

Insiders and Outsiders: Redrawing the Boundaries of the Writing Program

Cary Moskovitz and Michael Petit

In the last decade, a number of high-profile institutions have extended the Writing in the Disciplines (WID) concept by redesigning their first-year writing programs as interdisciplinary endeavors.¹ Even though WID was pioneered by compositionists, the hiring of scholars from various disciplines to teach writing has created considerable tension since writing courses are the bread and butter of many English/composition programs and an important training ground for future compositionists. There is a long history of institutions outsourcing first-year writing to barely-qualified and/or under-compensated adjuncts and to under-trained graduate students. To some compositionists, this extension of WID is yet another battleground in the effort to professionalize the field. Newly-minted Ph.D.s may be especially troubled by this development. We have heard young scholars at both regional and national conferences express the sentiment, “If anyone can teach writing, what good is a Ph.D. in Comp?”

While interdisciplinary first-year writing programs are a recent development, the essential positions underlying this tension were articulated as early as 1988 by Louise Smith and Catherine Pastor Blair. In her article “Why English Departments Should House Writing Across the Curriculum” (*College English* 50.4), Smith contended that English departments should house writing programs since English scholars have “relatively expert knowledge of such matters as reader-response theory, error analysis, writing-to-learn, and collaborative composition pedagogies” (394). In the same issue of *College English*, Blair, in her article “Only One of the Voices: Dialogic Writing across the Curriculum,” disagreed: “[I]f we wish . . . to provide the most liberal and liberalizing education for our students, we cannot privilege a single disciplinary context with a single language. . . . We need a writing program that concerns itself equitably with many ways of making meaning” (384).

The unresolved issues raised in this debate have only been complicated by the extension of WID into first-year writing.

“INSIDERS” AND “OUTSIDERS”

Throughout much of the twentieth century a Ph.D. in English was *the* factor that most distinguished so-called “insiders” from “outsiders.”² Charles Kneupper, an experienced writing teacher, could rhetorically position himself as an outsider in 1981 only because, at that time, literature scholars still held ascendancy as what he terms “the best available” writing teachers:

When I say I am an *outsider*, I do not mean that I have not taught composition, because I have. Nor do I mean that I do not follow developments in composition theory and research, because I do. What I mean is that my training in rhetoric and my competence as a teacher of composition do not derive from studies in a department of English. Rather, my training in rhetorical studies comes from a department of speech and was heavily oriented to the study of rhetorical theory. (304)

In the passage following this citation, Kneupper uses his outsider position to argue for the substitution of one privileged specialty, literary criticism, for another, rhetorical theory. But attempting to identify qualified writing teachers categorically by scholarly discipline inevitably reifies an unproductive insider/outsider binary. That the Smith and Blair exchange involved English scholars working within English departments publishing in *College English* also speaks to the issue of insider vs. outsider. Discussions of who should be “in” or “out” of the pool of potential writing teachers often take place in situations that limit participation of voices from other fields.³

In this essay we offer the shared perspectives of a former “outsider” with a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering who has come “inside” the world of teaching writing, and a former “insider”—a Ph.D. in English—who has stepped “outside” of an English department to teach in a stand-alone writing program. The wide methodological and epistemological differences between our disciplines highlight what it can mean to be (or to become) an insider in a writing program that challenges traditional distinctions between insiders and outsiders.⁴ Based on our experiences as writing teachers within various “insider” and “outsider” contexts, we challenge what we see as a primary source of the tension described above: framing the question of who should teach writing as an either/or choice—one where writing programs should be staffed only by compositionists (or perhaps, in another version, English and rhetoric scholars as well) *or* one in which the knowledge and experience of these “traditional” writing teachers is undervalued in the drive to

increase interdisciplinarity. Instead, we argue that writing programs have much to gain from genuine collaboration between those who have been traditionally located on the inside and outside of this work.⁵

Moskovitz:

In the realm of writing, my undergraduate and graduate training was typical for engineers: I took no formal writing courses after my freshman year, and while I wrote plenty of lab reports as an undergraduate, I wrote nothing resembling an essay after completing required core courses in my sophomore year. The only extended prose I wrote as a graduate student was for my thesis, my dissertation, and related technical articles for publication. (Of course I did a lot of “writing,” but this was mainly in the form of mathematics and computer programming.) In addition, I spent four years acquiring a Master’s of Architecture degree; that training emphasized the acquisition of visual and design knowledge, primarily through making and studying drawings and models. Response to my written work by my professors was similar in the engineering and architecture programs, where rhetorical and disciplinary conventions were rarely explicitly discussed. Unsurprisingly, my graduate training did little to shake up my notion that the writing of such fields was by and large a technocratic affair.

The breadth of my studies did, however, spark an interest in interdisciplinary learning and in pedagogy more generally. In trying to understand ancient Greek notions of rhythm and proportion in façade design or Frank Lloyd Wright’s ideas about motifs, for example, I found myself drawing on—and wanting to build on—my knowledge of mathematics and music. I became interested in how knowledge in one area can help (or hinder) learning in another.

In 1994 I joined the faculty of a small liberal arts college. In addition to courses in math, physics and architecture, my load included a writing-intensive, upper-level core course called “Science, Technology and Society.” My initial attempts to have students in this course write extended prose were disastrous for the typical reasons: my assignments were vague, my responses, though extensive, were not pedagogically sound, and I had no interaction with my students’ work between handing out the prompt and receiving the end product. I recognized that many of my students were weak writers, but also that I was inadequately prepared to help them. I solicited advice from the college’s resident experts, who gladly shared information and resources on some fundamentals of contemporary writing pedagogy.

Petit:

I come to the teaching of writing like many literature scholars: with on-the-job training during my first semester as an English graduate student. Holding an undergraduate degree in English, I was deemed well enough prepared to step into a first-year writing classroom and was selected on the basis of a writing sample to attend an intensive two-week training seminar before the semester began. The stand-alone writing program was directed by two full professors who themselves were specialists in literature rather than composition and rhetoric (though they had intellectual interests and experience in writing pedagogy). Given that I shared the directors' sensibilities and approaches as a fellow literary critic, I was *de facto* an insider, even though I was only beginning work that would lead to an M.A. in creative writing and a Ph.D. in eighteenth-century British literature. Though I had no prior teaching experience, the program gave me and the other selected graduate students the challenge of designing a first-year critical-thinking-through-critical-writing course. I don't know who was more apprehensive on the first day of class, me or my students. Despite my initial apprehension, I later realized that learning how to be an effective critical writing teacher over the next years was the single best intellectual training I received during graduate studies; I know it helped me become a much better writer. This took place in isolation from formal studies in composition and rhetoric, as the English department did not offer graduate course work in writing pedagogy, theory, or history.

I want to contrast this insider experience with the experience of my first post-doctoral position: adjunct instructor in literature and composition at a large R-1 public university. That institution's writing program was administered by faculty with advanced degrees in composition and rhetoric. Almost all sections of the required first-year course were taught by English graduate students who first completed a gateway course in writing pedagogy. Although by this time I had a great deal of experience in teaching writing, I lacked the specialized course work emphasized at that institution, and, like many who study literature, I knew little of the history of writing programs and remained unfamiliar with work by key compositionists. I was an outsider within this context. My institutional status as an adjunct also exacerbated my sense of being an outsider: I could teach, but I did not have any benefits; I could teach, but I did not have any input on course design, goals, or faculty governance; I could teach, but I did not have any opportunities for research funding or teaching awards. But just as important was the nature of the course itself, which required a unit on writing for the humanities, a unit on the social sciences, and a unit on the natural sciences. While

the idea of exposing students to the conventions of different discourse communities made sense, my training in the humanities did not prepare me to teach students to read and write in the social or natural sciences in any complex or nuanced way. I taught them like an English teacher. Though I designed assignments with a survey component to gather empirical evidence and asked students to do ethnography by observing dorm culture, I did so with the sinking feeling that I really didn't "get" the social science discourse conventions I was teaching. And while I had my students build elaborate structures to protect eggs dropped from a window in the English building and then write up the results—as suggested in the program's staff manual for the natural sciences unit—the assignment did not accord with my sense that students' critical thinking skills are better served by writing analytical and argumentative papers instead of what I perceived as merely descriptive lab reports. I expressed, then, outsider status in three ways—an outsider to composition, an outsider to regular faculty, and an outsider to much of the course work itself.

Moskovitz:

I came to the Duke writing program in 2001—its second year of operation and its first year of full staffing. The program had an exceptionally strong commitment to interdisciplinarity, and the faculty who joined the program that year had a wide range of backgrounds. Nevertheless, the culture of the fledgling program had been shaped primarily by its administrators who had backgrounds in English and rhet/comp, and secondarily by faculty who joined the program the prior year, most of whom had similar backgrounds. Even though I came to Duke with a few years of experience teaching writing-intensive classes, I was unfamiliar with writing program culture. With a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering, I felt very much the outsider. Claims and assumptions about academic writing and how to teach it floated about, and these did not always align with my experiences or disciplinary sensibilities. And even some of the terms central to the work of the program were unfamiliar or used in unfamiliar ways. I was immersed in a world of *workshopping*, *close reading*, *problematizing*, *complicating*, and *contextualizing*; of *textuality*, *intertextuality*, and *citationality*—terms that some who work in the field of composition may not even think of as being disciplinarily situated.

Because I sensed that what I was doing in my writing courses—what I knew how to do—was significantly different from what the insiders were doing, I felt the need to explain the way I was teaching writing to my colleagues, most of whom were unfamiliar with intellectual or discursive

practices in the sciences. For example, many of my colleagues centered the work of their courses on books, whereas I had no sense of how to teach writing from them. But I had a strong sense about how to teach with articles, since I had built many semesters of writing-intensive courses around such texts. (I should emphasize that even in my first term at Duke I was an experienced enough teacher *not* to assume that my particular scholarly specialty—experimental aerodynamics—would be an appropriate area of work for first-year writing students; I drew on my knowledge of other areas of science for topics that would be more accessible and have more resonance with my students. The need to make this distinction seemed to have been more obvious to me as a “way outsider” than to some younger faculty closer to the inside.)

My self-identification as outsider diminished as I adapted to the program and learned more about composition—its history, theory, and practices—from both the literature of the field and from many formal and informal conversations with insightful and intelligent colleagues. I rethought and revised my teaching. But my sense of being an outsider also changed because the program’s culture became gradually less “English.” Scholars from across the academic spectrum added to or replaced instructors closer to the inside as they moved on to positions elsewhere, and the administration encouraged these outsiders to help shape the program. The attitude of the program’s administrators toward the way I approached my work was critical to this shift in my self-perception as well. While they were generous in sharing their knowledge and experience, I never felt pressured to teach like an English scholar—in fact, I had been explicitly encouraged *not* to. Instead, I knew from the beginning that what the program administrators wanted from me was to do a good job teaching academic writing in the way that someone with my background might do it.

After a couple of years teaching in the Duke program, I no longer had the sense that I ought to be using books as objects of study in my writing courses. (I had learned from colleagues that book-length texts pose their own challenges in a first-year writing course.) And I came to understand that the kind of careful, scrutinizing, and skeptical reading I wanted my students to do with a five-page research article or a half-page letter to the editor from a science journal was as appropriate and as intellectually rigorous as the work that my colleagues in literature or comp demanded of their students.

Ceasing to be an outsider in the world of teaching writing involved not only matters of pedagogy, but acculturation as well. I learned which terms—*authentic*, *remedial*, *skill*, for example—are loaded in this community, and I gained a sense of the reasons and history that made them

so. And as my self-identification as insider strengthened, I felt it appropriate to interrogate disciplinarily-situated ideas and terms that didn't seem to account for the ways of knowing and writing on the science side of the academy: I wanted to *surface* unstated assumptions about "academic writing," to *complicate* "close reading," and to *problematize* "problematize." My insider colleagues encouraged me to challenge them in these ways, and they deserve credit for being receptive to ideas from the outside. But credit must also go to the program itself: such conversations require both a wide spectrum of experiences and the right culture, and this is one of the real strengths of a program that brings together an intentionally diverse group of scholars to the common work of teaching writing.

Petit:

Joining the faculty of Duke's writing program was both a home coming and a new experience. Duke's first-year writing course, similar in structure to the program in which I first taught, concentrates on critical reading and critical writing. I did not struggle with new vocabulary, and the initial training seminar was a welcome return to the kinds of English graduate seminars that were part of my Ph.D. program. But while I saw myself as an insider, I was concerned about my outsider, non-humanities colleagues. Were they teaching students to analyze a text, to call its unstated ideological assumptions into question, or were they teaching students to read only for content? Were they teaching students to write in an analytic-argumentative mode or to write lab reports? That some of my new colleagues were unfamiliar with what seemed to me to be fundamental, inescapable concepts such as close reading raised my suspicions. Were they *really* teaching writing classes, or were they teaching content classes in which writing was only an ancillary component? The suspicious nature of my questions points to the problem of assuming an insider framework: I didn't start from a position of collaboration; I wasn't yet asking what I might still learn about the teaching of writing from my new non-humanities colleagues.

Over time and through conversation, however, I understood that we had complimentary understandings and approaches to the teaching of writing. We were all trying to help students read below the surface of texts and interrogate the ways in which they construct knowledge. But while those of us in English may do this work by asking students to recognize the ways texts reinforce or call into question hegemonic ideas about class and gender, my colleagues in the sciences might do so by asking students to recognize the strengths and limits of the empirical evidence presented in scientific research literature. I also learned that those in the sciences do

not generally ask their writing students to write “research reports”; rather, like “us,” they have students write in a variety of popular and disciplinary genres and formats that require them to formulate and support claims with critical analysis. I no longer doubt that my colleagues are teaching critical writing classes. For although what counts as evidence differs in our various disciplines, each discipline requires its strategic deployment and thus the teaching of the various writerly moves and strategies necessary for effective argumentation. As I gained experience with and through Duke’s writing program, I came to see all of us as insiders—even though such an “inside” is a hybrid entity structured not by disciplinary boundaries but by the shared work of teaching academic writing.

THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING

Regardless of specific institutional contexts, virtually all writing programs have the teaching of first-year writing as a principal component of their mission. While instruction in the craft of writing—including such matters as structure and style—is typically a priority in these courses, we identify crucial distinctions among contemporary approaches. Many institutions structure courses around the writing of a distinct set of textual types or formats: students write the personal reflective essay, the ad analysis paper, the explication of a poem or short story, the compare-and-contrast paper, and so on. Other institutions ask students to examine works traditionally defined as “literature”—poetry, drama, and creative fiction—regardless of the type of writing they are asked to do. In contrast, academic writing is typically defined less in terms of its texts—what students write or read—and more by the focus on writing as a means of knowledge production. In an academic writing course, as David Bartholomae has observed in his landmark essay “Inventing the University,” students learn about the academy’s knowledge-making practices by engaging in its conversations and conventions. Students are asked to consider thoughtfully the implications of the chosen topic through close and skeptical reading, to arrive at their own critical interpretations through the process of writing and revising, and to take part in broader intellectual discussions on the topic by arguing their rationales and hard-won conclusions to readers. Along with most contemporary compositionists, we find that academic writing is the more compelling approach in a liberal arts setting, where the intent is to expose students to various knowledge systems and how meaning is made.

Academic writing courses have typically had one of two disciplinary orientations: the multi-disciplinary model described by Petit above (the humanities paper, the social science paper, the natural sciences paper);

or the (putatively) generic model, employing, for example, *Ways of Reading*, where scholarly approaches from the humanities are (silently) deemed general features of academic writing. The multi-discipline model has the advantage of having students sample a range of disciplines and can, ideally, look at those practices comparatively. However, students necessarily acquire only a cursory view of each field, and it is difficult to staff such courses with instructors who have sufficient expertise in all relevant domains. And while students can surely learn much of value in a humanities-oriented course, we believe that the field of composition is ready to move beyond the humanities-centric view of academic work that such a course represents.

The evolution of WID has produced a third model we term the “diverse disciplines model”: different sections of the course take up different disciplinary approaches according to the scholarly interest and expertise of the individual instructor. While we recognize that students in the diverse disciplines model will not get to examine disciplinary differences as thoroughly as with the multi-discipline model, we prefer it for a number of reasons. First, it allows students to gain a greater sense of what it means to engage in the intellectual work of a discipline, since they have more time to become familiar with some of its intellectual tools and conventions. If such a course is topic-focused, students can also benefit from what Anne Beaufort describes as “serious, sustained engagement with a specific subject matter” (195); this allows students to develop more expertise on the subjects they take up, which is valuable, if not sufficient, for promoting the sense of authority that empowers academic writers.⁶ Second, the diversity of courses offers students the broadest possible array of topics and approaches, making it more likely that they will find a subject of personal interest and so be more committed to the work of the course. Third, the diverse disciplines model better represents the range of intellectual work of the institution; since courses from many different disciplines are offered at one time, students see that writing is not just the province of English.⁷

The diverse disciplines model takes us back to the question of what it means to be qualified to teach academic writing. Smith and Blair, writing in 1988 (*College English* 50.4), take this up as a question of whether English scholars are inherently more qualified teachers of writing than others. Given the rise of composition as its own discipline, however, the matter of relative qualifications is more complicated. An up-to-date comparison involves something more like this: (1) compositionists; (2) the constellation of scholars Charles Bazerman has described as being “trained in the arts of language”—scholars of English, rhetoric, and so on (“Living” 64); or (3) scholars of other disciplines who seek to teach writing. Since there is no established name for the collection of disciplines in (2) or (3), we will refer

to the former as “STALs”—Scholars Trained in the Arts of Language—and the latter as “non-STALs.”

Blair maintained that scholars from all disciplines come equally prepared to teach writing. We reject this notion. We expect compositionists to be particularly knowledgeable about and dedicated to the teaching of writing, to know the history and theory of the field. Similarly, STALs have a focused relationship with textual practices and often bring some of the same skills and experience to the teaching of writing that compositionists do.

Although it would be easy for administrators to staff their writing programs entirely with traditional insiders, compositionists and STALs cannot, by themselves, effectively teach the ways of knowing and writing across the academy, an integral part of the academic writing mission. For example, as Susan Peck MacDonald has shown (*College English* 49.3), scholars of literature often model their writing classes after their own scholarly practices, devoting a substantial part of their courses to helping students learn how to problematize texts; but scholars in other fields don't set up their intellectual work in the same way. Those in the sciences often take up problems that have already been articulated by others. An important part of the work of all disciplines is to articulate meaningful questions, but, as Lee Odell writes, “the nature of those questions may vary so widely that a question that is important in dealing with, say, a particular topic in philosophy may be less important in dealing with topics in chemical engineering or even with other subjects in philosophy” (89). As Blair's argument suggests, approaching the teaching of academic writing only through the lens of English *or* rhetoric *or* composition is parochial: scholars in these disciplines are experts in examining texts within their social, cultural and political context, including how they are inflected by race, class, gender, sexuality and other ideological factors. But they tend not, for example, to receive much training in the way of the empiricism, quantification, or other aspects of epistemology central to the intellectual work of large segments of the academy. In other words, they cannot have a working knowledge of each discipline's sense of “what counts as a relevant contribution, what counts as a question, what counts as having a good argument for that answer or a good criticism of it” (Richard Rorty, quoted in Bruffee 643). Unless a writing program can accurately represent the broad work of the academy, it will tend to fall into the trap of hegemonic thinking that results when certain disciplines believe they “own” writing.

The effects of STAL-centric assumptions have not been limited to how writing is taught within writing programs, as the Writing across the Curriculum literature shows:

We are beginning to learn a great deal more than we previously knew about the social processes and textual practices of a wide range of academic communities. A good deal of that research, however, has not been . . . used in teacher training and faculty development workshops. In actual fact, the literature on WAC curriculum and pedagogy continues to be dominated by writing-to-learn and expressive writing techniques, including the keeping of journals, the emphasis on personal perspectives on generic conventions, and the inclusion of language-intensive approaches, even in those disciplines where natural languages are not the primary means of academic communication. (Jones and Comprone 62)

A telling example is found in *Teaching Writing in All Disciplines* (one installment in the *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* series), where we find, among essays by WAC stalwarts McLeod, Thaiss, Fulwiler and Walvoord, an article on WAC in mathematics by writing program administrator Barbara King. King encourages instructors of math classes to have their students write “reports” on topics such as “the life of a famous mathematician, research on math anxiety . . . and careers in mathematics” (41-42), rather than identifying pedagogies that are appropriate for the ways of knowing and writing in mathematics. Writing biographies *about* mathematicians has little to do with the intellectual work *of* mathematics, but that hasn’t kept the idea from circulating as a viable pedagogy for math courses. Although the King article dates from 1982, these kinds of practices are still actively promoted. (See, for example, the chapter on mathematics in Segal and Smart, 2005.) Such practices contribute to the tensions and distrust that can arise between writing teachers and faculty in other departments who, correctly or not, see themselves as being on the receiving end of a naturalized conversion process (see Fulwiler).

Given the limitations of a writing program staffed only by compositionists and STALs, it is difficult to even imagine one staffed only by engineers or other non-STALs. Although scholars in the hard sciences need to be competent writers themselves, the production and consumption of texts is not a standard subject of disciplinary attention. Writing in those fields is often perceived by practitioners as a neutral conduit for conveying information. Yet while mathematicians and chemists, say, tend to be less often what Bazerman has called “rhetorically self-conscious practitioners” of their disciplines (“Second Stage” 211), this does not mean that none are, or that the others cannot learn to be. As Bazerman notes elsewhere,

[Practitioners of all disciplines] are taught to think reflectively about the tools and methods of their fields. Once they become aware that language is one of their most fundamental, and most

sensitive, tools of knowledge construction, they cannot escape the conclusion that rhetorical studies are an inevitable part of methodological training, as much as education in statistics, analytical techniques, or laboratory experimentation. All professionals must have some knowledge of field appropriate methods of knowledge construction and their implications, and some specialize in understanding various techniques. If certain sociologists, economists, and educational researchers specialize in field-appropriate statistics, why should there not be scholars of field-appropriate rhetoric? (“Living” 68)⁸

We should expect, then, to find non-STALs who are interested in and highly capable of understanding the uses of language necessary to teach academic writing. As outsiders, these scholars will not likely have the same level of formal training as compositionists or STALs, but they *will* possess an internalized sense of the epistemological and rhetorical conventions of their disciplines. This knowledge is crucial for academic writing programs.⁹

REDRAWING THE BOUNDARIES: THE DIVERSE DISCIPLINES MODEL

In their *College English* essays Smith and Blair disagree about who should be teaching writing. Smith argues, in effect, for keeping the teaching of writing in the hands of insiders, since they are the ones best qualified to understand textual practices and then to teach those practices to students in the writing classroom (Figure 1a). Blair advocates for outsiders: since scholars from all disciplines are equally capable, they must *be equal* when it comes to being part of a writing program (Figure 1b). Smith and Blair do, however, agree that writing programs need to learn from other disciplines, and so prefer “dialogic” boundaries (as represented by dotted lines). We assume readers today tend to agree.

In Figure 2 we expand the boundary of 1(a) to include scholars from across the academy as represented in 1(b). This avoids the hegemony of traditional insiders while recognizing the importance of compositionists, STALs and non-STALs. But for this (as represented in Figure 2) to work, such an expansion must include more than a token number of representatives from other disciplines—and from the sciences in particular. In spite of the additional effort needed to hire and train them, only a critical mass of such scholars can pose the needed challenge to the tendency of a humanities-centric program to slip into humanities-based assumptions and practices.

While administering such a program inevitably involves real challenges, the model represented in Figure 2 offers a number of advantages. First, the presence of disciplinary representatives *inside* the program enhances the

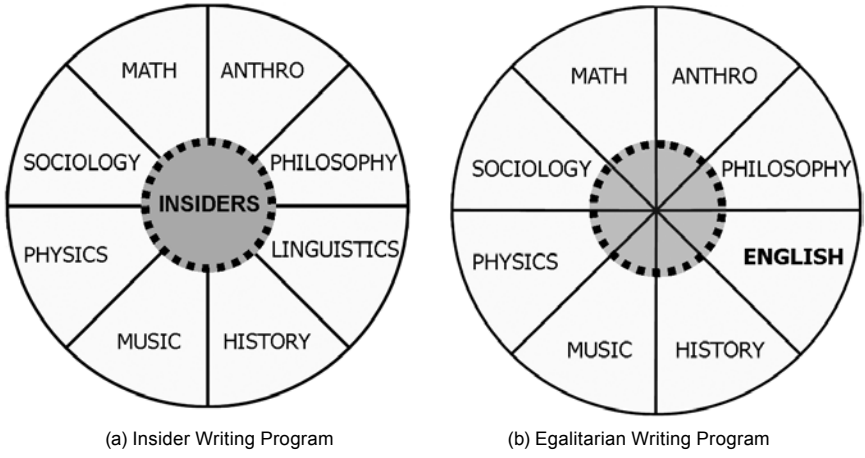


Figure 1. Our schematic depictions of writing program boundaries a la Smith and Blair

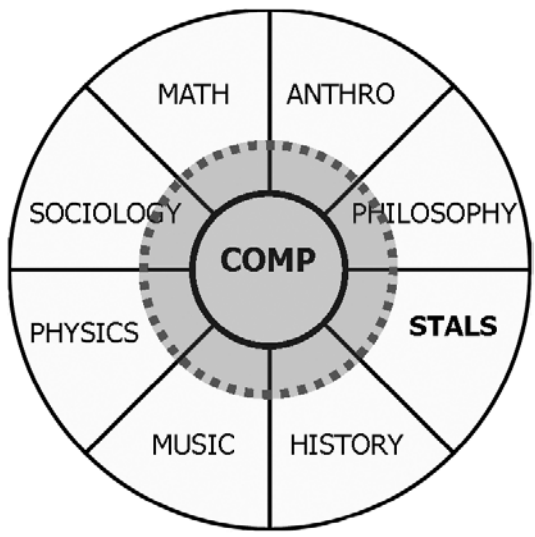


Figure 2. The Diverse Disciplines Model

flow of information and ideas between the writing program and those outside of its formal structure. These representatives can both bring knowledge of their home disciplines to the writing program and spread best practices to those on the outside in ways that traditional insiders cannot. Such a diverse program may also encourage trust among other faculty in their perception of how the writing program is serving the institution as a whole. Second, bringing STALs and non-STALs together within the writing program creates opportunities for pedagogical developments that draw on hard-won knowledge in composition studies without forcing the de facto practices of STALs onto other disciplines. While we have expressed reservations about model 1(b) because it dismisses what traditional insiders have to offer, we agree with Blair about the environment of multidisciplinary writing programs: “Much of the excitement of such a program seems to arise from the fact that the disciplines participate as *equals*,” and that such an arrangement “gives them the freedom to create new approaches rather than wait for the lead of the department that ‘owns’ writing” (388; emphasis added). Third, a faculty composed of scholars from a wide range of disciplines will challenge conventional responses to important questions: What types of writing and reading should students undertake in first-year writing classes? What kinds of questions, problems, genres and formats are appropriate for student projects? What constitutes good academic writing? How will students’ success be measured? And so on.

Additionally, while many contemporary compositionists value “reform” pedagogies, they tend to do so without considering what non-STALs can contribute. For example, much current composition literature promotes collaborative practices. Yet as Kenneth Bruffee has noted, “[T]he graduate training most [English teachers] have enjoyed—or endured—has taught us, in fact, that collaboration and community activity is inappropriate and foreign to work in humanistic disciplines such as English. Humanistic study, we have been led to believe, is a solitary life, and the vitality of the humanities lies in the talents and endeavors of each of us as individuals” (645). Many non-STALs can bring experience in this area (contra Smith’s claim above): collaborative research and authorship in the sciences and engineering is the norm, as a brief perusal of the table of contents of any science or engineering journal will show. Drawing on their experience with collaboration in their own work, many non-STALs employ collaborative pedagogies in their classrooms—and have done so for decades. For example, since collaborative work and revision are integral to the practice of engineering, design courses routinely structure student work to include and promote such practices. But while practitioners of such fields have expertise in collaborative authorship and project work, they tend to have a less-developed

sense of collaborative *writing* pedagogy, which illustrates the value of bringing insiders and outsiders together.

But perhaps the most important value of this approach to teaching academic writing is that it requires programmatic conversations about the nature of disciplinarity in ways that other models do not. Collaboration is central to the work of a cohesive diverse disciplines program. Since such a program brings together instructors with very different sensibilities about academic writing, program administrators and instructors must work together to distinguish what is common to academic work from what is disciplinarily situated. Citing sources, supporting claims, or even identifying intellectual problems are discipline-specific practices; the *need* to do those things is trans-disciplinary. While students need practical discipline-specific knowledge, they also need to understand the extent to which the particular practices they are learning *are* disciplinary. While the multi-disciplinary model does not preclude such conversations, they will likely take place among traditional insiders with their shared disciplinary sensibilities speaking on the behalf of others. In a diverse disciplines program there will always be someone to say, “Wait a second, that’s not how it works in my field.”

NOTES

¹ As of 2007, the list of institutions staffing their first-year writing courses with Ph.D.s from a range of disciplines includes (but is not limited to) Duke, Harvard, George Washington, Princeton, Stanford, and Syracuse. Of these, only GW has a permanent faculty, as opposed to post-doctoral fellows. Many other schools draw on graduate students from a broad range of fields. For an argument in favor of a related but different model—exchanging first-year writing for the first-year seminar—see Runciman.

² The dominant model of English departments housing writing is primarily historical rather than foundational. That philosophy, say, didn’t become the principal discipline through which undergraduate writing has been taught for the last hundred years is less a matter of disciplinary incompatibility than one of institutional and disciplinary politics and circumstances (see Russell).

³ Kuriloff provides another example of work that limits what should be a curriculum-wide discussion to scholars of English and composition only.

⁴ The term “outsider” has been employed in various contexts in relation to the teaching of writing, including pedagogical theory, the status of composition within English departments, working conditions, ESL instruction, and identity politics. For A.M. Tibbetts, “The theologian [linguist] is usually an outsider who wishes the insider (the composition teacher) to adopt the theologian’s views”

(94). For Susan Miller, the preferential status of literature scholars within English departments comes at the expense of compositionists—the “outsiders who make the insiders insiders” (54). For Mary Cayton, adjunct writing faculty are outsiders “in relation to ‘regular’ faculty and to the institution itself” (2). For Vivian Zamel, those whose “primary work is with ESL students, are perceived as ‘outsiders’” (108). And for Gesa Kirsh and Joy Ritche, “our own devalued identities can be powerful resources for knowing because the tension that arises from assuming the perspective of ‘outsiders within’ allows us to see what privileged insiders can not” (23).

⁵ Although our stories converge at Duke University’s Writing Program, we argue, ultimately, not for an approach identical to Duke’s, but one that shares some of its tenants. The program at Duke is independent of any department and reports directly to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. It is staffed primarily by post-doctoral fellows from a range of disciplines across the humanities and the social and natural sciences. Specializations in the last few years have included cultural anthropology, history, psychology, philosophy, political science, sociology, engineering, architecture, biology, performance studies, epidemiology, forestry, and linguistics—as well as literature and composition/rhetoric. The program is not operated under the assumption that insiders are (or will necessarily become) strong writing teachers. Candidates from fields less conventionally trained in or exposed to writing pedagogy are judged less on the basis of what they already know about writing pedagogy than by hiring committees’ sense of each candidate’s dedication to undergraduate education and promise to grow into strong writing teachers. For a detailed description of Duke’s Program, see Hilliard and Harris.

⁶ See Penrose and Geisler for a discussion of other factors affecting students’ sense of authority in academic writing.

⁷ For a discussion of the value of having a writing program represent the academy’s work as broadly as possible, see Moskovitz and Kellogg (320-321).

⁸ While Bazerman’s description of disciplinary training may be idealized, so may it be for STAL scholars. See “What Does it Mean to be a Writing Teacher?” in Smit, *The End of Composition Studies*.

⁹ David Chapman has argued against “replacing freshman composition with freshman seminars taught by faculty from departments across campus.” He reasons (from his own experience) that such courses will inevitably be taught by those “who have, perhaps, given a day or so to thinking seriously about how to teach writing to others” (59). We share his concern, but we hope it is clear that this is not the approach we have in mind. We can look at Duke University’s writing program for one example of how such scholars from other fields might be trained. Duke has made a commitment to taking the teaching of writing out of the hands of graduate students (except for a few special cases)—where, as at many institutions, these inexperienced teachers and novice scholars formerly did this work. In place

of graduate students, Duke's writing courses are taught by Ph.D.s with multi-year contracts, many of whom have come to Duke with significant college teaching experience. A number have held regular-rank faculty positions, and many have previously taught writing or writing-intensive classes. Duke Fellows are given training and attention that exceeds the norms for either graduate students or new faculty in many English departments: beginning with a three-week seminar on the teaching of academic writing prior to their first year in the program, fellows are expected to continue to develop as writing teachers and the program provides continual opportunities to support this development. Activities include faculty-led seminars on writing pedagogy, teaching collectives, Reflective Practitioner Groups centered on specific pedagogical issues, and visits to other instructors' writing classes. Program administrators formally visit classes, review a teaching portfolio produced by faculty in their second year, and give them feedback on their development as writing teachers. By the end of the first year, Duke's fellows probably have spent more time reflecting on their work as teachers than the majority of writing instructors in the country, particularly those at the graduate student level still completing course work, research and dissertations.

WORKS CITED

- Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." *When A Writer Can't Write*. Ed. Mike Rose. New York: Guilford, 1985. 134-65.
- Bazerman, Charles. "Living with Powerful Words." *Writing, Teaching, and Learning in the Disciplines*. Eds. Anne Herrington and Charles Moran. New York: MLA, 1992.
- . "The Second Stage in Writing Across the Curriculum." *College English* 53.2 (Feb 1991): 209-12.
- Beaufort, Anne. *Writing in the Real World: Making the Transition from School to Work*. New York: Teachers College P, 1999.
- Blair, Catherine Pastor. "Only One of the Voices: Dialogic Writing across the Curriculum." *College English* 50.4 (Apr 1988): 383-9.
- Bruffee, Kenneth. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind'." *College English* 46.7 (Nov 1984): 635-52.
- Cayton, Mary Kupiec. "Writing as Outsiders: Academic Discourse and Marginalized Faculty." *College English* 53.6 (Oct 1991): 647-60.
- Chapman, David W. "WAC and the First-Year Writing Course: Selling Ourselves Short." *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* 2 (1998): 54-60.
- Fulwiler, Toby. "How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work?" *College English* 46.2 (Feb 1984): 113-25.
- Hillard, Van and Joseph Harris. "Making Writing Visible at Duke University." *Peer Review* 6.1 (Fall 2003): 15-7.
- Jones, Robert and Comprone, Joseph J. "Where Do We Go Next in Writing across the Curriculum?" *College Composition and Communication* 44.1 (Feb 1993): 59-68.

- King, Barbara. "Using Writing in the Mathematics Class: Theory and Practice." *Teaching Writing in All Disciplines*. Ed. Williams Griffin. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982. 39-44.
- Kirsh, Gesa E. and Joy S. Ritchie. "Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research." *College Composition and Communication* 46.1 (Feb 1995): 7-29.
- Kneupper, Charles W. "An Outsider Looking in: A Comment on 'Notes from the Besieged'" in "Comment and Response." *College English* 43.3 (Mar 1981): 304-5.
- Kuriloff, Peshe C. "Writing Across the Curriculum and the Future of Freshmen English: A Dialogue Between Literature and Composition." *ADE Bulletin* 098 (Spring 1991): 34-9.
- MacDonald, Susan Peck. "Problem Definition in Academic Writing." *College English* 49.3 (Mar 1987): 315-31.
- Miller, Susan. *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1993.
- Moskovitz, Cary and David Kellogg. "Primary Science Communication in the First-Year Writing Course." *College Composition and Communication* 57.2 (2005): 307-34.
- Odell, C. L. "Context-Specific Ways of Knowing and the Evaluation of Writing." *Writing, Teaching and Learning in the Disciplines*. Eds. Anne Herrington and Charles Moran. New York: Modern Language Association, 1992.
- Penrose, Ann M. and Cheryl Geisler. "Reading and Writing without Authority." *College Composition and Communication* 45.4 (Dec 1994): 505-20.
- Runciman, Lex. "Ending Composition as We Knew It." *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* 2 (1998): 44-53.
- Russell, David R. *Writing in the Academic Disciplines: A Curricular History*. 2nd ed. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002.
- Segall, Mary T. and Robert A. Smart. *Direct from the Disciplines*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2005.
- Smit, David. *The End of Composition Studies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002.
- Smith, Louise Z. "Why English Departments Should 'House' Writing Across the Curriculum." *College English* 50.4 (Apr 1988): 390-5.
- Tibbetts, A.M. "A Short History of Dogma and Nonsense in the Composition Course." *College Composition and Communication* 16.2 (May 1965): 90-6.
- Zamel, Vivian. "Strangers in Academia: The Experiences of Faculty and ESL Students Across the Curriculum." *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, 4th ed. Eds. Edward P. J. Corbett, Nancy Myers, and Gary Tate. New York: Oxford UP, 2000. 100-12.

