing.

An additional appendix in the CWA guidelines described the role of the university liaison, who is to be a fulltime faculty member in the department of English with experience in teaching composition. The liaison's purpose is to assist the high school teacher in conducting the dual-credit class by providing support and information. In fulfilling these expectations, the liaison is expected to visit the dual-credit classroom a minimum of three times per semester.

The principles expressed in the CWA guidelines were intended to foster the integrity of the composition course while at the same time protecting the interests of the high school teacher and selecting the most capable students for dual-credit composition courses. Dual-credit teachers should receive professional development opportunities (and funds) comparable to their on-campus counterparts.⁶ Furthermore, the English department of the postsecondary institution granting credit for the course should determine which students are eligible to enroll in college composition, using its course placement process, plus the assessment of a piece or pieces of student writing to make the decision. In "mixed classes"—i.e., classes which combine students receiving only high school credit for the course with those students who are receiving both high school and college credit (and paying tuition for the college course)—student performance for college credit should be assessed by an external measure, such as the SAT II Writing examination, the Advanced Placement Language examination, or institutionally-approved assessment instruments.

Once adopted, the CWA dual-credit composition policy statement was used by member WPAs at their institutions as leverage in implementing its provisions. The Colloquium Executive Board also disseminated the statement to Missouri's college and university administrators and to administrative staff for the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE), encouraging its enforcement and calling for the CBHE to revise and strengthen its own regulations regarding dual credit. Of particular concern to Missouri WPAs was the then-frequent administration and delivery of college composition courses to area high schools without the involvement of the WPA or English department unit administrator of the institution brokering the dual credit. For three years, beginning in 1996, CWA published and distributed a chart listing institutions' compliance or noncompliance to the composition dual-credit

guidelines, as reported by WPAs who completed the annual “Missouri Writing Survey.” CBHE staff arranged for WPAs to make presentations about the CWA composition guidelines at the state’s annual Transfer and Articulation Conferences. From 1997 to 1999, executive board members of the CWA responded to drafts of the CBHE’s proposed revisions of its 1992 “Dual Credit Policy Guidelines.”

Most of the CWA dual-credit composition guidelines were adopted in the state’s 1999 revision of its “Policy Guidelines for the Transferability of Credit Obtained in Dual Credit Programs.” These included the following key conditions:

Students must meet the same prerequisites for course placement as on-campus students (and have a minimum 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale and be approved by their high school principal).

On-campus faculty in the college discipline must approve the selection and be involved in the evaluation of the dual-credit composition teacher; they must also approve the syllabus, textbook(s), teaching methodology, and student assessments for dual-credit courses in their disciplines.

Dual-credit teachers must have a master’s degree with a minimum of 18 hours in the academic field.

An on-campus faculty member in the discipline must serve as liaison to the dual-credit teacher, completing site visits and developing and approving assessments to ensure dual-credit course “quality and comparability.”

Dual-credit teachers must participate in the same orientation and professional development activities as other on-campus adjunct faculty teaching the same course.

Chief Academic Officers (CAO) at state institutions must file an annual report outlining the scope of their dual-credit programs and providing evidence of their compliance with state guidelines. These reports are available for review, upon request, to any CAO in the state.

The strengthened CBHE Guidelines, then, provide the state’s WPAs with the authority to oversee the implementation of their institution’s dual-credit composition offerings.⁷ A closer look at how the WPA at Southeast Missouri State University has used the CBHE Guidelines (and the CWA dual-credit guidelines) in developing and implementing the program for dual-credit instruction in place at that institution

demonstrates both the strengths and the limitations of the new statewide policy. Students who attend orientation on campus and their dual-credit counterparts on the high school campuses are admitted to EN 100 English Composition I by sitting for a fifty-minute writing placement exam. The WPA is responsible for the design of the test, for pilot testing the topics, and for selecting the schedule of essay topics to be administered. In order to ensure comparability during the examination itself, the tests at all locations are administered by trained personnel from Southeast's Office of Testing Services. Under the leadership of the WPA, the students' essays are holistically scored using a six-point scale by the same team of trained faculty readers who evaluate students' placement essays during on-campus orientation sessions.

In order to ensure that students have access to the same opportunities for test preparation, the high school dual-credit teachers are required to participate in a half-day training workshop on campus, presented by the WPA, that introduces them and faculty on campus to the holistic scoring process and to the criteria and scale that are applied to student essays. Participation in this workshop serves as a valuable professional development activity for the high school teachers in multiple ways: as an opportunity to learn the process of holistic assessment of student work, as partners in a dialogue about designing writing assignments and setting assessment standards, and as a time to network with other teachers of college composition courses.

At Southeast, high school dual-credit teachers undergo a rigorous approval process by the department of English. Interested teachers are required to complete a lengthy application packet and to demonstrate background experiences or training in composition theory gained either through completion of a National Writing Project Institute or EN 600 Orientation Seminar for Teaching Assistants, a three-credit hour seminar that focuses on a review of the epistemological evolution of composition instruction, primary composition theories, and pedagogical procedures in designing a composition program.

The CBHE Guidelines assign the academic department responsibility for certifying such high school teachers as eligible to teach dual-credit classes and for recommending the continuation of the teacher in the dual-credit program. At Southeast, the responsibility for initially approving the dual-credit instructors falls to the members of the Committee on Dual Credit, all of whom are full-time composition faculty in the department of English. After such certification is granted, the chair of the dual-credit committee assigns a full-time faculty member with extensive experience in teaching composition to serve as the liaison between the

department and the high school teacher. Currently, there are six faculty members, including the WPA, who serve as liaisons to the teachers in the high schools offering dual credit in Southeast's service region.

The liaison's primary purpose is to assist the high school teacher in conducting the class in accordance with the guidelines established by the departmental syllabus, but the liaison also serves as a resource and mentor for the high school faculty member. During site visits, the liaison may give a guest lecture to the class, may review students' essays or portfolios, or may simply observe the high school teacher's performance in the classroom. (The latter type of evaluation is not unlike the performance evaluation that occurs for all adjunct faculty systematically on the Southeast campus.)

During one recent high school visit, a liaison read students' essays and evaluated them using assessment criteria in place at the university. Then, she discussed the strengths and weaknesses in the writing samples and gave students ideas of how to strategize when planning for an argumentative essay. Another liaison recently gave a guest lecture in a different high school classroom on storytelling technique in narrative writing since the students had been asked by their teacher to incorporate dialogue into their essays. These "guest appearances" provide the high school students with a sense of a broader audience for their writing and occasionally with another teacher for the period. For the high school teachers, the liaisons' visits are often welcomed as confirmations of their grading practices or as opportunities to network with a colleague from the campus.

The program at Southeast has experienced both the rapid expansion and the tension that were predicted in two articles on the topic of dual-credit composition courses written by David Schwalm and Michael Vivion, and published in *WPA: Writing Program Administration* in 1991. When dual-credit composition was first offered by Southeast a decade ago, only three area high schools participated; today, that number has grown to 14 with one new high school offering dual-credit composition every third semester. During the 1994-1995 school year, 150 area high school students received college credit for successfully completing their high school dual-credit composition course. By the 2000-2001 year, the number of students had more than doubled. The English faculty members at Southeast were alarmed by the rapid growth of dual-credit composition classes. Yet opting out of brokering dual credit was not a feasible choice. Since Southeast is the only four-year post-secondary institution in its service region, the faculty members realized that if they were unwilling to support the offering of dual-credit courses, state institutions at a far greater geographic distance would fill the void. If other institutions offered dual credit in Southeast's service region, it was unlikely

that the careful monitoring of the program that exists under Southeast's auspices would continue. As a result of this concern and because dual-credit programs generate both money and identify potential students, the university continues to provide dual credit to high schools in the area.

As dual-credit courses proliferated in the 1990s, not only in Missouri but across the nation, campus WPAs frequently raised valid, but futile, objections to such offerings. In his 1991 viewpoint article about dual-credit composition in *WPA*, Schwalm encouraged WPAs to actively "resist" their institutions' embarking on such programs because they fail to replicate the "intellectual and social" context of a college writing environment, because they "eliminate a year of literacy education" for participating students, and because maintaining "standards [. . .] becomes nearly impossible when instruction is removed to remote locations and diffused among instructors whose primary allegiances lie elsewhere" (52-54).

In the counter viewpoint article in the same *WPA* issue, however, Vivion accurately predicted that dual-credit courses would only increase and recommended that WPAs "respond to this reality by creating dual-credit programs which offer students quality college-level instruction" (60). Nearly a decade later, Schwalm regretfully acquiesced that Vivion had been right in his prediction. Policy makers' endorsements, economic incentives, and enthusiastic student, parental, and administrative support had rendered dual-credit composition programs a permanent part of the first-year writing curriculum. According to Schwalm, WPAs throughout the country now have no choice; they must "take ownership" of these offerings in order to maintain the integrity of their college composition programs (Simpson).

Through the work of the CWA in Missouri, WPAs began the critical task of taking ownership of dual-credit programs in the mid-1990s. They tracked dual-credit enrollments; they adopted and promulgated policy guidelines for their delivery; and they worked with the state's coordinating board to ensure that WPAs and their academic units approve and evaluate dual-credit composition teachers and syllabi. As a result, Missouri WPAs are reasonably confident that when students matriculate to their campuses with dual-credit composition credit—from their own or from another state institution—that the dual-credit course content and assignments replicated the transferring institution's on-campus offerings of that composition course.

NOTES

¹ The only method currently available for identifying students with dual credit is by determining whether the semester in which the dual credit was awarded occurred prior to the student's high school graduation date.

² The results of a 1997 survey conducted by the State Higher Education Executive Organization (SHEEO) show dual-credit programs offered by a multitude of two-year and four-year colleges and universities in 36 states (90-91). Our fall 2001 follow-up to that survey via a query to Writing Program Administrators on the WPA-L listserv indicates that four more states have joined the dual-credit ranks since the SHEEO study. We have been unable to verify that there are dual-credit course options for high school students in these states: Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, New Jersey, and Vermont.

³ The Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment conducted its "Missouri Writing Survey" for 13 years, beginning in 1989; results for five years, beginning in 1995-1996, are available online at <http://www.mwsc.edu/cwa>. This statewide organization of writing professionals from two-year and four-year institutions of higher learning across Missouri has met annually at a member-institution campus since 1987 to share and critique writing assessment projects and to develop and implement proactive stances to statewide initiatives related to composition assessment, dual-credit courses, and general education competencies.

⁴ While the grade in the dual-credit course is assigned by the high school teacher, students' placement essays are read by the same team of university readers who evaluate students' essays for placement during on-campus orientation sessions. During the semester, the high school teacher and the liaison may jointly assess student work or independently evaluate essays and compare results. Students may be required to keep portfolios of their work, which would then be evaluated by a team of university faculty if a question is raised about a student's grade.

⁵ In the history of dual-credit composition instruction in Missouri, only one post-secondary institution has ever sent one of its own faculty to instruct a dual-credit composition course in the high school setting; that practice has been discontinued. A faculty member from Southeast Missouri State University, however, taught a dual-credit course via interactive television during the spring 2002 semester.

⁶ While some dual-credit teachers receive a "per student" stipend, others receive no additional compensation for converting their courses into college level classes. The state's 1999 "Dual Credit Policy Guidelines" now require colleges and universities to provide high school teachers "access to regular pedagogical and resource support such as professional development workshops."

⁷ Unfortunately, however, the CBHE Guidelines do not cover interactive television (ITV) or online (Web) offerings of college composition to high school students who are jointly enrolled in a high school English course at their high school, and ITV delivery systems are currently being used by some high schools in Missouri as a means of circumventing the state's policies for minimal teacher qualifications, student eligibility, and academic support for students in the class.

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Are We Having Fun Yet? Necessity, Creativity, and Writing Program Administration

Lynn Z. Bloom

Simply put, everything I do as a WPA is fun. If it wasn't, I wouldn't do it. It's not the same fun as kissing my girlfriend, but it excites me nonetheless. I love the challenge of being a WPA. I love having a say in what a university writing program looks like. I have fun training new teachers. I have fun talking about writing with graduate students. I have fun figuring out how to schedule 136 TAs each semester. I have fun reviewing syllabi. I have fun developing new classes. I have fun leading committees that work with curriculum. I have fun working with other administrators.

Being a WPA requires thinking and challenge. It's not dull. It's the kind of cerebral fun I like to have. Daily tasks require persistence, and sudden, unexpected tasks require quick thinking. If we don't see being a WPA as a fun job, we're in the wrong business. This is what I studied to do, what I want to do. If I didn't love it, I couldn't do it. I come to work every day excited about what might happen that day, about what might get done.

—Survey respondent, seven years a WPA

IN THE MOOD: INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT AND RESEARCH METHOD

This essay was prompted, nay provoked, by my recent experience of writing the Foreword to Theresa Enos, Stuart Brown, and Catherine Chapat's *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource*. Thirty solid chapters burst with advice, information, priorities, and strategies to help new WPAs go effectively and efficiently where they have never gone before. These essays convey a strong sense of the intelligence, authority,

and even power that has made their authors leaders in the profession. But perhaps because these essays, on such topics as “The WPA and the Politics of LitComp” and “Writing Programs in the Context of the University Budget,” are driven by the need to convey a great deal of information in a brief compass, they are written in dead earnest. The chapter on “Legal Considerations for WPAs,” which discusses NCTE’s insurance—“up to \$2,000,000 per claim” for a variety of sins, errors, and allegations, including “‘hiring unqualified persons’ and ‘failure to educate’”—is downright scary.

Did the authors really mean to convey a collective sense of “all fun abandon, ye who enter here”? I know most of the authors; so do you. They are not devoid of humor; when you meet them at conferences they twinkle and scintillate. Indeed, it is fair to assume that they hold their jobs by free choice, and that if they didn’t (by and large) find the work satisfying they’d do something else. They must be having fun.

So over Labor Day weekend, when I knew all true WPAs would be in their offices, I emailed fifty of our experienced colleagues around the country to ask them, “What is (or has been) the most fun for you as a WPA? What makes it fun? If the fun is long-term and ongoing, what sustains it? What’s the least fun? If (sigh) you have no fun as a WPA, why is this so? And if so, why do you continue as a WPA—if, in fact, you do?”

The answers came pouring in (“Caught red-handed on this Saturday morning of Labor Day weekend!”). Perhaps this pervasive zest is an artifact of the positive way in which I posed the question. Perhaps it is because my queries were directed to the profession’s movers and shapers—scholars and journal editors, organization officers, grant recipients, holders of fancy titles and endowed chairs—and to some relative newcomers, as well. I received a large number of positive answers from happy, energetic, creative people. This selective sample contradicts the literature of writing directors as housewives (Bloom, 1992) (as an associate dean, Charles Schuster, says he’s a “midwife” [88]), neglected drudges (Enos), and “sad women in the basement” (S. Miller). That my study injects good cheer into the earnestness of the prevailing literature on the subject is congruent with the current orientation of “positive psychology” that regards “hope, wisdom, creativity, future mindedness, courage, spirituality, responsibility, and perseverance” as the normative human condition, rather than as “transformations of more authentic negative impulses” (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 5). For, indeed, that is what I have found. To state my conclusion (and my thesis) first: the happiest WPAs are those who have transformed their jobs to emphasize what they do best: work with people, either through mentoring or more formal teaching, and solving problems. Thus, there is a good match between the

job and the person who fills it. These largely upbeat respondents share with their hapless and generally voiceless counterparts—those who may not have been able to effect such transformations—the problems of lack of status and competition for limited resources. Nevertheless, the Florence Nightingales, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and composite of all the noble teachers in *Lives on the Boundary* are on the job.

Supplemented by various chapters in collections by Diana George, Joseph Janangelo and Kristine Hansen, and selected *WPA* articles, I will identify what makes us happiest, and explain why. To avoid one-upsmanship in my audience, if not among the respondents to my survey (“He’s having more fun than she is.” “Is not.” “Is too.” “She’s not having any fun at all.”), I will not identify the email respondents, only those quoted from published sources, though the inimitable styles of some may be lively giveaways. First, I’ll discuss several essential elements of what’s fun—which overwhelmingly outnumbered the negative components (again, a possible artifact of my survey); then, what’s not fun. I’ll conclude with a brief analysis of the self-portrait of the *WPA* in action, having fun, that serves as the epigraph to this study.

AIN’T WE GOT FUN?

“*On the Street Where You Live*”—*Working with People*: It should come as no surprise that much of the fun that most *WPAs* have relates to their work with people, courses, and curricula. *WPAs* love to mentor *TAs* and other less experienced colleagues. They enjoy providing structures and contexts in which people can learn. They are happy to help faculty, students, and the larger community with “projects and programs that make a difference in their lives”—often on a very large scale and over long periods of time. These pleasures reflect a goodness of fit between the necessary duties of the job and the people who perform them. Although no *WPA* (or anyone else in an educational context) is autonomous, in all of these activities *WPAs* can take the initiative rather than merely react to the exigencies of academia, focusing on “hole-plugging and disaster management [. . .] bouncing from one crisis to the next” (Heilker 32). With (and sometimes in opposition to) colleagues, they can have “cerebral fun” being inventive, imaginative, creative; they can solve some problems and prevent others. Their work in all these areas can, in the best of circumstances, reflect a combination of theory, research, and reflective practice.

Mentoring TAs and Less Experienced Colleagues. *WPAs* expect to teach new teachers how to teach writing and provide composition studies resource materials for more experienced colleagues. The literature is full of ideas on how to do it (see Janangelo and Hansen; George; many

issues of *WPA*), but it rarely addresses the joys of the process that nearly every respondent has commented on. Some of the mentoring comes in formal classes for new teachers, informally conducted; a recurrent theme is the formation of a community with a common love: “Where else do you face a classroom of such engaged, excited, sharp, worried, willing, and at the same time stubborn (because smart, engaged, worried) individuals with whom you’re about to form a community, a team, a cohort centered around the subject you most love to talk about, the teaching of writing, being a writer.” Some of the “best moments” are those that acknowledge the transformations that come when the community has been established, notes a nineteen-year administrator still in love with the job: “A profound silence [. . .] sometimes comes over a class meeting with new TAs or the whole staff because something has just been discovered, understood, felt, and reached deeply into us.”

Another comment addresses the joy that new teachers (and their mentors) experience from understanding “what it means to teach college English” and how to use their new knowledge:

My biggest source of WPA glee comes from those moments in which I can help novice instructors gain confidence in themselves and grow beyond initial misconceptions of what it means to teach college English. In my experience, expressions of ‘Hey, I can do this!’ are prerequisite for a new instructor to sense that this is really important, humane work to be proud of.

Another colleague reflects on a comparable transformation: “Seeing new TAs come in scared and hunched and soon transformed with radiant confidence and love for their teaching.” That confidence, and that new community, provides a buffer against the usual problems of the fiscally challenged WPA; the author continues: “Next thing you know, you’re eavesdropping in the halls, listening to an impressive instructor/student conference as heartwarming insulation against the budget-cut meeting you face in 30 minutes.” The learning, the energy, the excitement are reciprocal. A veteran WPA evokes the “air of excitement about the teaching of writing and beginning of professionalism in the field,” and the fact that she herself learns a great deal, “not so much *from* the TAs but *because* of them.”

Mentoring Senior Faculty and Staff: Many WPAs, or WPAs-turned-department chairs enjoy “convincing senior faculty that teaching writing is an important job that they can actually learn to do,” showing them how to do it, and inviting them into the Burkean parlor. (For resistance to this, see “Stormy Weather” later in this essay.) An extension of this professional collegiality is to “maximize each faculty member’s opportunities

for presenting papers and other professional development.” And a third common form of mentoring is “just paying personal attention to people, knowing their interests in and out of academe” in order to help counteract the sense “of anonymity that many part-timers feel.”

The range of WPA mentoring is a function of time, energy, institutional size, imagination—and other commitments. Those who have the most fun on the job seem to be able to routinize the mundane so they can concentrate on more creative endeavors that transcend the university’s traditional boundaries and divisions. One long time WAC director says his happiest times are “consulting one-on-one with WAC faculty over lunch,” and “stretching traditional boundaries of WAC to include, for instance, a “poetry across the curriculum” project that involves 25 teachers in disciplines as varied as biology, chemistry, engineering mechanics, and urban tree care (see Merrill). The learning among teachers and students, if not the poetry, is memorable.

What might exhaust mere mortals even to contemplate energizes those WPAs able to leap tall curricula with a single bound. After 15 years on the job a happy WPA explains,

Here’s the real payoff for me in terms of fun. I am recognized on campus as one of the “go-to” people. I love the variety my work offers. On any given day, the range is enormous—a writing workshop for the grad students who work in the business school communications center; a talk to the staff of university disabilities services about what we are doing in freshman English and how our folks can work with the tutors of students who have learning differences; a meeting with the service learning office to incorporate service learning into more of our courses; a meeting with engineering faculty to arrange the details of a grant we have to pair ‘Engineering Concepts’ with ‘Critical Reading and Writing’; phone conversations with the folks who run our living and learning centers about the linked English classes; negotiating with the center for teaching and learning for extra funding to support an electronic portfolio program we will launch this fall, with a one-year director of educational technology (just for freshman English). I get to get out of the department and talk with people from all over campus.

The circle of teaching and learning is ever-widening. In “The Teaching Circle, the WPA, and Writing in the University,” an inspiring account of faculty fun on the job, Kathleen Blake Yancey explains how this energizing process can work. There are two models of “faculty circles,” in which faculty meet to learn about an issue, method, or approach to a

particular aspect of teaching, say “methods of collaborative learning” or “use of the Internet in teaching.” One is university-supported, public, and “highly focused” with designated leaders or teams to help the participants explore a given topic during a limited period of time—similar to a seminar. The other is “informal and self-generating,” proceeding for an indefinite period of time through collaborative discussion. Both represent new models of “cross-curricular faculty leadership” and mentorship designed both to serve as models of good teaching and to enhance the participants’ teaching. Although teaching circles are not restricted to WPA leadership, WPAs become natural leaders because the circles are analogous to their other faculty development work (129-37).

I WANT TO BE HAPPY: TEACHING WRITING, AND OTHER MATTERS OF CURRICULUM

“We care: about writing, writing students, writing teachers, reading and writing connections, writing within and across and outside the university” (Bishop 2). Wendy Bishop’s motto could be every writing teacher’s bumper sticker. Like crack auto mechanics, engaged teachers always have the hood up on even the newest custom-built constructions; they are forever tinkering. “Shaping programs and curriculum is the best part of the job, hands down,” explains a WPA who has

turned one school’s curriculum from weak to really strong, started a graduate training program for a minor in composition studies and begun a community text program for incoming freshmen entitled “Writer as Witness.” All of these programs have affected students’ lives for the better—which I consider the purpose of being a WPA.

Kurt Spellmeyer likewise places considerable faith in the efficacy of freshman English:

While I admit that English 101 is hardly the palace where the tyranny of expertise will face its last stand, I am convinced that the significant changes never happen in a big way, all at once and on an enormous scale, but always moment by moment and one person at a time, which is also how we teach and how we learn. (180)

It is unnecessary to belabor the point that many made in my survey, and which all WPAs understand. After 20 years as a WPA, one says,

I still enjoy creating the structure, the environment in which people can learn. And the learning I inevitably do each year because each student is different, the group is different, I am different. To watch people learn to love language, writ-

ing, and teaching these, to help them become less fearful, less rigid, more open about their teaching is fun to me. Well, what I'm speaking of here is beyond fun. It is rather like learning to swim. The process is not always delightful, but it yields a great deal of pleasure, sense of well-being, accomplishment, and sheer delight in moving through water like silk on the beautiful days.

This summary says it all—the sense of growth, transformation, change, invention, flexibility born of competence, confidence, conviction.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC: THE PLEASURES OF PROBLEM SOLVING, AND MORE

Given that much of any administrator's day is devoted to solving problems, I was surprised that few surveyed said it was fun. (The fun may be modest, as in the satisfaction of crossing off an item from a list of things to do: "Aha, done!") Although as associate dean, Charles Schuster works endlessly and frustratingly "on unsolvable problems, the ones that defy solution" (86), WPAs—the happy ones, anyway—report more solutions and, therefore, greater success. Rather than discussing problem solving in general, respondents referred to specific issues to resolve, derived from, as one WPA says,

a perverse compulsion to organize people and fix things—maybe mixed in with a desire to meddle in other people's lives. I love to spruce things up in the department, metaphorically speaking. Yesterday I spent all day on the jigsaw puzzle of the spring schedule of classes—trying to figure out which of our 80+ staff would teach what. To me that's fun.

Another likes "talking about integrity and character" to students "who have downloaded papers off the internet and will [otherwise] automatically fail the course." A third hates "adjudicating plagiarism cases," loves "redesigning our assessment procedures and curriculum. I got rid of a high-stakes exit exam and instituted portfolios."

In "Critique's the Easy Part," Richard Miller summarizes his satisfying life as a WPA, the best part of which is problem solving:

This work. [. . .] Learning from others. [. . .] Making contact. Solving Problems. Especially this business of solving problems and all that it entails: talking to students, teachers, and administrators, studying the known parameters, imagining alternatives, pushing back against necessity, finding a way out, joining the discussion, learning again and again

that there are other ways of thinking. This work, with its frustrations and rewards, has turned out to be much better suited to my needs and my abilities than my first choice [“nurturing that cold gemlike flame” by writing poetry (3)]. This work. It sure beats writing in isolation hoping to be heard. (13)

Many aspects of this work are embedded in the activities of the WPA quoted above whose problem solving ranges from disabilities services to service learning to engineering and educational technology.

HAIL, HAIL, THE GANG’S ALL HERE: PROFESSIONAL COLLEGIALLY

WPAs, organization mavens all, have fun organizing each other: “My first piece of advice [to new WPAs] is to join WPA,” says Mara Holt (39- 40). In the past 15 years, composition conferences have sprung up like mushrooms, devoted to composition studies, rhetoric, teaching writing, computers and composition, and peer tutoring—not to mention writing program administration. Although many of those I surveyed are among the major movers and shapers in professional organizations, the pleasures they identified were local rather than global. “When I’d go to WPA conferences,” explains one leader,

I loved the ‘aha’ feel of suddenly being among ‘my kind’ who had the same worries, pleasures, obsessions (reading student papers, helping writing teachers read those student papers); the release was giddy at the time, and certainly manic depressive to a degree: a place where you could let your highs and lows show and not feel you had to stiff-upper-lip it.

It is no secret that beleaguered WPAs find sustenance, stimulation, and solace from colleagues at professional meetings and through consulting trips to—as one very happy WAC director commented—“Romania, Korea, China, South Africa, and Thailand.” Such extramural contacts, indeed friendships, validate WPAs’ work, its intellectual and pedagogical dimensions, in ways often absent at our home institution. Contexts in which we can talk in code—and be understood, meet and greet new friends and old, share the same jokes (“How many WPAs does it take to change a lightbulb?”¹), and relax may be as close to professional heaven as we can come.

MOOD INDIGO: NOT FUN

“Stormy Weather”: Fathers, Recalcitrant TAs, Martyrs, and Second Class Citizens

Fathers. Sometimes the estrangement from colleagues is voluntary. Douglas Hesse, the only person who has fulfilled two focal roles in WPA as journal editor and president, is a self-acknowledged overachiever. In “The WPA as Father, Husband, Ex,” he confesses that as Writing Program Director at Illinois State in the late 1980s, he unilaterally assumed the role of “father” to the program, “self-reliant and taking care of others.” He chose to “handle most of the writing program business,” even though several other colleagues could have shared the innumerable duties conceptually as well as administratively. “I knew it would be more efficient” to do it myself, he says, and “I didn’t want to trouble my colleagues. After all, they were busy people working toward tenure and promotion, teaching their own classes.” As was he. “I did this. I did that,” he says, working “stupidly long hours, nearly every night and one day per weekend for six or seven years.” This paternalistic style cost him his marriage, producing “a crippling kind of alienation from both self and those others (wife, children, colleagues, friends)” who could have healed the breach. In time Hesse, who assumes all the blame, “divorced the writing program” (48-53). Not fun.

Recalcitrant TAs. Intellectual segregation starts early, often in graduate school. The bane of all WPAs is, as one says, “the occasional graduate student who arrives fully formed, sheathed in his cloak of arrogance,” unreceptive to either the theory or practice of teaching writing. Another says that the “graduate teaching fellows who are working just to collect a paycheck, who do the least amount of work to get by, who never manage to care about the community they belong to” turn into—if they last that long—faculty “with negative attitudes, who don’t want to join in the fun.” Although such contemptuous faculty often lament long and loud the quality of student writing, “it is always an uphill battle,” and often a losing one, to try to enlist them in the cause. This (among many other frustrations) can lead to burnout, and that is no fun. As Toby Fulwiler explains, “At times I burn out and tire of being a traveling salesman for writing across the curriculum, organizer of collaborative publication projects, director of first-year composition, and minority voice for hiring a colleague with a PhD in composition.” Fulwiler’s antidote is the solution—and the solace—of nearly everyone surveyed: “But then I teach my classes, meet my students, and read their writing—and discover, much to my relief, that I love my work and have the best job in the world” (“The Writing Committee at Work,” Fulwiler et al. 145).

Martyrs. Often, however, WPAs are isolated from their colleagues in ways far more problematic than those either Hesse or Fulwiler—both

tenured professors in their home departments—identify. One respondent made the deliberate choice to eschew the “self-indulgent” professorial model that would allow him to “teach my classes, concentrate on my writing, take summers off.” He decided instead to sacrifice peer collegiality and considerable research time “to work as a WPA for political reasons—I want to see if I can’t make things a little better for undergrads and their teachers [primarily TAs, adjuncts, and lecturers] whose job situations are so much worse than that of most tenure stream faculty.” Although “the WPA job is not much fun, it is important and possibly transformative work. I like the feeling of being useful.” Even after eight years on the job, with a superb support staff, he feels alienated from “other tenure-stream faculty. I’ve never felt very comfortable in the culture of the university, with its myriad pecking-orders and attendant anxieties over status and prestige.”

Second Class Citizens. As the above comment indicates, “second class citizenship” for WPAs, a status commonly attributed to women (see Bloom, 1992; Enos; S. Miller), is not exclusively a female complaint. It is no secret that many WPAs, including senior composition scholars and leaders of national organizations, are made to feel, by their critically oriented English departments, that they are left sitting on the porch of the House of Lore. This can be fine on good days, but threatening weather always looms on the horizon.

There is no need to rehearse here the myriad of handmaid’s duties that many WPAs routinely perform; some have even included these among the pleasures of the job. Whether or not WPAs choose, as Hesse did, to insulate their departments from the nature of their work—which is “never done. Autonomy has its price” (51)—critical colleagues can and do dismiss the work as “service,” and, therefore, by definition as unintellectual, not deserving of respect, or—in some instances—tenure. Research I institutions are particularly notorious in segregating WPAs from tenure-track literature faculty, either by keeping them off the tenure track entirely or refusing to evaluate those with academic status for tenure and promotion. In some notably egregious cases, nationally and internationally known WPAs were either fired or remain untenured assistant professors, if not lecturers, for unconscionably long times, with chances for tenure and advancement at other schools impeded by the lowly status at home. It is an understatement to say that the failure to be respected and rewarded by one’s home department is the source of anger and bitterness, even by people who otherwise love their jobs.

In fairness it should be acknowledged that in other instances, the directors of free-standing writing centers and WAC programs benefit from their marginalization, which is usually from English departments.

As Rebecca Moore Howard explains in “Power Revisited: Or, How We Became a Department,” some even lobby for it. They have, as one director said in my survey, “freedom to innovate that is fun,” and also freedom (and budget) to initiate programs, hire tutors and technicians, and expand their services around and beyond campus. “We don’t have to go through zillions of bureaucratic layers to get permission to do something. We can just do it. That’s fun too.” Yet Howard’s recommended divorce is not generically applicable; no single solution fits all.

Can rapprochement be effected between, as some say, the MLA-types and the compositionists? WPAs tend to discuss the problems with each other—a practice that guarantees a sympathetic hearing but does not change the academic culture unless there is a critical mass (and how many is that?) of composition studies faculty in a given department. Often, as numerous enthusiastic WAC publications indicate (Fulwiler, “Quiet”; McLeod; Phelps) WPAs find a much warmer reception in other areas of the university and the wider world beyond the English departments that continue to determine their rank and tenure.

CHEAPSKATES AND CHEATIN’ HEARTS

Two other types of problems bedevil WPAs in contemporary college culture. One is the cumulative effect of cost-cutting, which too often creates a large cadre of part-time and unrewarded teachers, and undermines the teaching of writing, support services, and administrative efforts in general. And that is “why I have given up being a WPA,” writes one former WPA, who has given up hope. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss solutions to this pervasive problem in American higher education, although they abound in Susan McLeod et al.’s encouraging overview of the state-of-the-art *WAC for the New Millennium*.

Another problem is lawsuits. The *Writing Program Administrator’s Handbook* addresses a number of the innumerable types of potential lawsuits lurking beneath the academic minefield; I will identify here only the one that occupies an undue amount of the WPA’s attention. The threat stems from, as one WPA says, “the ‘customer’ attitude that a number of students and their parents have these days. ‘I paid my tuition so I get an A; never mind that I didn’t attend class or do the work.’”

Such threats require a lot of investigative effort—and a firm response, which gave one seasoned WPA a major triumph:

Once a TA found that a student had cheated—copied a paper written by a student during a previous semester. We had the student cold. Not a fun thing to deal with, as all WPAs know. But what was fun was what happened when the defiant student showed up to fight the ruling with his

father and family lawyer. After seeing the evidence, the father, also determined to resist, explained very firmly that the ruling might damage the student's future and that he would unfortunately have to sue to recover such damages in court. The TA's eyes got bigger, but I felt confident enough to say, "Well, this is America, and you certainly have the right to sue. But please know that the university and its lawyers will back us and not permit the case to be settled out of court. And if any damage to the reputation of this teaching assistant results from the suit, any damage at all, we will also sue for those damages." At that point the lawyer stepped in and said, "I don't think this is something that we want to see adjudicated through the courts." The TA looked at me like I had done something really well. That was fun.

"SUPERCALLIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS": IN CONCLUSION

The above example emphatically illustrates the truth of Wendy Bishop's observation, "All of us make a difference, moment by moment, one person at a time, in how we teach and learn. Follow and lead. Read and understand. Write and change—ourselves and others" (3). The particularly happy WPA quoted at the beginning of this essay sums up the pleasures of the role, and thereby implies a formula for success, if not a theory. He is fully engaged with the university, the program, and the people in it—teachers, students, administrators. He loves to teach, formally and informally; to develop courses and curricula; to solve problems. The sense of intellectual challenge, the opportunity for creativity, coupled with his own energy, commitment, perseverance, and resilience in handling the unexpected, make every day new and exciting. Whatever drawbacks there may be—and he does not acknowledge any—are subsumed in the positive aspects of the work and the successes he obviously enjoys. WPAs who want to have this much fun can seek such a job ready made or reconfigure their existing job into one that resembles this model. A change of attitude rather than a change of duties may provide the jump start to make this possible. In my own experience, this includes a willingness to be unconventional, to challenge authority, to take risks, and to get into trouble—particularly when there are creative ways to get back out. If we are not having fun yet, fun is nevertheless within our reach. Advice is at hand, paraphrased from that immortal mentor, Yogi Berra. Having fun as a WPA is ninety-percent mental. The other half is physical.

NOTE

¹ “Or ‘a student’s grade?’ Or, ‘a curriculum?’” The answer—though I’m sure you already know this—can only be “‘One’—the single individual responsible for everything, and to whom a plethora of tasks cling as lint to velcro” (Bloom, “Moving” x).

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Dangerous Reading: The Unabomber as College Freshman

Edward M. White

Well, *somebody* had to have taught Ted Kaczynski freshman composition at Harvard. I remember thinking about that hapless teaching assistant as I read the turgid manifesto that the Unabomber published in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* before he was caught. “Plenty of interesting ideas here,” I might have written on his essay, had he handed in that tome in my class, “but connections among the ideas and to your sources seem to be missing. And have you considered the ethical implications of what you are asserting?” Like everyone else but the FBI and the Unabomber victims, I then put the whole business out of my mind.

But later, after an intense call from an FBI agent, I had to face the terrible fact: Kaczynski had been in my class, Gen Ed A, as we called it at Harvard in the fall of 1958, and I had had my chance to influence his thinking and writing. Oh, yes, the agent said, there was no question, he had been my student. What grade had I given him? I asked. That, it turned out, crazily enough, was classified information. No, I told the FBI, I couldn’t remember anything at all about him or his writing from that class over 40 years ago. I had no records. As I thought about my role in this story I began to shiver: at least I had not remained enough in his mind to receive one of his lethal mailings.

All I know for sure about that class, these reflective years after the FBI called, is what I asked my students to read. There on my shelf sit the texts we used: *Inquiry and Expression: A College Reader* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958) and *The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition* (same publisher and date). Both of them were edited and written by the directors of Gen Ed A, Harold Martin and Richard Ohmann. What, I ask, as I leaf through their crumbling pages, did Ted Kaczynski take away from those readings?

My eye stops at the third group of readings under “Defining” in the textbook. Here are Plato and Aristotle defining virtue, followed by William James, the good American pragmatist arguing that virtue must be defined through action. Next comes Bertrand Russell’s evocative essay on “Science and Ethics,” which stresses the subjectivity of values: “All systems of ethics embody the desires of those who advocate them, but this fact is concealed in a mist of words.” The last reading in this section is from *Huckleberry Finn*, the powerful scene in which Huck lies to some slave hunters to save his father figure Jim, a terribly hard ethical choice for Mark Twain’s hero because all his training taught him that such an act would surely send him to hell.

My teaching copy of the book is thick with marginal notes, discussion questions, and underlinings. We spent plenty of class time discussing ethical behavior in that class. But I cannot remember just what topics I assigned for the weekly student essays. First-year students then and now are ever-ready to question the givens of ethical behavior and to work out for themselves ways to make their mark on the world. Our job is to help them see these questions in a long and deep tradition of questioning. How did these questions intersect the troubles surely already bubbling in Kaczynski’s mind?

The next section heavily marked by my youthful pencil is entitled “About Machines and Men” and as I reread I am struck by its timeliness as well as by echoes from the Unabomber manifesto. Friedrich Juenger writes in 1948 that machines bring poverty rather than abundance: “The consuming, devouring, gluttonous motion racing through time restlessly and insatiably, reveals that never stilled and never to be stilled hunger of the machine.” Paul Ziff writes about “The Feelings of Robots,” and A. M. Turing (now known as the inventor of the computer) is represented by a 1950 essay on whether machines can think, a question he finally considers pointless, though I recall us debating it furiously. Turing is prophetic and optimistic: “Nevertheless I believe that at the end of the century the use of words and general educated opinion will have altered so much that one will be able to speak of machines thinking without expecting to be contradicted.” It takes my breath away.

Other sections of the book appear to have had very little influence on Kaczynski’s apparent later career. I see thickly annotated chapters on “Concrete and Abstract Language,” “Stock Language and Jargon,” and two entire sections on “The Economy of Style.” Along with every teacher of first-year college writing then and now, I know I spent much time trying to trim away the high-flown verbosity and abstract language of my students. I wonder what I said to Kaczynski. I wonder what I wrote on his papers. I wonder what he took away from our reading and his writing. It is clear that he was not untouched by them.

Of course, thousands of students used these books—read and wrote about these essays—and only one became the Unabomber. We know much less than we should about what it is that twists minds into murderous behavior, what influences play and interplay in disturbed minds, how reading of any sort relates to behavior. Ideas of any kind are dangerous, but first-year college students must encounter ideas of all sorts if they are to enter upon a serious education.

And yet, like any teacher, I am in part defined by my former students. I'm proud of most them, savoring their accomplishments, particularly when they become published writers. I know that any one teacher has only a slight effect, but, as the old saying goes, we never know quite where the influence stops. Was there some point, some 40 years ago in that barren classroom in Cambridge, when I might have done or said something to change Kaczynski's direction? Or worse, was there a moment of callousness in response, or insensitivity to the ethical implications of the reading, that triggered murder in my student's troubled mind? Mercifully, I can never know the answer to that question, though I think I will be asking it for some time. All reading is dangerous and every student has possibilities we hardly imagine.



Problematics, Risks, and Interrogations: Rethorizing Personal Writing

Personal Effects: The Social Character of Scholarly Writing. Ed. Deborah H. Holdstein and David Bleich. Utah State UP, 2001. 392 pages. \$32.95 (paper).

Amy C. Kimme Hea

In their introduction, “Recognizing the Human in Humanities,” co-editors David Bleich and Deborah H. Holdstein position their collection, *Personal Effects: The Social Character of Scholarly Writing*, as a contribution to the growing interest and assertion of “the full range of human experience into formal scholarly writing” (1). The scholarship in this collection does indeed speak to the range of personal and professional issues related to the study and act of personal writing. Bleich and Holdstein seek to interrogate, problematize, and position personal writing beyond its conventional position as “self-centered” or “narcissistic.” Through an explication of both their frameworks for the collected essays and their own investments in personal writing, Bleich and Holdstein invite scholars in rhetoric and composition to participate in the reflexive processes advocated by many contributors to the collection. This dialogue with readers begins with their suggestion that “[t]his volume collects essays that, taken together, try to show how fundamental it is in humanistic scholarship to take account, in a variety of ways and as part of the subject matter, of the personal and collective experiences of scholars, researchers, critics, and teachers” (1). By the very fact this work is a collection, we readers expect some rationales for the material and its arrangement, but the convention is quickly deconstructed through their own acknowledgement that “[w]e waited for the essays [after a call for papers] to arrive and to see what they said [. . .] we tried to withhold judgment about what we wanted to accomplish in collecting these essays, rather than decide beforehand and instruct potential contributors on what we envision” (2).

Their desire to step back from the project and let it emerge is emblematic of the kind of risk-taking and problem-posing defined by many authors within the collection. From explicit discussions of classroom practices to methodological explorations of personal writing to mixed genre pieces exploring issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality—this collection encourages readers to reflect upon our own teaching and research practices. In addition to asking us to think through complex emotional and social relationships, the collection disrupts the construction of personal writing as a sentimental, unified act of individual achievement or genius. Transgressing the boundaries of conventional first-person accounts to achieve complex, shifting, and quite startling works, the authors in this collection resist the temptation of imposing a single definition of personal writing. To the benefit of those of us who engage this text, we find, then, a provocative set of essays that are loosely gathered under the category of “personal writing.” Bleich and Holdstein develop a set of operational, rather than prescriptive, categories for the articles in this collection that include “Ideals and Cautions,” “Self-Inclusion in Literary Scholarship,” “Teaching and Scholarship Face to Face,” “Teaching and Scholarship Public and Private,” and “The Social Character of Personal Narrative.” These five categories cover the range of 17 chapters of the collection with works by Margaret Willard-Traub, Jeffrey Gray, Brenda Daly, Paula M. Salvio, Susan Handelman, Louise Z. Smith, Madeleine R. Grumet, Karen Surman Paley, Diane P. Freedman, Rachel Brownstein, Joycelyn K. Moody, Kate Ronald and Hephzibah Roskelly, Victor Villanueva, Katya Gibel Azoulay, Morris Young, Christopher Castiglia, and Richard Ohmann.

Bleich and Holdstein provide insight into both their own struggles to incorporate personal writing in their academic work and their desires to engage scholarship that has defined personal writing as personal, expressive, and hybrid. From these framings, they assert that this collection contributes to “[s]cholarly uses and examinations of personal experiences help to articulate relationships among a variety of disciplines, as well as interestingly unarticulated links between composition studies and literary studies” (5). This allusion to building connections across boundaries is a strong undercurrent among the works in the collection. Citing Sylvia Molloy, Bleich and Holdstein posit “[i]n view of both the problems and new opportunities it [personal writing] offers, personal-scholarly writing represents a new direction for academic work” (6). The essays in the collection keep this promise of offering new directions.

As with others in our field who argue for more careful consideration of categories and alternative views of our otherwise normalized practices, Bleich and Holdstein ask us to engage with intellectual and personal commitment the range of readings in *Personal Effects*. Chal-

lenging the ways personal writing has come to stand for uncomplicated subject positions of “coming to voice,” these co-editors and their contributing authors provide notable readings for those of us teaching, researching, and theorizing rhetoric and composition pedagogy at both undergraduate and graduate levels.



Help for Professionals

Elizabeth Rankin, *The Work of Writing: Insights and Strategies for Academics and Professionals*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001. 144 pages. \$16.00.

Donna Gorrell

Elizabeth Rankin's *The Work of Writing* draws upon years of experience with writing groups, so it's no surprise that its primary focus is feedback. Addressing professionals about their "professional work" of writing, Rankin acknowledges that not all writers have groups available for feedback, so she gives advice not only on "Getting Feedback from Others" but also for "Writing on Your Own" (where she advises writers about how to think like other readers). We see groups at work in her frequent "scenarios."

Each chapter has several of these narrative accounts. They illustrate writer's block, resistance to revision, observation of genre expectations, submission, and more. Convinced that "all writers face similar challenges" (xii), Rankin bases her book on the idea that these particular stories capture common experiences. So we learn of Julia, an established academic writer who is preparing her first major grant proposal. Scientists in the group advise her to "cut to the chase," identify the "problem," and reduce the first three pages to a paragraph. Ignoring their feedback, she sends off the proposal much as it was when she brought it to the group. Later, we learn, the proposal was rejected for the very reasons the scientists had criticized it.

Rankin is especially helpful in telling young writers how to "exorcise the grad student within" (59) and enter the "professional conversation" (5). Achieving a professional voice involves more than having a PhD in hand, and Rankin points out some of those features: avoiding overuse of citations, qualifiers, and "calls for further research"; achieving an acceptable personal voice; and defining one's contribution to the discipline, no longer "showing what we know," but knowing the right questions for ourselves as writers. So we have Sara, who has trouble

separating her professional contribution from those of known scholars; Eric, who has to make a place in scholarship for his innovative research; and Kurt, who needs help expressing opinions gracefully.

Following the scenarios, Rankin tells how writers can get the best help from a writing group and how they can give themselves feedback. Much of her advice is familiar, such as setting the writing aside for a few days so as to read it more objectively; since we often ignore such injunctions, it is good to be reminded. Writers, she says, can help themselves acquire a professional voice by noting genre conventions as they read other work in their field and by observing how other writers balance professional and personal voices.

Rankin's appendix on "Organizing a Writing Group" gives specific, helpful information. Here again she calls on her own experience regarding "basic structure," "membership," "meetings," and "leadership." Particularly helpful for someone working within a writing group or planning to start one are lists of "Writer's Responsibilities," "Readers' Responsibilities," and "Reading Drafts in Progress: Levels of Response." The routine for feedback is first to clarify any open questions, next to say something positive, then to respond to the writer's questions, and finally to make other comments. The groups, as Rankin describes them, meet weekly, with members requesting time on particular weeks and distributing their work in advance.

In this book on professional writing, where "as writers our first obligation is to think about what we are contributing to that conversation" and "to make sure that our readers stay focused on it as well" (10), Rankin opens a collegial conversation with her audience in a voice that is authoritative yet personal. She observes scholarly conventions of style but is not constrained by them. She contributes a wealth of ideas and advice gleaned from years of working with writers in various disciplines.

WPA readers might share Rankin's book with graduate students struggling with issues of voice, focus, style constraints, or reader awareness; how to begin a project and how to end it; how to make their writing less like student writing and more professional; or how to respond to and accept reader criticism. But the book is, indeed, intended for people like you and me, who, like all writers, are sometimes at a loss for how best to present our ideas. And it is an excellent "how to" if we've been thinking of getting a few colleagues together to form a writing group.

Without question, Rankin favors writing groups as a way for writers to get reader response. It is also clear that collaboration of this kind requires a commitment of time and effort. However, the time spent reading and responding may be balanced by the sensitivity to one's own

writing that comes from tuning in to the styles of others. Undoubtedly, says Rankin in quoting a colleague, when the group is working well, “Something definitely happens.”



Two Handbooks for a Maturing Discipline

Michael Hennessy

Ward, Irene, and William J. Carpenter, eds. *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. New York: Longman, 2002. 400 pages. \$54.00 (paper).

Pytlik, Betty, and Sarah Liggett, eds. *Preparing College Teachers of Writing: Histories, Theories, Programs, Practices*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002. 330 pages. \$29.95 (paper).

In a recent essay in *College English*, Laura Micciche describes “the climate of disappointment that characterizes English studies generally and composition studies—particularly writing program administration—specifically (432). While Micciche builds a credible case for her rather dark thesis, it is worth noting, at the same time, that the professional lives of most writing program administrators are surely better now than they were in 1980, when *WPA: Writing Program Administration* first began publishing refereed articles in journal format. Not that things couldn’t get better. As Irene Ward says in her essay, “Developing Healthy Management and Leadership Styles: Surviving the WPA’s ‘Inside Game,’” on WPA burnout in *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*, much of the work we do as WPAs is “frustrating, draining, repetitive, and downright drudgery.” But our work, she points out, can also be “worthwhile, rewarding, challenging, and downright fun (50).

The two collections reviewed here touch occasionally on the disappointment and drudgery of WPA work, but far more often they testify to the excitement, even the fun, of what WPAs do. Their appearance also suggests that writing program administration has achieved a measure of disciplinary coherence: each collection is, in a sense, a “handbook,” a guide to fundamental information about the field. Ward and Carpenter’s book gives a broad overview of the field, addressing key issues, reprinting classic essays alongside new ones, and gathering essential

professional documents—the field’s “sacred texts,” if you will—in one place.¹ Pytlik and Liggett’s *Preparing College Teachers of Writing: Histories, Theories, Programs, Practices*, on the other hand, illustrates that a single area of WPA work, TA preparation, is complex enough to warrant a “handbook” of its own.

Ward and Carpenter organize their collection around five major aspects of writing program administration. The first two parts of the book focus on large questions: Who am I as an administrator? Where am I situated within the university? How can I exercise power responsibly? In “The Writing Program (Administrator) in Context: Where am I, and Can I Still Behave Like a Faculty Member?” David Schwalm skillfully probes the first of these questions, asking specifically whether a WPA can still behave like a faculty member. The answer seems to be “maybe.” A WPA’s effectiveness, he writes, depends on a “willingness to think institutionally.” At the same time, negotiating the ambiguities of the position may *require* that the WPA “maintain a faculty perspective and an administrative perspective simultaneously” (22). Like Schwalm, most contributors to the first two parts of the book address issues of power and authority. The most provocative piece is Edward M. White’s frequently cited 1991 essay “Use It or Lose It: Power and the WPA.” At least partly in reaction to White’s thesis, Thomas Amorose and Hildy Miller describe alternative ways of exercising power, Amorose from his perspective as a faculty member at a small school, Miller from a feminist perspective. Miller points out, in one of the book’s most memorable phrases, that the complicated power arrangements at some institutions can make “writing directors feel like figurehead monarchs of make-believe realms” (81).

Parts III and IV of Ward and Carpenter’s collection turn to the more immediate concerns of WPA work: TA preparation, staff development, curriculum design, program assessment, the role of technology, and the politics of AP credit. One of the most lucid and sensible pieces is Todd Taylor’s “Ten Commandments for Computers and Composition.” Part IV ends with two helpful essays on writing across the curriculum, an original piece by Martha Townsend (“Writing Across the Curriculum”) and a reprint of Barbara Walvoord’s important 1996 *College English* essay, “The Future of WAC.”

The fifth part of Ward and Carpenter’s *Sourcebook* consists of three essays—by Douglas Hesse (“Understanding Larger Discourses in Higher Education: Practical Advice for WPAs”), Jeanne Gunner (“Professional Advancement of the WPA: Rhetoric and Politics in Tenure and Promotion”), and Charles Schuster (“The Politics of Promotion”)—on promotion and professional issues for WPAs. And Part VI (“Appendices”) reprints nine important historical documents, includ-

ing “The Portland Resolution,” workload guidelines from NCTE and ADE, the Buckley Amendment, and the WPA statements on outcomes for first-year composition and the intellectual work of writing program administration. These documents alone make the book invaluable.

New, returning, and seasoned WPAs ought to find useful reading in Ward and Carpenter’s collection. In their Preface, the editors suggest that the first two parts of the book will be “especially helpful for the newer WPA” (xii). But as a veteran WPA, I found these two sections, with their broad, sometimes speculative overview of administrative issues, among the most illuminating in the book.

Pytlik and Liggett’s collection of 26 essays, *Preparing College Teachers of Writing*, explores in detail the topic covered in Part III of Ward and Carpenter’s book: TA preparation. In their Preface, Pytlik and Liggett observe that no “best” model for preparing TAs exists. And several contributors agree, pointing out that any successful program must be tailor-made for the administrators, faculty, and students who inhabit the program. Local conditions—existing administrative structures, program history, the type of graduate students who make up the labor force—are always crucial factors in program design and development.

The third section of Pytlik and Liggett’s book, “Programs,” is most acutely attuned to such local issues, offering detailed descriptions of how specific programs evolved, how they are currently configured, and how they work. Katherine Gottschalk opens the section, discussing TA preparation in Cornell’s WAC program. Then Betty Bramberg (Cal State LA) and Chris Burnham and Rebecca Jackson (New Mexico State) describe historical and current features of the preparation programs at their institutions. The next two chapters examine TA preparation for a professional writing course at Miami University (Ohio) and a Web-based program at Utah State University. In the final “Programs” chapter, Muriel Harris discusses the Purdue writing lab as a site for TA preparation.

Part IV of the Pytlik and Liggett collection (“Practices”) also focuses on individual programs, discussing specific strategies used for TA preparation. There is useful information on mentoring (three chapters); on conducting summer orientation, practica, and formal TA courses; on valuing journal and essay writing; and on using teaching portfolios and notebooks. Michael Flanigan provides an especially rich discussion of reflection, role-playing, and classroom observation in the ten-day summer orientation at the University of Oklahoma. And one of the most pragmatic chapters in Part IV is Donna Qualley’s essay on helping TAs evaluate and grade student writing. Qualley and her TAs—all master’s degree students—develop grading criteria as a “teaching community,” which ensures that even beginning TAs share ownership of the criteria.

Qualley writes, “It doesn’t work to devise a set of criteria yourself and hand it over for others to apply. The people using the instruments need to become part of the process at some point” (283). The TAs in Qualley’s program finish their degrees within two years; the “teaching community” in which she works is constantly in flux. Like all the authors who contribute to this collection, Qualley recognizes that teacher preparation is a *process*. Each new group of TAs reconstitutes the “community”; for Qualley, and for all of us, each fall term brings new challenges that invite reflection and innovation.

The many discussions of local programs and practices that make up the bulk of Pytlik and Liggett’s collection will help newcomers to TA preparation build solid programs. And veteran WPAs, too, will find much inspiration and advice for fine tuning or renewing their programs. I’ve worked with TAs for 20 years, and reading this collection has convinced me to add teaching portfolios—and maybe peer mentoring—to the program I direct. Maybe old dogs *can* learn new tricks.

In reading Pytlik and Liggett’s book cover-to-cover—which is not the way that most readers will approach it—I was sometimes overwhelmed by the attention to specific programs, to “local” concerns. The book describes all or part of 18 programs in considerable depth (three chapters focus on TA preparation at Purdue), leaving only six chapters that are not tied closely to a particular program. While the book’s emphasis on the local is nearly always grounded in an awareness of theory and history, I wished at times for greater emphasis on global issues.

Kathleen Blake Yancey raises a related point in her chapter, “The Professionalization of TA Development Programs: A Heuristic for Curriculum Design.” Although she acknowledges the usefulness of studying specific model programs, Yancey notes that “in their diversity, the models offer very little general guidance about how to develop a program or sense even of what features these programs might share” (63). While agreeing that “a common model seems neither possible nor desirable,” Yancey argues that WPAs might find useful a “common understanding and explanation of the components that define [effective] programs” (63). She goes on to say that “we must consider not only the local context but also the larger rhetorical contexts of writing programs” (65). Her chapter then maps out a useful and rhetorically rich twelve-point heuristic for both the design and review of TA preparation programs.

For me, the 18 “local” programs described in the book are read most productively in light of Yancey’s heuristic, and I would recommend her piece as both an introduction to and conclusion for the chapters (4, 7-17, 19-26) that focus most heavily on particular programs. Like Yancey’s chapter, the first two chapters in Pytlik and Liggett’s book also provide

a much-needed framework (in this case a historical context) for the later “local” chapters. Pytlik herself, in “How Graduate Students Were Prepared to Teach Writing—1850-1970,” tells the first part of the story, Brian Huot, in “Recent Trends in TA Instruction,” the second.

The Pytlik and Liggett volume includes an exceptionally thorough index, making the book especially well suited for reference. There are detailed entries, for example, on mentoring, on orientation programs, on the role of reflective practice, and on the use of portfolios. A WPA thinking about adding a portfolio assignment to a TA practicum would want to read all of Margaret Lingren’s essay on the topic, which includes advice about everything from establishing a theoretical stance to selecting appropriate documents. But the index would also direct the reader to six additional places in the book that address one particular aspect of portfolios—their usefulness in a job search.

The two books reviewed here are not the sort that Francis Bacon, in his classic essay “Of Studies,” advises us to chew, digest, and read “wholly.” Rather, most readers will probably want to read the books “in parts” (50). Both collections, in other words, are reference works: “handbooks” for a maturing discipline. And the members of that discipline—new and experienced WPAs, faculty and staff who work with TAs, and graduate students exploring writing program administration—will want to read these books in various ways at various times. Each collection is a welcome and important addition to the field. I can’t imagine a WPA who wouldn’t want to read substantial parts of each book and then to keep both of them close at hand for quick reference and moral support.

NOTE

¹ Ward and Carpenter’s *Sourcebook* is not the first, and certainly not the last, book that might be classified as a “handbook” for WPAs. Two other contenders, one seven years old and one brand new, are Joseph Janangelo and Kristine Hansen’s *Resituating Writing* (1995) and Stuart C. Brown, Theresa Enos, and Catherine Chaput’s *The Writing Program Administrator’s Resource* (2002).

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Portrait of a Writing Program

Monroe, Jonathan, ed. *Writing and Revising the Disciplines*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002. 196 pages. \$17.95 (paper).

Michael Pennell

Frequently in WPA and WAC scholarship, readers find the illustration of a WAC program or the telling of a writing program administrator's narrative contextualized with the caveat: "Remember, each campus is unique." Therefore, the ways in which WPAs, for example, handle situations in their departments largely depend on their local context, and as readers we should expect a thorough description of the setting and see each of these as unique. Nonetheless, as a future rhetoric and composition professor, and possibly a WPA, I still find thick description of writing programs useful, if not wholly indicative of my future context. It is in this awareness of the highly situated nature of WPA work that I explored the more than unique, perhaps anomalous, setting of writing at Cornell University, as illustrated in Jonathan Monroe's collection *Writing and Revising the Disciplines*. Monroe's collection of essays from nine current and past Cornell professors offers a view of not necessarily the administration of a writing program but evidence of the importance of writing in all disciplines—a sort of "writing family" photo album. This book serves as a unique window into the writing, and the "family of writing," occurring across campus and creating and sustaining the various institutional disciplines which create the university.

The contributors to the text offer proof of the essential component writing plays in the existence and creation of disciplinary and institutional knowledge. Therefore, the stories contained within prove germane to the everyday work of teachers and scholars in the field of composition. As a professor of comparative literature, the associate dean of the college of arts and sciences, and the director of the Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines, Monroe sought the collected essays as a means to "assess and reevaluate [. . .] the relationship between writing and disciplinary" at Cornell. Therefore, the contributors seek to map and trace

the ways in which writing and disciplinarity are intertwined in their respective fields. The text, or family photo, is divided into three sections: the physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Each section, in turn, is represented by three contributors: The physical sciences offers N. David Mermin's "Writing Physics," Roald Hoffman's "Writing (and Drawing) Chemistry," and Margaret W. Rossiter's "Writing Women into Science" (representing science and technology studies). The second section, the social sciences, is composed of Isaac Kramnick's "Writing Politics," Ronald L. Breiger's "Writing (and Quantifying) Sociology," and Larry I. Palmer's "Writing Law." Finally, the humanities section presents Jonathan Culler's "Writing Criticism" (English and comparative literature), Dominick LaCapra's "Writing History, Writing Trauma," and Hunter R. Rawlings' "Writing the Humanities in the Twenty-first Century." (classics, university president).

Originally the Knight Writing Program, the Institute's initiative to establish discipline-based approaches to the teaching of writing, both at Cornell and elsewhere, can be traced to 1966. Currently, the Institute coordinates both first-year and advanced writing classes, houses the Writing Workshop, and engages in outreach activities, such as the Cornell Consortium for Writing in the Disciplines. Further, according to the Institute's home page, "more than thirty-five academic departments and programs offer courses associated with the Knight Institute's programs" ("Institute Overview"). After offering a brief history of the John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines and describing the effects that Cornell's approach to writing has, and continues to have, on various educational institutions who also aim to make writing "the property of all disciplines," Monroe highlights the key to the program's continued success: "the Cornell faculty's commitment to the importance of writing as a richly complex, heterogeneous activity that is integral to thinking and learning" (ix). Monroe contends that one question forms the basis for his interest in gaining a cross-section of writing at Cornell: "What do we talk about when we talk about writing?" (8). Monroe hopes to make present and future "teacher-scholars" throughout various disciplines more self-aware of writing practices "conventions, and constraints" that "each discipline necessarily cultivates" (7).

As Monroe notes in his introduction, the organization of the text is deliberately counterintuitive, as it opens with physicist N. David Mermin and closes with classics professor and Cornell president Hunter Rawlings. And interestingly, this counterintuitive arrangement mirrors my level of interest, and the writers' levels of self-awareness, in the essays. The contributions are strongest, and most germane to a novice "teacher-scholar" like myself, when they enact the same strategies employed in Diana George's edited collection *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and*

Troubadours: Writing Program Administrators Tell Their Stories, in which WPAs share *their* stories as part of the field. Unfortunately, the amount of “self” wanes as the book progresses, and ironically reaches a low point in the humanities section. Whereas N. David Mermin, in “Writing Physics” tells of his initial interest in physics through the magic of relativity and quantum mechanics, and of an experience in a high-school physics class, Dominick LaCapra, in his contribution “Writing History, Writing Trauma,” provides an extensive, and rather detached, consideration of two approaches to historiography. Similarly, while Margaret Rossiter in “Writing Women into Science” traces her difficult path as a woman into the university and the field of the history of science, Jonathan Culler, in “Writing Criticism,” traces movements of, and comments on, literary criticism, with little reflection on the self. And, writing as President of the university, Hunter R. Rawlings III offers a “state of the university” essay, highlighting the humanities central location in the “great university.” Thus, while some of the essays offer a view of writing and one’s use of writing in a discipline, others, unfortunately, simply offer disciplinary writing.

While Monroe admits in his preface that the text presents only a “family portrait or snapshot” of the disciplines included, I see the metaphor as more accurate, and dysfunctional, than he intended. The essays taken as a whole do present a snapshot of the discipline; yet, perhaps most perplexing is not only the lack of writing program administration in the text/snapshot but also the invisibility of the field of rhetoric and composition as a whole. As writing becomes a concern of the entire campus, rhetoric and composition, along with the administration of writing, become, it appears, everywhere and nowhere. The rather elite and/or dysfunctional portrait described by Monroe leaves future WPAs, such as myself, uncertain about their place in a university where “the humanities have fallen behind their more worldly disciplinary cousins” (Rawlings 188). While *Writing and Revising the Disciplines* succeeds in centralizing writing as key to the knowledge-making enterprise of the university, this action, at least as presented at Cornell, places the future, novice, and experienced WPA, at least as traditionally located within an English department, in a rare position of either being central or expendable in the university’s future.

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Situating the Public and Personal in Student Writing

Isaacs, Emily J. and Phoebe Jackson, eds. *Public Works: Student Writing as Public Text*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2001. 117 pages. \$19.00

Paley, Karen Surman. *I-Writing: The Politics and Practice of Teaching First-Person Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2001. 240 pages. \$25.00 (paper), \$50.00 (cloth).

Stephanie Kerschbaum

Emily Isaacs and Phoebe Jackson's *Public Works: Student Writing as Public Text* and Karen Paley's *I-Writing: The Politics and Practice of Teaching First-Person Writing*, both represent student writing from different ends of a spectrum, with Isaacs and Jackson looking at the ways that student writing is made public and Paley focusing on the value of personal, first-person writing for students. What these texts share, however, is a focus on classroom practice and the theories that underlie our approaches to various kinds of writing. They also pay close attention to the ethics and problems that these visions can bring, serving as effective guides to teachers seeking to work with the ideas they present.

More specifically, *Public Works* is a collection that complicates what it means for texts to be "public" and the pedagogical implications for such perspectives. The contributors to this volume expand and problematize notions of publicity by performing critical self-reflections on their own teaching practices, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of the relationships and boundaries between public and private. *I-Writing*, on the other hand, focuses almost exclusively on personal (expressivist) writing, using an ethnography of communication approach to classroom research. However, in her analysis, Paley pushes these "personal" student texts outside a realm of self-interest towards an appreciation for

the ways that these students' work interacts with the world. Both books, then, despite their opposing emphases, enact a healthy tension between personal and public writing.

Public Works offers as an explicit aim the need to conceptualize what it means for students to be treated as *writers*: we need to avoid limiting students' writing simply because it is written by students. In their introduction, Isaacs and Jackson write,

it all seems rather easy and simple: Writing teachers must be, with increasing frequency, developing courses that enable and perhaps mandate public writing. [. . .] Among the many differences we might have, the value of writing for audiences beyond the teacher seems almost universally valued" (ix).

When we move beyond the theory, though, we need to raise questions about how such pedagogies are to be enacted. For instance, how do we conceive of these "public" audiences? How do we develop criteria for evaluating this writing? What are the ethics of such moves in our classrooms? In attempting to respond to these questions, the contributors to the volume bring a practical element to the discussion, above all, trying to elaborate on variations of this question: How does the move towards "publicity," in fact, get enacted within a classroom space?

One of the most powerful elements of this collection is its emphasis on reflective practice. Each of the essays draws from personal experience and gleans theoretical insights from those practices, and then returns with those insights back to classroom practice. In this way, the contributors navigate a fine line between abstract generalizations about publicity and practical concerns that guide the theory's engagement in classrooms (or, in some cases, outside the classroom). Another strength of this collection is the range of voices represented: while most of the essays are written by professors, there is an essay written by a graduate student (Benda), and a collaboratively written essay by two recent undergraduates (Palmeri and Daum). The benefits of this variety is obvious, but the conversations the essays provoke also serve to help teachers locate themselves within the various practices advocated throughout the collection.

The collection is divided into three sections with four chapters each, moving from reflective theoretical discussions of publicity to a more specific enactment of publicity (writing online) to a section dealing with pedagogical strategies within classrooms themselves. Each of the four sections maintains an impressive thematic unity, while presenting essays with diverse perspectives. For example, in Part 1, Andrea Stover's essay, "Redefining Public/Private Boundaries in the Composition Classroom,"

argues that there is a necessary balance in every classroom between the privacy and the publicity of a piece of text. As teachers, we need to respect that balance as we work to make classrooms/students' writing public because, "[i]f a person's emotional and intellectual responses to a theory or practice are at odds with one another, the emotional response will almost always win out. And in my experience, issues of privacy provoke more intense emotional responses than intellectual ones" (3). Stover's insight leads to a conception of writing's relationship to publicity (and privacy) in which definitions for these terms need to be negotiated and understood by both the students and the teacher(s), even if one's understandings are incomplete. From Stover's essay, the collection moves to Amy Lee's "Embodied Processes: Pedagogies in Context." Lee's essay introduces a different angle from which we might conceive of the "public" move: if the classroom itself is to be treated as a kind of public in which students share their work with each other, we need to teach our students not only how to address various audiences, but how to *read* works intended for those audiences. Shari Stenberg shows how students may not be empowered, but rather, silenced by some public formats, encouraging caution as we design these pedagogical strategies. And finally, Amy Goodburn reminds us of some of the ethical struggles that arise when asking students to write about community experiences, asking how that work has effects on other students, as well as on the communities being written about.

The first section of the book thus serves as a nice introduction to the complex theoretical issues surrounding these moves towards various "publics," staying firmly grounded within the classroom. The next two sections move further away from the unitary "classroom": "The Virtual Public" moves to the Internet, while "The Pedagogy of Public Writing" explores what happens when students write for (not about) communities that exist outside the realm of the classroom. The essays are arranged thematically, but present diverse perspectives and theoretical grounds.

Paley's *I-Writing* is also wide-ranging, as she focuses on classroom spaces, but employs a number of voices to portray the students, teachers, and writing at the core of her study. The central part of *I-Writing* is a semester-long ethnographic study of two teachers at Boston College, which makes up the middle four chapters of the book. Paley's main goal, as she puts it, is "to affirm the value of teaching, or rather allowing, our students to write narrative (as well as expository, descriptive, and persuasive) essays in the first person" (7). A second goal is to show the different ways that "expressivism" can be implemented as a pedagogical practice.

The opening chapter, “The Social Construction of ‘Expressivist’ Pedagogy,” is a critique of how expressivism has been discussed in taxonomies of composition and rhetoric as a field. Paley cites James Berlin and Lester Faigley in particular as influential critiques of expressivist writing, arguing that their descriptions of expressivism are reductive and ignore much of its diversity and complexity. Further, she suggests that when talking about expressivism, our focus should be to take a closer look at actual classroom practice. In this way, she prepares readers for the chapters that follow: six of her eight chapters focus on classroom practice (four are from her own ethnography; one is a reading of Kathleen Cassity’s ethnography of Peter Elbow, and one is an account of a visit to Patricia Bizzell’s classroom).

In each ethnographically-based chapter, Paley works to show how personal writing is not contained within a writer’s individual self: exposing one’s personal writing to a larger public (whether that public is the teacher, other members of the class, or Paley herself) almost always requires that one also engage with larger issues involved in that piece of writing. For example, in discussing one student, Janet, Paley’s analysis revolves around Janet’s representation of and talk about homeless people, a project both personal (because it involves Janet’s volunteer work, and because it stemmed out of Janet’s own feelings of emotional homelessness) and public (because Janet is dealing with communities and issues outside of her personal sphere). However, much of the chapter also attempts to work through Paley’s feelings of “irritation” with Janet. This irritation, as Paley describes it, stems from her personal response to Janet, as well as “frustration” with the way Helena worked with Janet during conferences. In the end, both researcher and teacher feel limited with regard to Janet’s ability to integrate a critical element into her writing. Paley takes pains to point out here that expressivism does not allow writers to write whatever they feel—that, in fact, it demands a different kind of engagement with text.

Another student, Catherine, writes a personal essay dealing with her father’s alcoholism, which leads her to a paper dealing with alcohol on college campuses. Paley shows Catherine’s transition between these two papers through a careful narration of Catherine’s conferences with Helena as well as of the texts she produced. Describing Helena’s work with Catherine, Paley writes,

At the heart of the pedagogy is the belief that it is important for students to write about what matters to them. Rather than abandon that principle for the sake of teaching an author-evacuated mode of discourse, the kind of research

paper Lester Faigley valorizes in *Fragments of Rationality*, Helena retained it in order to facilitate the learning process. (109)

Throughout *I-Writing*, Paley integrates her description of these expressivist classroom practices with her own understandings and reactions to the activity. She's careful to situate herself very specifically, laying out her biases and explaining her reactions in what are often very personal terms. However, while in *Public Works* I found myself drawn into what felt like an ongoing conversation, one that remained yet to be decided and which I could add to, complete, and revise to suit my own pedagogy, *I-Writing* maintains a strong emphasis on the benefits of expressivist writing. I kept waiting for a critique, for cautions or warnings, for potential pitfalls along the way. The closest Paley comes, however, is to express her "frustration" with Helena's treatment of Janet.

For the most part, it feels as if Paley's desire to affirm the value of expressivism leads to a relatively uncritical treatment of it as a pedagogy. For instance, Paley makes clear her argument that we need to attend to actual classroom practice in conceptualizing what it means to be expressivist. However, what she doesn't ask is about the ways the theories underlying expressivist pedagogy might be problematic for these instructors and their students. Further, the definition Paley offers of expressivism, that it is "a pedagogy that includes (but is by no means limited to) an openness to the use of personal narrative, a particular type of the narrative mode of discourse" (13), is so focused on *practice* that it neglects any theoretical cohesion that might underlie that practice. If expressivism is to be seen as more than "personal narrative," teachers need to begin to do more than exhort its value: they need to reflect on the problems it raises, to see ways to address those problems, and to investigate the relationships between what they do and why they do it. While Paley is focused on looking at expressivism as a practice, without theory, that practice becomes what Ann Berthoff refers to as recipe-swapping, and fails to engage teachers in *reflective* practice. With that, I return to *Public Works* as a model of how theory and practice come together and engage teachers and writing program administrators. Despite what I see as *I-Writing's* thinness with respect to pedagogical theory, these texts, taken together, do much to help teachers situate their practices and to forward redefinitions of what we do in our classrooms.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

WPA Summer 2003

July 6-10: Workshop

July 10: Assessment Institute

July 11-13: WPA 2003

In the summer of 2003, WPA finds itself in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a vibrant city that boasts a wide range of restaurants, museums, and entertainment, and is characterized by interesting architecture and culturally diverse neighborhoods. With its own international airport and close to major hubs, including Detroit's brand new International Gateway Terminal, Grand Rapids is easy to get to. Just half an hour from the pristine shores of Lake Michigan, Grand Rapids also makes an excellent starting or ending point for vacations in the lower or upper peninsulas of Michigan or other parts of the Upper Midwest. For inquiries and questions, please contact: Chris M. Anson, 2003 WPA Program Chair; chris_anson@ncsu.edu; 919-513-4080; fax: 919-515-6071.

First WPA Book Award Announced

Shirley Rose

Coming of Age: The Advanced Writing Curriculum, edited by Linda K. Shamoon, Rebecca Moore Howard, Sandra Jamieson, and Robert A. Schwegler (Heinemann-Boynton/Cook, 2001) has been selected for the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Best Book Award for 2000-2001.

The CWPA has established this award as part of its efforts to develop and promote an understanding of writing program administration as intellectual work of depth, sophistication, and significance. The Awards Committee developed the following criteria for selection:

- 1) The book addresses one or more issues of long-term interest to administrators of writing programs in higher education.
- 2) The book presents outcomes of the intellectual work of one or more writing program administrators.
- 3) The book discusses theories, practices or policies that contribute to a richer understanding of WPA work.
- 4) The book shows sensitivity toward the situated contexts in which WPAs work.
- 5) The book makes a significant contribution to the scholarship of writing program administration.
- 6) The book will serve as a strong representative of the scholarship of and research on writing program administration.

The awards committee noted that, in addition to meeting these criteria, *Coming of Age* is also to be commended for its innovation in print-linked publication, which expands conceptions and definitions of scholarly genres. *Coming of Age* is part of Heinemann's "Cross-Currents in Composition" series, edited by Charles Schuster.

Professor Linda Shamoon is Director of the College Writing Program at the University of Rhode Island. Professor Rebecca Moore Howard is Director of the Writing Program at Syracuse University. Professor Sandra Jamieson is Director of Composition at Drew University. University of Rhode Island Professor Robert Schwegler is a co-author of the Council of Writing Program Administrators' "Intellectual Work Document." The editors received certificates of the award at a special presentation during the Friday evening banquet at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Summer Conference in Park City, Utah, on July 12, 2002. Members of the Award Selection Committee were Shirley K Rose, Chair (Purdue University), William Condon (Washington State University), Marguerite Helmers (University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh), Joseph Janangelo (Loyola University Chicago), and Ellen Quandahl (San Diego State University).

WPA Awards, Connors Conference Fellowships

Linda Adler-Kassner

As per the March CCCC meeting, an announcement for the WPA Connors Fellowship, covering registration fees for a graduate student attending the WPA Summer Conference, was circulated on WPA-L in April/May. Fellow committee member Kathi Yancey and I received ten applications for the Fellowships. In ranking applications, we considered the applicants' descriptions of their work in composition and writing program administration and descriptions of how the conference would enhance applicants' graduate educations. Of the ten applications received, four were chosen as fellowship recipients:

Stephanie Vie - University of Arizona

Billie Hara - University of Texas- Arlington/Texas Wesleyan University

Angela Lowe Margetts - Brigham Young University

Darren Cambridge - University of Texas- Austin

The Writing Instructor, a freely available networked journal and digital community indexed in the *MLA International Bibliography*, announces the release of Betas 2.1 (Open Topic) and 2.5 ("Electronic Publication"). Beta 2.5 is a multi-journal, collaborative issue involving *TWI*, *Academic.Writing*, *Enculturation*, *Kairos*, and *CCC Online*. These *TWI* releases feature new work from Paul Cesarini, Joseph Eng, Paul Heilker, Janice McIntire-Strasburg, Peggy O'Neill, Patricia Webb Peterson, and Karen Wink. *TWI* accepts open submissions for blind, peer review year round. Contact editors David Blakesley (blakesle@purdue.edu) or Dawn Formo (dformo@csusm.edu) for more information, or visit the Website at <http://www.writinginstructor.com>.

Discovering Digital Dimensions: Computers and Writing 2003 (3-D at Purdue in 2003) will be hosted by Purdue's Department of English, the Pro-

fessional Writing Program, the Rhetoric and Composition Program, and the Writing Lab from May 22–25, 2003, in West Lafayette, Indiana.

As in years past, the conference will provide diverse opportunities for engagement on issues of central concern to teachers, scholars, and writers in the emergent culture of the digital age. The theme—3-D at Purdue in 2003—stresses the importance of discovery in the many dimensions of learning, teaching, and writing as digital networks proliferate and make possible new forms of expression, suggest alternative rhetorics, and invite (re)presentation of our disciplinary histories. Conference participants will have opportunities to hear keynote and featured speakers, such as Bob Stein, Mark C. Taylor, Victoria Vesna, and Victor Vitanza, attend poster and panel sessions, interact with vendors specializing in communication technologies, and be entertained at special multimedia (3-D) events. The conference will again partner with the Graduate Research Network and the CW 2003 Online Conference. Some participants may have opportunities for earning course credit.

For more information about the on-site conference, contact David Blakesley, Program Chair, Department of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907, 765.494.3772, info@cw2003.org. The conference website includes registration and additional program information: <http://www.cw2003.org>

Computers in Writing-Intensive Classrooms (CWIC), the summer institute for teachers who want to incorporate technology into their classrooms, will be held June 16-27, 2003, at Michigan Technological University, Houghton, MI. Coordinated by Cynthia Selfe, Anne Wysocki, Dickie Selfe, Gail Hawisher, and Johndan Johnson-Eilola, CIWIC has three workshops that participants can choose from: (1) Approaches to Integrating Computers into Writing Classrooms (CIWIC-AIC), which provides a space for participants to explore the thoughtful integration of technology in composition and other classrooms by examining the value of such tools as electronic conferencing, text and visual composition software, print and Web design, digital video, and sound editing, as well as technology-enhanced assignment design and lab management strategies; (2) Integrating New Media into Writing Classrooms (CIWIC-NM), whose participants learn graphics and authoring software for composing, discussing, and developing compositional and rhetorical approaches for teaching multimedia texts; and (3) Individual Projects (CIWIC-IP), which is for returning CIWIC participants who want to take on a more focused project with individualized support. All three institutes use classrooms at Michigan Tech and the state-of-the-art computer facility, the Center for Computer-Assisted Language Instruction (CCLI). All participants receive three semester-hours of graduate credit. Participants need have no previous computer knowledge; individualized instruction will be provided. Participants from all educational levels are encouraged to attend. For more information and registration materials, visit our website at <http://www.hu.mtu.edu/ciwic> or contact Cheryl E. Ball by email at ceball@mtu.edu or by phone at 906-487-3272 (office) or 906-487-2582 (lab).

CONTRIBUTORS TO WPA 26.1/2

Nancy Blattner is a professor of English and an Academic Associate in the Office of the Provost at Southeast Missouri State University. From 1998 to 2001, she served as the statewide coordinator of the Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment (CWA). As part of her work with the CWA, Blattner drafted the group's position paper on the delivery of dual-credit composition courses and assisted in writing the CWA's position paper on equitable assessment of student writing. During the 2002-2003 academic year, Blattner is serving a national American Council on Education (ACE) Fellowship at Longwood University in Virginia.

Lynn Z. Bloom is Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor and Aetna Chair of Writing at the University of Connecticut, and past president of WPA (1988-90). Her publications include composition studies ("The Essay Canon," *Composition Studies as a Creative Art*; *Composition in the 21st Century*; and *Composition Studies in the New Millennium*, both co-edited collections of papers from WPA invitational conferences); biography (*Doctor Spock*), autobiography (*Forbidden Diary*; *Forbidden Family*); textbooks (*The Arlington Reader*; *The Essay Connection*; *Inquiry*; *Fact and Artifact: Writing Nonfiction*); and creative nonfiction ("Teaching College English as a Woman" and "Living to Tell the Tale: The Complicated Ethics of Creative Nonfiction.")

Sally Barr Ebest is WPA, associate professor of English, and Coordinator of the Campus-wide TA Workshops at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Material for her essay was drawn from her book, *Changing the Way We Teach*, forthcoming from SIU Press. Ebest is also the co-author of *Writing From A to Z* (McGraw-Hill) and co-editor of *Reconciling Catholicism and Feminism?* forthcoming from the University of Notre Dame Press. She is presently working on a "prequel" to *Changing the Way We Teach*, entitled *Models for Change*.

Jane Frick is professor of English and the Director of the Prairie Lands Writing Project, a National Writing Project site, at Missouri Western State College. She chaired the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism at Western from 1982 until 2001, and helped to coordinate the development and offering of dual-credit composition courses at her institution. As the Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment (CWA) newsletter editor, 1989-2001, she conducted the organization's annual writing survey, which tracked dual-credit composition course delivery systems and enrollments throughout the state.

Donna Gorrell is professor of English at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud Minnesota. She directed the writing program there from 1987 to 1993 and the graduate studies program from 1993 to 1999 and again from 2000 to 2001. She teaches in the rhetoric and applied writing program. Her articles have been published in various professional journals, including *Research in the Teaching of English*, *College Composition and Communication*, and *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. Her published books include *The Purpose Writer* and *A Writer's Handbook from A to Z*. She is presently writing a book on style in writing.

Amy C. Kimme Hea is an assistant professor in the Rhetoric, Composition, and Teaching of English program at the University of Arizona. Her research interests include web-based teaching and learning, teacher training, and professional writing theory and practice. She has published on articulation theory and methodology in the international journal, *Educare/Educere* and the relationship of academic and corporate web development and use in *Working with Words and Images: New Steps in an Old Dance*, edited by Nancy Allen. Her most recent work on the WWW and critical computer composition teaching is forthcoming in a special edition of *Computers and Composition*.

Michael Hennessy is Professor of English at Southwest Texas State University, where he directs the first-year writing and sophomore literature programs and teaches courses in composition, modern literature, and the teaching of writing. He holds a PhD in English from Marquette University and has taught at Memphis State University and John Carroll University.

Stephanie Kerschbaum is a doctoral candidate in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as the Co-Assistant Director of the English 100 Program. She is working on a dissertation that looks at how teachers and students negotiate difference in writing classrooms.

Peggy O'Neill is an assistant professor of writing and director of composition at Loyola College in Maryland where she teaches a variety of undergraduate writing courses, including first-year composition. Her scholarship, which focuses on writing assessment theory and practice, preparation of writing teachers, and writing program administration has appeared in several different journals and essay collections. In addition, she has co-edited *Field of Dreams: Independent Writing Programs and the Future of Composition Studies* and *Practice in Context: Situating the Work of Writing Teachers*.

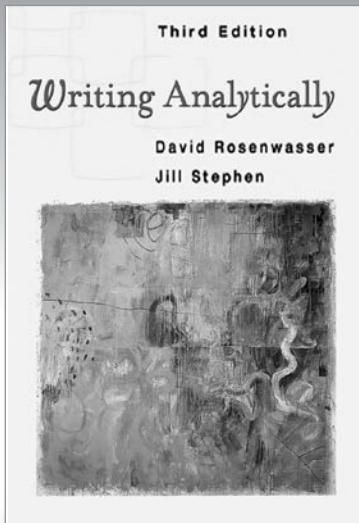
Michael Pennell is a doctoral candidate in Rhetoric and Composition at Purdue University. His specializations are in digitality, technology, and visual rhetoric.

Ellen Schendel teaches academic and professional writing courses in the Writing Department at Grand Valley State University. Her research focuses on writing assessment and has been published in *Writing Program Administration* and *Assessing Writing*, among other places.

Brian Huot is Professor of English and Director of Composition at the University of Louisville. His work focuses on the connections between practice and theory in writing assessment. With Kathleen Yancey he is now editing the *Journal of Writing Assessment*, a new periodical devoted to writing assessment.

Edward M. White is Professor Emeritus of English at Cal State San Bernardino and an adjunct professor in the Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English graduate program at the University of Arizona. He has written or edited nine books, three of them textbooks for first-year college composition courses. His best-known books are *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (1994) and *Assessment of Writing: Politics, Policies, Practices* (1996). He is one of the editors of the forthcoming *Composition Studies in the New Millenium*, based on papers delivered at the 2001 WPA conference.





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