

Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators  
Volume 15, Numbers 1-2, Fall/Winter, 1991

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**WPA: *Writing Program Administration*** is published twice a year—fall/winter and spring—by the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the Department of English and College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Utah State University.

# 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 or writing programs, coordinators of writing centers and writing 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 and the Modern Language Association.

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The Editor of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* invites contributions that are appropriate to the interests and concerns of those who administer writing programs in American and Canadian colleges and universities. Articles on teaching writing or research in composition are acceptable only if they deal with the relationship of these activities to program administration. *WPA* is especially interested in articles on topics such as establishing and maintaining a cohesive writing program, training composition staff, testing and evaluating students and programs, working with department chairs and deans, collaborating with high school or community college teachers, and so on.

The length of articles should be approximately 2-4,000 words (*WPA on Campus*, 1-2000 words). Authors should submit an original plus two copies, with the author identified only on a separate cover letter. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you would like a copy of your manuscript returned to you. All articles are anonymously reviewed by our Editorial Board, and their responses will be forwarded to you within about ten weeks of receipt of the manuscript.

Articles should be suitably documented using the current MLA Handbook, 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 writing program administrators. The editor reserves the right to edit manuscripts to conform to the style of the journal.

Authors whose articles are accepted for publication will be asked to submit their articles both in print form and on IBM compatible disk, if possible. (An article submitted on disk using WordPerfect in particular will greatly facilitate production.) Authors will also be asked to submit a 100 word biography for inclusion in the "Notes on Contributors" section of the journal.

Article deadlines: Fall/Winter issue, March 1; Spring issue, September 1.

Relevant announcements and calls for papers are also acceptable. Announcement deadlines: Fall/Winter issue, August 15; Spring issue, December 15.

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## Use It or Lose It: Power and the WPA

Edward M. White

Fortunately, the first time I encountered truly naked power as a WPA I was ready for it. Not consciously, I must add. But I had already been an English department chair for nine years, and then a statewide administrator in halls where nobody pretended (as they do on campus) that everyone is powerless. So I had absorbed from the atmosphere certain lessons: recognize the fact that all administration deals in power; power games demand aggressive players; assert that you have power (even if you don't) and you can often wield it.

I was now back on campus, coordinating a large-scale Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) program, with a wide range of responsibilities. And the Dean of Humanities had just let me know that I would be losing all assigned time, all clerical support, all faculty development money, even the pittance of a Xerox budget that had been part of the deal when I took the job. Without these funds, the program would fragment and then disappear.

"You can't do that!" I protested. "The budget for the program was designated by the university and can't be used for other things."

The dean was practiced. He knew that WPAs are normally powerless and that the WAC program (since it is outside of the departmental power structure) had no real way to fight back. He also knew that he was the administrator who was supposed to fight for my program, and he was knifing me in the back.

"I knew you'd be upset," he went on soothingly. "But this was all decided at the Chairs' Meeting. With every department growing and the budget holding still, the chairs decided that they needed that budget more than you did."

Another fact of power (in universities as well as in foreign relations) is that its most arbitrary use is always presented as if it were the most reasonable and logical consequence of facts out of anyone's control. In addition, the power stroke is supposed to have overwhelming support as a *fait accompli*. Despite myself, I had to admire the skill with which the dean was closing down all routes of opposition.

Like most WAC programs, ours was kept at some distance from the English department, so that we could demonstrate that writing was the concern of the whole faculty. But my good friend the English Department Chair was still supposed to keep an eye out to protect WAC. That was, however, another lesson I had picked up: when friendship or even professional loyalty and self-interest conflict, self-interest always wins. I wondered briefly what she would say, soothingly, to me when I next saw her. Meanwhile, I was very angry with the dean.

"Does that mean you lied to me when you said that Humanities would look after the WAC program?" I said.

"Don't fly off the handle, now," he replied, turning away. "I said I'd do all I could to support the program. And I have."

The problem was clear. The University had funneled its support for the WAC program in the most logical direction, through the School of Humanities. The School had both autonomy and democracy in allocating its funds. But all power resided with the deans and the department chairs, and every chair's principal allegiance was to his or her department, so programs that were outside of departments simply had no say in how resources got spent. The problem was not really personal, though I felt aggrieved and angry at the dean and the chair; it was institutional. There was no way to fight back within the school, but institutional problems are the main business of central administration. I started calling central administrators.

I hit pay dirt on my second call. We had a new dean of undergraduate studies, a clever and ambitious fellow who was ready to talk. I went right over.

"Here you are," I said, after a few opening pleasantries, "a dean of undergraduate studies, without an undergraduate study to your name. How would you like to take our WAC program under your wing?"

I saw a glint in his eye. The only budget he had at the time was for his own office, and he was looking for ways to expand his role in the university. I told him the sad tale of what the dean of Humanities and the chairs in the school had done to WAC.

"It was inevitable," I went on. "How can the WAC program compete with the Art department for funds? Or even with the German department?"

We need to get out of the departmental competition altogether. Your office is the natural one."

He agreed, and set up an appointment for us with the Academic Vice President on the spot. Two days later, the WAC program was transferred, with its budget intact, out of Humanities to the Office of Undergraduate Studies. During the course of that year, incidentally, that Office gathered unto itself the Learning Center (from Student Affairs), the Advising Center (a new program), the moribund Honors program, and a handful of other programs that needed a strong administrative advocate and a safe haven for their funds. Support for WAC has since continued to grow. That dean thanks me for helping his empire expand, and he is the steady advocate of WAC in administrative circles that the program must have. My Humanities dean wasn't soothing nor very friendly for some time. (He has since departed; shrewd and unscrupulous deans rise rapidly.) But he never attacked the writing program again; I was happier with his respect than I was with his useless soothing patronization.

This experience has important general implications. When I listen to new WPAs at the WPA summer workshops, I realize that power and the various uses of power are centrally important to most WPAs—but most of them are not only unaware of that fact, but resistant to it. We are writers, almost by definition against the establishment, hostile to the powers that be, opposed to that dread monster, "the Administration." Yet, as WPAs, we somehow find ourselves part of what we abhor: hiring and firing, evaluating and scheduling, fobbing off student complaints, and doing a hundred other administrative jobs, including the manipulation of power to protect our programs. Sometimes it seems better not to think about it, about power, about our own place in the power structure. Better just to stay with a conviction of our own powerlessness, amply affirmed by the deans and department chairs who (it appears) have *real* power.

But my campus experience made inescapable the fact that my job as WPA included being canny with power; the WAC program would have been doomed if I had not fought back against that "real power" and defeated it. I had discovered a kind of power that does not appear in flow charts, power that most WPAs have, and I was able to use it to save the program. What I did was to refuse to accept the condition of powerlessness. As a program director, I was figuratively able to pick up the WAC program, rescue it from dean abuse, and place it in a new home. In fact, I had more power than the dean of Humanities, though none of it was official. I had,

appropriately enough for a writing teacher, empowered myself (a move Olson and Moxley propose for all WPAs).

Of course, it helped to be a tenured professor who knew the ropes. But I am convinced that any WPA could have done what I did. We must empower ourselves in order to do our jobs.

WPAs in general live schizophrenically, hating power yet wielding it, devoid of official power (for the most part) yet responsible for large and complex programs. Many are appointed for rotating terms by English department chairs who, as Olson and Moxley have shown, appreciate us principally for our accessibility and ability to communicate, that is, for our ability to keep things nicely under control without exerting any real authority. But the situation of most WPAs is one more or less under siege, and we had better take stock of the power arrayed against us, the power we have to fight for our programs, or we will not be doing our jobs. If we really don't want to deal in power, we had better step aside, or we will be doing more harm than good.

To understand our situations, we need to assess where the enemies of our program lurk, what their motives and weapons are, and how we can marshal forces to combat them. We also need to see where our allies are and find out ways to strengthen them and to keep them friendly. If these metaphors sound overly military and Machiavellian, you are either new to administration, or you act instinctively in ways that you prefer not to recognize.

## The Enemies of Writing Programs

We can divide the enemies of writing programs into two groups: the natural antagonists of any program that uses scarce resources (that is to say, any department or school that does not see writing as essential to its own concerns), and the elitist opponents of writing in particular, those who as a matter of principle see the writing program as an inappropriate or low-priority use of resources. I much prefer to encounter the natural predators than the people of principle.

The natural antagonists of all programs other than their own are relatively easy to deal with; you need only be alert to the usual attacks on funds for writing: upon small class size, decent salaries for writing teachers, and the Xerox budget, and you can face them down. (My dean of Humanities was an extreme case of this kind.) This means, of course, that

you need to have someone representing the interests of the writing program when the resource allocations are made, preferably someone whose self-interest has some stake in the writing program. (This is why I had to move our WAC program when it became clear that those who were supposed to represent our interests were more interested in dismembering than promoting the program.) A very few writing programs have their own budget lines and are recognized as financial entities, but most of us must depend upon English chairs and school deans to look after the program. A careful WPA will use the three basic weapons of bureaucracy to deal with these bureaucratic foes: good arguments, good data, and good allies, mixed with caution and cunning.

The good arguments come easily to WPAs: the historical value of writing and rhetoric, the dismal state of freshman writing skill, the need for writing reinforcement across the disciplines, the sheer difficulty of writing well, the relation of writing to reading and critical thinking, the role of writing in all active learning, the need for small classes so that writing can be assigned and responded to, and so on. The powerful arguments for writing programs will persuade (and persuade again—the battle is never won) most of the natural antagonists, who will turn their greedy eyes to less important programs. Those who will not be persuaded must be circumvented.

The need for good data is less obvious, but careful WPAs will have on hand the entrance or placement test scores of freshmen, the drop-out rates for freshmen taking regular or remedial writing, the number of visits a month to the Writing Center, the number of students affected by the WAC program, the amount of time spent responding to student papers by the average writing teacher, the amount of writing done on the job by graduates, and other handy numbers. And I have already spoken to the crucial importance of good allies, particularly in the administrative chain of command. Routine bureaucratic weapons will usually prevail in routine bureaucratic skirmishes.

But the second group of enemies, those who oppose college writing instruction on principle, is much more difficult to handle. They have a view of writing as mechanics (or something equally elementary), or as a gift of the muse (or something equally mystical). In either case, for them, arguments, data, and allies are irrelevant; these are elitists or others living in a fantasy world, and they believe deeply that writing programs are not a proper part of higher education. Often (but by no means always) housed in English departments, they have an equal contempt for pedagogy and for

composition, and their motives are sometimes obscured, even from themselves. Their perceived calling is for higher things, and they have no intention of debasing themselves by learning anything about composition, which they avoid teaching to the equal relief of the students and themselves. For this group (and I have encountered them on high school as well as on college campuses), any money spent on writing is a diversion from the serious nature of teaching—which has no very clear relation to learning.

Against such foes, only one answer will work: sheer power. It is futile to argue with them, for you cannot pierce to the hidden sources of their beliefs. The most difficult part of being a WPA is combating those who have only scorn for our enterprise, for that means assessing and using the forces at our disposal.

Since many WPAs these days remain untenured, sometimes not even on tenure track, the paths to personal power often seem blocked and risky. (This is an important argument for appointing only tenured WPAs, a trend that appears to be developing as rhetoric and composition gain prestige as scholarly fields.) The best solution to this problem is to avoid placing oneself in a weak situation; every prospective WPA must recognize that occasions are sure to occur that require the use of power. As the promised faculty shortage emerges in the 1990s, untenured faculty should avoid becoming WPAs until their positions become more secure. But this emerging policy will not help present WPAs already in weak positions. (This smacks of Will Rogers' advice on how to become rich in the stock market: buy stock when it is cheap and sell it after it has gone way up in price; if it doesn't go up, don't buy it.) Nonetheless, the first rule of administration is to avoid placing yourself in a position that is untenable, that is, in a position with large, unmanageable responsibilities but very little authority (read Power).

When the position of WPA is defined as one without power, it becomes a trap. Olson and Moxley, in their survey of English department chairs, turned up a classic definition from an unusually honest chair:

Our director is not a faculty member. He is an underpaid lecturer without tenure! At one time, the freshman English Director was always a regular member of the faculty, usually an assistant professor. In recent years, we have appointed a Ph.D., who is *not* a member of the standing faculty. This has worked well, since it does not destroy the career of an assistant professor. The only

slight negative is that the Freshman Director may not have quite the authority in the department that a member of the regular faculty would have. (55)

As the demand for specialists in rhetoric and composition increases, such demeaning positions will become harder and harder to fill by qualified faculty. Those who are willing to have their careers destroyed by taking such a job will have to find ways to fight out of an almost impenetrable wall of restrictions.

## Wielding Power

But let us assume that the WPA has done reasonable negotiation before undertaking the position. What are the power issues he or she faces in relation to the writing staff, the English department, and the administration?

As every WPA knows to his or her discomfort, the staff tend to view the WPA as the boss, no matter how little power the position may in fact hold. Of course, some WPAs *are* the boss, with the power and the burdens that the term suggests; but most have only the responsibility of recommending hiring and changes of status. But the major power that comes with being perceived as the boss is the opportunity to improve the teaching of writing. A mere collection of syllabuses (not even the tenured full professor can fuss about that), followed by a meeting about them, can focus attention upon the best teaching going on. The same can be said of a collection of writing assignments, followed by a meeting during which teachers can explain the context and purpose of the best ones, including the role of revision and grading. Some WPAs also have direct power over texts and syllabuses, but most have only indirect power over these, achieved by focusing upon goals for the program and preferred ways of meeting them. Certainly, the most important aspect of the WPA's job (after survival) is the improvement of instruction. And most WPAs have substantial real and perceived power to accomplish that end.

One important exception to that last statement must be added, however: few WPAs can do very much with the tenured faculty who, on many campuses, still teach writing courses. Some of these tenured faculty do teach writing very badly, but I am convinced that most of them do better than rumor allows. They may use some old-fashioned techniques, but

some research shows that older faculty are more receptive to new ideas than are the less secure beginners (White and Polin, I, 321-323). WPAs are often frustrated by the tenured teachers, who resist the instruction of workshops and seminars and, most of all, the new-fangled ideas of the new hot-shot WPA. But more often than not, these teachers are giving good assignments and spending time with their students. Experienced WPAs tend to do relatively little with the tenured faculty; they will enlist them as mentors for the newer faculty (who may have something to teach their mentors), and waste no more time trying to tame the untameable.

Power in relation to the English department is another matter, one tangled hopelessly in the dispute over the professional status of rhetoric and composition as a field. If the department is aware of this field, or willing to consider the possibility of it as a field, the WPA gains power as any other faculty member gains power, usually through publication and other professional activity. Both CCCC and the ADE have published statements arguing that professional activity for composition faculty and administrators may include joint authorship of articles, textbooks, administration, workshops, and the like; it is important early on to seek a statement in writing that the English department (if that is where the WPA's future lies) will recognize such work. If not, the WPA must either find a department that will or prepare to publish in the field of literature. In four-year colleges and universities, faculty power is still very much a matter of publication that "counts." Personal power in the department usually comes from off campus, from books, articles, and positions in national organizations. Two-year colleges are more ready to accept excellent teaching and superheroic administration as sufficient.

Some WPAs do not have to deal with English departments, which is both a good and a bad arrangement. It is a great relief to apply for tenure without having to prove literary scholarship, if you are focused entirely upon rhetoric and composition. But it is also lonely and dangerous to be out there on your own, with no department to protect you, dealing directly with the deans and vice-presidents. In either case, the trickiest power relation that any WPA must maintain is with the administration, which returns me to my opening anecdote. If you have developed some personal power, through tenure and professional recognition, and institutional power, through administration of a good writing program, you can manipulate the administration to the degree your political savvy allows. But, while most WPAs have not yet gained that degree of security, the power game must still be played.

A survey by the National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (NCRIPTAL) discovered that administrators "view faculty members as much more powerful than faculty members view themselves. This discrepancy suggests that either administrators overestimate the power of faculty or that faculty are unaware of the influence they actually possess" (4). This administrative perception of power is doubly true for those faculty administering academic programs; most administrators simply cannot conceive how powerless most WPAs feel themselves to be. However powerless the WPA may feel, the administration often feels otherwise, and it is essential for the writing program that the WPA foster this illusion as much as possible. And it is not wholly an illusion, since power is ultimately a matter of perception.

The WPA has much power inherent in the position. A well-run composition program is a power base, since it frees administrators from what they fear most: constant harassment from discontented students and faculty. Furthermore, the writing ability that WPAs usually possess is, as we tell our students, an instrument of power. Some WPAs are fearsome memo writers, aware of the value of crucial copies to key people (the "cc" at the bottom), and are spared depredations from terror of their pens and keyboards. Others are quick draws at a survey; they know that few faculty are happy with the writing skills of their students, and they can always come up with fresh data to demonstrate the value of their work (and, incidentally, drum up support at the same time).

Another source of power for the WPA comes from the profession itself. Many WPAs have fostered networks, locally, or even nationally, upon which they can draw for help: letters of support or evaluation, evidence of practice elsewhere, statements of professional standards, and the like. The summer seminar for WPAs sponsored by WPA is a rich source of contacts for professional power. Another act of power is to call for an evaluation of the writing program by the consultant/evaluator panel of WPA itself; a team of well-known outside evaluators taking the writing program seriously represents the kind of power that administrators are accustomed to listening to carefully.

The final source of all administrative power is risky: the power to resign. However indispensable you may feel yourself to be, never make that threat unless you are really prepared to do it, for the odds are that your resignation will be accepted, regrettably, but with some internal rejoicing.

A resignation is like war, a failure of diplomacy, and a threat to resign is like a threat to declare war. And like war, a resignation in pique leaves a real mess for someone else to clean up. Nonetheless, sometimes this last resort is the only way to get the attention of the people who hold funds. The next WPA is the one to profit from a resignation, a tactic only the tenured are likely to contemplate.

This paper is, I notice, governed by military metaphors, not the kind of thing we are used to reading in these polite pages about writing and teaching. But I remember a brief conversation about power at the 1989 WPA Summer Workshop which keeps convincing me that these issues need to be brought to the surface. One member of the group said, "If we have learned anything at all from the Women's Movement, we ought to have learned that we can gain power by simply asserting that we have it."

"In some cases, yes," replied a veteran. "But we have also learned that if you assert power you don't have, you can be slapped down pretty quickly. Power games really *matter* at work, just as they do at home."

Power is in some ways like money or sex; it is only of pressing importance if you have none. But those with official power wield it so naturally and, often, so skillfully, that those on the receiving end never know what hit them. Administrators, including WPAs, cannot afford the luxury of powerlessness. The only way to do the job of a WPA is to be aware of the power relationships we necessarily conduct, and to use the considerable power we have for the good of our program.

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## Writing-Center Faculty in Academia: Another Look at Our Institutional Status

Virginia Perdue

For nearly fifteen years, those of us who work in writing centers have bemoaned the limited perception within our home institutions of the varied and complex nature of writing-center work. Our conversations at conferences are peppered with stories of the professors—even those trained in composition—who continue to send their students to us to clean up subject-verb agreement or sentence fragments, and the pages of our journals testify to the continuing need to describe (i.e., justify) to our colleagues what we do in our writing centers. Probably the most visible and public complaint came from Stephen North, whose frustration erupted in *College English* in 1984:

[T]he members of my profession, my colleagues, people I might see at MLA or CCCC or read in the pages of *College English*, do not understand what I do. They do not understand what does happen, what can happen, in a writing center. (433)

North was neither the first nor the last to note this ignorance. In 1983, Malcolm Hayward reported that members of his department consistently undervalued the capacity of his writing center to teach much more than grammar and punctuation. In 1985, Patricia Murray and Linda Bannister reported that their survey revealed a common faculty perception of a writing-center job as a “cush-y” substitute for office hours. Elray Pedersen argued in 1986 that “Writing Labs Are More than Remediation.” In 1988, Diana George described to English Department chairs the work centers accomplish and the opportunities they offer for research and teacher training.

One of the most troubling descriptions of our colleagues' narrow vision occurs in Gary Olson's and Evelyn Ashton-Jones' 1988 article in *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. They point out the perception among freshman English directors that writing-center directors are “a kind of wife,” among whose important attributes are the need to be “nice,” “supportive but not critical,” “friendly, cooperative, and have lots of personal-

ity," and who should "provide chocolate chip cookies to writing center clients"(23). From these descriptions, Olson and Ashton-Jones note that

She is not encouraged to 'work' as the real members of the academic community do, and when she is allowed to, she is certainly not compensated fully for her labor, since her labor is not truly valued by the community. In short, her place is in the home. (23)

Not much has changed since this chilling recognition. In September 1989 and in Spring, 1990, Rick Leahy countered commonly held "myths" faculty hold about writing centers and—again—described the work writing centers can and do accomplish. As recently as June 1990, Marian Arkin noted the continuing low status of writing-center faculty, despite some notable improvements in conditions for writing centers in the last seventeen years.

Despite this grim picture, writing-center faculty have developed a variety of responses to counter this persistent, narrow understanding of our work. Keeping statistics emerges as the standard response (Chapman; Jonz and Harris; Neuleib, "Evaluating a Writing Lab," and "Evaluating Writing Centers"), while sending memos and writing newsletters to faculty and administration describing writing-center services, projects, and success stories are also frequent strategies; classroom visits to describe and to demonstrate tutoring (North, Chase) along with open houses to bring faculty to the center (Smoot) are other common responses; additional services, such as hotlines, libraries, workshops, mini-classes, and test administration and evaluation have also been used to demonstrate to our colleagues that writing center faculty do work (Chase, North).

Despite all these efforts, however, the misconceptions continue, and many of us who work in writing centers must continue to explain our presence on our campuses. Are these misconceptions due merely to the inertia of old attitudes? Here again, writing-center faculty offer a variety of reasons for the persistent invisibility of our work: the operation of writing centers within a non-traditional, collaborative theory of learning (Bruffee, Ede); the historically low status of tutors as employees of the rich (Jolly); the origins of the modern writing center in response to the literacy crisis (North, "Idea"; Hairston); the use of students to staff the centers (Bruffee); the historical attachment of writing centers to developmental programs (Leahy, "What"); narrow conceptions about writing (Chase,

Pedersen); a prevailing view—even among many writing-center faculty—that individual tutoring is a supplement (i.e., "frill") to the 'real' instruction in classrooms (Simpson, "Reader").

All these explanations are valid. However, they ignore another equally important explanation: the possibility that we ourselves may contribute to the invisibility of so much of our work. For we, too, suffer from a narrowness of vision, not about what we do, but about how we describe to our colleagues and administrators what we do. All of these responses are *administrative* answers to a problem assumed to be essentially administrative. In other words, these responses may actually undercut our attempts to achieve a broader recognition in our institutions.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, Michel Foucault's insight into the relationship between discourse, power, and knowledge offers a useful perspective from which to view how one of these responses, statistics reporting, can prevent writing centers from gaining recognition. His description of the interplay among discourse, knowledge, and power can provide writing-center faculty with a theoretical framework to discover and investigate how most of our work in writing centers all too often remains invisible to our colleagues and, particularly, to department chairs and to higher-ranking university administrators.

We have traditionally recognized the connection between discourse and knowledge. Foucault, however, has added the element of power to this relationship. His explanation of power demonstrates how it is that we have traditionally not recognized power's presence or workings in our interchanges with our colleagues. According to Foucault, power is not a static imposition of force on an individual; it is at once positive and negative, enabling and constraining. In "Truth and Power," he points out that

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it . . . produces things, induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse (emphasis mine). (119)

In addition to this dual conception of power, Foucault describes the development in the 17th and 18th centuries of "a new 'economy' of power," whose effectiveness lay not in overt domination but in its development of "new technologies of power" whose "concrete and precise character" enabled them "to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes, and modes of everyday behaviour" ("Truth and Power" 119, 125). In short, power is most effective when it operates through routine

practices. And it is at its most routine in our everyday language practices. So, what we say, how we represent ourselves in a given report, memo, or orientation is not only a rhetorical choice and therefore an exercise of power, but, and perhaps more importantly, an effect of power as well.

What effect does routinely using discourse and knowledge have on power? We are accustomed to thinking of discourse as a system of communication, of the free exchange of ideas among speakers and writers—situated now, of course, within discourse communities. However, Foucault asserts in "The Discourse on Language" that discourse is actually unobtrusive; communication occurs, but much more remains unsaid: "Exchange and communication are positive forces at play within complex but restrictive systems; it is probable that they cannot operate independently of these" (225). Every statement,<sup>2</sup> therefore, is simultaneously expression and silence.

Essentially then, through familiar conventions, such as those which encourage us to describe our work with tutors as "training" rather than "teaching," discourse shapes and channels uses of power while power enables and constrains discourse. We can productively apply this understanding to the narrow view of our work on campus. As Foucault puts it:

Let us ask . . . how things work . . . at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our postures, dictate our behaviors, etc. ("Two Lectures" 97)

From this perspective, we can scrutinize the use we make of statistics reporting to see how it both advances and undermines our attempts to gain visibility for our work in writing centers. This is not to say that we can all dispense with keeping and reporting statistics, of course; the point is that we need to determine what our use of statistics allows us to express and exclude alike. The silences this determination can reveal may be very important indeed.

Statistics have long been regarded as highly convincing evidence for claims to truth, especially among administrators. As such, writing-center directors have adopted it in order to support our requests to department chairs and deans for institutional recognition. This use exemplifies statistics as an important avenue of power in both its productive and prohibitive aspects. A look at the literature reveals that the advice to gather statistics originated in a need for raw headcounts to justify the writing center's

existence on campus. Writing-center directors were advised to "Keep track of everything!" (Neuleib, "Evaluating a Writing Lab" 232). As writing centers matured, Jon Jonz and Jeanette Harris described other uses statistics can serve, for example, as bases for internal program assessment, for planning, and for research (226). As a result of such encouragement, writing-center directors have begun to learn more sophisticated and streamlined methods of gathering, interpreting, and using data.

The use of numerical data for survival has remained a key function, despite Jonz and Harris's warning to writing center directors not to engage in "defensive recordkeeping" (217). When writing-center directors want recognition from administrators, we rely on statistics. In advising those who would start writing centers in two-year colleges, Gary Olson describes "Data collection" as "the principal means of justifying a center's existence to administrators," explaining that it "provides the concrete information administrators need to judge the center's success" ("Establishing and Maintaining a Writing Center" 94). As recently as 1990, Rick Leahy matter-of-factly notes that "Most writing center directors compile mountains of statistics every semester on how many students have been served, in order to justify the center's existence" ("What" 43).

Informing this particular use of statistics is an assumption that numbers are the only data that administrators respond to because numbers offer objective, unbiased evidence upon which to base decisions. Foucault notes in "Discourse" that this assumption disguises a historical stance toward discourse and knowledge which developed in the 16th and 17th centuries to prescribe an absolute separation between observers and observed, or "subjective" knowers and the "objective" known; this separation, of course, disguises and denies the operation of power, of anything subjective, in "true" discourse and knowledge (218-220). Operating under this separation, what writing-center director would deny that our annual reports use these numerical measures as a "neutral" way to demonstrate the effectiveness of our work? We use numbers precisely because their assumed neutrality helps us make a case for our centers.

Unfortunately, this reliance on statistics to communicate with our chairs and deans lets us forget that those numbers describe only a small part of our work. We forget that the numbers we report, and the ways we report them, measure services unknown to our administrative audience. They know that so many students from x, y, and z departments have passed through our writing centers, but they have only a vague idea at best of just

what we do or why we think it is important. They rarely hear from our teacherly or our scholarly side; neither do we invoke their teacherly or scholarly side.

Because we often do not describe for our chairs and deans our scholarship, our work with tutors, our tutorials, or results gained by the students we serve, we miss an opportunity to demonstrate that our work involves more than recordkeeping. We forget, as Jeanne Simpson reminds us, "to emphasize at every turn that a directorship involves teaching first and administration second or even third" ("A Reader Responds" 6).<sup>3</sup> The result? "[F]reshman English directors [and department chairs and deans] are more likely to view the writing center director simply as an administrator, not as a teacher, a scholar, or even a writing specialist" (Olson and Ashton-Jones 20). The invisibility of our other roles is the structured silence which Foucault's comment on the restructuring of power through the rise of empiricism reveals.

So how can we begin to reclaim these other roles, particularly our teaching role? We can use anecdotal evidence, but we all know that anecdotal evidence "proves" nothing; it merely illustrates. Furthermore, deans and chairs still want data, preferably numerical data, no matter how clearly we recognize the limits of this evidence. Like it or not, this elevation of numbers, however political or ideological it may be, is "how things work." Granted then, our use of statistics will very likely continue to be one of the most frequent demonstrations of writing-center productivity. So, we can and should explore other ways to use statistics more effectively with our administrative audience, ways to break out of our narrow, instrumental use of numbers in order to highlight the heretofore invisible aspects of our work. However, numbers are not the only evidence at our disposal. It is equally important that we use other, non-numerical, forms of evidence as well. Rather than exploring alternative methods of using numbers, I want to point to some other familiar data which can allow us to round out the numerical evidence we offer.

Writing-center directors have another kind of powerful evidence at hand, the kind of data we, in fact, have been using for as long as we have used numbers: the progress reports and case histories we and our tutors write. We already use case studies for research and training, and we use the progress reports for informing our colleagues of the work we do with their students. But writing-center literature is silent about their systematic use for describing our teaching to chairs and deans. Perhaps the silence is

due to the commonsense objection that numbers are quickly read compared to a narrative account. However, is that necessarily so? Can we not summarize our work with a given student in a quickly read paragraph in order to *describe* our work as well as *count* it? Might not these descriptions be a way to reveal the pedagogical dimensions of our work in writing centers?

In order to reveal more of my teaching role in the center, I summarized the Spring 1990 progress reports in the files of a graduate student and a freshman, then included them in my annual report along with the statistics. I commented on the initial writing problems which brought each to the writing center, the challenges we helped them overcome, and the new strengths they exhibited in their final visits. What effect this summary had is uncertain, but I know that I have sent a more complete message. This message demonstrates that we teach (in the most collaborative sense of the word), not just "work with" real people; it describes some of the weaknesses and strengths we see in our students' writing and how we help those students improve their writing; it illustrates that we do more than correct grammar and punctuation; it also points out that graduate students and freshmen alike face similar issues in their writing. Most importantly, it includes a portrait of people working together on writing.

Using progress reports and case histories is by no means the only complement to statistics reporting, and, to be fair, the literature does suggest other avenues, such as videotapes and faculty workshops, to describe our work. Both have been successful because they convey what statistics do not: images and experiences of people talking about their writing. But examining our use of statistics is only the beginning. We must also carefully scrutinize the terminology we use in describing our work, perhaps moving away from terms like "training" with its administrative overtones, and examining the consequences of the dichotomy we set up between "teaching" and "tutoring." Work in that direction is already beginning (Hemmeter; James and Perdue).

For too long we have ignored our own rhetorical expertise and have tried to speak one register of an administrative language without checking first to see whether other registers are available to us and what we want to communicate, perhaps because we have not been exactly sure of how we want to be heard. As rhetoricians, though, we know the power of naming. We are identifying more and more clearly for ourselves all the dimensions of our work in writing centers and the resulting positions we can occupy

within our universities. As we explain to our chairs and deans (and our colleagues) what we do, then, let us remember what Foucault's understanding of power relations demonstrates: we must look closely at how we explain our work in order to see both what it allows us to express and what it prevents us from expressing. Clearly, that "how," especially when it seems most familiar, ordinary, regular, is just as important as the "what."

## Notes

1. This was the conclusion my colleague Deborah James and I came to after an academic year of fighting budget cuts. In "Writing Centers in Academia: Escaping Our Marginality," a CCCC presentation, we describe that experience and analyze the process by which the strategies we used to stop the budget axe exacerbated the very problem we were trying to avert.
2. The concept of the "statement" is the base of Foucault's archaeological method of inquiry; however, my use of this term is not so specialized.
3. I agree with her intention to make the teaching role of a writing-center administrator visible, but not with her implicit dismissal of our administrative roles. We need to think carefully and critically about them as well.

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## What Do You Need to Start—and Sustain—a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program?

Susan H. McLeod and Margot Soven

As members of the Board of Consultants of the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs, we have noticed a new trend in the semi-annual Network meetings held at NCTE and CCCC. In the early 1980s when the Network was new, those who came to our meetings were usually faculty (often WPAs) who were interested in finding out how to set up a program themselves. Writing across the curriculum (WAC) was at that time very much a bottom-up phenomenon, with programs being developed because of faculty initiative. Now, however, we notice that a number of people attending the Network meetings have been sent by their dean, department chair, or some other administrator. In other words, as WAC is becoming institutionalized—part of the academic landscape, as it were—it is also becoming a top-down phenomenon.

We find this trend gratifying in one sense, since it shows how WAC has become something that institutions want as a matter of course, rather like freshman composition, but we also find this mandating of WAC disturbing. Many deans and chairs, like the people they send to our Network meetings, are proceeding with good will, seeing WAC programs as something beneficial to their campuses; but they often do not have the time to read up on such programs and therefore do not understand the work involved in implementing them. The people these administrators send to our meetings, while they are just as committed as our earlier clientele, are worried—even frantic—about the unrealistic expectations of their administrators and about the seeming impossibility of the task they have been assigned. (One frustrated WPA confided to us that her dean had told her to deal with reluctant faculty by “ramming WAC down their throats.”) We see this lack of information about WAC principles and the accompanying expectations among some administrators as a potential danger to the WAC movement. What follows in this essay, then, can serve WPAs who are or might soon find themselves assigned the task of developing a WAC program as a guide to help them in informing administrators about some basic points, in knowing what to ask for before agreeing to take on the task, and in

understanding some basic procedures to follow for WAC program development.

## Defining WAC

At the first mention of writing across the curriculum on campus, WPAs should make sure that everyone understands what that means since WAC programs vary significantly from campus to campus. In defining the concept, it is easiest to begin with what WAC is *not*—WAC programs are not simply additive (more term papers, more writing assessment); nor are they programs for teaching grammar across the curriculum, focusing just on the surface correctness of student writing. Instead, at its best, WAC involves a comprehensive program of faculty development and curricular change, instituting writing in virtually all university courses in order to improve students' writing and critical thinking skills.

There are two philosophical bases for WAC programs. The first may be termed "cognitive": writing assignments (especially journals, learning logs, and other non-graded writing, as described in Fulwiler's *Journal Book*) are used by students as tools to develop their thinking and learning skills. The WAC program at Michigan Technological University is the best-known example of a program with this sort of philosophical base; it is described in Toby Fulwiler's and Art Young's *Language Connections: Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, and in Young and Fulwiler's *Writing Across the Disciplines: Research into Practice*.

The second philosophical base may be termed "rhetorical," with ties to theories of knowledge as a social construct. Writing is seen as a form of social behavior in a discipline, a way of entering into the ongoing conversation in a discourse community; writing assignments (often in upper-division "writing-intensive" or "writing-in-the-major" courses) are designed to help students become familiar with and eventually conversant in the discourses of various disciplines. The best-known program based on this philosophy was established at Beaver College by Elaine Maimon; her methods are presented in her text, *Writing in the Arts and Sciences*, and in her articles, "Talking to Strangers" and "Writing in All the Arts and Sciences." While programs like these emphasize one or the other philosophical approach, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive; many WAC programs encourage both writing-to-learn and learning-to-write-within-particular-discourse-communities. (For a fuller discussion of WAC definitions and philosophical assumptions, see McLeod, "Defining.")

## What WAC Programs Need If They Are to Succeed

Given the fact that WAC programs involve comprehensive curricular change, the first thing such programs (and program directors) need is time. Successful programs, while requiring strong administrative support and encouragement, must grow and develop through faculty consensus and dialogue. Most programs start with a few committed teachers voluntarily attending a workshop on methods of assigning and evaluating student writing. These individuals, the experimenters who are always seeking ways to improve their teaching, are very often among the campus leaders and/or most respected teachers. Once they are successfully using writing in various ways in their classes, the word spreads; the more cautious faculty members then attend workshops and adopt strategies to improve student writing. Depending on the size of the faculty, it can take several years of workshops before any real changes in classroom practices can be detected and curricular change starts to take shape. And there are, of course, always some who will never change their approach to teaching, and who would resent being told they should; these teachers should be allowed to continue as dinosaurs, and certainly never be required to go to WAC workshops, where they would probably do their best to subvert the proceedings. It is particularly important for WPAs to take the time to secure the support, or at least the benign neglect, of English Department faculty; while the WAC program need not be centered there, hostility toward WAC in the department that traditionally teaches writing can eventually kill any WAC efforts.

The second thing needed to create a strong WAC program is resources. The first and most valuable resource is a coordinator for the program—a faculty member with vision, leadership skills, tact, and some clout. Sometimes this person is the WPA, sometimes not. Sometimes this person is the one who leads faculty workshops; more often he or she brings in outside experts for workshops and then does the follow-up work, contacting workshop participants and offering consultation. Without a campus coordinator like this, a WAC program will lack direction; released time for the coordinator—during the planning period as well as after—is essential. If this person is expected to set up a program from scratch, he or she should have at least a semester (preferably a year) to study programs at other institutions, ask advice of other WAC directors, attend meetings where WAC is discussed, and gather materials for faculty use. (Two particularly good resources are Walvoord's *Helping Students Write Well* and Holder and Moss's *Improving Student Writing*.)

There should also be a reward system for faculty who participate in writing-across-the-curriculum workshops. In the early days of WAC, when outside funding was readily available, programs were able to offer modest honoraria to participants. If funding is not available for such honoraria, however, other sorts of awards can be just as successful—a catered lunch provided by the Dean, for example, or public recognition and commendation of faculty at the time of annual review. Sometimes just holding the seminar off-campus in a quasi-retreat setting is enough. But some sort of reward is essential for participants, providing public recognition that the university values the time commitment these teachers have willingly made.

The third resource needed to create a successful WAC program is support systems for both students and faculty. A writing lab or peer tutoring program of some sort is vital. Faculty in the disciplines can be expected to assign and respond to more student writing, but they cannot be expected to provide the intensive one-to-one feedback that a well-trained writing tutor can. A writing lab provides one of the most essential ingredients of good writing—a sympathetic audience; students can take drafts of papers to the lab for help with revision, and faculty members can consult with the lab on the design of assignments so that the tutors are prepared when students bring those assignments to the lab. The writing lab director can also provide outreach activities in the disciplines, visiting classes to discuss strategies for taking essay examinations or for planning and writing research papers. (For advice on setting up and running a writing lab, see Olson.)

Finally, WAC programs need some sort of administrative structure, however slight, to ensure that curricular change takes place and stays in place. The importance of such a structure cannot be overstated; David Russell points out that past programs similar to WAC have disappeared when their leaders retired or left, showing the importance of institutionalizing such programs. A large university with a WAC program needs an all-university writing committee, a composition board, or a centrally located WAC advisory board, with representation from all disciplines. Such a board would oversee and approve writing-intensive courses or writing in the major courses, making sure that the curriculum is consistent with WAC principles. At Oregon State University, for example, there is a campus-wide director of writing across the curriculum who is part of the Baccalaureate Core Committee now implementing changes in the university's general education program, changes which include a writing-intensive

course requirement. At a smaller institution, WPAs should be careful about trying to set up new lines of authority, but WAC can be administered through less formal structures. At La Salle University, for example, the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences oversees WAC and appoints ad hoc committees to address specific issues, such as the development of a proposal for writing-intensive courses and the administration of the Writing Fellows Program.

## How to Get a WAC Program Started

Once it is understood that WAC programs will take time, resources, and some administrative scaffolding for continued success, here is how a would-be WAC director should go about setting one up.

1. Set up a planning committee. Involve key faculty at the decision-making level and make sure composition faculty are involved and knowledgeable. Get administrators to send some of these key people to conferences to learn more about WAC—for example, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the summer conference and workshop of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, or the University of Chicago seminars on writing and critical thinking. Read up on WAC programs yourself as much as you can, starting with the works we have cited here.
2. With your planning committee, study the structure of your school and decide how a WAC program will fit with the institutional mission and any institution-wide planning underway. Since WAC begins with faculty development, what provisions and resources does your institution already have for such programs? Do you have a writing lab or learning center? Could WAC-support efforts start there? Should the WPA direct WAC efforts, or should someone else (an assistant director of writing, a campus-wide writing coordinator) direct the program? Study institutions similar to yours that have WAC programs to see how those programs are structured. (For descriptions of successful WAC programs at colleges and universities of various sorts, see Fulwiler and Young, *Programs That Work*.) Study any present institutional initiatives (such as general education reform or new core-curriculum projects) and tie funding requests to such initiatives where possible. Don't overlook the possibility of outside funding; while large amounts of federal funding are no longer available for WAC itself, writing can (and should) be an essential part of core curriculum revisions proposed to, say, NEH or FIPSE. Title III "Strengthening Institutions" grants are available from the U. S. Department of Education

for institutions with significant numbers of minority students, and several private foundations (Mellon, Pew, Ford, Lilly, Glenmede, and Bush) have recently funded WAC programs for particular kinds of institutions.

3. Bring in an outside consultant, if at all possible. Members of the Board of Consultants of the National Network of WAC programs or other WAC directors familiar with programs across the country can advise you on the best procedures and structure for a program for your institution. (Christopher Thaiss, Professor of English at George Mason University, is the Coordinator of the Network; for a list of programs and program directors across the country, see McLeod, *Strengthening Programs*). Plan for this consultant to conduct some workshops to inspire faculty; make sure your on-site coordinator can lead follow-up discussions in one format or another (Brown-bag lunches have worked well in some institutions,) and can continue to enlist faculty participation in the program once the visiting expert has left.

4. To establish a comprehensive program, start with a few elements in a pilot program and phase in others over time. The program planned at Washington State University, for example, will eventually include faculty workshops, curricular change (substantial writing in general education courses and in upper-division "writing-in-the-major" courses), support services (a writing lab), and assessment (a "rising-junior" examination to assess proficiency). Coordinated by an all-university writing committee, some of these elements are already in place (the workshops and the writing lab); others are being phased in now (writing in general education courses), and still others will be established within five years (the rising-junior examination and writing-in-the-major courses). The program at La Salle University began eight years ago with a summer workshop for six faculty members; it now includes a writing-emphasis course requirement, an advanced workshop for those who have completed the continuing summer workshop, an undergraduate peer-tutoring program, and an annual across-the-disciplines essay contest. It would clearly have been impossible to institute all elements at once in either institution; for a comprehensive program involving institutional change to succeed, one must move step by step.

5. From the beginning, build evaluation into the program to monitor growth and progress. Evaluating WAC programs, like program evaluation of any sort, is difficult (see Witte and Faigley; Davis et al.; Young and Fulwiler;

Fulwiler, "Evaluating" and "How Well?"; White, *Developing*). Proceed cautiously and use multiple measures, such as faculty and student surveys, interviews, attitude measures, and examination of assignments. Any evaluation efforts must be carefully designed, taking into account research on longitudinal studies of writing development and the intricacies of pre- and post-testing of writing (see White, appendix to *Developing*).

6. Don't expect immediate and obvious changes, and make sure administrators don't either. WAC programs aim to develop critical thinking and learning skills and to have an impact on teaching. Skills develop slowly; teachers change their classroom practices even more slowly. Putting a program in place takes time, energy, leadership, and resources. Making sure it results in eventual change takes not only an administrative structure of some sort but also some patience and perseverance on the part of everyone involved.

There will, however, be certain immediate and gratifying results from the faculty workshops. The first is renewed enthusiasm for and commitment to teaching, and the second is a blossoming of collegiality; both are well-documented side effects of WAC programs (Weiss and Peich). In institutions that still have large numbers of tenured-in faculty who are approaching burnout faster than retirement, these outcomes may be just as beneficial as the eventual improvement of student writing and thinking. A third benefit is a personal rather than an institutional one; directing a WAC program, while it has its administrative frustrations, is enormously gratifying and instructive for the director. Faculty in other disciplines have much to teach us about writing in their discourse communities, if we will only listen. Many faculty are already doing wonderful things with writing in their classrooms, as those of us who conduct workshops always discover, and are more than willing to share their ideas and assignments with others. When we have created a program that helps such teachers break out of their isolated classrooms and share ideas about writing—and about good pedagogy in general—we have also helped to create a community of teachers and writers.

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## Master of Arts in Writing

Brenda Deen Schildgen

A number of books in recent years have challenged the conventions underlying traditional English studies. These include, among others, Robert Scholes, *Textual Power*, Frank Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism*, Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature*, Richard Ohmann, *The Politics of Letters*, and Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*. All of these writers in their unique ways single out three basic characteristics of the conventional English curriculum:

1. Writing and reading, that is, construction and reconstruction of discourse are separate activities and they do not re-enforce each other. The consequence of this preconception is the separation of writing programs from literature studies and the commensurate degrading of one of these activities in the curriculum.

2. A hierarchy of genres has been established in English studies, particularly as the legacy of new criticism, which placed poetry (epic and lyric) above other literary activities, with poetic drama following, and the prose genres sorted to the end of the list, with the novel first, and other ostensibly fictional forms following. The essay, with other non-fictional forms, has been relegated to the bottom of the list. The consequence of this hierarchy is the separation of fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry, and imaginative literature from "practical" writing. This translates into a curriculum in English classes which primarily features those poets and novelists who were canonized by the new critics. In the writing curriculum, these distinctions are built into such specialized courses as "creative writing," "journalism," "professional writing," and "technical writing," as separate and distinct from what are identified as literary studies.

3. The convictions and practice in many English departments tend to deny that what goes on in the English curriculum concerns more than just the English department at any given university. But exposure to literature and immersion in the language we speak, write, and think is one of the major activities of the university, and this activity transfers from the school setting to the world, where literacy (in its most elemental and most developed models) plays a critical role. Therefore the English curriculum should be engaged in more than preparation of students for professional graduate study.

These scholars have been criticizing the fragmentation in the writing and reading curricula and the reduction of literary studies to a single methodology as represented by the new critics and unreflectively applied in literary studies until the recent wave of critical upheaval. They have drawn attention to the division between composition and literature, and the calcified place both have taken in the undergraduate curriculum as a consequence of this separation. This division is also reflected in the social and economic status of the professoriate, with teachers of literary studies receiving higher pay and greater respect, while the teachers relegated to "mere" composition are lower in pay, lower in status, and in many cases professionally marginalized, without equal pay benefits, job security, etc. A set of contradictions tends to regulate English studies. There is a pseudo-scientific emphasis on *analysis* of canonical texts—an attempt to treat them with scholarly objectivity and relate them to a highly articulated body of criticism. Irving Babbitt had recognized this problem over eighty years ago, and he made suggestions to reform the English curriculum. But, in fact, graduate and undergraduate studies in English in this century have lost their connection to established rhetorical practices and methodologies, and, as a consequence, writing and literature have often been taught in a cultural and linguistic vacuum. Returning rhetorical models to the English curriculum could re-integrate writing and reading, and attention to rhetorical purpose could clarify distinctions among genres without denigrating some while elevating others.

For the literary scholar, "composition" is at best a chore to be endured, a way of paying dues so as to enable one to rise to the more exalted level of pure research activity. Such a schism was unthinkable in the ancient world, when the tasks of the literary scholar and composition teacher were inseparable. As I reflected on this cleavage between reading and writing, between the study of literature and its production, I realized this was a relatively recent problem. Just in observing the American literary tradition, in such diverse writers as Twain, Howells, and Hemingway, one can see no clear division or hierarchy of genre. With the demise of Rhetoric as a discipline in the 19th century, the university lost touch with systematic methodologies for the production and interpretation of speeches and writing practiced for over two millennia. Reading and writing had been interrelated activities from the time of the emergence of Rhetoric as a discipline in Ancient Athens. The tradition of rhetoric held that interpretation and construction of discourse were related activities, and this attitude dominated education throughout the Roman Empire into the Medieval and Renaissance periods in some form or another until the 19th century. The

very structure of graduate studies in English today, for the most part, reinforces the idea of literary scholarship as separate from all other activities associated with the use of language. For example, the creation of literature, whether non-fiction, fiction, or poetry, the study of rhetoric, its history, disfavor, and demise, as well as the practice of rhetoric have all been set aside in favor of a single mode of literary transaction in graduate studies—the research paper.

## Theoretical Issues

The Master of Arts in Writing described in this essay is an attempted reform of the masters degree in English. Designed to revive rhetorical approaches to the construction and interpretation of literary works, the program as it developed raised a number of important questions about curriculum reform, current, traditional, and ancient approaches to the teaching of writing, and the difficulties of replacing entrenched disciplinary practices. The implications of this experimental program apply equally to undergraduate or graduate studies in English because the dichotomies between reading and writing permeate both levels of English education. In fact, an argument could be made, as has been done in recent years, for different kinds of graduate studies in English to train for different kinds of undergraduate teaching, but perhaps the undergraduate curriculum, whose function is much larger than merely preparation for graduate studies, would be more effective if the relationship between journalism, for example, and other forms of "communication," literature, composition, or "creative" writing were re-established by the rhetorical model. This experimental curriculum, which reached back into formerly established academic practices, attempted to reform graduate studies, but its intellectual rationale is equally applicable to graduate and undergraduate English studies. The writing-across-the-curriculum movement, a revival of rhetoric, is clearly another such attempt to address a major problem of English studies as they are presently constituted: the marginalization of the composition program and the intellectual work which supports it.

As director of the undergraduate writing program over a five-year period, I had been thinking about an innovative graduate humanities program which would revive classical rhetoric. Underlying the original conception of the program, as my first response to the criticism of English programs for separating reading and writing, is a traditional Aristotelian framework, that hermeneutics and rhetoric (interpretation and production

of texts) are *related* activities. This central conviction of Aristotle's has been advanced periodically by rhetoricians since Aristotle, including Cicero, Quintilian, John of Salisbury, Philip Melancthon, Giambattista Vico, and more recently by Hans-Georg Gadamer, among others. Such a rhetorical approach to English studies, whether graduate or undergraduate, seems to offer a potential solution to the problems inherent in the design of the English curriculum.

A second response to the criticisms of English studies built into the initial design of the program considered current critical theory's challenge to assumptions about the definition of "literature" and the "literary." Also, many other conventions governing English studies, for example, the dichotomies between creative writing and non-creative writing (whatever that is), fiction and non-fiction, fact and fiction, journalism and fiction, history and literature, and research and creativity were to be scrutinized and dispelled. The idea that all writing engages the imagination was to undergird the academic rationale for the program. The revival of rhetoric and the rhetorical *paideia* would direct the curriculum as well as the idea that truth, knowledge, understanding, interpretation, and their expression are presented and developed through language and that therefore all verbal communication, whether the classics, the annual report of the Megatex corporation, or a computer manual engages the imaginative use of language. Though at the time I had not read Brian Vickers' *In Defence of Rhetoric*, which did not come out until 1988, its description of ancient rhetorical education and the Renaissance revival of that education corresponds intellectually with the objectives of the program.

Third, the developments in the teaching of writing in the last twenty-five years had offered the possibility to revolutionize the teaching-learning environment, providing the occasion for collaborative learning and writing, peer editing and responding, and interactive classrooms. These pedagogical advances treat students as subjects in learning groups, whose education must be engaged and applied beyond the narrow confines of a particular discipline and preparation for graduate studies. The classroom innovations adapted to the program would respond to the divorce of the reading and writing curricula with preparation for thinking, writing, and living in the world outside the academy. Ideas and intuitions, however, no matter how well-intended, original, or supported by historical precedent, do not realize themselves. How can insight be "bureaucratized," as Kenneth Burke put it? And even if it can be, will the innovations work?

## Program Description

Funded by a \$75,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Institutional Grant for its first two years, this unique degree was designed for serious mid-career adult professionals, who had undergraduate degrees in a range of fields (law, medicine, accounting, English, Philosophy, and History, for example). The students in the program are all practicing writers, in the sense that writing plays a prominent role in their professional and private lives. The studies are intended to lead the students to proficiency in imaginative and professional writing as well as to the development of their editing and writing abilities through the study of non-fiction, fiction, and poetry.

The thirty-six-semester-unit graduate degree divides into six strictly writing courses, and six humanities courses chosen from ten possibilities. The students are required to take nine units, that is three courses per semester for four semesters, but these semesters last twenty-four weeks (year-round enrollment with three-week intermittent vacations). Students are accepted into the program as a "group" of eighteen to twenty who stay together for the duration of the two-year program. There are a number of academic advantages to this procedure. First, students develop alliances with each other which facilitate their growing capacities as editors of each others' work; second, because they know each other, they work collaboratively both on their projects and on morale boosting during an arduous and demanding program. This proved to be an effective policy because, of those in the first group, only one student out of nineteen dropped out. The second group had a similarly successful retention rate.

The writing component is comprised, first, of four writing workshops requiring both practice and study of the genre the student writes in (one workshop each semester, out of which students can select from poetry, non-fiction, or fiction), and, second, of two directed studies set aside for work on a "writing project." This writing project is a compilation of the student's best writing produced during the two-year program. It is assumed that the project (a working draft of a novel, a collection of short stories, poetry, non-fiction essays, or a mixture of genres) is a working collection. The humanities segment includes ten courses from which students select six.

The division of the curriculum into writing workshops and humanities courses was intended to integrate writing with "academic" studies and to

provide an opportunity for concurrent intensive work in a specific genre in the workshops and practice in creating, evaluating, interpreting, and analyzing literary works in diverse genres in the humanities courses. Also, the humanities courses in the third and fourth semesters took up a number of thematic issues connected to the production and interpretation of literary works. The diversity in humanities courses was not just distinguished by the content (i.e., literary style, genre, and cultural affiliation of the literary texts under scrutiny), but included the range of writing activities students would practice as a consequence of the literary studies. These were prose non-fiction in a range of styles, tone, and rhetorical stance or purpose, literary fiction and poetry in imitation of the "canonized" writers of the twentieth century, position papers, definitional and analogical essays, oral histories, and public addresses, as well as the more typical English graduate student research paper. The structure of the program then attempted to insure that interpreting and writing were brought back together as they were in traditional rhetoric.

Also, it should be noted that as a consequence of a year of "focus"-group meetings with outside consultants, we reached a general consensus that the humanities courses should provide some kind of "coverage" in the traditional sense. Our students would come from many fields, not necessarily from English, and they might not know what was deemed "canonical" or "non-canonical." Having at least two courses which were intended to acquaint them with twentieth-century literary breakthroughs would provide this kind of conventional coverage. Nevertheless, the approach to these works would contravene the norm.

While the literary assignments in the writing workshops were directed towards the student's writing project, the assignments in the other courses were to be diversified, providing opportunity for experimentation in both non-fiction and fictional genres, breadth of experience in interpreting and writing, and in the final semesters they were to include either research papers or position papers which probed perennial humanistic concerns with some depth. The writing assignments were to encourage self-reflexivity and awareness of the ways in which writing is an act of conscious reflection on self, society, history and tradition while also being an act of disguise or pretense, the presentation of a transformed or created self.

Beyond the course descriptions, however, is the teaching approach to the production and interpretation of literature. With the recent developments in teaching writing, combined with a class full of talented, intelligent, and highly motivated adults, the classroom atmosphere was to be

collaborative and interactive, along the lines of the recommendations of Peter Elbow and Donald Murray, among others. These students, as practicing writers themselves, could be counted on to be responsible participants in the classroom; their professional experiences and avid interest in the reading and writing activities could prepare them, with sensitive leadership from the faculty teaching the classes, for example, to be fellow editors of each others' work, leaders of seminar presentations, and capable discussion collaborators.

The faculty, on their side, who had critically rethought how a literature course would be taught to students interested in literary writing rather than literary research, would be prepared to cede some authority in the classroom to these students, for whom writing was a necessary part of their professional activity. Reading assignments were to be designed to fulfill the larger goals of the program: to develop the student as a productive writer and through the study of literary works to provide a background in literary styles, ideas, and techniques to add breadth and depth to the students' writing, thus enabling them to interpret, evaluate, edit, and contribute to their own work, as well as to that of others. These goals were to be advanced throughout the entire curriculum, supported by the writing and humanities courses, the reading and writing assignments, and the student's writing project. Writing assignments in the humanities courses were to be diversified in the tradition of the rhetorical *paideia* (imitation, parody, arguments, position and reflection papers, as well as research papers in the final semesters) and responded to with the pen of a constructive and creative critic, the teacher, whose performance would model teaching and editing practices.

To be accepted into the program, the student must demonstrate experience and skill in writing, have some background in successful humanities studies, and show a record of academic discipline and conscientiousness. The student application, designed to uncover these talents in the student, includes a sample of the student's writing (10-15 pages of prose, or a short collection of poetry), a grade transcript, a statement of purpose, a resumé, and two letters of recommendation. The student is accepted after an evaluation of these materials, all of which help the committee to assess his or her ability to succeed in the program. A committee of faculty, rather than a single person, evaluates all candidates; each candidate is scrutinized according to criteria which will enhance the academic environment of the class and benefit all members. These criteria are:

1. Diversity of personal goals. Because students write in a number of genres in their courses, care is taken not to admit a preponderance of fiction students. Students who are interested in developing themselves broadly in the humanities (literature and writing) rather than narrowly in a particular genre will be more successful and more satisfied with the program. An overabundance of students with an interest in fiction only is bound to cause complaints about being forced to abandon writing for "academic" courses. Since student applications include an extended sample of their writing and a statement of purpose besides the usual graduate school documentation requirements, it is easy to identify students' primary interests. Admission is based on the quality and diversity of the students' writing interests, as well as on their ability to perform academically.

2. Diversity of professional backgrounds. Though all the students must be promising writers, care will be taken that the group is balanced among teachers, editors, technical writers, and other professionals. A goal of the program is to develop students as writers who "write," that is, use their writing in the "real" world; an overabundance of students who do not appreciate the value of the craft of writing in the largest sense will contribute to undermining all the courses except the fiction workshops. Students who must write in their work will provide a critical edge to discussions of style, purpose, invention, audience, etc.

All that I have been describing so far, of course, is the design of the program, the ideal which would underly the actual practice. But, as so often in academia, the innovative must necessarily encounter the entrenched, which appears diversely as the fiefdoms of stultified administrative structures, traditional methods and attitudes which dominate our discipline, and the comfort of doing things as they've always been done. In the following section I outline the program's strengths and the problems which emerged in the first three years.

## Program Strengths

The strongest aspect of the program lies in its original curriculum, designed to challenge conventional barriers among literary genres, as well as the hierarchy of genres that places novel and poetry (i.e., the traditionally fictional genres) above history, biography, essays and other non-fictional forms. This is supported by the integration of humanities courses and writing courses with an emphasis on the rhetorical tradition, giving

students the opportunity to work in non-fiction, as well as in the more common creative writing endeavors (poetry, novel, short story).

A second strength is the students, who are highly motivated and capable professional adults, eager to learn and consume our common cultural heritage which they in turn choose to re-present in their own work. Because classes are offered at night and consecutively, it is possible for adult working people to complete their studies. This design also makes it possible for them to complete a writing project during the two-year program.

A third strength is the engagement of the faculty, who are inspired by the possibilities of the program. Also, the writing workshops, led by Bay Area published novelists, prize-winning non-fiction and fiction writers, journalists, and poets, are small, interactive, and intensive, allowing the students to work closely with these authors.

## Potential Problems

### Faculty and Administration

Just as the students may have preconceptions about conventional literary studies and what they would like to see changed, so indeed do faculty and administration. After the first two years of the program, a serious problem emerged. The faculty had very different definitions of the program. In an experiment such as this, it is essential that all the faculty operate with a shared definition. This does not mean that all faculty must use the same classroom techniques, have the same convictions about what literary works merit "coverage," or assign the same kind of written work. Just the contrary, the idea underlying the program was that all kinds of literary activities had merit, and that they should be practiced in the program, and that lectures would certainly be appropriate on some occasions. Rather, coherence among the faculty should emerge on the fundamental premises that reading and writing are related activities and that literary style and form are developed by practice in reading and writing in a variety of forms. The ideal graduates of this program would not write great novels; rather, they would transform their writing by enlarging the range and capacity of their literary activity.

However, without these shared convictions about the program, faculty will fall back on conventional English studies definitions. Some perceived

the program as an "applied" literature program; others as a creative writing program with some "lit-crit" courses tagged on; still others as a creative writing program being ruined by the incursion of English-type faculty; some thought it was strictly a teacher-training program; and others believed it was a modern version of a program in rhetoric. This confusion multiplied because there was an administrative tangle about authority, and the faculty were therefore undermined, or they lost interest. Despite good intentions, these diverse strands, if not directed, will tend to fragment a new program, a condition students would readily recognize. As a consequence of this first problem, the faculty ended up teaching their own courses, just as often happens in higher education, with the door closed, as though only "my course" and "my students" counted, and the relationship with the remainder of the curriculum was abandoned.

A further concern is that a rift can develop between the adjunct professional faculty, on whom the program is dependent for its academic respectability, as well as economic viability, and the full-time English department faculty. Mistaken notions about the goals of the program as well as judgments of teaching practices and attitudes based on stereotyped views of "English" department types will create a rift. To address this problem, the adjunct and full-time faculty must be engaged, at regular joint faculty meetings, in the dialogue of the program's intellectual goals and the necessary interdependence of both parties for its academic stability. The adjunct professional faculty's salary must be commensurate with their experience, training, and contribution to the program. Alternating who chairs faculty sessions, whether adjunct or ladder faculty, would also help to build more community among the two sets of faculty.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Faculty need to share techniques for conducting an interactive, collaborative adult classroom. Again these can be demonstrated in faculty meetings with all the faculty in the program participating in "show" and "tell" activities. Such occasions provide for discussion, exchange, dispute, and change. A frequently voiced complaint from these capable adult students is they are too often forced into the passive, receptive role in the classroom rather than being constructive collaborators in their own learning. The faculty should read, for example Don Murray's *Learning by Teaching* or Peter Elbow's *Embracing Contraries* and discuss as a group how these methods of classroom conduct and responses to student writing might be incorporated into their teaching practice.

2. During bi-monthly meetings faculty should take up particular rhetorical topics to refine the implications of such an experiment in education. They should be willing to write position papers advancing arguments on curriculum, teaching methods, changing attitudes, etc. The topics might include:

a) What is the connection between rhetoric and literary interpretation and how does this affect the design of a course or the objectives of the entire curriculum? How does it affect what we do in the classroom when we teach? Should writing courses be separated from reading courses? How can these activities be better integrated?

b) What is the role of research in a rhetoric curriculum? How can it be incorporated into a writing course so that its capacity to enhance understanding of a topic is manifest? How can a research project be more than a rote exercise repeated formulaically by each student?

c) How do we break down stereotypes about literary activity? That is, how do we construct a pedagogical argument, a discourse that directs away from clichéd literary attitudes that elevate one genre over another and which peremptorily dismiss the prose non-fiction genres both in literary study and in the academic curriculum? This particular prejudice is at the very heart of English studies and regulates the status and pay of those who teach the largest body of non-fiction in the university, the attitudes of faculty who eschew teaching it, and students who must write it. Naturally students attracted to the program want to write fiction. Our entire culture and the educational structure which supports it endorses this choice even though the pleasure and work of our language depends on a long prose non-fiction tradition which merits as much reverence and demands as much imaginative talent.

The working position papers and tentative conclusions which faculty reach should be shared with the students enrolled in the program. A newsletter which reports on the ongoing debates in which students are also involved should make the debates public.

## Curriculum

The fact that the writing workshops and humanities courses were separate in the original design of the program, may have re-enforced the traditional dichotomies in English studies because students were split in conventional categories in the workshops (fiction, non-fiction, poetry) and into two directions—towards their “own” writing project and towards breadth and scope in rhetorical experimentation and humanistic inquiry in the humanities courses. The major problem with the entire curriculum was this division which resulted in student unrest, potential faculty conflict, and a general distrust of the humanities courses on the part of the students. I would say that the distinction between these two activities needs further refinement and consideration, and that simply saying as we do these days that “all writing engages the imagination” cannot dissipate the now entrenched academic division between “creative writing” and ordinary English classes, no matter how re-formulated these “English” classes might be with reference to the rhetorical tradition. What to do about this dilemma, which is central to the program’s academic difficulties, is not clear. The Writing Workshops are the most appreciated portion of the program. To eliminate them would resolve this problem, but kill the program. It is the opportunity to write a lengthy work that attracts students into the program, and this work is supported by the workshops. One response has been to bring the humanities courses more into line with the workshop format. The advantage to this has been to improve the quality of teaching in the humanities, but at some expense to the curriculum of the adjusted courses. My own conviction remains that the students need to have the overall goals of the program constantly emphasized by every faculty member so they understand the underlying coherence to the curriculum of the whole sequence of courses directed towards their development as skilled writers and interpreters of our language and its literary traditions.

### Recommendation:

Curriculum, teaching practices, and grading standards must be confronted, discussed, shared, and modified. Otherwise an overlap between courses could potentially occur. Conflicts in curricula attitudes, including works to be studied, approaches to them, and grading standards can be the grounds for healthy discussions of the premises of our academic prejudices. In a program such as this, there are bound to be differences of opinions, and these should be focused on in an effort to trace their origins,

rationale, and implications. Conflicts in grading standards, particularly if the workshop faculty reject conventional grading standards, must be addressed because this could contribute to the undermining of the humanities curriculum, and its commensurate degrading in the overall curriculum.

## Students

Students also have preconceptions about literary studies based on the conventional distinction between creative writing and non-creative writing, between traditional literature courses and a “practical” approach to writing. These must be confronted from the beginning. Prospective students should be informed that this program is unlike conventional English graduate studies, that it is neither a creative writing program nor a graduate English degree. The difference should be emphasized, demonstrated, and indeed celebrated throughout the program so the advantages of the new approach become clear.

Despite an extensive orientation to the program at information meetings, in individual interviews, and again at the registration meeting, many students still enter the program with one romantic goal in mind: to be a writer who writes novels. And the academic courses are perceived to interfere with this goal. Too many students attracted to the program are more interested in fictionalizing their lives in a novel than in advancing their rhetorical and imaginative abilities in a variety of literary forms.

### Recommendation:

Students need to receive a thorough orientation to the academic and intellectual rationale for the program. If they do not, they may enter these studies with personal goals which may not match the program’s goals. As a consequence, some students may become annoyed by the humanities courses which they consider distractions from their writing. The writing workshops offer more easily self-gratifying work, but students must be shown how the work in the other courses is essential to their development as writers. Again, this conviction will emerge if the goals of the program are shared by faculty and students, and writing activities in the humanities courses are rhetorically based.

## Conclusion

It can be seen from these accomplishments, concerns, and problems that an enterprise such as this hardly resolves contemporary dilemmas in English studies. Rather, it identifies them, scrutinizes them, and provides an opportunity to evaluate conventions while testing some new approaches. It also directs our attention to all the corners and crevices of higher education in literacy studies: attitudes about tradition and innovation, personal comfort and ego gratification, prejudice and ideology, and even energy and enervation, all of these appear in a long-term creative academic project. Probably the most important realization that could emerge from this experience is that a teaching and interpretive methodology which requires self-scrutiny, historical reconstruction, dialogue, conflict, and knowledge of the workings of traditions and prejudices in academic activities (teaching, curriculum development, administration) can only strengthen our shared educational goals. I have in mind the application of methodologies like those explored in Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* and Jurgen Habermas's important modification of Gadamer in "The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality."

I have attempted to give an overview of the issues that must be confronted when a new program with new goals for literary studies is initiated. Others who have ventured into these territories have discovered similar conditions, and likewise have entered where "power failed the lofty fantasy" (Dante, *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 142), so I offer these experiences for others whose imagination is boundless but who know the limitations and boundaries of the academic community.

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## WPA on Campus

"WPA on Campus," a new section of the journal devoted to short articles of a practical nature, provides a forum for discussing issues that are important to WPAs but not readily suitable for publication as full-length, scholarly articles. What follows is a discussion of high school/college dual enrollment from two points of view and a critique of the *MLA Job Information List*.

### High School/College Dual Enrollment

David E. Schwalm

WPAs should be aware of a potential threat to our students' chances of developing college-level literacy: high school/college dual enrollment programs in English.

I consider "high school/college dual enrollment" to be a disturbing extension of the concept underlying the Advanced Placement program, the concept that a student should be able to earn college credit for work done in high school. Here is how dual enrollment works. A student enrolls in high school Senior English and simultaneously enrolls in a phantom section of Freshman English at the cooperating college, paying tuition for the course. The student who earns a C or better in Senior English receives credit both for Senior English and for Freshman English at the college. The process may be repeated in the second semester for Senior English II and a second semester of Freshman English. Thus, by passing senior English in the high school, students who pay tuition to the college can also receive credit for college freshman composition.

There are a number of variations on this arrangement. Sometimes the students qualify for the course through a placement procedure, sometimes not. Sometimes the cooperating college determines the curriculum, sometimes not. Sometimes college faculty supervise the high school teachers, sometimes not. Often, these programs are offered through the college's continuing education unit, without the knowledge, consent, or advice of the English Department. Whatever the variations, dual enrollment programs characteristically involve high school courses taught in the high school, by high school teachers, during high school hours, to high school students—for both high school and college credit.

Dual enrollment programs can involve large numbers of students. A comparison with Advanced Placement programs is illuminating. Students who pass an AP English course are not guaranteed college credit. They must take the national test, and not all AP students do so. Of those who do take one or the other AP English tests, only about one-third qualify (score 4 or 5) for college credit, and exemption or partial exemption from composition courses. *In many dual enrollment programs, a student who has paid tuition need only pass senior English to be assured of college credit.* In my own community, one college working with only one of twenty-eight local school districts gave credit for ENG 101 and 102 to virtually 100% of the three-hundred high school seniors who were dually enrolled—in what was called a “pilot” project. Were the practice of dual enrollment to spread, nearly every college-bound high school student with money for tuition could come out of high school with credit for college freshman composition on the strength of having passed senior English.

And the practice is spreading. Especially for tax-supported institutions, the financial incentives are enormous. The cooperating college (public or private) receives tuition and credit hours for doing virtually nothing: no classrooms, no supplies, no clerical support, and often no instructor’s stipend. (If the college pays the instructor, it is usually at low part-time faculty rates, an amount by which the high school’s contribution to salary is reduced; thus, while instructional costs are slightly redistributed, the total teaching cost is the same as if the student got only senior English credit.) Large numbers of students then show up at college with credit for freshman composition so that the demand for *actual* sections of the course on campus is reduced. The state subsidizes one year of literacy education rather than two. The financial incentives are complemented by many students’ delight with this strategy for avoiding freshman composition.

The objections to high school/college dual enrollment can be stated rather briefly:

1. Dual enrollment confuses the awarding of credit hours with the acquisition of knowledge or skill, eliminating the demand for college composition without eliminating the need. Merely giving students credit for freshman composition does not guarantee that they can meet the demands of college-level writing tasks. Students who pass senior high school English are the very college freshmen whose lack of proficiency in college-level reading and writing has regularly been lamented by press and public. Dual enrollment eliminates a year of literacy education that most students need.

2. Dual enrollment arrangements may displace Advanced Placement courses, gifted and talented programs, and other enriched high school English curricula. Some enriched curricula are their own reward, and AP courses offer the students only an opportunity to take a test which will qualify about one-third of those who take it for college credit. Dual enrollment virtually assures college credit to all who participate.

3. The dual enrollment program presupposes that writing is a finite skill—like multiplication—that can be mastered once and for all, thereby reinforcing the view that the function of college writing courses is only to “remediate” the failures of high school courses. In fact, college writing courses are designed to help students cope with the increasingly difficult writing tasks presented to them in the intellectual and social context of college. They must learn to address college audiences, to write about complex and abstract subjects, to draw on the research resources that college writing tasks require, to use college-level reading and discussion as a basis for writing. College writing courses are, by definition, taught in the general context of college—a context impossible to replicate in a high school senior English class.

4. Dual enrollment programs covertly compromise the principal objective of the Wyoming Resolution and the subsequent 4 C’s statement: improved literacy education through the institution of professional teaching conditions. By displacing college composition credit from college courses to high school courses, dual enrollment programs appear to reduce the exploitation of part-time instructors—but only by exploiting high school teachers. Such programs also remove issues of placement, class size, teaching load, curriculum, and academic quality from the purview of post-secondary educational institutions and their accrediting agencies. Anyone with experience in trying to maintain standards in a large on-campus writing program knows that the task becomes nearly impossible when instruction is removed to remote locations and diffused among instructors whose primary allegiances lie elsewhere.

It has been argued that dual enrollment programs encourage students to go to college, on the assumption that high school graduates are more likely to continue their education if they have a few credit hours in hand. Maybe. But the real driving forces behind the rapid spread of dual enrollment programs are, on the one hand, economic incentives (get rid of “expensive” college composition programs by giving everyone credit in high school and get tuition too) and, on the other, students and parents who naively buy into the equation of credit hours with knowledge. It is

extraordinarily difficult to resist a practice that is both economically advantageous and supported by its victims. (I denied composition equivalency to a transfer student who had dual enrollment credit for composition but whose writing sample and test scores put him in the lower half of those who place into basic writing. Both the student and his parents were outraged at me—not at the school that gave him college credit—and showed little concern about his inability to write.)

High school/college dual enrollment arrangements seem to be spreading very rapidly with little discussion of the matter among WPAs. I hope this contribution will encourage such discussion. My own view is that we must resist dual enrollment arrangements individually and as members of the WPA. I suggest the following strategies:

1. WPAs who evaluate transferred composition courses should not accept dual enrollment courses as equivalent to college composition courses. They should notify colleges and high schools that have dual enrollment programs that their courses will not be accepted as meeting college writing requirements.
2. WPAs should avoid getting involved in dual enrollment programs and should work on withdrawing from them if already involved. This is sometimes more easily said than done, as the programs are vigorously promoted by administrators and sometimes offered through continuing education units to avoid English Department interference.
3. The WPA Consultant-Evaluators should pay special attention to dual enrollment arrangements in their evaluations of writing programs.
4. WPAs should encourage professional discussion of dual enrollment at NCTE, 4C's, and MLA national conferences.
5. WPAs should work with high schools in their areas to develop interesting, appropriate, and attractive high school English curricula that will better prepare students for college reading and writing.

## High School/College Dual Enrollment and the Composition Program

Michael J. Vivion

At recent meetings of WPAs, high school/college dual enrollment in composition courses has become a subject of increasing controversy. This controversy, in brief whether English departments should participate in programs which allow students to enroll simultaneously in courses for which they receive both high school credit and college credit, reflects one which our department has resolved to its general satisfaction. We decided not only to continue our participation (begun in 1979) but also to increase it. We made this decision, however, not without a great deal of research and some important qualifications. We were aware of the potential for abuse and of our responsibility to provide quality college-level instruction to the students in the program. As a result of our concerns, we developed a program which benefits not only the students but also the department and the participating high schools.

The first step in reaching this decision was to discuss with representatives of local school districts the general concept of college credit offered to high school students. High schools in this area are under great pressure to offer their students the opportunity to earn college credit while still enrolled in high school. The overwhelming response was that these types of programs were perceived as essential opportunities for the districts' students, opportunities which parents both expected and demanded. We discovered that high school students were receiving college credit in a number of different ways: for high scores on ACT and SAT exams; from high scores on the CLEP English exam, both with and without a writing sample; from Advanced Placement classes and exams; from the International Baccalaureate program; and from dual enrollment on courses offered by two other area colleges. District administrators assured us that if we dropped our program they would turn to another source for their offerings.

We had already experienced frustration with several of these alternatives. The university's admission's office had recently sent the department chair a request that the department review its policy of accepting only six hours of credit for the AP English exam. He asked for the review in light of the change in the AP's English exam from one test to two: the Language

and Composition test and the Literature and Composition test. He recommended that the department consider awarding up to twelve hours to students who had taken both exams and had received a 3 or better. Our review of the AP program and the history of the department's acceptance of AP credit led us to a few surprises.

The major surprise was how little the members of the English Department knew about the AP test and the credit we granted for it. We also discovered that there was no university policy which called for a regular review of any of the tests which the university accepts for credit. Our examination of the two tests, the Language and Composition test and the Literature and Composition test, opened up questions both about the nature of knowledge within our fields, in particular undergraduate composition and literature, and about what constitutes acceptable evaluation. We discovered that 40% of each test is multiple choice. For those who believe that the measure of education should be the ability to deal with complex ideas in speech and writing, the questions on the AP exam are an inappropriate way to assign college credit. They are part of the "scantron" philosophy of measuring education by machine scoring computer cards. Each test, however, is 60% essay. In fact, on each exam students are given 105 minutes of essays. Fifteen minutes of this time is mandatory reading and thinking time. Ninety minutes are left to write. On both tests there are *at least* two essays questions. The longest the students had to write on any topic was 45 minutes. There was no time for revision or editing--15 minutes for thinking. We also examined the content of both courses and discovered an appalling lack of similarity to our own curriculum. As a result of this review, we severely limited the amount of credit we grant from AP, and we raised the score requirement from 3 to 4.<sup>1</sup>

Even earlier we had researched the performance of students who had either received credit for or been exempted from freshman composition on the basis of ACT or SAT scores. We then raised the exemption level to the score which all students had who received an A in their next composition course. At the same time we changed our policy of accepting CLEP English scores without a writing sample; we also decided to score the writing sample ourselves.

We also reviewed the dual credit programs offered by the two other area colleges. We discovered that, although they provided the same syllabi used on-campus, they provided minimum supervision of the classroom teachers and negligible contact between on-campus faculty and high school faculty. In addition, one of the colleges offered both semesters of their

freshmen composition to the high school seniors. Furthermore, selection of the high school faculty teaching these courses seemed largely left up to the high school principals. In short, these programs are models of dual enrollment programs which make the concept the center of the recent WPA controversy.

After we decided to accept the reality of the pressures to offer college credit on the high school campus, we set out to recreate our program. The program which evolved includes the following elements: direct supervision of participating teachers, departmental approval of participating faculty, opportunities for professional development, collaboration between on-campus and high school faculty. This redesigned program has significantly changed the relationships between the English Department and local school teachers.

We now have two faculty members who supervise participating teachers. They visit each classroom at least once a year, observe and critique the teaching, examine a set of graded papers, and write an evaluation for the composition director--the same process used for new on-campus faculty. Because of our concern about accountability, however, this process is ongoing in the dual credit program, perhaps unfairly because the dual credit teachers consistently receive high evaluations. These teachers also participate in the same student evaluation program used on-campus; evaluations are sent sealed to the English Department and not released to the teachers until after the grading period. They also participate in our faculty grading exchange, which admittedly should take place more regularly. Teachers who show need for improvement receive direct attention from the two supervisors and the director of composition. Overall, the program teachers are almost always rated among the best in the department. It's been no surprise to us that dual credit students have regularly been among the winners in the university's expository writing contest.

Adding to our confidence in the program's quality is the selection of teachers. First, these teachers are always among the best of the high school faculty. Also, each of the teachers in the program must be approved by the departmental hiring committee. We ask for a master's degree in English, teaching experience, and evidence of formal instruction in the teaching of writing. If applicants lack these qualifications, they are rejected or accepted on probation--with extra supervision, a prescribed number of graduate hours, or a writing project course on teaching composition. In general, the teaching credentials of the dual enrollment faculty are superior to those of

many part-time faculty in departments throughout the country. They are clearly superior to those of beginning teaching assistants. Indeed, their credentials, and their performance, make them assets to our staff.

If the teachers are required to take courses or if they simply choose to take courses to further their education, their adjunct status makes them eligible for a 60% discount in tuition. Over 90% of the teachers in the program have used this option. Furthermore, they receive all privileges accorded regular faculty, for example, library, recreation, athletic, theater, conservatory.

In addition to this continuing education opportunity, we provide a variety of staff development activities. Each fall semester all the dual enrollment teachers are brought to campus for a program and to discuss their problems and successes teaching the course. The program usually consists of a presentation on a special topic made by one of the program teachers, although the format may vary to include something like responding to a challenging student paper or reviewing text selection. Each spring semester the department and the College of Arts and Sciences host an English studies conference which the dual enrollment teachers attend along with other K-13 teachers from the region. Almost every conference in the last five years has included at least one program teacher among the presenters. Program teachers are also invited to campus when the department has speakers. In recent years, at either the conference or at staff development meetings, they've been able to hear and respond to Judith and Geoffrey Summerfield, Ben McClelland, David Bleich, Ann Bertoff, Ken Macrorie, David Bartholomae, Lil Brannon, John Trimbur, Jim Berlin, Andrea Lunsford, Vivian Davis, Bob DiYanni, Maxine Hairston, and Joe Trimmer, among others. One of the most rewarding additions to the staff development program has been the dean's sponsorship of two to four program teachers to the CCCC each year.

Because the teachers feel connected with the department, they feel freer to collaborate with the department. In the past these teachers have served on textbook committees, worked for *New Letters Review of Books*, co-authored articles and made joint presentations with on-campus faculty, served as readers on our campus-wide writing assessment, come to department parties, and offered thorough critiques of our curriculum. In short, these teachers have become valuable colleagues whose voices are now part of the professional conversation of our English department. They also are more willing to listen to our voices. At least a third of the schools involved in the program have made changes in their own curricula as a

result of their participation in the dual credit program. The influence flows in both directions.

We feel that the department's involvement in the high school/college credit program has changed our relationship with local school districts and teachers. We have joined with our school colleagues to create a school/college collaboration which has significantly improved the quality of writing instruction at both the high school and the university. This collaboration has increased the professional status of writing instruction and has led to positive educational innovation, not only in the suburban districts that benefit most frequently from accelerated programs like AP and IB but also in Kansas City's inner city schools where few such benefits have been available in the past.

The students also benefit from this arrangement. Their dual credit classes are generally smaller than their other classes; the university controls class size as part of its agreement with the schools. Students who are active in other school activities can work dual credit offerings into their schedules. They follow the same syllabus, read the same texts, write the same assignments and face the same standards as their peers on-campus. The course is a college course, one for which they pay approximately 30% of regular tuition. Nevertheless, they receive the same campus privileges that other part-time students receive, library and writing-lab privileges included. Some teachers bring their students on campus tours and arrange for their students to visit on-campus courses. Students who are less sure of their abilities have the chance to experiment with college work within the familiar atmosphere of their high schools. Indeed, no student fails the course; instead those having difficulty are allowed to withdraw up until late in the semester. Those who do complete the course successfully receive credit on a regular transcript—the course is not identified as an off-campus or as a dual enrollment course. The follow-up studies we have done indicate that students completing the dual enrollment course generally perform as well or better in their following composition courses.

The dual credit concept is not ideal and should most certainly not be implemented without concern for local conditions and without a strong commitment to participation from the administering English department. In many ways we would prefer to have the students on campus, interacting with students from different high schools and of different ages. Indeed, this belief is one reason that we will not offer our second course on the high school campuses. Students can benefit from an experience with composition within the unique cultural circumstances of the university. We are

convinced, however, that in today's educational environment high schools and their students will aggressively pursue avenues to obtain college credit. It is our responsibility to respond to this reality by creating dual credit programs which offer students quality college-level instruction and which unite teachers at both levels in a mutually beneficial professional undertaking.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes

1. Our examination of the May 1984 AP information on the English tests showed that 80% of the students who took the test received a 3 or above. This discovery and those noted within the text convince me that credit by examination is another issue which deserves intense scrutiny and discussion by WPAs.

2. I'd like to thank Joan Gilson for her excellent work with University of Missouri-Kansas City's High School/College Credit Program and for her helpful comments on this essay.

## Somewhere Between Disparity and Despair: Writing Program Administrators, Image Problems, and *The MLA Job Information List*

Joseph Janangelo

There is a central irony in looking for work as a Writing Program Administrator. On the one hand, we have created several vehicles (including a Council, a journal, and a consultant-evaluator service) to help change the academy's traditional images of Writing Program Administrators. On the other hand, when we look for work many of us will still answer advertisements such as those listed in *The MLA Job Information List*. One problem for us is that the *JIL* is a conservative and somewhat outdated text. It consists largely of unedited job descriptions written and submitted by literary scholars who have serious misconceptions about the professional roles and responsibilities of Writing Program Administrators. Given this disparity between our self-images and the images reflected in the *JIL*'s job descriptions, two questions arise: What are the *JIL*'s dominant images of Writing

Program Administrators? And how do those images relate to our own self-conceptions as teachers and scholars?

My purpose here is to examine some emblematic job advertisements published in the *JIL* during the past two years. My argument is that the majority of these advertisements militate against Writing Program Administrators' professional advancement. In fact, they often serve to undermine our professionalization, to misrepresent our work, and to keep us further "marginalized" (Trimbur and Cambridge 15) in the academy. Before reviewing these advertisements, I want to specify that it is the naive attitudes embodied in them that I find most troublesome. For me, the problem lies in the fact that the people who write these ads seem to have an unclear concept of the field of rhetoric and composition, of the specialties within the field, and of the particular difficulties that face untenured WPAs. In reviewing these job advertisements, I see them as presenting three major problems: 1) they recruit WPAs as untenured assistant professors, 2) they require a high degree of literary training on the part of candidates, and 3) they disguise the political dangers of administering a writing program within the language of opportunity.

## Varied Expectations and Untenured Vulnerability

Initially, the most compelling problem about many WPA job descriptions is that they are often targeted at beginning assistant professors, requiring them to assume too many different kinds of responsibilities while performing sustained and focused scholarship. Here are two examples from the *JIL* which illustrate my point. For Job #1, the prospective WPA is asked to

... coordinate a writing center and a computer facility...including supervision of graduate students and adjunct faculty and to teach undergraduate and graduate writing and composition theory courses (10/88, 34).

For Job #2, the prospective candidate's responsibilities include

teaching expository writing, directing Freshman Composition, coordinating course offerings in all basic skills courses, supervising adjuncts, and developing concern for good writing across the curriculum (12/89, 14).

Both jobs entail extensive teaching and administrative duties. The multiple tasks delineated in the first advertisement are intriguing in that they promote a blurring between the candidate's professional training (composition theory, writing center theory, and writing program administration) and field of specialization (computers and composition). By grouping the responsibilities of a Writing Program Administrator, a Writing Center Director, and a computer and composition specialist in one sentence, this advertisement disregards the fact that each of these fields has its own scholars and practitioners, its own body of philosophical and theoretical knowledge, its own special interests and concerns, and its own associations, conferences, and journals. This advertisement effectively deprofessionalizes Writing Program Administrators. It recruits us not as specialists with extensive skill, experience, and training in a focused field of study, but as generalists—people who can be held responsible for all aspects of writing instruction at our institutions. In the second advertisement, it is the mention of "writing across the curriculum" that is especially risky. That particular responsibility creates opportunities that could jeopardize the future of a beginning assistant professor—especially one who is asked to retrain tenured colleagues who may not want to be retrained.

In "Directing Freshman Composition: The Limits of Authority," Olson and Moxley report that assuming a directorship can have a "deleterious effect on [a beginning] instructor's career" (55). They quote two department chairs who each admit to having hired an "underpaid lecturer without tenure" (55) to direct their writing program so that the directorship "does not destroy the career of an assistant professor" (55) through overwork and the resentment of colleagues.

### Literary Training as Insurance

The second major problem with the advertisements is that they often require candidates to exhibit expertise in both composition *and* literary studies. The problem here is that while many departments are requiring prospective WPAs to show extensive training and commitment to rhetoric and composition, some of them are trying very hard to make sure that the people they hire in tenure-track positions can also function as literary scholars. Thus these departments require candidates to have at least two kinds of training: literary and rhetorical, not to mention "administrative," a word which seems largely unmentioned in the *JIL*.

This traditionalism is apparent in the December, 1988 *JIL* where we see an ad that reads:

Director of Freshman Composition needed to organize writing center and establish development programs. Must be trained in composition theory. May also be required to teach World Lit. and/or Classics. Doctorate Preferred. Two years college teaching desirable . . . (16).

The first part of this advertisement is familiar. It features the same blurring of administrative specializations (Writing Center Director and Director of Composition) and the same potential to create tension among colleagues. It is the second part of the text that warrants our attention. By suggesting that the successful candidate may be "required" to teach World Literature and Classics, this advertisement presumes a considerable degree of literary training on the part of the applicant, especially if the term "world literature" includes nonwestern and minority texts. This advertisement illustrates the diverse teaching demands made on all faculty at smaller institutions. It also suggests that a rhetoric and composition specialist—particularly an administrator—needs a traditional disciplinary expertise to fall back on, both at tenure time and at budget cutting time.

Considering the extensive breadth of preparation and responsibility expected of faculty at small, mid-size, and even large institutions, it seems that the politically wise WPA Carol Hartzog (14) writes about needs to be exceptionally useful in both a departmental and an institutional sense. Being "useful" in this case translates into exhibiting a great deal of flexibility and versatility. On the one hand, the applicant needs to convince the hiring committee (who must convince the dean) that he is indeed a "specialist" in composition. He must portray himself as someone who is at the cutting edge of his field—someone who can design, coordinate, and direct a writing program that will serve and anticipate its institution's changing needs. Here, he must represent himself as something of a *voyant d'écriture*—someone who can foresee future trends of the field and the long range needs of the institution. On the other hand, he must convince the committee (and the dean) that he has, as one advertisement put it, a solid "grounding in a period or field of English or world literature" (10/89, 4) just in case all this writing stuff goes bust. Although I like the above-mentioned advertisement's inversion of the traditional intellectual hierarchy—citing literary expertise as a "grounding" while portraying training in composition as

something that is airborne and theoretical—this advertisement is still problematic. In fact, what is “new” about this ad is precisely what is “old” about the academy.

Job advertisements for Writing Program Administrator positions that make statements like “Background in literature preferred” (10/88, 10) make larger statements about the precarious position of Writing Program Administrators in American higher education. They also convey an institutional skepticism about the continuing role of writing programs at century’s end. By recruiting people whose teaching responsibilities can be easily converted to full-time literature positions, these schools are insuring themselves and the people they hire against the possibility that the institutional phenomenon of a writing program may someday become extinct. In short, they are shoring up their tenure lines with literature-based scholars in the event that writing program administration, writing centers, writing across the curriculum, and computer-assisted composition instruction turn out to be fads. They want to be ready and safe just in case the “new” rhetoric which emerged during the sixties and seventies, and was popularized and politicized in the eighties, becomes compromised and pulverized in the nineties.

## The Language of Opportunity

Finally, it is the language of these advertisements that betrays a fundamental naiveté about what Writing Program Administrators should be expected to do. Rather than simply listing the hiring requirements, some departments create mini-narratives in which the job’s inherent risks and exploitation are cloaked within the language of challenge and hope. For example, one institution’s advertisement for a Writing Program Administrator seeks to offer its candidates “opportunities for leadership in the ongoing development of a writing program, a writing center, writing across the curriculum, and teacher education” (12/89, 23). All of this while the candidate tries to write and teach her way to tenure. The point of a phrase like “opportunities for leadership” is to elicit a call in the candidate. The call is something like: “seize the opportunity! be a leader! be a Writing Program Administrator.” In using the language of “opportunity” to lure beginning scholars who may be eager to gain professional experience, these advertisements romanticize a Writing Program Administrator’s role by camouflaging the implicit dangers and vulnerability these leadership “opportunities” may hold for a non-tenured faculty member.

This “inspirational” language also reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of writing itself as a complex and dynamic field of study with its own emerging specializations. In April 1990, one institution was looking for someone to “provide leadership for writing across the curriculum” (4). The writers of the ad went on to say that the applicant’s “Graduate emphasis must be in composition,” and that the applicant “Must have knowledge of all elements of comprehensive writing programs” (4).

The use of such phrases is troublesome. It is both insulting and unfair. Certainly scholars in literature would not be asked to demonstrate “knowledge of all elements” of their field, or to define their field so broadly. Furthermore, how can a candidate apply for a position with such generalized criteria in a dignified and realistic manner? Think of it. The candidate’s cover letter might read:

I am writing to apply for the position of Director of Writing. I have extensive knowledge, training and experience in such areas as student placement and assessment, course design, faculty recruitment and supervision, teacher education, computers and writing, feminist pedagogy, ESL, and honoring diversity in the classroom . . . just to mention a few.

To address the ad in its own terms, the candidate would have to affirm in her letter that she is knowledgeable about all writing program issues. Such an affirmation would not only put her at risk as a credible scholar in the field, it would also create a tough promise to live up to should she be “lucky” enough to get the job.

## Conclusion

Having examined some emblematic advertisements, I wish to offer a suggestion about what the Council of Writing Program Administrators can do to diminish the disparity between the roles that we wish to create for ourselves, and those that are typically created for us in *The MLA Job Information List*. My suggestion is that the Executive Committee of Council of Writing Program Administrators should consider establishing an evaluative coalition composed of tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate students, whose mission could be three-fold:

1. To create guidelines for WPA job descriptions that are sent to all relevant Departments in the United States. These guidelines should describe WPA positions at all levels of the academic hierarchy--from tenured full professor to non tenure-track positions. They should try to explain to departments how the vulnerability of an overworked, untenured WPA can negatively affect their institution over time.
2. To create a section in *WPA: Writing Program Administration* and *WPA News* that publishes reasonable advertisements, thereby modeling suggested job descriptions.
3. To begin a dialogue with department chairs to discuss ways that WPAs can address institutional needs while still receiving adequate professional support, protection, and status.

By doing these things, the Council of Writing Program Administrators can work toward insuring a more equitable representation of Writing Program Administrators in the text that drives and defines professional recruitment in our field. We can also try to make the job advertisements published in *The MLA Job Information List* more clearly reflect the concerns of Council members, and more accurately describe the candidates who try so determinedly, and sometimes so despairingly, to fit those descriptions.

## Note

This paper was originally presented at the 1990 Council of Writing Program Administrators' Annual Conference. Many thanks to Bruce Beiderwell and Ellen Strenski for their insightful comments and advice.

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**Judith A. Langer and Arthur N. Appleby. *How Writing Shapes Thinking: A Study of Teaching and Learning* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1987) 171 pp.**

Reviewed by Christopher C. Burnham

As writing program administrators, we are frequently asked to explain why the institution and our colleagues should invest so much time and energy on writing. Understandably, administrators seek the bottomline and want some proof of value returned for resources spent. Professional colleges want arguments they can offer their certifying bodies explaining the trade of three or four hours of discipline studies for a writing requirement. Colleagues interested in Writing Across the Curriculum want hard data to justify their considerable expense of energy designing and evaluating writing assignments. Students march into our offices complaining about writing requirements, wondering how writing-intensive courses will contribute to their careers as accountants.

Our responses vary according to our audience and purpose. We make appeals to the "great tradition," to the basic skills crisis, to surveys of employers concerning the importance of communication skills in the information society. We talk, obliquely, of altruism and discipline: writing is good for them, for you; like taking vitamins.

In fact, only recently have we begun to examine the role of writing in learning from an informed research base. In *How Writing Shapes Thinking: A Study of Teaching and Learning*, Langer and Appleby make a significant contribution. They articulate a theory to explain the specific relation between writing and learning and develop a research-based method for testing that theory.

This brief but readable research report, addressed to both teachers and researchers in language and learning, and certainly relevant to writing program administrators, reviews the literature on writing and learning; reports case studies of high school teachers using writing in their teaching; uses current cognitive theory to examine specific relations between writing and learning, investigating several different kinds of writing and the thinking students do to complete that writing; and speculates on both individual and institutional changes required to take the best advantage

of the positive relation they discovered. It provides an extensive list of references as well as technical descriptions of the analytic methodology developed to measure the relation between writing and learning.

In the "Overview," Langer and Appleby review the existing rationale for using writing when teaching: 1) writing creates a permanent record and allows rethinking and revising over an extended period of time; 2) writing requires explicit expression so that meaning is clear in various contexts; 3) writing requires organizing ideas and developing relationships between ideas; and 4) writing requires active, engaged thinking that explores implications and challenges unexamined assumptions.

Reviewing the literature, they draw our attention to the contradictions between competing methods of teaching writing. Current writing instruction employs inquiry-based learning, stressing process, revision, rhetorical purpose, and audience. The process approach involves writers in discovering meaning as well as communicating information. Standardized multiple-choice error recognition and editing tests and brief impromptu writing samples, the most common means of evaluating writing, teaching, and program success, are holdovers from the old tradition. They ignore process, devalue discovery and individual expression, and emphasize the transmission of received knowledge in conventional forms. Values, teaching methods, and evaluation tools contradict each other, partially explaining low teacher morale and minimal student success. That the traditional way of teaching writing continues to predominate is demonstrated by the books that form the core of the curriculum. The handbook tradition continues to hold sway: "In secondary school instruction, Warriner's *Handbook of English Composition and Grammar* (1951) is the archetypal example of this approach, and in its many editions it is the most widely used high school composition text today" (6).

"Studies of Teaching" reports the case studies. Langer and Appleby analyze the classroom practices of seven high school teachers from a variety of disciplines at two suburban high schools with heterogeneous populations. The teachers had either participated in faculty development programs such as the National Writing Project, or they had reputations as teachers who stressed writing in their teaching. Langer and Appleby find that the teacher's purpose and discipline shape the assigning, interpreting, and evaluating of writing. For example, social science teachers use writing to help students evaluate and apply key concepts, English teachers use writing to have students report received interpretations of literature in

academic forms, science teachers use writing to help students recall basic scientific information, and home economics teachers use writing to help students develop a positive self-image in order to solve problems in the future. Whatever the theoretical purpose of the writing may be, teachers subvert it to their classroom purposes.

Because teachers subvert writing to their own intentions, Langer and Appleby recommend that teachers work hard to articulate their own purposes so they can employ writing assignments to reinforce those purposes. For writing program administrators and English faculty, the implications of this recommendation are two-fold. First, we must understand that writing is not a monolithic activity. Rather, writing has specific functions within various disciplines, reflected not only in the formal genres of a discipline, i.e., research reports in scientific journals, but also in the pedagogical forms, i.e., study questions at the end of a chapter in a science textbook. Further, we must learn to help our colleagues in other disciplines understand and articulate both the value they attach to writing and the function they wish it to serve in their teaching. We can then use our knowledge of the connection between writing and learning to help our colleagues accomplish their purposes more effectively.

In the case studies, Langer and Appleby discover three basic purposes for classroom activities: 1) to prepare students for new information by allowing them to draw on their current relevant information; 2) to consolidate and review new information; and 3) to reformulate and extend knowledge (41-42). Further, they use sophisticated empirical measures to demonstrate that certain kinds of writing foster certain kinds of learning. Non-threatening, non-evaluative freewriting assignments, asking students to review their existing knowledge in unorthodox ways (such as writing a poem about crayfish, or asking a question about crayfish), effectively prepare students for new information. Allowing students to demonstrate what they already know about a subject or to determine what they want to know allows them to assimilate new information by expanding and reinforcing existing cognitive schema. Note-taking and end-of-chapter study questions help students to consolidate and review information, explaining how structured learning logs aid learning. When we require students to make a systematic record of class activities, we are helping them consolidate and review information, thereby establishing an ongoing context for their learning. In addition, these logs help students discover concerns and formulate questions that can become part of the class agenda at the next meeting. This kind of writing involves all students in reflective activity and allows teachers to evaluate students' understanding. Through

protocol analysis, Langer and Appleby uncover the specific types of thinking students do to complete writing assignments. Protocol analysis, a standard research methodology in cognitive psychology, was originally introduced to composition studies when Flower and Hayes were building their cognitive theory of writing. Students think aloud as they work through an assignment; the commentary is tape-recorded and then analyzed. Langer and Appleby find that, when students write, four cognitive activities predominate: hypothesizing, during which students make predictions about the task, revealing their understanding of the structure of the whole and the relations between the parts; questioning, during which students develop a close focus on specific content elements; making metacomments, during which students reflect on the whole process of completing the assignment or solving the problem; and using schemata, during which students make connections between the subject-area content and their own experience. Reformulating knowledge, Appleby and Langer find, requires the most hypothesizing and, according to their empirical analysis, the most thinking. Assignments designed to prepare students for new information or to consolidate and review information result in the most questioning (63-64). Again, understanding that certain kinds of writing require certain kinds of thinking should determine what kinds of assignments teachers should use to accomplish their purposes.

In "Studies of Learning," Langer and Appleby investigate how writing contributes to learning. They focus on three general kinds of writing: study questions, note-taking, and essay writing. They discovered that study questions provoke further questioning as students shift focus from one question to the next. However, students focus only on ideas provided by the textbook writer; they do not connect the content with their own knowledge or experience. Using schemata occurs most frequently when students are note-taking; they take specific content from the book and restate ideas in their own words. Students focus on large concepts and integrate ideas across sentence boundaries, but they treat the larger chunks of meaning superficially, relying on the organization provided by the text, failing to reorganize it for their own purposes or according to their own cognitive schemata. Essay writing involves students in hypothesizing, using schemata, making metacomments, and in two more cognitive activities, citing evidence and validating interpretations. Because it requires students to reconceptualize content, focus on larger issues or topics, integrate information, and, generally, to engage in more complex thought, essay writing involves students in the greatest variety of reasoning operations and provides students the best opportunity to reflect and

develop their ideas (96-102). This finding confirms what we who administer writing programs and provide leadership for WAC activities have maintained for so long. How gratifying it is when our professional values and common sense find empirical validation.

Investigating how writing during studying affects learning, specifically in recalling, abstracting and summarizing, and gathering topic knowledge, Langer and Appleby conclude that the positive effects of writing on learning vary according to the difficulty of the material. Writing helps students learn more difficult content and learn it more thoroughly than any of the other study techniques examined.

Summarizing their findings, Langer and Appleby make four generalizations about the relation between writing and learning. First, the more content is manipulated, the more likely it is to be remembered and understood. Writing requires extensive content manipulation and thus leads to improved learning. Second, the positive effects of writing on learning are specific and limited to the information and ideas expressed in the process of writing. Rather than a generalized positive effect on learning, writing can, in fact, limit learning by causing students to focus on certain aspects of content at the expense of others. Thus, whether writing is the most appropriate learning tool in a particular pedagogical context depends upon the teacher's specific objectives. Broad, relatively superficial contact with a great deal of content may be best achieved by means other than analytic writing, such as note-taking and summarizing. Third, writing tasks differ in both depth and breadth of information processing. Thus, teachers must match writing assignments with their goals, using study questions to cover a broad range of content, note-taking to encourage some generalizing, and essay writing to develop close focus on specific material (130-131).

In "Conclusions," Langer and Appleby offer the concept of "instructional scaffolding." By simplifying situations, clarifying structures, helping students succeed at difficult tasks, and providing a framework and procedures that can be internalized so instructional support is no longer needed, teachers provide the "scaffold" upon which students can build their own learning processes. Thus, Langer and Appleby make a case that writing should have a predominant place in the teaching of all disciplines. Through writing, teachers can help students learn how to learn so they can become independent learners in various contexts (140).

Finally, Langer and Appleby remark that, even though they can demonstrate writing's powerful positive effect on student learning, current institutional values, as reflected in curricula, textbooks, testing programs, and school policy concerning teacher evaluation, impel teachers to continue traditional practices and repeat the failures of the past.

On the bright side, the positive influence of writing on learning allows us to better explain the importance of writing in the university. Langer and Appleby provide solid evidence that justifies our own commitment to writing and that will help us help others use writing more effectively. Further, they provide substantial arguments legitimizing our claim that all faculty should use writing to support their instructional goals, and that the institution should support us in this endeavor.



## Notes on Contributors

**Christopher C. Burnham**, an Associate Professor of English, directs the Freshman Writing Program, the WAC program, and teaches courses in writing, rhetoric, language and literature at New Mexico State University. He has published articles in rhetoric and the teaching of writing and contemporary American literature in various professional journals and literary magazines. His freshman writing text, *Writing from the Inside Out* (HBJ) appeared in 1989. Recently he has concentrated his studies and teaching in journal writing, autobiography, and non-fiction prose.

**Joseph Janangelo** is a Lecturer at UCLA Writing Programs and an alumni of the 1990 Council of Writing Program Administrators Summer Workshop. He has published articles in *The Writing Center Journal* and *English Education*, and is co-editing a book entitled *Theoretical and Critical Perspectives on Teacher Change* (Ablex, 1992).

**Susan McLeod** is the Director of Composition at Washington State University where she also leads the WAC Faculty Workshops. She edited *Strengthening Programs for Writing Across the Curriculum* (Jossey-Bass, 1988), and *Writing about the World* (HBJ, 1991), and authored various articles on composition, writing program administration, and writing across the curriculum. She and Margot Soven are both members of the Board of Consultants of the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs and are currently editing a collection of essays on developing successful WAC programs.

**Virginia Perdue** holds a Doctor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan. Currently, she is an assistant professor in the Literature and Language Department at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, where she teaches freshman English and the occasional advanced writing course. Every other year, she also teaches in and co-directs the University Writing Center. Her publications have appeared in *Writing Lab Newsletter* and *Rhetoric Review*.

**Brenda Deen Schildgen** holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and teaches both literature and writing at the University of California, Davis. Her publications include essays on the history of rhetoric and its implication to literary study, current hermeneutical theory, Dante, and medieval studies. Before coming to U.C. Davis, she administered writing programs at the University of San Francisco, developed an M.A. in Writing (sup-

ported by an NEH grant), and organized a Literacy Conference focusing on the interconnections between writing theory and practice and literary studies.

**David E. Schwalm** is Director of Composition at Arizona State University. His research interests include rhetorical analysis of non-fiction texts, rhetoric of biography, and degree of difficulty in writing tasks. He has published articles over the last few years in *College English*, *The Writing Instructor*, *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, and *Biography*.

**Margot Soven** is associate professor of English, director of the La Salle University Writing Project, the Writing Fellows Program, and co-director of the Freshman Composition Program. She is editor with Susan McLeod of *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs* (forthcoming, January, 1992). She has published articles on writing across the curriculum and research in assignment design.

**Michael Vivion** is Associate Professor of English and Director of Composition at the University of Missouri at Kansas City where he coordinates the High School/College Credit Program and the Greater Kansas City Writing Project. He co-authored *The Writer's Circle* (St. Martin's), *Houghton Mifflin English 9-12*, and a collection of essays on cultural studies praxis (forthcoming from Heinemann-Boynton/Cook). He has also written articles on teaching composition and literature which have appeared in journals such as the *Arizona English Bulletin*, *English Journal*, and *English in Texas*.

**Edward M. White** is Professor of English at California State University--San Bernardino, and the author of *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (Jossey-Bass, 1985) and *Developing Successful College Writing Programs* (Jossey-Bass, 1989). He directs the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Consultant/Evaluator program and has been a co-leader of WPA summer workshops.

## Announcements

### Grants

The Council of Writing Program Administrators is proud to announce the winners of the 1991 WPA Research Grants:

Allison Wilson, Jackson State U, for a survey of freshman writing programs at historically Black colleges and universities.

Lisa K. Hanson, Ball State U, for a survey of WPAs' attitudes toward the relationships between teaching, research, and service.

Mary Louise Buley-Meissner and Don Perkins, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, for an analysis of composition teachers' discussions of the scoring of writing-proficiency tests.

Brian Huot, University of Louisville, for a survey of university writing placement practices.

These proposals showed a high level of scholarly merit and originality, and the projects promise to have a significant impact on WPAs, teachers, and students.

The Council of Writing Program Administrators is currently accepting proposals for its 1992 research grants. The Council will award several grants (up to \$1000 each) for research relating specifically to the concerns of WPAs. Proposals should not exceed four single-spaced, typed pages and should describe (1) the research problem and objectives, (2) the procedures for conducting the research (including sample, design, instrumentation, and personnel), (3) a time-line, and (4) a budget. Researchers planning to conduct surveys may include in their proposal the free use of the WPA mailing list. All WPA grant recipients will be asked to submit their research report to the Council's journal, *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, for possible publication before submitting it to other journals. Please include your name, affiliation, address, and telephone number on your proposal. The deadline for submission is November 1, 1991. Please send the proposal and two copies to Professor Karen Greenberg, Chair, WPA Grant Committee, Department of English, Hunter College, CUNY, 695 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021.

### Journal Call for Articles

The *Journal of Second Language Writing* is now accepting article submissions on topics related to the study and teaching of writing in a second language. The editors encourage theoretically grounded reports of research and discussions of central issues in second and foreign language writing and writing instruction at all levels of proficiency. Send submissions or further inquiries to Ilona Leki, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-0430 or call (615) 974-7080.

### Winterowd and Kinneavy Award Winners Announced

The annual W. Ross Winterowd Award for the most outstanding book on composition theory published in 1990 was awarded to Sharon Crowley for *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric*. Honorable mention went to Deborah Brandt for *Literacy as Involvement: the Acts of Writers, Readers, and Texts*.

The James L. Kinneavy Award for the most outstanding essay in volume 10 of *JAC* was awarded to Joy S. Ritchie for "Confronting the 'Essential' Problem: Reconnecting Feminist Theory and Pedagogy." Richard M. Coe received an honorable mention for "Defining Rhetoric--and Us." The Winterowd and Kinneavy Awards include a cash prize and an attractive framed citation.

These awards were generously endowed by Professor Winterowd and by Professor Kinneavy, Blumberg Centennial Professor at the University of Texas. Both awards were presented at the meeting of the Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition at the Conference of College Composition and Communication in Boston.

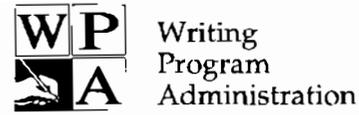
### Call for Papers

"New Directions in Portfolio Assessment," the Fourth Miami University Conference on the Teaching of Writing, will be held **October 2-4, 1992**, at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Proposals are invited on all topics related to college portfolio assessment, including its impact on secondary education. Proposals that focus on research, theory, pedagogy, or any combination of the three are welcome, as are responses to the work of the

keynote speakers--Peter Elbow and Edward M. White. Selected papers will be published by Heinemann-Boynton/Cook as a volume of conference essays. Proposal deadline is April 1, 1991. To receive more information contact Donald A. Daiker, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056. (513) 529-7110 or 5221.

### WPA Workshop/Conference

The Council of Writing Program Administrators' Summer Workshop and Conference will be held July 20-25, 1992, in Denver and Breckenridge, Colorado. Sessions will consist of formal presentations and panel discussions, as well as workshops, papers, and informal discussions on topics, such as the interplay between evaluating and rewarding teachers, various means of faculty development, the roles of politics in the classroom, the roles of theory in TA training, and so on. Proposals for WPA concurrent sessions are invited on these and other topics of interest to writing program administrators. For further information, write to Margaret Whitt, Program Chair, WPA Annual Conference, Department of English, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208.



## Membership in the Council of Writing Program Administrators

Membership in the Council of Writing Program Administrators includes a subscription to *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. The membership fee is \$15 a year in the United States and \$16.50 a year in other countries. \*Institutional membership fee is \$25.

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 Jeffrey Sommers, Secretary-Treasurer, WPA, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.

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\*Membership in the council of Writing Program Administrators is organized by the academic year. Dues received before January 1 are credited to the previous academic year and entitle you to that year's fall / winter and spring issues of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. Dues received after January 1 are credited to the following academic year, and your subscription to *WPA* begins the subsequent fall.

**Change or revision of name and address.** If the name or address printed on your WPA mailing label is incorrect or has changed, please send a copy of the current printed label along with the form above, indicating the complete, corrected information to Jeffrey Sommers, Secretary-Treasurer, WPA, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.