Dancing the Same Dances: *WPA*, 1979–1981

Lori Ostergaard, Jim Nugent, and Jacob Babb

> *When I sat down to write these chapters, one of my central (if tacit) purposes was to provide a shared past, a story of ancestors. I am trying here to build a fire around which we can sit and discover that we do know the same stories, and dance the same dances.*

—Robert J. Connors,
Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy (18)

We opened our first issue as editors by looking back at the genesis of *WPA*, which was first published as a newsletter and evolved into a journal in 1979 under the editorship of Kenneth Bruffee. Here we continue our historical review and, in future issues, our editors' introductions will continue to reexamine *WPA*'s legacy of contributions to research, advocacy, and community. In tracing the history of the journal that we are now so privileged to edit, we hope to honor the legacy of those who came before us; to acknowledge the work that the council, its journal, and its members performed in nurturing our field; and to "build a fire around which we can sit" and share important stories about our community. We offer these retrospective pieces not just to highlight early works that may interest contemporary WPAs, but to also illustrate our field's connection to the issues, problems, practices, failures, and successes of the past. In each new issue, we will seek both to advance the best work of contemporary scholars, teachers, and administrators in our field and to contemplate how we fit into the legacy that began with Bruffee's editorship in 1979.

WPA's first official issue as a journal (vol. 3, no. 1) featured work from familiar scholars: Maxine Hairston, Erika Lindemann, and Greg Larkin. The issue focused "on program definition and evaluation" (8) and featured Hairston's "What Freshman Directors Need to Know about Evaluating

Writing Programs." Hariston called on "administrators at all levels to take a more professional and objective look at teaching writing than we have ever done in the past" (11), and she shared insights into program evaluation that she and James Kinneavy developed at the University of Texas at Austin. Hairston's article was six pages long and cited no external sources, but it relied heavily on her experience as a WPA. In its first three years, *WPA* published 33 articles over eight issues. Each issue was an average of 39 pages long and articles averaged about five pages each. Fewer than one in three of those articles cited outside experts or studies. Then, as now, WPAs were *the experts*, and *WPA* had provided them with a pioneering scholarly platform to share their expertise and develop their own corpus of research.

While Hairston's article demonstrated how program administrators should evaluate their own programs, Erika Lindemann's article "Evaluating Writing Programs: What an Outside Evaluator Looks For" introduced readers to the concept of external program evaluation, explained how the evaluation process works, and provided a guide for how to plan an external evaluation. We wrote to Lindemann to ask her to reflect on this article and her work with the Consultant Evaluator Program, which was announced in vol. 3, no. 2 (see figure 1). Lindemann recalls that, at the time of the first issue, there were only a small number of WPAs who regularly attended CCCC and MLA and "the role of a WPA was evolving as faculty members trained in other areas of English studies became professionally committed to teaching writing, especially in first-year writing programs." CWPA president Harvey S. Wiener first called for the creation of an external evaluator program in a 1978 issue of the *WPA Newsletter*, and Lindemann notes that it was probably Wiener who asked her to contribute this article:

> He and Ken Bruffee were hoping to turn the *WPA Newsletter* into a refereed journal, and members of the editorial board were all engaged in enlisting articles that would advance the scholarship of writing program administration. We were eager to define, for ourselves and for other colleagues in our home institutions, what writing program administration is (and could be).

Lindemann, who had been trained as a medievalist but was tapped to become an administrator "one year into [her] first full-time faculty appointment to direct the writing program at the University of South Carolina," sat on the first *WPA* editorial board. When Wiener asked her to write "Evaluating Writing Programs," she notes that she "had already been thinking about ways to improve the writing program [she had] inherited as a faculty member." At that time she had conducted two external reviews and a self-study of her program, so her article drew largely from those experiences.

While she was not identified in the 1980 *WPA* article, "Writing Program Evaluation: An Outline for Self-Study" (WPA Board), Lindemann notes that she was responsible for compiling the guidelines presented there, which were originally developed at a workshop held at the April 1980 CCCC convention in Washington, DC. The goal of the CCCC workshop, she says, "was to flesh out the four areas discussed in my 1979 essay—curriculum, program administration, teacher training/faculty development, and support services—by drafting a 'set of guidelines and standards' for writing program self-study." She remarks that participants broke into groups "charged with creating subcategories within the four broader areas and developing questions that WPAs could use as a heuristic, a tool" to review their own programs. Lindemann was chosen to record the discussions and compile each report, which she "combined, edited, and submitted" to Bruffee for publication. She notes that the guidelines, which were "sanctioned by WPA, offered significant backing not only for recommendations that consultant-evaluators felt necessary to make but also for worthy improvements that faculty members and administrators wished to implement in improving their own programs." As Lindemann's work demonstrates, the journal played a vital role in disseminating information about, and lending additional authority to, the consultant-evaluator program in the early 1980s.

WPA consultation service

WPA will offer a service of writing program consultation and evaluation beginning April, 1980.

WPA consultants will be current or former directors of writing programs in American colleges and universities who have been trained by WPA in techniques of program evaluation, curriculum development, student needs, and organizational structure.

Consultants will be available, within the limits of program funds, to visit campuses; to interview faculty, students, and administrative officers; and to prepare written reports that appraise the strengths and limitations of existing programs and suggest improvements appropriate to an institution's needs and resources.

The service is available to public and private institutions, two-year and four-year colleges, universities, and professional schools. WPA will provide a small grant, predicated on need, to institutions selected to take part in the program. The supplement is intended to defray part of the cost of the consultation visit and report.

For application forms, write to Harvey S. Wiener, President, Council of Writing Program Administrators, La Guardia College, City University of New York, 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, New York 11101. Applications must be received by February 15, 1980.

This service of the Council of Writing Program Administrators is supported in part by a grant from the Exxon Foundation.

Figure 1. First announcement for the WPA consultation service, published in the winter 1979 issue of *WPA* (6).

Much like the authors in this issue, scholars gracing the early pages of *WPA* took on pressing problems in the field and offered practical ideas that WPAs could apply at their own institutions. For example, the fall 1980 issue of *WPA* featured an article by Robert R. Bataille, who warned that

> if we do not challenge everywhere the tendency to hire poorly quali-fied faculty at low rank and salary to teach composition courses, we will continue to convey the message—to our higher administration, to our colleagues, and to our constituencies outside the institution—that composition teaching and research in related fields are, media propaganda notwithstanding, still relatively unimportant to a good college education. (17)

Bataille's article, titled "Hiring Composition Specialists," provided strate-gies for writing job ads that would attract specialists in composition, gave advice on how to read application letters and CVs to evaluate an appli-cant's interest and experience in composition teaching, and discussed how to evaluate an applicant's "formal training" in the field (20). In reflecting on what that training might look like, Bataille provided what he referred to as "a slightly mad, impossibly idealistic recipe for a training program for composition specialists" that included courses in "the theory of mod-ern rhetoric, theory of composition, classical rhetoric, the major practical approaches to composition, and perhaps modern persuasion theory" (20). He recommended courses in linguistics and teaching English as a second language, statistics and research design, teaching reading, and, because the field had begun investigating cognition,[1] Bataille recommended that "a course in cognitive psychology might also help" prepare teachers of college composition (21).

The topic of developing a graduate program was also very much in the air in the early 1980s. The same year Bataille published his "slightly mad" list of graduate courses, Richard L. Graves and Harry M. Solomon pub-lished a national survey of new composition-rhetoric graduate courses in *Freshman English News*. Graves and Solomon surveyed 89 graduate pro-grams and found that 61 of such programs had developed one or more new graduate-level courses in composition between the years 1974 and 1979. Their survey identified six categories of graduate courses in the field: "(1) The Teaching of Rhetoric and Composition, (2) Theory of Rhetoric and Composition, (3) Advanced Writing, (4) Basic Writing, (5) Research in Rhetoric and Composition, and (6) Stylistics" (1). The following year, the *Journal of Basic Writing* dedicated their entire spring/summer issue to the topic of graduate education and professional development, featuring descriptions of doctoral programs in composition that were authored by

John Brereton (Wayne State University) and Joseph Comprone (University of Louisville), and profiles of writing instructor training programs by Richard C. Gebhardt (Findlay College) and Charles Moran (University of Massachusetts Amherst). Bataille's article on hiring composition specialists illustrated the scarcity of faculty who were expert in the teaching of writing. But that need was already being met by new graduate courses and new doctoral programs in rhetoric and composition.

While articles about graduate programs and pedagogy appeared regularly in the pages of *WPA*, the early journal also addressed issues related to assessment, professional development, and program evaluation. In keeping with its mission to address issues of urgent interest to WPAs, the winter 1980 issue featured its first forum with five articles on faculty professional development: two longer works examining "Faculty Indifference to Writing" (Marius) and "Faculty Development Through Professional Collaboration" (Lyons), and three short articles dedicated to "Helping Faculty Make Rewarding Assignments" (Nold), "Six Steps Toward Departmental Engagement in Composition" (Bonner), and "Three Kinds of Writing Workshops for English Teachers" (Brothers). This forum was taken on as a response to budget reductions and declining enrollment in English major programs, which had forced many senior English literature faculty into first-year writing classrooms. The forum sought to provide WPAs with strategies "to help these highly trained faculty, deeply committed in other areas of the profession" to fulfill their teaching responsibilities in composition (7).

In the fall of 1981, Bruffee dedicated an entire issue to labor conditions in first-year writing. Included among articles by Donald A. McQuade, Susan Blank and Beth Greenberg, Wayne C. Booth, and Geoffrey S. Weinman was a report by Ben W. McClelland describing a CWPA survey of 156 US writing programs. McClelland noted that nearly half of writing faculty at surveyed institutions were designated part-time. The survey also revealed that while 59% of these institutions required that their part-time faculty possess at least an MA, the remaining 41% required "no more than a B.A. or B.S." (13). McClelland reported on the percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty in the departments he surveyed, maximum teaching loads for part-time faculty, percentage of departments who provided benefits to their adjunct faculty, and the salary ranges for part-timers (see figure 2).

Wayne C. Booth's article in this special issue on labor was titled "A Cheap, Efficient, Challenging, Sure-Fire and Obvious Device for Combatting the Major Scandal in Higher Education Today." Booth began by decrying the uncivilized state of higher education where full-time faculty seemed content "with the persisting scandal of intellectual, economic, and social abuse of part-time faculty" (35). He enumerated those abuses—

low wages, lack of job security, lack of representation in university governance—and suggested that any institution wishing to demonstrate that it was committed to education should develop "a serious program of continuing education for all beginning faculty members, and [take] part-time teachers as seriously as lucky tenured teachers" (36).

Rank and salary. Only 25 percent of the institutions reporting have academic ranks for part-time faculty and only 24 percent provide any fringe benefits to part-time faculty. The table below sets forth the data on the salary range for part-time faculty at all institutions reporting.

Salary Range Table

Salary ranges per semester hour	Percentage of institutions reporting
Below $300	30
$300-399	42
$400-499	13
Above $500	15

Figure 2. McClelland's explanation and table demonstrating salary ranges for part-time faculty at the surveyed institutions (15).

Unlike Booth, who waxed nostalgic for his days as a new adjunct at the University of Chicago, Susan Blank and Beth Greenberg described the struggles they faced as part-time faculty in "Living at the Bottom." This article, which was reprinted from a 1977 issue of *The Radical Teacher*, demonstrated the "series of contradictions, each one prickly and confining and ultimately exploitative" that defined the authors' work as part-time instructors (9). For example, they bemoaned the union rules that were designed to prevent them from being exploited through overwork but instead kept them "underemployed by making it illegal for [them] to get enough work" to earn a living wage at only one college (9). They observed that while teaching is recognized as a profession, they were "in many ways" more like migrant workers who never knew where they would have to go next to find work (10). Their article examined the consequences of this piecemeal work, including the loneliness stemming from their inability to connect with colleagues who may be "uprooted the next term" (11), and the contradictions between their feeling "slighted when excluded from professional duties . . . [but] exploited when [they were] asked to perform these duties for no pay" (11).

In these early issues we find writing faculty and WPAs giving voice to the problems that continue to challenge our field today. The pages of this journal also document how far we have come in developing the professional

apparatuses, administrative practices, and research methods that facilitate and lend credibility to our work. While *WPA* cannot provide space for the kind of "collective memory" that Kelly Ritter advocates in her article in the present issue, this journal's archives demonstrate the collective power of this organization and its members to develop an identity for program administrators and to define our field, our programs, and our pedagogy.

In This Issue

We are proud to share four articles, two plenary presentations, and three book reviews this spring. This issue is a transitional one, featuring two works—Christina Saidy's "Inez in Transition" and Kelly Ritter's "Making (Collective) Memory Public"— that the current editorial team approved for publication, and two works—Carol Hayes, Edmund Jones, Gwen Gorzelsky, and Dana L. Driscoll's "Adapting Writing about Writing," and Ashton Foley, Bridget Fullerton, Eileen James, and Jenna Morton-Aiken's "Preparing Graduate Students for the Field"—that were selected and developed by the previous editors. We're thrilled to see all of these fine works "dance the same dances" that Bruffee, Lindemann, Bataille, and others began for us nearly four decades ago. This issue also features two works from the 2017 CWPA conference in Knoxville. Nancy Welch provides us with a version of her presentation, "'Everyone Should Have a Plan': A Neoliberal Primer for Writing Program Directors," while Tony Scott offers a synthesis of some of the lessons he took away from individual sessions during the conference in "Austerity and the Scales of Writing Program Administration: Some Reflections on the 2017 CWPA Conference."

Reviews

Courtney Adams Wooten's tenure as book review editor begins with this issue, and she would like to invite those in the field who wish to write a review—whether they have a book in mind or not—to contact her at wpabookreviews@gmail.com.

This issue includes one book review essay and two individual book reviews. First, E. Shelley Reid reviews two recent books about faculty development in her review essay "Beyond Satisfaction: Assessing the Goals and Impacts of Faculty Development." Brandy Lyn G. Brown's "Learning on the Job" offers a review of the award-winning book *The Working Lives of New Writing Center Faculty* by Nicole I. Caswell, Jackie Grutsch McKinney, and Rebecca Jackson. Finally, Daveena Tauber reviews a collection about programs developed to support graduate student writers in her

review, titled "Collaborating to Support Graduate Student Writers: Working beyond Disciplinary and Institutional Silos."

A New Home for the Travelogue

The *WPA* travelogue, which has traditionally appeared in the spring issue of the journal, will appear this year in a special online supplement to the journal. While Shirley Rose's interview with WPAs at the host institutions will remain the central feature of the travelogue, an online forum will allow us to offer additional information about the conference's host institutions. Look for information about the travelogue in early June on social media, the WPA-L listserv, and an email to the CWPA membership.

Acknowledgments

Finally, we would like to take a moment to thank our home institutions for their support of our work editing *WPA*. Dean Kevin Corcoran of the College of Arts and Sciences at Oakland University (OU) has provided office space, travel funds, course releases, and other resources to make the work of editing this journal considerably easier. Lori and Jim are grateful to Dean Corcoran for making a home for *WPA* at OU and for recognizing the importance of this journal to the field and to the work of our own writing program and department. Jacob is grateful for the support of Uric Dufrene, Indiana University Southeast's executive vice chancellor of academic affairs, for providing funding to ensure that Jacob can attend the CWPA Conference each summer during our editorship.

The quality of the articles published in *WPA* are owing both to the hard work of our authors and to the constructive, knowledgeable, and timely feedback provided by a small army of dedicated reviewers. We are grateful to the following reviewers for their generous and supportive responses to the submissions we have received since June 2017. Our field is better for the service of Heather Brook Adams, Susan Delaney Adams, Valerie Balester, Deb Balzhiser, Charles Bazerman, Shane Borrowman, Bob Broad, Nicole I. Caswell, Pamela Childers, Michael Day, Amy J. Devitt, Doug Downs, Heidi Estrem, Harley Ferris, Crystal N. Fodrey, Teresa Grettano, Kay Halasek, Kristine Hansen, Susanmarie Harrington, Bruce Horner, Sarah Z. Johnson, Seth Kahn, Jeffrey Klausman, Michelle LaFrance, Paula Mathieu, Randall McClure, Miles McCrimmon, Annie Mendenhall, Tracy Ann Morse, Jessica Nastal-Dema, Kat O'Meara, Mya Poe, E. Shelley Reid, Donna Strickland, and Howard Tinberg.

Note

1. Of course, cognitive approaches were prevalent in a number of composition journals during this time. Karl K. Taylor's "*Doors* English: The Cognitive Basis of Rhetorical Models" appeared in the spring/summer 1979 issue of the *Journal of Basic Writing*; Linda Flower's "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing" and Andrea A. Lunsford's "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer" were published in *College English* one year before Bataille's article; Linda Flower and John R. Hayes' article "The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem" appeared in the February 1980 issue of *College Composition and Communication*; and Mike Rose's "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block" appeared in *College Composition and Communication* in December 1980.

Works Cited

Bataille, Robert R. "Hiring Composition Specialists." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1980, pp. 17–21.

Blank, Susan, and Beth Greenberg. "Living at the Bottom." *The Radical Teacher*, vol. 5, 1977, pp. 14–16. Reprinted in *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 5, no.1, 1981, pp. 9–12.

Bonner, Thomas, Jr. "Six Steps Toward Departmental Engagement in Composition." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1980, p. 20.

Booth, Wayne C. "A Cheap, Efficient, Challenging, Sure-Fire and Obvious Device for Combatting the Major Scandal in Higher Education Today." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1981, pp. 35–40.

Brereton, John. "The Doctorate in Composition at Wayne State University." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1981, pp. 14–22.

Brothers, Barbara. "Three Kinds of Writing Workshops for English Teachers." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1980, pp. 21–22.

Comprone, Joseph. "Graduate Programs for Teachers of Basic Writing: The University of Louisville's Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1981, pp. 23–45.

Connors, Robert J. *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*. U of Pittsburgh P, 1997.

Flower, Linda. "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing." *College English*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1979, pp. 19–37.

Flower, Linda, and John R. Hayes. "The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1980, pp. 21–32.

Gebhardt, Richard C. "Training Basic Writing Teachers at a Liberal Arts College." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1981, pp. 46–63.

Graves, Richard L., and Harry M. Solomon. "New Graduate Courses in Rhetoric and Composition: A National Survey." *Freshman English News*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1980, p. 1+.

Hairston, Maxine. "What Freshman Directors Need to Know About Evaluating Writing Programs." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1979, pp. 11–16.

Larkin,Greg. "The Essential Unity of Language Arts Programs: Its Pedagogical Implications." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1979, pp. 25–28.

Lindemann, Erika. "Evaluating Writing Programs: What an Outside Evaluator Looks For." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1979, pp. 17–24.

—. Email interview by Lori Ostergaard. 30 Jan. 2018.

Lunsford, Andrea A. "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer." *College English*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1979, pp. 38–46.

Lyons, Robert. "Faculty Development Through Professional Collaboration." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1980, pp. 12–18.

Marius, Richard. "Faculty Indifference to Writing: A Pessimistic View." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1980, pp. 7–12.

McClelland, Ben W. "Part-time Faculty in English Composition: A WPA Survey." W*PA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1981, pp. 13–20.

McQuade, Donald A. "The Case of the Migrant Workers." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1981, pp. 29–34.

Moran, Charles. "A Model for Teacher Training Programs in the Field of Writing." *Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1981, pp. 64–78.

Nold, Ellen. "Helping Faculty Make Rewarding Assignments." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1980, p. 19.

Rose, Mike. "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1980, pp. 389–401.

Taylor, Karl K. "*Doors* English: The Cognitive Basis of Rhetorical Models." *The Journal of Basic Writing*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1979, pp. 52–66.

Weinman, Geoffrey S. "A Part-Time Freshman Writing Staff: Problems and Solutions." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1981, pp. 21–28.

Wiener, Harvey S. "WPA President's Message," *WPA Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1978, p. 4.

WPA Board of Consultant Evaluators. "Writing Program Evaluation: An Outline for Self-Study," *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1980, pp. 23–28.

"WPA Consultation Service." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1979, p. 6.