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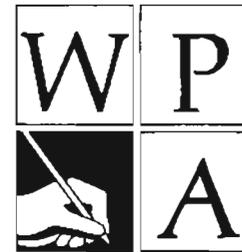
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Writing Program Administration

Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators
Volume 8, Numbers 1-2, Fall-Winter, 1984

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The Council of Writing Program Administrators

The Council of Writing Program Administrators is a national association of college and university faculty who serve or have served as directors of freshman composition, coordinators of writing labs and workshops, chairpersons and members of writing program-related committees, or in similar administrative capacities. The Council of Writing Program Administrators is an affiliate of the Association of American Colleges.

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Article length (flexible), 2,-4,000 words. Authors should submit two copies and retain a copy for their own files. Material should be suitably documented using the *MLA Handbook, 2nd Edition* although as much reference as possible should be included within the text. Annotated bibliographies accompanying articles are encouraged, as well as any other apparatus which might make material more conceptually and practically valuable to working writing program administrators. The editors reserve the right to edit manuscripts accepted for publication to conform with the style of the journal. Article deadlines: fall-winter issue, January 15; spring issue, September 15. Relevant announcements are also acceptable. Announcement deadlines: fall-winter issue, October 1; spring issue, January 5. Address contributions and editorial correspondence to William E. Smith, Editor, *WPA*, English Department, UMC 32, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322.

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Editorial

With this issue the *WPA* assumes a new look, a change in design and type size we think makes the journal more readable. Although the type, the margins, the spacing, and the logo change, the editorial policy remains the same. Ken Bruffee's vision of the *WPA*'s purpose still guides editorial policy and outlines the kinds of articles we publish.

Our current editorial policy echoes the words Bruffee wrote in his Fall 1980

... In general *WPA* does not publish the types of material our kindred journals (*CCC*, *College English*, and the *CFA Forum*) publish. For example, although teaching composition is certainly relevant to what *WPAs* do, *WPA* is less likely to publish articles on how to teach composition than articles on how to deal with composition teachers; less likely to publish articles on how to put a curriculum to good use in the classroom than articles on how to get that curriculum put to good use in many classrooms.

More specifically, the *WPA* publishes articles that address issues confronting *WPAs* across the country. Rather than publishing an article on the successes and failures of a specific writing program, we publish articles that extrapolate the underlying administrative principles or the philosophical model that informs a specific program. Rather than emphasizing a particular program in New York, the *WPA* underscores the global qualities of that program and its implications for *WPAs* in North Carolina, Texas, California, and Utah.

If what we do as *WPAs* matters to the growth and development of our programs, then what we write about as administrators speaks to the profession at large. If not, we have in the crush of daily detail lost our direction. We have transformed ourselves from decision-makers into caretakers. And in the process, we have trivialized a complex, intellectual task into a simplistic, mechanistic one. As *WPAs* we focus our attention on the process of writing. And with the knowledge that writing program administration is always in process comes the realization that we must seek help from other *WPAs* in similar situations. To that end, *WPA* is a public forum that welcomes articles separating "administrivia" from administration, articles that research, speculate or reflect on the philosophical, economic, and political realities of writing program administration.

The articles in this issue of the *WPA* reflect the continuing editorial policy of the journal. Each author moves beyond specific program concerns and comments on the global principles underlying that program. As a result, the authors speak to each of us.

Freshman English 1984: Politics and Administrative Process

Carol P. Hartzog

Freshman English causes administrative grief that runs much deeper than that usually reported. Directors of freshman English spend hundreds of hours each year scheduling and staffing classes, monitoring enrollments, measuring students' progress, and keeping records, as well as developing curricula, training faculty, and evaluating programs. And they spend those hours moving towards changeless deadlines, working in understaffed offices. (See, for example, Leon Coburn's "Notes of a Freshman Comp Director or *Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate*.".) But the problems of freshman English cannot be solved by meeting each demand, by responding to each emergency situation. Freshman English has caused composition's misfortune within the academy and disfavor within society. As a result, its problems can be solved only by understanding its history and by giving attention to basic processes of administration.

The size, if not the splendor, of the freshman program explains the early interest English departments showed in composition. Chronicling the growth of English departments, William Riley Parker found no compelling reason why in the late nineteenth century writing should have been annexed to English, except that the funding and faculty positions attached to large numbers of writing classes seemed attractive (347). So annexed it was. Over the years, English departments have never completely forsaken freshman English. Richard Lloyd-Jones has reminded us that even after departments lost their taste for writing courses, practical matters restored their interests: with declining enrollments, English discovered a literacy crisis "in order to get a few new sections" (29). As J. Paul Hunter observed in *Profession 80*, "Writing courses have, beyond debate, saved a lot of English departments from decimation in the past few years, and not a few faculty jobs are directly due to the renewed demand for basic courses in writing" (2).

These comments suggest how often pragmatic, rather than exclusively intellectual, concerns have governed the fate of writing courses. They also confirm that composition has been identified with freshman writing, even though it emerged from a broader, more important discipline: rhetoric. Indeed, we all know too well how writing courses have fared as adopted children of English. Martin Steinmann, Jr., offers this summary judgment: "...departments of English have been teaching

composition for almost a century, Tens of millions of teacher contact hours, tens of millions of student hours, and tens of millions of dollars have been invested in this enterprise. But all, or mostly, for nothing, it is generally agreed. The teaching of freshman composition has been, on the whole, a conspicuous failure. One reason is that we have despised it" (12).

Though it would be flattering to assume that today's writing courses will necessarily succeed where others have failed, the complexities of teaching and evaluating writing warn against such a claim. Steinmann's comment on attitude, however, hits the mark. The relationship between composition and English studies has been at best a delicate balance. English departments have usually shown distaste for composition, distaste which Paula Johnson explains as the result of its "appliedness." She points out that "nearly all research on student writing assumes that the writing must be altered in some way" and that this assumption and purpose "keep English and composition apart" (15). How ironic that English departments should show an extremely pragmatic interest in writing courses, then reject composition for its practical aims.

How ironic, too, that many writing programs today simply reverse that pattern: we deny that composition has exclusively practical aims, and then, as if to prove our point, we fail to take advantage of resources connected with freshman English. We dignify writing as something more than a skill, something intimately connected with cognition, something essential to all levels of a university education. Yet, lacking academic dignity ourselves, we seldom view large numbers of classes and faculty positions as gains. Even though these positions are often part-time or temporary and even though writing programs, like most departments, do not have full budgetary control, freshman English does offer us resources that we should use to advantage. To do so, we will have to develop new approaches to administration. Indeed, we will have to identify the administrative structures, processes, and organizations that can help give freshman English a new role in the academy and society.¹

For freshman English to be transformed and, in turn, to advance composition studies, it needs appropriate administrative shelter. Small wonder that it hasn't prospered under English departments' protection and guidance (often negative sums). Clearly, freshman English needs to be set within an administrative structure that will give it stability, direction, and purpose. It does not, however, have to be completely severed from English. We have the negative example of remedial writing programs that, with their own faculty and administration, have been shunted off from the mainstreams of their colleges and universities. We also have the positive example of interdisciplinary composition boards that exist outside of English departments but tend to draw their chairs and other key members from those departments.

The rhetorical tradition explains what composition has to do with literature and justifies their co-existence within one department, as James Murphy has persuasively argued. The plan he advances would place writing firmly and respectably within English departments once and for all (8-11). (See also the recommendations offered in *Composition and Literature*, edited by Winifred Horner.) In an ideal world, freshman writing could age gracefully, remaining forever freshman English. But for such a plan to work, English departments would themselves have to be dramatically transformed. As an interim or alternative measure, freshman writing might come of age within an administrative unit that has semi-autonomy yet holds some connection with English.

Michigan's English Composition Board (ECB) generally achieves this balance. Though the freshman program remains within the English department, the interdisciplinary ECB helps train freshman instructors and develops course materials. (See Barbra Morris' description of the board in the appendix to *Literary for Life*, edited by Richard Bailey and Robin Melanie Fosheim.) UCLA has designed an alternate model which combines a sub-department of English and an independent office in one administrative unit. That unit takes the name of the office, UCLA Writing Programs, and manages a campuswide writing program. In this arrangement, the freshman writing program has its own director, as well as coordinators of placement and testing, special preparatory programs, and teaching assistants, but it exists within a larger program. Here, freshman writing benefits from the quality and experience of its instructors, its firm administrative support, and its interlocking fit within a comprehensive program.

If the separation from English were to be complete, a writing program might become an autonomous unit or part of a communications program. Though these options would signal independence or new identity within the academic community, they seem largely impractical. First, they would finally separate composition from literary study. Though that union has been unhappy, the association should be modified and improved, not ended. Second, these arrangements could further endanger composition's shaky reputation. For the most part, composition seems a legitimate academic discipline only to those working within the field. Proclaiming independence too early--or joining with communications studies--might weaken rather than strengthen claims of legitimacy. Third, though these moves might be justified as efforts to restore rhetoric to its place of honor, such arguments would not be convincing on many campuses. However, some campuses do accept rhetoric or alliances of rhetoric, language, and literature as viable academic units. If some association with English departments--or literary studies more generally--remains possible, such departments or alliances may be effective.

Working within a structure that confers some independence and yet protects departmental affiliations, program administrators can give new attention to freshman English. In such a setting, the freshman program is elevated to the position of importance it deserves. For decades the academy and the public have identified composition with freshman English-and loathed it. But in a campuswide program, composition becomes larger than freshman English: associated with research, publications, and professional organizations, it becomes a specialization and a shared responsibility. In this context, freshman composition becomes something other than an administrative chore, valued only because it justifies large numbers of faculty positions.

To understand and usefully the resources of a freshman program, we need administrative processes that allow us to merge program review with faculty development. I see, in fact, a three-stage progression toward this goal. In the weekly staff meetings that Wayne Booth has recommended as "A Cheap, Efficient, Challenging, Sure-Fire and Obvious Device for Combatting the Major Scandal in Higher Education Today," faculty development occurs naturally through discussions of a set curriculum. In the coordinating group meetings that Michael Holzman has devised, instructors first gain latitude in determining their own teaching techniques and goals, then create their own peer evaluation system to improve teaching (291-92). In the review process that I advocate, faculty members examine and help reconstruct the entire freshman program in a way that gives them responsibility for its success and that places it at the core of a comprehensive writing program.

A review that was tailored to UCLA shows how a single administrative process can govern both curricular reform and faculty development. On a campus of 33,000 students, the UCLA Writing Programs faculty of 45 lecturers and 40 teaching assistants offers some 360 classes annually. After opening our office, we surveyed campus needs, developed adjunct and graduate courses, began work on computer programs and videotapes, and then, very early in our program's life, turned to freshman English. An 18-month review, involving more than 50 faculty and staff members from our program, the English department, and tutorial programs, led to major changes in the curriculum and administration of the freshman program. These principles governed the review:

1. Freshman writing should become the foundation for a pyramid of writing instruction. A broad, solid base of freshman courses should introduce students to the varieties of academic discourse, upper-division courses should teach them to write for their majors, graduate courses should offer professional training. With our faculty teaching at all levels, the freshman review could influence the entire writing program.

2. No single theory or practice should dominate the program. A survey of composition publications shows a variety of approaches and ideas, but no agreement on a single writing curriculum. Our curriculum should be pedagogically and theoretically sophisticated, its coherence resulting from informed decisions on its structure and purpose, its durability ensured by its capacity for change.
3. Our faculty should shape the curriculum. We had hired a large staff of well-trained and highly motivated professionals, and we had reduced their teaching loads from seven to six courses a year so they could participate in program development. Through this review, they could help design the new freshman program and prepare to teach in it. Those who would make the program a reality-teaching, conferring with students, assigning and reading essays-would thus determine its proper form.

The review was coordinated by a small planning committee representing our faculty and staff, as well as the English department.² After holding open forums for instructors and conducting student surveys, this committee named a dozen sub-committees to review the entire freshman curriculum, to evaluate our testing program and tutorial services, to analyze our upper-division courses in relation to the freshman program, and to propose training and research projects. These subcommittees surveyed instructors, contacted other institutions, and reviewed the relevant literature, then offered their recommendations for change. In a final report, the planning committee outlined the new freshman curriculum and its central administration. Valuing both coherence and creativity, the new director of the freshman program articulated its goals and principles and offered curricular models that our instructors could adapt, balancing or combining theories and pedagogical methods. In this way, we returned to our faculty the results of our joint deliberations so that they could bring the new program into being (Hartzog et al; Rose).

Participatory change, a reorganization from within, lends a program strength and flexibility. In this review, we tried to work not around, but through, the problems of managing large numbers of sections and hiring large numbers of faculty members. We turned not less, but more, of our attention to freshman English and its place within the university. Our lecturers, with experience in program review and curriculum design, have now begun incorporating the best of current composition theory and practice into all their classes. As Donald McQuade has pointed out, temporary faculty deserve clear information on their responsibilities; they need encouragement to study composition theory, research, and

pedagogy; and they need occasion to enter the community of intellectual inquiry (33). Geoffrey Weinman has suggested that the problems of providing qualified part-time instructors and making them feel part of the institution they serve "can be ameliorated, if not solved, by involving them in making decisions important to their professional work and welfare" (24). Such involvement not only serves these faculty members, but also enriches the programs in which they teach.

Housed within a comprehensive writing program and scrupulously reviewed, freshman English can gain new stature, substance and vitality. A carefully designed freshman writing program with an energetic and informed faculty can hold an essential place within a larger writing program and within the full university or college curriculum. Yet the structures and processes I've described will not alone change the fortunes of freshman English. The program director who designs and manages a solid, effective program must also represent it to the rest of the academy and to the public. To do so, the director must enter the intersecting realms of academic politics and public opinion. Work in these areas requires acumen like that displayed in creating a program, but it also calls for broader vision and a different kind of initiative.

If the freshman program is part of a campuswide effort to improve writing, its faculty and administrators regularly cross departmental lines. Establishing a writing program and integrating writing into the curriculum, they gain experience--sometimes painful experience--in academic politics. Yet any tensions that show in faculty discussions of writing will almost inevitably become exaggerated when the subject is freshman writing. The prejudice displayed against composition as an academic discipline, the notion that writing is a simple skill that should have been acquired in high school, uneasiness with students who lack full command of written and spoken English--all revert to freshman English. Because freshman English has caused composition's misfortune and disfavor, anyone advancing the cause of freshman English can expect repercussions.

Let me again work from an example. After we had ambitiously redesigned our freshman program, local academic senate committees, acting on systemwide legislation, turned their attention to the problems of remediation. Because the history of freshman English is always characterized by irony, we shouldn't have been surprised when a faculty committee declared English 1 remedial and removed credit from it. This freshman course, the second in a series of three, had carried two units of baccalaureate credit for five years. Though we had just upgraded the entire freshman sequence and though the revised English 1 might in fact have deserved four units of baccalaureate credit, the course fell into a vortex of excellence and educational reform. To set and maintain standards, to send a message to the high schools, the University of California's

faculty senate had ruled that no remedial course should carry baccalaureate credit. And local and statewide committees acted aggressively on this mandate, even though no one had agreed on a substantive definition of remediation in writing.

The decision to remove credit from English 1, even the legislation behind it, seemed anachronistic, given the reforms in our freshman program and in those on other University of California campuses. Recently, writing program faculty and administrators had been working to develop coherent, closely interrelated sequences of instruction that challenge all students to deal with university-level materials and assignments. At the same time, the academic senate had been preparing to separate remediation from the university curriculum and to reduce remedial offerings. Two problems seem obvious: (1) the lack of agreement on a substantive definition of remediation in writing, much less on an appropriate pedagogy or philosophy to guide the university's actions, and (2) the lack of communication on issues extremely important to both writing programs and the academic senate. As much as those of us directing writing programs felt that we held an informed, reasonable position, based on research and experience, we could not influence senate decisions.

During the past year's debates on these issues, writing program directors within the university have offered one another information and support. At an initial conference on remediation in writing, we invited university administrators and senate leaders to discuss the nature, purpose, and context of current legislation. Then, after tracing the history of the university's remedial programs, we made plans for a system-wide composition network. To meet the challenges posed not just by our students, but by our faculty senate and administration, we have now created a Council of Writing Programs. This council, with 75 charter members, will become a vehicle of communication between campuses and a representative body to work with the senate and administration. As chair of the council, I have already begun meeting with local, systemwide, and intersegmental committees considering such issues as diagnostic testing and university standards in writing.

I see distinct parallels between the formation of this council and the review of UCLA's freshman writing program. To give that program strength and resilience, we accepted its size and ordinary diffuseness, as well as the temporary status of its faculty, and we worked through these features toward change. Now, we're joining together a set of writing programs often staffed and directed by non-senate members, often dismissed from academic deliberations, and we are creating new means of representation. We gave our lecturers academic responsibility; we want now to give our writing programs a voice. In both cases, we're changing our basic stance and involvement in the academy.

Next, we need to reach beyond the academy, for the public is a source of unrest and also the target of our instruction. In the University of California, writing programs feel pressure from the administration and the faculty senate, who are concerned about standards and student preparation; the senate and administration feel pressure from the state legislature, which is worried about paying twice for education in basic skills; the legislature feels pressure from the voting public, which is distressed by the declining quality of education in America today. To reach the public, we need to reverse this line of influence, working with academic senate committees and administrators and with the State Department of Education, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, and individual legislators. We need also to continue collaborating with the schools, the community colleges, and the state universities and colleges. And we need to continue teaching our classes well. To develop influence, we will have to create a presence and demonstrate the success of our programs.

Program administrators have already begun showing initiative like that I've described. Writing programs are working through alliances such as the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors and the Consortium of Ivy League Writing Programs. And the Council of Writing Program Administrators, through its summer workshops, program reviews, conference presentations, and this journal, supports those who design and manage writing programs across the country. Overall, though, writing program administrators have not yet become good politicians; we have not yet argued well. Given the traditions of composition and its place in the academy, Richard Lloyd-Jones mused several years ago, "Clearly we are on the defensive. No wonder... but perhaps defensive measures will just further erode our tight little island. Perhaps we have too much given in to fashion and too little asserted our own view of the world" (29). Only by asserting that view, by coming to influence such things as budget allocations, commission reports, and legislation, can we finally improve the state of freshman English and the status of composition.

Notes

¹A new, dynamic model of program administration will show the influence of Kenneth Burke. The paradox of substance, described in *A Grammar of Motives* (1945; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), explains how composition can share its substance with "legitimate" English studies, even as it grows toward independence. Further, administration itself is necessarily Burkean, demanding intellectual agility and multiple perspectives. I will develop these ideas more fully in another essay.

²For the success and the spirit of the review, my thanks to those who served with me on the planning committee: Cheryl Bolin, Susan Brienza, Michael Moore, Mike Rose, Patricia Taylor, and Jennifer Wilson. For the quality of the

new program, special thanks to Mike Rose, who, after co-chairing the committee in its last full year, became Director of the Freshman Writing Program.

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Editor's note: The following set of articles by Judith Fishman and Lynn Quitman Troyka presents two views of the CUNY Writing Assessment Test, a large-scale assessment tool which has interest for writing program administrators nationally. Professor Troyka's article appears at the Editor's request.

Do You Agree or Disagree: The Epistemology of the CUNY Writing Assessment Test

Judith Fishman

May I ask you, readers, to do the following exercise? Take out a few minutes to read and react to the statements below, by checking the blank next to each assertion--do you agree or disagree?

- | Agree | Disagree | |
|--------------|-----------------|--|
| _____ | _____ | 1. Everyone should be religious. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. Kids shouldn't watch television. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. Handguns should be forbidden. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. The death penalty should be used more often. |
| _____ | _____ | 5. Automobiles should be eliminated. |
| _____ | _____ | 6. Nobody should be allowed to have a big family. |

These are the kinds of topics used for the City University of New York Writing Assessment Test--or as we within the system call it--the "WAT."¹ Every entering freshman and all transfer students within the 17 branches of CUNY take a version of the WAT; students are asked to respond to one or two topics (like those listed above) by writing an "essay"; they are asked to "express your thoughts clearly and organize your ideas so that they will make sense to a reader." They *are* told that "correct grammar and sentence structure are important," and instructed *to* "agree or disagree" with the assertion and to "explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observation of others, or your reading."²

Since the inception of the WAT in 1976, national attention has focused on CUNY's attempt to institutionalize a means of testing writing abilities by asking for a writing sample of all its students. The University has been applauded for not resorting to multiple-choice testing and for having allowed teachers of writing to design the test:³ "Chief Readers" representing each branch of CUNY meet yearly to review proposed exam topics to fit the existing model. Tests are generally read holistically within each college, and rates of agreement between college and "audit" readers generally exceed 80% each year. The WAT is used in all branches of CUNY for placement (students who fail the test are placed in basic writing courses) and in many branches for "exit" (students who do not pass the test--re-tests are permitted--by the time they earn 61 credits may not be permitted to continue in college). All incoming freshmen (more than 33,000 each year) and transfer students take a version of the same test. In short, the system "works."

For college administrators and writing program administrators considering the implementation of college-wide testing, the CUNY system, along with the ETS and the California Placement Test, has become a model for its efficiency, its packaging, and its high reliability in placing native students in appropriate level courses. And yet, it seems to me, and to many of my colleagues within CUNY, that the system is in need of reevaluation and repair. My purpose here is to examine some of the concerns and questions explored within the program at Queens College and at meetings of other colleagues within CUNY, so that those who do look to CUNY as a model may reflect on these observations, as they consider implementing or modifying a college-wide testing program. My concerns are these:

- that the test does not enable students to write at their best (even considering the constraints of testing)
- that the test shapes, misshapes, and dominates basic writing programs
- that it imparts a set of values about living (particularly in New York City) that many students, particularly foreign students, cannot relate to
- that the test promotes a model of mind that does not reflect what we should be reaching for in institutions of higher learning.

"It seems axiomatic," says Kenneth Bruffee of Brooklyn College, "that the way we test our students determines in part what and how we teach them. To some degree, we all 'teach the test.' Or to put it in a way that may be easier for all of us to accept, when we teach we have in mind

the goals we hope our students will reach." (4-5). Bruffee is right: gather together a group of basic writing teachers from CUNY, and a guaranteed topic of conversation is "how to teach to the test" so that students in basic writing courses will pass a "re-test." And teaching to the test often boils down to this: teach students how "to make up their minds" on the spot, take a position, defend it, invent support if necessary, "lie" if you need to. Many of my colleagues are distressed that this kind of teaching to the test sabotages a writing course, that they end up drilling students on how to pass this test. More important, they are concerned that the test promotes a set of values--as all tests do--that does not reflect "goals we hope our students will reach," the model of mind we wish to promote. Consider for a moment the exercise you have just completed; consider that you have been asked to make serious, responsible, fundamental judgments about religion, the educational system, the death penalty, teen-age crime, and mass transportation; consider that you have been asked to make up your mind within a very short time. "Do you agree or disagree?"

From my vantage point as Assistant Chair for Composition over the past three years, I have had an opportunity to work in the field--to speak with nearly 200 students about the CUNY/WAT: one of my administrative responsibilities has been to hear problems, complaints, worries about the test--from students, their teachers, parents, counselors, even principals, of high schools. Whenever I hear a complaint, I retrieve the student's test booklet, re-read it, and confer with the Director of Composition. As numbers of complaints mounted, Director of Composition Nancy Conley⁴ began to observe--as I did--as unsettling number of anomalies and contradictions between poor performance on the WAT and apparent strengths of mind, intellectual talents, and verbal skills evidenced in our talks with students and our review of additional samples of these students' writings; we began to pool our resources and engage in informal research by interviewing students about their perceptions, their memories, of taking the test. We heard, regularly, students exclaim that they had "had a bad day," that they "weren't feeling well," that they had "forgotten how to write over the summer," that they didn't have enough time." Then we began to stumble on cases such as this one: Student X informed me that she was a transfer student from Radcliffe; she had failed the WAT and was advised to take a basic writing course. She had not realized, however, until mid-semester that she was required to take a basic course and was now enrolled in a Romantic literature course, where she was earning an "A." Now she was sitting in my office, distraught, bewildered. She was to be put on probation for failing to comply with regulations.

I asked her about her recollections of the test and she said that she had had difficulty, that she had attempted to answer a question on religion, about people leading more "meaningful" lives if they were religious. But

she had sat there watching the time tick away; she had sat there pondering. I read her text and, indeed, it was ponderous, indecisive. Four months after she had taken the test, she still could not make up her mind, she said, and perhaps she will never make up her mind about religion and a meaningful life. I found her to be one of those serious, thoughtful, contemplative, reflective people--an ideal student, we might say, if she appeared in our classes, a student who weighs pros and cons; a student who can accept ambiguity and uncertainty about issues that cannot be settled within a 50-minute writing session.

In interviewing students, I also noted that many were convinced they had not chosen a "right" answer, that which they believed was endorsed by the institution; they had spent a good amount of time--before they even began to write--trying to determine which point of view would be the acceptable one: if they answered "wrongly" they were certain they would fail. In speaking with basic writing teachers who speak with their students repeatedly about the WAT, I found this view to be widespread, that students admit to trying to please the test-designer by agreeing with "his" values, with the "voice" behind the test. In reviewing all formats of the CUNY/WAT, I found this voice to be problematic--at times it is

neutrally submerged; at other times it surfaces as a mysterious "me" or "I":

it always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at television. If we could unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated and independent human beings.

Not surprisingly, responses to this question often evoke a 'voice' that

says "Yes, television is bad for young adults. We should unplug all the TV sets in America!" The party line?

I have also observed a curious shift in the WAT format: early versions of the test asked students to agree or disagree with this statement, rather than to agree or disagree. Perhaps the test designers attempted here to separate the 'voice' of the test designer from the 'voice' of the question.

Faculty were also concerned that students didn't know what to do with some of the questions: we looked, for example, at the subway question where it was suggested that New Yorkers "complain" too much about the system, and should, instead, "appreciate" it. Our concern is that *appreciate* is an elusive, intangible, odd handle; if we speculate on what one does to appreciate something, we might come up with absurd, slightly ridiculous options: initiate a subway appreciate day; decorate a subway station with flowers; start a subway fan club. What does a writer *do* with the verb *appreciate*? (Perhaps if Henry James was right, riders should take them over, for James argued that to appreciate something is to make *it one's own*).

Faculty were worried, too, that the disagree-or-agree-format promotes an essay, not of argument, but of opinion, where students may, initially, choose a side: I agree that the automobile must be replaced by mass transportation, and then discover they have little of substance to say. Their limited experience, their relative paucity of information, insists that they write from a "sense of ignorance,"⁵ and we find, as readers, tautological, abstract, indefinite responses, as students discover themselves plunged into supporting an economic or social issue that they, finally, know little about.

Faculty teaching basic writing courses at Queens were in agreement that "something" was amiss; in a 1983 survey of 40 basic writing teachers we found nearly total agreement that the test worked well as an "agitator," a "motivator," within the course itself: students seemed to take the course seriously because they had to pass the re-test. But faculty were concerned that it was the "wrong" test; they found themselves apologizing for it, particularly when they urged students to make up their minds on fundamental questions. Charles O'Neil, an adjunct lecturer, noted a "strange paranoia" whenever the test was mentioned in class; students refused to discuss the test because they were convinced that their values, their beliefs, their views--on politics, religion, styles of living--were being tested. On a questionnaire he gave to his classes, students repeatedly expressed their concerns that they had held the wrong views--and that was why they were relegated to a basic writing course. Here are three students' comments:

- When writing about any one of these topics, you use your own opinion. If you write about your opinion and its controversial, you might fail just because the person who's marking it doesn't agree with you.
- I feel that these questions are too ambiguous. This leaves the student wondering which way would be best to answer the question in order to impress the reader. I feel that the questions should be more specific. This would then lessen the possibilities of different ways to approach the question, enabling the student to concentrate on the actual technique of the written argument. After all, that is what is being judged, not the subject or opinion the student chooses.
- Should not ask questions dealing with religion. Religion is a private matter and should not be written on to see if you can pass an assessment test.

Informal interviews with students, conversations with faculty, a close reading of the test topics, our growing unease--all led to our conducting, at Queens, a small pilot study (working as Karen Greenberg did, within the formal constraints of the WAT) to try to determine whether students preferred a question that could be attributed to a "real" voice, and that could be answered more flexibly. In the Spring 1984 semester, five

instructors each with two classes (totalling 250 students) were invited to try out a first-day-of-class writing exercise, wherein students (who had passed the WAT) would be given an opportunity to choose between a "WAT" question and a similar question that was (1) attributed to a real voice and (2) open to varied responses:

(Question #1 is the CUNY/WAT format; question #2 is the alternative, "attributed," format).

1. Older people bring to their work a lifetime of knowledge and experience. They should not be forced to retire, even if keeping them on the job cuts down on the opportunities for young people to find work.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

2. "We have isolated old people and we've cut off the children, the young people from their grandparents. One of the reasons we have as bad a generation gap today as we do is that grandparents have copped out. Young people are being deprived of the thing they need most—perspective, to know why their parents behave so peculiarly and why their grandparents say the things they do."

Margaret Mead

What do you think of Margaret Mead's statement? Write an essay where you discuss your response to Mead. Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, and/or your reading.

After students wrote for thirty minutes on one of the questions, they were asked to reflect, in writing, upon their choice. Although students' choices (over 80% chose the WAT format) did not support our hypothesis that the attributed, more flexible question would be the one chosen, we found students' comments exceedingly interesting. Many students said that they were used to the WAT format; we concluded that in our next study, we must work with a naive group. Several students said that they always answer the first question asked (we had mixed the order on the test forms.) Several students said that our "attributed" question was too long. Several said that the Mead observation was too complicated, that they had learned not to think in exams. Those who chose the attributed question claimed that this form offered them more room to think; here is one response:

I chose question 2 because that question is a more open question. It is more open to a variety of different answers, whereas question 1 leaves you with only two choices: agreement or disagreement. Also, I have not as yet made up my mind as to a solution for the problem in question 1; both sides have their good points and their bad points, and I have not yet made up my mind as to which, if either, is the right course.

As we plan for our next round of research, we will build on these informal studies, and try out a variety of formats, prompts, and topics, and reach for means of discovering how students are reading the test.⁶

Certainly, we will explore more fully a situational format, where the writer's role and purpose, audience, and context are clear, following Richard L. Larson's useful suggestions for reshaping the WAT: "Stipulate an audience for the students to address, and if possible a reason for addressing that audience. Ask students to play a role just as they will need to play a role in any writing done for any audience" (8-9). Many colleges at Queens have found students responding enthusiastically to in-class exercises such as this one:

You have learned that the world will end in one year. Your Uncle Harold has suddenly left you \$1,000,000 to spend in any way you like. You must now write him a letter informing him of your plans.

We create here a situation where the context or frame, the role of the writer, and the nature of the audience are all clearly specified, and where the enterprise or act prompted by the writing assignment corresponds to the conditions of the test: when a situation is dire, as our examinees may assume it to be when they write the test, then the response required of the student should not be the expression of a reflective, detached, contemplative state of mind, but rather a statement of a plan of action.

The rhetorical context—or the fictive context—as James Hoetker insists in his review, "Essay Examination Topics and Students' Writing," (338) must not be elaborately specified or unduly complex. At Queens, we found the attributed question too long, too complex, too complicated—and our students were not in a test situation. Surely, however, we can devise topics and formats that allow for variety of mind, variety of response.

What can those who administer writing programs glean from these observations, probings, reflections? First, the ramifications of institutional choices are far-reaching: I am concerned at CUNY about our students, our teachers, our courses, and our program: about students who take the test repeatedly and lose confidence; about teachers who feel bound by the pressure of the test on their students and find themselves turning their basic courses into a series of tension-filled practice sessions

on the three-point essay on typical WAT topics; about the integrity of courses and programs; about pressing students, teachers, and programs into institutional constraints that inhibit rather than facilitate.

Test shapes program: in designing a test, one must consider the model of mind that is promoted. The assessment test, for thousands of undergraduates, is not a 50-minute session, quickly taken and then forgotten. Because the re-test is identical to the placement exam, the test hovers over the lives of undergraduates for a semester, a year, even two or three years. The agree or disagree format represents in their minds the sanctioned shape of an essay, of writing.

What is in the minds of the test examiners is not necessarily in the minds of the examinees or in the minds of the readers of those examinations. Careful, scrupulous research needs to be conducted into the ways students respond, as readers and writers, to such matters as topics, prompts, format, modes, time-limits, and explicit or implicit statements of values, inherent within tests. Our preliminary, provisional excursions into research at Queens convince us of the need for such studies so that we can be certain that the test is the best instrument we can construct for our students. As a profession, our research techniques, as they venture more and more into a case study and ethnomethodology, offer us the means for such explorations, but as Hoetker says, we must be prepared for "all sorts of perplexing difficulties" (389).

Even though a system is in place, even though it "works," it must be continually reassessed, reevaluated, reexamined, studied, and probed, questioned and requestioned. One of CUNY's strengths, says Robert Lyons of Queens College, is that the administration has been willing to "turn over most aspects of the testing program-to faculty control" and has provided "a strong base for continuing faculty involvement." So it has, but the WAT, comments Lyons, "now seems as solid and immovable as the filing cabinets in which the test results are stored." He worries that the system has become stagnant; he worries about a "silence of acquiescence" (7). So do I.

Notes

¹Because the CUNY/WAT questions are considered "secure," that is, they may not be reproduced, WPA is not permitted to quote passages verbatim. The "television" question and the "old age" question are in the public domain; they are used to explain the evaluation scale in "The CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test: Student Essays Evaluated and Annotated by the CUNY Task Force on Writing," CUNY Task Force on Writing, April 1979.

²CUNY Task Force on Writing, *The CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test* (New York: CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, 1980).

³For articles on the CUNY Writing Assessment Test, see Robert Lyons, "The City University of New York Writing Assessment Test: A faculty-generated model," and Allan Brick, "The CUNY Writing Assessment Test and the teaching of writing," *WPA*, 4 (Fall, 1980):23-34. And Karen Greenberg, "Competency Testing: What Role Should Teachers of Composition Play?" *CCC*, 33 (December, 1982):366-376.

⁴The informal interviewing, rereading of CUNY Writing Assessment Tests, reviewing of student writings; conversations held with English faculty, individually, and in faculty workshops; attendance at CAWS (CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors) meetings were all done in collaboration with Nancy R. Comley, Director of Composition, Queens College.

⁵The term "sense of ignorance" is borrowed from Leslie Stratta and John Dixon, *Teaching and Assessing Argument* (Southampton, England: Southern Regional Examinations Board, 1982), 23, to describe the effects of "topics of social and economic importance ... beyond the competence of the average 17+ candidate to discuss with more than the shallowest argument," cited in James Hoetker, "Essay Examination Topics and Students' Writing," *CCC*, 33 (December, 1982):372-392.

⁶James Hoetker notes: "Since there are no studies of how students read essay topics, we know little about how the structure or the rhetoric or the vocabulary of a topic affects students' interpretations of it or their affective responses to it," "Essay Examination Topics and Student Writing" *College Composition and Communication* 33 (December 1982): 380.

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The Phenomenon of Impact: The CUNY Writing Assessment Test

Lynn Quitman Troyka

In "Do You Agree or Disagree: The Epistemology of the CUNY Writing Assessment Test," Judith Fishman objects to the test's topics, which end with "Do you agree or disagree?" She misses the point, I think. Test topics can be changed. Given the proper research rigor, investigation of alternate topics for an in-place test is simple to undertake. I will discuss the CUNY writing topics presently, but first I want to set straight a record I think Fishman misunderstands.

The Writing Skills Assessment Test (WAT) created and used at CUNY has had an impact far more positive than Fishman implies by her statement "In short, the system works." The WAT is process as much as product. Its existence is both symbol and fact. Moreover, the quality of the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program, of which the WAT is part, surely must have influenced FIPSE in its recent decision to award a three-year, \$363,000 grant to the National Testing Network on Writing, now part of the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, for a project on "College Assessment Program Evaluation."

The phenomenon of impact is real. Sure, CUNY deserves to be proud of the excellent consistency with which it runs a complex, multi-campus assessment program, but the stakes are far higher than that. The WAT is raising consciousness in the CUNY feeder high schools about the need for a curriculum that stresses actual writing; it is alerting CUNY students and faculty to the centrality of writing as a means of learning; it is nudging CUNY curricula toward greater emphasis on large amounts of frequent writing; it is making the public aware that writing is important. At the core of any testing program lie what Stephen Witte and Lester Faigley call "unintended effects" (62).

I

I was among the faculty back in 1977 who thought it could not be done. I did not think CUNY, with its yearly incoming freshman class of about 33,000 students in the fall and 12,000 students in the spring,¹ could manage to assess students' writing abilities with an essay test. I did not think that a sufficient number of topics could be properly developed and kept secure; that CUNY English faculty would agree to take on the added

task of scoring then of thousands of essays each year; that so huge a collection of essays could be read reliably across-CUNY at each of the separate 17 CUNY campuses; and that the testing schedules would work out easily for the students. I was wrong.

I was delighted to be wrong. Who could object to learning from the likes of Mina Shaughnessy, who chose the Task Force members charged to select a writing test suitable to the CUNY Board of Trustees' mandate for a check on skills? from the likes of Ken Bruffee, who chaired that Task Force? from the likes of Marie Jean Lederman, Robert Lyons, and Harvey Wiener, who were among the members of that Task Force? Most of all, who could object to discovering that in-house proficiency assessment with essays was possible on a colossal scale?

"First-generation concerns," as I call them, occupied that first Task Force on Writing in 1977. The group, comprised of only highly experienced teachers of writing,² met approximately 24 times during six or seven months of what must have been exhausting but exhilarating activity. The Task Force's first major decision proved to be landmark: to use an essay test exclusively.³ They had three reasons, I'm told:

1. multiple-choice tests, with their attention to error hunting and revising others' prose, do not represent the universe of knowledge called "writing ability,"
2. reinforcing the need for as much actual writing as possible has a salubrious effect on teaching and curricula, and
3. an assessment combining multiple-choice test and essay is too vulnerable to budget crunches which can too easily eliminate the expensive-to-administer essay test in favor of the inexpensive machine-scorable test.

Of course, the Task Force had to develop topics. Preferring topics of appeal to the unique student body attending CUNY, the Task Force wanted topics that were timely and rooted in the real world. They wanted the tasks to be straight-forward and concrete, and thus reasonably accessible to the students. The Task Force decided on a choice of topics for each test, because one topic seemed too limiting and more than two topics seemed intimidating within the 50-minute constraint. Finally, the Task Force wanted a format that might help to propel the students to "get started." The closing words of the WAT prompts, "agree or disagree," were spawned by that concern: to give the students a gentle push into the flow. (Fishman asks why the earliest tests read "agree or disagree with this statement" instead of the current "agree or disagree." Simply this: The early WAT forms, produced under the pressure, had a vague referent for "this." Embarrassing, but true.) A typical WAT test with the

complete prompt and two sample topics no longer part of the "secure" pool of approximately 50 CUNY topics appears in Appendix I. (All topic-statements are more fully developed than Fishman was able to show, due to test security, in her opening list.) Topic development, by the way, goes on yearly. All faculty get a memo inviting them to submit new topics. Then a sub-group of the Task Force on Writing develops, pilots, and finally selects the best of the new ideas. I know not if Fishman has ever submitted topic suggestions to the CUNY committee, but I do know that every idea is welcome because of ongoing need for fresh topics.

"Second-generation concerns" occupied the Task Force about the time I began to serve in 1980.⁴ All was in place, and it was time to take a hard look at what we had. Our major priority was research. For example, we instituted a yearly central audit of randomly selected papers from all campuses so that we could assure that standards for the test were being applied consistently. More important, the Office of Academic Affairs freely offered research specialists to Task Force members and any other interested faculty who would write proposals. We were urged to ask hard questions. I wish that Fishman had come forward. She would have liked what we were doing, I think. She would have found, I know, a forum for sharing her ideas and the means to be guided into some very interesting research. In the early 1980's, four research monographs on the WAT were published by the Office of Academic Affairs.⁵

I had the privilege of conducting one of the studies (*An A Posteriori Examination*) to review the WAT descriptive criteria, written *a priori* by the first Task Force. We wanted to see if the criteria might be made fuller and more performance-based, thereby helping students and test scores. The project, involving the collaboration of over 100 CUNY and non-CUNY faculty, was complex and costly for the Office of Academic Affairs. As I worked, I found a spirit of honest inquiry without a trace of "why bother if things are going well?" And when refined criteria were worked out, the administration vigorously undertook to disseminate the new information. Those refined criteria, given in Appendix II, do not depend in the slightest on an "agree or disagree" format, just as the first set of criteria did not.

Fishman raises what I would call a "third-generation concern." Can the topics be improved? I cannot imagine why not. Nothing is perfect. Although the existence of the WAT seems assured, the particulars of the WAT have never been cast in concrete. The spirit of the entire WAT enterprise has been colleagues consulting with colleagues to improve what they can offer to students.

II

Despite the potential of Fishman's concern, I am troubled by some of the separate points she makes. Her discussion and suggestions seem to me to suffer from inexperience in reading about, or conducting, unbiased research. Let's take the story of the Radcliffe student. If one of the topics troubled her, why did she not choose the alternative topic? How typical is she? The WAT has been shown to measure well the ability of talented students. For example, two years ago a selective upstate New York college, a college not unlike Radcliffe in its rigorous standards, asked CUNY to include in an annual WAT audit a few hundred of their college's initial and re-test essays, without being singled out to the scorers. In that select group, 85% passed the initial test and 90% passed the re-test.

If we want to go on anecdotal evidence, which I might enjoy talking about but cannot put much stock in for decisions affecting large numbers of highly diverse students, I can bear witness to excellent student reaction to the WAT. Until the WAT was in place, the placement test at the CUNY college where I taught was a multiple-choice test with laughable face validity but bulls-eye accuracy for sorting students into the various levels of composition we offered. During those years, I spent much of my time trying to justify the test to angry students who correctly saw no connection between their actual writing and the nit-picking items on the placement test. Once the WAT was in place, the tension ended. In fact, I always urged my students to look up their placement essays after about six weeks of class. On returning from the college's testing office where the essays are kept on file, dozens of students each semester would bounce into class chattering about the fact that now they could "see" and evaluate their own writing more clearly. They were beginning to take control of their own educations.

Fishman's suggested alternate topic illustrates the important difference between a classroom topic given as exercise and a university-wide topic. I wince at the idea of telling an uncle how I am going to spend a million dollars because the end of the world is near. The possibility of the end of the world is no joke to today's students who, according to surveys and studies, sincerely and deeply fear a nuclear holocaust. What kind of values are suggested by telling the students to think about going on a spending spree and chattering about it to an uncle? What about the materialism, even nihilism implied by that so-called "dire situation"? Most of the students I know think about crisis in terms of yearning for the comfort of family, friends and, in some cases, religion.

Fishman is again exclusively anecdotal when she reports opinions about the WAT held by some of her colleagues at her CUNY college. She does not also refer her readers to the widely circulated research report by Karen Greenberg, *CUNY Writing Faculty: Practices and Perceptions* (1983).

Greenberg presents the results of a scientifically developed anonymous survey of CUNY writing faculty, which asks opinions about the WAT, among other matters. Of the 433 faculty from all CUNY colleges who responded, 75% thought that the WAT was as effective as, or more effective than, the placement system used previously by the individual college. Only 15% of the faculty said that they "taught to the test," and half of this group consider the WAT a benefit to their curricula. One teacher said:

I teach directly to the test—I give frequent, full-length, in-class essay assignments. Because of this we spend more time on writing rather than on grammar or mechanics. Also, my students are improving their ability [sic] to provide logical reasons for assertions thanks to WAT practice. (47)

Well, I did not use WAT-type practice in my own teaching, but I admit that were I forced to choose between a teacher who uses grammar drills to teach writing and one who uses essay practice, even in a WAT format, to teach writing, I would choose the latter. I would not much like the choice, but I would make it knowing that grammar drill is a not uncommon focus in too many writing classes.

Off and on, I have heard about teachers who "teach to the test." I wonder about those teachers. I wonder what they were doing when the test was a multiple-choice test. And is drill in WAT-type topics all they can think of doing? I wonder what kind of writers they are. And readers. But then, in all fairness, I began to wonder about a possible explanation for some of our teachers' behavior: many CUNY colleges require, on their own, that re-tests be given after only a quarter or a semester of college work. That is an error, in my opinion. No test, essay or multiple-choice, can be statistically sensitive enough to measure growth over the short haul. Writing ability grows with exposure to good teaching over an extended period of time. The Office of Academic Affairs mandates *only* that the WAT be taken for placement and, if failed, be taken again before the completion of 60 credits. No central mandate requires re-testing after one course in basic writing. Some CUNY colleges, however, have made that decision on their own. Colleges that re-test students after only ten to fifteen weeks of life in college are bound to be disappointed with the results, and the teachers whose final grades are determined by one test are bound to be frustrated.

III

The research I have done over the years has always turned out to be more difficult and fascinating than I had anticipated. I would like to offer, therefore, a few basic guidelines for Writing Program Administrators and other English faculty who wish to undertake thorough, unbiased topic research for the purpose of placement or proficiency assessment with essays.

1. If the test is going to be used for determining requirements that affect the time and money a student must spend in college, the test has to hold up to close scrutiny, perhaps even in the courts.
2. An essay test can have a wide variety of topics, but each one has had to be put through a rigorous screening process.
 - a. A "jury" of faculty has to meet, read and discuss the topics. It must eliminate any topics that "on the face of it" (face validity) do not seem appropriate.
 - b. Each topic has to be administered in a test-like situation to a group of students as much like the ones who will take the test as possible. The students should be from as varied backgrounds as the ones who will take the test (within reason, of course). The minimum number of pilot tests per topic is 300 for a testing program the size of CUNY's.
 - c. To end up with two topics that can be used, pilot ten. (This is conservative; professional testing companies—which write test topics for national audiences—expect a much higher rate of eventual rejection, but if a college knows itself, the 2:10 ratio will probably work).
 - d. The pilot tests have to be read by a group of faculty, preferably some of those on the original "jury" and some new people, to check for ambiguity of topic and to see if the topic is biased against any one subgroup of the pilot test group. For example, a topic about rock music obviously would be biased against people who do not listen to it; other biases are less obvious and often surprising on reading pilot test essays.
3. The topics have to be "equivalent," but not exactly alike. This means that no student is penalized for selecting a topic more difficult than another. This factor has to hold "over time," which means that once a test is in place, new topics have to be of equivalent difficulty. A student taking the test in 1984 cannot have a benefit (due to topic variance) that was not

available to someone who took the test in 1978. This matter is less restricting than it might seem. A good consultant in research design knows how to set up comparative studies so that statistical equivalence can be objectively measured.

4. The topics should not be random but should have an undergirding rationale. But the rationales should not control the test unduly. The students have to be able to do their best under time pressure (assuming there is a time limit as exists at CUNY, with its tests in writing, reading, and math). For example, some faculty today might be attracted to topics that make explicit audience, purpose and other details of the rhetorical situation. Fine, but check it out with pilot testing. James Hoetker in "Essay Examination Topics and Students' Writing" reminds us of Brossell's work which "concludes that too detailed a specification of rhetorical context 'can be counterproductive to writers by inducing them to repeat needlessly the information in the topic and thus waste time.'" (388)

Carefully collected data are, after all, the best assurance we have that our decisions will not be derived from one controlling personality or philosophy.

Notes

¹Some of Judith Fishman's facts are a bit off. She says that 33,000 accounts for "all incoming freshmen," but that accounts for only the fall semester; the total for an academic year is over 43,000. She says that "the inception of the WAT" was in 1976, but she is early by two years. 1976 was the year the mandate for skills assessment was given by the CUNY Board of Trustees; in 1977, Task Forces in the various skill areas met; the Writing Assessment Test (WAT) was instituted in the spring of 1978 to be binding on students entering the fall 1978 semester.

²To the credit of the CUNY administration, especially during those pressured months of quick decision-making about mandated tests, only faculty were appointed to decide on matters that would long affect CUNY faculty and curricula.

³As I was researching WAT history, I was impressed to discover, that the Task Force on Writing was *not* the first CUNY committee to recommend an essay test for writing assessment. During 1976 and early 1977, the Chancellor's Committee on Movement from Lower to Upper Division, a cross-curriculum group of faculty, deliberated about all of CUNY's skills-assessment needs. In March 1977 their final report recommended an essay for writing assessment. The Task Force on Writing, formed soon after, had that recommendation at hand—and it was only a recommendation, not a mandate—when they began their work. (For the full text of the recommendation, see "Freshman Skills Assessment: A Proposal," Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, The City University of New York, August 1977).

⁴Membership on the Writing Task Force rotates regularly, to keep ideas about test improvement fresh, and to ensure representation from all 17 CUNY colleges. The chair is an experienced member of the Task Force who also serves on a CUNY Policy Advisory Board which coordinates the entire Freshman Skills Assessment Program in writing, reading, and math.

⁵The complete list of these monographs and research monographs on other topics including computers in the English class (along with cost information—around \$2.00 each) can be obtained from the Instructional Resource Center, CUNY, 535 East 80th Street, New York, New York 10021.

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Appendix I

The City University of New York Writing Skills Assessment Test

Directions

You will have fifty minutes to plan and write the essay assigned below. (You may wish to use your fifty minutes in the following way: 10 minutes planning what you are going to write; 30 minutes writing; 10 minutes rereading and correcting what you have written.)

You should express your thoughts clearly and organize your ideas so that they will make sense to a reader. Correct grammar and sentence structure are important.

Write your essay on the lined pages of your booklet. You may use the inside of the front cover of the booklet for preliminary notes.

You must write your essay on **one** of the following assignments. Read each one carefully and then choose either **A** or **B**.

A. It always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at television. If we could unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated, and more independent human beings.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

B. Older people bring to their work a lifetime of knowledge and experience. They should not be forced to retire, even if keeping them on the job cuts down on the opportunities for young people to find work.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

Appendix II

The City University of New York Freshman Skills Assessment Program

Writing Skills Assessment Test Evaluation Scale (refined 1981-82)

6

The essay provides a well-organized response to the topic and maintains a central focus. The ideas are expressed in appropriate language. A sense of pattern of development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanation or illustration, and the vocabulary is well suited to the context. Sentences reflect a command of syntax within the ordinary range of standard written English. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are almost always correct.

5

The essay provides an organized response to the topic. The ideas are expressed in clear language most of the time. The writer develops ideas and generally signals relationships within and between paragraphs. The writer uses vocabulary that is appropriate for the essay topic and avoids oversimplifications or distortions. Sentences generally are correct grammatically, although some errors may be present when sentence structure is particularly complex. With few exceptions, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct.

4

The essay shows a basic understanding of the demands of essay organization, although there might be occasional digressions. The development of ideas is sometimes incomplete or rudimentary, but a basic logical structure can be discerned. Vocabulary generally is appropriate for the essay topic but at times is oversimplified. Sentences reflect a sufficient command of standard written English to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Common forms of agreement and grammatical inflection are usually, although not always, correct. The writer generally demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentences. The writer spells common words, except perhaps so-called "demons," with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

3

The essay provides a response to the topic but generally has no overall pattern of organization. Ideas are often repeated or undeveloped, although occasionally a paragraph within the essay does have some structure. The writer uses informal language occasionally and records conversational speech when appropriate written prose is needed. Vocabulary often is limited. The writer generally does not signal relationships within and between paragraphs. Syntax is often rudimentary and lacking in variety. The essay has recurrent grammatical problems, or because of an extremely narrow range of syntactic choices, only occasional grammatical problems appear. The writer does not demonstrate a firm understanding of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer occasionally misspells common words of the language.

2

The essay begins with a response to the topic but does not develop that response. Ideas are repeated frequently, or are presented randomly, or both. The writer uses informal language frequently and does little more than record conversational speech. Words are often misused, and vocabulary is limited. Syntax is often tangled and is not sufficiently stable to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling occur often.

1

The essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English. Lapses in punctuation, spelling, and grammar often frustrate the reader. Or, the essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.



Editor's Note: The following article is the first in a series of articles by Edward White and Linda Polin which will appear in the *WPA*. Future articles will address numerous issues relevant to writing program administrators: problems and practices of faculty development, patterns of college writing instruction, student perspectives on composition instruction, and the effectiveness of specific features of college composition programs.

Research on Composition Programs: Faculty Attitudes and Beliefs About the Teaching of Writing¹

Edward M. White and Linda Polin

Our research team has been examining the curious love-hate relationship between college and university English departments and the composition programs they normally contain. Our primary interest is to discover characteristics of effective programs of composition instruction, and, as our first step, we gathered a substantial amount of descriptive information about those who teach in composition programs. This article analyzes a few elements of those descriptive data, focusing particularly on what we have discovered about tenured instructors: what they believe about the students they teach, and the importance of composition research, and the effects of composition instruction itself.

We focus this article on the composition teaching of tenured faculty, since these faculty play an important role in many writing programs—despite the fact that the composition practices of the tenured are usually hidden from view. Interviews conducted in an earlier phase of our research indicate that writing program administrators usually know quite well what is going on in the classes taught by part-time faculty and teaching assistants. But what happens in the classrooms and curricula of the tenured faculty who more or less willingly teach composition is not only unknown but the subject of many dark suspicions. Our research allows us to organize and reflect on what they say they do and what they report their attitudes to be.

The information summarized here originated in individual responses to a questionnaire sent, in early spring 1982, to all those who regularly

teach lower division composition in The California State University.² The CSU, with its nineteen campuses, exhibits a diversity in campus size and student population roughly representative of most public and private institutions of higher education in the United States. We therefore believe the data from our sample of faculty will be useful, as well as interesting, to most writing program administrators.

Who Teaches Composition?

The unusually high return rate for the questionnaire (56%) includes representative portions of tenured, tenure-track, and part-time faculty. These individuals (N = 407) show a reasonable diversity of age groups, despite the general shortage of jobs over the last decade. The largest grouping (33.7% or 137 respondents) is 40-49 years old; 29% are in their thirties, while 21.4% are in their fifties. Fewer than 10% are in their sixties; 6% or so are in their twenties. Since almost 70% of the respondents are 49 or younger, the frequently asserted aging of the collegiate faculty has not occurred (if our sample is typical) in the field of composition.

About 60% of our sample report completion of the Ph.D., and only 8.3% have less than an M.A. Most of the respondents (70%) report American or English literature as their major field of study. The remaining responses are distributed among linguistics, composition, education, and rhetoric (in descending order of popularity). A surprisingly high 14.7% report "other" categories, such as history, sociology, and counseling, a finding that suggests some influence from those urging writing across the disciplines and involvement of non-English faculty in the teaching of composition.

Over half of our instructor-respondents (58.5%) report themselves as tenured or tenure-track. Graduate student assistants (5.4%) and administrators (0.5%) complete the sample. As one might expect, rather more composition teaching is done by the younger staff than by the older staff. For "years teaching writing," faculty responses range from one to 40 years (with a mean of 13.3 years), but over two-thirds of the group report teaching writing sixteen or fewer years. The actual distribution of responses suggests a bimodal sample, with one group of respondents clustered around three or fewer years (generally non-tenure-track instructors) and a second group, the "tenured/tenure-track" faculty clustered around twelve to fifteen years of experience in the teaching of writing.

A Few Words About This Data Analysis

We constructed the questionnaire in a way that allowed us to avoid relying on responses to any one or even two items to draw conclusions

about faculty attitudes and beliefs. Instead, we devised item sets, each covering a different dimension or facet of a subject area, and we allowed for a wide range of choices along each dimension. In addition, our survey is not a checklist; respondents did not simply give "yes-or-no" answers about whether or not they "do/have/use" something. In every item we required our respondents to answer by assessing "degree" (of use, importance, influence, for example). Thus, our data allow us to see gradations of difference, where they occur.

One of the main sources of information about these differences among faculty attitudes and beliefs is the set of 31 "Likert" items (items which ask for degree of agreement with a given statement) covering a range of topics such as attitudes towards composition instruction, department colleagues teaching composition, students in composition and remedial courses, program and department leadership, and campus policies affecting the writing program.

A second source of information about faculty perspectives is a set of 23 items requiring the faculty respondents to evaluate various influences on the composition program. For each of these influences, such as the department composition committee, the student population, and the available adjunct instructional services on campus, respondents assessed the kind (from positive to negative) and degree (from high to low) of impact these influences had on composition instruction.

Most of our information on instructional practices comes from six sets of questions asking instructors about what they do in class: the themes underlying the organization and sequence of instruction, the importance of various composition materials to the instruction, the frequency of certain composition activities in the classroom, the classroom arrangement, the frequency of particular kinds of writing assignments, and their usual responses to student writing.

We used answers to these and other items to develop two different factor analyses, a statistical procedure which examines patterns of responses to find a common set of items in those patterns. Where a common item grouping is found, the items are said to form a "factor," a hypothetical trait which underlies and "accounts for" the apparent clustering of those items. A factor (to which the researchers then affix a descriptive name) can then be used to generate a "score" which summarizes the particular pattern of answers given by any one respondent. This "score" describes the respondent in terms of the factor, for example, "high" on the "Bah Humbug" attitude factor.

Since we measured dimensions of the same subject area, such as attitudes toward composition course work or preferred instructional approach, we expected to find factors which grouped questionnaire items relating to those subject areas. We did, in fact, derive a substantial

number of instructional and attitudinal factors (13) from responses to our 12 page questionnaire. When we refer to a factor which describes "Level of Commitment," for example, we know we are discussing responses to items that many people see as related.

Although our 13 factors provide a wealth of information about our faculty, we will discuss in this article only some of that information so that we may expand our descriptions and consider implications rather than briefly list summary findings.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Bah Humbug. Table 1 displays the questionnaire items which comprise this factor. These seven Likert items have a strong "anti-composition" bent to them, and for this reason (perhaps too whimsically) we call this the "Bah Humbug" factor. Faculty in our sample demonstrate a consistent pattern of responses to these items whether positive or negative. That is, those people who feel that tenured and tenure-track faculty do not need review or coordination of their instruction are also those who avoid faculty development and undergraduate writing courses; they also oppose remedial writing at the college level, see "writing as process" as one more passing fad, and (as one might expect) do not feel that their students improve very much as a result of a single writing course. The validity of this grouping of items also holds for those faculty respondents who reject these attitudes; they too demonstrate a pattern of answers to items in this factor, though, of course their pattern goes in the opposite direction.

TABLE 1. Items comprising the Bah Humbug factor.

Likert Items: (1 = strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree; 9 = unsure)

Generally speaking, in this department tenured and tenure-track instructors do not need review or coordination of their writing instruction.

I am not likely to attend meetings designed to improve my writing instruction, e.g., faculty development or "retraining" sessions.

Had I the choice, I would never teach undergraduate writing courses.

Students who are not prepared to do college-level writing should not be admitted to this campus.

College resources should not support remedial programs in writing.

Much of what I've heard about "writing as process" strikes me as yet another fad in the field of composition instruction.

In every composition course I've taught here, I've finally had to admit to myself that most students do not improve their writing very much by the end of a single school term.

We have generated "factor scores" for each factor for each person responding to our questionnaire. Using these factor scores we looked for characteristics that differentiate between people with "higher" and "lower" scores on the Bah Humbug factor. Using the statistical tool of analysis of variance, we tested for and found these differences depending on whether faculty report themselves as part- and full-time lecturers or tenured and tenure-track faculty ($p = .01$). (Table 2 also contains tabled ANOVA statistics for this factor.) When we look at the average scores of each status grouping, it is clear that the lecturers generally demonstrate the more positive attitude, i.e., reject the Likert statements that make up the factor, thus yielding a "negative" average ($\bar{X} = -.11$); while the regular faculty generally tended to be the ones who agreed with the "anti-composition" sentiments expressed in those same statements, thus yielding a positive mean score ($\bar{X} = +.07$).³

A future article in this journal will return to the "Bah Humbug" factor in relation to student performance, when that information becomes available. While we expect that students will show greater improvement in their writing if they have teachers with low Bah Humbug scores, we may turn out to be mistaken; perhaps the students of our composition cynics will perform as well as the informed enthusiasts.

TABLE 2. Analysis of variance on Bah Humbug factor scores.

Source variable	df	Sum of squares	F value
Main Effects			
Faculty rank	1	3.63	6.60*
Course referent	2	2.19	1.99
Campus	18	8.73	.88
Two-way Interaction Effects			
Rank x Referent	2	.63	.57
Rank x Campus	18	5.40	.55
Referent x Campus	31	13.35	.78
Three-way Interaction Effects			
Rank x Referent x Campus	15	3.60	.44

* $p = .01$; (N = 418)

If our outcome measures (which include both a student writing sample and a student attitude survey) show that these differences in instructor attitudes do not affect either holistic or primary trait scores of students' essay performance, we may nonetheless find impact elsewhere, for example, in student attitudes towards writing or in overall faculty morale. If student performance does correlate with the Bah Humbug scores, and education research suggests it should, writing program

administrators will have powerful reasons to attempt to foster changes in their programs and their faculty to lower scores.

Level of Commitment

Our factor analysis procedure uncovered a second factor seemingly related to the Bah Humbug factor. We refer to this second factor as "Level of Commitment" because so many of the Likert items that it subsumes describe the level of instructor effort and interest in planning for and teaching composition courses. The actual questionnaire items are listed on Table 3.

In addition to the Likert attitudinal items, two items from the instructional goals section of the questionnaire are part of the pattern of responses described by this factor. Those two instructional goals are "teaching editing skills" and "teaching invention skills." The grouping of these two goals seems counterintuitive; editing skills (as opposed to "revising skills," which was also a goal choice) seems focused upon the finished product of writing, whereas "invention skills" seems focused

TABLE 3. Items comprising level of Commitment factor.

Likert Items: (1 = strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree; 9 = unsure)

My responsibilities in composition instruction require more preparation and "home-work" on my part than do my other teaching responsibilities.

I have tried out some of the new ideas about teaching composition suggested to me by my colleagues.

Student evaluations of my instruction in composition should be a part of my record for promotion or retention.

Concern about students' feelings about writing is a legitimate component of my instructional responsibilities in teaching composition.

I have a fairly good sense of what is going on in other composition classes in the English Department.

Themes underlying the organization and sequence of your writing class instruction: (1 = very important; 4 = not important at all; 9 = not applicable)

teaching editing skills

teaching invention skills, such as planning, prewriting, clustering, heuristics.

upon the process of writing, as articulated in newer composition research and theory. As it turns out, these goals are not endorsed by the same set of people. The factor describes two different groups of respondents.

Though both groups tend to answer the Likerts in the same manner, one group is made up largely of composition instructors who value "teaching invention skills;" and the other group basically consists of remedial writing instructors who value "teaching editing skills." This difference in responses between remedial and composition course instructors arises only for the instructional goal statements. Response patterns for the five Likert items which comprise the main thrust of the factor do not differ in this way.

As with the Bah Humbug factor, we generated individual scores on this Level of Commitment factor. We used those scores in carrying out analysis of variance to determine if particular kinds of group characteristics distinguished between higher and lower scores on the factor. We found that, unlike the Bah Humbug factor, instructor status does not account for statistically significant differences in scores; nor does it matter whether the respondents were referencing their regular or remedial teaching assignments. The one grouping characteristic that does result in significant differences in factor scores is "campus." This probably reflects an important underlying difference between the two factors. Level of Commitment is primarily composed of Likert items which describe composition instruction as a workload issue related to collegiality; Bah Humbug presents composition as a scholarly field of study with important effects upon students, eliciting much more personal reactions. Thus, the Level of Commitment factor seems to relate to faculty morale, which, in turn, seems to vary widely from campus to campus. And, despite such similarities across CSU campuses as teaching load and salary structure, the differences by campus turn to be very substantial.

The overall average score on this factor, across all nineteen campuses, is .06, and the range of scores runs from a low of -.26 to a high of +.60. The .60 score is an extreme one; the next closest positive campus score is .27. We of course can not disclose which campuses have the higher or lower scores on Level of Commitment. But we do expect to be able to summarize the campus program characteristics which are associated with high and low scores, and we do expect that numbers of these characteristics will be susceptible to change. Should high scores on this factor be associated with positive outcome measures, this factor will provide some suggestions for program change and some evidence for writing program administrators seeking resources or other support in implementing such change.

The excitement of the research so far has been the statistical identification of coherent sets of attitudes such as those we have described in this article and the prospect of knowledge beyond anecdote or merely personal experience as to their origins and locations. We have also identified six general approaches to composition instruction now in use by our

TABLE 4. Analysis of variance on Level of Commitment factor scores.

Source variable	df	Sum of squares	F value
Main Effects			
Faculty rank	1	.09	.22
Course referent	2	1.18	1.49
Campus	18	11.89	1.67*
Two-way Interaction Effects			
Rank × Referent	2	.12	.15
Rank × Campus	18	6.70	.94
Referent × Campus	31	9.00	.75
Three-way Interaction Effects			
Rank × Referent × Campus	15	6.36	1.07

*p = .05; (N = 418)

sample of faculty, each approach expressing a different underlying theory of instruction and a different sense of purpose for college writing. Our intention is to develop patterns of composition program features and to associate these patterns with differences in faculty and student outcomes. Thus, the most interesting part of our study still lies ahead: discovering the program features which are most effective for different kinds of students and faculty in different settings. We will be reporting on these matters in subsequent articles.

Our intention is to make our findings available and accessible to writing program administrators, who are in an unusually good position to bring about change. Our interviews have shown that most writing programs have evolved in a more or less accidental manner and that there is a pervasive interest in discovering different and more successful ways of organizing writing instruction. As this article has shown, there are sharp and definable differences in faculty attitudes and beliefs about the teaching of writing, differences we expect to correlate with student performance. These differences are likely to occur among those teaching writing at most colleges and universities and to relate to program decisions made some time ago, perhaps at some distance from the composition program. Writing program administrators will, we hope, use our findings to understand the attitudes and beliefs of their composition staff and pursue ways of bringing about positive changes.

Notes

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necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the NIE. A two-volume report on the first phase of the research (including the questionnaire and much of the data used here) has been entered in ERIC and should be available by the time this article appears.

Other members of the research team are Ron Basich, The California State University Chancellor's Office, Office of Analytical Studies, and four English department faculty from four different campuses of The California State University: Kim Flachmann (Bakersfield), Charles Moore (Sacramento), David Rankin (Dominguez Hills), William Stryker (Northridge).

²A separate version of the questionnaire was prepared for those involved with writing instruction in learning centers, specially-funded programs, or non-English department programs. The data from that form were analyzed separately and are not discussed here.

³These means were derived from standardized, not raw, factor scores.



Evaluating Developmental English Programs in Georgia

John Presley

In 1973, Mina Shaughnessy wrote that "the debate about Open Admissions has been and is being carried on in the language of those who oppose it: in the alphabet of numbers, the syntax of print-outs, the transformations of graphs and tables." She urged teachers of Basic Writing to commit themselves to extending their accountability to adopt the techniques of evaluation and close, systematic observation of the social sciences, to pool research. "Until we can describe more precisely than we have the process whereby our students move toward maturity as readers and writers, we cannot challenge those critics who claim that the students do not move at all." (401-404)

Developmental English courses, like the developmental studies programs in which they are often embedded, have been the subjects of many evaluation studies, often designed to measure the effectiveness of various program designs. Just as frequently, these studies have been intended to answer critics of developmental studies, ranging from attacks like Geoffrey Wagner's, who argued that developmental education was a threat to the real purpose of colleges, to the more recent charge that developmental education does not serve the very minority students in whose support it was originally called into existence.¹

There are real restrictions on these evaluations, however. Since these evaluations are usually performed for or by administrators at particular schools, they must be subject to the calendar by which decisions are made. The problem investigated is generally a pre-established concern of the audience for the evaluation, and thus the evaluation must be relevant to current administrative concerns and comprehensible for administrators. Generally, this argues against scientific rigor and technical sophistication. When issues of program installation, expansion, modification, or termination are concerned, research design tends to become secondary (Ball). Developmental programs "are dealing with human beings, not laboratory animals, and in many instances, the type of controls necessary for valid research are simply inappropriate." This is, in fact, a moral issue. "Is it fair to deny a high-risk student access to an experimental program simply because his/her number was not randomly selected by a computer?" (Hill 43)

In fact, studies using rigorous research designs have tended to focus on very narrow aspects of program design, such as the effect of career counseling on disadvantaged students, and the results have been mixed. Ferrin reports, as do Pedrini, Brown and Ervin, that remedial coursework does improve the retention and performance of disadvantaged students. But just as many of these narrow studies report exactly the opposite: an early article by Wilkerson--one example among many--reports that there is little evidence students are well-served by developmental curricula.²

The Developmental Studies Program in Georgia has a statewide evaluation system that has proven effective and simple. No curriculum in the state is more thoroughly evaluated. Because of the controversy attendant upon placing remedial programs in the state colleges and because the Developmental Studies Program was mandated by the University System's governing body, the Board of Regents, over some protest, this curriculum has, from its beginning, been forced to prove to its critics that it deserved support with state funds.

In 1974, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia created the statewide Developmental Studies Program in response to a growing percentage of entering freshmen who were insufficiently prepared for curricula assuming the mastery of basic skills. The Developmental Studies Program is designed to meet these students' needs and to ensure that every graduate of a high school in Georgia, particularly students who may in the past not have been well-served by post-secondary education, could have the maximum chance to succeed in college.

All entering freshmen who score low on the SAT must take the collegiate Basic Skills Examination, a competency test in mathematics, English, and reading developed by University system faculty. If BSE scores indicate weakness in any of the three areas, the student must enroll in the appropriate developmental course within the Developmental Studies Department. A student cannot take freshman courses involving mathematics, English, or reading until successfully completing developmental courses as prescribed by BSE scores. By the end of the freshman year, the student must have improved scores on a re-test (the BSE plus a writing sample, for instance) to remain enrolled at the institution.

Each institution has developed its own entrance and exit criteria as well as its own curricula; the schools are free to meet the challenge of increasing the success and retention of non-traditional students in their own fashion, as long as the criteria do not fall below statewide minimum scores. The program is administered at the University System level by an advisory committee with representation from all 33 state institutions,

and by a Director of Developmental Studies.³

Within these limits there is considerable variation in system-wide developmental English classes, for example: some schools offer only one developmental English class, while others offer two; schools supplement the in-class offerings with peer-tutorial labs, audio-visual centers, computer aided instruction; mastery learning, contract learning, and fairly traditional classroom teaching all exist side by side. But regardless of however the faculty of a particular institution teach or design a course, two things at least remain constant: the submission of an acceptable writing sample by all students in developmental English classes and the use of the BSE as a posttest which tests English skills through error-recognition and which requires considerable instruction in grammar.

Before 1968, there was little evaluation being performed in developmental studies. John Roueche's periodic surveys of developmental programs have since discovered more and more schools developing procedures for evaluating curricula; in his 1977 study, more than a third of the colleges indicated that they regularly evaluated both the outcome and the design of their developmental programs. He found that "the most successful developmental education programs are generally those that evaluate themselves and use a number of indices on which to evaluate those efforts" though "few" programs use a "control or contrast group."⁴ The advisory committee that designed the statewide developmental studies program for Georgia sought out models of program design and of program evaluation. Happily, Roueche's surveys and the examples of "compensatory education" at black colleges, which had long histories of commitment to developmental studies, provided some useful models.

Early attempts to evaluate the developmental studies program in Georgia simply used standard survey procedure to discover the range of procedures, criteria, and design, including the sorts of program evaluations being used, at system institutions. In December of 1974, the first quarterly report was mailed to each institution. It was designed to provide information about the population served by the developmental program at each institution and to ascertain whether the program aided in retention of these students.

But of course, the most important questions to be asked of any program, though, are "Does it work?" and "How will we know if it is working?" To measure the effects of the curriculum directly, the first report asked these questions, which have since appeared on every version of the report:

1. Of the students required to enroll in Special Studies math, how many exited mathematics?
2. Of the students required to enroll in Special Studies reading, how many exited reading?

3. Of the students required to enroll in Special Studies English, how many exited English?
4. How many students required to take Special Studies completed their final Special Studies requirement(s)?

Answers to these questions were further classified by student ethnic identification. The answers to these questions tell an evaluator about student success, whether a student is meeting the requirements of the curriculum, but they do not tell the evaluator whether the curriculum is meeting the requirements of the student. Student success in a given curriculum does not necessarily indicate whether the curriculum is too simple, too difficult, or simply irrelevant. The focus of the report form had to be changed to meet this criticism and thus make the instrument more valid.

Remedial or developmental programs are designed to prepare students for the freshman curriculum and it is there, in subsequent study, that the question "How will we know the program works?" will be answered. Andrew Hill has argued that study of developmental program effectiveness should not be so concerned with the persistence and success of students in the remedial programs themselves. "The central issue in any study of developmental education would seem to be how well developmental program students are prepared to tackle college-level work, not how well they achieve or persist at the remedial level " (44).

In Fall of 1975, questions were devised to measure the success of Developmental Studies students in subsequent study. At first on an annual basis, each institution was asked to compare the success rates and grade point averages of ex-Developmental Studies students and regularly placed freshmen in English, mathematics, and social science classes. Once each institution had developed computer programs or other methods of discovering these data, this annual comparison became a regular feature of the quarterly report form:

Of the former Developmental English students who took college level English courses, how many were successful in the courses?

The question was repeated for each area of the curriculum and again asked for ethnic classifications. As the question evolved from an annual question to a quarterly question, the issue of grade point averages was dropped. These are not two randomly selected comparison groups; obviously the regularly placed freshmen would be expected to have higher averages, and they do. But the success rates of both groups are absolutely vital information; it is by comparing the two groups-random or not-that we discover whether "the program works."

Across the 33 institutions of the University System of Georgia, the entire Developmental Studies Program is apparently working well-in

fact, much better than was originally anticipated. According to Dr. Charles Nash, a former Director, only 3 percent of Developmental Studies students fail to complete their courses, while the average attrition for other courses across the system is 10 percent. 50-60 percent of the students in Developmental Studies courses complete this work and move into freshman credit courses, with 21 percent able to do this within one quarter and 65 percent able to complete all developmental requirements within a year (Nash).

Developmental English courses, however, apparently pose the most difficulty for minority students. As the figures in Table I show, black students do not exit the developmental English classes in as high a percentage as other students do. And, once in regular freshman English classes, a lower percentage of black students pass than the passing percentage of other students. Both groups of ex-developmental English students have more difficulty with freshman English classes than do regular-placement students.

The evaluator must remember though, particularly when interpreting the results of evaluations not based on a rigorous research design, that "the end result of the evaluation must be program development" (Deem). In other words, program evaluation, not student evaluation, must be all that is attempted. If, in fact, students are not performing as expected, one cannot, in the absence of random or matched control groups, blame the students. One must look for the weakness in the program itself.

And constant program development, always with the difficulties of minority students in mind, is helping make the courses more responsive to the needs of minority students, slowly if surely. A glance at the data in Table 1 shows that our programs of faculty development, closer attention to textbook selection, reliance upon minority advisors and other measures have helped narrow the gap between minority and other students. The trend in both tables is toward better performance for both groups of students.

One school in the system, Georgia Southern College, has been able to use the control group method to evaluate its developmental English classes, since an increased standard for admissions made it possible to study the success of two groups of students with comparable SAT scores: one group who passed through the developmental English classes, the other group who did not. Of the students who were not required to take developmental English classes, 52.7% passed the regular freshman English class on the first attempt, compared to a 72.6% rate among the students who had taken developmental English first. The 20% difference is strong evidence that the program makes a difference in the chances of the underprepared student (Bitter).

The Developmental Studies Program has clearly increased the chances for success of many minority students. Figures in Table 2 show that since the inception of the program, system enrollment of minority students has increased. In addition, these students now persist in their enrollment in larger numbers than before. Table 2 indicates that the numbers of minority students in each enrollment category are quite stable from quarter to quarter, indicating good retention and persistence. While many other factors, such as increased recruiting and financial aid, have of course helped bring about this change in student population, Developmental Studies has no doubt played a major role.

And of course it need not be surprising that developmental studies students lag at least slightly behind regular placement students in achievement. The two groups are not equal, and the latter group may set an impossibly high benchmark for comparison, though certainly one that should be our standard to strive toward. The results from Georgia compare favorably with those reported from other states using similar evaluation methods. For example, in *Statewide Assessment of Developmental Remedial Education at Maryland Community Colleges*, Dorothy S. Linthicum reported that of students who successfully completed developmental English courses, 53% completed a college level English class with a passing grade, while over 96% of a control group of regular placement students passed their first college English course. Seventy-five percent of the former developmental English students made C or better in their college English course, compared to 91% of the regular placement students. Though precise figures were not provided, Linthicum reports that white students tended to make higher grades. The results are similar from a study of the Queensborough Community College program: In most of the introductory courses during the two years of the study, a higher percentage of A and B grades was achieved by the former basic skills students (7.9% and 29.7% as opposed to 2.9% and 18.1%) while the total percentage of passing grades for former basic skills students showed an increase from 64.6% to 68.5% over the two years (Irwin and Grace).⁹

Thus, the evaluation of the Georgia developmental English curricula shows quite respectable results, though there is certainly still room for improvement. (The passing percentages shown in evaluation of the program's reading and mathematics curricula are much higher, and the gaps indicated there between black students and other students and between developmental and non-developmental students are correspondingly smaller). And importantly, the findings of these reports and studies are being used when consideration is given to changes in placement, curriculum, or testing policies, because these results are couched in terms easily comprehensible. And equally important, this inductive evaluation provides a longitudinal base line for our programs, against which further refinements of curriculum can be measured (see Table 3).

TABLE 1. Yearly averages of passing rates in Developmental English at Augusta College (C or better).

Year	Black Students	Other Students
1975-1976	37%	42%
1976-1977	45%	69%
1977-1978	39%	62%
1978-1979	37%	58%
1979-1980	43%	62%
1980-1981	44%	63%
1981-1982	57%	63%
1982-1983	51%	66%
1983-1984	59%	72%

TABLE 2. Black student enrollment at Augusta College by class.

Quarter	Fr.	So.	Jr.	Sr.	Gr.	Developmental Studies	Total*
Fall 1978	124	78	85	51	23	106	503
Winter 1979	108	84	85	58	20	99	409
Spring 1979	88	86	78	66	23	93	477
Summer 1979	28	50	55	62	32	42	380
Fall 1979	79	74	78	61	23	133	487
Winter 1980	79	78	69	71	19	123	500
Spring 1980	89	72	61	67	20	102	458
Summer 1980	33	46	49	45	21	45	348
Fall 1980	101	81	54	60	30	132	517
Winter 1981	105	77	70	69	27	95	534
Spring 1981	100	77	58	70	24	80	502
Summer 1981	41	49	36	47	28	29	338
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Fall 1982	98	92	95	65	32	97	479
Winter 1983	100	83	89	81	36	95	484
Spring 1983	100	102	94	80	36	78	490
Summer 1983	44	53	51	57	37	34	276
Fall 1983	119	99	98	71	26	109	522
Winter 1984	109	99	67	70	75	100	520
Spring 1984	106	101	72	73	62	94	508

*Total includes a small number of transient students from other institutions, who are not otherwise classified.

TABLE 3. Percentages of students passing Freshman English at Augusta College (C or better).

Quarter	Black Former Developmental Students	Other Former Developmental Students	All Students
Spring 1975*		36	60
Spring 1976*		46 (48)	72 (72)
Fall 1978	28.9	39.3	68.2
Winter 1979	24	41	64
Spring 1979	16	47	78
Summer 1979	25	61.5	73
Fall 1979	26	44	68
Winter 1980	37	42	56
Spring 1980	54	52	61
Summer 1980	21	49	53
Fall 1980	53	58	73
Winter 1981	44	45	70
Spring 1981	47	45	72
Summer 1981	31	35	34
Winter 1982	50	53	52
Spring 1982	43	43	43
Sum 82-Spr 83**	30	47	74
Sum 83-Spr 84	40	51	79

*For Spring 1975 and 1976, no ethnic classification was requested; the figures in parentheses are University System of Georgia averages, and were available only for this quarter.

**Quarterly reports were compiled into annual form after Summer 1982.

Notes

¹"On Remediation," *College English*, October 1976:153-158. Typical of more recent criticism is David E. Lavin, Richard D. Alba, Richard A. Silberstein, *Right Versus Privilege* (New York: Free Press, 1981).

²Ferrin, R.I. "Developmental Programs in Midwestern Community Colleges," *College Entrance Examination Board Higher Education Surveys*, 1971. Pedrini, D.T. and Pedrini, B.C. "Assessment and Prediction of Grade Point and/or Attrition/Persistence for Disadvantaged and Regular College Freshmen," *College Student Journal*, 1976:260-264. Brown, S.E. and Ervin, Leroy, "A Multivariate Analysis of a Special Studies Program," *College Student Journal*, 12.4:379-381. Wilkerson, D. "Compensatory Practices in Colleges and Universities," *Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged Bulletin*, ERIC 011908.

³For this description of the program in which I work I am indebted to Paul Marion, "Basic Skills Competency Testing Programs in Multi-Campus Systems," *Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education*, Winter 1980:26-27 and Cynthia L. Davis, "Developmental Education in Georgia: A Statewide Program," *Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education*, Winter 1979:2-4, 26.

⁴John E. Roueche and Jerry J. Snow, *Overcoming Learning Problems* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977):107. The argument for inductive evaluation is found in Hoi Suen, "Special Services Evaluation," *Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education*, 3.1:7, 29.

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Community Faculty: Part-Time Teachers Who Connect the Composition Classroom to the World of Work

Robert Gremore

For reasons we all know and lament, not everyone who graduates with an advanced degree in English, composition, or journalism ends up teaching. Some have opted out of the academic life; others have been forced out or denied admission to begin with. Thus, we should not be surprised to meet many individuals employed in business and government who hold advanced degrees and who have taught some years ago in composition programs or more recently in employee training programs. Equally important, these individuals currently work in positions requiring them to spend many hours per week in careful writing for clients, supervisors, or employees. They write memos, letters, reports, proposals, advertising copy, newsletters, environmental impact statements, legal briefs, and employee performance appraisals. Their writing skills are highly developed, for their jobs and the well-being of their firms often depend on this writing. In short, these individuals are true, professional practitioners of the craft we teach.

Metropolitan State University has recruited employed professional writers like these to serve as part-time writing teachers. Called "Community Faculty," these part-time instructors differ from the typical adjunct faculty of most colleges. As a result of those differences, community faculty are not troubled by issues that concern traditional adjunct faculty. In most cases, part-timers provide good writing instruction, but they receive relatively less pay than full-timers, enjoy few or no fringe benefits, lack adequate support services, have little voice in departmental decision making, enjoy no job security, receive little support for professional development, and feel cut off from the professional lives of their full-time colleagues.¹ Unlike typical part-time faculty, however, community faculty are not troubled by these issues. This paper describes characteristics we look for in community faculty, explains how we recruit and train these unique part-time teachers, and surveys the advantages they bring to our writing program. Our use of community faculty has not only helped us solve the "problem" of part-time teachers, but also has allowed us to make a valuable connection between the composition classroom and the world of work.

The writing program at Metropolitan State University is staffed with only one full-time writing specialist, who serves mainly as an administrator. Most courses and tutorials are conducted by the 20 or so part-time writing instructors on our community faculty. Qualifications we look for in prospective community faculty include a secure job, expert writing skills, an advanced degree, and at least one year's teaching experience. We seek individuals who also show understanding and commitment to the idea of liberal education. A letter or phone call to a PR firm, ad agency, or employee communications department will usually find its way to at least one interested and well qualified individual. Often these writers work on flexible schedules allowing them to escape their offices long enough to teach a class and hold office hours on campus. Other community faculty are available only in the evening, which is nevertheless a good time for extension classes, writing center workshops or tutorials. Some community faculty meets students during the day in their business offices. In some cases, the teacher/writer's employer views college teaching as a source of prestige for the firm or as a kind of community service and grants the employee time off to teach.

Although our community faculty are paid for teaching, almost no one is attracted for that reason. The pay is too low. At about \$1200 per quarter class of 20 students, our pay scale compares to that offered part-timers at many institutions. Relative to the time and effort involved in teaching writing, though, \$1200 means little to writers earning upwards of \$30,000 in their full-time jobs. Community faculty enjoy writing and want to share its pleasures with students. They feel obliged to pass on their expertise to beginners. They take aesthetic pleasure in presenting carefully planned and well conducted lessons. They like to perform for a class. They look forward to social interaction with Metro students, most of whom are adults. Or they enjoy the prestige of being listed as members of a college faculty. They would probably not teach if they weren't paid, but pay is not the main attraction. Most community faculty teach two or three courses per year and earn \$2000-\$4000 doing it-enough to pay for a luxurious vacation or an expensive hobby. The point is that community faculty are not trying to support themselves by teaching. Most of them view their teaching as a source of enjoyment and as a service to the community.

Since their full-time jobs provide community faculty with adequate salary, fringe benefits, and retirement security, these commonly voiced concerns of most part-time faculty do not trouble them. As a result, we are able to hire community faculty not as employees of the university but as independent consultants, like the contractor hired to renovate Old Main. As private, independent "vendors" to the university, community faculty are paid only a lump sum "for services rendered." This concept simplifies accounting for our business office because community faculty

salaries are not subject to withholding for taxes or social security and community faculty do not participate in university benefits or retirement programs. Since their needs are met by their full-time employers, we can devote our scant resources solely to honoraria and professional development.

Although most new community faculty come to us with strong backgrounds in writing and teaching, they appreciate the professional development programs we offer. We present four kinds of programs. In the first session, new faculty attend a general orientation to University policy and to procedures affecting them. Occupying about three hours, this session provides an introduction to the school, to the faculty role in general, and to terms and conditions of their employment. This orientation session serves new community faculty from all departments of the University. After the orientation, new writing faculty receive a packet of journal articles on composition theory and writing pedagogy, a brochure describing the writing program, and a collection of syllabi previously used in the courses they were hired to teach. This material provides the base for a subsequent "Writing Instructors Workshop" that new faculty must attend before meeting their first class.

New community faculty are delighted to attend this workshop, which meets for four hours on a Saturday a few weeks before the quarter begins. The workshop is led by the writing program director, and veteran community faculty are invited to meet the new teachers and contribute to the workshop. At this point, the new faculty are usually feeling a bit apprehensive about returning to the classroom. Although they're experienced teachers and expert writers, it may have been years since they've designed a lesson or faced the anxiety and awkwardness of beginning writers. The reality of what they've agreed to do has struck them, and they're wondering how they're going to fill 30 hours of class time, what kind of assignments they're going to make, and how they're going to grade all those papers. Also, almost none of them has kept up with the literature in our field, so many of them hold outdated notions of how to teach writing. This seminar, then, provides a forum for discussing the journal articles they've read and relating them to course design or classroom practice. Also, we agree on objectives for each course and on a variety of likely ways to achieve them. We survey teaching techniques and classroom practices that have worked in the past with our students. We review strategies for creating and sequencing writing assignments. And we survey effective ways of responding to student writing. In addition, workshop participants have a chance to examine a large sample of writing texts and identify ones to use in their classes. They're assisted in this by the workshop leader and veteran teachers, who can comment on some of the texts. That is an outrageous agenda for a four hour workshop, and we cover no topic in much detail. The workshop does,

however, introduce new faculty to current theory and practice in the teaching of writing, and it gives them much to think about as they design their syllabi.

After the workshop, each participant develops a syllabus and mails a draft to the writing program director, who reviews it and meets individually with each new faculty member to discuss it and suggest revisions. Only after attending the writing instructors workshop and submitting a revised syllabus is a new community faculty member allowed to teach a class.

These writing instructors workshops are held only when we hire several new writing faculty at once. That has happened twice in the last three years. For most quarters, of course, we have no need to hire new faculty. When we hire only one new teacher, we schedule no formal workshops. Instead, the writing program director works individually to orient the new community faculty member. Those individual sessions are similar in substance to the group workshops conducted when we hire several new teachers.

A third professional development program consists of a series of Saturday morning sessions open to community faculty from all departments of the University. These sessions cover topics such as "Use of Audio-Visual Materials in the Classroom," "Teaching Returning Adult Students," "Library Resources in the Social Sciences," and so on. These sessions are arranged by the office of curriculum and instruction and conducted by appropriate members of the full-time faculty. The intent is to provide all community faculty with information they have little chance of acquiring on their own due to their professional commitment to careers other than college teaching. Community faculty receive a modest honorarium of fifteen dollars for attending these general faculty development sessions.

The fourth professional development program is intended only for community faculty in writing. Once each quarter, the writing faculty meets for a four-hour "Professional Development Seminar." Throughout the year, the writing program director monitors the major composition journals, selecting articles to be photocopied and forwarded to all writing faculty. These articles sometimes serve as a base for seminar meetings in which we discuss the articles and consider their application to individual classes. Community faculty have been especially interested in articles that discuss classroom practices or explore strategies for responding to student writing. Since community faculty are not professional teachers, they perceive these areas as their weakest. Although there are individual exceptions, most community faculty have been less interested in articles exploring composition theory. They have succeeded as professional writers without needing to articulate theories of writing or dis-

course, so they view themselves primarily as practitioners. They are especially strong at teaching strategies for editing and revising, but they are less self-consciously aware of the early phases of the writing process, especially of strategies for generating and developing ideas. Community faculty most appreciate theoretical articles on these topics when the seminar focuses on applying the theory to course design or classroom practice. And as full-time writers, they bring some unique and useful insights to our discussions of theoretical articles.

Not all seminar meetings proceed from journal articles, though. Other professional development sessions address specific topics in writing or teaching. For example, recent seminars have focused on assignment shaping and on techniques of workshopping student writing. Still other seminar meetings are devoted to idea/method exchanges or to paper-grading sessions in which faculty compare their responses. The idea/method exchanges are particularly fruitful with community faculty, for they bring to their classrooms--and to our seminars--a variety of unusual teaching techniques learned from business consultants, staff development professionals, and corporate training meetings. Since community faculty are generally isolated from other writing teachers and from the academic journals, these professional development seminars are a necessary way of keeping faculty abreast of recent developments in the field and assuring that faculty are teaching and grading in effective and reasonably uniform ways. Community faculty receive a modest stipend for attending these seminars.

Another professional development issue that we are just beginning to address is that of research and publication. Until recently, community faculty have served only as teachers, but their positions between the composition classroom and the world of work make them especially well situated to conduct ethnographic research that could bear directly on their teaching. A few interested community faculty have agreed to work with the writing program director on research projects that could lead to publication or conference presentations.

The combination of training, professional experience, and desire to teach makes our community faculty effective and engaging instructors. Perhaps equally important, they are able to teach without generating the concerns facing most part-time faculty and the departments that hire them. Teaching salaries and benefits are not issues for community faculty because those needs are met in their full-time jobs. The professional development programs allow community faculty frequent interaction with colleagues, and since community faculty teach almost all courses, these part-time instructors have not become an underclass at the University. On the contrary, their full-time jobs as professional writers give them perhaps more status and certainly higher salaries than most full-time writing faculty. Far from being an exploited underclass,

community faculty are successful professionals performing a service for the University and the community.

Since their major professional commitments are to careers other than teaching, however, community faculty generate a few special concerns in our writing program. One of these arises when a newly hired community faculty first begins to plan a writing course. Typically, faculty at this point become quite righteous about writing mechanics, and the grammarian in each of them emerges with strident aggressiveness. Newly hired community faculty generally have not kept up with research in our field, so they equate rigor in the writing class with vigilant attention to punctuation, usage, and the "proper form" in which a given document should be cast. Community faculty turn away from this mind set not only during the writing instructors' training workshops but also while designing their first syllabus. In outlining a ten-week course, they discover that they don't actually have much to say about surface features, and instead they design a course based in their experience as professional writers, which of course is an experience of the writing process.

Another concern of new community faculty involves evaluation. As professional writers, they are not always sure about what standards to apply in evaluating writing in an academic setting. We have approached this concern by asking community faculty to evaluate student writing in terms of what they would want to know about a student's writing if they were considering hiring that student as a writer. That line of thought leads faculty to produce a narrative evaluation resembling a job recommendation. The narrative evaluation can then be converted into a ranking scale like writers in business would use to rate job applicants, and the ranking scale can be converted to a scale of letter grades. It's a long way around, but community faculty are comfortable with the process and the evaluations that result have the virtue of reflecting criteria actually in force in the world of work.

A third concern is that community faculty are not always available to attend training sessions, and they are even worse than regular faculty about submitting forms and reports by the appointed deadlines. They are busy professionals whose full-time jobs often call them away from their duties as writing teachers. This is a situation we simply live with, for if community faculty are busy professionals, they are also responsible individuals. They know how long they can delay completing a form, how many professional development seminars they can miss without seriously falling behind in the program, compromising their effectiveness as teachers or inconveniencing their students. Community faculty generally respect these limits. Those who do not handle their time responsibly are not asked to teach again. Since they are independent vendors to the university, their contracts can be easily terminated. And we can do so knowing that we are not ruining a career or depriving someone of a

livelihood; their careers and livelihoods are elsewhere. As a result, only the most conscientious and effective community faculty remain with the university.

On the whole, the concerns generated by the use of community faculty may be less serious and more easily addressed than those arising with other kinds of part-time teachers. And against these concerns we may weigh the substantial benefits community faculty offer. As professional writers, community faculty bring to their courses and to our writing program in general not only teaching and writing expertise, but also a first-hand knowledge of writing as done beyond the classroom. As full-time writers, they have perfected strategies for writing sensitive documents quickly in office settings under the pressure of strict deadlines. Often, they give students assignments culled that week from the faculty member's office "in" box, or they create writing assignments based on case studies drawn from their experience on the job. They teach students to approach these assignments in the same ways professional writers would. Although they can teach "the expository essay" as well as any instructors, community faculty know that writing is not only a literary skill or even a uniquely academic skill, but a way to learn, to solve problems, and to create an impact *in the world*. As college professors, our working lives revolve around classes, course syllabi, assignment sequences, and journal articles. In that situation, it's easy for us to forget that most of our students will be in college for only four years. We may hope, though, that students will continue to write for one purpose or another long after graduation. Community faculty can teach them to write college essays and term papers, but equally important, they can show students how working writers apply academic writing skills to create an impact in the worlds of business and government, where our graduates will spend most of their lives.

To some adjunct faculty, the concept of community faculty may seem less desirable than a continuation of the part-timers' status quo. In this respect, the idea of community faculty has two faces. One face is threatening. The use of community faculty diminishes opportunities for individuals who wish to remain part-time professionals. It takes a job away from someone who wishes to teach only part-time and hands it to a moonlighter who already holds a secure full-time position. Furthermore, the use of community faculty reduces the number of full-time teaching positions available for those part-timers who hope someday to land a tenure-track job. As individuals concerned with the strength and future of our profession, we may justifiably question those developments. But in that questioning, we should also consider the other face of the community faculty concept. This face is more benevolent. The use of community faculty reduces the number of teachers whose expectations we are abusing. Many individuals teach part-time in hopes of eventually

being selected for tenure-track positions that might someday open up. Most of these people will be disappointed. Similarly, few part-timers receive medical or retirement benefits. This lack of benefits may not concern them now; they're young, healthy and retirement is far away. But they may justifiably feel abused in the future when these concerns become more immediate and the part-timers realize they have accrued no benefits after ten or twenty years of poorly compensated service. These concerns simply do not trouble community faculty. Another virtue of the community faculty concept is that it makes teaching positions available to English and journalism graduates who have been obliged to accept fulltime work outside of academe. These individuals can support themselves comfortably in business or government and still pursue teaching as a serious avocation.

Despite these virtues, community faculty may not be effective or desirable at all colleges. Many small communities lack adequate numbers of professional writers who could teach as community faculty. And the continued strength of our profession requires numerous full-time practitioners who have dedicated themselves to teaching and research in our field. But for some small colleges operating on tiny budgets in large cities, community faculty can solve the "problem" of part-time writing teachers and at the same time make a valuable connection between the composition classroom and the world into which our students will soon graduate.

Notes

¹Ben W. McClelland, "Part-time Faculty in English Composition: A WPA Survey," *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 5.1 (Fall 1981):13-20. Also, Timothy Dykstra, of Franklin University, has begun compiling a bibliography of surveys of part-time teachers.

For discussions of the concerns of part-time faculty, see the following: Wayne C. Booth, "A Cheap, Efficient, Challenging, Sure-fire, and Obvious Device for Combatting the Major Scandal in Higher Education Today," *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 5.1 (Fall 1981):35-39. This issue of WPA is devoted to the concerns of part-time writing teachers. See especially Susan Blank and Beth Green, "Living at the Bottom"; Geoffrey S. Weinman, "A Part-time Freshman Writing Staff: Problems and Solutions"; and Donald McQuade, "The Case of the Migrant Workers," all in *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 5.1 (Fall 1981).

For solutions to the concerns of part-time writing teachers see the articles cited above by Booth and Weinman. Also see Paula J. Gaus, "A Survival Kit for Part-time Faculty," *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 5.3 (Spring 1982):25-27.

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Bob Gremore is the director of the writing program at Metropolitan State University, a school serving about 3,500 returning adult students in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. He is currently implementing a grant funded program allowing the establishment of "writing emphasis" and "speech emphasis" courses in all departments of the university. His research interests are in the fields of work-sponsored writing and teaching writing to adults; he has recently begun a research project to study cognitive demands made by certain kinds of work-sponsored writing.

Carol P. Hartzog, Director of UCLA Writing Programs, has helped design and establish a comprehensive series of writing programs for the UCLA campus. These include not only undergraduate, graduate, and outreach programs, but also an administrative writing program which she teaches for UCLA administrators. In addition, Dr. Hartzog has been active in statewide projects: last fall she planned and chaired a University of California Conference on Remediation in Writing, and she currently chairs the new UC Council of Writing Programs. Dr. Hartzog serves on the WPA Board of Consultant Evaluators, and she is concerned broadly with the problems of administrative and curricular change. She has extensive consulting experience in both the public and private sectors.

Linda Polin is Assistant Professor of Educational Computing at Pepperdine University. Her U.C.L.A. dissertation (1984) focuses on the assessment of tenth grade writing skills. She has been associate director of the Research in the Effective Teaching of Writing project since 1981, and is responsible for all data analysis for the project and this article.

John W. Presley, Professor of English and Chairman in the Developmental Studies Department at Augusta College, has published several developmental reading and writing textbooks, as well as freshman English texts and a book on the manuscripts and letters of Robert Graves. His publications—which number over 100—include articles on stylistics, modern literature, composition pedagogy, program evaluation, and a number of poems, which he claims to write more

slowly than his other work. Active in all the major professional organizations, he has delivered talks on *Finnegans Wake* at the American Joyce Symposium and at the Joyce Centenary in Dublin.

Lynn Quitman Troyka, a professor of writing for 15 years at Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY), chose in 1983 to become a full-time academic writer and researcher. While teaching at CUNY, she served on the Task Force on Writing and was a Research Associate in the Office of Academic Affairs. She was Chair of CCCC (1981) and on the NCTE Executive Committee (1980-81). She now serves on the Executive Committee of MLA's Teaching of Writing Division and the NCTE College Section Committee. She is Editor-Designate (1986-89) of the *Journal of Basic Writing*, published by CUNY. Her books include *Steps in Composition*, with Jerrold Nudelman (3rd ed., 1982, Prentice-Hall). She has published research monographs, and her articles have appeared in many journals, including *CCC*, and books, including *Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse*, eds. Connors, Ede, Lunsford (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984).

Edward M. White is professor and former chair of the English Department at California State College, San Bernardino, and Director of Research in Effective Teaching of Writing, a project funded by the National Institute of Education through the California State University Foundation. He has been Coordinator of the CSU Writing Skills Improvement Program, and for over a decade was Director of the English Equivalency Examination program. In addition, he is author of numerous articles on literature and the teaching of writing; he has written two English Composition textbooks. Dr. White is a frequent speaker at conferences, and a consultant to various educational institutions in the area of writing and evaluation. His book *Teaching and Assessing Writing* will be published by Jossey-Bass in 1985.

Announcements

The Writing Lab Newsletter

The *Writing Lab Newsletter* is intended as an informal means of exchanging information among those who work in writing labs and language skills centers. Brief articles (four to six typed pages) describing labs, their instructional methods and materials, goals, programs, budgets, staffing, services, etc. are invited. For those who wish to join the newsletter group, a donation of \$5 to help defray duplicating and mailing costs (with checks made payable to Purdue University, but sent to the editor) would be appreciated. Please send material for the newsletter and requests to join to:

Professor Muriel Harris, editor
Writing Lab Newsletter
Department of English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

The Writing Instructor

The Writing Instructor is a quarterly publication committed to the field of writing/ composition instruction in secondary and higher education. The Editorial Board invites articles of 8-10 double-spaced pages which blend theory and pedagogy to the practical ends of classroom experience. Exercises, brief notes on resources, and announcements are also welcomed. Subscription to the journal is \$12.00 annually for individuals and \$16.00 annually for institutions. We do not bill. Please send material and subscription requests to: *The Writing Instructor*, c/o Freshman Writing Program; University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0062.

The Journal of Teaching Writing

The *Journal of Teaching Writing* encourages you to submit articles for publication. Elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers as well as junior college, college, and university professors who want to share ideas are welcome to send manuscripts.

The *Journal of Teaching Writing* is devoted to writing pedagogy throughout the curriculum from kindergarten to college, from the science class to the literature class. It is committed to the teaching of composition and language skills and the relationship of writing to reading, speaking, and learning. The Editor is interested in considering manuscripts that relate to ways writing is taught or understood; for instance, topics could include composition theory, cognitive development, evaluation of skills, revision, literature and composition, business writing, creative writings, curriculum development and innovative teaching techniques. Typewritten papers, doublespaced, with notes and citations on separate pages, also doublespaced, should be submitted in duplicate, accompanied by a stamped return envelope. Author's name and address should appear only on a separate title page. These steps facilitate our policy of anonymous manuscript review and the prompt return of unused materials. Correspondence regarding editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, *Journal of Teaching Writing*, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, 425 Agnes Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

The Journal of Basic Writing

The *Journal of Basic Writing* has resumed publication. One issue has been published for 1984, and two issues are in place for 1985, all edited by Sarah D'Eloia Fortune whose term as editor has ended.

Lynn Quitman Troyka has been appointed editor starting with the 1986 semiannual issues. Manuscripts of 10-20 pages on any topic related to basic writing will be welcome as of January 1985, in the new MLA style in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 1984 (also in the *MLA Handbook for Scholars*, 1985); and for the referee process, in quadruplicate with identifying information on a cover page only. Prospective authors can send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to request the new JBW "Editorial

Statement" and the *JBW* "Style Sheet." Subscriptions for one year (two issues) are \$8 for individuals and \$12 for institutions. Foreign postage is an additional \$2.50.

Address: *Journal of Basic Writing*, Instructional Resource Center, Office of Academic Affairs, The City University of New York, 535 East 80th Street, New York, NY 10021.

Call For Papers

The journal *Technical Communication* will publish a special section of a forthcoming issue on the subject of readability research in technical writing. We are particularly interested in articles that report research results, and also review articles that assess current research and discuss how such studies can help the technical writer or educator on a *practical* level.

In addition to the special section, we are interested in any articles concerned with technical writing and editing, especially when they relate the theoretical to the practical.

Articles should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* and should not exceed 16 double-spaced pages. Send submissions to Gary A. Olson/Associate Editor/Center for Writing/University of North Carolina/Wilmington, NC 28403.

The National Testing Network in Writing

The National Testing Network in Writing, The City University of New York, The University of California, and The California State University announce the THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON WRITING ASSESSMENT on March 6, 7, and 8, 1985, at the world-renowned Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco, California. The conference is for educators, administrators, writers, and test developers and will be devoted to critical issues in assessing writing in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary settings. Discussion topics will include theories and models of writing assessment, the politics of testing, computer applications in writing assessment, the impact of testing on minorities, research on writing assessment, and the effects of testing on curriculum and teaching.

For information and registration materials, please write to Leo P. Ruth, NTNW Conference Co-Director, Language and Literacy Division, School of Education, Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

Nominations for the WPA Board of Consultant-Evaluators

The WPA Executive Committee invites nominations for consultant-evaluators to take part in WPA's Exxon-funded project in writing program evaluation.

Nominees should have a doctorate, at least three years experience in writing program administration, and professional involvement at the regional or national

level. Prior experience as a consultant or evaluator is desirable but not necessary. Nominees must be members of WPA. WPA members may nominate themselves or others.

Nominees must submit the following materials: a nominating letter; two letters of recommendation (one from outside the nominee's own institution); the names of two additional people who have knowledge of the nominee's professional capacity and administrative experiences; and a curriculum vita. Letters of recommendation should address the nominee's academic background, administrative ability and experience, and ability to work with people. WPA consultant-evaluators must be able to interview and evaluate, recognize and acknowledge strengths and weaknesses of people and programs, and present findings in a well-organized, clearly written report. Tact, integrity, and intelligence are equally important in a well-qualified consultant-evaluator.

Nominees appointed to the WPA Board of Consultant-Evaluators must be able to attend a training workshop at CCCC in Minneapolis, on March 20, 1985. Complete application materials for nomination must be received by December 20, 1984. Selection will be by vote of the Executive Committee of WPA.

Address nominations to Winifred B. Horner, WPA Vice-President, Department of English, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211.





Membership in the Council of Writing Program Administrators

Membership in the Council of Writing Program Administrators includes a subscription to *WPA*. The membership fee is \$15 a year in the United States and \$16.50 a year in other countries.*

To apply for membership, please fill out this form and return it with a check or money order payable to the Council of Writing Program Administrators. Send the form and fee to Joseph Comprone, Treasurer, WPA, English Department, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40208.

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Change or revision of name and address. If the name or address printed on your *WPA* mailing label is incorrect or has changed, please print the complete, correct information below and send it to William E. Smith, Editor, *WPA*, English Department, UMC 32, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322.



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