

Writing Program Administration

Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators

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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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Author's Guide

WPA: Writing Program Administration publishes articles and essays concerning the organization, administration, practices, and aims of college and university writing programs. Possible topics include the education and support of writing teachers; the intellectual and administrative work of WPAs; the situation of writing programs, within both academic institutions and broader contexts; the programmatic implications of current theories, technologies, and research; relationships between WPAs and other administrators, between writing and other academic programs, and among high school, two-year, and four-year college writing programs; placement; assessment; and the professional status of WPAs.

The previous list is meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive, but contributions must be appropriate to the interests and concerns of those who administer writing programs. The editor welcomes empirical research (quantitative as well as qualitative), historical research, and more theoretically, essayistically, or reflectively developed pieces.

The length of submissions should be approximately 2000 to 5000 words, although the journal occasionally will publish shorter or longer pieces when the subject matter warrants. Articles should be suitably documented using the current *MLA Style Manual*. Please submit three copies of manuscripts, with the author identified only on a separate cover letter. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like a copy returned. Submissions are anonymously reviewed by the Editorial Board.

WPA publishes reviews of books related to writing programs and their administration. Publishers are invited to send appropriate professional books to the Editor, who assigns reviews. *WPA* also publishes an annual review of textbooks; publishers should contact the Associate Editor.

Authors whose works are accepted for publication will be asked to submit final versions in both print and electronic form. Authors also will be asked to submit a 100-word biography for inclusion in the "Notes on Contributors" section of the journal.

Relevant announcements and calls for papers are acceptable. Announcement deadlines: Fall/Winter issue, September 1; Spring issue, January 1.

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Address inquiries about the *WPA* consultation/evaluation service

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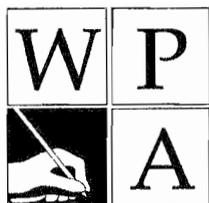
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Writing Program Administration

Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators

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Letter From the Guest Editor

The concept of collaborative writing program administration has been in existence long enough for it to have been enacted, theorized, critiqued, and reconceived. The following pages chronicle this history of collaborative program management. The first several articles reflect the ways in which WPAs and their colleagues have reformulated administrative structures and concepts to achieve a decentering of their program, to establish a more inclusive, more democratic structure—enactments of what might be called the first-generation theory of collaborative administration; the collaborative writing teams of Lynn Meeks and Christine Hult; Anne Aronson and Craig Hansen; and Kitty Keller, Jennie Lee, Ben McClelland, and Brenda Robertson have described programs and methods through which traditional notions of authority and responsibility are recast.

These are followed by second-generation discussions, which consist largely of critiques of collaborative theory in relation to a reality dominated by institutional hierarchy. Many of these analyze the tensions created as well as addressed by collaborative structures, including the articles by Susanmarie Harrington, Steve Fox, and Tere Molinder Hogue; Eileen Schell; and Sharon Quiroz. Broader issues of collaboration, tension, even guilt are taken up by Trudy Smoke and Sallyanne Fitzgerald, who deal with the perspective and role of the administrator within less-than-ideal institutional situations.

In the final group, we see a third phase of discussion, in the form of articles that take the concept of collaboration and broaden its application, reconceiving and repositioning it in ways that are in and yet which nonetheless allow us to transcend institutions, reconsidering how we enter the profession, “teach” the discipline, and relate to a community beyond the academic culture. Chris Anson and Carol Rutz, Brad Peters, Peter Blakemore, Tom Recchio, and Kurt Spellmeyer look at how disciplinarity and institutional practices constrain the ways in which we think about our work—about its (and our) relation to a larger reality. Overall, the articles, while organized according to these varied approaches, “speak” to each other in multiple ways, contradicting, correcting, and informing collaborative intentions and practices.

Much credit for this issue belongs to Doug Hesse and the members of the WPA Editorial Board, who supported the issue from first proposal through the time-intensive review period. I am grateful to them for allowing me to serve as guest editor. This is the last issue to appear under Doug’s aegis; his final Letter from the Editor appears at the end.

Santa Clara University provided funding for the issue in the form of a Thomas Terry Research Grant from the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and University Planning; a grant from the Bannan Institute; and a grant from the Department of English. I appreciate the university’s commitment to social justice and its willingness to endorse the theme of this issue as part of that agenda. And thanks to my student assistant, Andy Smith, and our department’s Administrative Assistant, Bobbi Hall, for their work. Finally, I’d like to thank the

authors, who produced such engaging work under tight deadlines. Your commitment to collaboration shows.

I hope the *WPA* readership will find much to discuss, debate, and embrace in this issue. Its critical case studies and theoretical treatments differ somewhat from the usual journal contents, to the end of engaging us all in the democratic concerns that distinguish our field from traditional academic cultural values.

Jeanne Gunner

*The Council of Writing Program Administrators
is pleased to announce*

New Co-Editors of WPA: Writing Program Administration

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A Co-Mentoring Model of Administration

Lynn Meeks and Christine Hult

It's the first day of the new quarter, 7:30 a.m., and it's snowing heavily. There is *untypical* chaos in the English Department. The power is out in all the administrative offices; the registrar has sent no class lists; the copier is broken yet again; the senior secretary is out with a broken leg; instructors who teach first-year, on-line English are panicking because, inadvertently, too many classes have been scheduled for the computer labs each hour, and the instructors who planned on taking their students to the computer labs have no place to hold class. Since it's 7:30 a.m., there are no staff assistants or Writing Program Administrators around to handle the problem. What happens?

Out of the winter gloom the savior appears: she is a graduate instructor. Making a chart on the white board, she quickly divides the on-line instructors, assigning computer labs to each; the overflow class she assigns to a room with a computer hook-up. Other graduate instructors bustle about setting up a computer and LCD so the on-line instructors can orient their classes. Another graduate instructor volunteers to print class lists from a computer that has power. By the time the administrators arrive at 8:00 a.m., the immediate problems are solved, and everyone is calmly going about the business of teaching and learning.

Is this some kind of miracle? We don't think so. We feel that because of the administrative style that we use in the Writing Program, the graduate instructors felt empowered to "make it work" just as if they were in charge of the program. We believe that the instructors were willing to take responsibility for the program because as administrators, we consciously try to share our administrative power with them.

Co-Mentoring

In "Postmasculinist Direction in Writing Program Administration" Hildy Miller discusses writing program administration in terms of power sharing. Citing Lamb and Gunner, Miller compares and contrasts what she calls "feminist" and "masculinist" styles of administration. Miller defines a "feminist" style of administration as one in which the leader does not dominate, but rather "facilitate(s) . . . share(s) power, and enable(s) both self and others to contribute" (52). Miller defines a "masculinist" style as a hierarchical system, a finite entity in which "increasing one person's power necessarily diminishes another's" (52).

Rejecting both the above as too "either/or" (59), Miller advocates what she calls a "both/and" (59) or "postmasculinist style" of administration in which power, rather than being centered on the WPA, is "decentered" (Gunner 10), is shared and "mutually-enables" (Lamb 21) those who are in the program. This is what Gunner¹ describes as a decentered "group, or collaborative, (an) entity in

need of a spokesperson or liaison . . . but not a single position assigned total curricular responsibility or autocratic power" (13).

We agree with Miller and Gunner that the position of WPA should be decentered and that power should be shared. However, we prefer the term "co-mentoring" to Miller's term, "postmasculinist," to describe what we do.² We have discovered that there is too much resistance to a gendered term such as "postmasculinist"; it also requires too much explanation, whereas "co-mentoring" needs little explanation. Most people are familiar with the concept of "mentoring" and can easily understand "co-mentoring" as an administrative concept without having to deal with the additional baggage that a term such as "postmasculinist" brings with it.

This technique of co-mentoring was originally developed for the classroom, but can apply to an administrative setting in which people work together (Bona, Rinehart, and Volbrecht 119). For us, co-mentoring describes a collaborative relationship in which all parties contribute equally to the relationship. Each mentors the other in light of the strengths each brings to the relationship. The back-and-forth-ness of the relationship avoids the more hierarchical mentoring relationship in which one person imparts knowledge and wisdom to the other. For example, a legitimate mentoring relationship may exist between a graduate student and her thesis chair. The Chair is probably the more knowledgeable person in the relationship and can advise the graduate student on a variety of topics relating to the thesis, such as where to go for more sources, what questions yet need to be considered, or how to conduct herself in the thesis defense. For the most part, the knowledge flows in one direction: from the mentor to the mentee.

Contrast this to a relationship between co-authors in which both contribute equally to the article, but each contributes according to her interests and expertise. For example, in writing this article, Christine and Lynn each brought an area of interest and expertise to the collaborations: Christine's current interest is how electronic media supports collaboration; Lynn's current interest is in a feminist theory of administration. We have been able to combine both areas of interest and our growing expertise to write this article. Our collaboration on this article could be considered a sort of co-mentoring relationship because both of us give knowledge and expertise to the other for our mutual benefit.

However, co-mentoring is more than just working together to accomplish a common goal. In a co-mentoring situation, roles may shift over time. The mentor becomes the mentee and vice versa, depending on the level of expertise each has. Bona et al point out that co-mentoring "invites the participants to act as teachers, demonstrators, and counselors for each other. These practices may include more than two because co-mentoring allows for the sharing of the mentor/mentee responsibilities by several individuals" (119).

The opening scenario is a case in point. The graduate instructors who took charge of the untypical first-day-of-the-quarter chaos in our English Department acted as teachers, demonstrators, and counselors to the others and solved difficult scheduling problems. The other graduate instructors followed their leadership even though the leaders weren't "official" administrators. When the

official administrators arrived, they were glad to follow the graduate instructors' lead. When thanked profusely by the administrators for stepping into and dealing with a difficult situation, one of the graduate instructors said, "I saw a problem that needed fixing. So I fixed it." Her attitude describes the administrative design of our writing program administration to a tee. Rather than wasting energy "protecting turf," we work together to fix what needs fixing.

Co-Mentoring in Our Writing Program

There are eight of us who officially share responsibilities for administering the Writing Program at Utah State University, and we all co-mentor each other. Four of us are tenure-track faculty (the Director of Graduate Studies, the Associate Department Head, the WPA, and the Director of the Writing Center), three of us are graduate instructors (with responsibility for administering first- and second-year English), and the eighth (and arguably the most important) is the Computer Lab Supervisor. We would certainly agree with Shrewsbury (11) that our administrative powers are not diluted but are instead transformed through our co-mentoring administrative style. When we see something that needs fixing, we fix it. However, we rarely act alone.

Instead of individuals functioning separately from each other, we work as a unit, but a flexible unit, meeting face to face and on-line in various permutations and combinations as the needs of the situation dictate. As Shrewsbury points out, the person with the greatest knowledge and experience in a given situation is recognized, and his or her knowledge and experience is used "... to increase the legitimate power of all" (11). What might be looked at as the power to dominate becomes the power of creative energy. Because we all share the same goal (a writing program that is a smoothly-running, efficient community of learners in which both the graduate instructors and their undergraduate students flourish and grow), as administrators we group and regroup to work toward that goal.

For example, when office space and computer shortages became an issue with the on-line graduate instructors, Christine and Lynn met with the Computer Lab Supervisor to figure out a solution. Ultimately, we decided that we should only suggest a plan and give the graduate instructors themselves an opportunity to help us solve the problem. We called a meeting to outline possible solutions to the problem of not having enough computers to provide each instructor with one on his or her desk. Not all instructors were teaching in the on-line environment in a given term. We thought it would be unwieldy to change offices every term to ensure that on-line instructors had their own computers on their desks. So, we suggested a neutral location for a mini-computer lab that could be shared by all instructors. To our surprise, the instructors were adamant about all on-line instructors having computers on their desks during the term they were teaching in that environment. As they pointed out to us, and rightly so, when teaching an on-line class, the computer itself becomes both your classroom and your office. You need immediate access to both on your own desk. We official administrators would never have had the nerve to make the graduate instructors with computers change offices and give up their computers. We felt it would cause too much ill will and too much confusion each quarter.

This example illustrates what Shrewsbury and Miller call "feminist" administration, but what we call co-mentoring. Shrewsbury explains, "There is a dynamic between leadership and followership, and effective leaders under the more modern sense of leadership are also effective followers. . . . Individuals are responsible for their acts within the context in which they have freedom to act" (14). In this situation, our co-mentoring style of administration included the graduate instructors. We gave them an opportunity to understand the facts of the situation, detailed the lack of office space and computers, and gave them the responsibility for solving the problem. They gave us advice and we took it.

Had we not adopted this form of collaborative administration for ourselves, we doubt that we would have thought of including the graduate instructors in problem solving, nor would we have trusted them to take responsibility for the program. But because this style of administration works so well for us, we naturally think to include as many of the stakeholders as possible in the decision-making process. We are convinced that our co-mentoring administrative style serves as a model for the graduate instructors. Because we willingly share power with each other and with them, they are willing to take responsibility for the success of the Writing Program and the instructors who teach in it. We agree with Curtis and Rasool who claim, "Nothing motivates quite like a sense of power over one's personal and professional life" (312). What follows is another example of the way in which the official administrators are co-mentored by the graduate instructors.

This incident occurred during an on-line instruction transition period. When new instructors are assigned to teach on-line classes, their most difficult task is learning how to transfer the interactive, student-centered pedagogy of their composition classrooms to the on-line environment. Usually the on-line instructors work informally with a veteran on-line instructor and learn by "lurking" in other on-line classes. However, when one of our second-year graduate instructors observed that the new on-line instructors' concerns had reached the panic stage, he wrote a proposal to establish the position of Assistant Director of Writing in Charge of On-line Instruction. He argued that the new on-line instructors needed official one-to-one instruction and support as they learned the tricks of on-line teaching. He also argued that the informal method of instruction that we had been using took up too much of the veteran on-line instructors' time.

The Writing Program administrators met with the graduate instructor to talk over his proposal. Not only were his arguments persuasive, he alerted us to a potentially serious personnel issue. We agreed that new on-line instructors needed more formal instruction. An Assistant Director of Writing volunteered to train new on-line instructors. He met with each one individually and held weekly meetings until panic subsided. Because of the graduate instructor's willingness to identify a problem and suggest a solution, we were able to address the problem before it got out of hand. Furthermore, we agreed that we needed to provide ongoing, formal instruction for new on-line instructors each quarter.

We feel that giving instructors a sense of power over their professional lives not only helps them take responsibility for the Writing Program, it helps the

Writing Program run more smoothly. To this end, the graduate instructors co-mentor the official Writing Program administrators in a variety of professional ways. Specifically, they develop the curriculum for the first- and second-year writing courses and publish the accompanying curriculum handbooks. In addition, they are in charge of textbook selection for first- and second-year composition courses. The graduate instructors run the committees, work with the textbook representatives, pilot the texts, and make a final selection. We official administrators follow their advice because 1) we want to give them power over their own working conditions and teaching materials; and 2) we believe working on committees, making textbook selections, and taking other kinds of responsibility for the Writing Program teaches the graduate instructors the tools of leadership in our profession. We give the graduate instructors as much professional responsibility as they will take, and they respond by co-mentoring us on the Writing Program in general. We contrast this “professional” co-mentoring to what might be called “systemic” co-mentoring, that which occurs by virtue of one’s position.

Systemic Co-mentoring

Certainly we are not saying that no official administrators are in control of the Writing Program. We acknowledge Luke’s argument that “. . . we do need to take authority—or at least, make explicit that we already embody and exercise authority even in its camouflage of pastoral nurturance” (302). Furthermore, it would be dishonest to pretend that we were running the Writing Program as a democracy. The Writing Program administrators have all sorts of authority that comes with having terminal degrees, tenured positions, and titles after our names. In addition, we are the graduate instructors’ employers and teachers, plus we are the ones who write crucial letters of recommendation. We have plenty of power and authority, and high expectations. It is only fair that we acknowledge our power and make clear to the graduate instructors (and to others) who has authority for the particular aspects of our program’s administration. Here is a brief outline of our respective roles.

The Director of Graduate Studies oversees the second-year graduate instructors and observes their teaching. He is assisted in this by an Assistant Director of Writing who is a second-year graduate instructor. The Associate Department Head (Christine) budgets the Writing Program, hires and helps to supervise the graduate instructors and lecturers, schedules their classes, and administers certain aspects of on-line instruction. The Director of Writing (Lynn) oversees the first-year graduate instructors, teaches the “Practicum in Teaching Writing” class, makes classroom observations of the first-year graduate instructors, and oversees certain aspects of on-line instruction. She is assisted by two Assistant Directors of Writing who are second-year graduate instructors. In addition Lynn handles student complaints, organizes text selection committees, oversees the publications of course handbooks, and enforces Writing Program policies and procedures. She also directly supervises all three Assistant Directors of Writing and advises the various committees they chair to review goals and objectives, revise handbooks, and select textbooks.

The Director of the Writing Center does just that; she trains and supervises the writing center tutors, many of whom are graduate instructors who also teach in the Writing Program, and administers and evaluates the "challenge exams" for first- and second-year courses. She also supervises the on-line tutorial that originates from the Writing Center. The Computer Lab Supervisor is responsible for the running of the computer lab, especially the development and upkeep of the on-line classes's web environments. Together we make up an "octopartate" WPA. In this respect our collaboration is more like the masculinist model that Miller describes: each of us exercises authority for certain areas of the Writing Program. Ultimately what Miller advocates is a combination of feminist and masculinist models, and so do we.

We also know—because they have told us in many different ways—that the graduate instructors perceive all of our Writing Program Administrators to be as Miller describes them: "... receptive, cooperative, willing to promote discussion, listen to divergent views, and look for common interests" (53). So in that respect our collaboration is more like the "feminist" model that Miller describes, even though our model of administration does include a "masculinist" hierarchy of sorts. But within that hierarchy we willingly listen to each other, even "take orders" from each other to ensure the success of the Writing Program.

As an example, one committee that meets weekly is the On-line Instruction Committee. It is made up of the Assistant Director of Writing in charge of on-line instruction, first-time on-line instructors and instructors who will be teaching on-line the next quarter, the Computer Lab Supervisor, and the Director of Writing. The purpose of the committee is to share information on on-line teaching techniques and to "trouble shoot." The meeting has a regular format: the Computer Lab Supervisor reviews the previous week's problems (if any) and asks for suggestions or proposes solutions. The on-line instructors respond, ask questions, make suggestions, and share information. Most problems are resolved in the meeting; concerns are addressed, and then the Assistant Director of Writing presents a specific teaching technique. In this case, the Director of Writing mainly listens and takes notes. The Assistant Director of Writing is in charge of conducting the meeting and making sure recommendations are carried out. The committee meets to ensure the effectiveness of the on-line classes. In order to do this, the administrators must listen to the concerns of the instructors and the Computer Lab Supervisor.

We think it is this willingness to listen to each other that promotes the sense of co-mentoring and solidarity that pervades our Writing Program. Co-mentoring makes it possible for all voices to be heard, because each person's voice is equal. We believe that each of us has specific talents (on-line instruction, scheduling, personnel issues, rapport with students, budgeting, classroom expertise, curriculum design, text selection, etc.), which makes each of us an expert; therefore, our voices will be heard and respected. We believe that this acknowledgment of equality of voice empowers both graduate instructors and administrators. Everyone knows: It is OK to speak out; your voice will be heard; your concerns will be acted upon within the limits of our program's finances and

resources. Miller points out that “in feminist directing . . . communicative functions appear as a significant source of power” (53). We mine these communicative functions—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—to discover who among us is the leader whose voice we follow in any particular situation. That person—*whether graduate instructor or official administrator*—has the power because he or she has the expertise to solve a particular problem and control of the communicative functions with which to do it.

Communicating

It is to the communicative functions of administration that we would now like to turn. We feel that our co-mentoring administration is not only made possible but enhanced through communication, and in particular, through various electronic media. As TWIG Writing Group maintains, “One way to facilitate empowerment—and thereby reciprocity—is through the sharing of information. Because information often is closely linked to power, having information can increase an individual’s feeling of control . . .” (20). In other words, through our co-mentoring writing program administration, we try to share power with—rather than having power over (21)—the instructors in our program. However, we have arrived at this co-mentoring, power-sharing administrative style over a number of years—we did not just dream it up one day while we were standing around the copy machine. And it has taken us some time even to describe and name it.

Our struggle to describe our administrative style echoes the difficulty that Lunsford and Ede had trying to name and describe their collaboration:

Along the highways and byways of our research and reading roads, however, we began to catch glimpses, perceive traces, of another mode of collaboration, one we came to call dialogic and one which, we ultimately realized, succeeded in naming our own mode of collaboration. . . . This dialogic mode is loosely structured and the roles enacted within it are fluid: one person may occupy multiple and shifting roles as a project progresses. In this mode, the process of articulating goals is often as important as the goals themselves and sometimes even more important. Furthermore, those participating in the dialogic collaborative generally value the creative tension inherent in multivoice and multivalent ventures. . . . In dialogic collaboration, this group effort is seen as an essential part of the production—rather than the recovery—of knowledge and as a means of individual satisfaction within the group. (133)

As we considered more directly the administrative style that we have been developing over several years as administrators, we were struck by how important those communicative functions have become for us in our program. We would like to look back briefly at our own careers in an effort to better understand this evolution.

When Christine first began as an administrator more than sixteen years ago, she felt it to be a very isolating experience. She found herself in situations in which she, as WPA, had a great deal of responsibility for running an effective

writing program, but very little authority within the departmental hierarchy to do her job well. She had difficulty articulating the parameters of her job. Like the informant in Theresa Enos' book *Gender Roles and Faculty Lives* who wrote under the pseudonym of the "battered wife," Christine also didn't know how difficult her administrative situation was until after she'd left it behind for a new job: "Leaving the English Department at State was like getting out of a bad marriage—I did not realize how dysfunctional the department was until I got into one that was, by comparison, a model of collegiality" (18). In part because of the move to a different departmental culture, Christine needed to define more clearly for herself and her department the role of WPA. This led to the Portland Resolution initiative, in which she started an effort by the WPA organization to describe in more realistic terms the work that we do.

As we have talked to other WPAs at annual conferences and on the WPA listserv, we have been struck that Christine's experience of initial isolation seems to have been widely felt. Perhaps this is due to the fact that many times in years past, the WPA was the lone "writing person" in a department—an extremely isolating feeling. To complicate things further, if the departmental structure were hierarchical, the WPA probably found it very difficult to introduce any collaborative or co-mentoring efforts which might involve power-sharing with those perceived in the departmental scheme to be of "lower" status, such as Graduate Instructors or Lecturers.

In contrast, when Lynn first became a WPA in 1995, she had a number of support systems in place to mitigate the isolation that Christine felt. First, having Christine as her Associate Department Head made a huge difference. Christine was literally "next door," available to answer questions and give advice. But more importantly, because Christine was the primary author of the Portland Resolution, Lynn knew that she understood the issues and concerns involved in administering a writing program, and if need be, could act as an advocate for Writing Program policies with the English Department Head. Because Lynn also knew that Christine subscribed to the same principles in writing program administration, Lynn never felt that she had to "watch her back," a common complaint of WPAs who work with unsympathetic administrators. In addition, the Associate Dean of our College (Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences), Joyce Kinkead, is also a former WPA. When Lynn became WPA, she found herself in the enviable situation of working within an administrative structure that understood and valued what she did.

Both these former WPAs were able to mentor Lynn in a number of ways. Lynn could ask for and receive almost instant advice through both e-mail and voice mail. This made it easier for Lynn to ask for help, even on "trivial" matters ("Is it O.K. for me to sign a change of grade form for an instructor who has left the University?"), and simple for the former WPAs to respond ("Yes") without either party having to leave her office or interrupt the rhythm of her work. Both administrators were able to give her substantive suggestions on Writing Program documents she created (again sent and received through e-mail). And underlying all these exchanges was the common language of the Portland Resolution. Lynn

knew that both Christine and Joyce understood and supported the Portland Resolution, so in a sense had another “voice” supporting her—the voice of the WPA organization itself. Lynn also found support through the WPA Workshop and Conference held each summer.

In 1995 Lynn participated in the WPA Summer Workshop for new WPAs led by Charles Schuster and Kathleen Yancey. The “Class of ‘95” established its own listserv which supported the new WPAs through their first year. In addition, many new WPAs lurked on the established WPA listserv and sometimes participated in the conversations. Lynn was daily, if not hourly, able to ask questions, receive advice and support, and stay in contact with other WPAs, a major factor in reducing the sense of isolation and aloneness which Christine had described.

Both of us find that now our administrative lives are quite fulfilling. What has changed over the years? What have we done, together and independently, consciously or intuitively, that has made a difference? Through various maneuvers, job changes, role shifts, changes in administration, funding initiatives, and so on, we have positioned ourselves in ways that were effective and also that fit with our emerging, co-mentoring administrative style. Miller urges us to “communicate attempts to reinvent the game. Explain the philosophy that undergirds new methods” (57). Co-authoring this article has given us the opportunity to articulate for ourselves our evolving sense of a co-mentoring administrative style. Although we have not entirely sorted the complex weave of our administrative lives, we will attempt to describe one of the things that has made a difference for us—communication.

Perhaps because communication allows us to escape isolationism, this makes it all the more important. In the early years of both our administrative lives, it was communicating with others, particularly at the annual WPA conference, that gave us a sense of community and power. We left each of those conferences armed with ideas and strategies that allowed us to make headway on our own campuses. Talking and listening to other WPAs at conferences has become a significant source of power for us.

A second and equally important communicative source came with reading and writing—in particular the WPA journal. In Christine’s early years as an administrator, she would eagerly await each issue and read it from cover to cover: for insights, ideas, understanding—power. When the opportunity came to become the journal’s editor, she accepted the challenge gratefully and continued to gain a tremendous amount from talking and working with authors, editorial board members, outside reviewers, the WPA Executive Committee, and journal readers, for the seven years of her editorship. Gaining information, from speaking and listening to others in the field and from reading and writing professional literature, has definitely helped both of us feel more in control as administrators.

In recent years, as Lynn and Christine have been collaborating on the administration of the Writing Program at Utah State, the communicative functions have seemed to become easier. Maybe practice makes perfect—but also, perhaps the changing tools, and in particular electronic media, are making a difference as well. As we reflect on earlier administrative times, we remember

the truism that Lynn Bloom coined: "If a WPA is in her office, there is someone in there with her." So why did we feel so isolated? We were constantly surrounded by other people—usually people with problems that they wanted us to sort out: students with complaints about grades, instructors with complaints about schedules, and so on. But those meetings, although necessary, were seldom productive times for us in our own quest for professional growth. Much of our time was taken up with the constant bombardment of interruptions in our office.

But, these days, Lynn Bloom's truism has changed for us: "If a WPA is in her office, she is staring at her computer." Many of the face-to-face communicative functions of times past now take place over computer networks. We are most likely to learn of that student or instructor complaint first via an e-mail message. Often simple problems can be sorted out over e-mail without the necessity of a face-to-face encounter. In fact, we find that communicating with each other, with instructors and students in our program, with administrators across our campus, and even with other WPAs using the WPA listserv, has given a different organizational shape to our days. As co-mentoring administrators, Lynn and Christine joke about the time they spend "talking" over e-mail—doubly ironic given the fact that their offices are adjacent to each other! But the truth is that we prefer the e-mail medium because its communicative function, though fairly immediate, tends to be less interruptive than a face-to-face encounter.

Using e-mail is also more expedient for disseminating information and receiving information from a number of people—an essential feature of a co-mentored program. Creating your own lists of correspondents and using your e-mail client's ability to group lists of people into "nicknames," provides you with an ability to communicate simultaneously to many correspondents using only a single message. For example, when we are working together on necessary program documents, such as course goals or common syllabuses, we can easily and quickly work together by e-mailing drafts to the working group.

In fact, in many ways co-mentoring means co-authoring. As we think back to the times before the advent of computers, we remember struggling to produce documents in endless streams of typed drafts or purple mimeos. It was very difficult for a WPA in those days to co-author the many documents that are necessary to keep a program running smoothly. Now, however, co-authoring is not only possible but expedient. It is a way to bring many diverse voices into the administrative stream. Documents such as our Freshman English Handbook and our Guide for Instructors are now truly collaborative enterprises. Disks are swapped, attachments are sent via e-mail, and documents are "constructed" by many authors, each able to contribute in their particular area of expertise. Because many of the constituents of the program are also the authors of the governing documents, they gain an important sense of ownership and power.

We mentioned earlier in this article an incident with our on-line instructors sharing in the decision-making about their office computers. This incident also points out that the teaching environment on our campus has been radically changed by recent technologies—in particular the advent of Internet teaching via

the World Wide Web. We are actively exploring on-line education in our writing program and we offer our students a choice of traditional instruction or computer-assisted instruction. The amount and type of computer assistance varies among classes and instructors, but there are many opportunities for instructors to innovate in this arena.

There has been much written in the literature about the democratization of the writing classroom through the introduction of computers. Handa expressed this thought succinctly in her Introduction to the collection *Computer and Community*: "In fact, we have found that the computer may be a democratic tool" (xix). She goes on to describe the ways in which the hierarchical community typically found in classrooms, with a teacher on the stage and the students in the audience, changes in a networked classroom:

Even in a democracy, society nonetheless provides a multitude of hierarchies, not all of them economic, that cause some people to devalue self, others to privilege self . . . the computer is a powerful tool that, if used in certain ways, can not only enhance but create a strong sense of community among both the students and their instructors." (xx)

The democratizing impetus created by computer classrooms—and now even extended to Web-based teaching in which the classrooms only exist virtually—has had an important spill-over effect on both our teaching and our co-mentoring administration.

At the same time as we've experimented with computerized instruction and on-line teaching, we have discovered another important communication tool—the department's Website. Our instructors are now sharing curricular ideas and information in ways that were very rudimentary before the advent of computer networks. In years past, we used to share assignments and course ideas through a wire "basket" in the office workroom, instructors were encouraged to deposit photocopies of their best teaching ideas into the basket. However, this method of disseminating information was hit or miss, at best. Loose papers were easily lost or misplaced. Often the handouts were without important contextual information that explained their justification or implementation. Now, the department's Website has become an important repository for teaching information and help—analogue to the workroom's wire basket. We keep on the Website model student work for both instructors and students to review; there are writing helps and evaluation helps, model assignments and teaching ideas. The possibilities are endless. We see this communication tool as yet another way for us to encourage instructors and administrators to "co-mentor."

In addition to departmental efforts to co-mentor through a Website, there are national efforts as well. We, along with many other WPAs and WAC directors across the country, have been collaborating with the WPA at Colorado State University, Mike Palmquist, to build a Writing Across the Curriculum Website that would serve as a resource for everyone who is either teaching or administering a WAC program. Such a site can serve not only as an archive of information for WAC programs and instructors, but also a site for co-authoring documents and sharing programmatic insights at the cutting edge of the discipline. Similarly,

we have participated in campus and Utah listservs to work on general education and state-wide articulation issues. This kind of work provides the opportunity for co-mentoring on a grand scale.

Concluding Thoughts

This is not to say that everything always runs smoothly in our Writing Program. Sometimes our “communicative functions” break down and we are back to a hierarchical “I’m in charge here” model. A good case in point is a misunderstanding among Christine and Lynn and two graduate instructors who had been hired to oversee our fledgling on-line program. These two instructors (both males) did not understand at all the collaborative nature of our administrative structure. They assumed that, by virtue of being appointed as team-leaders, they were given authority and power over all the other instructors teaching in the on-line environment. They did not understand the concept articulated so eloquently by Lunsford and Ede: “Those participating in dialogic collaboration generally value the creative tension inherent in multivoiced and multivalent ventures” (133). Our two graduate instructors never would allow any other voices but their own to be heard. The meetings that they conducted were lectures where they performed as the “sage on the stage” and the other instructors had to sit passively and listen. Finally, both had to be removed from their posts—after they had managed to thoroughly alienate everyone else in the program, including us.

At first when the situation described above was unfolding, Lynn and Christine were baffled by how difficult communicating with these two graduate instructors seemed to be. Upon later reflection and reading, however, we have gained a better understanding of their (and our) behavior. Luke quoting Bagilhole (18) explains it well:

And yet the unmistakably engendered dynamics of student/teacher relations and the gendered ideological foundation of authority also mean that women often encounter “problems with male students who do not accept their [women’s] status or authority as academics. . . . Some male students find it hard to do what a woman tells them and they don’t like it. They have difficulty with authority.” (289)

Although Luke and Bagilhole are discussing student/teacher relationships, a similar problem had occurred between our two male graduate instructors and us, their two female “bosses.” The graduate instructors were operating under a hierarchical, masculinist model of administration and simply didn’t understand (or were hostile toward) our feminist style. Had we better understood the dynamics at the time, perhaps we could have resolved the stalemate more gracefully. But, it may also be the case that we were all destined to talk at cross-purposes to each other and thus were better off just ending the relationships before more permanent damage was done. As Qualley puts it, “While I believe that we must always strive for a ‘both/and’ conception of gender and gender-linked traits, I don’t think our students can easily embrace such a perspective if they have only experienced one side of the either/or binary” (33). It could very well be that our two male graduate instructors had only experienced

a masculinist model of teaching and administering and therefore had trouble functioning within a different model. And, for our part, we had a difficult time recognizing the root causes for their behavior. Consequently, we had trouble establishing a “co-mentoring” relationship with these instructors.

The above example notwithstanding, the boundaries of our program are surely changing for the better; that old sense of isolation is being broken down and the walls of the castle breached. The Writing Czar is becoming (or has become) the writing team-leader or co-mentor, who “dances always between authority that leads and authority that coerces” (LaDuc 163). She works with diverse constituencies and colleagues in a mutually-enabling administrative network, enhanced and empowered by communication.

Notes

1. Gunner’s article instigated an important corrective to an ongoing discussion in the WPA journal about power and the WPA. After several articles which described power in very masculine terms, Gunner’s article suggested that there might be another way to look at power—as collaborative or shared.
2. Theresa Enos coined a similar term to our “co-mentoring” in her essay “Mentoring—and (Wo)mentoring—in Composition Studies.” Enos discusses in that essay a feminist version of mentoring, which she calls “womentoring.”

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Doubling Our Chances: Co-Directing a Writing Program

Anne Aronson and Craig Hansen

"Which one of you wants to chair the writing department?" These were some of the first words that each of us heard from a somewhat apologetic dean only days after we were hired as assistant professors at Metropolitan State University. The university had just undergone a large expansion of the full-time faculty because of an enrollment bulge; as a result, many brand new faculty were called upon to run departments and act in other administrative roles. When we heard that we were two of the lucky candidates for such a role, our reaction was mixed. On the one hand, we were thrilled that our new university home was about to create a bonafide department of writing, separate from the English Department and as autonomous as any unit in the college. On the other hand, we were skeptical about the prospect of walking into an administrative job as untenured faculty. We had both done administrative work as graduate students, and we knew that writing program administrators, whether department chairs or program directors, face enormous political and professional challenges. In short, neither of us wanted the job. We quickly conferred with each other and with tenured faculty whom we trusted and decided that the only solution was to co-chair the department. At the time, we thought of this as a temporary arrangement that would evolve into a more traditional administrative structure as we accustomed ourselves to the institution. Almost five years later, however, our co-chairing structure not only endures, but thrives. In fact, by sharing the duties of writing program administrator, we have been able to avoid or overcome many of the political quagmires and professional pitfalls that plague WPAs.

We have identified several key areas where this arrangement has resulted in personal, departmental, or institutional benefits. We have found, for example, that co-chairing a writing program has allowed us to shift responsibilities between us, to accommodate the demands of our individual workload or personal lives. On a departmental level, co-chairing depersonalizes the role of chair or director, reducing political risk for the co-chairs and fostering a departmental identity separate from the person of the chair or director. Finally, co-chairing challenges some traditional notions of bureaucracy, and in our own case, offers some interesting insight into cross-gender, shared leadership.

We should, at the outset, distinguish between co-directing and co-chairing. As we noted above, we were tasked with developing a stand-alone writing department. It's become a large academic unit, with curricula in composition (basic through advanced), creative writing, technical and business communication, and journalistic writing. We manage two majors and a minor and the

university's writing center. Although chairs do not become part of the university administration at our institution (they remain full-time faculty), we do get some limited standing in this role, including regular access to the college dean. This may not be the case for directors of a writing program nested within another department. Being chairs as opposed to program directors has probably increased our autonomy and enhanced our ability to carry through our own plans. On the other hand, the role of chair is considerably more defined than program director, and our arrangement has more publicly challenged traditional expectations. While we acknowledge there are differences between co-chairing and co-directing, we think that many of the points in the discussion that follows apply more or less equally to both, and we use the terms interchangeably throughout this article. Indeed, other factors, such as institutional context or the personalities of individual chairs or directors, may play a larger role in the relative success or failure of a co-chairing or co-directing arrangement. These, and other potential drawbacks, exist for this kind of shared leadership: we discuss these in the article's final section.

In terms of our own institutional context, Metropolitan State University, though part of a large state system, is not a typical institution. Most notably, Metro State students are almost exclusively working adults; their average age is 34. But Metro State is also unusual in that it has a rich tradition of alternative approaches to education which have recently been overlaid with more conventional university practices. Until the last six years, for example, there were no traditional academic departments, majors, or grading systems. The small faculty met as a whole to make curricular and policy decisions. Now we have clearly delineated departments, a growing number of majors, and a standard grading system. Administrative structures have been defined and solidified, curriculum has been regularized, and clearer lines of accountability have been instituted. The university still maintains, however, a distinctly entrepreneurial feel; it's an institution where change is fundamental and frequent. As such, we have experienced little resistance to the concept of co-chairing a department.

A Fluid Approach to Co-Directing

When we introduce ourselves as co-chairs to people who don't know us, we typically make some distinctions in our roles. We let others know that Craig is responsible for the technical communication major and for upper division curriculum, and that Anne coordinates the writing major and lower division curriculum, including the writing center. This apparent division of labor, however, belies the reality of our everyday work as co-directors. In fact, the vast majority of what we do is shared. We both schedule and staff courses; hire, train, and evaluate faculty; monitor enrollment term by term; meet regularly with the dean to discuss department issues; field and address complaints by students and part-time faculty; oversee the budget; allay the anxieties of faculty in other disciplines about the writing of their students; plan for future needs; and interact with units such as the computer center, the multicultural student office, and the library. Throughout the university we are both acknowledged as directors of the program. Queries about programs, courses, and schedules are directed to both of us.

We tend to receive duplicates of mailings, and we are both invited to functions involving department chairs (although usually only one of us attends). In fact, we have developed what we term a fluid model of co-directing. The fact that either of us can perform all required tasks gives us great flexibility. We frequently shift duties to meet our individual needs and, as we discuss below, use this approach to overcome some of the most problematic challenges faced by WPAs.

Workload and Professional Identity

Like many workers in America in the late 1990s, WPAs are asked to stretch themselves beyond a reasonable limit. One obvious consequence is that administrative work consumes the time and sometimes the soul of the WPA. Saddled with a wide range of supervisory, budgetary, and programmatic responsibilities, WPAs often have little time to pursue their own scholarly endeavors. The professional world of the WPA often shrinks to a series of problems (sick instructors, students threatening lawsuits, budget shortfalls, newspaper reports on legislators' dissatisfaction with the literacy skills of college students) that beg for short- and long-term actions. Not only does the professional horizon recede behind this pile-up of needs and demands, but there is also a high risk of early burnout. And the problem of professional compromise becomes more acute when the WPA is untenured. For the untenured WPA, limited professional horizons can have dire consequences. As the CCCC Committee on Professional Guidance to Departments and Faculty states, "The administrative and teaching burden of the position may be so heavy as to prevent the candidate from fulfilling requirements for scholarly work" (494-95).

The work of running a writing program also takes its toll on the WPA's personal life. In her survey-based study of gender and writing program administrators, Sally Barr-Ebest quotes from informants who give heart-wrenching testimony about personal lives squeezed so tight, they sometimes disappear. One woman says: "Of course my duties have affected my personal life. I might be able to have a healthier life if I weren't always in the service of the institution." A male respondent said: "Well, I have no personal life. I rarely see my wife and child because I have to work all the time just to keep up. As soon as my assistant has tenure, I plan to step down. Unfortunately, that's probably five years ahead. I hope I can survive that long" (60). This last comment is interesting because it suggests that this WPA will simply hand down to his successor the enormous strain that he has experienced. In contrast, our co-directing arrangement addresses some of the problems cited by these administrators before they become a blight handed down from generation to generation. Because we share so many duties, we can easily alternate when one of us has other commitments. Each of us has had substantial personal challenges during our almost five years together as co-chairs. In every case, our fluid arrangement allows one of us to cover for the other. Similarly, we have given each other "breaks" to work on research projects. The virtues of co-directing have also been apparent during summers when, in our administrative roles, we are rarely off duty. We have sometimes traded months during the summer, so that one of us can have a significant block of time for rest and research. Our arrangement also allows us to do more teaching, since

we share the release time for chairing a department. Jeanne Gunner points out that in a highly centralized writing program, the director is often pulled away from teaching in order to administer the program; as a result, both the curriculum and the staff of instructors suffer. By co-directing the program, we are able to continue to do substantial quantities of teaching in a variety of areas within our curriculum.

Although the logistical advantages of co-directing are the most obvious benefits in terms of professional renewal and achievement, there are some psychological advantages as well. One such advantage is that even if we don't call on the other person to cover when we have another commitment, we know that we can. In other words, there is a mental health safety valve built into the co-directing structure. Another significant benefit is that we are able to process together the trials and tribulations of our job. We meet almost every day to communicate about various issues affecting the department. Our co-directing meetings move rapidly back and forth between our need to accomplish tasks and our need for support in a climate that is not always friendly for writing program directors. We recognize, however, that both kinds of interactions are vital for our success as writing program directors. We feel we are better able to address problems when we can have a dialogue about solutions, and we feel we are better able to maintain our sanity and our focus when we can exchange concerns and frustrations.

The Politics of Writing Programs

The problem of exploitation and overwork is exacerbated by another major challenge typically faced by WPAs: the political vulnerability of writing programs and their administrators. Writing programs are too often considered the "service" division of a college and so are regarded as the intellectual inferiors of English and other departments which teach "real disciplines" and "content areas." They are often staffed by part-timers who have little authority or political clout. And writing programs are chronically underfunded, competing with more privileged departments and programs for scarce resources. The writing program administrator, then, must often interact with the university and larger community from a position of weakness. WPAs without tenure are even more vulnerable. As Olson and Moxley put it, "Clearly, the untenured director's position is precarious: it is exceedingly difficult to make unpopular albeit programmatically and pedagogically sound decisions when professional survival is at stake" (57).

From this apparent position of weakness, the WPA must negotiate a host of political challenges. These challenges include maintaining consistency across sections, training and retaining a large pool of instructors, managing complex budgets, and simply dealing with the interpersonal issues that arise when numbers of students and faculty are large. Writing programs are also highly visible. Faculty and administration across the university pay close attention to literacy skills, as do employers, legislators, parents, and other members of the community. As a result, the writing program is often held accountable when students lack college level literacy skills. (This accountability is not in itself problem: meet-

ing the needs of underprepared students is a particular strength for many writing programs. The problem, rather, has to do with realistic expectations for writing instruction outcomes.) A further type of political situation has its roots in writing pedagogy and can involve challenges to multicultural content in readings or a perceived lack of emphasis on writing correctness. All of these kinds of issues (managing personnel and budgets in a complex program, meeting the needs of underprepared students, maintaining quality, consistency, and independence) have the potential to become politicized, to involve conflicting value systems. The risks are twofold: a disadvantaged position for the writing program in competing for resources and a potentially disadvantaged position for the already beleaguered WPA. We have found that co-directing can ameliorate some of these problems. An advantage of co-directing in a politically charged climate is that the program is never identified with a single personality.

The tendency within an institution to equate a department or program with the personality of its leader harkens back to the trait theory of educational leadership, where traits for effective leadership tend to cluster together to form an ideal image of the virile leader: "Leadership in organizations has been historically associated with particular characteristics which are more frequently depicted as 'masculine' than 'feminine': aggressiveness, forcefulness, competitiveness and independence" (Blackmore 100). Personality is also at the center of the transformational model of leadership, which features a charismatic leader who inspires and "generates emotional arousal" among followers (Middlehurst 35). We are all familiar with departments or other units that are strongly identified with the personality of the chair. This equation of a personality with an academic unit is virtually erased when the department or program is co-directed. In our situation, neither of us has the opportunity (nor the desire) to be identified as "the writing program."

When the directors of the program are two people with different personalities, histories, and genders, external attention is focused on the department rather than on personalities. Politics, as a result, tend not to get bogged down in personality, with all of the inherent risks to the individual. But politics can still affect the department as a whole and, again, co-directing offers some advantages. As we mentioned above, a major source for potential political conflict that affects the writing program centers on the acquisition of literacy skills and writing pedagogy. Expectations are the key element here. What are the goals of writing instruction? What are desired outcomes? How can literacy skills be reinforced throughout the curriculum? When audiences external to the writing program know the answers to these questions, the potential for conflict and political fallout is minimized. Yet educating these external audiences is a daunting task, as the cast of characters changes frequently and retention of learning seems brief. Co-directing can aid in this significant educational effort. Two empowered voices can address the university community concerning literacy issues; two knowledgeable advocates can attend meetings, offer workshops, or engage in casual conversation with colleagues in other departments. We have found, for example, that we have each been able to create largely separate, multidisciplinary networks

of faculty interested in writing. While co-directing does not necessarily double the educational outcomes concerning the goals and expectations of writing instruction, two voices do increase our contact with external audiences and, consequently, reduce the misconceptions that can lead to conflict.

Co-Directing as Post-Bureaucratic Practice

After five years of co-directing a writing program, we have found that our unusual arrangement challenges and destabilizes many traditional (and problematic) tenets of bureaucracy. These tenets include a rigid division of labor, the imposition of hierarchical structures, and resistance to change (Heckscher and Donnellon). Two critiques of traditional bureaucracy are particularly relevant to our co-directing scenario: the feminist critique of dominant models of bureaucratic leadership and the critique within management theory of mechanistic organizations. The feminist critique of dominant models of leadership is ably articulated by educational theorist Jill Blackmore. She argues that the dominant model of leadership is masculinist and is based in liberal political theories: "A particular view of leadership premised upon liberal theories of abstract individualism and bureaucratic rationality, and supported by positivistic theories of knowledge which privilege universal laws of administration and human behavior, has become dominant in educational administration" (94). Blackmore contends that the "masculine ethic of leadership is based on individuality, rationality, and hierarchy" (106). She argues for a feminist model of leadership which emphasizes the interdependence of individuals, the relational context for decision-making, and a notion of power as empowerment rather than domination. Other feminist theorists challenge the centralization of power that is endemic to traditional masculinist models of leadership. They argue for an approach to leadership in which authority is decentered, and decision-making is shared (e.g., Miller; Dickson). Blackmore also challenges the "bureaucratic rationality" that is at the center of masculinist leadership. In bureaucracies, decisions are made based on what will produce the most positive outcomes. In the spirit of promoting efficiency and productivity, the division of labor is clearly defined, and individuals are assigned limited, specialized tasks.

Blackmore's explication of bureaucratic rationality echoes Gareth Morgan's model of the mechanistic organization. In his *Images of Organization*, Morgan contrasts two types of organizational structures. Derived from military models, the mechanistic organization is intensely hierarchical, bureaucratic, and based on specialization: every person has specific, unshared responsibilities that contribute to the overall organization mission. Management provides leadership in task assignment and integration. Accountability is clear, though mechanistic organizations are not good at adapting to changing circumstances (28). Though out of favor with theorists, the mechanistic organization is the model more or less followed by many large organizations. By contrast, Morgan's "organic" model de-emphasizes both hierarchy and specialization and interprets organizations as biological organisms. It is based on the idea that organizations operate most effectively when "the interdependence of technical and human needs . . . is kept firmly in mind" (38). The organic organization is loosely structured: it uses

flexible teams to carry out tasks. Team members have specialties, but also contribute most when they have a broad grasp of organizational goals and functions. Management sets those goals, but the locus of decision-making is in the teams. Organic organizations are very good at accommodating change, less good at ensuring accountability and consistency.

Although in many ways a university reflects the mechanistic model of organizational behavior, the organic model best reflects our fluid approach to co-chairing. Key for us is meeting needs—not only those of our students and colleagues, but our own. An inflexible “one person, one job” approach would leave us perpetually responsible, unable to off-load work. Certainly we could reduce the amount of responsibility by dividing the work between two people, but there is limited flexibility in this plan. As described in terms of the organic model, the administration (in the person of the dean) sets organizational goals and the “team” consists of the two of us. It is not terribly flexible in the sense that the team seldom changes players, but it is highly flexible in its ability to meet needs. Interdependent and responsive to change, our co-chairing arrangement is also radically non-hierarchical. As co-directors we are equals in every sense. There is no visible or hidden hierarchy that determines who really is in charge. We have equal authority to sign off on any form, equal authority to hire faculty, equal authority to develop curriculum and policy. The idea that we are completely equal in role and authority has been difficult for some to comprehend. When Craig served on a search committee for a new dean, he repeatedly introduced himself to candidates as the “co-chair” of a department. Many candidates seemed baffled by this title. Some seemed to think that as an untenured “co-chair” he was somehow apprenticed to a senior faculty member who was the “real” chair. The experience of co-directing a program has allowed us to see how deeply ingrained are cultural assumptions about the singularity of the “leader” and about the hierarchical context in which “he” operates.

Not surprisingly, when we first initiated our co-directing arrangement, it sometimes disrupted daily bureaucratic practice at our institution. Various members of the community, for example, had difficulty fitting us into their usual procedures. Sometimes budget and scheduling forms would be sent to one of us only; at other times, the other person would receive the material. Eventually we worked out an arrangement in which we both received all the forms, and then would negotiate who would do what. We imagine that our unusual arrangement at first irritated our co-workers, who were trying to keep information moving as efficiently as possible. Over time, however, the systems adjusted to our collaborative role; when authority is decentered, bureaucratic practices become destabilized, making way for alternative practices.

We should acknowledge, however, that more mechanistic, bureaucratic structures offer some advantages. While no one wants inflexibility, increased specialization, from a strictly administrative view, might result in clearer lines of responsibility, more focused use of time, and perhaps more predictability (if this is in fact desirable). As co-chairs of a department, we find there is an occasional loss of efficiency in the organization. For example, we routinely receive two

phone calls for the same problem. A student might call asking about a course, or a faculty member might call inquiring about a room assignment. The caller rarely indicates that she is also calling the other co-chair. As a result, we sometimes duplicate our efforts in responding to the call, and on occasion give conflicting answers to the question. While this duplication appears to be a chink in the armor of efficiency, any loss of productivity is amply compensated for by the fact that we both can answer the question. Efficiency would be compromised to an even greater extent if we were perpetually referring questions to the other person.

Collaborating across Genders

Thus far we have discussed some of the personal and professional benefits of co-directing a writing program. One other feature of our collaboration is worth noting, however. As a cross-gender collaboration, we have had the opportunity to explore a number of issues surrounding gender and administration. Our co-chairing arrangement has provided a kind of unofficial laboratory in which we can study how constructions of gender affect leadership of a program. We have discovered that in some ways, our co-chairing arrangement confirms dominant constructions of gender. For example, when we were hired, we were assigned to specific areas—Anne's job focused on basic writing, the Writing Center, and assessment; Craig's job focused on professional writing and technology. This division of labor is certainly a gendered phenomenon and it has to some extent affected our roles as co-chairs. More commonly, however, cross-gender collaboration has provided us with several opportunities to rethink traditional patterns of gender behavior and perception. We've identified three such opportunities: 1) cross-gender leadership as a site of resistance to gender norms; 2) cross-gender leadership as an opportunity for shifting identity; and 3) cross-gender leadership as an administrative strategy.

First, cross-gender leadership has proven to be a site of resistance to gender norms. For example, when we first began as department co-chairs, each of us was approached differently by other members of the community. While Craig was contacted for issues related to program development and policy, Anne was approached about issues that involved caretaking (e.g., student complaints) and "behind-the-scenes" work that bordered on clerical activity (e.g., scheduling classes). This problem became most obvious during one meeting with a high level administrator in her office. The administrator made virtually all of her eye contact with Craig. When we left the meeting, we discussed what had happened. We resolved to change seating arrangements next time to avoid a recurrence of this problem. Similarly, Craig made a point never to make unilateral decisions about policy, and Anne made a point to identify herself publicly with issues of policy and program development. These efforts reflect our desire to consciously and deliberately resist the way that gender is typically reproduced in everyday life. Cross-gender co-chairing is a particularly rich site for such resistance because it potentially enlists both women and men in the process of challenging dominant assumptions. Co-chairing provides an ideal opportunity, one might say, for a coalition effort.

Secondly, we found that cross-gender leadership provided an opportunity to play with gender identity. While we often think that we have specific and fixed gender identities, gender may in fact be mobile and flexible, as much current feminist theory suggests. Gender identity may change as the context (local, global, historical) changes. In other words, as male and female co-chairs, we might find ourselves occupying identities and roles typically assigned to the other gender. For example, Craig recently served on the Dean Search Committee for our college. He turned out to be the committee member most concerned about how the new dean would meet the needs of underprepared students. He was, in a sense, taking on Anne's role (a gendered role) as defender and protector of vulnerable students. In contrast, Anne recently came to a department meeting armed with what she called an "Enrollment Enhancement Plan," or EEP. (Metro State has many acronyms, but this was a new one.) The plan was focused on the bottom line—getting more students in our classes, even if that meant cutting back on opportunities for part-time faculty. One might have expected a top-down plan like this one to emerge from a male leader, more concerned with profits, so to speak, than with people.

Finally, we've learned that cross-gender leadership offers strategic opportunities. The idea here is that leaders may occupy diverse gender positions for the purpose of furthering a goal. In some situations, for example, it may be particularly effective for Craig to represent underprepared students or for Anne to plan strategically for increased enrollment. Similarly, it may be advantageous for Anne to call on Craig to intervene with a recalcitrant male instructor who is entrenched in traditional gender norms. For Anne to attempt to deal with this person could be worthy in terms of asserting her authority and defying gendered expectations; unfortunately, though, it simply may not work. As Hildy Miller says of co-existing masculinist and feminist models of leadership, "In the bi-epistemological institution, personas have to change with context" (53).

Conclusion

We need to reiterate something we mentioned in the introduction: co-directing a writing program might not work in all settings. Further, personalities definitely play a role. The co-directors have to be committed to co-directing. They must be clear and public about the arrangement to realize its benefits; they must be interested in egalitarian cooperation, not in what turns out to be an obvious or subtle tug of war; they must be committed to open and frequent exchanges of information and ideas. And to benefit from the fluid model we employ, they must each be willing to take more than their share at some time, to provide space for their partner in collaboration. This is not always convenient.

Further, co-directing can have drawbacks. One potential drawback is accountability. It is conceivable that co-directors might use their position of shared responsibility to continually defer questions, criticism, or even decision-making. Whether this results from lack of communication, avoidance, or other causes, it can undermine the effectiveness of the writing program and render co-directing less useful than a single-director model. Perhaps an even more significant

drawback has to do with overwork. One of the major goals of co-directing is to allocate workload to best meet the needs of the faculty involved. In practice, this truly seems to work. However, we have also found that as co-directors, we do more work than might be expected from a single director, a common situation in any kind of job-sharing arrangement. While we equally divide the perquisites of program direction (teaching release, for example), we each put in more than a fifty percent effort into our administrative roles. This has obvious advantages for the department (and the university administration does not mind it, either), but it is something that should be closely monitored or at least well understood. In our co-directing relationship, we recognize that this is a different type of overwork (voluntary, for the most part), but we feel it is still a less exploitative situation than that faced by many solo WPAs.

Despite these drawbacks and the commitment necessary to make fluid co-directing successful, we feel that we have individually benefited from this arrangement, as have our department and its students. Co-directing may be a valuable strategy for negotiating the many personal and professional pitfalls that confront writing program administrators.

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Reconstituting Authority: Four Perspectives on a Team Approach to Writing Program Administration

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Introduction

The power of the administrator and the writing program's political situation have been explored in publications since the mid-eighties. A quick review of the literature reveals, in fact, how much has been written on this topic. Carol Hartzog candidly assessed WPAs as "not yet . . . good politicians" ("Freshman" 14). Linda Polin and Ed White surveyed WPAs in 1985, finding that they possessed relatively little power on significant matters of policy. Indeed, many WPAs were themselves in tenuous (i.e., untenured) positions. In 1989 Gary Olson and Joseph Moxley revisited WPAs' significantly-challenged authority, showing English department chairs' relatively low estimate of WPAs and fervently calling for "a reconceptualization of the role" of the WPA (58). Marcia Dickson wrote about the relative powerlessness of WPAs and the need to construct a feminist model. In 1991 White further explored some problematics of WPAs and campus power. While he found "much power inherent in the position," White also learned that "new WPAs at the WPA summer workshops" were not only unaware of the importance of using power, they were "resistant to it" ("Use It" 5). He concluded by advising that "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 to the good of our program" (12).

Recently, colleagues have made calls for radical reform of governance models. Jeanne Gunner penned a critique of the "WPA-centric administrative model" (9) of one person as the program leader, calling for more sharing of authority, control, and power by "decentering the WPA and democratizing program administration" (14). Gunner earnestly called on WPAs "to cede to subordinates a share of whatever power they have attained" (15). Not to do so, Gunner contended, is to sustain an oppressive system. Christine Hult analyzed the conditions of administration from traditional political classifications of governance: monarchy, dictatorship, oligarchy, anarchy, and constitutional democracy. Hult, too, called for democracy in administration, though, she admitted, "there are several barriers that may prevent writing programs from becoming representative democracies" ("Politics Redux" 50). John Trimbur called on WPAs to resist traditional professionalization as a discipline; reading aspects of our work through Foucauldian and Marxian lenses, Trimbur suggested that

WPAs “grapple daily with the persistent conflicts between building individual careers and popularizing expertise for broader social purposes” (145). Hildy Miller proposed a “postmasculinist” approach, a combination of both feminist and masculinist orientations. To sustain a postmasculinist approach an administrator must adopt a “bi-epistemological stance . . . [which] is not just a matter of replacing masculinist with feminist, but rather of somehow doing both or creating a space for one to exist within the other” (58). Anne Gere reiterated innovative thinking about WPAs, especially the concepts of collaborative administration and administrative work as knowledge production.

In 1995 Joseph Janangelo and Kristine Hansen published *Resituating Writing: Constructing and Administering Writing Programs*, a collection of articles focusing on administration from scholarly or theoretical perspectives. In the lead article, Janangelo carried out a Derridean analysis of “the complex relations that simultaneously compose and constrain writing programs” (“Theorizing Difference” 3). He made numerous suggestions “intended to help writing programs continually reinvent ourselves through dialogue . . . so that we can avoid taking a self-destructive, adversarial stance toward our institutions” (18). Christine Hult provided an analysis of the innovative kind of scholarship produced by WPAs. Hult defined the scholarship of administration as “the systematic, theory-based production and oversight of a dynamic program (as opposed to traditional scholarship which is generally defined as the production of ‘texts’)” (“Scholarship” 126). Barbara Cambridge and Ben McClelland challenged traditional assumptions about WPA identity, suggesting “a more radical redefinition of the WPA, a redefinition that involves changing the basic architecture of leadership and the responsibilities of the WPA” (155). We argued for a partnership between the WPA and faculty members in joint responsibility, “shared administrative and organizational structure” (157). These various proposals, utopian in vision, lead us into the twenty-first century with reform very much at the heart of our thinking, if not yet our daily work. This article tells versions of a story of such reform as our daily work at one institution.

Re-positioning the Director of Freshman English at Ole Miss: Ben McClelland

At the University of Mississippi, an avatar of traditional academic hegemony and hierarchy in the public sphere, I determined to turn vision into reality—at least provisionally in my small corner of the academy, the Freshman English Program, which has a staff of fifty Graduate Instructors¹ who teach over a thousand first-year students. After a hiatus of several years, I resumed the position of Director of the Freshman English Program in the late spring of 1997. The holder of the Schillig Chair in English Composition, I also wear a couple of other administrative hats: Director of the University Writing Program and Director of the University Writing Project.² To prepare the way for a new programmatic operating system, I began in the fall of 1996 discussing a way of redistributing the position’s duties among members of the Freshman English Committee. Four of us were faculty; three were graduate students. We faculty included two tenured in the senior rank; of the two in the junior rank, one was

tenured; the other was in her third year of a tenure-track position. All of us were in rhetoric and composition; except for me, all the others were also literary teachers and scholars. The committee members proposed a flexible restructuring of the WPA position by loosely dividing the duties among us on a rotating basis from semester to semester, according to our interests and needs, allocating varying amounts of extra released-time from teaching duties to those committee members who picked up the greater shares of work in given semesters. The proposal never got off the paper, however. First, the department chair said he could not allocate that much funding (in released-time from teaching) for the position. Then the dean, jovially working through his seventeenth year in that position, said he wanted to be able to hold a single person accountable for the job and not have to deal with several people with ambiguous duties and relative power. Finally, two committee members learned that they had received sabbatical leaves for the next year. So much for attempting to design a "shared administrative and organizational structure" (Cambridge and McClelland 157) among faculty and the WPA. At least for now. Perhaps in another season. Perhaps during another dean's tenure. This year the committee would continue to serve a supportive, less foregrounded role.

Despite that setback in administrative re-working, the idea of differential leadership became increasingly attractive to me. I looked for another way to achieve a redefinition of the WPA position. Construing the concepts more loosely, I applied the idea to a different set of players, this time creating an administrative team with two Writing Program staff members and the graduate administrative assistant to Freshman English. This effort to re-form a top-down structure into a more egalitarian administrative staff involved these basic actions: 1) relying on the decision-making power of the Assistant to the Director of the Freshman English program, Jennie Lee, a graduate instructor, 2) creating the position of Assistant to the Director of the Writing Program and appointing to it Kitty Keller, a graduate student, and 3) inviting special program-linking activities from the Director of the Writing Center, Brenda Robertson, a full-time staff member who is also a graduate student. This group design had great flexibility and developed marvelous rapport and spontaneity, though it lacked the architectural configuration and institutional commitment that the faculty committee would have had.

The four of us began working together informally in the spring of 1997; thus, this role redefinition was an exercise in resituating ourselves as we played the game. There were no dress rehearsals. We reinvented ourselves as we grew to envision the short- and long-term issues and as we devised ways to work at them together. By the fall we were meeting regularly to decide collaboratively on program actions, allocate responsibilities, and carry out the tasks. Though we have never given our group a name, the work of our administrative collaborative has moved forward, continually facing tasks from a posture of integration, cohesion, inclusiveness. Moreover, within the teaching staff we empowered a group of seven teacher team leaders with collegial authority and responsibility to help us carry out our work. The Freshman English Committee serves as another collegial group with whom we confer on program activities, especially major

initiatives such as curriculum revision. The means of communication in these groups is generally conversational dialogue; we strive for consensus, generally taking no formal votes. In short order, the locus of power within the Director's position was decentered. Considering the mix of folks involved, the style of leadership that has evolved could be termed "postmasculinist administration," a combination of "feminist and masculinist orientations" (Miller 58).³

Of course, this activity did not occur in an institutional vacuum. Along with the "flattening" of administrative power, we were also triggering change on a number of other fronts: 1) establishing for the first time administrative offices in a new facility away from the English Department Offices and moving the entire instructional staff from several locations into a single facility; 2) establishing new methods of—and reasons for—staff communication, 3) modifying the curriculum, especially the terms and procedures for writing portfolio assessment, and 4) creating a challenging vision for the program. So, the administrative project was more than just one of the boiling kettles in a busy (oft-times hot) kitchen; it was the scene of the cooking and the means by which the cooking was carried out.

Collaborative administration was not just a theoretical playground for me. I set this new system in motion purposefully to achieve two goals: 1) to establish within the English graduate instructor staff a culture of composition studies, our graduate students being literature students and 2) to encourage the graduate instructors to take ownership of the Freshman English Program. The actions that I took to meet those goals were 1) to form a new administrative staff, 2) to establish residence in a new staff facility, 3) to reinvigorate the teacher team system 4) to enhance our intra-program communications, and 5) to improve our teaching by conducting a seven-day professional development workshop/conference with local and national presenters.⁴ I not only believe that we achieved these goals, but also that we created a powerful organizational dynamic.

Assistant to the Director of Freshman English: Jennie Lee

As of May 1997, I entered the administrative machinations of the Freshman English Program as the Assistant to the Director of Freshman English. I have been a Graduate Instructor in this program for the past six years but, despite my familiarity with the policies and people that make our department tick, I gradually began to realize that my experience in my current position, while building upon those five years in the classroom, would be qualitatively different from my experiences there. I applied for the Assistant's position in the spring of 1997, and before that school year was even over, I had already assisted in the assignment of class schedules, assumed some responsibilities in the program's relocation process, and contributed to ongoing conversations about policy decisions and the upcoming fall teacher workshop. The reality of Joseph Janangelo's description of the university writing program as a "site where many different voices (student, staff, and administration) converge and conflict in constant conversation" immediately asserted itself (4).

The Freshman English Program is composed on a relatively traditional, hierarchical administrative model: a division of the English Department, it is led by a Director who is responsible for orienting and supervising fifty Graduate Instructors at various stages in their respective degree programs. Organizationally speaking, the situation of our writing program within the auspices of a larger department recalls Hildy Miller's description of the writing program's ambiguous academic and administrative location within blurred "lines of responsibility and . . . boundaries of territory" (51). When the boundaries of responsibility between department and writing program do occasionally overlap, in the hiring of new graduate students/writing program instructors every year, for example, "writing administrator concerns are often outweighed by those of department or institution" (51). One of my primary responsibilities as the Assistant to the Director has been to function as a liaison across these boundaries and territories, by serving as a mediator between the English Department and the Freshman English Program, and by helping to navigate a course for the program and its instructors amidst the contests of two administrators who find themselves occasionally at cross-purposes. My past familiarity with the personalities and policies of the department has served me well in this capacity.

Traditionally, the Freshman English Program administration has consisted of three people: a director, an assistant to the director, and a program secretary. This triumvirate was responsible for establishing program philosophy and policies, initiating changes to those policies, organizing the annual week-long fall teaching workshop for Graduate Instructors, as well as carrying out the day-to-day business of the program. And while the department leadership has never been exactly autocratic, neither has it been authentically democratic. Graduate Instructors especially complained of a programmatic "illusion of democracy" whereby the administration solicited and encouraged their input to Freshman English policy and summarily made its own decisions.

Between May 1997 and the present, this triumvirate has slowly and deliberately expanded to include a much wider range of people, collaboratively engaged in the construction of a more serviceable Freshman English Program. We should be frank: our efforts at collaborative administration have not enacted any permanent changes in the administrative structure of the university, the department, or the Freshman English Program. As a subsidiary program within the English Department, Freshman English remains a numerically large but institutionally neglected subdepartment within the School of Liberal Arts. With the exception of the Director, who is tenured, the program is implemented by graduate students and university staff members who collaborate because he has invited us to do so. Within this institutionally conservative and disenfranchised context, however, we have attempted to demonstrate the viability of a system based on cooperation and honest interchange among its various elements. That our ambiguous administrative and academic status might prove an asset, as Janangelo suggests, has been part of the collaborative agenda from the beginning (14-15).

As the introductory section of this article indicates, the professional literature on writing program administration has begun to suggest ways in which writing programs can more constructively channel their (sometimes limited) administrative resources. Specifically, each person contributing to a collaborative effort assumes responsibility for defining and enacting vision; for voicing opinions despite different levels of authority; for outcomes of the unit; and for individual honesty (Cambridge and McClelland 156). In our case, Ben as the WPA had the authority to put collaborative theory into practice and initiated the effort "not to dominate but rather to facilitate, to share power, and to enable both self and others to contribute" (Miller 52). But what has gradually become apparent in our own experience is that one cannot reposition WPAs without inevitably repositioning those people who work with them. One thing in particular that has struck me this year is the enormous personal effort it takes to sustain a collaboration without deferring to conventional administrative standards of authority and hierarchy—which is, after all, how we have been trained by the academy to perform. Sometimes, it has been difficult (for me, anyway) to articulate grievances or to disagree with colleagues who exceed me in age, or in experience, or in political clout; but my failure to do so would have indicated a failure of my commitment to the group.

On occasion, in fact, the collaborative delegation of responsibility has made for alliances across hierarchies. Confronted all too often with disappointed or disgruntled Graduate Instructors (GIs) too little time to balance administrative duties and the demands of teaching, and the sometimes disparaging attitudes of professors or administrators outside the program who feign no sympathy for the teaching of freshman writing, I often find myself face to face with a sensation Miller suggests is typical of the WPA, that of "having enormous responsibilities without accompanying power" (51). And when it comes to facing down the university's central administration, I, a female graduate student, and the tenured male director of the Freshman English program share a vulnerability. However, we are also participating together in a new active agency. In the meetings with the administrators we are defining who we are, articulating our differences, and listening to their perspectives, techniques Janangelo suggests as a means of "strategizing difference and resisting the dynamics of haste" (16). This avenue of dialogue is new. So far, it has been fruitless in achieving our short-term goals (namely a significant budget increase), but we have created a space for ourselves on the university's administrative agendas, and we have defined ourselves as a program in terms that did not exist heretofore.

Through this experience, I have realized that Miller's concept of the bi-epistemological administrative stance does not follow naturally or organically. It has happened in our program only through a consciously determined sequence of choices. Given the not always favorable reaction of the GI community to suggestions for change and the opposition of the perennially entrenched university hierarchy, to enact such a role is at times personally and academically equivalent to paddling upstream against a strong current.

The inauguration of a pro-collaborative stance in this writing program

has met some of its greatest challenges and rewards in developing the link between administrative policy and the classroom. Miller suggests that there are two ways of beginning to implement a post-masculinist administration—modification of existing structures and supplementation—and we have found ourselves making use of both of these strategies in our efforts to put theory into practice (55). For example, when Ben assumed the Director's position and I stepped in as Assistant, there were two significant problems facing the program from the perspective of the GIs. Our team scoring-based system of portfolio assessment, initiated several years ago in the effort to curb grade inflation within the program as well as a way of maintaining consistent community standards, had begun to require an enormous amount of time and energy from GIs, and this was understandably causing some resentment. In addition, the standards for assessment we were using as evaluative measures required continual calibration and maintenance, requiring further time commitments from teachers. The portfolio system as it was implemented several years ago was not working effectively or efficiently and was making the teaching responsibilities of the GIs more rather than less demanding. Thus, one of our primary goals for the 1997-98 school year was to design and implement a more effective portfolio assessment system tailored to fit the needs of our program.

Towards this end, Ben and I met regularly throughout the summer with the leaders of program teaching teams to formulate agendas and policies for the year ahead. We spent the summer hard at work with team leaders so that by August, we found that we had inadvertently re-invented the concept of teacher teams within our program. Team leaders were now integrally involved in the planning and implementation of program policies. On the positive side, this meant that GIs had a more representative voice in the theorizing of the program they were expected to carry into the classroom every day; on the negative side, the program's success was now depending heavily on the voluntary service of seven or eight GIs who were already teaching two classes each semester and trying to complete their degrees. Though one of our first goals last spring had been to secure funding to compensate these instructors for their hard work over the summer months, we failed to achieve this objective; commendably, they carried on. Becoming a team leader (a yearly appointment for which GIs must apply and interview) has thus come over the last year to represent a significant commitment of time and energy but provides participants with practical experience and a role in shared leadership.

The first real test of this larger collaborative enterprise came with the annual Graduate Instructor Teaching Workshop held in August 1997, an event designed to orient new GIs to the program and to offer veteran teachers the opportunity to share ideas, observations, and classroom experiences both with one another and with the new instructors. Ben solicited presentations from outside consultants to help us address GI complaints about the curriculum and portfolio assessment, and team leaders worked with me over the summer to plan and present almost 30 concurrent workshop sessions. Kitty attended in an administrative capacity, enabling us to accomplish the enormous task of summa-

rizing and recording the content of every session of the teaching workshop and posting them on the department listserv. The University Writing Center staff, under Brenda's direction, played a vital role in the workshop by sponsoring hands-on seminars to familiarize GIs with the Writing Center facilities, by providing those who were interested with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop listservs and webpages for their classes, and by scheduling Writing Center orientations for each section of Freshman English.

We used the fall workshop as a community of teachers to generate an enormous amount of information pertaining to our program's portfolio system and assessment. We devoted several workshop sessions during the week to re-conceiving our team scoring system with Kathleen Yancey. By reacting toward and against some alternative scoring scales, we generated the raw material that would become our new system of assessment. The following Saturday, team leaders spent five hours hard at work with Dr. Yancey to hammer the mass of information we had generated in workshop into more workable concepts. Ben purposefully did not attend this session during which we GIs clearly defined for the program as a whole exactly what a writing portfolio would be. To follow up, I met with team leaders several more times over the rest of the semester; by November, we had worked out the fine details of our assessment process. Program leadership adapted a willingness "to promote discussion, listen to divergent views, and look for common interests" (Miller 53), and, as a direct result, we accomplished some extremely valuable programmatic goals in a matter of months. This exercise in broadened leadership was a defining moment through which we established a new entity, one that, once it realized its value and jelled into an organizational *modus operandi*, would not have countenanced a WPA exercising power autocratically.

Another aim of this Freshman English administration has been that of raising morale within its ranks; we wanted to ensure that the freshman composition classroom proved a consistently valuable and positive experience for both teachers and students. One problem in particular which had been facing our program for many years was the geographic separation of its constituents. GI offices have been located in as many as four different building around the campus, with the department offices located in yet another. Years of this kind of separation served to suppress the program's sense of community (both academic and social), a situation which had the potential to make the maintenance of consistent program goals and methodologies increasingly difficult. In the last year, office space for GIs has been consolidated into one building with offices for the program secretary, the Director, and the Assistant to the Director. We have had the opportunity to get to know one another more closely, personally and professionally, and this acquaintance has a tremendous impact on our ability to orchestrate and implement new policies that affect the community as a whole.

One further challenge to the collaborative functioning of the program has been the issue of a program-wide curriculum revision. Ben initiated this process by circulating written curriculum revision proposals to the GI community as a whole and followed up by meeting with teacher team leaders to gauge responses.

When feedback from team leaders suggested a reluctance to accept mandated changes to the curriculum, Ben changed his initial intention to re-direct the program toward a reading-based English Studies series. After exploring pros and cons with team leaders, we called a staff meeting to introduce GIs to the theory base for such a curriculum, to offer an explanation of how such a curriculum might work, and to open the floor for discussion. The communication channels will remain open through a series of optional follow-up workshop sessions for those instructors interested in learning more about the curriculum. This route empowers those who wish to pursue the possibility of exploring a reading-based writing pedagogy with full programmatic support and leaves those instructors close to the end of their degree programs or comfortably settled into a pedagogical model of their own free to remain there.

While some of the long-term benefits (and problems) of a collaboratively oriented writing program administration remain to be seen, the short-term impact—at least at this point—seems undeniably positive. And as for me, I have had the uncanny, illuminating, validating, challenging, and, at times, disconcerting opportunity to see—as a graduate student—the possibilities that the academic game might admit within the perimeters of an administratively leveled playing field.

Assistant to the Director of the Writing Program: Kitty Keller

I was a Graduate Instructor for eight years before becoming the Assistant to the Director of the Writing Program, a new position at the university; as such, my job is constantly evolving. I am involved with the University of Mississippi Writing Project. I work closely with the Director of Freshman English/Director of the Writing Program. I am also involved with the Freshman English Program, specifically through the ESL mentoring program and the Freshman English Workshops. “Schizophrenic” is sometimes the best way to describe my mindset in this new job, as I move back and forth between programs, projects, and people, but my position allows me an interestingly holistic vantage point from which to view this newly collaborative administration.

What is most striking to me, from an administrative standpoint, are the ways in which power and authority have shifted within our Freshman English Program over the past nine years. Within that time, we have had no less than five departmental secretaries and four changes in the position of the Director of Freshman English, with three different faculty members filling the latter role. The number of GIs has increased steadily, from roughly thirty-five when I first began teaching, to fifty in my last year. In many ways, these changes within the program are reflected in the questions being asked throughout the field of rhetoric and composition as a whole: how do we best facilitate and administer a program that has moved from being the “bastard stepchild” to an enormous teaching/training force for graduate students?

Our work this year as a collaborative administration is one solution, one which has proven to be empowering as well as illuminating. We are an attempt in “democratizing program administration” (Gunner 14), spreading the power

base horizontally among the four of us and beyond into the GI community, yet I have realized that the parameters for such an endeavor are somewhat limited when an empowering of graduate students is involved. Ben remains an authority figure and remains in control of the program and the way in which it is run. By opening the Freshman English Program to collaboration, however, he has enabled us as graduate students to have a strong and clear voice in decisions made and policies implemented; we bring our own issues and ideas to the discussions of programmatic concerns. Though we will never achieve an egalitarian vision within a hierarchical system such as that in our university's table of organization, we can take some ownership of our own teaching and the system through which it functions.

When I began my Graduate Instructorship, my first Director of Freshman English was an untenured assistant professor, a new Ph.D. who was quite sympathetic and supportive of the GIs, and who found herself in the position of juggling her responsibilities as an administrator of GIs with her role as a faculty member. As a new, junior member of the university community, her powers of leverage were limited when fighting for increased salaries, benefits, and reduced course loads for the GIs. The department chair was, during this time, very much involved with the daily affairs of the Program. He was a part of the hiring, firing, and scheduling of the GIs, and he was involved in student grade grievances as well. During this time, graduate student involvement in the running of the program was growing somewhat, with one student serving as the Assistant to the Director and two more serving as members of the Freshman English Committee. There were also several of us who served in very traditional positions on departmental committees, representing the graduate student voice but often without a vote in the decisions made. Thus, the power structure in these first few years was quite typical.

When the untenured professor's three-year term as Director ended, she chose not to take on another term in that position, preferring to put her energies into the work necessary to gain tenure. That year, I served as the Assistant to the Director of Freshman English under an Acting Director, a tenured professor who was not a rhetoric and composition specialist; this experience was my first real foray into collaborative administration. We were truly partners in many respects, moreso than in previous Director/Assistant to the Director working relationships. He often turned to me for advice/information/assistance with the daily running of the department, and I relished being able to have such input into the workings of Freshman English; I knew he respected my opinions, and that was of enormous importance to my (often fragile) GI ego. During this time, I was also able to see the ways in which administrators work, gaining insight into the politics of academia and the running of a department. I realized that it was not the fault of the department, per se, that the instructors were among the lowest paid at the university and among the hardest working; the machinations of the university administration as well as the field as a whole had much to do with their peon status.

This was also a time in which I found myself set apart from my fellow instructors, due to the nature of my job as Assistant to the Director. I was a

graduate student, yet because I was privy to information that I could not divulge to my colleagues, their confiding in me about the underground of the department abated somewhat during this year. It was an awkward position for me, in certain respects, as I straddled some invisible line between being one of them (administration) and one of us (graduate student). While the Director and I worked well collaboratively, Freshman English was still run by the standard mode of university governance; for the most part, the rules came down from on high and, other than myself and the graduate students involved in committee work, the GIs had little input into the running of the program.

Two more changes in the administration of the program over the following four years ensued, until the 1997-98 academic year when a tenured professor again took on the role of Freshman English Director. As an endowed chair and a seasoned administrator, Ben was able to be much more aggressive in asserting the program's needs to the central administration. The change to a proactive director is a difficult one for some of the members of the university community to make; we now have a person in the position of authority who is a force to be reckoned with throughout the university. He is a Director who is in a position to lobby for the needs of the instructors and the needs of the program, and he is a Director with enough power and control to create an administration such as ours. Ben works toward a "postmasculinist" theory of administration, supporting the ideals of collaboration, listening to graduate student voices, and cooperating within the GI community, yet allowing for the "bi-epistemological" tendency of college administration by showing himself to be very much a masculinist in nature when dealing with the powers that be.

With the move toward a de-centering of authority in this program, there has been an increase in GI cohesiveness this year. The lines of communication within the Freshman English Program have never been more open and honest. This openness has brought to the surface dissension within the ranks of instructors which had heretofore been grumbled about in private, and it has allowed all of us a better, more realistic view of the totality of the program, so that we can assess and deal with the problems of this large program realistically. For example, the graduate teachers are the instructors-of-record for at least two courses per semester, yet many still seek outside employment to be able to make ends meet. The graduate students also realize that they are Graduate Instructors (responsible for between fifty and ninety students per semester) rather than Teaching Assistants, a point also noted in Miller's essay: as teachers, they "actually are assisting no one" (58), yet the moniker of "TA" still persists. In addition, our department is not graduating many Ph.D.s, and the GIs are concerned about their assistantships running out before their degrees are finished; then, once finished, they are worried that there will be no jobs out there for them. Thus, morale is a big issue for the administration of this program, as it is for most every department. Though these are not new concerns by any means, within this new administrative context, the graduate students are finding themselves in an empowered position to take some control, to work together to find creative solutions to these and other issues.

One way in which the GIs have begun to assert some authority over teaching and professional development is through curriculum development, the building of their own writing and literature courses (theme-based or other), which has often led to conference paper presentations, publications, and textbook projects. Also, the 1997 Fall Graduate Instructor Workshop was predominantly student-led, drawing on the years of experience contained within the instructor corps, allowing them to showcase their creative ideas and maintain a dialogue about programmatic issues. Students recently created an English Graduate Student organization, which is taking on some of the responsibility for community-building, professional development, and mentoring. Graduate students are often the most eager members of the professional community, and this collaborative administration has enabled them to build on their own interests and enthusiasm, to take their excitement from the classroom into their own professional lives. They are working together, helping to govern the program and its policies, gaining valuable administrative experience as well as innovative teaching experience which will contribute to their marketability once they graduate.

Our administrative team this year is a study in collaborative effort as well in that there is no power struggle and very little bickering. The only new position in this foursome is my own, the Assistant to the Director of the Writing Program, but this is the first time in my tenure at the university that we have had such constant interaction within the different aspects of the Writing Program, interaction which has been beneficial. The four of us have been longtime associates in this program; we are supportive and encouraging. It is a delight to have this sustenance in a working environment, and the division of labor is such that we are able to give and take, depending upon the specific demands of our respective jobs. We have truly established ourselves as a staff; though we may all be working in different aspects of the writing program, our weekly meetings allow us to touch base, reallocating work as needed. These meetings are the moments of enacting the collaboration; they replenish our ability to function as a cohesive whole, and they are often the only chance that we all have to come together as one body, to vent frustration or share excitement over something in our week.

Among the four of us, we are learning the quirks of each of the other members of the team, a necessity with regard to collaborative work: Ben delegates easily and listens well, and he assumes that once he gives out a task, it will be done; Jennie is a hard-working team player, who brings forth the most wonderful insights when we most need them; Brenda is an ideas woman who is not hesitant to go toe-to-toe with Ben; I am the realist who tries to keep us grounded, who is sometimes a tough sell in our brainstorming sessions. Perhaps our respective genders play a part in our ability to work the way we do, but I also attribute much to the personalities involved. We all care a great deal about the success of this program, and as such, those of us who are graduate students face one of the drawbacks to the involvement of students in an effort such as this: we give all we can to enabling the program to thrive, yet we will have graduated by the time the long-term results of much of our work is evident.

Thus, this collaborative administration made up of the four of us and, by extension, the team leaders and the other GIs and the composition faculty of the department, is a study in playing well together. The undergraduates whom we teach can only benefit from the clear lines of communication now open in this department, by instructors who have a vested interest in the program and the way in which it is run. For the first time since I've been a member of this department, I can see all of the parts slowly coming together to form a cohesive whole, and I feel very much a part of it. In addition, I am facing the job market with years of real service and administrative experience in our department, and I'm ready for the broad variety of demands and responsibilities that come with moving out of this apprentice phase of my academic career.

Director of the Writing Center: Brenda Robertson

In the fall of 1996 I was hired to direct the University Writing Center, a full time staff position. My job description requires that I hire, train, and supervise student writing consultants, budget the hours of operation for Writing Center, prepare payroll sheets and keep time records, keep accounts of funds, purchase and maintain computers, keep and report usage statistics, write proposals for additional funding, and also work with the Freshman English Program and academic degree programs to develop program-specific support to student writers in those programs. In reality, I do more.

When I made the decision to accept this position, I was, and remain, a Ph.D. student with more administrative experience than the average student, partially due to my length of tenure—nine years in M.A. and Ph.D. programs. Delays in progress toward my degree have been first due to extenuating circumstances often encountered by middle-aged female students. I chose to accept the staff position of Writing Center Director prior to completion of work toward my degree because it offered me the financial benefits of full-time employment. This higher profile job has also provided me the opportunity to accommodate my personal life while I complete my studies and meet professional development goals I set for myself.

During my graduate studies, I have served as Assistant to the Director of Freshman English, Administrative Assistant to the Writing Program Administrator, Teaching Team Leader, Freshman English Committee member, graduate student representative on assorted departmental committees, and Assistant to the Writing Center Director. Now, as Director of the Writing Center, I learn to maneuver my way through academic administration, and my perspective broadens. I know first-hand how to appeal for funding. I know how to manage a budget. I now know how to "make connections" all across the campus. I also know how to accommodate specialized student and faculty needs. These and many other experiences prepare me to face an increasingly competitive job market with professional experience and self-confidence few other new graduates possess. My commitment of service has also exacted a price: although I have gained valuable administrative experience, I am not yet able to market this experience because I have not yet completed my degree.

When I began directing the Writing Center, I proceeded to overhaul a facility which had been neglected for some time due to lack of both financial support and administrative attention. I quickly claimed surplus furnishings for the Writing Center when the University library was renovated. Among those, I recognized furnishings that would be useful to the Freshman English Graduate Instructors, whose offices were sparsely supplied with ancient typing and cafeteria tables. My stint as a Graduate Instructor had provided me with first-hand experience in midnight requisitioning of property, so I suggested to the English Department that they might acquire some of the library's furnishings for the GIs that summer. A few weeks later when surplus offerings were dwindling, I turned to Ben, as Freshman English Director-elect, to borrow his pickup truck to assist the GIs in procuring some of the excess for themselves. At about the same time Ben visited Somerville Hall, a vacated residence hall, and returned enthusiastic about further possibilities for change in the GIs' working conditions—if the instructors could be relocated from their various locations across campus (Ben's enthusiasm would later prove useful when he would heave desks and bookcases up the three flights of stairs at the new location). GIs commented that they would believe the changes when they saw them. After much finagling and some carefully worded e-mail correspondence with a central administrator, Ben called me to his office to read the administrator's affirmative response to his request that all of the GIs be assigned offices in the vacated hall. We high-fived one another.

During the shuffling of the furnishings, the English Department chair observed that I must have a very strange job description; he was unaware that moving furniture for Freshman English was a part of the Writing Center Director's job. As Miller has pointed out, "[w]hen boundaries of administrative responsibility blur, cooperative approaches to resolving conflicts may be mistaken for encroachment into territory" (54). My predecessors had not been so actively involved in the Freshman English Program and, admittedly, mine was a slightly uncomfortable position: I was at once an English graduate student and also a full-time staff member. Fortunately, Ben and I shared the vision of developing the relationship between the Freshman English Program and the Writing Center. We were just beginning in a fundamental way—logistical support first, collaborative curriculum-building later. He and I also began to formulate ways to share with others the decision-making responsibility in the Freshman English Program. By late spring I had supervised the final move of furnishings and the fifty GIs were settled into new offices. Ben also moved his office to the new site and began individually interviewing each of the GIs to learn of their perspectives on the program and their needs as graduate students—a feat in and of itself.

By then the new 1997-98 Assistant to the Director of Freshman English, Jennie, had been selected, so she assumed responsibility for the various physical concerns at Somerville Hall thereafter and came onboard as one of the major players in our collaborative effort. Jennie and I conferred with and without Ben about the logistics of general management matters. Later Kitty came on board as Assistant to the Director of the Writing Program. Jennie, Kitty, and I have

previously worked together on several projects and committees. We know we can trust and rely on one another to meet immediate needs when one or the other cannot be present. Since Kitty's office is adjacent to my own, we often share our writing and our duties. Both Kitty and Jennie have, at times, each contributed their services to the Writing Center. This blurring exchange of job responsibilities has offered us each a perspective we might not otherwise have gained. In addition, we have developed cooperative arrangements for the departmental social events which are inevitably part of an administrative program.

The renewed relationship between Freshman English and the Writing Center has brought benefits to both programs. For example, when I participated in organizing and then attended the Fall teachers' workshop, where the majority of the GIs scheduled Freshman English class orientation sessions in the Center, more than 1000 students learned of the Writing Center's services, and more than 550 new e-mail accounts were activated. As a result of these orientation sessions, the Writing Center has experienced a record number of student contacts this year in both the computer center and the writing consultation areas. In addition, the GIs are in the Writing Center more often, using the Internet services and visiting/consulting with me. They have grown to know our student staff and have gained more confidence in their abilities. As more GIs better understand what we "do" in the Writing Center, they encourage more students to seek our assistance.

I have gained from the informal presence of the GIs in the Writing Center, too. Structural relationships did not provide for my maintenance of a position in the Freshman English Program, but the individual and small group relationships with GIs have provided me a place adjacent to the program and allowed me to maintain my status within the community.

Although I had served on a variety of committees as a Graduate Instructor representative, I never felt that I had a real voice in the administration of the program, since graduate students had no vote in matters of policy. This fall that feeling changed when I joined the informal Freshman English leadership committee of four—a committee without a name but with great purpose and possibilities. Each Wednesday at noon in Somerville Hall we discuss teacher workshop plans, staff or student problems, rookie issues, departmental financial woes, Writing Center/Graduate Instructor issues, communications with the English Department, teacher team news, and a multitude of other administrative issues. Though we sometimes have a specific agenda, these luncheon meetings are informal and everyone speaks; we chat socially as well as conducting hard business. We are able to generate ideas together and to share the work to be done. The team or committee works well because all members have a strong commitment to the teaching of Freshman English and respect one another as colleagues. I also feel that Ben attempts to settle himself into the least authoritarian position he can locate in our predominantly female group. (Although at times he has told us hunting stories, Ben has also sung for us the "Good Morning" song with which he greets his two-year-old daughter.) Occasionally, he and I vigorously debate issues while the two younger team members glance side-long

at one another. Through it all, our personal bonds have grown stronger; our commitment to the collaborative effort is sustained.

I have brought my share of Writing Center problems to the Un-committee meetings, and the others often offer useful advice. We three graduate students have shared our experiences as Assistants to the Directors of Freshman English. Jennie is also able to share her prior work experiences as an English Department part-time assistant. Ben describes the wondrous world of academic bureaucracy in the central administration as the three of us sit astonished. Ben is also able to help us understand creative ways to resolve issues. But I think the lesson I best learn from Ben is one of internal fortitude in the face of lack of administrative support for upgrading the Freshman English Program, and I believe that the GI staff has seen this in his stance as well.

They now have a common location, a vested interest in their community, and a well-led program in which they have stronger voices. Through the Fall teacher's workshop they have learned how to work smarter. They function much as a departmental faculty but without nearly so much in-fighting. I am confident that their enfranchisement in the Freshman English Program will produce an even greater confidence in collaborative classroom methods. I think, too, that there is a change in perception of the administration. Although at first there seemed to be confusion from the grad students concerning Jennie's, Kitty's, and my jobs, especially what each "does," they now know they can rely on any of us to see that their needs and issues are addressed. Because there are three graduate students working so closely with Ben, there seems to be less of the "us against them" attitude, and I feel that the grad students better trust the administration. We may, as Miller cautions, "look weak and the delivery system chaotic" (57); we have in reality a much more fortified base of support because our foundation is flexible and constituted of our individual strengths working together.

For me this year has been instrumental in my gaining greater confidence as an administrator and expanding my sphere of activity in the university. It's been an exciting ride from scavenging abandoned furniture to blazing new horizons in academic support services for our students.

Conclusion: The Four of Us

We have attempted to show multiple, though limited, perspectives on several dynamic changes in the architecture of power in one university's writing program. While the problems that we face daily are no less vexing than those the program faced last year, we each feel more empowered to act on those problems and, working together, we multiply our individual power into a communal power. Because three of us were or had very recently been graduate instructors, our peers trusted us as leaders; therefore, the roots of our power relations spread quickly and deeply into the graduate instructor community. Plus, we believe that we have developed a better, more communally humane way of addressing issues. We can report better staff morale, more communication between ourselves and the staff, more efficient work routines, a more consistent implementation of the curriculum staff-wide, and a feeling of belonging to something

special, a place in the academy that is ours. The way we went about achieving all of these things was of paramount importance, dependent on transforming the power of the WPA into a participatory activity in which several staff members became enfranchised.

While some would view this form of administration as ephemeral, lacking deep structural positioning, we view it as more subversive and more pervasive programmatically. We view our work as history-in-the-making, feeling that we are involved in an exciting journey.⁵ Five years from now our work may be viewed as transitional, leading to an agency that is constituted by more tenured faculty and that demands more institutional commitment. But, whatever the form of leadership in the near future, one thing is for certain: the legacy of our group will define much of its nature and constitution. Graduate instructors will figure prominently, if not predominantly, in the leadership team. And the linking relationship between the Writing Center and the Freshman English Program will continue vigorously.

In this new enterprise we graduate students have gained invaluable and unique administrative experience; Ben has gained associates who share in the leadership role. Together we produce a number of viable options and foster an atmosphere of good will. While some players in this game will change in the next season, the infrastructure for a collaborative administrative agency has been established. Our two other composition faculty colleagues will return from their sabbaticals next year. And the dean has announced his retirement at the end of this semester. The playing field is being readied for another administrative team to carry on this new tradition.

Notes

1. "Graduate Instructors" is a term preferred by our graduate students who are the sole teachers of record for freshman and sophomore English courses. Previously they were called graduate teaching assistants, the profession's more commonly-used term. Throughout this article, the terms "Graduate Instructor" and "GI" are used interchangeably.
2. The Writing Program is a university-wide agency that involves several offices and departments in various formal and informal arrangements. It receives funding from various state, federal, and private sources. Admittedly, my holding the Schillig Chair and the Writing Program Director's position as well as being Director of Freshman English has provided me with administrative flexibility, funding, and, thus, powers that were not available to my predecessors in the Freshman English Director's position.
3. Perhaps not so ironically, my administrative stance outside the program—when dealing with other administrative agencies on campus—must be one of a strong authority, empowered by my status as a full professor holding an endowed chair and by my several years' experience as an administrator of other programs. While holding collegial conversations within our leadership group meetings, I write argumentative memos and engage in tough negotiations with

central administrators, competing with other program heads in trying to gain badly-needed resources.

4. John Bean, co-author of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing*, worked with us for two days, concentrating on classroom practices in the teaching writing; over a three-day period, Kathleen Yancey helped us rethink how we taught and assessed writing portfolios.

5. Indeed, so self-aware have we been that we have devoted several of our weekly meetings to the collaborative planning of a conference presentation on this topic at CCCC this spring and the collaborative writing of this article—even to the point of us being frequently seated around a conference table (and even a breakfast table!) composing on laptop computers. Composing this article has been a major challenge for us, because our routine means of communicating is a roundtable discussion, very much a free-flowing give-and-take. Presenting our stories on paper has required that we shift from conversation to separate speeches, working through revisions to respond to each other's section within our own.

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**COUNCIL OF
WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS**

Website

WPA maintains a Website of organizational information, as well as information and resources for those involved in writing program administration.

The URL is

<http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/English/Hesse/wpawelcome.htm>

Power, Partnership, and Negotiations: The Limits of Collaboration

Susanmarie Harrington, Steve Fox, and Tere Molinder Hogue

Writing program administrators are much given to introspection. As Jeanne Gunner's presentation at last summer's WPA conference argued, the scholarship about writing program administration is increasingly concerned with critical reflection on the definition and work of writing program administrators. Gunner argues that the history of the WPA is "a history of an unraveling unity, a growing displacement of a monolithic position by a multipositioned agency." This displacement, which Gunner also calls "unthinking the WPA," involves seeing the WPA as more than either a bureaucrat concerned with oiling the wheels of a complex set of interlocking introductory courses or a single figure whose scholarly and pedagogical expertise drives the development of all curricula and faculty training; recent examinations of the nature of a WPA call for the position to become something embedded in partnerships, networks, conversations, and collaborations within the writing program and across the campus. Such analysis grows out of the political crises faced by WPAs whose institutions failed to value either their individual work or their programs, and also out of the trend toward the postmodern, which urges us all to become contextual, situated, multiply defined.

In many ways, this theoretical movement in scholarship about WPAs has grown largely unchallenged. That WPAs should forge political alliances is, of course, sound advice that we would not dispute. That WPAs, and writing programs, should be rhetorical, situated in their local context, aware of the ways in which multiple subjectivity affects all levels of decisions, is likewise undisputable. But living the experience of a postmodern WPA can be complicated and troubling. We have a personal stake in these matters, since our writing program is one of the few that does not have a single WPA at its head. No single person has authority or responsibility for the program; the WPA work is spread among a large committee. We are thus in a unique (or at least unusual) position from which to critique and extend the recent theoretical calls to decrease emphasis on a unitary WPA figure and to increase emphasis on collaboration.

Calls to increase collaboration in administration have proposed two different types of reform. In one, administrative structure would not change, but the administrative work would. Anne Ruggles Gere argues that the recent crises surrounding WPAs may open the way for a new model of WPA, one more in keeping with the long revolution of composition. . . . The word "administrator" signals the totalizing unity that most often defines WPAs. I propose that we reconceptualize WPAs in terms of multiple subject positions, positions that are more collaborative and research oriented and offer the possibility of forward motion in the long revolution of composition. (127)

Gere, while calling for a profound reorientation of administration, still assumes that there will be a figure who serves as a writing program administrator, albeit one who functions in “multiple subject positions.” Barbara Cambridge and Ben McClelland, on the other hand, call for a different sort of collaboration, one which would change administrative structures as well as administrative work. They share Gere’s complex vision of the WPA but suggest that perhaps writing programs don’t need a director at all. Programs would benefit, they claim, from a collaborative administrative structure that promotes relationships with faculty across campus. The WPA position, they argue, should become a partnership with other faculty, characterized by shared governance, so that the WPA is repositioned “from icon to partner” (159). A WPA is not “primarily responsible for the program,” but rather “remains intimately involved in coordinating the faculty who decide what they are able to do and for what they will be accountable. The value of the WPA’s coordination and of the faculty members’ pedagogical success are both measured by the student learning outcomes. The partnership implicates both the WPA and faculty in joint responsibility” (157). Despite the fact that Cambridge and McClelland argue for the abolition of the writing program directorship, they refer to “the WPA” throughout their essay. It is difficult to abandon the notion of a single administrator, although they do mention several administrative structures that involve more than one person.

What underlies both these arguments is the belief that the WPA should be conceptualized as a dynamic figure who enables other work—whether that other work be situated research (Gere) or innovative faculty partnerships (Cambridge and McClelland). Especially in Cambridge and McClelland’s vision, the writing program administrator(s) provide energy more than direction; the WPA is not the only person responsible for explaining or dreaming the program’s vision. Furthermore, the leadership provided by the WPA must come from a “shared administrative or organizational infrastructure” (157), which means more than a rotation of responsibility. It means shared responsibility, decisions made in fluid, contextual partnerships. The WPA, Cambridge and McClelland note, using Charles Handy’s formulations, will “orchestrate the broad strategic vision . . . develop the shared administrative and organizational infrastructure, and . . . create the cultural glue which can create synergies” (157).

Cambridge and McClelland thus argue that a repositioned writing program *administration* is able to be more effective than a writing program *administrator*. Gere’s argument in favor of the restructured WPA comes from a slightly different angle, for she posits that a traditionally conceived WPA can actually have negative consequences. Starting with Raymond Williams’ analysis, Gere examines the ways in which WPAs obstruct a revolution in composition as “they identify with the existing order by accepting a position in the hierarchy,” which keeps literature at the top of the department and composition at the bottom (127). A collaborative model of administration would resist the hierarchy and better enable action research (128), making the writing program a more vibrant place on campus, home to a network of texts and relationships.

What neither argument addresses is how such partnerships come to be created in a hierarchical university environment, how power (even the decentralized,

facilitative kind) is acquired, and how collaboration works on a daily basis. In an institution which values distinctions of academic rank, and in which administrative work in the first-year writing program is not always acknowledged as a complex form of teaching and scholarship, the creation of networked partnerships that build bridges across campus, or blur boundaries between research, service, and teaching, can be difficult. That the task is difficult does not make the task unworthy, but our theories must address this difficulty.

Local History

For us, this issue is a practical as well as theoretical matter, for we are three members of a ten-member coordinating committee that has collaborated in the administration of our university's first year writing program for the past ten years. Our experience living the theory affords us an opportunity to examine, critique, and extend the new directions in writing program administration theory. While the arguments for collaborative administration are clear, the political dimensions of collaboration and partnership have been undertheorized, and we use our institution's administrative structure as a starting point for analysis. Such a move, we must acknowledge, is exactly the kind of work Cambridge and McClelland call for near the end of their article, which cites our committee as one example of the kind of administration they advocate (158).

Rather than a writing program director, our program has a Writing Coordinating Committee, composed of tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty, that oversees all aspects of the introductory writing program. Like many other university structures, our model of writing program coordination came about partly out of theoretical conviction and partly out of historical accident. Overall, the structure of the writing program was spurred by two factors: first, the desire to decentralize decision-making and involve more adjunct faculty in the life of the program, and second, the desire to increase the connections between composition research and writing program practice. Particularly as the number of faculty lines in rhetoric and composition grew, the department reasoned, associating administrative tasks with lecturers would "free up" tenure-track faculty to pursue research interests within the writing program.

Collaborative administration has slowly grown in our department. In the 1970s, our department had a Director of Writing (a tenure-track line), along with writing program secretaries, who occupied a different office than the literature secretaries, and a literature faculty (full-time) and writing faculty (part-time, save for the director) who had little to do with each other. Two successive directors of writing who served from 1970-85 supervised a large group of part-time faculty who were excited by the arrival of process pedagogy. The *esprit de corps* among the adjunct writing faculty was impressive, and the directors of composition instituted an active committee and social structure for the adjunct faculty, who thus engaged in policy formation, professional development, and faculty governance. An adjunct professional organization kept track of seniority and handled scheduling.

In the mid-'80s, Barbara Cambridge was asked to become director of writing. She suggested the term *coordinator* instead, and requested that the department set up the Writing Coordinating Committee (WCC), composed of adjunct faculty. This move formalized the role the adjunct faculty had played in developing curriculum and made the WCC, previously an ad hoc arrangement, a standing departmental committee. The shift in title, from *director* to *coordinator*, allowed the department to recognize the ways in which the entire writing faculty worked together to create the program. But differences in status were still important. As the WCC's only tenure-track member, Cambridge was the only one able to attend department meetings. However, positions such as coordinators of various courses or of the University Writing Center emerged on the committee, and within the program, a flexible and shared administration grew. When the department was able to hire seven full-time, non-tenure-track faculty (called lecturers), these positions were filled from the ranks of adjunct faculty (largely those who were already serving on the WCC). By the late '80s, there were no more adjunct faculty on the committee, and some tenure track faculty were added to the committee. The committee currently has 10 members. (See Figure 1 for committee staffing. See Appendix for a full listing of the committee's responsibilities.)

Figure 1: Writing Coordinating Committee Staffing

Since 1994, the tenure-track faculty have rotated the chair of the committee every two years. This position does not include any released time, nor does it include any specified duties other than convening the committee on a regular basis and coordinating the agenda for each meeting. The WCC membership includes the following:

Coordinator of First-Year Composition and Coordinator of Basic Writing*
Coordinator of First-Year Composition and Coordinator of Second-Semester Composition (Research and Argumentation)*
Coordinator of Second-Semester Composition (Professional Writing)*
Coordinator of the University Writing Center*
Coordinator of ESL courses*
Liaison with academic advisors
Tenure-line faculty
Director of Placement and Assessment (current chair; assistant professor)*
Assistant professor
Associate professor
Director of Technical Communication (associate professor)

*Lecturers have a 4/4 teaching load. Tenure-line faculty have a 3/3 teaching load, with usually one course released for research. Each person marked with an * receives 1, sometimes 2, course release(s) per semester for writing program administration. Summer administrative time is negotiated each year.*

The department chair retains technical authority over staffing and curriculum, although the committee, in practice, makes all such decisions. Virtually all the assigned administrative responsibility is held by five lecturers, who coordinate the writing center and the set of five writing courses that comprise the first year offerings. Susanmarie is the only tenure-track faculty member holding assigned administrative responsibility, and she directs the placement and assessment program. The other faculty on the committee (those without assigned administrative duties related to the writing program) serve to improve communication within the department and to involve composition research in the program. Collectively, the committee does what a director of composition would, handling matters of staffing, faculty development, curriculum, and policy. On a broader level—and this is where the collaborative structure makes a difference—the committee seeks to *coordinate* the work of writing program faculty; to *represent* the interests of adjunct faculty in the department and the university; and to *link* the writing program with other offices on campus with an interest in writing.

The mix of experience, expertise, and perspective on the committee provides much-needed diversity, and compensates for individual shortcomings. Although each member exercises strong leadership in individual areas of responsibility—whether that be a particular course, or placement, or the writing center—no single person dominates the overall policy-making responsibility of the committee. The writing program does not speak with a single voice, but it does, on the whole, speak from consensus. Yet some troubling dimensions of this arrangement remain, and we do not find these addressed in the literature on re-thinking collaboration. Issues of relative status and institutional power, as well as incentives to collaborate, are challenges we face. Our collaborative structure is grounded, in part, in the assumption that “administration” is something not suited for tenure-track faculty, or at least that it is an onerous burden to be borne by as few tenure-track faculty as possible. It is also grounded, in part, in the assumption that research and teaching are separate activities, research being conducted by tenure-track faculty in exchange for a lighter teaching load. The committee structure, an easy-going network, supports information flow, but does not contain a mechanism for addressing the effects of differential university status. At the same time, we recognize that this structure does create a web of relationships, since the committee’s function is, essentially, to “engage all parties in strategic planning” (Cambridge and McClelland 157).

Complicating Collaboration

In this model, collaboration abounds. Few decisions are made by individuals; hallway consultations and long monthly meetings ensure information flow and shared decision-making. Our introductory writing program is a good one; last year’s external review of the English Department writing program praised the professionalization of our adjunct faculty and the effectiveness of our program administration. Yet, after twelve years of growth, we are beginning to sense strains in the collaborative model. Our structure emphasizes internal collabora-

tion, and does not explicitly set up pathways for communication or collaboration beyond the writing program. Our consideration of the possibilities and limitations of a collaborative administration grew initially out of frustration with handling the large work load of the committee, as well as with the campus' handling of certain debates about writing requirements. Why, with such a large committee to share the work, was certain information about our writing program not getting out to other departments? And why, with such a large committee, did we feel so overworked, and even beleaguered? We knew that at other institutions a single director and perhaps two assistant directors did what we assumed to be the same work. Perhaps there was something wrong with the way we were collaborating. While we have been grateful for the support our collaborative administrative structure provides, we have also become increasingly aware of the fragility of collaboration. We have become aware of ways in which external challenges can pressure collaborative administrators to work with, rather than against, the systems we usually aim to reform.

Molly Wingate's insightful discussion of writing center politics gave us a way to frame these questions in a larger context. Wingate invokes the historical associations of the term *collaboration*, using a political framework to categorize ways in which her collaboration with the university structure actually prevented the writing center from flourishing for a time. Collaboration is a complicated term, and Wingate reminds us that collaboration, in itself, is neither good nor bad; collaboration's goals and contexts must be articulated carefully if good results are to follow. An analysis of the politics of collaboration can be extended beyond the relationships between writing centers and their host institutions, to examine the ways in which writing programs themselves are situated in their universities. Wingate's work draws on the work of Werner Rings, a German historian, who describes four kinds of collaboration: *neutral collaboration*, undertaken by those who "believe that they must survive the best way that they can... these collaborators directly and indirectly work for the occupying power without professing any political principles" (104); *unconditional collaboration*, undertaken willingly because the collaborators "admire and accept the ideas of the occupying power" (104); *conditional collaboration*, undertaken out of only partial acceptance of the occupiers' ideas; and, finally, *tactical collaboration*, undertaken "to regain freedom, to save innocent lives, or to reach a political ideal" (104). In borrowing Wingate's use of these historical categories, we echo her warning that "colleges and universities are not cruel foreign powers occupying writing centers," and, we would add, first-year writing programs (104). However, Wingate helps us see that shared administration alone does not promote the reflection and progressive partnership necessary for reform; administrative structures must promote this, and they must promote partnerships across campus.

These campus partnerships can be difficult to achieve, a fact that was brought home to us in a long and public debate over writing requirements in an emergent proposal for revised general education requirements. The second-semester composition course taken by liberal arts and science majors had an

unacceptable drop/failure rate and had been the object of scrutiny and revision for more than a year when a committee proposing new general education requirements began critiquing it. The public discussion that followed involved several levels of department administration, and the WCC often felt that the campus discussion of the course neglected the work it had *already* done to identify and then remedy the problems. Our administrative model was sorely tested as we responded to this debate.

With the benefit of hindsight, we see that this crisis (like Wingate's) was provoked, in part, by our failure to embed our administrative work in campus partnerships. Much of our energy (and specific responsibilities delineated by the department) is devoted to collaborating with each other; little to collaborating with other academic units. Using Wingate's framework, we were able to identify the institutionalized style of collaboration we were living as neutral collaboration, collaboration which failed to articulate or address the assumptions under which we labored. And while some of those assumptions had positive consequences (for instance, the assumption that collaborative administrative structures would encourage information flow between full-time and adjunct faculty has indeed fostered good morale among our faculty), others have not (for instance, the assumption that non-tenure-track faculty have no need to conduct research has led to a devaluation of non-tenure-track faculty's voices in campus debates). As a result of these experiences, we have identified external political concerns that have impeded the formation of partnerships. Some issues that need to be clarified and theorized in any collaborative arrangement include the nature of partnerships, conflict management, and multiple roles played by all involved.

Nature of Partnerships

The nature of the partnerships implied in administrative collaboration has been a complicated issue. In some ways, the egalitarian nature of partnerships among ourselves is undercut by the titles we bear. Susanmarie, in a tenure-track line, is *Director* of Placement and Assessment, while Tere is *Coordinator* of the University Writing Center; the other lecturers who receive released time for administration are similarly titled course *coordinators*. In Susanmarie's first year, her title was also coordinator, but it was mysteriously changed by action of the university administration. If the partnerships are truly equal, why can't everyone have the same title? Does a director outrank a coordinator? And what to make of the committee members —like Steve —who serve with no special title at all?

The matter of titles grows out of a more fundamental difference between faculty ranks, and the underlying assumption of a split between teaching and research, or administration and research. How does publishing an article in a disciplinary journal compare to the kind of "lore" that an experienced teacher and administrator gains? How does the training a Ph.D. program provides function alongside the important professional expertise that a lecturer with one or more master's degrees has? Do titles confer or recognize authority? How does authority affect partnerships?

In partnerships within the Writing Coordinating Committee, we usually

manage to set aside these questions, and our unequal ranks in the hierarchy, and achieve working relationships built on actual experience and expertise and much mutual respect. In moving beyond the committee itself to forge partnerships with other faculty, departments, and schools, however, the unequal status of disciplines and faculty ranks becomes salient again. For example, when we tried to collaborate with a professor in another department (we'll call him "Professor Knox") who critiqued our first-year writing curriculum, we had many problems. Professor Knox, who had a sincere interest in the effectiveness of general education courses, did not seem to treat composition as a discipline worthy of true partnership with his own. Interdisciplinary faculty partnerships based on mutual respect for each other's discipline are one thing; an interdisciplinary relationship in which one person or group ignores the disciplinary expertise of the other, and in which that person or group's discipline does not even come into play, is quite another. Composition, like math or reading if not more so, invites kibitzers and Monday morning quarterbacks. It would be one thing for a faculty member in anthropology, psychology, or communication to offer perspectives from one of those disciplines that shed light on our work in composition—and to be open in turn to what composition might say to their disciplinary endeavors. Professor Knox did not offer insights from his discipline, and though one composition professor gave him several readings in composition theory, he did not seem influenced by our field's hard-won findings. Nor was his discipline's status at stake in this "collaboration." We have encountered similar problems when dealing with the campus committee charged with revising the undergraduate curriculum and with other institutional partners.

Faculty rank also complicates such external partnerships. The lecturers on our committee have sometimes felt slighted or patronized by professorial faculty both within and outside our department. Professor Knox, for example, seemed unwilling to acknowledge the professional authority of our lecturers and our adjunct faculty. Our lecturers are pragmatic and not terribly thin-skinned, so they frequently suggest that a tenure-track member of the committee, or the department chair, speak on behalf of the writing program. Still, this creates problems. The coordinator of a course should have more authority to speak about that course than the tenure-track chair of the Writing Coordinating Committee or the department chair—or at least should have comparable authority, so that we can work with other faculty as partners.

Although not every writing program has non-tenure track lecturers, most have faculty of various ranks (including adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants), and thus calls for a more collaborative WPA structure and the forging of partnerships must reckon with the effect of faculty rank and disciplinary status on such partnerships. At each institution, and sometimes in each new situation, WPAs must decide which sort of collaboration allows them to accomplish their purposes without unconscionable sacrifices of principle and self-respect. At our institution, the collaborative model of writing program administration has at least forced us to acknowledge these thorny issues and has also provided us with some experience, however imperfect, of an alternative, more egalitarian model. If

we engage more skillfully in tactical collaborations, perhaps we can make this model more influential in changing or humanizing the hierarchical model that pervades our university system.

Conflict Management

Collaboration is often linked with consensus, leading to the misunderstanding that consensus means everyone always agrees. In a collaborative arrangement, conflict must be managed well, indeed encouraged, for successful collaboration relies on a free exchange of ideas. The collaboration must be handled in ways that encourage collaborating partners to function as *equals*, to the extent possible, although (because of the tensions described above) this is one of the most difficult issues we have had to confront together. In a small group dedicated to collaboration, sharing offices in a small stretch of hall, there is actually great pressure to agree, to sacrifice professional disagreements for the sake of personal relationships. Yet what Gregory Clark asserts about the need to acknowledge conflict in reader-writer collaborations applies to our professional collaborations as well. Rather than suppressing conflict, Clark argues, readers must acknowledge it and even encourage it, and then seek through conversation to attain consensus—albeit a temporary consensus. The process of conversation, and thus the plurality of conflicting views, must continue (52-53). As teachers, we hear students complain that their peers are too “nice” and thus do not offer useful critiques. Some students fear that criticism will lead to conflict and that conflict will destroy the group. As members of the Writing Coordinating Committee, we have also, at times, feared conflict and thus suppressed it. We sometimes sidle up to major disagreements, and collectively back away from them, unwilling to air the disagreements publicly. For instance, a new textbook has been chosen for our first-year course with surprisingly little conversation among the committee or our faculty, partly because of time pressures, and partly because of no clear way to manage conflicts about some key issues in the program which are coming closer and closer to the surface. A similar level of surprising agreement has permeated the extensive revision of our basic writing and first-year composition courses. As Gregory Clark states, “Because it is the nature of consensus to deny the ideological nature of knowledge and thus the validity of conflict, any attempt to establish such a consensus constitutes an attempt to establish what Perelman calls ‘an orthodoxy’ that will officially ignore and consequently suppress difference and dissent” (56). Again, we need to apply what we have learned from student groups about collaboration to our own administrative collaboration. Peer workshop groups often move toward a consensus that suppresses difference. Individual committee members (and likely individual members of the writing faculty as well) have sometimes chosen silence over conflict, enabling what appears to be consensus, but actually creating an imposed orthodoxy. The imposition of orthodoxy is no less unfortunate if accomplished via collaboration than if directed by a single person.

Clark distinguishes authoritarian consensus from pluralistic consensus based on conversation:

A community that is proficient in pluralism is constituted on the basis of a very different kind of consensus than the authoritarian consensus that would reconstruct a community in the ideological image of the person whose rhetoric promotes it. Pluralism requires that conflicting notions of shared, social knowledge coexist, and that the conflicts themselves be publicly explored. Consequently, it necessitates that the conversations that sustain a community proceed not toward agreements that would end the exchange but toward the exposure of disagreements. In essence, it means that the primary agreement that supports the process of conversation is agreement to converse. (57)

A collaborative administrative structure will not automatically promote pluralism. Without an agreement to converse and a willingness to explore disagreements, shared administration can degenerate into a front, masking the will to power of some dominant person or group on the committee or in the department. Our collective leadership must be authorized by the conversation of the committee members—and by the conversation of the whole writing faculty. Otherwise, our collaboration becomes an imposition of authoritarian rule on others. This vision of authorized rhetoric conflicts in many ways with the hierarchical structure of the university. Not everyone would see themselves as part of the conversation: adjunct faculty and students in our classes might perceive our administrative collaboration as excluding them. We should find more ways to engage the various stakeholders in our writing program in the conversation that sustains us, and we must seek out the key disagreements that will provide the momentum for forward growth.

Many of the conflicts that administrators must face are not, however, internal conflicts (such as what textbook to use), but external conflicts (such as the role of writing courses in the university's curriculum, or how to assess students' writing abilities before graduation). And in a hierarchical university which, traditionally, values research more than teaching and in which full professors speak with more authority than do non-tenure-track faculty, conflict management becomes a difficult task. It is difficult to achieve pluralistic consensus in a hierarchical university that has not agreed to invite all members of the university community to the table for conversation. Any collaborative partnership must create a rhetorical environment in which conflict can be fully explored.

Multiple Roles

Another important element of a network of partnerships is Cambridge and McClelland's notion of "twin citizenship." The members of our committee exist as citizens of many worlds, worlds which sometimes conflict with one another, or worlds which may be less desirable than others. On a physical level, some of our offices are in different buildings, or on different floors of the liberal arts building. On an institutional level, the assistant professors on the committee, for instance, find themselves swept up in campus-level politics, meetings with vice-chancellors, deans, and directors, while worrying about how to present their administrative work in acceptable form in a tenure dossier. The lecturers on the

committee, now full-time teachers with benefits (albeit yearly renewable ones), all began their work with the program as part-time faculty members. The tenured members of the committee divide their time between program work and other administrative responsibilities in the department or the campus. In our multiple roles, too, we are responsible in different ways to different parties. Tenure track faculty are responsible to the department, often with their eye on the department's promotion and tenure committee, and see themselves as members of a profession and a discipline, with responsibilities that extend into professional organizations with national audiences. Non-tenure track faculty, on the other hand, see themselves as responsible to a more local community—students and teachers on our campus. Their sense of professional identity is often linked with the institution, more than with the profession as a whole.

Cambridge and McClelland argue that twin citizenship enables better decisions to be made, for they are made by partners with an investment in two worlds. In reflecting on our experience, however, we see that the notion of "twin citizenship" extends only so far. We create our own senses of citizenship, by our involvement with other units, and by the ways in which we define our own positions (no job descriptions exist for any of us). But the university often sees us only in one citizenship role—as tenure track faculty expected to publish (or perhaps teach excellently—that's more difficult to document, but it's possible), or lecturers expected to teach, and expected not to publish. We have found ourselves pushed into situations where we felt no option but to choose one world over another. The research agendas of tenure-line professors don't always mesh easily with the committee's priorities. Our desire to upgrade the status of adjunct faculty by creating more lectureships conflicts with professional concerns about defending tenure. In the search for tenure, both Steve and Susanmarie feel pressed to find ways to take individual credit for administrative work, to demonstrate the excellence of individual achievements, in order to fulfill tenure requirements, even as we remain committed to working with, rather than dominating, the Writing Coordinating Committee.

Conclusions: Whither Collaboration?

Our reconsideration of collaboration in administration leaves us both more committed to this model and more skeptical of it. Writing program administration is, in many ways, an exercise in power. As long as writing programs are staffed by teaching assistants or part-time faculty, and as long as required writing courses are a key element of university general education requirements, writing program administrators will possess a great deal of power over the curriculum, teachers, and students. This power, something we do not often acknowledge in a discipline which privileges cooperation, collaboration, and empowering others, is not necessarily evil; good administrators deploy power in order to allow teachers and students to engage in the constructive and critical work of building curricula that challenge student writers. Our own experiences in recent years have taught us that power *can* be acquired through partnerships and shared in collaborative environments. As collaborative

administrators, however, we must seek out partnerships that will grant us power in campus conversations about writing. It is particularly important for us to examine the ways in which partnerships are formed in a multiplicity of contexts. The unitary writing program administrator may well be a holdover from a simple and hierarchical notion of the place of a writing program in an English department. Yet the unitary WPA retains certain advantages over a shifting, collaborative, contextual writing program administration. The locus of power is clear in the unitary model, and that clarity speeds communications (especially outside the department). In order to recapture some of this clarity, our department is seriously considering appointing a director of composition again. Our challenge will be to position a new director as a facilitator of partnerships and overall director of a collaborative administration. In fact, the very title for this new administrative appointment will be carefully considered so that we can convey our commitment to the style of leadership we have forged and cultivated over the years.

Nurturing collaborative administration involves many layers of change. Partnerships are constantly (re)negotiated, and as that occurs, we must foreground the ways conflict, power, and citizenship sometimes unite and sometimes brush against each other. The function of rank, experience, and visibility with many audiences must be analyzed. Those who hold the most visible and most recognized power in any given situation must carefully work to deploy it for the advancement of tactical partnerships. A constant focus on power, partnership, and negotiation will further the steady growth of a principled, situated administrative model. This, too, will be a long revolution.

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Appendix

Writing Coordinating Committee Responsibilities

	Teaching	Research	Service
Intellectual Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *write teaching materials (course guides, teaching w/ technology materials, Writing Ctr. handouts, etc.) *design Writing Ctr. workshops *orient new faculty, raters, WC staff *course meetings, workshops *observe/mentor new faculty *individual consulting with faculty *grade appeals *placement appeals *exemption portfolios *portfolio readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *write curriculum *publishing/conference presentations *research workshops/curriculum prior to development *assessing our programs *placement validity survey *evaluating teachers *choosing textbooks *keeping up with research <p><i>n.b. at Fall '96 retreat, the WCC targeted lack of evaluation of curriculum and lack of ongoing research into teaching practices as areas that we currently overlook</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writing Center contacts around campus *liaison with other academic and student support units *teaching award nominations
Borderline/Managerial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *read evaluations *nuts and bolts orientations *handle student, instructor complaints *student awards 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *develop policies *hiring and firing *maintain records of policies *staffing/scheduling *newsletters/memos
Academic/Professional Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *comparable credit petitions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *textbook orders *letters of recommendation *answering questions *technology consulting
Clerical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *preparing first day handouts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *test scores entered

Who's the Boss?: The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Collaborative Administration for Untenured WPAs

Eileen E. Schell

When you are offered a position of power, there are many ways you can take it up—ways of being and acting that we must learn to choose, not just fall into, unthinking. Leadership “style” expresses how you conceive yourself in relation to the system that authorizes your position (legitimated, subversive, reformist, conflicted, co-opted...?) and how you envision your responsibilities to and relationships with the people whose work and energies you direct, as distinct from the people, entities, and purposes this work serves. (Phelps 292)

The growing body of scholarship on writing program administration leadership styles offers assistance to those who are searching for productive models and tactics for organizing their work. While this scholarship offers useful advice and strategies, it often fails to account for the ways in which a WPA's age, gender, race, rank, status, reputation, and the administrative and professional culture already present in an academic department contribute to the success or failure of a given leadership style. In this essay, I examine the ways in which the scholarship on leadership styles and administrative authority addresses the unusual and often perilous position of the untenured WPA. I argue that what we need when we discuss leadership styles is not a list of blanket directives about power, authority, and administrative structures, but a series of local narratives and case studies that show us how writing program administrators negotiate viable models of administrative leadership.¹

Using the scholarship on administrative leadership styles as a critical juncture for discussion, I analyze the writing program co-directorship my former colleague Paul Heilker and I implemented at a large state university between 1993-96. By offering a critical analysis of my experiences with collaborative administration, I join the ranks of scholars who call for collaborative administrative structures (Cambridge and McClelland; Dickson; Gunner; Howard; Phelps); however, my goal is not to extol the theoretical virtues of such arrangements. My goal is to represent the potential for partnership and sharing of power that resides in collaborative administrative structures while simultaneously portraying the difficulties untenured WPAs may face as they attempt to implement such structures. I begin with an analysis of the scholarship on administrative leadership styles, describe the co-directorship model my colleague and I developed at a Southern public university, and conclude by reflecting on the possibilities and

problems such a structure may provide and the need for future scholarship on this issue.

Leadership as Might and Right or as Collaborative Action

One of the chief ways to differentiate the scholarship on administrative leadership styles is to study where its theorists locate the power, authority, and responsibility for writing program leadership. In whom is the authority for the writing program invested? Is the WPA position conceived of as a directorship through which an authoritative individual exercises or wields power *over* others in a hierarchical structure? Or is the leadership of the program shared by an individual or a group who has power *with* others to make decisions about writing program policy? Given these questions, the scholarship on leadership styles and administrative authority might be productively understood as having two dominant strands: the scholarship of might and right and the scholarship of collaborative action.

In the scholarship on might and right, the WPA's power and authority emerges from his or her position as a powerful director with tenure in a hierarchical administrative framework that can be likened to the Great Chain of Being (with the University President at the top and a descending scale of Vice Presidents, Deans, Department Chairs, and internal department administrators). In other words, a leadership style based on might and right does not question traditional lines of administrative authority; rather, it advises WPAs about how to succeed within conventional administrative structures. A classic text of WPA authority as might and right is Edward M. White's "Use It or Lose It: Power and the WPA," a piece that reads like the campaign diary of a sage and seasoned general. White admonishes WPAs to "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" (3).

Conversely, a leadership style based on collaborative action constructs administrative power as a capillary, not individualistic, practice (see Cambridge and McClelland; Dickson; Gunner; Howard; Miller; Phelps). According to the collaborative model, administrative power circulates among and between administrators, teaching assistants, and instructors. A collaborative administrative model might be organized as a modified single directorship or coordinatorship where the writing program leader coordinates, consults, and collaborates extensively with various writing program constituencies; as a co-directorship or a triumvirate; or as a committee or administrative cabinet composed of elected or appointed members. Such a rethinking of the single directorship model, contend Barbara Cambridge and Ben McClelland, is "particularly needed for WPA positions, many of which are readily described as dysfunctional for those who hold them" (156).

By separating the scholarship on leadership styles into two strands, I do not mean to create a neat binary between the two or to elevate one over the other. Most WPAs employ a mixture of leadership styles to fit a given economic, political, institutional, and historical context. What, however, are the particular

challenges faced by untenured WPAs who try to implement such leadership styles? A closer look at the two administrative styles will reveal the challenges each poses to untenured WPAs.

Administrative Authority as Might and Right: Use it and You Might Lose It—That is, Your Job

Although White claims that *any* WPA can apply his power principles—wielding power successfully by strategizing against writing program “enemies” and deploying “three basic weapons of bureaucracy”: “good arguments, good data, and good allies, and caution mixed with cunning” (7)—he acknowledges that untenured faculty are in a relatively weak position as leaders since they have “large, unmanageable responsibilities but very little authority (read Power)” (8). He counsels untenured faculty to “avoid becoming WPAs until their positions become more secure” (8). Yet White’s exhortation to avoid administrative responsibilities seems unrealistic given the large number of advertised positions for Assistant Professors who will also serve as WPAs (see Janangelo; Pemberton; Thomas). While I agree in principle that placing new Assistant Professors into administrative positions is problematic and that this practice should be discouraged, many of us entering the field would be unemployed or would remain teaching assistants forever if we did not accept such positions. Instead of being warned repeatedly about our powerlessness and exploitation (something we live with and work against on a daily basis), those of us who are untenured WPAs need strategies and tactics for managing our often untenable positions. Moreover, we need leadership models that address our competing responsibilities and troubled political status, since few of us who are untenured WPAs can lay claim to White’s bold leadership style and tough-talking trench warfare tactics. His “use it or lose it” leadership style reinforces what Christine Hult calls the “Dictatorship model,” in which a single and often “charismatic leader” leads the program (45)—a situation that may be destructive rather than productive for the untenured faculty member who is juggling multiple and often competing roles and responsibilities. In addition, a single directorship model is at odds with the democratic principles of collaboration and shared authority inherent in liberatory composition pedagogy (Gunner 9).

White’s theory of power, which is predicated on masculinist metaphors of aggression and ritualistic displays of might, also poses an interesting dilemma for untenured women WPAs. I cite my own WPA experience as a case in point. As a twenty-nine-year-old woman faculty member hired into a hierarchical and patriarchal Southern English department with a history of not tenuring its untenured WPAs, I would have been ill-advised to employ an agonistic “use or it lose it” approach. Instead, a more successful strategy for me was to spend my first year on the job “researching” the writing program, learning as much as I could about the program’s complex history and curricular goals. I began my research by listening to and sorting through the competing narratives of the writing program offered by its teachers, former administrators, and the Department Chair. I also studied program documents and correspondence and began to

formulate a viable administrative leadership style and structure tailored to meet the specific demands of the immediate context. If I had asserted a model of leadership without first understanding the program's history and curricular goals, I would have jeopardized my job as well as my credibility as a leader. Thus, White's model, although it contains some useful advice, seems ineffective for those who do not have the benefit of his previous leadership experience, national reputation, publication record, and authoritative presence.

A more qualified account of administrative authority as might and right is offered by Gary Olson and Joseph Moxley. Although they endorse a single directorship model similar to White's, they base their decision less on might and more on right. It is the WPA's *professional right* to claim authority; after all, the WPA is the department's trained specialist and therefore should "be responsible for major decisions concerning the program" (56). But Olson and Moxley's "autonomous" authority model, like White's model, places the untenured WPA in a double bind. On the one hand, they argue that new WPAs need direct and full administrative authority to carry out programmatic projects. On the other hand, they warn that untenured WPAs should not be placed in the "no-win" situation of supervising senior colleagues who will judge them at tenure time, nor should they be in the position where they must make "unpopular albeit programmatically and pedagogically sound decisions when professional survival is at stake" (57). Their solution to this authority dilemma is for WPAs to be granted tenure or for senior compositionists to step in and administer writing programs. This is a noteworthy ideal and one I heartily endorse, but, again, untenured WPAs are left with few concrete suggestions about how to manage their work loads and competing responsibilities.

My chief problem with the models offered by White and Olson and Moxley is that they construct untenured WPAs as disempowered subjects, not as active agents. Their theories of administrative leadership, while perspicacious in many respects, do not help untenured WPAs find a viable or ethical model of administrative leadership. Moreover, such theories presume that the most effective way to administer a writing program is through a single directorship model, a structure that may prove too burdensome for an untenured WPA who must meet traditional tenure criteria. Because of their heavy administrative duties in addition to teaching, research, and service responsibilities, untenured WPAs may be compelled to operate out of a "dialogic" model of authority based on "dialogue, connectedness, and contextual rules" (Mortenson and Kirsch 557) rather than an "autonomous" model of authority. Enter the scholarship on writing program leadership as collaborative action.

Writing Program Administration as Collaborative Action

Among, although not necessarily limited to, the leading advocates of collaborative leadership styles are a number of feminists who argue that such styles share some of the common tenets of feminist theory and practice: collaboration, shared power and authority, and the creation of non-hierarchical or, at least, less hierarchical programmatic structures. Moreover, the feminist scholarship

on collaborative administration represents a growing sensitivity to the interrelationship between gender, power, and authority. By pointing out the synergies between collaborative administration and feminist practice, I am not making the essentialist claim that collaborative approaches to writing program administration are limited to women WPAs or self-professed feminists or that the theories espoused by these writers offer the definitive word on feminist practices. An emerging strand of feminist scholarship on collaborative administration is only one of the multiple strands of emerging scholarship on collaborative leadership styles, but an important one, nevertheless.

A common element in the scholarship on collaborative administration—feminist or otherwise—is a reconception of the single directorship model. For example, Marcia Dickson proposes a feminist model of administration where the concept of administrative authority is transformed from “control to collaboration”; the “administrator becomes one of a group of instructors (not the leader of a group of instructors)” (148). Dickson’s theory of ideal administrative practice is premised on the idea that writing faculty (whether they are non-tenure-track faculty or teaching assistants, or tenured faculty) will be willing to work together to form and enact program policy and make curricular decisions. This is an admirable egalitarian assumption, but a writing program—like any other institutional structure—is not a level playing field where all faculty members have equal time, energy, expertise, or the material incentive to participate fully in shared leadership. Thus the key issue is not should writing faculty participate in collaboratively administering a writing program, but *how* can such a collaboration be structured equitably? In what ways will collaborative structures possibly overextend and exploit already overburdened teaching assistants and non-tenure-track faculty? In what ways will non-tenure-track faculty members be compensated for their administrative work? Moreover, how will tenure-track writing faculty be evaluated and rewarded for their roles as collaborative administrators? By dismantling the traditional administrative hierarchy and dispersing authority, is the writing program administrator—especially if untenured—at a disadvantage in the tenure or promotion process if he or she gives up the traditional authority role?

I ask these questions not to disqualify the importance of collaborative administration but to interrogate the material conditions of its practice. Of course, many will argue that the only way to transform the faculty reward system is to redefine intellectual work and to diffuse hierarchical administrative practices, and I support efforts to do so. Implementing a collaborative model of administration, however, is fraught with conflicts, contradictions, and costs that anyone experimenting with collaborative structures should be aware of, as my own experiences with collaborative administration will demonstrate. As Phelps points out, a theory of writing program administration based on “culturally ‘feminine’ principles like cooperation, dialogue, nonhierarchical structures and ‘caring’” practiced in a hierarchical environment often fails to “provide a vision realistic enough to guide us [WPAs] through the minefield of ambiguities, complexities, and pain entailed in wielding power responsibly” (293).

My analysis of the efficacy of these two leadership styles—might and right and collaborative action—calls attention to the key contradictions and problems that are likely to arise when untenured WPAs try to implement them. My critique, however, is not meant to suggest that there are no viable leadership styles for untenured WPAs and that they should resign from their posts or avoid them altogether. Some might argue that a leadership style that occupies a middle ground between the “might and right” and “collaborative” approaches would work best. Hildy Miller has referred to a mixed leadership style (she identifies the two styles as masculinist or feminist in contrast to my categories of might and right and collaborative action) as a “bi-epistemological stance” or “postmasculinist” administrative style whereby the WPA adjusts his or her persona and authority relations to fit the demands of a given rhetorical situation (58). In other words, Miller advocates that WPAs construct themselves as postmodern subjects who are able to adapt to conflicting, often schizophrenic roles, as the need may be. Miller’s “bi-epistemological” leadership style, however, does not address the issue of workload and the untenured status of so many new WPAs. Therefore an adjustment in leadership style may be insufficient unless it is accompanied by a material reconfiguration and possible redistribution of the position itself. As Miller puts it, “. . . just as feminist directors must alternate feminist and masculinist personas to cope with double ideologies, we also need to design collaborative administrative structures that can be translated hierarchically” (56). What is it like, then, to implement a “bi-epistemological stance” and a collaborative administrative structure “that can be translated hierarchically” (56)? What follows is a narrative of one writing program’s attempt to create a co-directorship model based on the principles of collaborative leadership. This account, however, is not meant to serve as a success story, but as a critical analysis of both the possibilities and pitfalls of collaborative administration for untenured WPAs.

Co-Directing Writing Programs: A Critical Case-Study

My experiences with collaborative administration began in 1992-93 when I applied for and eventually accepted a tenure-track position in the English department at a Southern public university. In 1992-93, as is still the case today, over half of the Rhetoric and Composition positions listed in the MLA Job List included administrative responsibilities. Assistant professors were wanted to direct Writing Programs, Writing Centers, Writing Across the Curriculum Programs, National Writing Project Sites, sometimes all four at once. In my job interviews and campus visits, I quickly discovered that many English departments were not looking for an assistant professor; they were looking for a “miracle worker,” a composition evangelist who would single-handedly and miraculously transform the writing curriculum, improve instruction, start programmatic initiatives, and provide departmental and possibly university-wide leadership in writing (Pemberton 158). The question I faced repeatedly during my interview process was not “Would I become a writing program administrator?,” but “*How soon* would I become a writing program administrator?”

The job I was eventually offered, however, promised to exempt me from administrative duties during my first four years in the position. At the Southern

public university where I was hired, I was to serve as one of two composition faculty members in a large English department (40 tenure-track faculty, 27 teaching assistants, and approximately 50 part-time and non-tenure-track instructors) with a new cultural-studies-based writing curriculum serving approximately 4,000 students. The only other compositionist on the faculty was coming up for review in a year, and I was assured that she would be granted tenure and would direct the writing program, which was currently administered by a Full Professor in literary theory who planned to step down in a year.

Because I would be spared administrative responsibilities until later in my career, I felt fortunate to be offered the position; however, the ground shifted under my feet shortly after I signed my contract. My colleague in composition, a single parent, suddenly accepted a job at another university where she would be closer to her extended family. Suddenly, I was the only composition faculty member—the so-called senior, but untenured compositionist—at the ripe old age of twenty-nine. Overnight, my dream job turned into the WPA position my graduate school mentors had warned me not to accept.

I became the WPA-in-training the minute I arrived on campus in August of 1993, two scant weeks after I defended my dissertation. Fortunately, I was not unprepared for the duties that lay before me. Like many new Ph.D.s entering the job market, I had conscientiously followed the advice found in the literature on writing program administration (see Pemberton; Thomas). While in graduate school, I became an assistant WPA in a large writing program. I helped orient, mentor, and evaluate new teaching assistants and adjunct faculty; I ran monthly staff meetings and administered a large scale portfolio program. I was well-versed in the scholarship on writing program administration and took a graduate course on assessment theory. My preparatory efforts obviously paid off, perhaps too well. As one of my new colleagues wryly remarked, “You seem unusually qualified to take on an overwhelming number of administrative tasks.”

My goal, however, was not to allow those “unusual qualifications” to become my downfall. I spent my first year on the job teaching graduate courses, writing a book prospectus, and strategizing about how I would administer the writing program without becoming like the beleaguered faculty members described in Olson and Moxley’s survey (53). My first strategy was to begin immediately (even before I arrived on campus in August) lobbying the Department Chair to mount a national search for another tenure-line person in composition to replace my former colleague. The second strategy, one I mentioned earlier, was to make myself into a “researcher” of the program by studying the program’s history, structure, and lines of power and authority. What I learned was rather disheartening and mythically familiar: no one in composition had been granted tenure in the English Department; the structure of the WPA position I was to occupy resembled the classic configuration described in Olson and Moxley’s article: many responsibilities, little power, and too heavy a workload for an untenured professor who must meet traditional tenure requirements (a single authored book and six refereed articles) at a research university.

Fortunately, however, the curricular structures in the department were in

flux, which created an opening for change. A review of the Writing Program by the WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service had sparked a two-year curricular revision and the formulation and installation of the new cultural-studies-based writing curriculum. In consultation with the Department Head and with senior WPAs from other institutions, I began to consider alternative administrative structures that might allow for a sharing of writing program leadership duties. Put into place a number of years ago were three administrative positions: the position of Assistant Director, a post capably occupied by a non-tenured writing instructor who coordinated the department's placement program and other matters; a Writing Center Directorship, also occupied by a non-tenure-track instructor; and a teaching assistant mentoring program and practicum staffed by six faculty members (mostly non-tenure-track instructors and an occasional full-time faculty member). In this sense, the administrative structure resembled the "flattened hierarchy" Gunner describes. To this existing structure, which was already quite successful, we added a new component: a co-directorship, which replaced the single directorship model that had created a revolving door for my untenured predecessors. The co-directorship was to be occupied by me and by our newly hired compositionist, Paul Heilker. Before joining our co-administrative team, he had spent two years as an Assistant Professor at a private urban university where he had distinguished himself by establishing a strong publication and teaching record.²

In the first month of the co-directorship—in between writing memos, dealing with first-week crises, and training new teaching assistants—Paul and I wrote a clear job description that outlined the distribution of our duties and a rotation schedule. Although we were to share our administrative responsibilities, we did so through a system of rotation that allowed us to alternate semesters in which we carried the weight of the program. While one of us served as the active co-director, the other wrote, taught, and carried a lighter meeting schedule. We also established better and more frequent communication between all members of the administrative team. We held monthly meetings with our staff of six teaching assistant advisors and established a listserv for weekly e-mail discussions. We worked closely with our departmental Composition Committee to author administrative reports, conduct program assessments, select new textbooks, and update the program's writing guide.

In addition, we focused the majority of our administrative efforts on professional and curricular development. As co-administrators, we initiated a variety of inclusive intellectual activities designed to meet the needs of different groups of faculty: monthly faculty development workshops where a panel of instructors presented assessment methods, new assignments, or classroom activities; syllabus groups for TAs, instructors, and professors that met to discuss the formation and implementation of the new curriculum; a composition theory and pedagogy reading group for all writing faculty that met monthly to discuss a core set of readings; and a Speaker Series (for which we received both internal and external funding) that brought in nationally recognized composition scholars to speak on topics relevant to the new curriculum, such as portfolios, the role of reflection, and the cultural studies approach to writing instruction. Our

intellectual agenda was met with a degree of enthusiasm and support from some of the faculty and departmental administrators. It would be disingenuous, however, to represent the co-directorship model as an unqualified success; there were many conflicts that deserve mention.

Conflicts and Contradictions in Collaborative Administration

Even with the co-administrative model in place, we often felt overwhelmed by political pressures, criticism of the new curriculum, competing responsibilities, and the pressure to “publish or perish.” While such ever-present conflicts do not faze seasoned WPAs, they were new and troublesome to us, nonetheless. In addition, we were daily confronted with the historical legacy of devaluation of composition courses and the political resentments left over from previous administrations. Often we felt the “ghosts of administrations past” in our conversations with colleagues who warned us about making the same mistakes as our predecessors. As Paul wrote in his account of his first and second years as a new WPA: “I find myself performing as a new, bit player in long-running soap operas, my fortunes tossed about by previous plotlines which I didn’t help write, didn’t act in, and don’t know” (27).

Because we had inherited a complex and controversial curriculum that we had not designed, we found ourselves frequently bucking the “aftershocks” of post-curricular change. Many of the senior non-tenure-track instructors had built up grievances against the former administration and felt that the curricular change process had been thrust upon them despite the former administration’s attempts to include them in the deliberations. Thus, some did not believe in the “new curriculum” and longed to go back to the “old one,” although it had been incoherent and often unsuccessful. Others supported the new curriculum but had little time or material incentive to attend our monthly faculty development workshops, reading groups, or lecture series. Without a system of internal promotion or merit-tier pay system and with teaching loads of four writing classes per semester, many of the non-tenure-track instructors understandably felt that they could not “afford” the time to attend our workshops, a situation I was familiar with, having been a non-tenure-track faculty member myself. As a result, attendance at the faculty development workshops, reading groups, and lectures waxed and waned, sometimes ranging from six to twelve to twenty-five writing faculty members at any given event. We realized, as we implemented our professional development agenda, that the reward system for non-tenure-track faculty must be changed if we were to encourage and reward growth and professionalism, but we knew that this was not a battle we could fight until we established ourselves, gained allies, and learned more about the political obstacles before us. Meanwhile, we continued to grapple with our own material conditions. As is so often the case, our administrative release time was insufficient even with the co-directorship model in place. In the reorganization of our positions and with budget cuts coming down from state, the writing program administrative team lost release time in spite of our repeated arguments against such cuts. This loss of administrative release time made our jobs more labor-intensive despite our attempts to disperse our duties.

Around these common material conflicts, we also experienced dissimilar ones that were more individualized and institutionalized according to our different conceptions of administrative work, our different preparatory backgrounds, our different ways of coping with the pressures of the position, and our gender identities. Surprising in many ways, although in retrospect we should have anticipated this, were the ways in which gender factored into our different conceptions of our administrative roles and our interactions as co-directors. In many ways, we carried with us different and often gendered conceptions of what our roles were, and we were also constructed in gendered ways by those around us.

Paul's entrance into administration—and collaborative administration at that—came as a jolt. In "On Not Teaching; or, True Confessions of New Writing Program Administrator," he contrasts his experiences as a writing teacher with his experiences as a new writing program administrator:

I realize that as a teacher, I dwell amid the safe and the familiar: I know my courses, my goals, my audience, my techniques, and my roles intimately. As a new administrator, I lived in a threatening and unfamiliar landscape: I do not know what all my duties entail, nor what my objectives should be, nor what multiple, hidden, and overlapping audiences I am addressing, nor what skills I should bring to bear, nor what my place is (or places are) or should be. As a teacher, I work within self-contained ahistorical contexts. Decisions can be made neatly. But in my work as an administrator, every decision must be informed by and weighed against both local and general institutional histories about which I know not nearly enough. (27)

In addition, Paul, until months later, was not entirely convinced of the importance of his administrative work and often perceived it as "hole-plugging and disaster management as that of bouncing from one crisis to the next, putting out fires" (32), a stance he began to reconsider as he gained experience and knowledge of the program and became a more proactive as opposed to reactive administrator: "I have, furthermore, come to see the value in the work I do as an administrator, a value which has escaped me until recently. The new value I find is undoubtedly related to my moving from a reactive to a proactive stance" (32). Paul's transition from teacher to administrator, however, was difficult and often painful—a transition, undoubtedly, that many new WPAs experience.

My immediate transition into the administrative role was less conflicted, in some respects, although not in others. Since I had worked as part of an administrative team in graduate school, I felt more comfortable in the WPA role and knew that our work had an immediate impact on the curriculum and the writing faculty. What troubled me most about being an untenured WPA, however, was the insufficient release time, the pressure to publish while juggling heavy administrative responsibilities, and the ways in which I was singled out as the member of the co-directorship who was more "approachable" and "accessible" (see Olson and Moxley). When the department head or other administrators across campus needed a faculty member to serve on a writing-related

committee, I was often the first to be approached. When there was a problem with the writing program, the Department Chair often came to me first. When an instructor felt upset about his or her teaching evaluations or when a teaching assistant had endured a bad class, I was often the first person they approached for advice and solace. Perceived as being more caring, understanding, and "available," I often found myself spending extra hours and sometimes days on my administrative work when I needed to be writing or preparing for my classes.

There are a number of probable explanations for why I was characterized as the "caretaker" in the co-directorship. For one, I had been employed at the university a year longer than Paul, and, perhaps, some faculty approached me because of my "seniority." Another explanation is that gender stereotyping played a role in the perception that I was more nurturing and approachable and that I participated in reinforcing that stereotype with my attentive, caretaking behaviors. Feminist educational theorists and sociologists (Aisenberg and Harrington; Bernard; Simeone) have argued that such gendered responses and role constructions often place academic women (especially untenured women) in the "double bind" of taking on disproportionate service and mentoring obligations when they most need to be engaged in developing their own scholarship and teaching. In her survey "Gender Differences in Writing Program Administration," Sally Barr-Ebest documents the ways in which sexism and socialization factor into women WPAs' professional lives. As one participant in her survey acknowledged, "It's not so much our lack of status as our female conditioning to be very service-oriented, placating, and caring. These qualities cause us to attract responsibility, not rewards" (66).

Due in part to our different backgrounds, work experiences, personalities, and gender-role socialization, Paul and I also fell into gendered interactions and communication styles in our administrative relationship. While I pushed for planning meetings and tended to postpone decisions until I had conferred with members of the administrative team or the department's Composition Committee, Paul preferred to act autonomously. While I would mull over decisions and get multiple opinions, Paul would quickly make decisions and dispatch correspondence—sometimes with problematic political consequences. As a teacher used to acting in an autonomous and highly individualized paradigm of instruction, he appeared to feel overwhelmed and often oppressed by the need to collaborate and to tie his fortunes to an administrative team and a program instead of a classroom. Of these difficulties, he wrote: "As a new administrator, I'm having to learn how to collaborate, how to negotiate, how to be inclusive and deliberative in decision-making processes, how to be more cautious and slower to act" (24). Gradually, however, we began to work together to address these gendered constructions and conflicts. Paul became more comfortable with collaborative decision-making: "I thus find it far easier these days to be more inclusive in decision-making and slower to act, two tasks that clearly vexed me as a new administrator" (33). Conversely, I began to understand the ways in which I had fallen into the role of the administrative "caretaker" who was

accessible and responsive to others' needs (a problematic role both male and female WPAs face, as Olson and Moxley point out). I began to say "no" to extra service obligations and began to be more successful at delegating tasks and sharing the workload. However, I continued to struggle with the balance between my administrative and scholarly work. For over two years, I held a book contract for my dissertation and was engaged in revising it for publication, but I was unable to complete it despite my efforts to delegate extra administrative responsibilities and to spend days at home with my writing. The crush of everyday administrative responsibilities depleted my energy and cut too deeply into my time for sustained scholarly work. The continuing war between the time I spent on administration and the time I spent on my scholarship led me to begin to question whether or not I would produce enough scholarship to meet the department's tenure requirements.

Meanwhile, Paul and I were also concerned about the future of the writing program and the English Department, given repeated budget cuts and a plan hatched by the Dean of Arts and Sciences in 1996 to create a joint master's degree program in English and Communication Studies Sciences and to create a freshman writing course with a public speaking element. Our Department Chair asked us to "explore" with senior faculty in the Communication Department a plan to "pilot" such a course. Not surprisingly, we did not have the authority or institutional clout necessary to effectively negotiate a successful "pilot project" with the senior Communication Studies faculty members (nor did we truly believe the Dean's plan was intellectually viable)—another situation which brought home to us, once again, our lessened authority role both inside and outside the department.

This situation, coupled with the earlier conflicts I experienced, encouraged me to seek the "safety valve" option frequently discussed in the literature on WPA work. I began to search for another job that would not involve administrative responsibilities until after tenure. Eventually I was offered a job at a university where I would not be required to be a pre-tenure WPA. After much soul-searching, I decided to take the position, although I knew I would be giving up the program structure and mentoring relations Paul and I had painstakingly built. What guided this decision was not a dislike of my colleagues or the co-directorship, but a sense that, despite our efforts to redistribute the administrative workload via the co-directorship, I was losing the battle to complete my book—a fact that would jeopardize my ability to earn tenure and promotion at the university where I was employed. It was with some reluctance that I left the co-directorship, for it was an alliance forged with great effort and under great duress. Paul stayed on to direct the program alone.

Some might see my resignation and move to another position as the ultimate power play, as a cop-out, or as a sign that the co-directorship had failed. Some might argue that I should not have accepted the job in the first place. Such interpretations are limited. The co-directorship, in many ways, was a success and a transformative experience. Both Paul and I benefited from our collaboration and were able to accomplish more than a single director could have done; we

learned a great deal from each other and gained insight and administrative and intellectual skills. We also mentored a number of teaching assistants and instructors who have gone on to pursue successful careers both inside and outside of academe. Part of the difficulty in telling this story, then, lies in interpreting its significance. What was gained? What was lost? How does one make meaning out of the fragmented and conflicted circumstances that so often plague untenured WPAs?

Conclusion

In "How to Tell the Story of Stopping: The Complexities of Narrating a WPA's Experience," Wendy Bishop and Gay Lynn Crossley foreground the narrative difficulties of recounting Bishop's resignation from her WPA post. One reviewer saw in an earlier draft of the essay a trail of missed opportunities and naiveté, while another complained that Bishop and Crossley were telling yet another WPA "victim narrative" (73-74). Like Bishop and Crossley, I do not tell this story to portray myself as the untenured female WPA whom senior WPAs should pity or label "naive," nor do I wish to portray myself as the self-aggrandizing heroine who overcame the odds by fleeing my first job in a fit of pique; rather I relate my experiences and Paul's experiences with collaborative administration to point out the ways in which collaborative administrative structures do not necessarily circumvent problems of authority, gender, and workload. I must admit, though, this is not the essay I planned to write when I began co-directing the program. That essay, as I had originally envisioned it, was a straightforward argument advocating co-administration as a viable strategy for untenured WPAs. As often happens, the realities of implementing a collaborative theory of administrative leadership proved to be more complex and multilayered; thus my experience does not conform to the familiar rhetorical form of the "success narrative." Nevertheless, I believe there are important insights to be drawn from the experiences Paul and I had with co-administration.

The first is that it is worth experimenting with new leadership styles such as co-administration; however, those who set out on this path (especially untenured WPAs) need to be attentive to the ways in which the WPA's identity politics, status, reputation, and the departmental and university context contribute to the success of the collaborative structures. The scholarship on collaborative writing program administration, however, has, for the most part, remained strangely silent about the tensions and conflicts that accompany collaborative leadership efforts, often painting collaborative administration as a utopian or progressive, non-hierarchical practice.³ Instead of extolling the virtues of collaborative administration, I urge those experimenting with it to write realistic case studies that address the conflicts as well as the possibilities inherent in collaborative leadership.

Finally, I do not have the space here to adequately address the arguments that have been made in the "The Portland Resolution" (Hult et al) and elsewhere that WPAs should be hired with tenure or that administrative work should count as a form of scholarship. Such ethical claims, unless they can be enforced or

strongly encouraged through specific practices, do little at present to help untenured WPAs who are hired into departments with traditional tenure criteria. For this reason, I wish to end this essay with a call for further scholarship on the problematics of establishing viable models of leadership for writing program administrators—especially untenured ones. Those of us who subscribe to the WPA listserv and who regularly attend the CCCC and WPA Conferences (including the workshops at both conferences expressly designed for new WPAs) benefit greatly from the mentorship of our experienced WPA colleagues. It is my hope, however, that such informal mentoring relationships can be duplicated in a more formal way via the scholarship on writing program leadership styles and collaborative administration. In particular, untenured faculty like myself need to hear from WPAs who have successfully weathered the tenure process while holding down administrative appointments. The questions such scholarship might address are: How did the WPA arrive at a viable model of administrative leadership and administrative authority? How did he or she negotiate the main challenges of the administrative appointment? How did the WPA pick winnable battles, practice strategic planning, handle failure and defeat, and learn from trial and error? How did he or she cope with the competing claims of administrative work, research, and teaching? How did the WPA handle mundane matters such as time management, delegating authority, and establishing and holding to a research schedule in the midst of an administrative appointment? While further scholarship cannot solve the problems I name in this essay—overwork, powerlessness, inexperience, and sexism—it can, perhaps, help us envision new strategies for dealing with those chronic problems.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Charles Schuster and Rebecca Greenberg Taylor for reading and responding to earlier drafts of this essay. Also, I would like to thank WPA reviewers Christopher Brunham, Rebecca Howard, WPA Editor Douglas Hesse, and Guest Editor Jeanne Gunner for their comments and suggestions.
2. I thank Paul Heilker for reading and commenting on the draft of this essay and for allowing me to tell our story. Throughout my account, I have endeavored to let Paul speak for himself by citing his article "On Not Teaching; or, Confessions of a New Writing Program Administrator."
3. An exception to this trend is Louise Phelp's "Becoming a Warrior: Lessons of the Feminist Workplace" where she describes the complexities of initiating a collaborative leadership model in the Syracuse University Writing Program.

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Collaborating at the ECB: A Reflection

Sharon Quiroz

The English Composition Board of the University of Michigan has been called "The Mother of All Writing Across the Curriculum Programs." It was established in 1978 by professors in the English Department, with its own budget, housed outside the English Department, and directed by a policy board drawn from faculty across the disciplines. In the next twenty years, as the discipline of composition emerged, the lecturers who staffed the unit became increasingly important on the national scene, and the hope grew of establishing an independent rhetoric department at the University of Michigan, once the home of Fred Newton Scott. But in 1997 the College of Arts and Sciences refused (again) to allow the ECB to become an academic unit with majors and tenure lines, and this time it put the ECB under the administration of the Director of Writing in the English Department, effectively ending it.

Over those twenty years, the ECB served as the model for many other campus-wide writing programs. But the model changed over those years, as some impulses in the original came into the foreground and others receded, in ways that often speak to the rise of composition as a discipline, diffracted, as always, through local needs. (Keep in mind that the ECB never was an introductory composition program in an English department. That default model does not apply here—except that it was in the air we all breathed.) The ECB began as a writing across the curriculum program, with a strong element of social reform patched onto a fundamental commitment to existing intellectual disciplines. At the end it was a political program, with a decidedly vexed sense of its own disciplinarity and its relationship to power. There was, of course, wide disagreement among us. But the argument that theoretical work of any kind indicated insufficient commitment to political action was very frequently advanced and very often carried the day. This commitment to action, to real social change, paradoxically as I think, required the ECB to maintain an expensive utopia. We had to deny too much of what was happening around us, as I will argue later.

And yet it was a great experiment. The ECB was essentially a child of affirmative action in the seventies, early on a mostly pedagogical commitment. Later, as sustained reflection on social issues moved us all toward the eighties focus on diversity, and unforeseen events seemed to open up possibilities, that critique of power migrated to the management style. The ECB served as a crucible in which we forged a practice of collaboration, a living laboratory for contending with power.

In what follows I will describe the differences between the two conceptions of the ECB, the early cooperative and the later collaborative. Because we invested so much in imagining the practice of collaboration I will elaborate its

expression in our use of portfolios. If God exists in the details, as Einstein is rumored to have said, it was in the details of assessment that our "god" existed. A word of caution: just when you get to the end, I will unleash a host of furies that assailed the ECB, befuddling causality, calling into question the story I have been asked to tell about the effect of collaborative management on the demise of the ECB.

Cooperative Practice

The ECB began in the English Department with Dan Fader, Richard Bailey, and Jay Robertson. For Fader, a tenured Shakespearean in the English Department who got the original money from the Carnegie Mellon Foundation in the late seventies, it was all about affirmative action. He described it for me this way: The University had made a commitment to bring in more minority students, but it had no support in place for them. You could see their anger, he said. They hung out by what was then the courtyard, in the passageway that connects Angell Hall with Haven, glaring at professors who passed by. And so, he said, he wanted to deal with that mute pain. The ECB was put in place to make it possible for them to succeed. And he feels that the ECB did its job, and that the larger scene is no longer what it was: affirmative action has effectively changed the situation of entering minority students.

According to Fader, he had sold the ECB to the professoriate at Michigan as support for students writing in their classes, and for teaching assistants who received a salary enhancement for helping the instructor work with students' writing; but for him, the affirmative action piece was always the crucial point. Other founders always thought of the Junior/Senior Writing Program as central to the ECB mission, always saw it as a WAC program. In any case, the original conception was hierarchical, presuming that access to existing power was a good thing. As I said earlier, the "Board" part of the English Composition Board was originally made up of representatives from each department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, one of whom—usually the one from the English Department—served as the director of the ECB. The staff was hired on one-year contracts. Some had Ph.D.s in English, others didn't.

From the Board's point of view, the focus was the upper level writing officially called the Junior/Senior Writing Program, but usually just the "UL." The UL program was taught by faculty in the disciplines, who had agreed to make regular courses into writing intensive courses. ECB's role was administrative and developmental. We paid and trained teaching assistants hired by the departments to help faculty with the workload. They received a salary enhancement for the extra effort. We further supported this program in the Writing Workshop—our writing center. Other supporting duties included assessment and tutorials for incoming students, a writing workshop to support the writing intensive courses, and outreach to high schools. The players in those days were faculty in the disciplines, with ECB staff in a supporting role.

Barbra Morris, who was there from the beginning, resists my interpretation, insists that collaboration was always the agenda. She writes:

When the ECB was established (I was one of the original faculty who thought through and presented the ECB model to University of Michigan departments and to schools outside the University of Michigan), we all understood that the teaching of writing was our common mission. In the case of the Tutorial (later renamed the Practicum), we would be teaching students who were identified as not yet ready for Introductory (or first-year) Composition. Our well-defined mission led us to professional conversations about composition nationally and to research in writing that we could talk about together, because we all wanted to learn from each other, certainly to improve our courses and to ensure that our students would become better academic writers. Common teaching ground became the basis for our ECB culture of dialogue and shared expertise. Unlike other disciplines or fields, in which people probably do not identify so congruently with each other's work, we became more than just colleagues; we were deeply engaged with each other's teaching and research, methods and practice. Moreover, we mentored young teachers who came into the ECB and we believed that time spent in committee work and professional development, talking together with each other about assessment and language development as people entered and left the ECB, was valuable to the ECB and to the College of LAS [Liberal Arts and Sciences] in general, because we had been mandated to prepare students for tackling academic writing in all departments. The professional momentum of the ECB was invigorated by collective attention to differing facets of improving writing ability, from second language students to those who had writers' blocks or were deeply confused about structuring their ideas or were unable to sustain a consistent voice, and so on. A rich variety of composition research interests and of concerns about writing in the disciplines converged in our discussions, as we learned from and respected each others' areas of expertise. Our collaborative management style evolved naturally out of a unified and coherent purpose, and from our sincere interests in various teaching/learning strategies we employed so that this educational objective could be achieved. (Morris)

In Barbra's description I do not find the critique of expertise that later constituted one important current in the ECB discussions. And I note that the description applies to a group of one-year lecturers whose work was carried on outside a regular academic department, under the supervision of tenured faculty in regular academic departments. Perhaps the early gatherings of faculty, graduate students, and ECB lecturers did not feel hierarchical at the time. In the history of composition, this is an important and exciting early statement about collaboration. In the history of the University of Michigan, it describes rather the cooperation of different departments in putting together a committee to oversee writing instruction. In this early cooperative effort, expert knowledge is not affected by the cooperative process. It is not a collaborative construction of knowledge; it is the cooperative application of pre-existing expertise. And the institutional hierarchy does not appear to be challenged.

Collaborative Practice

Collaborative management became a real option when Bill Condon, Associate Director for Instruction and still a lecturer, was appointed interim director of the ECB because the director (tenured in the English department) fell ill. We had the practice Barbra described, and also the experience of collaboratively organizing a national conference. When the ECB hosted the Computers and Writing Conference, five people developed that conference collaboratively, without so much as a committee head. In my recounting here I won't include personal histories because I have no right and not enough knowledge. But individual commitments matter, and the ECB believed that the personal is political and acted on that belief, so I will profile briefly some of personal commitments that seemed powerful to me. At one point four of the 11 full-time faculty were devout Quakers; almost all the faculty, male or female, would say they were some kind of feminists. Women usually outnumbered men in a ratio of about three to one, and the majority of the faculty were single mothers. There were no older experienced white men, and only a couple of less experienced older women—and so it was a very young unit.

To continue: With Bill Condon's appointment a new set of players took over the ECB—the collaborative composition folks. At that point the ECB had nine ongoing three-year lectureships, and two of the original faculty had retired after twenty years of service, one year at a time. Bill and Emily Decker (assessment) and I (Jr./Sr. Writing Program) were the associate directors.¹ The collaborative team included everyone, we said. Staff voted at faculty meetings. (You'll find all the names I can remember from the relevant time period in the footnote. I know I will have left out someone, and I apologize.² Although we never completely did away with a top layer, an accurate description of our collaborative management has to include "the middle" as well as "the top," dimensions we tried hard to do away with.

I believe Bill was genuinely morally committed to collaborative management, and Emily was a truly brilliant strategist of internal collaborative management. It is difficult to separate the collaborative piece from the professionalization of composition, especially as those were related to each other at the ECB. We tried to imagine new ways of being professional without being hierarchical. Some of the ECB faculty strongly resisted the idea of disciplinarity, while searching for a way to value composition, without turning it completely into politics. Others—I'm one—while finding much to critique in disciplinary practice, nevertheless believed that disciplines are useful social formations and unlikely to disappear.

The ECB sought to define composition as a set of collaborative practices in every way. Although it was a relatively late expression of that principle, I will focus here on the way we used portfolios to work out principles of collaboration. Of course, it was part of the nationwide move to use assessment to drive curriculum reform. For some, educational reform is what the ECB was about, and portfolios were the central instrument. They provided a way to define ourselves as a composition program, and a way to make an argument for

tenuring teaching faculty. So we used portfolios to define ourselves and our work collaboratively.

Even before we began to use portfolios to place entering students into the writing program in 1994, we did a great deal of work with high school English teachers around the state, soliciting their suggestions about developing entrance portfolios as well as representing the University to them. We prided ourselves on developing a school/university collaborative mode that respected the experience of the high-school teachers. We did not go to the schools as experts and tell them what to do. The placement process was also an enculturation process—modeled on consciousness raising. ECB faculty and graduate students read 500 portfolios each summer. The graduate students were almost always from the English Department and had experience teaching the introductory composition course in that department. We drew on their experience as teachers, and treated the portfolio placement process as an ongoing conversation about all facets of writing instruction. ECB faculty were expected to go through the training every year, on the grounds that this was to be an ongoing process always involving both newcomers and old hands because of what we could learn from each other. The development of criteria for reading the portfolios went through several phases, always collaborative, using committees of the whole as well as focus groups, with varied configurations of experienced readers.

In the tutorials or practica we carried forward the portfolio as center of collaboration. Besides designing the portfolios to include students' evaluations of their own work, we also had working groups of instructors, including newcomers and old-timers, which met two or three times throughout the term to talk and look at syllabi or sample portfolios, and we visited each others' classes. We evaluated our students' portfolios at the end of the term as a team. For a while we tried to assign the task of evaluating instructors through this team approach, but it simply didn't get done. Young teachers objected that they didn't have the kinds of evaluations they wanted in their professional recommendations, so that task was reassigned to senior lecturers, but again, in a mentoring structure.

We also developed teacher portfolios to use in end-of-the-year evaluations. Some ECB faculty wanted to simply divide the money available for salary increase by the number of faculty and distribute that equally. Our director found the College unresponsive to that idea, and borrowed from somewhere a system by which each faculty was given shares on the basis of performance, and the shares redeemed for a percentage of the total amount available. The evaluation of teaching portfolios was done by the director and associate directors, not by the teams or any such collaborative device.

Thus, portfolios provided a focus for discussions of students' work and discussions of our own pedagogy, as well as examinations of our standards. They provided us a medium for mentoring of newcomers by those who had been there for many years, providing a framework for continuity. All this activity based on sharing portfolios provided us a common language and a common experience.

At the "top" of this collaborative management was the administration of

the ECB, the director and the three associates (Wayne Butler became an associate director when Bill became the director). From my point of view, having attended Associate Directors meetings under three different directors, the last was extraordinarily collaborative. Even meeting with the door open felt new and exciting. But I soon was given to understand that collaboration among the associate directors was not nearly enough. Faculty at the ECB wanted more say in the management, and were not satisfied with what seemed to me like huge efforts to do away with hierarchy. Decisions that before would have been made by the director without a second thought were brought to the table for faculty to discuss—mostly through Emily Decker's watchful effort. She made sure that support staff and even work studies attended faculty meetings, for example. That simply would not have occurred to me. It does now.

Faculty pointed out that all the A.D.s had been appointed by earlier directors. Not one had been chosen by the rest of the faculty. In response, the unit had agreed, just before the end, that the various A.D. positions would become elective. If the mission of the ECB required sharing knowledge and experience, it followed that faculty should be rotated through the management positions. That would never have been proposed under a tenured director, though Robinson had tried hard to get tenure lines for the ECB (as had Deborah Keller-Cohen, the director who succeeded Robinson's first term).

ECB Faculty also complained that their role was really advisory, that their decisions were not binding on the leaders. The strain of trying to maintain a collaborative structure in a hierarchical institution caused people to rethink positions, and as individuals changed in different ways, collaboration became problematic.

The Costs of Collaboration

As Barbra's paragraph makes clear, long before we had portfolio assessment and continuous conversations, the ECB faculty was committed in principle to the notion that all learners are equal, including the teacher; that new teachers bring a great deal of new experience into the faculty and should, therefore, be respected in the same way that old experience is respected; that teaching is learning and learning is teaching; and that students cannot be taught to write, they can only be allowed to learn. We did outreach with the idea that we could learn from high school teachers, that outreach was a two-way street. We defined "our work" as teaching the practica and in the Writing Workshop, and working with each other.

There is not much room for expertise in such a system, and one faction of the ECB was profoundly suspicious of disciplines and expertise, invoking the Freirean notion that knowledge owned by the oppressor could only keep the oppressed in bondage. In fact, talk about doing one's "own" work was discouraged. It was a little like the Club Med of the sixties, where the common spaces were featured at the expense of the private spaces. Some ECB faculty do not see this as a conflict, but others felt it keenly. For some, being part of the ECB gave them great freedom; others found it a bit cramped. One effect of our collabora-

tive approach was the way it constrained individual research, and therefore our options for a professional future. The development of expertise, as the academy defines it, was discouraged by a system in which the ideal, for some, was that everyone could do everything. Our portfolio system was carefully engineered to insure collaboration and collegiality and to insure that our time was spent doing those things, not other things. One could get around that by doing research on portfolios. For those who wanted to focus our research elsewhere, it was a problem. We had to finish our portfolios first. When I raised this issue I was told, "That is the job." And certainly from the administration's point of view, our job was to teach, not do research. But there were faculty who felt used by those in leadership positions who wanted to develop portfolios. I am not so sure how we might have arrived at any focus without what some people felt was coercive. There were those who would have preferred to spend their time on computers, for instance, instead of undergoing the two-day reader training for the fifth time. And there were those who felt that being required to follow even a very loose portfolio design, or to use portfolios in their classrooms at all, was intrusive. But my main point is that the collaboration as the ECB defined it constrained our ability to compete for tenure-track jobs elsewhere, and to enter institutions as full members. Collaboration was disempowering in this sense, but for those deeply committed to changing the power structure, that was just fine.

There were members of the ECB who would have preferred to keep the unit in place, without tenure lines, with its focus on teaching and collegiality, even if the administration never chose to reward us for that. They argued that tenure lines and research would interfere with our focus on teaching, and that the community we existed to serve could be served within the marginal structure we had in place. They preferred to fight for higher wages and long-term contracts. I found that ideal seductive but ultimately naive. I can't imagine such self-sacrifice gaining so much support in a faculty dominated by men. Some of us congratulated ourselves on that challenge to masculinist ways. As I said earlier, the ECB was dominated by single mothers, at a stage in their lives where child-rearing was necessarily central. Both men and women brought their children to work and felt good about that. Our collaborative model was very much colored by the ideals of family, by the notion that family commitments and needs must be recognized in the workplace. The climate definitely discouraged any critique of that ideal, and it was hard even to deal with blatant incompetence on the part of a staff person. On the other hand, the productivity was prodigious. The unit offered enormous emotional and moral support, and even though we insisted on valuing family, we put out a tremendous amount of work. We did everything anybody asked, and then took on extra work for dessert.

In our enthusiasm, we refused to hear other views. We wouldn't hire anyone who didn't "look like us." But reality came calling in the form of the 5-year review. The external evaluators were all tenured composition people with the highest credentials, and I believe they came in with a great deal of sympathy for the ECB. After all, the English Department at Michigan has steadfastly refused to take composition seriously. On the other hand, English departments can hand out tenure. As many comp/rhetoric folks have argued, the only way to

legitimate the discipline is from inside an English Department, however uncomfortable that may be. Composition's confused relationship to power leads to an argument that to be legitimated, collaboration must fit in the hierarchy. And the ECB struggled with that. In our deliberations as the ECB prepared the self-study, and considered what future we wished to fight for, some people felt that our collaborative model was betrayed. As a committee of the whole, we specifically refused to make tenure lines the priority. However, some of the leadership didn't hear that. It became clear that tenure for the director at least was being represented as the will of the ECB. Those most committed to a collaborative model were outraged at this misrepresentation.

With regret and a sense of loss, I must say that attention to the realities of the institution was absolutely necessary. Tenure for any ECB faculty was never a possibility, and, in the context, that is lethal. My perception is reinforced by the recommendations of the review committee. The final document they prepared warmly approved the work of the ECB. It was less approving of the English Department's role in teaching writing. Still, it recommended that, since the administration was adamantly opposed to making the ECB a tenure-granting unit, a college committee be formed to oversee the relationship between the ECB and the English Department. In other words, they ducked the issue, in part because they had no real choices. I believe it would have been very difficult for tenured reviewers committed to composition as a discipline to vigorously recommend that a nationally prominent program like the ECB should function as an independent rhetoric department but without tenure lines, if, indeed, such an idea was ever presented to them. The struggle to get composition recognized as a discipline has been too hard. But some of the ECB faculty would have preferred that arrangement. Some ECB members took the view that if we had not fought for tenure lines, the ECB could have gone on as before.

In the last days, after the "merger" was announced, many in the ECB believed that by showing our solidarity and the strength of our collaborative model, we could maintain our dignity and independence within the English Department. We tried to talk with them as equals. That incensed our new bosses.

The Institution

We were too focused on our internal issues. Most ECB faculty spent very little time examining the larger institution surrounding us—in fact could rarely see over the English Department. We felt cut off from the rest of the University, and turned inward. Someone once said, "There's a big concrete wall between me and the rest of the University, and there's nothing I can do about it." And we often blamed others, as if they were under some obligation to allow themselves to be reformed by us. Most faculty within the ECB were not aware that the bulk of the resources were allocated to the upper level writing program, which was a WAC conception. Conversations with faculty in other departments were consistently marked by the failure to grasp each others' assumptions. ECB thought it was a rhetoric department; the rest of the University thought it was an administrative support for the WAC program. Because I directed the UL program and had to work with people in other disciplines, I knew that, but I

didn't know how to close the gap.

The ECB experience with collaboration has remarkably little to do with what else was going on. Indeed the salient characteristic is the lack of connection between what we thought we were doing and what the rest of the University had in mind. It not only makes it hard to organize this essay, but hard to make any evaluation of the experience. There were huge forces raging around us, and our collaborative experiment was mostly irrelevant. I find that especially troubling. We lost the battle in part because no one knew where the war was. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences officially hoped that the infusion of ECB faculty would have an impact on the English Department's pedagogy. "Trickle up." More candidly, some administrators approved the ideas of the ECB, but, they said, "It isn't working. You are too isolated. Your ideas aren't getting out to the faculty." But they didn't give us the resources we would have needed to do that. They wanted to reform the professoriate, not the lecturers. And they had other things to think about: financial models, eroding support for affirmative action, inability to find leadership for the ECB under the existing rules, and—back to money—a donor who wanted to give the University five million dollars for a writing center, with some guarantees of future stability, I suspect. As Bill used to say, "It's hard to make a five-year plan with three-year lectureships."

I'm not deconstructing my story here out of nostalgia for fashion past. I would impose unity if I could. But I think it would be too easy to make the ECB a martyr to the cause of equality. We have to confront those other forces somewhere. I'll begin and end with money.

Like many universities, Michigan has begun to look to business for financial models. Their version is called "Total Quality Management." It is so complicated that they hold endless seminars and never succeed in explaining it to the faculty. The basic idea is that units will be rewarded for bringing in students. Education will improve, they argue, if success is measured by student feet. But any scheme can be undermined, and there are ways to increase enrollment figures without improving the quality of the education. Many people at Michigan believe it was this policy that prompted the School of Engineering to discontinue the practice of sending first year students in engineering over to the College of Liberal Arts for the introductory composition course. However, and composition people should think hard about this, there is also evidence that the School of Engineering didn't like what the Introductory Composition program was teaching engineering students. To other faculty, composition, for all its quarrels with literature, still only prepares students to write about literature. Either way, by fall of 1998 the English Department will have lost about a thousand students. The ECB had about 800. Many on the ECB faculty think that accounts for everything. I think it is more symptomatic than causal.

The End of Affirmative Action

I asked the founder how he would go about it if he wanted to start the ECB today. He said the moment was past, and he didn't think such a thing would be possible today, that Carnegie Mellon wouldn't fund such a thing

today. Some activists (though not those in the ECB) believed that affirmative action had effectively already done its job and really wasn't needed any longer. As we all know, now is the time of California's reactionary legislative action. And we began to hear more calls from faculty in the College for increased effort to attract better prepared students. There aren't equivalent people in the English Department these days. One doesn't have Shakespearians and grammarians and medievalists who want to support a social action seen as separate from their "disciplines." Nowadays the department hires literary critics for their social critique, and tenures them for doing research in that area. It is a different world. And another reason no one wanted to take on the directorship of the ECB is that they didn't see support for it in the College.

So we're back to money. The ECB began and ended with outside grants. I don't have much information about the new arrangement, but it does rely much more on graduate students in the English Department than faculty trained in composition.

At the summer meeting of the WPA in Houghton, Michigan, I heard many people comparing what happened to Chris Anson at the University of Minnesota with what happened to Bill Condon at Michigan. It was irritating to hear all those composition folks assuming the same hierarchical structure they so often fulminate against, as if Bill had been the only member of the ECB who counted, the rest of us simply dismissed.

On the other hand, there are some reasons to make the comparison between two manifestations of the conflicting perceptions of who should teach writing, the WAC model versus the expert model. Nationally I see three impulses that constantly come into conflict, and they were part of the ECB experience, too. One impulse is toward what Jim Slevin called the "amateurism" of Writing Across the Curriculum defined so that writing can be taught by some variety of nonspecialist; another impulse is the emergence of composition as a discipline; and another is the "WID" (Writing in the Disciplines) impulse, which often claims disciplinary status but is focused on content, based on various rhetorical and linguistic approaches to discourse analysis, rather than on pedagogy. The ECB appears to have begun as a WAC program, become a composition program, and then gone back to being a WAC program.

Those in the administration who looked to the ECB for educational reform, who wanted to involve tenured professors more in undergraduate education, and who saw the writing across the curriculum program as part of that movement, supported the ECB in a certain way. But they also represent the version of WAC that makes it a social movement, not a discipline. So I think the opposition between WAC and composition was very much implicated in this conflict. Although ECB faculty taught the First Year Seminars, begun about this time, along with faculty from other disciplines, those seminars were early indications that the administration was committed to a nonprofessional model. Even before the changes, administration at Michigan was looking at Cornell's John S. Knight program. The fact that First Year Seminars taught by other faculty rarely provided enough writing assignments to count, in the eyes of the adminis-

tration, as writing courses is only one more confounding factor (though crucial to my own thinking on the issue).

Our effort to institutionalize composition at Michigan was fundamentally at cross-purposes with the University. From the administration's point of view, the ECB was a teaching unit. The administration did not want a rhetoric department that would offer a degree and develop a research faculty. The Carnegie-Mellon Foundation had offered to fund such a unit a few years back, but Michigan turned down fifteen million dollars rather than go ahead and develop a modern rhetoric department. Tenure lines based on teaching became the goal of the ECB leadership. And all this time, composition was becoming institutionalized as a discipline, and, in the ECB version, ever more focused on *learning* as opposed to *teaching* (a very difficult concept for lots of faculty across the curriculum). We defined composition in terms of assessment, portfolios and computers. The ECB's website never has laid its legitimate claim to being "the mother of all writing-across-the-curriculum programs." In the nineties we wanted to be a rhetoric department (though some faculty could not abide the word), not a WAC program. As the Associate Director for the Jr./Sr. Writing Program, the upper level writing-across-the-curriculum piece, I often felt myself in conflict with the rest of the ECB, focused as they were on defining composition as a discipline chiefly through pedagogy. That was a productive conflict for me. In my new job I find myself confronting the same issues, with local variations. I'm very grateful for what I learned from my collaborating colleagues at the ECB about 1) pedagogy, and 2) intellectual politics in practice. And about collaboration.

Notes

1. The typical teaching load was 21 contact hours per week: two 4-credit practica per term, plus ten hours in the Writing Workshop. Practica were structured with two hours per week of class and a half hour of individual conferences every other week. If we taught advanced courses, it was under another rubric or in another department. That was the exception rather than the rule, and it matters that we were so heavily focused on first-year courses, as it matters that so much of composition theory has been developed in first-year courses.

2. Wayne Butler, Francelia Clark, Bill Condon, George Cooper, Emily Decker, Amy Doherty, Dacia Dressen, Zilia Estrada, Teri Ford, Helen Fox, Todd Gemes, Peggy Goetz, Liz Hamp-Lyon, Susanmarie Harrington, Janice Honeyman, Helen Isaacson, Kay Keeler-Johnston, Colleen LaPere, Phyllis Lassner, Mark McPhael, Barbara Monroe, Barbra Morris, Sue Richardson, Becky Rickley, Rebecca Reed, Marty Rosenberg, Ann Russell, Julie Stieff, LeeAnn Sutherland, Renee Moreno, Ray McDaniels, Margaret Willard.

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Collaborating with Power: Contradictions of Working as a WPA

Trudy Smoke

A recent exchange took place in *College English* between James Sledd and Lynn Z. Bloom that disturbed me. In describing "the subgroup of compositionists," Sledd was reminded of the metaphor of the old Southern plantation, which he termed "Pomocompo," surely his comment on the world of postmodern composition studies. He decried the administrators of writing programs as overseers or slavemasters over the part-timers whom he termed "slaveys down in the quarters" of this pomocompo plantation (713). Bloom responded by stating that she "never bought into the academic caste system" and that in her many years of serving as a writing program administrator, she "had worked hard to change exploitative systems and to improve the working conditions and lives of those whose status is 'On the Floor with the Kitty Litter'" (714).

Although I have great respect for both Sledd and Bloom, I am concerned about the binary nature of the either/or positions they present. My perception is that the WPA position is much more contradictory than their descriptions imply and much less in our power to define or control in any stable way. Unlike the master/slave relationship Sledd describes, I not only administer but also teach in the writing program in my college. I have my own students who look to me to prepare them for the necessary tests and to help them improve their abilities to write and understand academic texts. Yet daily I face enormous pressures in trying to maintain a good program in an institution under tremendous political pressure to cut back, downsize, and tighten standards. At the same time, I am immersed in the conflicts of faculty members, students, and administrators trying to function as rules and regulations shift. Moreover, unlike Bloom's WPA, although I too have never bought into it, I must be honest and admit that my work as a WPA has in some ways facilitated the "academic caste system" in which part-timers and full-timers have different teaching loads and academic benefits.

In trying to understand these contradictions, I have found it helpful to reject an "either/or" perspective in favor of a "both/and" approach in which individuals are viewed not as essential and fixed in nature, but instead as "diverse, contradictory, and dynamic; multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered" (Pierce 15). I think that this description is appropriate not only for individuals but also for the institutions that individuals create, especially in light of colleges becoming more diverse, policies within them more contradictory, and internal structures more dynamic.

As higher education evolves, new levels of authority develop to cope with the rapid internal changes and external pressures. As writing ability becomes a more significant indicator of college success, the WPA role takes on a

new significance too. This is ironic because, increasingly, the WPA role contains within it the paradox of powerless power: having responsibility and little authority, having insider knowledge and being institutionally ignorant, and needing to cooperate and wanting to resist. This is power defined by its negations and limits. Judith Butler writes provocatively about the affirmations and subjection processes of power in her recent book, *The Psychic Life of Power*. She writes, "'Assuming' power is no simple process, however, for power is not mechanically reproduced when it is assumed. Instead, on being assumed, power runs the risk of assuming another form and direction" (21). What happens when one assumes power is unpredictable; the assumption of power is an act in process, a constant gain, loss, and redefinition.

The Particularities of the Position

The City University of New York (CUNY), serving more than 200,000 students, has been under attack in the media lately for not enforcing writing standards in some of its community colleges. At Hunter, a senior college in the CUNY system with 19,800 students, our freshman composition, developmental, and ESL writing courses are taught in the English Department, a department that in the past year has had to increase dramatically the number of courses that we offer because of a new one-semester remediation policy requiring students to take any necessary developmental writing, reading, and math courses during their first semester in the college. Entering students are also strongly advised to take all their freshman writing courses in their first year. The one-semester policy was initially opposed by many faculty members because it appeared to be creating a revolving door for students who may have been poorly prepared in high school or who are still in the process of acquiring English and therefore may need more than one semester. In response to faculty concerns, the President promised that sufficient sections of these courses would be made available for all students needing them. Newly entering students are also strongly advised to take the free summer immersion program before entering the college in the fall. Students are no longer forced onto waiting lists for courses as they had been in the past. As a result, there have been record numbers of courses, part-time teachers to teach them, interviews on hot August days, and observations this fall. Negotiating the new policy to meet the needs of our students while also meeting the requirements of college administrators also meant meetings throughout the summer for the English Department chair, deputy chair, and myself as director of the Freshman English Program.

We were able to do all of this because of the generally egalitarian administrative structure of our program. Our developmental and freshman English courses are governed by an administrative committee made up of the department chair, the deputy chair, the director of the Freshman English Program, and the coordinators of Developmental Reading, Developmental Writing, Composition I, and Expository Writing. Each individual has one vote and equal status. The director position is a new one and was created not with the intention of imposing a top-down hierarchical structure but instead to make sure that the program would have representation and therefore a voice at college-wide

meetings and committees. It was created so that students would have someone to go to when there were problems, so that administrators in the college would have one person to call when there were questions, and so that representation from the college would be guaranteed at all CUNY-wide meetings. The position was also created to simplify the process for obtaining grants. In intention, it is similar to the "decentering" model for writing administration Gunner described, which needs "a spokesperson or liaison, perhaps, but not a single position assigned total curricular responsibility or autocratic power" (13).

Interrogating the Role

When I accepted the position of director, I knew some of the problems that would arise, but I could not have conceived the self-altering nature of the WPA position. To understand some of the challenges I have been facing in trying to "become" my new role, I have begun to interrogate the role of WPA itself. Butler led me to this avenue of exploration when she referred to Foucault's idea "that the point of modern politics is no longer to liberate a subject, but rather to interrogate the regulatory mechanisms through which 'subjects' are produced and maintained" (32).

In interrogating the WPA role, just as Sledd and Bloom, I, too, have come up against the complexities involved in my work with part-timers. Although it sounds very simple and obvious, an important first step in coping with the contradictions inherent in being a full-timer working largely with part-timers is to talk with the teachers in the program and find out more about their situations. What I quickly discovered is that teachers had different needs. While some of the teachers in the program seemed satisfied with their positions, many others felt used and burned out. Several were worried about losing their jobs; several felt that their students were not making enough of an effort to succeed; and several lamented that their jobs did not seem to be the stepping stones to full-time positions they had hoped for. Many of them felt personally unheard and institutionally ignored.

I wanted to do something to better meet their needs, but, once again, I faced the limitations of my job and the political situation of teaching writing in a large American university today. Talking, however, was a start. I wanted them to know how much our program meant to me, and how powerless I too felt when I identified with their feeling that the institution was changing rapidly and that faculty were often not consulted about the changes. Yet I also wanted them to know that my sense of agency came from the belief that all was not futile and that we could do something together. With this in mind, we have made small inroads in bringing about changes for some of the teachers.

Those individuals identifying themselves as used-up and burned-out teachers were for the most part creative individuals who had been teaching the same courses for too many semesters. Together, we looked at our course offerings and discussed their various abilities and interests. Soon after one of our meetings, I was in the process of applying for a grant to link writing classes with other classes in the college. Some of these teachers wanted to get involved with

the grant because it gave them a chance to attend, with pay, other teachers' classes, to teach to a theme they found stimulating, and to become more integrated in the college as a whole.

The grant we received was announced in December, at the end of the fall semester, making it difficult to plan, to notify the registrar, and to make sure that all classes had sufficient students. But we were able to do it because of the combined efforts of the participating teachers. Those who were interested in linking their classes and the Freshman English Program office manager made posters and flyers notifying students of the new "linked" courses. Despite the fact that these were placed all over the college, someone had to be there to assist students in getting information about the courses, to make sure they were eligible for them, and then to get them registered. This job fell to me and led to many hours of advisement and consultation with faculty in several disciplines. Classes were eventually filled and all the grant money was used, which benefited our students and faculty members. One of our part-timers who had thought about quitting teaching participated in the grant and refound her commitment in the linking of ESL writing and women's studies courses. Others involved with the grant felt more valued, intellectually and emotionally, because someone had listened to them and responded to their needs.

For the teachers who were worried about losing their jobs, there was less I could do. Our chair tried to assure them that their jobs were as safe as possible in our uncertain times, and they all remained. Several of these teachers still feel insecure about their jobs despite our efforts to make sure they get their schedules early and are given forms to make requests for their teaching choices at least a semester in advance. These are teachers who work in several institutions, have very little time, and are unable to attend meetings, so their awareness of the college's shifting policies is minimal.

The frustration of the third group of teachers, regarding students who do not make enough effort, has become a subject of discussion at several of our meetings. Many of these teachers make enormous personal sacrifices to attend graduate school, work as part-timers, and set aside time for their students only to find that too many of their students seem interested solely in passing their tests, getting through their courses, and completing their college requirements and are less concerned with improving their writing and reading abilities. In our meetings, we have discussed the fact that these students are attending college in a time of decreased educational benefits and increased pressure to complete college rapidly and get a job. The concept of education for knowledge itself may be vanishing as students are forced by societal pressures to identify career choices early, "get through" required courses, and start to take the courses that will prepare them for their future careers. Students and teachers alike are living with these kinds of dilemmas which cannot be simply resolved. However, meeting to discuss them at least gives frustrated teachers a voice in these issues.

The best results occurred for those teachers seeking full-time positions. Posting job openings and writing recommendation letters may have played some role in the fact that four of our part-time faculty did get full-time jobs beginning

this past fall. This semester I have made it a policy to meet with available part-time faculty and graduate assistants to talk about our field and to make suggestions for future full-time work.

In addition, this semester, for the first time, the coordinator of one of our courses is a part-time adjunct. She has been with our department for a number of years, knows the program well, and has taught several courses in the developmental writing component. She has aspirations to work in administration in our college writing center, and she expressed an interest in gaining administrative experience. We now work together two or three times a week; she has written memos to other teachers, has presided over meetings, and has been introduced in our departmental meeting. For her, it is an opportunity for growth. For me, it is another chance to collaborate with a colleague.

Since she has taken on the role of coordinator this semester, several other part-timers have spoken to me about doing this some time in the future. In the past, part-timers only did occasional program coordination in the summer program, so this individual's success may open the way for other part-timers to gain such experience. The fact that interested individuals have come to speak to me could indicate the existence of a hierarchical structure, yet it also suggests that they see possibilities for themselves to become more involved in our program. This simple act of collaboration is but a small correction to the long history of exploitation inherent in the system, in the misuse of power and authority in academia, and in the complex relationships between somewhat privileged full-timers and somewhat exploited part-timers.

While taking all these steps, I still know that I am directing a program in which part-timers suffer and feel disempowered, not as the slaves to which Sledd refers but as professionals caught in a trap. Many of these are individuals with Master's degrees who find themselves competing with better-credentialed, although perhaps less experienced, persons when they do go for jobs. Some of them are also getting older and are finding ageism to be a factor as well. These are realities in the academic world today.

In addition to the personal needs of faculty, there is the serious concern that excessive demands are being made on students. The one-semester policy puts disempowered part-time faculty in the unenviable position of having to fail students who will then be dismissed from the college. Many teachers are conflicted about whether or not to push forward less prepared students in the hope that, with additional semesters of reading and writing in a variety of courses, students will improve sufficiently by the time of graduation. They do not want to tell hard-working students that they have not made enough progress to exit writing courses.

Because I also teach in the program, I am very cognizant of the problems teachers face in making these decisions. This semester, I am teaching English 110, our Composition I course. Recently I talked with another teacher of 110 who is a graduate assistant teaching with us for the first time, about how we respond to ESL students' papers in our classes. He was concerned about what would

happen to some of the weaker ESL students in his mainstreamed writing class. I made some suggestions and got him copies of the students' placement essays, but more importantly we shared our concerns about our students and their futures in our college.

Beyond the complex needs of the faculty and students in the Freshman English Program at Hunter are the myriad needs of the rest of the college community and the future work community of these students. I am a member of the Task Force on Teacher Education in the college where I hear about what happens when students progress academically in the college without having progressed in their writing abilities. Here, my experience as a teacher enables me to bring to the committee the ambivalence felt by teachers conflicted about whether to pass or fail weak students in their courses. I also can bring back to the teachers in the program the reality that when students are pushed ahead, but then do not pass statewide exams, the value of our degree is diminished. The frustrations and anxieties of these dilemmas are enormous.

Reciprocal Effects of the WPA Role

In a sense I am being re-constructed by my role as a WPA. While I entered the position of WPA freely, I feel that the position has now entered me. Butler writes that "we are used to thinking of power as what presses on the subject from the outside," but expanding on Foucault's notion that power forms the subject, she states that power "assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity" (3). In this sense, the power of the WPA position has psychically constructed or modified my self-identity.

I initially thought that having the characteristics of a feminist teacher—"cooperation, collaboration, shared leadership, and the integration of the cognitive and affective" (Schniedewind; qtd. in Miller)—would be enough. But in the complex, somewhat corporate world of education today, these characteristics are only part of the whole picture. I quickly learned that I needed to know as much about budgets and about keeping statistics, about writing clear, readable memos and reports, as about being collaborative. Overcoming my shyness was only one aspect of my personality that I had to alter as I forced myself to speak up for students and for our program in meetings with administrators inside and outside of my college. In my own department, I also have had to cope with the discomfort of giving negative evaluations and observations to faculty I like and negative results to students I want to see succeed.

Learning to live with policies that I do not support, I have also found that the power of the WPA enables me to assist students in need. Few events feel better than being able to retest a student who failed an exam because of a serious personal or health problem and then being able to call that student the next day and tell her she passed the exam. While I have always identified with the frustrations of students and writing faculty in the college, now, however, I also identify with my colleagues outside of our program and with the administrators in my college.

Feminist author Chris Weedon writes that “recognizing contradictions and the power relations and interests which inhere in specific definitions of women’s nature and social role is only the first stage in the process of change both for individual women and in the struggle to transform social institutions” (5). Using the contradictory power relations to forge a collaborative structure that has the potential to transform an institution while realizing that at the same time a self-transformation is occurring is one of the critical challenges faced by many WPAs these days.

The WPA position is a complex one made more difficult by the shifting expectations, policies, and perceptions of higher education today. Teachers, WPAs, and administrators need to collaborate inside and outside our own systems. Within the system, these collaborations enable us to maintain the support that programs must get from our departments, colleges, and the university system. We need to cooperate with one another to present ourselves well in public forums in our schools and in our communities. From without, WPAs benefit from collaborating at conferences and via on-line chat groups such as the WPA listserv. These collaborations help us not only to maintain and develop programs, courses, and better serve students but also to deal with the “multiplicity of power vectors” inherent in our position (Butler referring to Foucault’s term, 99), the complex forces that impinge on higher education across the country and the dilemmas we individually face.

Limitations of Collaboration

One of the ironies of the WPA position is how much our jobs depend on public perceptions of our students and of our colleges in general and, therefore, how limited our power actually is. This is especially true in a public university such as CUNY that is constantly under public scrutiny. Our best efforts to ensure good programming and a cohesive course structure can all be compromised by a public outcry stating that graduating students are unable to write, read, think critically, or whatever is the focus of the current public hue and cry against education.

This past May, for example, one of the community colleges in the CUNY system was accused of graduating students who had not passed the CUNY Writing Assessment Test (WAT). Much of the research on the WAT over the years has suggested that it is not a fair, good, or even valid test of students’ writing abilities. This, coupled with the revelation that passing the WAT had not in fact been a legal requirement for graduation from the community colleges, had little impact. The negative media attack waged on CUNY about this exam resulted in internal pressure being brought upon all CUNY colleges to make the WAT an exit requirement from developmental writing courses. At Hunter, I and other available members of the administrative committee met with the college administration over the summer and struggled to maintain our courses and assessment procedures. Ultimately, we agreed to adjust our requirements so that our students would have to pass the CUNY WAT by the end of Composition I. We did this at a time when another test was being presented to the Board of Trustees that governs CUNY. This one had been approved by the English

Discipline Council, a group of English Department chairs that had met for more than six months to develop a new and improved writing assessment measure. Although the decision to require the passing of the WAT had been made by the administrative committee, I, as WPA, had to present our new and somewhat contradictory policy—requiring students to pass the WAT to exit developmental writing until the new test was created and approved—to the teachers of our various reading and writing courses. By the time teachers and subsequently students found out about the new policy, it was a *fait accompli*—there had been no time or possibility for faculty-wide discussion.

It was with much ambivalence that I spoke to the teachers whose classes would be affected by the changes. My efforts at collaborative administration seemed to be failed ones. Many teachers were angry, and some blamed me for acquiescing to the administration. I told them what my position had been and explained the compromises that had been made to ensure that we lost no courses, no teachers, and few students. I left the meeting feeling ineffective about my capabilities as a WPA. Again, Butler sheds light on this dilemma when she writes, “The power imposed upon one is the power that animates one’s emergence, and there appears to be no escaping this ambivalence. Indeed, there appears to be no ‘one’ without ambivalence . . . ” (198).

Conclusion

Recently, I had a conversation with a WPA in another CUNY college and we talked about the fact that neither of us had wanted to enter college administration, yet we both accepted the role of WPA. Why? He explained that being a WPA was different from any other type of administration because one could be an advocate for teachers and for students, could work to hold together programs, and could create a collaborative community centered around writing. All of this is true, yet I have to reflect on what happened during a recent observation conference with a young teacher who had gotten an unfavorable evaluation and who said in a sad monotone that she had tried and that she had failed. I identify with her in relation to all the battles I have lost and all the ways I have failed in my position, too. The power that we wield to hire, evaluate, and fire individuals, as well as to counsel, place and register students, is coupled with the powerlessness we face when our programs are defunded, devalued, and downsized. Collaboration becomes a shifting field of power in which the WPA’s power sometimes diminishes us when we are used to carry out institutional agendas, and sometimes gives us greater agency such as when, for example, we share the identity of powerlessness with colleagues. I agree with Butler when she describes power as “formative or productive, malleable, multiple, proliferative, and conflictual” (99).

Power is not unilateral. In fact, Butler points out that the individual “is produced, paradoxically, though the withdrawal of power . . . ” (198). We are constructed by what we have lost as much as by what we have gained. Many of us accept the WPA position focusing on our abilities to effect change and develop our programs. This is only a part of the seductiveness of power. To gain

a better picture, we also need to reflect on the pain of feeling powerless or disempowered. This paradox of simultaneous loss and gain is essential to an understanding of the nature of power and the value of collaboration in WPA work. The WPA does not function unilaterally as a master or as a savior; it is not an either/or position. As Miller writes, a collaborative WPA does not seek "to dominate but rather to facilitate, to share power and to enable both self and others to contribute" (52). This seems to me to be the best response to Sledd and to Bloom.

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Pleasure and Pain: Faculty and Administrators in a Shared Governance Environment

Sallyanne H. Fitzgerald

California Community Colleges are required by law to pursue a policy of shared governance, sometimes called "collegial consultation" in other states. The California Education Code refers to regulations about shared governance as those related to "minimum standards governing procedures established by governing boards of community college districts to ensure faculty, staff, and students the right to participate effectively in district and college governance, the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration. . . ." For the lay person, this requirement means that when an issue impacts a group—staff, faculty, students or administrators—its members must be consulted. This consultation is frequently accomplished through the use of standing committees where all constituencies are represented. While some areas of college governance are the purview of a particular group (for example, curriculum is the domain of faculty), all parties participate in the discussion that precedes a decision. In some cases, shared governance has created situations in which decisions cannot be made because consulting everyone takes such an enormous amount of time.

I am Dean of my division, which houses English, ESL, speech, mass communication, and learning skills. Shared governance has been part of the division's culture for many years; it is not just a law to our faculty and staff but the way of making decisions. Even when I have the responsibility for a decision, as is the case with managing the budget, the culture requires that I seek the advice of my faculty and staff. But even in such a clearly defined, mandated shared governance setting, such consultation can bring both pain and pleasure for us all.

Problems in the Decision-Making Process

Pain occurred for all of us during the summer of 1997 when our community college faculty contract was implemented with a new provision about which we had not been informed. Suddenly, the number of hours that a part-time, hourly English teacher could teach per week was reduced to either five or six, not the typical eight, depending on the classes assigned. (A teacher who teaches one five-hour basic writing class and one higher level class earns about \$2300 for the former and about \$1600 for the latter, for a total of about \$3900.) The change meant that part-timers who were counting on earning almost \$4,000 for teaching eight hours would see a loss of from \$1600 to \$2300 for the semester, depending

on the classes they taught. Since we hire between forty to sixty English part-timers a semester, I anticipated facing a number of very unhappy people. If I informed them of the change, many of them were likely to quit to take jobs where they could earn more money. If they remained, they were going to be very angry with the college for the loss of pay. Furthermore, I would have to hire about twenty new part-timers to pick up the class which could no longer be covered by some of our most experienced part-timers, and almost all the classes were going to be basic writing—the cornerstone of our program. Adding to the difficulty, since in a California Community College an administrator dare not make a unilateral decision about an issue that so directly impacts curriculum and hiring, I needed to consult with faculty immediately, but only two of the full-timers were teaching summer school. As the end of July approached, I was faced with an immediate crisis.

I had no choice but to implement the new contract; however, how I handled the results for part-time faculty was something upon which I felt required to consult. Therefore, I began to make calls to various faculty leaders in order to explain the issues to them as I saw those issues. First was the problem of what to do to prevent the part-timers from resigning from their positions, with the semester beginning in only three weeks, to teach elsewhere—a real possibility, because most of them could not afford to teach on an hourly basis if their hours were limited in many cases to five instead of eight per week. Then, we needed to decide what to do if I had to hire many new faculty who had very little time to prepare to teach the core courses in basic writing. The basic writing classes would be the ones most heavily impacted by the change, and those classes are the training grounds that insure student success in advanced classes. Finally came the problem of trying to persuade the part-time faculty that the contract change was not something with which English full-timers agreed: it was important to us that they understand we wanted to maintain our collegial relationship with them and were interested in solving the problem.

My solution was to break off one hour from the load of each part-timer who would have been over the allowed hours, thus allowing them to keep most of their income. That one hour I assigned to another part-timer who was under the allowed load. The hour picked up by the underload person was to be earned by that person staffing our writing center at various times to enable the students to complete one of their weekly hours by attending any of a variety of hours in the writing center for any activity including peer tutoring. My solution was based upon a desire to keep experienced part-time faculty teaching our basic writing classes. I wanted to give them as many hours as possible to teach while making sure some of the classes they taught were basic writing. Students who were doing five hours of class for four units of credit would get four hours with an experienced person and one hour of other useful writing help in an alternative activity through the writing center. Since students could choose the activity from among five options, including computer use and peer tutoring, they would benefit. Also, since the center hours could be staffed by the part-time faculty, we would be able to keep it open additional time, including evenings, when it had

been traditionally closed because of no staffing. With evening staffing, we could make student tutors available then, also; many students, not just those in the changed classes, would have the service available.

This solution was fraught with problems, and the difficulties were compounded by the need for shared governance. The faculty coordinator of the writing center did not like the idea of students descending on the center at unscheduled times and envisioned that about 300 students might appear at the same hour when only one or two tutors were there to help them. Then he left town on vacation just when the decision had to be finalized. When he returned, just as classes started, he suggested that some classes be team-taught for that hour, with the one-hour person meeting the class in the regular classroom.

While the coordinator's solution limited the number of students going to the center, other problems arose. For example, some faculty who shared the hour did not share compatible teaching goals or styles, so they had trouble being a "team." This meant that frequently that hour became "busy time" for students and a bone of contention for faculty. New problems grew out of the solution to assign some students to an hour in the center. For example, I had expected that the usual sign-in procedure would be followed so that a computer record could be shared with the regular classroom teacher of students who used the writing center. Unfortunately, the writing center could not do this because the computer record was for funding, and we could be charged with abusing the funding formula by claiming the same student twice for only one hour of instruction. Without records, faculty who wanted to "track" students' participation found this difficult to do. Along with this, some of those faculty assigned to cover writing center hours did not like the one-on-one tutoring they were asked to do. And some faculty, as well as their students, were upset by a lack of clearly perceived assignments for the hour in the writing center.

Responsibility Versus Consultation

This temporary solution allowed part-timers to continue teaching close to their anticipated load; it also meant that I did not have to hire as many people as I had feared. The greatest problem that resulted from this situation was a faculty perception that they had not been more closely involved in the discussion of the solution, leading, therefore, to their unwillingness to be flexible when we began seeking a long-term solution. That attitude confirmed for me the most basic problem with shared governance: administrators are charged with making decisions, but they must do so by consulting. The faculty, on the other hand, face no requirements except that of being part of the consultation. They are still free to dislike the solution and to blame the administrator for whatever results from the process.

On the other hand, when faculty are involved in the decision and are made part of the solution, they will usually support the final outcome. Two examples of that type of support can be found in the writing center and the basic writing program. When the college moved from quarters to semesters, the faculty took leadership in changing the curriculum. They did this for two

reasons: the department was without a permanent administrator to assume leadership but the conversion could not wait on a permanent hiring, and, more importantly, newly trained faculty who had been recently hired saw an opportunity to implement their ideas. As part of the conversion, the faculty eliminated the writing and reading centers, which were actually classroom-based instruction on a master student model. Instead of deciding what would replace the centers, they used a new grant to begin a new center with computer classroom support but no philosophy or procedures. The philosophy grew gradually as the classes moved into the computer rooms, and from what happened in the first two years came a philosophy of collaboration that resulted from pedagogy driving curriculum decisions. The staff, faculty, and student tutors all "bought into" what was happening, and, as a result, the writing center came to be the focus of much of what makes our current classes work so well at the developmental level.

From this most recent crisis has come the second example of successful shared governance where faculty have become invested in the results of the shared decision-making. Because of the problem over the summer with the threatened loss of part-time hours, the administration looked more closely at the course description and decided that it was incorrectly worded for the amount of credit that was being given to full-timers. In other words, the course outline suggested particular activities which on this campus are given less weight than that given to the full-time English faculty for such work. The full-time faculty were unwilling to consider changing the course outline and decided that they should get what they always had received. The administration, with which I agreed, changed the load value. This infuriated the full-time faculty because it was done without what they considered "appropriate" consultation. In fact, it is the administration's right and responsibility to make such decisions. Nevertheless, the furor that resulted from the "high handed actions" meant that faculty were galvanized into looking more closely at the curriculum and articulating the issues in those terms. With the passage of time and much discussion, including a curriculum retreat, both full- and part-time faculty have agreed to a particular approach to the basic writing courses. The same faculty who assumed leadership in the curriculum conversion stepped in again to articulate the issues on the basis of the curriculum, not as an "us-them" issue. Fortunately, the resolution will allow part-timers to teach the hours they have traditionally taught and maintain the basic writing courses, which enact an approach recommended by current research. But, most importantly, all the faculty feel consulted because the process that was followed was faculty-led and conformed to earlier faculty decisions.

The pain of the last few months was both mine as an administrator and the faculty's. We suffered through the time it took to reach consensus and the controversy that resulted from the discussion. Part-time faculty were pitted against full-time faculty, and administrators, including me, were faced with angry part-time and full-time faculty. The faculty coordinator and the staff who work in the writing center found themselves embroiled in the controversy as they tried to deal with the solution I implemented. In the midst of all the anger

and the questioning of curriculum versus the need to provide part-timers with sufficient instructional hours, none of us found much pleasure. That only came at the end of the process when through the consultation process we came to an agreement about the curriculum.

There are several lessons here. Collaborative structures such as shared governance are not likely to produce clear relations and happy solutions to institutional conflicts. Taking consultation rights seriously is one way to reduce the friction inherent in such systems, for the consultant and decision-maker alike.

Grants Awarded

The WPA Research Grant Committee (David Jolliffe, chair, Christine Garris, and Doug Hesse) awarded the following grants at the 1998 WPA breakfast in Chicago:

Pat McQueeney
University of Kansas
\$2,000

“Writing in Large Classes: Operative Variables”

Alice Gillam
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
\$950

“Investigating Alternative Models of
Writing Program Administration:
A Case Study and Survey”

Graduate Students, Writing Programs, and Consensus-Based Management: Collaboration in the Face of Disciplinary Ideology

Chris M. Anson and Carol Rutz

In his preface to Olson and Taylor's new collection on publishing in rhetoric and composition, J. Hillis Miller notes the importance of changing our beliefs about the preparation of future faculty. Himself an eminent literary critic, Miller writes that while literary studies are in a "state of decline," the field of composition and rhetoric has become "brilliantly professionalized," responding to "major social forces such as the redefinition of the university's mission from cold war research and indoctrination in a single set of national values to 'preparing a skilled workforce for competition in the global marketplace'" (xiv).

Arguing that graduate students need at least some administrative preparation if they intend to pursue careers in composition, some composition programs are now creating graduate courses that focus partly or wholly on the difficult, complex, and knowledge-based work of administration. A few programs have gone even further, creating new approaches to collaborative administration that increasingly involve graduate students who may have little experience in higher education leadership. These trends, however, are not without their strong detractors, especially those who argue that graduate students have no business doing the work of faculty and ought to be spending most of their time on their studies.

While debates about the involvement of graduate students in writing program administration may seem to invoke mostly superficial issues, we believe that the future of such collaborations depends largely on the underlying ideology of our allied professions—on tacit beliefs about the relationship between knowledge and work in higher education. In this essay, we explore this relationship by considering the values that led to the creation of a consensus-based management system in our own composition program at a major university. By surveying faculty members who once participated in this system as graduate students, we also 1) gauge the effectiveness of this system in helping them to secure positions as faculty and in providing them with skills and perspectives essential for their success; and 2) try to understand the ideological and disciplinary reasons why the new administrators of this same program, who do not have backgrounds or experience in composition, would resist and largely abandon the administrative model on which the program was founded.

Consensus-Based Management: A Brief Local History

The management system on which the University of Minnesota's independent Composition Program was founded in 1981 reflected, in both structure and spirit, an attitude toward graduate students as developing professionals rather than as novices who are unable to participate in departmental governance until they can boast a Ph.D. This consensus-based system, which created a community of workers united in the delivery and administration of effective, cross-curricular writing courses, often deliberately tried to ignore differences in the institutional status of its members, giving everyone equal voice in key decisions and seeking the advice and reflections of all members.

From 1981 to the fall of 1996, the Composition Program operated in a separate instructional unit in the College of Liberal Arts. Four faculty members transferred some of their effort, through course release, into the Program in capacities relating to administration and the training of teachers, but their tenure homes were in the English department. The six thousand undergraduates served annually by the Composition Program were taught primarily by graduate students—over 100 of them—whose interests as teachers, graduate students, and employees the Program tried to serve in its various missions.

A graduate teaching appointment in the Composition Program was competitive, requiring a formal application procedure and interview. The Program staff, consisting of faculty, civil service employees, and appointed graduate student assistants, identified and recruited qualified candidates from a broad range of disciplines. All applicants were advised that the appointment required a two-year commitment, intensive pre-fall training, ongoing participation in teacher-development programs (including cross-observations of classes), and relatively autonomous but supervised teaching of lower and upper division courses. To recognize the professionalism stemming from extended training and the length of the teaching commitment, the Program provided centralized office space; office supplies and services; teaching assignments for a full academic year; seniority as a factor in choice of courses and office space; travel funds to attend professional conferences; an annual teaching award; and participation in program management.

Graduate students played a significant and at times indispensable role in Program management through several part-time administrative appointments. Composition TAs were eligible to apply for these designated administrative jobs within the Program. Every year, several graduate students helped design and deliver training, worked closely with the faculty directors of lower and upper division curricula, directed the writing lab, and assisted the director with administrative projects. These positions were awarded after a competitive application procedure that included assembly of a dossier and a formal interview with a panel of faculty and peers. The jobs were compensated by replacing part of a teaching assignment with course-equivalent administrative duties. For example, each of the two graduate students who assisted the upper division

director received payment equal to the stipend for one course. Those who served in administrative jobs did so for fixed terms and were prohibited from succeeding themselves, which ensured that the positions would routinely be available to other graduate students as they moved through their degree programs.

Graduate students typically worked in clusters in close collaboration with one of the faculty members, who each had responsibility for one or more domains of the Program. Graduate students with administrative jobs also served on the Core Staff, the governing body of the Program. During regular meetings, faculty, staff, and graduate students addressed curriculum, training, professional development, and day-to-day management. Graduate students participated in all of these discussions, with the exception of the rare disciplinary matter that involved peers, or confidential and high-level issues ethically and legally best taken up by the tenured faculty. Minutes from Core Staff meetings were published for the entire Program, and important recommendations could lead to a formal vote of the group. Specific initiatives or proposals that would affect teachers were usually described in mailings or at open forums, and the entire staff was asked to offer reactions and suggestions. Graduate student representation on the Core Staff also allowed for more direct communication between the administration and the teaching staff.

Fifteen years after the foundation of this independent program, its administrative control was given back to the English Department through the actions of a temporary dean who held the Program accountable for several hearsay complaints that undergraduate students at the University were not writing well. The English Department, in need of tuition revenue and the many TA lines held by the Program, eagerly complied. On the heels of this abrupt move, a faculty administrator in English remarked that it was the department's intent to burst the "bubble" that had surrounded the Program when it had independent status. He was referring specifically to the Program's system of management—a system based on the administrative participation of faculty, graduate students, and support staff. In characterizing the Program as a "bubble," the professor was referring to a perceived aura of unreality encircling—in his words, "protecting"—graduate students who participated in the Program. This bubble apparently did not exist in other departments, which maintained a strict personnel hierarchy and strong limits on the extent to which graduate students could participate in administrative and curricular work.

Within a few months, much of the old system had disappeared. Where the previous model emphasized mentoring by faculty and among peers, there were now fewer opportunities to explore and reflect on the daily teaching situations that help a new teacher become a faculty member. Graduate students' professional needs were minimally represented—three of twelve seats—on a Writing Advisory Committee that replaced the Core Staff. (The Core Staff, a group of about the same size, was about half graduate students, half faculty and support staff.) The new governance provided for advisory input only. Policy was determined by the director in consultation with the English Department's executive committee, a group that included some faculty who had not taught composition in more than two decades.

From the perspective of the compositionists who created and ran the Program, its system of management provided excellent preparation for future WPAs, gave voice to all members of the staff, and led to effective problem-solving and strong, democratic leadership. In fact, similar systems were in place at other universities with strong graduate programs in composition—and over the years several WPAs had visited Minnesota’s composition program to study its model and adapt or replicate it on their own campuses. The system, in other words, worked well. Why, then, would the new administration of composition within the English Department look upon this management system as suspect and, having taken control, dismantle its basic structure?

In puzzling through this question, we are led to speculate on the ideological clashes often experienced between disciplines and subdisciplines—in this case, English literary studies and composition studies. The English Department’s change in the managerial structure of Composition does not seem to have been precipitated for structural or logistical reasons: it would have been less difficult to continue the old system in its new home. Instead, we believe the reasons have a disciplinary foundation. As we discovered, breaking down hierarchies can directly challenge the leading assumptions of higher education institutions, which are inevitably caught in their own management structures and in their own, often tacit beliefs about work duties, educational and degree status, earned rights of speech or involvement, seniority, accountability, and chains of command. Scholar-teachers in composition and those in literary studies do not always share the same views of work, position, and rewards, and the differences in their values about the purpose of graduate training strongly influence the roles they establish for their students. In critiquing our colleagues’ views, of course, we also recognize that their positions and actions necessarily emerge from and are deeply rooted in tacit sets of beliefs and social practices that constitute their own cycles of production, credit, and self-replication.

From this perspective, we wondered whether the particular kind of collaborative management system that characterized the “old” composition program was effective in preparing future faculty. We wondered, in other words, whether there was a relationship between the values that structured our program and the realities facing our graduates. Although we knew about the fate of most of our past administrative assistants, we had never asked them to assess their experience in light of their post-graduate employment. Does it serve graduate students well to distract them from their scholarly studies by involving them in programmatic work? Is there a strong match between the disciplinary ideology of many literary departments, which urge total immersion into one’s studies, and success on the job? Intrigued by these questions, we turned to our own former administrative assistants, most of whom now hold tenured positions in English departments at colleges and universities around the country, some as literature experts, some as compositionists and WPAs. In surveying these faculty, we wanted to know whether the specific kind of experience they had in our program as administrative collaborators prepared them in any way for their work in higher education—or if they had any misgivings about the time and effort they put into collaborating with us as “novice” WPAs.

We sent an e-mail questionnaire to two dozen people who had held administrative appointments in the Program in Composition as graduate students sometime between 1983 and 1996. Providing them a way to remain anonymous—though none chose to—we asked them to tell us about their current position and the position they held while here. We asked them to tell us whether they thought their administrative work as graduate students helped them in any way in their current position or any other position they have held since leaving our campus. We urged them to be candid in describing any problems they experienced in their administrative roles as graduate students. And we asked them to comment on the pros and cons of an administrative model in which graduate students collaborate with faculty as they did during the life of the Program. We hoped that their reflections could help us to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our model in terms of its relationship to the work and roles of faculty in the area of English studies.

Knowledge, Preparation, and “Work” in Composition

From the perspective of our colleagues in literary studies, our graduate students gain admission into challenging academic programs in order to earn a Ph.D. degree so they can produce high-quality scholarly work in tenure-track positions at comparable or next-tier institutions. Preparing them for success, some of their mentors even look upon teaching as a set of intrusions—the annoyances and distractions of students, office hours, papers to grade, and classes to meet. More than a few literature faculty will concede, however, that at least some teaching, perhaps a course per semester or year, and perhaps as late as possible in the candidate’s degree program, can be useful for securing a job and preparing for life at another institution where teaching will be required.

But expecting a new Ph.D. in medieval literature or the British novel to move directly into the management of an English Department strikes most literature faculty as unthinkable. Assisting the chair of an English department, helping to coordinate faculty-development efforts, being the departmental admissions officer or curricular overseer—these positions fall to those with some years of experience in departments, and most often to those who have earned tenure after considerable research and teaching experience. What good could possibly accrue to a graduate student from involvement in the usually hidden elements of departmental governance? Graduate students who wish to express themselves within many literature departments do so by participating in whatever grass-roots forums, committees, or other bodies are organized by the graduate students themselves.

The realities for students preparing for lives as compositionists, however, appear quite different. By its very nature, composition unites teaching, research, administration, and service into an integrated whole. The most challenging intellectual questions in much of the field have their genesis in the complex processes of literacy development—itself at the heart of curricular design and delivery. In composition, “administration” includes attending to teacher development; discussing matters of course design; considering the ethics and condi-

tions of employment for writing teachers; informing and persuading those beyond the writing program; working on outreach; grappling with questions of placement, developmental education, and fair-minded testing; and managing large amounts of more routine work such as staffing, scheduling, and budgeting.

In spite of these underlying differences in the expected roles of graduate students in literature or composition, every one of our survey respondents held their experience up as a highlight of their graduate education, whether they now work mainly in literature or composition (or both). For one respondent who had worked on curriculum in the Composition Program but written a dissertation in literature, it was the first time he saw the direct connection between his own research and the world of teaching. "How am I supposed to be an effectively contributing member of an English Department," he wrote, "if I don't know how the administration works? At what point does administrative experience magically spring into existence in the mind of a doctoral student? Is it when s/he flips the tassel on the mortarboard?" A tenured professor at a small college in the Midwest wrote that her administrative role "is what got me hired into my current job." Another person who chose to develop a career in higher education administration wrote that her experience on the Core Staff was "invaluable," and that it was the feature of her background that got her "foot in the door" in her current position. Others pointed out how "tremendously helpful" their experience was to their own abilities as teachers, and how it provided them with "collaborative models of leadership" as well as the "nuts and bolts of running a program." A respondent who is a tenure-track professor at a two-year college in the Midwest said that the administrative experience in composition provided "confidence and practice working with educators and other administrators" before she ever started her career.

At some institutions, new Ph.D.s in Composition find themselves quickly given administrative responsibilities—problematically, if the criteria for promotion and tenure do not reward such responsibilities; more often positively, as their expertise is solicited in many capacities relating to the coordination of undergraduate writing curriculums and writing centers, or the oversight of instructional staff. Most of the compositionists who responded to our survey told us that they were expected to participate in such administrative work—and they were eager to do it. The administrative credentials that helped them secure their positions also served them well as they quickly moved into positions of administrative authority on their campuses.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the benefits of administrative experience clearly play out for many graduate students in the form of impressive credentialing. Even if someone has been involved in some kind of administration before graduate school, the demonstrated application of administrative ability to a university writing program shows a professional sophistication that is often lacking in new Ph.D.s. Many former administrative TAs reported that their experience on the Core Staff set them apart from other candidates, getting them interviews and eventually jobs. In most cases, teaching is at least as important as administrative experience, but the combination seems to be particularly attrac-

tive to hiring committees. One veteran, who now has a permanent, tenured position at a community college, wrote:

I believe that my administrative experience in the old Program in Composition and Communication is the reason that I am currently employed in higher education. I restricted my job search to local institutions of higher learning, and the job market was depressingly tight in 1994-95. In spite of these constraints, I became a finalist for three different positions that spring (one land-grant research institution, one small liberal arts four-year college, and one community college), and I was able to procure the position at [the community college]. In each case, during the interviewing process, it was evident that my work in the Program [as an administrator] was a primary attraction.

Another respondent at a similar institution wrote that the administrative background was the deciding factor in her getting seven on-campus interviews during her job search. A tenured associate professor of English at a state university in the South tells a similar story from a time when the market was less depressed:

When I went on the job market in 1987, I had invitations for 28 MLA interviews, of which I accepted 24. From six campus visits, I received five job offers. I am convinced that the administrative experience on my c.v. 1) set me apart from other candidates; 2) gave me confidence in initial meetings; 3) prepared me to discuss a wide range of issues (curriculum development, program administration, issues related to computers and composition, collaboration, WAC); 4) qualified me for the curriculum development/administrative work that seems, directly or indirectly, to be a part of almost any full-time composition job; 5) allowed me to assess other programs quickly and make a good decision; and 6) prepared me for the transition to a tenure track role where I would have to juggle teaching, research, service, and administration.

The way in which her administrative work helped her to connect the multiple roles of work in higher education also affected a former graduate student administrator who now holds a tenure-track job at a liberal arts college in the East. Claiming that her administrative work in the Composition Program was invaluable "in a number of ways," she pointed out that "It was the first time that I had been asked to think about higher education from an organizational perspective rather than a strictly academic or intellectual viewpoint." This professor found the administrative experience to be a useful laboratory for team-building that contrasted significantly with the emphasis on individual learning and achievement that was her experience as a student. Administrative work, she wrote, "teaches skills and perspectives to graduate students that are not fostered (in most cases) by their own academic preparation. Serving in the Composition administration was the single best career decision I made in my nine years of graduate study." Echoing these sentiments, another graduate student administrator who hailed from the Theater Department and was hired into a tenure-track position at a state university in Ohio wrote that his work with the Program was

“perhaps the single most important factor” in his preparation and job search, placing him “in a better position (in terms of knowing how things work and why things happen as they do at a major university) than most of my senior, let alone junior colleagues.”

If these graduates’ experiences in a range of institutions and departments are representative, their collaboration with the faculty in administrative and quasi-administrative capacities has helped them to develop skills and knowledge that bring together the often fragmented pieces of faculty work in higher education. Yet such experience remains relatively rare at most research-oriented universities. The gulf between “pure” scholarly preparation and new graduates’ work roles on campuses around the country continues to widen in the absence of much attention to students’ preparation for tenure-track jobs. However, as English graduate programs struggle to place their new Ph.D.s in a tight market, the profession is reevaluating its traditional assumptions about adequate preparation. Some members of the English profession are beginning to realize that graduate students need an introduction to the business side of academia as well as the scholarly side. In a recent *MLA Newsletter*, MLA President Elaine Showalter argues that those who train graduate students in the humanities (not just English literature) should change their expectations to include a new emphasis not only on writing and teaching but “most radically” on organizational leadership. Doctoral programs, she writes, should “require all graduate students to take a seminar on educational organization, management, and negotiation. Academia’s condescension toward such corporate skills is notorious; although professors spend large parts of their careers running committees, serving as chairs, or acting as deans, we are expected to pick up the business of administration on our own” (3).

Acknowledging the complexity of academic work in higher education, Showalter is pointing to an ideological and disciplinary gap between the preparation of the future professoriate in English studies and the obvious needs on many campuses for new hires who are savvy in the areas of campus administration, governance, and politics. Interestingly, however, she advocates an approach that reifies the discipline’s vision of the relationship between knowledge, preparation, and work. Knowledge is seen from the perspective of course-related accrual, rather than direct experience. Additional credit hours of preparation in the abstract principles of administration provide students with a sense of being certified, from a mostly informational perspective.

As our respondents made abundantly clear, however, it was the *activity* of their work, the direct experience of shared governance, that served them well as they began their new roles as faculty members. For example, a faculty member describes how her administrative experience prepared her for the demands of outreach and service in her tenured position as a WPA at another small liberal arts college: “I’m convinced that [the administrative] role is what got me hired into my current job. Going straight from grad school to a faculty position in which I’m expected to run WAC, offer faculty workshops, advise faculty across the college about student writing issues, and supervise College Writing (1st-yr.

Comp course) faculty would never have happened if I hadn't had similar responsibilities and experience [in graduate school]." This professor's experience as an administrator in the mid- to late-1980's is shared by another tenured professor and WPA of the same vintage, who teaches at a liberal arts college in Illinois; he writes that "the work in the Comp Program was terrifically important in my getting this job and was immensely helpful in my learning how to teach. It was easily one of the most professionally significant experiences of my career." He is so certain of the worth of this experience that he looks for evidence of similar preparation as he serves on hiring committees himself. "When I'm involved in hiring, I take a candidate much more seriously if I see he or she has held a position comparable to what I held." For this person and many others who responded to our query, acculturation into the administrative side of the profession has had a profound effect.

Complex roles and social adjustments associated with the administrative experience also seem to have made a lasting impression on many former TA administrators. One, who now teaches in a tenure-track history position at a state university in the Midwest (and has recently acquired responsibilities for faculty development on her campus), returned to her home department of history while still at the University and was able to work with faculty and graduate students to implement a similar team approach there based on the Composition Program's administrative model. She wrote that this move "radically shifted the social patterns in the department for the better. . . . The department's graduate student population developed a much stronger cohort emphasis that crossed the former boundaries of period, place, and methodology." In her experience, the strengths of the interdisciplinary, inclusive Composition model transferred fortuitously to another disciplinary site. Improved communication and a broader sense of disciplinary community were the most obvious benefits. But she also described her experience in terms of the relationship between her personal and professional goals—between who she was as a student and who she saw herself becoming as a faculty member. "Most of the Comp professors and many of the teaching assistants lived as if what they did for a living was connected to how they wanted to live." She saw the consensus model of management as one way to provide congruence among work, citizenship, and personal life. Like the history professor, the associate professor from the southern state university remembered the Composition administrative experience as one of "community and commitment" within a huge institution:

It seems to me that when an administrative model for teaching and training involves graduate students, that model gains the energy, innovations, and commitment of people new to the field. The result: a collective, a community. Shared goals are what keep this model on track, in balance, coherent and collaborative. Such a model demands more of faculty who provide the continuity as the graduate students constantly change: they have to remain flexible, the program has to be open to changes, the graduate student voices have to be acknowledged.

This sense of “coherence,” wedding personal and professional roles and aspirations, seemed critically important to several other respondents.

To tease out the negative experiences of our past colleagues, we also asked about problems they had experienced—problems associated with the competing roles of student, teacher, and administrator. Did they sense tension between permanent staff and themselves? Were they ever caught in the middle as faculty and support staff brought them into curricular, policy, and other discussions? Did their scholarly work suffer or prosper while they served as administrators? Would their graduate careers have been stronger and more unified if they had not collaborated with the tenured faculty in helping to run the Program?

The answers to these questions varied. The perceptive reader has probably correctly concluded that administrative appointments tended to be sought and filled by energetic, high-achieving people. Some people who were used to juggling many responsibilities easily accommodated a few more. Some others, however, found themselves distracted from their teaching or writing. A community college professor reported on two “negatives”: feeling caught between faculty members who had “strained relationships,” and being drawn into the administrative work of the Program at his own peril. About the latter problem, he described the path that led to his Ph.D.:

I will finish my doctorate thesis this spring (1998). I started my graduate studies in 1988. There are many, many factors that have contributed to this delay, but part of the delay was the amount of work I willingly and eagerly took on, first in the Core Staff of the Program, and then later as a research fellow. . . . There is no one to blame in this except myself, but it is worth noting.

The experience of a professor teaching in the East was somewhat different:

I can see now that there must have been situations where the faculty needed to discuss issues privately to which I was not privy. However, I was made to feel at all times like a full player in the administration of the Program, and I greatly appreciated the sense I had that my perspective was valued and heard. Also, the faculty was careful to delineate the responsibilities of my position such that I never felt that I was asked to go beyond what was appropriate (e.g., disciplining, grade disputes). My recollection is that the position was no more time-consuming than teaching was—less so, at many times of the quarter—and so it did no more to distract me from my studies than any form of supporting myself.

A professor in a local liberal arts college also noted the potential hazards of becoming involved too fully in administrative responsibilities. Administration that includes graduate students, she wrote, provides a

particularly big advantage for a grad student considering a career path that may include some administrative responsibilities, such as a Director of Comp job. Being treated like a peer—in teaching, administration, and scholarship—was energizing and affirming. It was also such a change

from many other aspects of my experience as a grad student. The two biggest disadvantages are the potential for administrative tasks to "take over," leaving studies on a back burner, and getting caught in the middle of faculty-faculty disagreements to a greater extent than might otherwise occur.

A WPA at a private liberal arts college in the Midwest agreed that the workload can be onerous. In her role in several administrative capacities, she found the work increasingly absorbing and time-consuming, but at the same time it seems to have connected with and energized the other aspects of her growing professionalism:

During my four years as a Composition Program administrator, I was able to make more than adequate progress toward my degree, present papers regularly at professional venues, run workshops, win a teaching award, and conduct my dissertation research while performing well in administrative roles.

The potential of new responsibilities to infuse enthusiasm and perspective into other work was also noted by a tenured associate professor who was part of the Program in the 1980s. She found that after working in a supportive community of teacher-administrators, the fragmentation in her tenured position resulted in a loss of cohesion and inspiration:

Since I was lucky enough to experience the sense of support and community that grew out of this model, I miss it. While I know that I have picked up new roles, I know I don't write as much as I did when I felt a central part of an intellectual and teaching community. But that disadvantage is mine—not a disadvantage of an inclusive model.

Another respondent also experienced this "reverse" workload effect, in which the demands for time in a collective administrative model actually inspire productivity instead of draining it. Her current WPA job at a liberal arts college lacks the disciplinary support provided by the Composition Program. "Having been a scholar in a community, becoming a solitary seeker of truth seems perverse, especially when rhetorical research and activity require community by definition."

Motivation to give time to the work of literacy development in its programmatic and curricular dimensions comes from feeling membership in a supportive community of workers. Their experiences in such a community seem to have influenced several past administrative TAs to create a similar context on their campuses; one alumna, who is now a WPA at a technical college in the East, consciously works to establish the same sense of community that motivated her during her graduate years:

The collaborative model [of leadership] has become particularly important for me as I work to develop a cohesive writing program at a college with a high percentage of adjunct faculty. Having learned that graduate students can be a productive part of a writing program's leadership (and should be, if we truly believe in student-centered learning), I've ap-

proached adjunct faculty with the same perspective. Within the writing program, for example, adjuncts and full-time faculty participate equally in curricular and faculty development assessment, and they have equal votes.

Conflicts between collaborative models of administration and institutional norms can also have occasional interpersonal or psychological effects. The history professor, for example, noted that faculty lose some privacy and perhaps some perceived status when graduate students are present at occasions when faculty may not be on their best behavior:

A disadvantage [of including graduate students in decision-making roles] for faculty might be the loss of mystery that comes when grad student administrators see who is late to meetings habitually, who is unorganized, who argues with whom over what issues and with what language, and so forth. Faculty of quality can deal with this loss of privacy—I've seen it done. The major advantage of graduate student administrators is that the practice legitimizes the teaching work performed by academic apprentices. To be outside the decision-making process means to be disconnected from the program and encourages people merely to put in their hours at the job—the deadening kind of work that would indeed detract from a graduate student's professionalization. To be connected, on the other hand, means there is potential for coherence between one's livelihood, one's academic work, and one's life.

The effects of what this respondent calls "disconnection"—of classroom teaching emerging from decision-making processes in which graduate students do not participate—are beginning to be felt as the Program has been absorbed into the English department. Because several of our respondents have either finished their degrees very recently or will do so within the next year or two, they brought a unique perspective to our survey. Most have experienced first-hand the changes in the administrative structure following the takeover of the Composition Program by the English Department; a few have even worked in both administrations. One doctoral candidate wrote that she "was hired as Assistant Director of Lower Division [Composition] under the old regime, but carried out my duties under the new one." Expecting to join a community of program administrators, she felt instead that she was given "all of the duties, [and] none of the administrative voice." This lack of full participation led to difficulties "when we had to run the training seminar in the midst of the total dismantling of the program's administrative structure." Yet while the job did not develop as she had hoped, she still found it useful, helping her to secure an adjunct position at a nearby college while she finishes her degree.

Amplifying these points, a past assistant who is highly networked within the staff of graduate student instructors reflected on her cynicism (out of which she sees a hopeful pragmatism) watching the change in administrations. One example, she wrote, can be found in the "confusion and real anger" experienced by teachers in the new composition wing of the English Department:

The training and practicum requirements have been unclear at best and

while experienced teachers have welcomed the freedom that results from a lack of direction, new teachers feel abandoned—as if their classrooms are not sufficiently important to require departmental attention. . . . Fact is, for now the classroom instructors are not working very closely with full faculty and the network of advanced Comp TAs has all but disintegrated. Those of us “oldies” still lingering are daily cornered for help—the brush fire model has never been very effective, but it can appear to work.

If this observer is correct, the sense of community noted by former TA administrators has vanished—from the teaching cohort as well as from those who remain in nominal administrative roles. Isolation from training, decision-making, and other collegial activities tends to breed defensiveness and insecurity about teaching. Thus, what starts ideologically as a concern for students’ professionalization (defined as the speed and success of their degree programs and their total immersion in the knowledge of their specialized areas) may end up keeping these students from understanding the full range of the work they will be asked to do; denying them opportunities to see higher education in all of its dimensions; and compromising their ability—all, that is, but the most brilliant students in the most prestigious universities—to secure tenure-track jobs.

Conclusion: Governance and Disciplinary Ideology

The reflections of our past graduate-student administrators, most of whom are now well-positioned in academic and professional careers, are clear. In celebrating their full inclusion in the management of a large writing program, most of these past colleagues tell us that they would not be where they now are without that participation. There is much more, of course, in their testimonials: the benefits of exposure to the underside of academic life; the chance to put to use, in concretely administrative ways, their developing skills and talents; the opportunity to learn how to manage smaller domains of a writing program; and the advantages of working in a context where they could develop a collegial self, experience participation in difficult administrative decisions, or understand the complicated relationship between a writing program and its institutional culture.

Graduate students are denied opportunities to engage in such work not from maliciousness or even fear of their ineptitude. Rather, many caring administrators and faculty in English departments continue to act upon inherited beliefs about the proper roles and work of professors. Students come to a university to learn, and faculty to teach. Each has a socially inscribed status and set of goals. To blend their roles is to blur important notions of expertise, control, and earned privileges of rank. More simply, students run the risk of straying from their real purpose: to earn an advanced degree. Drawn into the vast administrative landscape of a large writing program, graduate students can flounder. The heavy public demands of writing programs and the typical barrage of paperwork can distract them from their research, stalling their degree programs and even ruining their careers.

These concerns, however, must begin to give way to new expectations of

the professoriate of the twenty-first century. Without a strong understanding of employment practices, young faculty may be vulnerable to major shifts in university policies on tenure, promotion, and job security. Lacking knowledge of how curriculum is invented, refined, put in place, and managed, new hires may not understand how or whether to deviate from the standard design of a course they have been assigned. Without insight into the organizational structures and systems of our institutions, the newly appointed assistant professor may be clueless about how to mediate a dispute, where to go for help in a faculty conflict, or how to look out for his or her rights in a review for merit, reappointment, or tenure.

If they are to be fully included in governance, few graduate students who serve in administrative roles can be “protected” from a fuller understanding of faculty life in a college or university setting. Where their professional responsibilities once covered the writing class they taught and the work they were doing for their graduate courses or research, now these same students have to meet new deadlines and participate in outreach that extends their institutional role. In many cases, graduate students have to seek answers on behalf of their instructional unit, either from sources inside or outside of the university. Learning to present themselves as representatives of a larger entity can be a new and demanding experience for many.

We return, then, to the metaphor of the bubble, within which the graduate-student collaborators in the old Composition Program were thought to be floating. Far from protecting graduate students in a sphere of unreality by elevating their status to something approaching a WPA, involvement in the work of administration actually exposes graduate students to the most challenging aspects of university life, in all its political, structural, and interpersonal complexity. New theories of work in higher education (e.g. Boyer; Brookfield) argue that the faculty member of the next century will be working at the intersections of teaching, scholarship, and service. Campuses around the country are already exploring ways to unite teaching and scholarship, bringing together areas hitherto bifurcated and often unevenly supported. Such initiatives are often a response to increased public accountability, and a concern that, unlike pilots, surgeons, and tax consultants, most faculty are not formally credentialed to practice a major part of their work: teaching students. Collaboratively participating in the governance and oversight of a curricular unit not only offers students experience in the more mundane “skills” of administration, but gives them a unique vantage point for making the connections between the work of their fields and the work of teaching, at the very nexus of these two activities: the organizational entity of the department.

For many years, the field of composition studies has endorsed a model of classroom instruction that celebrates a collective identity, practices collaboration in its developmental forms, and represents the inclusion and participation of all its members. We believe that these ideological underpinnings, which often define compositionists and place them in cultural opposition to their institutions, should also characterize the administration of writing programs. As higher

education develops new hierarchies and top-down management structures, as participation in faculty governance dwindles and the ideals of academic freedom represented by tenure are almost daily challenged, perhaps faculty members across our institutions will begin to recognize the importance of practicing with their own developing professionals those principles they hold most important to their sense of inclusion in the work of governance and in the decision-making processes on their own campuses.

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Enculturation, Not Alchemy: Professionalizing Novice Writing Program Administrators

Bradley Peters

I. Into the Abyss

Carlos Castaneda writes of a final meeting with his mentor, Don Juan, a Yaqui man of knowledge, a sorcerer. The meeting occurs with other apprentices in the Sierra Madre of central Mexico. Castaneda says:

... our apprenticeships had come to their concluding moment. . . . I jumped . . . from the top of the mountain into an abyss. . . . Don Juan . . . [is] no longer available and [his] absence has created in me a most pressing need . . . to make headway into the midst of apparently insoluble contradictions. (7-8)

Castaneda's tale allegorizes the experience of many novice writing program administrators, as they leap from graduate school into their first full-time jobs. Struggling with a profound sense of isolation and vertigo, novice WPAs may only come to recognize the need for collaborative administration as circumstances dictate it. For them, I hope to provide a cautionary tale. But I hope my tale also proves useful in helping seasoned WPAs to see their work afresh.

I began my full-time employment as a "visiting instructor" in a medium-sized, private, PhD-granting university noted for its program in composition and rhetoric. I was assigned four sections of composition per semester, with twenty-eight students per section. When I wasn't holding conferences or responding to freshman prose, I was conducting independent studies with graduate students, serving on committees, maintaining a regimen of scholarly activities, and continuing my search for a tenure-track position. After a year of this schedule, the department chair invited me to direct the undergraduate writing program. I was to organize workshops, observe classes, order books, staff courses, handle grade appeals and complaints, advise TAs, write letters of recommendation, and attend to a myriad of other unspecified duties. I would teach three sections of composition per semester instead of four. "Don't worry" the chair assured me. "It's do-able. And we'll extend your yearly contract from three years to five."

The notion of becoming an untenured, "visiting" writing program administrator was very problematic, politically and ethically—and later, this point would be driven home to me in dramatic fashion. But to be frank, I felt too overwhelmed to assert William Irscher's dictum that "a major portion of a director's time must be concentrated on the TA training program. . . . No one can

teach full-time and direct the program as an overload" (35). Accordingly, I sought advice from a professor who had been my chief mentor during grad school days. She urged me to accept the offer. "At least you'll have a say," she predicted. So I decided to earn my academic citizenship by demonstrating a sterling work ethic. Surely, if I did the job as it should be done and provided reports that specifically detailed all my duties, I could persuade the chair to ameliorate my working conditions. Maybe my efforts would eventually affect my temporary status, too.

I now realize that my initial plan was naive. I lived at the border of a culture I didn't understand.

Even though new PhDs in rhetoric and composition emerge firmly grounded in classroom theory and practice, the custom of turning them into WPAs catapults them into political realities that their graduate courses and teacher training never revealed (Hult, "Politics Redux" 50). Seduced by the hope of advancement and distracted by their overload, these unwary WPAs land pell-mell among the shifting tensions of power in English departments and university administrations, often becoming "a filter through whom all that is 'low,' *ad hoc*, and transient moves, even as this filter represents the . . . regulating gaze of the truly powerful" (Miller 172).

Institutions will typically pressure novice WPAs "to participate in the exploitation of others [and] . . . identify with the existing order of the academy," so they might earn the possibility of a better future, if not tenure (Gere 126). Many of us already know the sad twist of justice with which, after five or six years' service, these institutions release WPAs, only to replace them with others who are employed under the same protocol (125).

Action research has attempted to address this scenario. We're familiar with how the CCCC initiatives on the Wyoming Conference Resolution strongly encourage English departments to appoint tenure-line, not temporary faculty, who are "professionally committed to rhetoric and composition . . . [to] coordinate and supervise composition programs"; they "should be given appropriate release time and should be eligible for professional advancement for this work" (62). The Council of Writing Program Administrators' Portland Resolution provides English departments with clear-cut guidelines for WPA job descriptions, underscoring a *genuinely* do-able workload, fair evaluation procedures, employment security, access to people who influence their programs, and the power to request adequate resources and budget (Hult et al 89-90). Action scholarship has also suggested a leadership model for WPAs, where "the intellectual agenda and authority . . . come from a synthesis of informed instructors . . . in need of a spokesperson or liaison . . . but not a single position assigned total curricular responsibility or autocratic power" (Gunner, "Decentering" 13). Indeed, such collaborative administration is a necessity, if writing programs are to approach anything that resembles the goals of the Wyoming and Portland documents.

Notwithstanding, writing programs will continue to be perceived as "merely administrative units," until they are transformed into *local* sites of

action research (Gere 128). Only so can WPAs become change agents whose “unfamiliarity with and respect for the local culture combined with a willingness to listen and learn . . . makes their knowledge about teaching writing not something to be imposed but something to be discussed, perhaps broadened through dialogue” (McLeod 112).

Yet again, no alchemical formula exists to transform fledgling WPAs into these action researchers or change agents. Instead, they must undergo a process of enculturation.

I believe the process can be defined in terms of three stages. In the first stage, new WPAs critically read a writing program, to locate the program’s key allies, potential advocates, and proven adversaries. They need to learn why these people have taken such stances. In the second stage, WPAs implement changes on an infrastructural level, to convert positive relations among their colleagues into collaborative leadership. They need to create a coherent community identity. In the third stage, WPAs seek dialogue with the superstructural level, to sustain the writing program’s mission or to implement a better vision of what it must become. They need to see what lies beyond the program’s immediate boundaries. Experienced WPAs might also verify that these three stages outline an ongoing process that must be sustained.

At the same time, Paulo Freire warns that when enculturation in any social context occurs, people’s “subsequent acts *must* become the object of [their] knowledge so that they can perceive [a culture’s] conditioning power” (Freire 53-54, emphasis added). WPAs cannot perceive the conditioning power of academic culture by themselves. Others must help them do it, so that WPAs can effectively resist inertia, resist entrenchment in any one doctrine, and resist the very concept of professionalization itself—if such professionalization reifies them as “boss compositionists.” That is to say, enculturation is mutual, and I specifically equate it with collaborative administration. It involves the concurrent education of a full cast of players who are influenced by, or participate in, the writing program. Without mutual enculturation, not just the WPA, but TAs, adjuncts, full-time faculty, administrators, and students remain vulnerable “to the fate that may be imposed upon [them] by those who have the power of decisions” and who, in turn, want them to yield to other interests (112).

Accordingly, the enculturation of WPAs means that everyone assumes a degree of responsibility, and no one remains unchanged. This essay will explore how such a symbiosis of professional relationships might be choreographed.

II. Post-secondary Writing Programs and their Constituents: A Reading

How do WPAs initiate mutual enculturation? They begin by critically reading the rhetorical constructs of the program, to see where the program metonymically represents “other more general questions facing American culture” (Connors 3). One such construct is that a writing program must remediate illiteracy among entering college students. Another persisting construct is that a writing program should ensure correct grammatical expression.

Or: a program must promote “life skills” which improve inter-communication and critical reflection; it must establish uniform academic standards; it must prepare students for their vocation; it must enhance pluralism and encourage minorities to contribute to democracy; it must initiate social reform; it must introduce students to the discursive practices of different academic disciplines and communities.

To be fair, the rhetorical construction of a writing program usually indicates how a concerned faculty wants composition courses to function in their department, for the general well-being of students and the institution. However, as Sharon Crowley warns, no matter how promising the rhetoric—and the pedagogical practices the rhetoric gives rise to—it may represent no more than an attitude toward the program’s identity, rather than any real shift in the theoretical paradigm upon which the program needs to be founded.

To read a writing program, I would propose WPAs keep four major categories in mind. These categories correspond with Richard Lloyd-Jones’s schema in “Doctoral Programs: Composition”: 1) those that are an extension of the English department’s interests, offering practice in exegesis and the genres of critical/literary research; 2) those that are a service of remediation or standards-setting for the rest of the institution, but are not directed by “experts” in the discipline; 3) those that are shaped by one faculty member who has developed interest, or has already been trained, in rhetoric and composition and can acquaint TAs or adjuncts with reasonably timely practices; 4) those that are nourished by the collaborative participation of several faculty committed to rhetoric and composition, whose various specializations contribute to a masters or doctoral degree in the discipline.

Clearly, it’s perilous even to hope that all writing programs could be commensurate. The program I first directed eluded the very categories I’ve enumerated. The English department included many senior members who taught rhetorical theory and history, or even undergraduate composition. But as I collected information from various conversations, I saw how years of teaching graduates had separated them from administering the undergraduate program itself. Moreover, the department chair had addressed budgetary concerns by replacing a tenured director of composition, when that person left, with a succession of visiting appointments. The most recent successors to the appointment had prepared themselves for careers teaching literature, not composition.

In joint discussions with TAs and interviews with prospective adjuncts, I often heard the chair recite a familiar “text”: the program’s mission was to provide undergraduates the benefits of “the most modern, up-to-date methods of teaching composition.” But I discerned a conflicting text: without any systematic structure in place to help them reflect on their practicum, TAs and adjuncts rarely felt confident enough to experiment with those methods. Instead, many of their syllabi navigated the uncertain shallows of neo-Aristotelian rhetoric, impeded by the usual barnacles: narration, description, exposition, and argument (see Berlin 11-13). Other syllabi focused on writing about literature, or on style and grammar. Some had no center at all. I was reminded of Louise

Wetherbee Phelps's finding that "In such cases structures and common requirements are few, or essentially empty of content: autonomy resides with ideological factions, individual faculty members, or even students, to fill in the blanks. This anarchy [is] called the 'apprenticeship model'" ("Reproducing Composition" 118-19).

Notwithstanding, I sensed that no major ideological dragons were holding this particular version of the apprentice model hostage. As my "reading" became more intensive, I saw many hopeful signs challenging the presiding anarchy. For instance, a colleague in literature initiated the argument that I be appointed director. Then a senior colleague who regularly taught theories of rhetoric and composition met with me to discuss his own perception of the program's priorities. Following that, graduate students and adjuncts responded to a memo I sent out, telling me how they felt the program could be improved, mentioning specific faculty in the writing center who gave the best, most pragmatic classroom advice.

As I looked beyond the department, my reading led me to see other key allies and potential advocates of the writing program who might come to the fore if I sought to implement reforms. The college dean and one assistant dean strongly supported a more rigorous and organized approach to training instructors. People from the intensive English program keenly desired dialogue with TAs and adjuncts. So did the coordinator for students with learning disabilities, the academic advisor for student athletes, the Dean of Student Life and her staff, and professors from the departments of nursing, religion, economics, and engineering, who all taught writing intensive courses. Perhaps the best revelation of all, though, was that undergraduates—freshmen and sophomores, especially—provided some of the most thoughtful critiques of the program as they responded to questions I posed to them in the sections of composition that I taught.

This host of composition-friendly colleagues and their supportive responses helped to offset the department chair's surprisingly obstructive, laissez-faire attitude toward the program. In fact, when some people found that I actively sought their advice, they encouraged others to initiate contacts with me—and their individually expressed concerns helped more and more to piece together the fragments of the "whole text" I was trying to excavate and interpret.

My example represents the act of going beneath the "surface" of a writing program's rhetorical construction and attempts, in Freirean terms, to problematize its deeper structure as a codified situation that preserves the culture's status quo. I find that true enculturation begins for WPAs when they proceed to deconstruct such a surface, gaining distance from the program as "a knowable object," as Freire puts it, in order to

perceive relationships between the codification's elements and other facts presented by the real context, relationships that were formerly unperceived . . . [transforming] what was a way of life in the real context into 'objectum' in the theoretical context [so that t]he learners, rather than receive information about this or that fact, analyze aspects of their own existential experience represented in the codification. (52)

Deconstructing the rhetorical surface thus helps novice WPAs to estimate not only where they fit in, but also where an activist "spirit of communion" might be engendered (84). People who constitute, or are influenced by, a writing program will not necessarily recognize the interests they share. But when WPAs begin to intuit how the relationships among the program's constituents and allies have evolved—or have failed to evolve—they can also begin to see how those relationships condition everyone's performance. From that point, WPAs can help everyone to imagine instead what their shared interests are, and in what ways they can pursue those interests (see 87-88). To interpolate Freire's perspective further, as I did, WPAs must adopt a subject position that is qualitatively different from those who have been conditioned to opt for passive silence—writing instructors and students, especially—because on the local level, action research depends upon setting a dialectical exchange in motion *and sustaining it* (95).

III. Revising the Infrastructure

In many instances, people see WPAs as merely emblematic of the localized status of composition. A department's or an institution's unacknowledged expectations of a writing program will thus confer an "affective domain" upon the WPA herself (Miller 165). Jeanne Gunner notes that "This construction of the WPA subsumes and subverts the political. It separates administration from the social, a managerial model that highlights tasks and functions" ("Politicizing" 27). Just so, when the affective domain surrounding the WPA is negative, upper-level administrators may act ambivalent, faculty members aloof, graduate students apprehensive, and adjuncts frustrated—not because they dislike a WPA's personal leadership traits, but because they perceive (or misperceive) composition's "social usefulness" (Miller 164-65). This negative affective domain can turn a writing program into a token club where docility and acquiescence are the by-words, and only those who pose no questions or probe no problems earn membership (Welch 96-97). The infrastructure of the program will reflect as much.

Susan Jarratt's work implies that the infrastructure of any learning community evolves from its function as a site which represents multiple forms of power. Her work suggests that a collaborative theory of administration will not only help WPAs deconstruct a negative affective domain, but reconstruct the infrastructure as well.

However, WPAs who want to make infrastructural changes based upon the collaborative model must realize that "collaboration becomes more difficult when one collaborator has significantly more power," putting less powerful collaborators—especially TAs and adjuncts—in a position of uneasy compromise, just to survive (Wingate 101-02). A psychologically healthy collaborative model will stimulate leadership and interaction within the program by cultivating discussions of difference that do not stifle—or give too much sway to—the discourses of conflict (see Jarratt). It does so in two ways: 1) it helps WPAs to learn and retain what is most valuable in the program's existing infrastructure; 2)

it helps WPAs to revise the infrastructure so that undergraduate and graduate students, teaching assistants, adjuncts, English and cross-disciplinary faculty, lower and upper-level administrators can engage each other in mutual education.

I entered this second stage of enculturation when I recognized that several necessary practices for a collaborative model were already in place in the program. The tricky part was to critique how well those practices actually functioned. To illustrate: every year, experienced TAs and upper-level administrators as well as English and Writing Center faculty enthusiastically contributed to a three-day, pre-semester workshop which engaged first-year TAs in pedagogical issues and syllabus development. Many faculty and administrators felt that this workshop sufficiently addressed the program's teacher-training needs. But classroom visits and discussion with TAs and adjuncts taught me otherwise.

In fact, a number of TAs and adjuncts wanted something that would extend the pre-semester workshop considerably. One TA told me that in a nearby university, "the graduate students are required to take a one-hour [per week] seminar per semester in support of their classroom teaching." Why, she wondered, didn't our program have such a seminar? I started by organizing triweekly colloquia. Recruiting senior faculty to help lead the colloquia was crucial, because it would curry the department's general recognition of what the TAs and adjuncts really needed. Inclusion of undergraduate composition students complemented this strategy, because their frank responses at the colloquia enabled all of us to ponder where instruction succeeded, where it could be improved, where it failed.

The program's infrastructure also included appointing a graduate-student as associate director of composition. This position—a catch-all for duties to which the director could not attend—became, in the absence of an official director, an *ad hoc* directorship. Just so, the year before I started as WPA, when no one occupied the position, a graduate student appointee ended up seriously compromising progress in her degree. I saw how her situation also barred others from sharing important leadership opportunities.

Following that year, I made it clear that the associate director's responsibilities would be relegated more evenly to others. In response, two TAs volunteered to edit the program's freshman manual for comp courses. Another took on the task of organizing the graduate students' annual spring conference. Still another accepted duties as the graduate student representative to the department. Each position called for leaders to train their next-year's replacements. The collaboration of leadership paid high dividends indeed when consequent associate directors were freed to pursue specialties in areas such as computer-assisted instruction and writing across the curriculum. They not only supplemented what I could offer by way of training to TAs and adjuncts: *they helped to train me.*

TA teaching teams accounted for still another component of the existing infrastructure. Formed to compensate for the lack (or elimination) of a director of

composition, these teams had been assigned the task of visiting each other's classes and evaluating them. One TA saw the teams as "a policing agency" and asked, "Why aren't they conceived as a resource for me?" Another said her team was "a non-functional group . . . too busy to swap ideas, come into my classroom, etc." This system utterly excluded adjuncts, as well.

Yet when I followed the TAs' and adjuncts' requests to let them choose their own teams, and I required them to visit one another's classes in preparation for small-group conferences with me, the teams became sources for building solidarity, discussing individual teaching styles, and complementing my own classroom visits. Adjuncts, above all, felt more a part of the program. Our conferences provided explicit points for everyone to gauge professional growth and a way to address the sharp, sometimes wild, disparities that existed among different instructors.

A fourth asset of the program's existing infrastructure was the graduate students' regional spring conference. This gathering of scholars, faculty, and graduate students from a variety of nearby colleges and universities annually invigorated the entire department and provided us with exposure to some of the finest current thought in the discipline. How ironic, then, that so much of it went unapplied in the classroom.

In my third year of directorship, the grad student organizer of the conference asked me to be one of the speakers. Although I first declined, she urged me to talk about inequities in writing programs. She suggested that I collaborate with an untenured faculty member from the writing center. She'd already got him to agree. I was hoist on my own petard. But when our turn came to present at the conference, my writing-center colleague and I ended up generating a very lively discussion about the potential power that WPAS, TAs, and faculty have to institute reform in teacher training programs. An even livelier discussion about reforming our own program occurred afterward among our own faculty, graduate students, and adjuncts—many of whom had already participated in, and wanted to accelerate changes, starting with an established seminar for first-year TAs.

The four infrastructural revisions I cite culminated in a turn-about for the writing program. I compiled a proposal that outlined a year-long pilot program for upgrading the department's teacher training. The graduate committee accepted it and pressured the department chair to petition a year's extension of my temporary appointment. A seminar was established for the following year, requiring two semesters of weekly meetings for newly appointed TAs. We also planned for more frequent and participatory methods of assessing classroom performance for all instructors. I would have adequate release time to implement the changes.

It seemed that my work ethic had born fruit indeed. But shortly after this burst of collective enthusiasm, unhappy news arrived. The department chair advised me that the administration would not extend my yearly contract beyond

the three years originally agreed upon. I was stunned into silence. Not knowing what else to do, I sent out a rush of application letters to other schools. It was March—just before that year's Conference on College Composition and Communication. The letters yielded some interviews, and I eventually got invited to three campuses. With these results, I told a few colleagues on the faculty what was happening. They seemed startled. Within a few days, I got a letter from the Provost, telling me that the university would extend my contract for another year. I asked my colleagues what they thought I should do. "Sign the contract, but go for your on-site visits," they advised me. Getting a tenure-track position took priority over my staying another year to implement the teacher-training proposal. I heeded them.

At the beginning of my third and last on-site visit, the head of the search committee told me she'd phoned my department chair for more information about my work. By way of reply, the chair had asked her if she'd hire someone who broke contract with another school. She wondered what was going on. I asked her to contact one of my other colleagues on the faculty instead. She did. Later, she called to tell me that the search committee had invited another candidate to accept the position, but that they would have offered it to me, had that candidate refused. It provided small consolation. I wondered if the other two search committees had phoned my chair as well.

In any case, I knew I'd be staying on for another year, to carry through with the teacher-training seminar.

I have to reflect on how Freire frankly describes the ambiguous character of a change agent in this sort of situation: "it is manipulative, yet at the same time a factor in democratic mobilization" (79). Were the reforms I implemented manipulative? On many levels, yes, and those reforms cost me dearly. But I'd still argue that the collaborative model of the writing program helps to prevent the manipulation from becoming undemocratic because it particularly involves those whose cultural alienation is "reinforced by their university 'formation'"—TAs and adjuncts (see Freire 79). When WPAs actively seek to provide opportunities for everyone to change ineffective, even oppressive and dehumanizing structures—"taking advantage of . . . the most efficient and viable means of helping [themselves] to move from the levels of semi-intransitive or naive transitive consciousness to the level of critical consciousness," as Freire advocates—it thus helps many, and not just WPAs alone, to re-see the political realities of the conditions surrounding the writing program (83). Sometimes those political realities are deeply disconcerting.

From this perspective, novice WPAs come to appreciate the writing program's infrastructure as a permutation of historical conditions and themselves as engaged in transforming that history. They can accordingly join the ones who have already played a role in putting the program's infrastructure in place, sometimes to intervene against reactionary maneuvers, but more often to remind their more experienced and privileged colleagues that a program's infrastructure is never a stable historical artifact. Freire's work probably confirms

my own observation that ever-changing exigencies render the program's infrastructure an unfixed dynamic of reflection and action. A successful writing program provides its own, self-evident testimony to praxis.

No assurances exist as to how higher-ups will apprehend or support such a project, however, since the important and very risky task in revising the infrastructure of a program collaboratively "is not to take power but to reinvent power" (Freire 179). That is why WPAs must also consider how power impinges upon the program from superstructural levels. As Freire would observe, the reinvention of power moves WPAs increasingly toward "an infrastructural process that renders the system a dialectic between the infrastructure and the superstructure" (31).

IV. The Dialectic with the Superstructure

As WPAs transform the writing program into a site for action research, they must acknowledge—as I discovered—that "the superstructure cannot be automatically transformed by making changes in the infrastructure" (Freire 31). The reason that changes in the one do not always challenge the stability of the other is that the academy's "class life [is] almost feudal in its stipulation of working class and ruling class" (Schuster 89). Thus, denizens of the superstructural realm may apprehend the writing program as foreign terrain, what goes on there as foreign affairs, and WPAs as "other." This is the flip side of WPAs assuming the stance of an "appealing visitor" who is willing to listen and learn from the local culture, even as they work to effect change (see McLeod 112).

A dialectic between the infrastructure and superstructure depends upon human interaction and what Kristine Hansen calls "the ethical motivation that comes through face-to-face relation with the other" (37). This dialectic is imperative, if WPAs want to safeguard the movement of change that they must bring to a writing program. Otherwise, the program may amount to little more than a "cult of personality" that disintegrates whenever individual WPAs move on or are replaced (Hult 51).

Perhaps the most essential and formative face-to-face relation WPAs can have is with their English department chairs. Gary Olson and Joseph Moxley suggest that ideally: "The department chair directs all non-composition aspects of the department; the writing program administrator directs all aspects related to the writing program. Both administrators enjoy autonomy over their respective components" (56-57). Such an arrangement begins to deconstruct the "otherness" of novice WPAs, if duties are democratically shared, rather than divided and compartmentalized. The latter can silence novice WPAs, even shutting them off from the very community of colleagues they seek to recruit. But in a democratic mode, the chair can function as liaison between the infrastructure and the superstructure, making the novice WPA aware of upper administrative attitudes toward the writing program. The chair can voice to those in power the novice WPA's concern for program reforms, explaining why the reforms are needed. The chair can mentor the WPA in relating effectively to the faculty, so that neither the WPA nor the writing program is ever seen as a

poor relative of the department. The chair can stay alert to semesterly and daily administrative problems as they occur in the writing program, remaining available to the WPA when the support of a concurring authority is needed—but not intervening when intervention would be counter-productive. Just so, sound relations with the department chair keep in check the impulse that novice WPAs may feel to adopt a siege mentality, whereby—as Jan Swearingen warns—they could create a caricature of Freirean teachings by seeking to empower TAs, adjuncts, and themselves “to participate as a group in various guerilla strategies aimed at the English department, the university, and the larger political institutions that the university is seen as representing” (12).

The same year I piloted the teacher-training seminar, a new department chair assumed office. He immediately petitioned the Dean and Provost to approve the appointment of a tenure-line director of composition—which I’d strongly recommended in my proposal to the graduate committee. He invited me to apply. I knew the upper-level administration would not seriously consider or approve my candidacy, but when I declined applying in favor of continuing my job search for positions elsewhere, the chair invited me instead to share my vision with him of what the writing program should become. He made it clear he valued my ideas and wanted to know where he could help me to strengthen the program’s mission of training teachers. At the same time, he wanted to let me know where the administration’s contending values might necessitate negotiation or prevent reform. We spent a great deal of time that year considering ways to set up and activate an infrastructural/superstructural dialectic. I shall briefly describe a few of the outcomes:

- The chair and I discussed the need to establish university-accredited courses for preparing TAs and adjuncts. This goal became part of the new director’s job description, which the chair submitted to the department and the higher administration.
- The chair gave me autonomy over course scheduling and staffing. He provided substantial support in getting the dean to enforce a slightly lower enrollment cap. At the same time, he started a conversation about restructuring teaching assignments, to accommodate a much smaller enrollment cap.
- The chair also made it a part of the new director’s job description that s/he should play a major role in deciding who received teaching assistantships.

However, the most significant outcome concerned the abuses of the adjunct system. The university had had a visit that year from regional accreditation officials, who noted that four departments in the College of Humanities relied very heavily on adjuncts—and the English department was the worst offender. The chair used this evaluation to get the faculty and the administration to agree upon my suggestion that a core of full-time instructors be hired to teach composition. The chair conceived of this suggestion as opening the possibility for *de facto* tenure for the successful candidates, who would continue their employ-

ment through rolling contracts. Due to his efforts, monies were released for three appointments.

Productive relations with the new chair accompanied other promising developments. During the second semester of the TA seminar, a senior colleague joined us for weekly, lunch-time meetings. One afternoon, he proposed conducting a comprehensive appraisal of what composition meant to the university. Plans fell together very quickly. For the first tier of the project, he recruited a graduate student to help him interview English faculty, to find out what they expected composition courses to accomplish. For the second tier, he planned to do the same with faculty from other disciplines and departments. For the third tier, he wanted to interview composition instructors themselves, to learn what they believed their students were gaining. For the fourth tier, he would compile a summary and analysis of the data to share with the college dean, the provost, and the chancellor.

My colleague predicted the project would show that composition courses were the most influential in the curriculum, when it came to introducing students to academic life and affecting students' long-term enrollment. To the department and the administration, he announced that this project would provide a useful public-relations tool for stabilizing reform in hiring practices, reform in teacher training, reform in the university-wide focus on writing, and—the highest priority of all—reform in instruction for undergraduates.

Wisdom dictates that I fix a skeptical eye on the relatively encouraging turn of this account. Yet I have to agree with Freire's assertion that changes in the infrastructure can cause cracks and fissures to appear in the "culture of silence" that an oppressive superstructure imposes upon it (38). While the result may not produce precisely the dialectic that WPAs expect, the exigencies for its emergence "can be verified by the witness of the leadership," when department chairs and senior faculty rally to the writing program's cause (84). Such colleagues become a deciding factor in enculturating WPAs, because, in Freirean language, they can help WPAs to remind higher administrators that even in the superstructure, "there is no permanence of permanence, or change of change" (38). Such colleagues can also teach WPAs that even in this current era of budget-crunching and downsizing, campus administrators may still regard a writing program favorably—if only they are apprised of the program's needs through the right channels and actions.

What more can novice WPAs learn from such colleagues? They can learn not to accept facile solutions to complex problems. They can learn not to act freehandedly, but to appreciate the interests of the superstructure, and why those interests exist. Most of all, WPAs can learn from their more savvy colleagues not to over-reach their grasp, since in the academy as elsewhere, "we do what we can and not what we would like to do" (Freire 41). I suspect this last is an addendum to Louise Wetherbee Phelps' advice that WPAs must enact a form of *kairos*, which "enables [them] to become a positive force for change by . . . operating experimentally and hypothetically; nurturing a fragile sense of

community in talk, text, and collaborative work; and seeking interdependencies where they can find them" ("Institutional Logic" 168).

It is this *kairos* that will enculture the most powerful allies of the WPA, even while the WPA is becoming encultured.

V. Directions and Misdirections

As novice WPAs adapt to, come to know, and participate in the academy, they begin actively to influence the young teachers, the colleagues, and most important, the undergraduates whom the writing program draws to it. But I cannot reiterate enough that the academy and the people surrounding the WPA exert a powerful influence in return. The slowly evolving status of rhetoric and composition demonstrates all too clearly how an educational system reproduces the values and legitimates the ideologies of the society that allows it to exist (see Giroux xiv). So, perhaps more than others, WPAs need to decipher Freire's disconcerting assertion that education "is not a tool for transformation" (179).

This latter point serves as a warning about the professionalization of WPAs. James Slevin indicates that a trend toward tenuring directors of composition puts them nearly on par with tenuring the "professoriate" in other disciplines—(69% versus 82%) from 1985 to 1990—but that its objective is more to stabilize writing programs by placing at the helm "fairly secure colleagues whose professional complexion matches that of the staff" (4). John Trimbur suggests that this trend can translate into "a monopoly of the services [WPAs] provide, to keep authorized practice independent of other practitioners and other markets," leading to "acts of surveillance that constitute both staff and students as 'docile bodies'" (138, 142). Kristine Hansen warns, "If WPAs seek only for [themselves] the privileges of professionalism that are purchased with the services of underpaid, overworked part-time faculty [and TAs, they] contribute to . . . the ideology that ghettoized composition and its teachers in the first place" (42). And James Sledd insists that in too many instances, the dreadful has already happened: WPAs have become "boss compositionists, overseers" whose speech of empowerment and transformation belies their selling out to a brutal hierarchy (6).

I am personally disquieted by these voices of prophecy in the discipline. I have moved on to a tenure-line directorship at a university with a very large and complicated writing program. Due to my current terms of employment, I could possibly stop worrying about securing—or even redefining—my position. Instead, I could focus my energies upon maintaining the program structures that are already quite strong in many ways. But the program depends predominantly upon adjuncts. It also has a teacher-training program that prepares and encourages its own graduates to join their part-time colleagues' freeway-flying ranks. Therefore, even if I grant that the adjuncts are unionized and that they are assured at least of some basic benefits, I cannot deny what I see and what I am part of. How can mutual enculturation among the adjuncts, the TAs, the full-time faculty, the administrators, and me help to prevent the program's stability from becoming an excuse for protecting this deeply entrenched system of inequity?

How can we turn around the undercurrent of demoralization that grows as teachers who have served for years remain vulnerable to fluxes in state support for writing courses, upper-level administrative pressures to downsize, and an inexorably unpredictable pattern of supply and demand from semester to semester? How can my work with them keep me mindful that my role as change agent, or my efforts at local action research, must never become shallow and ineffectual guises for the privilege I now enjoy?

I am also aware of the professional loneliness that is part and parcel of the WPA's institutional function. On the one hand, WPAs must bring together all kinds of groups and factions, to mediate, negotiate, and facilitate the discussion among them, with an attitude that approaches universal empathy. On the other hand, WPAs must avoid relations that create imbalances, or identify themselves too radically with the interests of anyone—even students—because of the limits such identifications will impose upon their necessary openness to change. *If WPAs can never afford to work independently, they can afford even less to become all things to all people.*

So what do WPAs do to assume accountability? Do they foster professional development among instructors—university-sponsored seminars, travel support for scholarly activities, academic freedom in course design, inclusion in administrative duties/decisions—"that can begin to compensate for the lack of job security and traditional markers of professional achievement" (Strenski 84)? Do they campaign to establish permanent writing across the curriculum programs, to popularize their expertise "for broader social services," so that in some utopian eventuality, tenured writing specialists will become ensconced in every discipline (Trimbur 145)? Do they seek alliances with entities outside the academy—e.g., the private business sector—to devise programs financed and specially tailored to meet job market demands? Do they examine the implications of technology and long-distance learning, to envision what many of us would still condemn as unthinkable—writing programs that actually exist, charge fees, and function beyond the aegis of the academy?

Freire provides a compelling, civil-rights oriented challenge to WPAs in the presence of such questions. He says:

Educators must ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working. The more conscious and committed they are, the more they understand that their role as educators requires them to take risks, including a willingness to risk their own jobs. Educators who do their work uncritically, just to preserve their jobs, have not yet grasped the political nature of education. (180)

Herein lies the hope and the scourge of our profession.

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An Intentionally Ecological Approach to Teacher Training

Peter Blakemore

Having served as an assistant director of the University of Oregon's Composition Program, and having taught writing for more than a decade, I have been an extremely interested observer of composition directors over the years. I have talked with them, eaten lunch with them, even shared offices with them. I know how hard they work. It seems like a generally thankless job, but one that I would enjoy facing. Out of respect for them, and because part of what I will do in this paper is to call for a re-evaluation of practices, I want to acknowledge that I cannot speak to all of the forces—the department heads, faculty senates, accountants, and deans—pressing on writing program administrators as they develop their teacher training. What I can speak to, and what this paper focuses on, is the process of becoming a teacher. In what follows I assume that writing program administrators start from a shared experience as teachers; even if they are not primarily teachers now, in most cases, composition directors became teachers before working as administrators. Though my specific aim here is to affect the way directors of college composition conceive of themselves in relationship with their student teachers, because I recognize the reciprocal forces at work in such complex systems as writing programs and teacher training curricula, this essay addresses anyone who has become a college writing teacher. As I do so, I ask questions that may seem basic, but I draw them from an ecological and phenomenological viewpoint, a perspective which I believe offers valuable insight into the systematic functions of perceiving parts within a greater whole such as a college composition program. Some of these questions are: What did the process of becoming a teacher involve? How long did it take? Who were the people who most influenced us as we became, and continue to become, teachers? What was the environment in which that process took place?

If we pause to reflect on these questions, we cannot help but remember that becoming a teacher is an intense and phenomenally rich experience. Recalling the persons, the buildings and grounds associated with our first time entering the classroom as a teacher should give us pause as well to recall our own anxieties, internal narratives of teacherly perfection, and the psychological trials that are practically inevitable in this process. One might think that such an important aspect of a college writing pedagogy would lead to the creation of a large and rich body of research and publication. Some studies do exist, of course—writing program administrators are thinking carefully about this process and developing curricula for teacher training all the time—but I have to agree with the authors of a recent bibliography on the subject when they say that finding materials on teacher training is not easy (Catalano 36).¹ Some might

argue that the many fine anthologies on classroom practice and theory² obviously offer enormous assistance in devising a composition pedagogy. But can such research and theoretical scholarship, however practical it might be in preparing a teaching assistant for the setting of the classroom, assist the writing program administrator in preparing to meet a new group of prospective teachers? Beyond informing the foundation of a pedagogy, can these descriptions of classroom practice and the details of cognitive theory or subject research combine to offer an approach to teacher training itself? In short, can the teacher of teachers rely on writing pedagogy as a model for teacher training? Perhaps—much of the newer work on collaboration and audience takes into consideration how we approach our visions of the self in community, and some useful ideas might be extrapolated from recent work on writing groups. But not enough of the major focus in teaching pedagogy deals with how a writing program as an environment opens itself to the incoming teacher-to-be.³ We too often focus on communities of college writing teachers as aspects of theory and programmatic development without considering the threshold experience of entering into a new community—and I mean our local communities of teachers. We align ourselves in discourse communities spanning thousands of miles, existing in journals, or at conferences, or in cyberspace, but too little consciousness seems to be expended on how we invite new members into what we do together at home.

As I pondered the reason for this, a few possible explanations came to mind: first, our culture tends to focus on the individual, which leads us ever away from community thinking, collaboration, and open discussion of our interrelationships. I won't go further into that dense, complex forest, but I think most of us will acknowledge that the heroic ideal still dominates academia. A second possibility for why the writing and research on teacher training so often turns to theory may be that many prominent theorists in the field move from directing composition programs into careers oriented more toward research—directing a composition program is a tough job and there's no reason to hide or mince words about the fact that the burnout rate is high. Perhaps admitting that from the start will help, which leads directly into my next possibility: maybe the people who would do such writing and thinking—the writing program administrators themselves—are simply too busy to take the time to write about this aspect of the curriculum.

The very fact that one of the standard references on the subject is more than ten years old should tell us something about the need for new research and writing on this topic. Indeed, reading through the volume, Charles W. Bridges' *Training the New Teacher of College Composition*, takes us to the heart of the problem as I see it. Though the essays are generally fine examples of the kind of thought that has focused on this question of becoming a teacher, only one of the dozen essays in the collection directly addresses the process of training—most return to theories of what should take place in the writing classroom rather than what should take place in the teaching classroom. In general, they argue for one or another approach to classroom practice but offer little if any direct advice or careful analysis of how to train teachers. Like *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*

series, the text addresses the individual from the point of view that what he or she will do in the classroom can be learned from a book. And certainly, much of what we do in class does come from our theoretical base, and as insight into pedagogical theory, the essays work well enough. We have had more than ten years now to try these ideas out. But this still leaves the question of how we address the new arrival—how do we invite teachers-to-be into the conversation?

The one article which seems to speak directly to writing program administrators, William Imscher's "TA Training: a Period of Discovery," may help to explain why the others ignore this aspect and generally focus on the theoretical foundation or tips for classroom success. As Imscher addresses the question of "the role of the director in creating the proper climate for learning by students and teaching assistants alike" (27), he offers a view of the teacher in training as a type:

Teaching assistants . . . by their youthfulness and relative inexperience paradoxically have a built-in advantage unless they deliberately adopt mannerisms and strategies that sever the natural working relationship they have with students. Freshman students are more willing to write for someone who is likely to accept their ideas and values because no matter how bad their writing is, students characteristically attribute low grades to some fundamental disagreement between them and the teacher about content. (28)

This assumption, that teaching assistants in training will fall into a special category of person, leads to a further misconception. It is no stretch of the imagination to see how this concept of the model TA in training turns to the narrative of the inchoate teacher whom the writing program administrator will mold in his or her own image, as the following passage from Imscher's essay demonstrates:

A director's attitude about the importance of writing will become the attitude of the assistants. They will learn the value of teaching writing. They will learn respect for what they are doing and not simply anticipate the time when they will graduate to what are too often considered the more significant areas of English studies. (35)

Ideas come from above—they trickle down into the brains of the TAs. Knowledge and practice are revealed—given. Teachers-to-be are blank slates upon which a pedagogy gets written. It would be misleading for me to leave it at that, for Imscher's essay, as I stated earlier, was the only one in the collection to actually address the idea of community and creating relationships. He at least began from the point of view that the uncreated teacher is an entity worthy of our specific observation.

Now admittedly, these ideas are ten years old. But judging from a recent special issue of *Composition Studies* (Fall 1995) containing a large selection of syllabi for composition theory/teacher training courses, we have not advanced very far beyond the paradigm that claims theory as the primary component which we may pour into our teachers-in-training. Indeed, the very fact that

courses in theory and teacher training are so often combined, as they are in many of the syllabi, may itself indicate uncertainty about what teacher training is. Apart from the fact that people are now more direct about claiming their theoretical preferences, and in spite of the many promises of, as one syllabus put it, "abiding commitment to more openness and tolerance and fairness in teaching and living" (Hurlbert 43), the narrative figure of "making" teachers out of people, of creating the people we want, remains, as the following passage from one of the recent syllabi demonstrates:

As we seek to understand and further sculpt the nature of composition as a profession, it is perhaps most crucial for me to keep in the foreground the really messy embarrassing questions. Questions like, to what degree has "writing" as we know it become obsolete in an age where visual literacy reigns supreme and information exchange relies less and less on ability to make sentences? What does it mean that, of all academic fields, composition is the one that depends perhaps most heavily on slave labor (the widespread subjugation of thousands of grossly underpaid, over-worked adjuncts with little or no benefits and professional rights)? How responsible is a *field* like composition, with its incessant preoccupation with production of written texts, when outside our classrooms the world is on the brink of ecological collapse? I want my students [teachers-in-training] to doggedly pursue such questions. I am not interested in simply churning out batch after batch of "good writing instructors" who do their jobs admirably but with little critical awareness of the profession they're electing to become a part of. (Owens 86)

Again, as with the 1986 volume and the ideas it carries, I want to point, not to the individual administrator—indeed, many of us will agree with at least part of what is said above—but to the intentions and systematic perception of the teacher who will *be made*. All of the syllabi highlighted the fact that the pedagogical houses (or plantations) which the teachers-in-training were being invited (or bound) into had foundations in theory. But judging from the statements of purpose, reading lists, and general designs of these courses, except for two or three out of the seventeen represented, little emphasis was placed on examining the values, desires, hopes and fears of the teachers-in-training themselves. Must we proceed from this empty vessel narrative of teacher training or is there another way to conceive of this complex interaction? I want to offer some suggestions and point out a few practical and philosophical concerns that might help us to begin the process of looking into our own houses once again.

I return your attention to the title of this essay—an *intentionally ecological approach*. The phrase works as a sort of tripod, with each separate term necessary to balance the whole toward its center. No part of this three-word phrase will stand alone. To explain why I've set it up this way, I refer to one of the most thoughtful contemporary interpreters of the idea of ecology, Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, who writes that "the complexity and flexibility" of an ecological structure make "the formulation of an ecosophy" or ecological philosophy "impossible, perhaps even meaningless" (31). I won't lead you on a cat-and-

mouse chase after the idea of ecology. I think any educated person has a sense of what it means—the study of local environments, of the parts making up the whole, of energy transfer systems, of creation, dissolution, and relation—ecology at its most basic level means simply the “home way.” Not all homes are the same, of course. Ecosystems exist at varying levels of complexity, and we cannot by a single action choose to order them differently—by their very relational nature, one action can, and likely will, create reactions beyond our immediate ability to predict. What we can do is see ecosystems from different perspectives. We can learn to ask questions that look into the process and thereby come nearer to useful predictions.

To bring you closer to the idea and its problems as a “theory,” I offer the age-old epistemological conundrum that Thoreau expressed in the paradox of “be[ing] nature looking into nature” (quoted in Worster 78). How do we achieve that? How do we make any sense out of the thing of which we are so integrally a part? How can we speak in the subject/object dichotomy when we are so totally involved in the system? This is the problem of ecology, and this is why Naess and other careful thinkers have resisted labeling it as a monolithic philosophy or theory. And it is also the reason why I choose the other two legs of the tripod for my title.

To be *intentional* is to be purposeful, mindful, and directed.

Phenomenologists from Edmund Husserl through Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Edward S. Casey use the concept of intentionality to remind us that we bring ourselves into all situations—we carry a self-concept and go toward what is not ourselves with a preconception. “To the things themselves!” was Husserl’s reveille, and maintaining a mindful awareness of the subjects around us in the world can help tremendously, especially in these times of intense self-absorption and personal reflection.

To clarify the difference between this approach and the usual sorts of reflection we read about most often, I point to this distinction made by Don Ihde in his book *Experimental Phenomenology*: “An introspective ego proclaims direct, immediate and full-blown self-awareness as an initial and given certainty. In phenomenology, the ‘I’ appears by means of/and through reflection upon the phenomena that in toto are the world. Put in practical terms, the phenomenological ‘I’ takes on its significance through its encounter with things, persons, and every type of otherness it may meet” (50-51). The renewed interest in phenomenology and the great rise in research and writing on collaboration directly result from decades of introspection and fascination with the individual self. We are looking outward more carefully again, and I want to ask that we go further still.

Setting up an “ecological” composition program based on such a phenomenological approach might seem like an impractical, even a silly idea. In fact, I would never argue that we should or could do so. But by focusing on how we see things, by *approaching*—and here is the third leg of the stool and of my title—by *drawing nearer* to the programs we administer and the teacher training we design, we can increase our understanding of what we do and what we have in place. An intentionally ecological approach would keep us mindful that we are

looking at a local system—this is the idea of the “home way” that sits at the center of the very term ecology. Staying mindful of our local system will bring the reciprocal, ecological nature of a writing program to the fore and keep us intentionally engaged with the collaboration that is always at work in such a social environment. Ecological-mindedness teaches us that parts must collaborate to make a whole—the many things, coming together to form a single thing, always affect one another in the process, whether we are conscious of this fact or not. We administrators, teachers of teachers, and teachers in community might try to see who it is we wish to affect. Such a delicate act of respectful and mindful approach is essential to good working relationships and to the health of culturally based ecosystems.

Knowing where our theory comes from, as difficult a task as that may be, is never enough. As the theory acts in process and practice, we can begin to contemplate its place in the center of our teaching community. But apart from naming it, what other, ecological sorts of questions might we ask about the ground of our program and how it affects teacher training and classroom activity? How often, for instance, do we stop to ask ourselves what is *unavailable* because of the choices we have made? Imagine new teachers-in-training as migratory birds for a moment (graduate student teachers reading this may thank me for making one of the most favorable animal comparisons they have heard for themselves): what birds will not be likely to land or thrive here? Why? What is it about this particular program and method of training that will keep certain kinds of people from finding a purchase here? We are less likely to ask such questions if we do not approach our programs with the relational, ecological, and collaborative points of view in mind. How will we ever really know anything about what’s happening where we are if we don’t know who the people we hope to train are? How will we know who they are unless we ask? So from the start, the simplest, most obvious way to approach a more intentional ecological view of our system is to become more mindful of those who participate in the program with us.

Now obviously some people are simply better judges of personality and character than others. You will know them by their abilities. But imagining the other must be a part of any composition director’s or manager’s job. Is there another way, though, aside from being constitutionally a careful observer of people? As a starting point, you might ask: Does the program we administer have built into it any means for determining who precisely it is we are training? All of us have preconceptions and imaginary views of what it means to be a teacher. Even so-called non-traditional students, like the 40-year-old returning to college after years of labor in the vineyards of the “real world,” will enter a teacher-training course with some internal concept of what teaching means. Phenomenology and the idea of intentionality remind us that there really are no clean slates when it comes to people. What predilections, what views, what interior narratives of teaching and learning do people carry with them? We spend plenty of time calibrating our composition classrooms by inviting our students to explore and explain their own beliefs—do we ask our teachers-in-

training to do the same? And if we do ask, what for? Is our intention merely to expose them to their own predispositions, or do we listen when they speak?

What I am advocating goes beyond heightened reflection. It may seem easy or obvious, but until we grasp the final and most important aspect of this perceptual engagement, it will be meaningless. The easiest part of the system to forget is that the self both perceives and projects at the same time. And from a spirit of collaboration, we begin to realize the self in direct reciprocal relationship with others. To heighten this sense of reciprocity and collaboration, we might pause to ask ourselves whether or not we care enough about the teachers entering our programs to imagine how they see the world, and take the next mindful step by considering how the self we project will affect their view. The design of a program, the reading list for a course, the welcoming letter, the tone of correspondence, all of these simple messages and signs we send out affect the way a new teacher will come into a community. How do we meet them? What is their frame of mind as they arrive? What kind of narratives have we written to describe them in our imagination in advance? How will this entering group's dynamics affect the larger dynamic of the community that is already in place? Who am I, as the writing program administrator and trainer of teachers, to them? How do I respectfully and most ethically approach them? What was my own experience as a first-time teacher? How did I myself become a teacher? What were my fears? What are their fears?

To put this in practical terms, I want to look in the final part of this essay at some possible ways that a person might be implaced in a new teaching community. I know these are possible because I own them—these are my memories.

My first experience was miserably bad, but probably not very rare. It happened at a large, western public university and consisted of roughly four two-and-a-half hour seminars over about a week's time. Just before the fall term, we were given a forty-page booklet, called a *Manual*, which drove us toward teaching a ten-week course on the "10 Principles of Writing" (including such generalities as "freewriting," "transitions," "development," and the like). The manual gave a few ideas and tips about how to teach these principles, and we met every other week for two hours during our first quarter of teaching. No one wanted to admit that they were inadequately prepared, so no one jumped up during those meetings to shout "This pedagogy sucks! We need something else!" Some drifted into madness and paranoia, while others adopted a stoicism and kept their eyes on the days ahead when they would no longer have to "do comp." A handful of us lucked into the fact that one of our friends had a Master's in Teaching Writing and had taught elsewhere. Watching us flounder during the first few weeks, he took pity and started dropping books and articles in our mailboxes, ideas which we devoured and talked about for hours on end in bars, at lunch, in our offices. Weekly rap sessions on teaching practices evolved into a small, stable, sane community of teachers. We tried things that seemed unthinkable during the crash course in composition, and plenty of them failed. Others

worked and some just helped to keep us level and alive in the classroom. Maybe this introduction helped me in the long run. Being tossed overboard, so to speak, may have gotten me and my friends who engaged in our subversive teaching to realize the strength and value of teaching communities. But I hasten to add that I would not wish those first few weeks of classes on anyone—the terror of being twenty-five years old, standing jaw agape, realizing that the lesson plan out of your *Manual* took up only 15 minutes out of an 80-minute period can be paralyzing, and I hazard a guess that many of those instructors who obviously hate teaching learned to do so in just this way.

This method of teacher training is like dumping a mound of bagged generic Super Mulch in a circle in your backyard, sprinkling a few packages of seeds over it, turning the sprinkler on it for two hours every few days, and hoping a garden will emerge. Of course, without any thought to the soil content, climate, or seed types, you're likely to get just whatever local weeds will spring up in that base. The minds that constructed this first pedagogical system could not have cared much about what did spring up. Some of the people introduced to teaching via this trial-by-fire method gave it up forever. Those of us who formed our separate microsystem survived. Others became callous or cynical or hateful of teaching. Poor soil gave them no support at their roots. They withered and fell to the wayside. And who knows what happened in their classrooms. Not much good, I suspect.

The next ecosystem I wound up in came with a non-tenured, renewable full-time position. I was one of the slaves mentioned in the syllabus earlier, but I had autonomy to teach as I saw fit. Most of the discussions about composition at this school—another large, public western university—focused on the fact that the graduate student teaching assistants favored process over product, as the embattled composition director had taught them to. The members of the faculty who decided to take an interest in the underlings teaching writing did so only for the sake of registering disapproval and belittling the ideas of those who labored in the fields of composition. After a year or so of this discord, things came to a head, and in a paranoid process of meetings, memos, and repositioning of staff, the laborers were brought into line. As an adjunct member of the faculty, I could voice my concerns and pass along some of the things I'd learned, but again a sort of subversive or furtive teaching of process evolved. The top spoke and the people at the bottom—clipped trimmed and trained like so much topiary—contorted themselves to appear like the absurd model of composition teachers the department decided to imagine. I am sure that the faculty who interfered in the program and changed it so violently had images in mind of errorless themes on literature and perfect classrooms filled with well-groomed, youthful TAs passing along the knowledge of how to perform these papers. I know this because they confided in me as a colleague somewhat higher up the evolutionary ladder than the TAs and part-timers. When they poked fun at the nonsense of process-oriented writing courses, I told them that my Advanced Composition class operated as a workshop from beginning to end and asked them whether they'd read any of the more recent work on writing pedagogy. Once or twice, I

offered to Xerox articles and introductions to books. I stayed for a couple of years at this school and along with a few other members of the faculty tried as best I could while teaching four classes in both literature and composition to help my fellow composition teachers figure out ways to make their classes productive, to engage the students in affective learning, in making composing a practice rather than a mystery or a formality.

As an ecosystem this program was a sort of Versailles of the mind—the aristocrats passed down decisions about how things ought to look, and as they strolled along the hallways or stopped for a moment in this or that part of the garden, the pruned hedges and geometrically ordered designs gave them comfort. Of course, massive amounts of chemicals had to be used to keep down any wretched weeds or unplanned wildflowers that might pop up to break the rhythm of perfect rows and elaborate color schemes. And the plants seemed somehow unlike themselves, the coloring a bit off, the shine of their leaves diminished somehow.

In the years since then I have been fortunate to experience carefully conceived, much more healthy composition programs. Teaching at San Francisco Bay Area community colleges, I found that the use of the term “community” in their title was more than just part of the name. At one of the schools where I taught, groups of writing teachers, tenured and non-, gathered at the end of the semester to read all of the entrance placement samples from our basic and remedial writing courses. In the spirit of community, we developed our ecosystem—a flourishing public garden where, during several highly sensitive and reflective days of examining students’ work, we struggled to understand what the words we wrote on people’s papers meant. Discussions of theory arose and questions of practice and intentions were asked and answered with a common purpose in mind. We made decisions together, and we checked together to see how these decisions matched up overall. Though the administration of the writing courses may not have been explicitly collaborative, our communal calibration meant that nearly all of the faculty entered the conversation during the most vital part of the curricular and instructional process. Thus, acting together as a group, we determined what we thought our students should learn, and together, in collaboration, we learned something of how each of us in our community saw his or her role.

My experience in community college teaching was a good stepping stone toward my even more favorable experience at the University of Oregon, where I was welcomed into the program in a way that impressed me with its carefulness and desire to draw me and my ideas into a community of teachers. My introduction to the program was to receive in the mail a schedule for something called the Fall Composition Conference. I was pleasantly surprised to see that I would begin the year by coming together with other teachers. Years of moving into new teaching situations had taught me to cherish any opportunity to discuss the work I would soon be engaged in. It had also made me acutely aware that gaining an accurate sense of any new work site depended on my own openness in the beginning of the process. Learning the new landscape required receptivity and

good guides; I immediately appreciated the fact that this conference would give me such a chance without my having to go through the sometimes perilous process of seeking information. In effect, orientation and renewal had been built into the system. It was as though special ground had been set aside to allow new growth—new outgrowths—in the existing place.

Having since designed and carried a Fall Composition Conference to realization, I can say that the four-day event full of panels made up of graduate student teachers, instructors, and faculty works to invite collaboration and to calibrate our program. With participants addressing everything from classroom practice to literacy, from theoretical foundations to curricular developments such as portfolio use, departmental requirements, new textbook offerings and new tools for the Computer Writing Center, the conference asks the newest teachers and the most senior to enter into—or come back to—a conversation that has been going on for some time. As the first event of the new year, the annual conference stands as a cornerstone event—the fact that it has happened in the past and will happen again in the future has a great effect on how the planners and participants conceive and collaborate on the project. The conference also sets an early example to new arrivals of the possibilities and realities of working together in the university's Composition Program.

Through a process of consultation with the Director and the departing Assistants from the past year, the new Assistant Directors are asked to make a current, relevant rendition of a thing that is already in existence, and that they themselves are familiar with from their own past. We were shown an open space within which to work, but with the knowledge that we needed to fulfill the broader goals of our larger community in doing so. Learning to work together, having the chance to see how collaboration had gone into making the program what it now was, we Assistant Directors were given a chance to realize the functions of the larger system into which we had already been adding our ideas and actions, but which we now were being asked to affect in even more direct, purposeful, and intentional ways. This kind of collaboration, stretching as it does beyond the simple notion of people working together, out to the more phenomenological sense of horizons and the collaboration of the past, with the present, looking toward the future, represents the deepest sort of ecological interaction over time in place. Tradition and imagination are key elements: remembering how things worked in the past, and holding that in comparison with our own vision for the future, can be enormously productive and a real learning experience.

Over the years, seeing the conference from a variety of perspectives, as an entering teacher and a returning teacher, as the conference designer and facilitator, and as a member of a community who will likely soon be moving on, I have had a chance to reflect on its wider meaning and central place in our pedagogy. By having the Graduate Teaching Fellow Assistant Directors plan and put on the conference, the University of Oregon Writing Program recognizes the value and, as I have argued here, the need, to draw the newest members of the community together with the rest in order to learn who we are as a whole.

In comparison to earlier programs which I had come into, this was far and away the most informative, interesting, and thorough introduction to a pedagogy I'd yet experienced. Where in the past I had been expected to more or less come on board by either taking a one- or two-week crash course in the hopes and desires formed by someone else's imagination—a writing program administrator? a rhetoric? a departmental committee?—or by perusing the available textbooks and coming to my own decisions about my class, in my introduction to the University of Oregon's Composition Program I was asked from the start to participate and collaborate in the continuing process of creating a vision of teaching writing and reasoning. I felt as though I was truly a part of a larger relationship. I felt welcome, and I felt eager to get to work.

Our system is not perfect, but thinking ecologically about systems reminds me that perfection itself is a strange dream—maybe even a nightmare. Real ecosystems operate by a different set of motives than the single grand design, and as a system our program at the university has the advantage of being prepared to shift and open itself to new members.

The conference may be the most important way of showing the program's receptivity, but there are a host of others throughout the year. A textbook selection committee, the practice of Graduate Teaching Fellow mentoring and apprenticeship programs, the production of our program's extensive annual curricular guide and sourcebook, *Componere*, and a book-length collection of student essays, *Harvest*, founded, edited and produced by the teaching fellows—all of these aspects of collaboration, reflection, and openness to the teaching staff help to build a sense of community. Through all of this, we stay mindful of the local, and the program that is in place has more vitality and opportunity for teachers to affect it from within than any other I have known. The soil has been worked and cared for with great attention to its elements over the years. It is true that we have not got a wild ecosystem, but I'm equally certain that such wild systems ill serve the students and the teachers-in-training themselves. Here, on the forest's margins, we develop a continuously changing, evolving garden in which elements from outside enter into the ecosystem and adapt to it but at the same time change it by degrees. This process is at work in any system, but when that evolution is recognized and fostered—when the ground is left open to allow new growth—the system maintains a diversity and resilience which will allow it to thrive.

I admit to being partial to the ground I found upon my arrival at the university, for so many of the practices that I had come to from an effort of trial and error, of striking the flint and occasionally having the fuel burst up in my face, were already in place in the Oregon pedagogy. As I said, we could make improvements—one that I can think of straight off would be to set up some sort of *teacher-led* evaluation of the pedagogy by which graduate teaching fellows, who have spent years teaching in the program, can engage the newest teachers in the ongoing conversations begun at the Fall Conference. Such an open-ended questioning of what is absent could strengthen the value of what is present.

I end by pointing to an idea that comes from the Mckenzie River essayist and bio-geographer, Barry Lopez. In his short, insightful book, *The Rediscovery of North America*, Lopez identifies what he sees as the most serious problem with the European approach to North America:

Instead of an encounter with 'the other' in which we proposed certain ideas . . . our encounters were distinguished by a stern, relentless imposition of ideas. We never said to the people or the animals or the plants or the rivers or the mountains: What do you think of this? We said what we thought, and bent to our will whatever resisted. I do not suggest lightly, or as a kind of romance, that we might have addressed the animals, the trees, the land itself. The idea of this kind of courtesy is more ancient than 'primitive'. And the wisdom of it, the ineffable and subtle intertwining of living organisms on the Earth, is confirmed today by molecular biology and atmospheric chemistry. To acknowledge the interdependence is simply a good and wise habit of mind. (15-17)

Can we try, as administrators, teachers, teacher trainers, trainees, and students to develop such habits of mind? Can we strive to better see the roles we play in our own local systems? Can we help our writing community, our ecosystem, our home way in its constant state of becoming by approaching our work with a renewed intention to see the parts in reciprocal relationship? I think we can.

Notes

1. See Works Cited for the complete reference. This bibliography and Beth Burmester's bibliographic essay, "Doctoral Pedagogy as a Field of Inquiry: A Bibliography" (*Composition Studies/FEN* 23:2, Fall 1995: 104-09), offer the most extensive resources on publications and unpublished papers on this topic.
2. Erika Lindemann and Gary Tate's *An Introduction to Composition Studies* and Gary Tate, Edward P. J. Corbett, and Nancy Myers' *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* (3rd edition) are exemplary for the sort of collection I refer to here.
3. Along with the many narratives and memoirs relating individual histories of becoming teachers, Elizabeth Rankin's *Seeing Yourself as a Teacher: Conversations with Five New Teachers in a University Writing Program* (Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1994) offers a reflective insight into the issues that arise for a small group of graduate teaching assistants in one university's teacher training program.

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Writing Program Administration as Conversation

Tom Recchio

We say that we "conduct" a conversation, but the more fundamental a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a fundamental conversation is never one that we want to conduct. Rather, it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it. The way in which one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own turnings and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the people conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows what will "come out" in a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like a process which happens to us. Thus we can say that something was a good conversation or that it was a poor one. All this shows is that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language used in it bears its own truth within it, i.e., that it reveals something that henceforth exists. (345)

—Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

At the end of their article, "From Icon to Partner: Repositioning the Writing Program Administrator," in which they argue for "a radical redefinition of the WPA" by "changing the basic architecture of leadership and the responsibilities of the WPA" (155), Barbara Cambridge and Ben McClelland conclude as follows:

The hidden curriculum of a university includes the lessons of administrative structure. If our positional [i.e., organizational leadership] and nonpositional [i.e., scholarship] values are to be consonant, we must reexamine the ways in which we administer writing programs. Resulting changes will reposition the WPA from icon to partner but, more importantly, will model for students the ways in which we all can learn, know, and live as responsible, decision-making partners in the work and life of the academy and of the world. (158-59)

The passage makes two obvious points: one is about the structural "hidden curriculum" of administration, which I take to be an echo of the notion that what we teach has more to do with how we teach than with the putative content of our words; and the other is about the desirability of the WPA functioning as a human being with whom one might work rather than the WPA being perceived merely as a symbol with quasi-mystical powers that one would like to but cannot quite believe in.

Important as those points are, what interests me is the relation between WPAs and students implied in the changes that "more importantly" would occur

in the transition from icon to partner; these changes would “model for students the ways . . . we all can learn, know, and live.” The idea of modeling for someone, of course, implies that we do and they watch. We initiate; they imitate. Partnership, in this “model” of collaborative administration, involves “teaching faculty, departmental administrators, deans, and all other constituencies which are currently in the relational network” (156). Note how what seems to be an unambiguous reference to conventional academic hierarchy—“faculty, departmental administrators, deans”—gets redefined by an abstract sleight of hand as a “relational network” of partners, a network that is later defined as “the community of people who care about students learning to write” (158). One wonders what meaning, beyond a vaguely positive associative one, the word “community” can possibly have (Harris). In my reading of Cambridge and McClelland’s argument, that “community” may be for students, but students are not included in it.

The gap, evident above, between writing program administration and the students in whose interests writing programs are theoretically constructed typifies my reading of the published record of writing program administration scholarship. Only one of the eleven essays in Janangelo and Hansen’s *Resituating Writing: Constructing and Administering Writing Programs*, for instance, deals in any sustained way with the question of the kind of work students do in writing programs or with the question of what kind of writing characterizes the work of the writing program. The one essay that addresses those issues, Lester Faigley and Susan Romano’s “Going Electronic: Creating Multiple Sites for Innovation in a Writing Program,” emphasizes teacher and student agency, introduces the idea of students’ “extracurricular literacies” in reference to computer technology/communication, and identifies three rhetorical strategies, which they distinguish from the strategies of the “academic essay,” that are characteristic of internet communication: the reliance on experience (i.e., “eye witness accounts”), the ubiquity of single sentence assertion, and the deployment of pathos. Despite those apparently student-sensitive emphases, the actual writing students do, their work in redefining and extending the range of essayistic literacy, is reported second hand in terms of procedures and interests (56).

More telling for me, however, is the fact that none of the essays deals with the conceptual and operational relations between the ideas and practices of writing in the program and the ideas and practices of program administration. Those relations define the boundaries within which hidden curricula, though not easily seen, flourish. In what follows, I want to explore the relations between writing program administration and the idea of writing that such programs administer. That is, writing programs do not simply model an idea of writing that students, one hopes, will imitate. Writing programs enact a practice. At the center of that practice is writing, and those who do the vast majority of the writing in any writing program are the students. As I consider the relations between the official pedagogy of the writing program that I administer and my administrative practices, I will not propose a model of what those relations ought to be. Rather, I see this essay as an opportunity for me to think publicly about

what I imagine such relations can productively be. In my exploration of the interanimations among my teaching of Freshman English, my teaching of other teachers of Freshman English (TAs), and my work as a WPA, I hope to come to terms (in some ways for the first time) with the hidden curriculum of my situation. I will leave it up to others to pass judgment.

The metaphor that has dominated my thinking about the teaching of academic writing over the past decade or so is of writing and reading as a kind of conversation. Informed by my reading of M. M. Bakhtin's notions of dialogism, answerability, multi-vocality, and unfinalizedness, notions that I have inflected through Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, I have written expository writing course descriptions that argue for a conversational model of academic writing (arguing that one converses with a text rather than argues for or against it); I have run student paper response sessions for TAs emphasizing that the teacher as grader is a respondent who while judging writing extends the conversation that the students' papers are a part of; and I have tried to organize my graduate course for new TAs, "Theory and the Teaching of Writing," as a forum for conversations about teaching, conversations that, ideally, extend beyond the classroom and permeate the Freshman English Program as a whole. Such conversations suggest that the idea of conversation in my work is more than a metaphor; it is a principle of human relations mediated by language. That principle has its origins in Gadamer's explanation of literary hermeneutics. Here is how he describes the way readers come to terms with the meaning of a text:

. . . the meaning of a text is not to be compared with an immovably and obstinately fixed point of view which suggests only one question to the person who is trying to understand it, namely how the other person could have embraced such an absurd opinion. In this sense understanding is certainly not concerned with understanding historically, i.e., reconstructing the way the text came into being. *But this means the interpreter's own thoughts have also gone into reawakening the meaning of the text.* In this the interpreter's own horizon is decisive, yet not as a personal standpoint that one holds on to or enforces, but more as a meaning and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly to make one's own what is said in the text. . . . [T]his is the full realization of conversation, in which something is expressed that is not only mine or my author's, but common. (350; emphasis added)

That "conversational" model of reading has resonance beyond reader/text relations. In its emphasis on point of view not as a position that one defends but as a position that one "puts at risk" as one begins an inquiry, and in its depiction of understanding as an intersubjective achievement in which what gets expressed through conversation is not one's nor the other's but "common," Gadamer presents what we might call an ethics of inquiry which can be part of an ethics of administration. That is, clarity about one's own prejudices (the point of view from which one begins), openness to the other to a degree that destabilizes one's initial point of view (a willingness to see the other's position distinct

from one's own and to consider the claims of that position in relation to the matter at hand), and a recognition that in any human work mediated by language one never speaks in a single voice (as Bakhtin might say, one's own words always contain the intentions of others as well) can be read as a phenomenological description of ethical inquiry, ethical teaching, and ethical administration.

To make that claim, however, is clearly an idealization. Such an ethics implies an "always already" equality among those involved in any classroom or any writing program. That, of course, is not the case. I may want to (teachers and administrators in general may want to) imagine that when I (we) speak with students or TAs or junior colleagues or more senior administrators that we always speak simply as human beings to each other. That desire may, in part, result simply from the fact of human uncertainty: since I never feel absolutely sure about every detail of every thought I have, decision I make, or action I take, I internally de-register the perception others may have of the relative power of my position. Others, however, undergraduates and TAs in particular, seem all too aware of that power (uncomfortable as I may be with it). The awareness of others about power ensures that power remains an institutional effect, despite any implicit and explicit effort to deny it. What might the effects of the matter of course fact of institutional power be?

To address that question, I would like to consider John Trimbur's discussion of how the politics of professionalization "shape the living experience of writing program administrators" (142). Trimbur points out that WPAs "are invariably implicated in acts of surveillance that constitute both staff and students as 'docile bodies'." That surveillance, Trimbur notes, is carried out through the obligatory activities of administration: "course design, textbook selection, testing, placement, grading sessions, and classroom observations" are all activities within which we realize our "professional identity" by "differentiating, measuring, hierarchizing its [i.e., our?] subjects." Trimbur tellingly notes that

Michel Foucault's description of how discipline works sounds remarkably like a description of a WPA doing course scheduling at the beginning of a term. Discipline, Foucault says, operates "on the principle of elementary location or partitioning. Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual. . . . Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies . . . to be distributed." (142-43)

In order to side-step the implications of this "rather bleak portrait of the WPA" who functions as the "human agent" of a "largely unacknowledged system of power that operates behind the backs of its actors," Trimbur evokes Foucault's call for an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (143). While Trimbur looks to strategies of "popularizing expertise" (145) as a focus for a version of insurrection, I would like to look elsewhere for spaces that resist the disciplinary power Trimbur describes, and the first place I would look would be the classroom itself, that place of "elementary location or partitioning."

Granted, the image of the WPA placing names into slots on a scheduling sheet suggests a degree of impersonality where individual need is subjugated to the demands of institutional organization and discipline. We can compound the

image with that of touch-tone telephone computer systems slotting students into their classes. Thus the small degree of pleased surprise WPAs experience when scheduling goes smoothly is unfounded. What has in fact happened is the disciplinary function of the institution has simply coopted what seems to be WPAs' autonomous energy. Our pleasure, in this circumstance, is a mixture of sadism and masochism, our "success" a mark of our internalizing the power of the institution as a part of our own desire. But, as Robert Frost has reminded us, all metaphors break down, as does this too easy Foucault analogy.

As it happens, this past term (Fall 1997) I worked on the "Panopticism" chapter from *Discipline and Punish*, in Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading*, with my Freshman English students. When I read Trimbur's analysis in the context of my administrative and teaching work, I found myself in a dual role: I was the scheduler and the scheduled, the agent and the subject of power. I wanted, as my students so perplexedly and vigorously did, to resist the implications of the Foucauldian analysis of power. On the simplest level, that analysis did not account for the way I experience my working life; nor, if I can take my students' word for it (which I think I can), does such an analysis square with my students' sense of their own institutional experience. (This non-identification of the analysis of power with personal experience of power, is, of course, one of the insidious qualities of disciplinary power. We unwittingly experience our subjugation to power as personal agency. One of the things we tried to do to get out of the circularity of that argument in our response to Foucault's analysis was to address it as literally as we could—more on that below). With a vague sense of interest and discomfort, my students and I worked on the "Panopticism" chapter in order to test its explanatory power in relation to our experience in institutions, for example, schools, sports teams, clubs such as Girl Scouts, and families, which can be taken as examples of the extension of disciplinary power from prisons to public life more generally. The writing assignment was to imagine how Foucault would analyze the chosen institution on the one hand and then on the other to consider what that analysis misses. What does it not account for? One of the things it does not account for (according to my Freshman English class of Fall 1997 and me) is relationships.

That point emerged in a discussion about the literal differences between Foucault's description of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon and one student's example institution, a high school football team. In teasing out the differences, we addressed simple things: the diverse placement of bodies, the limited number of hours the players were "in" the institution of football, and the multiplicity of cross-connections among players in contrast to the singular isolation of the cell, the twenty-four-hour-a-day surveillance or potential surveillance, and the paradoxical dis-individualization that results from breaking the "see/being seen" (Foucault 202). We concluded that Foucault's argument about the multiplication of the panoptic model throughout institutions at every level of society created more than just the possibility of a general carceral culture; the multiplicity of disciplinary institutions creates multiple gaps, relatively free spaces where unofficial, unsupervised relationships become possible. That is, the relations among the institutions are not seamless; there are fissures within which resis-

tance, or contrary expressiveness, or the freedom to be indifferent to the institutions can flourish. The simple fact of friendships developing among football players, a fact which could be read as an extension of the discipline of the "team" concept on the one hand or that could be read otherwise as a solidarity that is born out of resistance to discipline, suggests that resistance flourishes within institutions as well. Consequently, no institutional power functions within itself seamlessly.

Trimbur's Foucauldian reading of the WPA coolly scheduling "docile bodies" into classrooms need not be read with bleak pessimism then, for the classroom is not always an isolated space that disindividualizes. On the contrary, the classroom can be thought of as a space where many individual lives converge, collide, collude, resist, act, or ignore. It is not a place where power is exerted unilaterally; it is not the only space teachers and students inhabit. Thus, when the WPA schedules teachers and the university schedules students, the institution may be fulfilling its surface disciplinary function while also assembling forces of resistance.

Resistance, of course, is not negation. On the contrary, it is an inevitable and necessary part of any action, the essential element that animates any task, any desire. Problems arise when resistance itself is negated, as in "passive resistance." A teacher's worst nightmare, I should think, would be to have everyone in class do exactly what the teacher asks on an assignment simply because the teacher asked them to, and they have already concluded that there is no point in expressing dissent. Similarly, no WPA wants a teaching staff that is simply obedient, working uncritically within the constraints established by a clearly planned system. My concern here is with the kinds of student writing implied by a writing program administration that would base itself on what Jurgen Habermas would call "cognitive-instrumental or 'strategic' rationality" (qtd. in Spellmeyer 164), the kind of rationality that places the highest value in writing instruction on "socialization, initiation, and indoctrination" (Bloom 78-79) at the expense of "critical awareness," which Spellmeyer argues remains, even in the context of theories of collaboration, "the hidden dimension of learning" (163).

Discussing the "silence" at the center of pedagogies constructed on transfer of knowledge models, such as the initiation notion upon which theories of the social construction of knowledge are based, Spellmeyer argues for a model of teaching that brings critical awareness, which he equates with Habermas's idea of "communicative action," and strategic rationality, which he equates with Habermas's idea of "purposive-rational action," together: "According to Habermas," Spellmeyer writes,

all forms of social life entail a dialectic between these two different modes of action: purposive-rational action, the activity of a group toward a shared goal; and communicative action—reflection on and debate about the activity in each of its stages, before, during, and after the fact. . . .

Whereas purposive-rational action presupposes agreement on relevant values and procedures, it is the task of communicative action to clarify

values and procedures and to recast them when they cease to be meaningful and valid for the members of the group. . . . According to this model, we decide what we will do, and then we do it. When we have done it, we confer on the results and make adjustments in our assumptions and in our plans for the future. Within the dialectic of purposive-rational action and self-reflective communication, each supplies for the other a sense that "something's missing." (164)

Within this model, it is difficult to imagine a writing program that is self-contained, under control, and running on all cylinders at all times, in other words, a writing program that is complete. In contrast, this model encourages administrators, teachers, and students to think about writing programs as always under construction, always being re-invented as term gives way to term, as day gives way to day. The most problematic part of the dialectic in the continual re-invention of writing programs concerns communicative action, that "conversational" element that gets disrupted by the real and imagined effects of power. Let me illustrate that point with another example from the classroom.

Every semester when I teach Freshman English, I ask my students after the first completed assignment to address these four questions: What do you see as the purpose of this class? How do we try to fulfill that purpose? How do you see your own work in relation to the first two questions? What things do you think you need to or would like to work on in the future? My intention is to get a sense of how the students are experiencing the class, their perceptions of how the class functions, and the quality of their commitment to the work of the course. When I read their responses, I look for evidence of resistance, for moments of dissidence which will shake up the smoothly functioning surface of our day-to-day reading, discussion, and writing. Most of the time, however, the responses are either too easily enthusiastic ("My work has gotten much better") or dutiful and resigned ("My work is a 'work in progress'. I'm trying to make my reading and writing better"). When someone tries to write a more nuanced and textured response, the evidence of resistance is often undermined by acquiescence. The following is a case in point.

The purpose as I see it is to become better readers and writers. Although most (All?) of us are here because we need this course to graduate, not all of us really like English. English, however, is not a skill that can be ignored, and as such, while we are here, we might as well do what we can to learn about it. Most of us have been forced to read stuff we don't like (a primary reason for not liking English?). Because of this, we taught ourselves to read quickly and for facts, much like a magazine article. The purpose of this class is to show us another way of reading and writing about material . . . for meaning, and, of course, this will be done by forcing us to read stuff we don't want to. But . . . there is no other way. . . . Most of us do not want to read these stories. You say, "Okay, now read them again" and most people chuckle sarcastically and mumble, "You're lucky we read them at all" or "Are there Cliff Notes for this?"

This response succeeds admirably in registering the disparity between what I hope my students will experience in my class (writing is not a "skill"; it is a mode of inquiry, a technology that enables understanding and reflection, etc.) and what they do, in fact, experience (writing is an unpleasant necessity, part of what one needs to do to be certified—i.e., to graduate—and no matter how differently writing is presented, it [writing] remains an unpleasant necessity.) That difference in perception can be read as the result of the fundamental difference in power between my students and me; no matter what I say and do, they feel (and know) that I have power and they don't. Consequently, evidence of resistance (the refusal to read) is framed and contained by acquiescence ("there is no other way"). When we discussed their responses to my questions in the following class, I read the one above to them and focused the discussion on what that response communicates (the quality of the class's experience in English classes in general, including my writing class). My effort was not to correct what I took as a misperception of my intention in teaching (although I did hope that by discussing the gap between my intention and the students' experience, I would at least be more clearly understood); nor was it an effort to finesse the question of unequal power. My effort was to stimulate reflection on the actual situation of everyone in the class through conversation with the hope that reflection might lead to unpredictable forms of agreement or more open and generative forms of disagreement as the semester went on. Whether we achieved much agreement or generative resistance in reality is an open question, although I would point to our work on "Panopticism" as evidence that we came to some kind of implicit agreement in practice. I offer this example not as a mark of my success or failure as a writing teacher (although the example could easily be read one way or the other), but as an example of how difficult establishing and sustaining conversations that function as communicative action in the writing classroom can be.

I think of the Freshman English Program that I administer as a series of sites for conversations where, I hope, my point of view and the points of view of the TAs and students are open to question. In the exchanges at the center of the face-to-face encounters that ground the program, we all shape through our conversations ourselves as students, ourselves as teachers, and the writing program itself newly each year. The writing classrooms are, of course, the primary sites of such conversations, conversations which at their best enact a critical reflectiveness suggested by the Foucault work described above. The other significant administered sites of conversation are the program TA orientation, the required course on writing theory and practice for new TAs, and mid-term folder reviews. Each of these sites is typical of the organizational features of most writing programs and are not in and of themselves sites that privilege conversation. Each can be a site where orders are overtly or covertly given and surveillance in the name of consistency and standards the dominant practice. While I make no claim about these sites functioning free of discipline and surveillance (for when there is power, there are both), I try in each case to enable the sites to structure themselves as a conversation.

During the last week of the summer before classes begin, we have a five-day teacher orientation for new TAs. Over the summer I send them a packet with course descriptions of our two required courses, articles on the teaching of writing, a copy of the text required for those teaching our first semester course for the first time (after the first year, TAs choose their own texts), and a detailed letter of welcome that asks them to read the articles and as much of the book as possible. I also write and/or phone TAs experienced in the program and ask them to participate in the orientation. (Over the past eight years on average more experienced than new TAs have participated; in some years the proportion was easily two to one.) After the first day, which involves introductions of people and explanations about the writing program, the other days are organized on a series of topics (for example, working with readings for discussion in class, constructing assignments, responding to papers, organizing group work, etc.). Then from day to day the new and experienced TAs meet in groups with the focus ostensibly on the official topic. Invariably the discussion begins on topic but moves in unpredictable ways onto other things. The first year or so, I was concerned about what seemed to be a lack of consistency and, implicitly, of control. However, the response of the new TAs was so enthusiastic, the sense of connection among TAs so affirmative, that it seemed (and still seems) to me that whatever was taking shape within the unstructured (and thus genuine) conversations during orientation was worth far more than any anxiety I was feeling about my lack of control and, truth be told, my lack of knowledge about what exactly they were talking about. We have what seems to me to be a quite productive orientation status quo because the dynamics change from year to year. Even though the official agenda is constant, the conversation is protean. I remain the WPA, but I have also become a participant.

This latter fact has influenced the tone of the mid-term TA folder review, in which the TAs submit sample student folders (one high-, one middle-, one low-range folder and any others individual TAs would like to discuss) complete with all student papers with teacher comments and grades, assignments, in-class writing, and any other work, in short, the full documented record of their writing courses. What could be a highly charged meeting, where institutional surveillance of their work seems unambiguous through a direct meeting with their "boss," does not usually play out as one. To make that review an extension of the conversations that began in orientation and that have been extended in the "Theory and Teaching of Writing" course, I do not take notes or have a check list of questions. Rather, I begin by asking each teacher to describe her/his course, and I try simply to understand and respond to the description. What usually happens is that a conversation develops, the TA often asks unplanned questions, and we learn something, I think, from each other. In retrospect, it would be possible to describe the structure of the conversation and even develop an implicit checklist of questions (a kind of "Jeopardy" for the teaching of writing) based on the substance of it. But if it is true that the hidden curriculum is more powerful than the explicit one, then the values of critical reflection that we would attach to the writing we teach should also be central to the way we run our programs. Organized as a series of conversations, writing programs each can

have a “spirit of [their] own” through the use of a language that “bears its own truth within it, i.e., that reveals something that henceforth exists” (Gadamer 345).

What I am arguing for in writing program administration is a case for less emphasis on organization and instrumentalities of action—who is responsible for whom, who is rewarded, what counts as research, how might one pry support from a dean, and the like, important as those things are—and more emphasis on the day-to-day, face-to-face human actualities of writing program administration, an emphasis that both extends to and emanates from the classroom. While it would be foolish not to have strategies for organization, procedures of redress and accountability, and instructional goals for a writing program, it would be equally foolish not to acknowledge that the unpredictability of changing circumstance and human need puts continual pressure on organizational structures to adapt or even to disintegrate. To frame the distinction between the value of administration as expertise on the one hand and administration as a site of human relation on the other, consider the ideas about administration implicit in the following piece of administrative “wisdom”:

... a wise administrator once told me that he thought five years was long enough for most administrative positions. “It takes a year to learn the new job,” he said, “two years to invent changes, and two more years to get them into place. After that you get too wedded to the status quo and are much less willing to shake things up.” (Bloom 74)

That rule casts most administrators as hired guns who come into town, clean things up, and get out of town before they become too attached to it. The emphasis is on a superficial expertise and mastery: one year to learn, two years to plan, two years to implement, and then the cycle begins with someone else learning, planning, and implementing. On that model, a WPA at a research institution would hold the job on average two or three years fewer than it takes for a new graduate student to earn a Ph.D. Such an instrumental view of administration assumes that the stability that emerges through the development and nurturing of ethical working relationships becomes a status quo, which must be destabilized. It implies that administrative practice cannot stimulate and accommodate change; therefore, there must be continual administrative change.

In contrast, consider Kristine Hansen’s discussion of ethical writing program administration, in which she argues for a relational administrative practice as opposed to a masterful practice. Applying the ethical vocabulary of Emmanuel Levinas, Hansen writes: “To be conscious of the other and of the infinite difference between our two selves is to be conscious of my moral obligation to the other. If I do return his gaze, rather than totalizing him, or reducing the infinite in his face to a representation, I am obligated to respond to him; I am obligated to be less selfish” (36). From there Hansen argues for the necessity of bringing administrators above the WPA level “face-to-face” (37) with those who teach in writing programs in order to stimulate an ethical motivation for administrative change in the treatment of part-time teachers. Although she presents her point in the context of her specific efforts to achieve better working

conditions and compensation for writing teachers at her institution, her main point that "relationships are the venue for ethical action" (41) is widely applicable. If to teach writing is an ethical act (and I would argue all teaching implies an ethics), then to administer a writing program is an ethical enterprise. If one grants those two points, then the reasonable conclusion to draw is that ethical writing program administration depends on the quality of relationships not only between the WPA and other administrators or between other administrators and teachers but between the WPA and writing teachers and among the writing teachers themselves. In addition, within institutions relationships develop through language; thus, the quality of relationships within a writing program depends in large part on the quality of conversation (in the philosophical sense of Gadamer, not the instrumental sense of Bruffee) that the writing program stimulates and sustains (or not).

Sustaining ethical conversation and thus relation within a writing program requires, it seems to me, a shift in emphasis from thinking about administration as masterful organization and implementation to conceiving of administration as relational and receptive. That is, no matter what structure a WPA might construct, no matter what practice a WPA might require, no matter what goals the WPA might set for the program as a whole, the structures, practices, and goals of particular teachers and among students in particular classes will never be identical. It is, then, essential that the WPA see the differences between ideal projections and actual practices as productive so that everyone involved in a writing program can recognize that they have a role in making and remaking the program as they grow within it. In that light, dissent is never a threat. It is always there in one form or another. Repressed dissent is unambiguously destructive, but in most of its other forms, dissent is what keeps a program fresh by being a continual stimulus for conversation.

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Marginal Prospects

Kurt Spellmeyer

"I wouldn't want *your* job." I've heard those words so often they hardly bother me anymore. To have my job, to oversee a program with 11,000 students in 500 sections every year, means you need to tolerate a rather busy life, the kind of life I've led for almost thirteen years. Testing students, talking with new teachers, staging workshops, writing memos, phoning deans . . . but you already know. In the summer, when my colleagues send me lighthearted notes from Santa Fe or the south of France, I'm sitting at my desk. Three days before Christmas, I'm at my desk. It's six o'clock on a Friday night, and naturally I'm at my desk.

Yet I've come to think of composition as the place to be these days. One might say that while my colleagues are traveling, their knowledge stays right here, locked up in the university itself. Whatever prestige it may enjoy, whatever social power, the university has increasingly become an isolated, isolating culture—the culture of specialized disciplines, more or less thoroughly balkanized. But I want to make the case that composition has the chance to travel, to move from discipline to discipline, and to go beyond the university into the lived worlds that constitute "civil society"—the worlds of everyday interaction in our homes and on the street, in our neighborhoods and churches and temples. If the disciplines produce a knowledge painstakingly sequestered from events and concerns "out there," then composition could re-root that stranded knowledge in the lived world once again. To think along these lines, however, is not just to see ourselves in an unfamiliar light—as suddenly indispensable because we remain outsiders—but also to understand the university in a more comprehensive and less starry-eyed way. If we are ready to abandon the image of "comp" as low-level service work, then we might play a small but important part in something like a renaissance, not only a rebirth of the university but also of society as a whole.

Composition as the Anti-discipline

For a long time now in various articles I've been arguing that if composition someday becomes a respectable discipline with a place alongside History, Criticism, and Political Science, we will have missed a crucial opportunity. Of course, I know how strongly the currents of sentiment now run in the opposite direction. Few other academic institutions, after all, enjoy so marginal a status in so many ways. We are, for instance, economically marginal. Most of the teachers in my own program are either graduate assistants, part-time adjuncts, or full-time instructors excluded from the tenure stream and paid half the salary of an ordinary entry-level colleague. But composition is marginal in less tangible ways as well. In a hierarchy of academic disciplines, with physics at the very top and literary studies somewhere near the middle—though safely above the "dirtier"

fields like Labor Studies and Nursing—composition, if considered as a field in its own right, would sink nearly to the bottom. It goes without saying, additionally, that even inside of English we are quite clearly declass . If prestige is our concern, then *College English* and CCC cannot truthfully be said to circulate in the same universe as *Critical Inquiry* or *Cultural Critique*. Nor are we the equals of literary studies in some other regard, such as by virtue of our august lineage. True, we can always summon up the ghost of Aristotle, but communication in the fourth century BCE bears as little likeness to communication now as the quasi-tribal city-state of Athens bears to an industrial nation-state. Worse yet, the few moderns of real eminence that we sometimes try to claim as distinctly ours—I’m thinking here especially of Kenneth Burke—never saw themselves as “compositionists,” and they have seldom been products of the Ph.D. machine from which most of us recently emerged.

Yet we have, nonetheless, a great deal to learn from our place on the bottom, though I don’t mean about how to “better ourselves,” how to get published beside Jane Gallop in a trendy postmodern anthology, or how to win a few dry words of praise from a theory maven like Hillis Miller. I mean instead that our placement gives us the chance—and the powerful motive of class resentment—to survey the academic apparatus with a skeptical eye. Despite our desire to be treated with respect by our literary colleagues at the MLA and the waiters at the Marxist cash bar, composition might instead take on the role of the *anti-discipline*, the one venue within the university from which a genuine alternative might arise—an alternative to a hierarchy that thrives on fragmentation. Although the term “class resentment” may sound rather mean-spirited, a close cousin to the ancient vices of Envy and Pride, I believe that it plays an indispensable role in the ongoing drama of social life, and I’m hardly the first person to say so. Truth be told, there is no intrinsic reason why the study of literacy should matter less than the study of literature, but it does. And when I consider that the privileging of literary art works to the detriment of so many people, whose acts of language are supposed to be less evolved than the “The Idea of Order in Key West,” I cannot help but look on my own resentment as a humanizing force to the degree that it prompts me to identify with the “losers” rather than the “winners” in a society more and more competitive and less and less concerned about the human results.

But I also understand that class resentment, for all its crucial importance to the process that Marxists speak of as “ideological awakening,” can produce a rather rigid and ungenerous spirit, especially when it becomes closely allied, as it did in virtually every real-world Marxist regime, with a desire for revenge and domination. As Vaclav Havel is supposed to have once said, those who storm Bastilles will be condemned to rebuild them. Improbable as it might seem right now, we may someday manage to overtake literary studies in the race for prestige and funding—a development that looks a bit less farfetched when we consider the recent explosion of jobs in our field. But I still can’t regard such an ending as an altogether happy one, with the evil pretender overthrown and the virtuous exile on the throne at last, if only because the throne remains . . . well,

the throne. Let me put it another way: class resentment runs up against its limits at the exactly the point where people need to imagine something genuinely new, an arrangement more spacious and enabling than a simple inversion of the status quo.

And here—at the point of exhaustion for our practitioners of deconstruction and critique—composition might do its most useful work. For composition might become the “anti-discipline” in a rather different sense than the one I’ve described so far. Although I value skepticism, the marginal status of our discipline also permits us to use knowledge in a different way, not just to break things into pieces, as so many of our colleagues like to do, but also to put them together again: to ask how different ways of seeing might converge within some larger whole, a whole presupposed by the nature of thinking itself. As a *techné*—the skill of taking things apart—analysis or criticism clearly has its place, but that place is always secondary and circumscribed. The very act of dismantling the world first demands that a world already exist, as a meaningful, consistent, coherent life-world. And this life-world, from which thought always arises as an echo or reflection, is an artifact that humans themselves have made through a process, a *poiésis*, we might speak of as . . . “composition,” a term we should no longer limit, I believe, to what people do with pens on paper. While it seems to me that our involvements with the world are more complex than the metaphor of writing allows, the world gets composed in some fashion or another. Even the sciences, which define their work primarily in terms of their commitment to a reality independent of human motives, assumptions, and values—even the sciences have witnessed again and again the need to adjust their “world picture” in response to new evidence. And if people had no need for this sort of adjustment, if reality could be known in an unmediated way, then everyone would be a scientist and everything they did would be a science. But science must be learned and must be taught precisely because the sciences are not reality, strictly speaking, but only one means of approaching the real.

Even science presupposes, in other words, the existence of a pre-scientific, everyday life-world, and for all their close attention to things as they really are, scientists have given no more thought to that world than their counterparts in the other disciplines. But this neglect offers us an opportunity we can scarcely overestimate: since no one else has asked the big questions so far, nothing’s stopping us. How exactly does this everyday life-world get made, and by what practices and processes? Why is it that our trust in the coherence of things, a coherence that makes speech and writing possible, is never disappointed in spite of the ceaselessness of unpredictable change? Perhaps “composition” in this new, expanded sense remains pretty much uncharted ground because we compose and recompose the world so often and so naturally that we never recognize our fundamental work except at times of crisis, the times, for example, when we start to fear that existence really is inexpressible or absurd. We might say that the process of composition does its work, it more or less completely conceals itself, whereas analysis, by halting the endless flow of impressions, makes possible a narrowing of attention. By isolating a single moment within a continuum of

moments, analysis creates an “object” that appears to exist outside of time, but once analysis comes to a close, we start composing again and the object recedes into the background of sheer presentness. If analysis is the right hand of understanding, so to speak, then composing is the left—the “dark” part we never see so long as we are looking at particulars alone. And perhaps this is why our marginal field always seems to be in search of its real matter. Mistakenly, we have presupposed that the moment of isolation, when a hardened “form” appears, is actually the moment of knowing. But the moment of knowing may come earlier, when details long unrelated start to cohere into shapes we ourselves could never have foreseen.

Life-world Rhetoricians

If what I am arguing makes any sense, then we will need to think about knowledge in novel ways, not by starting with its objects, methods, or products, as scholars and teachers ordinarily do, but with the relations to the world as lived that every discipline tacitly inaugurates. We will need, in other words, to practice rhetoric, though also in an “expanded” sense: I have in mind a marriage of phenomenology, ethnographic research, cultural history, psychology, political science, and systems theory. Once we start thinking in this novel fashion, however, we might see the various disciplines in an unexpected light—not simply as ensembles of revealing paradigms but also as strategic reductions of a much larger, more complex reality. The sociologist, the psychologist, the historian, each learns first how to exclude nearly everything presented by lived experience. (Which is why formal learning often feels so difficult and painful.) Only after the student has internalized an “occupational psychosis”—the term is John Dewey’s, via Kenneth Burke—is he capable of doing the discipline’s work, which amounts to thinking through the implications of particular “authorized” paradigms (Burke 38). Of course, once a person has spent twenty years or more working with—and working in—his preferred paradigms, they begin to look as wide and as real as the world. But a few paradigms cannot a whole world make, and this explains why our current situation, in which knowledge keeps growing exponentially, may do more social damage than otherwise, sacrilegious as this possibility might sound to those who suppose axiomatically that knowledge is a good in and of itself.

When we think about the incoherence produced by the current explosion of specialized knowledge—when we think as life-world rhetoricians—we become more aware of the losses that accompany the gains, losses that remain obscured until we look at consequences as lived out by actual individuals. Certainly there are gains: the “up side” to our strategic reductions is precisely that by seeing things selectively, a person learns to see up-close and in depth. At the end of the twentieth century, though, the virtues of this truth-by-microscopy should be obvious to everyone. But what happens to the world of everyday experience, and of civil society—the only world, in fact, that we all share—when our education teaches us to turn our backs on so much, so persistently? And what happens to the people who never become true specialists, by far the greater

number of our fellow citizens, who encounter in their passage through the university a disorganized pastiche of this and that—a little economics, a little psychology, and a little critical theory and a little chemistry? It would be nice to imagine that the different disciplines speak to each other in some fortuitous way, so that the student who learns about the “free market” in an economics class might object to that idea once we teach her to read *The House of Mirth* as a critique of Gilded Age economics. But I suspect that the experience of most students is far less coherent than this. More typically, the disciplines sustain among themselves a conspiracy of silence rather than a conversation. No professor in economics really minds that Marx gets taught in those crazy English classes because no *bona fide* economist thinks of Marx as an economist any more, just as no one in psychology departments thinks of Freud, another icon of English studies, as anything other than a failure in his attempts to understand the workings of the mind. But this conspiracy of silence is no accident. As I will argue at some length, well-guarded borders serve the collective interests of the disciplines as enclaves of specialist knowledge. But as I also want to argue, this same conspiracy works against the interests of our society as a whole, and against us as individuals. Rather than ask our students to “invent the university,” in David Bartholomae’s famous phrase—to become honorary participants in the system of specialist knowledge—I would rather see our students reinvent society, using the knowledge of specialists to address concerns in which everybody has a stake. If composition can begin to do that, then who cares if we ever win a seat with the “real” players at the table?

The Knowledge Bureaucracy: A Culture of Concealment

Compositionists have never had a seat at the table, but precisely the self-evidence of this fact has prevented us from asking why. I suppose we prefer to think badly of ourselves instead of scrutinizing our exclusion as a key to the whole institution. What exactly is this “university,” which has looked with so great an indifference on the education of nonspecialists—a task I take to be our principal concern? One sure way to misconstrue the university is to accept the self-promotion that masquerades as soul-searching in journals like *Academe* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*—publications half-intended to convince outsiders, and half-intended to convince to ourselves. And if you fear this assessment is a bit too harsh, then please join me in what the philosophers call a “thought experiment.” Imagine for just a moment that you yourself are a revered and protected academic luminary. Let’s say that you went straight from the Ph.D. at Hopkins to a job at Yale, and that you’ve published six books in twenty years. Over the course of your career you’ve placed almost sixty articles into progressively more prestigious journals, and you now give papers only on request at places like Oxford and the Sorbonne, which pay you thousands of dollars for a few hours work. You teach one course each semester, to graduate students exclusively, and each term the department chair gives you a smart, attractive young assistant who handles your correspondence and does much of your primary research for you. On occasion, you’ve even slept with one assistant or another, though you have always treated him or her in a warmly parental way

once the moment of enchantment has passed. For a long time you have recognized, at least implicitly, that you are almost universally admired. And more recently, whenever you think about yourself, and you think about yourself fairly often, you see your name in a history of literary criticism alongside names like Frye and Leavis, Croce and Dilthey, Coleridge and Sidney, and so on back to Aristotle. You regard yourself, in other words, as a real participant in the making of a Tradition, which you may or may not be willing to describe as "Western" and as "civilization." Although you know that you will die as all humans do, you will die convinced that absolutely every critic who lives after you—or, at any rate, every critic who counts—will have to come to terms with your ideas.

Within the context of the humanities, such a person embodies fundamental values. We can imagine the revered luminary as deconstructionist, but he might easily have taken some other path. He might have become a Marxist, for example, and in that case, rather than see his name enshrined alongside Frye and Leavis, he might imagine it next to Gramsci and Adorno. Or he might have been a scientist, in which case he would have published no books, perhaps, but something like 500 articles. And instead of thinking about his work in terms of a Tradition—or a "project," as the Marxist critics like to say—he might envisage himself as having solved a certain "problem" or having helped to usher in some "innovation." But the most important thing to notice for my purposes here is not the work itself, and not the person either, but the perspective afforded to the ones on top, a perspective that takes for granted the justice of the system, its openness to change and the soundness of the thinking that it promotes.

But now, imagine that you're a fifty-five-year-old associate professor, twice turned down for promotion. You have one book to your credit, a revised version of your dissertation published fifteen years ago and out of print for the last thirteen years. Since that time, you've written eight articles and you've managed to place four of them in small journals at some distance, on the scale of prestige, from the first tier of national publications. For many years, you have continued your accustomed pace of research and writing, but lately your commitment has fallen off. Although you still subscribe to a few of the major journals in your field, you find yourself less and less engaged by the conversations you encounter there, and you sometimes have a hard time following the dense and highly abstract reasoning of the various eminent writers. In spite of all this, however, you still think of English as your profession and you still serve on a number of committees crucial to the functioning of your department.

Against your own conscious intentions, you contemplate the institution of English with painfully mixed feelings. Long ago, as a graduate student, you believed that you were really entering the profession. You imagined yourself as part of a community and you hoped that you might have a modest but significant role to play. But somehow, along the way, you got blocked. Part of the problem had to do with your 4-3 teaching load, which made it increasingly difficult to get back to your "real work." And part of the problem had to do with a change in critical fashion, a change you found hard to adjust to in your research and writing. Little by little, people in your department started to treat you

differently, not with disrespect but with a courtly indifference. More and more, you got assigned to the introductory classes; perhaps the chair assigned you to teach comp, or even a class in remedial English. If you were a scientist instead of an English professor, some of these particulars might differ, but only incidentally. Perhaps you were trained as an ethologist, and now, with the rise of genetic technology, you are too young to retire but too old to retrain. So you teach an especially heavy load. Or perhaps your last research project simply came to completion a few months too late, while another research team made the kill. Six months is not much time, but it can be quite enough to prevent you from sitting with the winners.

Now imagine yourself as a newly turned-out Ph.D. When you arrived at the university eight years ago, you still believed that English had primarily to do with the reading of novels and poems, and only slowly did you come to understand that the subject of graduate English studies is English studies itself. For a while, you sat quietly at the back of every class, and whenever you found the courage to speak, the Famous Critic, whose latest book you should have read but never did, responded with a look of confusion, as though you were speaking Turkish. It didn't take you long to see, however, that the Critic's brow unwrinkled and his eyes grew clear when certain other students spoke. These were the ones he turned to constantly throughout the hour; these were the ones who were conversant in the language they referred to as "theory." And so, finally, to save your self-respect, you learned theory too, and you learned it so well that you at last became one of the students the Famous Critic acknowledged eagerly, not only in class but even in the halls. Later, you wrote your dissertation with the Eminent Foucauldian on the gaze and the formation of the early modern subject, and Cambridge snatched up the manuscript even before you had gotten it done. Oh yes, and throughout all this time you were teaching, first composition courses and then, as you moved up, "real" courses, that is, courses in your field.

But then everything went terribly awry. Strangely, no one wanted to hire you, even though the letters in your c.v. described you in hyperbolic terms: the most brilliant student ever, world-historical potential, visionary, and so on. After your first year on the market came to an end, the department gave you a composition job on a full-time basis. You will never forget the strain of that time, teaching four writing courses a semester while you fought your exhaustion on the weekends in order to get something else in print. Then the next year came along and you had lowered expectations. The MLA arrived and there were two interviews at places you would never have considered only three years earlier—and one of these made you an offer. So now you are leaving New York behind for the empty spaces of the Dakotas. Do they have trees out there? Will anyone have heard of *A Thousand Plateaus*? At least you won't have to teach writing any more.

The three imaginary persons I have just described are each "ideal types," in the argot of sociologists: composite figures derived from many real-world examples. Beyond the ideal abstractions, one might identify countless true stories

that end more happily. And yet like all abstractions, the ones I have sketched out point to commonalities of lived experience. Learning how to be an English studies professional requires the beginner to emulate those who have “made it” in the ways embodied by Hillis Miller and scholars like him—Barbara Johnson, Fredric Jameson, Jonathan Culler. And this mandatory emulation, considered sociologically, is not tangential, as we might think. At least when we contemplate professional life from the standpoint of the individual career, “making it” matters more than anything else. Whether we like to say so or not, the academy is highly stratified and also highly competitive. We may speak about “collegiality,” but the winners in the race for preeminence are the ones who finally get to shape the profession decisively. And no matter how often the eminent profess indebtedness to this mentor or that institution, we can be sure that they privately attribute their success to hard work and their native ability. As for those who never quite arrive, the perennial associate professors—no doubt they often blame themselves, just as most unsuccessful aspirants do. Perhaps they didn’t “work hard enough,” perhaps they “lacked the talent” or the “intelligence.” But then, still lower in hierarchy, we can find any number of jobless Ph.D.s whose careers have already ended. And although we might expect people in this last group to be the most angry and dispirited of all, they preserve their institutional loyalty, like many lifelong associates, at the expense of their own self-esteem—they are loyal, we might say, to the dream of success, even if the reality keeps eluding them. At every step along the path to the Ph.D., the young hopeful has identified so thoroughly with a mentor who has “made it” that he finds himself simply unable to believe that his mentor, in a certain sense, set him up for a fall. Could it be that the Eminent Foucauldian never really had faith in you, but simply wanted students in his graduate class to keep from teaching undergraduates? Needless to say, such a question can be painful to entertain, which explains why so few people ever entertain it. No one who takes pride in his intelligence to the degree that most academics do wants to see himself as a sucker, and so the inequities on which the whole system rests persist only as kind a professional unconscious—a primal scene of violation ordinarily repressed to facilitate day-to-day functioning.

We in English think so much about culture that we forget about the preeminence of structure—the institutions and the practices that ensure the persistence of culture itself. No matter how hard a young scholar may work, there are only so many spaces at the top, and the existence of a top and bottom tells us more about the nature of English studies, and the place of composition on the margins, than many years devoted to the inspection of particular disciplines or to particular schools of thought. Typically, when we try to explain what English studies involves, we refer to the objects of its inquiry or its methods, but these, as aspects of our profession’s *culture*, change with the changing winds of fashion, while the *structure* remains more or less intact. To speak of English as a “community” in the manner of Stanley Fish or Patricia Bizzell goes a little farther toward explaining how things really work than simply attending to methods, since it begins to account for knowledge structurally—but it only goes a *little*

farther because our departments and disciplines are communities in only a figurative sense. In genuine communities, people share a common geographic space, common resources, and to some extent, a common past and future, while they differ in many other respects—in race, age, income, religion, occupation, values, and so on. Plainfield, New Jersey, where I live, qualifies as a community—but the same should not be said of an English department. The truth is that English departments, in their structure and day-to-day operations, are very nearly the antithesis of “communities” as we normally imagine them.

Another way of thinking about English and the other academic disciplines is to understand them as professions. On this account, professors of English are like doctors or other professionals who live by selling specialized knowledges to their clients. But here again, as in the case of community, the comparison is largely figurative. Most professionals sell their services directly to their clients, while the intervening institutions—clinics, for example, or the American Bar Association—play a relatively minimal role. For professors in English, by contrast, the ones who have really made it anyway, the clients hardly matter while “the profession” itself absorbs the greatest share of our attention and energy. But English is unlike a profession in other respects as well: few associations of professionals are so rigidly hierarchical as the university, except perhaps in the special case of teaching hospitals. But if English is neither a community nor a profession, then what could it possibly be? And the answer I will give is “a bureaucracy.” The closest analogues to the university are organizations like the Catholic Church or the Justice Department. The academy possesses, after all, the characteristics that Max Weber described as typical of bureaucracies: official functions, a sphere of unique competence, a pyramid of authority, and so on.¹

Of course, I recognize how deeply most of us resist the proposition that we as professors are the bureaucrats of knowledge.² Aren't we really counter-hegemonic intellectuals, or pedagogical outlaws speaking subversive truth to power? And aren't the academic disciplines the last, best sanctuaries of free inquiry in our commodified age? The answer to these questions, in my view, is “No.” Given the steeply hierarchal structure of the university, we should hardly expect to find “academic freedom” there in any conspicuous way, nor is there much room for dissenters. Here again, let me ask that you join me in conducting a thought experiment, one involving an entire English department this time and not just a few individuals. Though the story I will tell is a fiction, of course, I believe that most readers will recognize the details as essentially true to life. My story, then, begins in a better-than-average department when a prominent postcolonial feminist scholar applies for a job as a senior theorist. And because the scholar in this case could hardly be more eminent—with a titled chair in one of the Ivys—the search committee should by rights be elated. But in reality, the reality we all know, the application threatens to become a major embarrassment, since the candidate brings along with her 27-page c.v. a reputation for behavior of the most self-indulgent and overbearing kind. So widely known are this scholar's displays of vulgar arrogance that the search committee had already

passed her over in silence while drawing up the list of senior figures the department would invite to apply. And yet once they received the application, the committee feels obliged not only to announce its arrival to everyone, but also to offer her the senior job, or if not that job, then another one even more prestigious and well paid. While an outsider might find all these details rather dull, if not actually absurd, most of us can appreciate the tensions at play. Quite simply, no one on the search committee feels sufficiently authoritative to turn down the candidate—and no one feels sufficiently powerful to fend off recriminations from her allies on this continent and several others.

Still more remarkable—and revealing of how the academy really works—is the behavior of my fictional department when the matter comes up for the required vote. In the hallways and at various gatherings prior to the vote, large numbers of colleagues express their dismay. The only exceptions seem to be a small number of up-and-coming colleagues who stand to gain much from close associations with the scholar, whose name never ceases to get cited in all the trendiest journals. The department, as I say, has strong misgivings, yet when the time arrives for public discussion, only two or three colleagues find the courage to speak against the candidate, and then in only the most muted terms. Once again, no one wants to go on record as opposing so prestigious a figure, and so the real campaign of resistance takes place several hours later, following a near-unanimous “yes” vote, when colleagues secretly e-mail the associate dean, pleading with him to do what they had not dared—that is, to kill the application. But this, it seems to me, is the way all bureaucracies operate, with the power emanating downward from the top so decisively that a single “world class” scholar can “outvote” very nearly a department’s worth of middle-level scholars.

As long as we suppose that events like this one are incidental to the academy’s “real work,” then the nature of that work will continue to elude us. While it is certainly true that the study and criticism of writing, literary or otherwise, has been the ostensive reason for English departments to exist, these activities might take place in a variety of settings: they do not in themselves require a national organization like the MLA, rankings among institutions, rankings among individuals, a system of differential rewards, the proliferation of coterie languages, and so on.³ Because the activities in which we engage might take place in many different settings, we cannot accept those activities as a sufficient account of our institution. Let me put it even more crudely: the study of literary texts is secondary—more or less an alibi—whereas the bureaucratic structure is not. One can imagine, for example, that English departments might someday abandon literary study altogether, replacing it with the analysis of technical communications or popular culture. The old subject would be gone while the departments themselves might thrive, with more and more eminent faculty cranking out a superabundance of knotty scholarship. And the same might be said of higher learning generally. Given what most studies indicate about the long-term retention of matter learned in university settings—in fact, there is almost no retention at all—we might at least consider the possibility that the point of a higher learning in its present form is the legitimization of yet another

hierarchy, not just the one that separates professionals from the "educated" laity, but also the hierarchy separating all of us from our "uneducated," working-class counterparts.

I would like to caution, however, that when we see things in this way we should not assume that we have surrendered ourselves to cynicism. On the contrary, I would say that any constructive change in our social lives will require us to think truthfully about why we behave in the strange ways we do, regardless of the cost to alibis and illusions. Right now, for example, at the very moment when many professors of English believe that they are shaking to its very foundations the mighty edifice of the bourgeois liberalism, the average book issued by Columbia or Duke sells a couple thousand copies. It makes no sense, in such a case, to continue to work as we have so far: if we want to undertake activities of greater real-world consequence, then will need to engage a larger audience when we write—there's simply no other way. But such a change would not be easy even if the will and means were already at hand because the structure of the academy has produced a culture in which communication gets distorted or suppressed in complex and sometimes quite invisible ways. These distortions are not, however, unique to the academy: they are typical of communication in every real-world bureaucracy. The culture of bureaucracy is fundamentally a culture of concealment, of calculating adaptation. And this may help to explain why composition, with its concern for understanding and accessibility, has for so long made its home in the basement. In a culture of dissembling, who could look more naive than the person committed to the notion that we should try to make ourselves clear?

To my mind, no major theorist has developed a better understanding of bureaucracy than the anthropologist James C. Scott. Although Scott has forerunners in many places—among them the George Orwell of *Burmese Days*—he was the first to grasp the importance of "calculating adaptation" to our dealings with one another in relations marked by non-negotiable imbalances of power. Long before the critiques of liberal humanism had become virtually obligatory, people like Orwell were quite keenly aware of the ways in which coercion, and not reason or goodness or truth, gives shape to our "formal" relations. But Scott's unique contribution has been to recognize that the exercise of power, which is always unequal and always underway, creates two separate spheres in the modern world—the sphere of visible, "formal" action, which he describes as the "public transcript," and the sphere reserved for oneself and one's intimates, where the "hidden transcript" unfolds. As soon as we begin to think along these lines, however, almost everything about our society takes on a different character. We begin to notice, for example, that much of our written history is nothing more than the "public" side of things, and therefore somewhat less than half the story. We begin to notice too that almost everything that counts as "knowledge" and "reason" is "public" in much the same way. Those old high school textbooks on government, for example, could not have been expected to explain how our Congress and our President actually get things done. Imagine what would happen to the textbook that admitted quite straightforwardly that the passage of

a bill ordinarily begins with contributions of significant sums from a PAC to the National Committee of one party—or to both parties at once.

Needless to say, almost every adult in America knows that legislation gets going in exactly this manner. Although academicians sometimes like to think of their lay counterparts as the quintessential cultural dopes, recent polls demonstrate unequivocally that the great majority of our fellow citizens understand that money talks while “the will of the people” goes silent. So why do the textbook writers keep on saying what they say? If Scott is right, then people are not simply oppressed or oppressors, fighters of the good fight or sneaking collaborationists. Within every hierarchy, pretty much everyone, pretty much all the time, must be thought of as participating in a dialectic of public presentation and private concealment, and of overt control and implicit resistance. The legitimacy of the civics teacher depends on the legitimacy of much more than the teacher—the school, the educational establishment from kindergarten through college, the town or county government that employs the teacher, and the governments of the state and the nation. We can hardly expect the teacher to undermine the sources of his own authority, but at the same time, he himself may resent these sources and resist them to some degree, just as his own students both comply with his instructions and resist them when they can.

Publicly, the teacher is more or less obligated to tell the students that our political process is rational, fair, responsive and so on. But privately, alone with his colleagues or his wife, he may express markedly different sentiments. He may throw his daily paper on the floor and cry aloud in his disgust at the Beltway bureaucrats. To call this behavior hypocrisy, though, is to miss Scott’s crucial point about modernity: our world is fundamentally hierarchical and fundamentally undemocratic.⁴ Under these circumstances, no one can fully say what he thinks or do what he wants to do. Instead, people see the so-called public sphere as the arena in which they must pursue, not their freedom or fulfillment, which are largely out of reach, but their survival and their safety. They do what they have to do in order to get by. And this insight too is common knowledge, except perhaps among the intelligentsia, who mistake their own success for testimony to the basic justness of the system, and who confuse with genuine freedom their own deftness in adapting to the will of superiors. Outside of the academy, by contrast—if we can judge from a huge body of popular writing—people tend to see themselves as “survivors,” skillful players at a game they did not make or choose to play.

In my view, Scott’s description of social life today has at least one great advantage over its primary rivals, the Marxist and poststructuralist paradigms—and that advantage is its ability to account for the experience of “worldlessness” which seems so much a part of the current scene. For most Marxists, something like distinct classes still remain in place, and with these classes, clearly defined allegiances. About our hypothetical high school civics teacher, the Marxists might say that as a member of the bourgeoisie, he buys into the dominant ideology; or else, if we want to count teachers as proletarians, then the teacher himself has been seduced by the myths of the capital-holding class and its

illusion-generating apparatus. By contrast, most poststructuralists believe that a world—some sense of a common ground—has never existed and never should. At every turn, we face multiple possibilities, but every choice, according to our “post” theorists, will reinstate its opposite, its “supplement,” in an endless cycle of indeterminacy. While people of a prior generation would have responded to the gospel of endless exile by descending into utter dejection, their successors tell us that we should learn to accept our worldlessness in a “playful” spirit.

Precisely because both of these accounts express a partial truth, neither stands alone persuasively, to my mind. In one respect, at least, the Marxists are right: inequality remains an ever-present fact of modern social life. But the poststructuralists are right in their own way as well. Almost no one can think of himself or herself unequivocally today as a “worker” or a member of the “underclass.” If we are “positioned,” as they say in poststructuralist circles, then we are positioned within multiple and overlapping contexts, apprehended by each of us in radically different ways. But this doesn’t make the notion a meaningful world any less appealing. I believe, in other words, that the Marxists want more coherence than there actually is, while the poststructuralists want less—want none—because they fear that coherence is always totalitarian. And yet whether our world happens to look coherent or not, we are profoundly constrained in ways that neither the Marxists nor their “post” counterparts have adequately recognized.

For both parties—the Marxists and the poststructuralists—the real villain in the world today is inevitably “capitalism,” always vaguely imagined as a monolith, everywhere essentially the same and essentially bad. But capitalism takes on many different forms today, with many different consequences, just as it has for three centuries. Early mercantile capitalism was quite unlike the capitalism of Dickens’ time, or the capitalism of the corporations. As a descriptive term, “capitalism” allows for no greater precision than “education” or “the family.” But Scott lets us do better. Although I cannot speak for Ted Turner or Bill Gates, I suspect that few wealthy people today act with the unqualified sovereignty of J. P. Morgan or John Rockefeller, men who owned their companies and ran them pretty much as neo-feudal demesnes. Today, corporations generally operate along markedly different lines—*bureaucratic* lines much like the ones that define our conduct in the academy. There is a “top” in the corporate world as well in ours, and people on the top exercise their authority within a structure that sorts workers out in terms of their abilities and rewards. Senior corporate administrators make decisions on the basis of information that flows upward from the lower levels, and quarterly reports must stand the scrutiny of stockholders who depend on their own cadres of advisors. Under these conditions, even a CEO operates within a dialectic of control and constraint, visibility and concealment.⁵ On the job, the CEO may feel no less threatened by his shareholders and vice-presidents than the middle-level manager feels threatened by the management above him or by the salesmen and the workers on the production line below him. I don’t mean to suggest that the CEO and the mailroom clerk enjoy something like pragmatic equality. To think so would be absurd when CEOs sometimes

earn several *hundred* times the salaries of entry level personnel. Nor do I mean to argue for the system's "rationality," as the Weberians call it. I mean instead that the market in and of itself is only one part of a much larger phenomenon. In some of its incarnations capitalism can be profoundly liberating, just as Marx understood. The real problem, in my view, is with bureaucracy, which tends to consign more and more of our affairs to a minuscule elite—a tendency that assumed its most devastating form (so far) in explicitly socialist societies. If capitalism has done anything, it has complicated relations of power enough to prevent state-sponsored bureaucracies from achieving preeminence. But at the same time, many businesses have become ensnared in bureaucratic structures of their own making.

Apart from these inequities of power, the problem with bureaucracy in a larger sense arises from the culture of concealment it promotes, a culture that gradually evacuates our public lives. If bureaucracies operate, as I believe they do, by producing forms of "official" knowledge at odds with the lived experience of almost everyone, then their proliferation gradually contracts the domain of meaning and commitment—the domain within which our thoughts can be consonant with our actions. If we never have the latitude to study what interests us, then why should we value education? When a person feels authorized to express only what the institution sanctions as true, why would she ever take an interest in writing? And when the "life of the mind" becomes adaptation to a menacing authority, why would the learned be solicitous about the education of beginners? Under those conditions, as we all should know, it's every man for himself.

The Pedagogy of Critique: Why Nothing Happens

So where does this leave us—"us" meaning compositionists? At the very least, my argument should suggest that most of the models now available for describing the "social construction" of knowledge are naive in the extreme. They reflect what Scott might call the view from the top. From that Olympian height, familiar to world-class scholars and upper-echelon administrators, it seems obvious that the purpose of a university is to promote learning (or thinking, or critical consciousness), just as the purpose of the legal system is to protect the citizenry, and the function of our government is to carry out the will of the people. But if you accept my argument, then you might concede that none of these propositions may be true. The fraudulence of the justice system and of the government—their manipulation by the privileged—seems to me so evident that I needn't say anything more. But among our "official" institutions, the university still enjoys a degree of public confidence that we encounter almost nowhere else today. People trust and value the university because it still appears to provide some measure of upward mobility. But in fact, the university offers opportunities largely to those who already have them, as study after study confirms. Looking up from the bottom, one might say that the principal purpose of the modern university is to ration access to social power by means of a competitive ordeal that has become absurdly ritualized. Just imagine, if you can, how many thou-

sands of *cum laude* English majors are right now selling insurance, managing restaurants, practicing law, or writing news copy—performing, in other words, none of the tasks they were trained to perform.

If we want to understand the social construction of knowledge in more clearheaded ways than we have so far, then we need to consider that the disciplines have operated throughout this century within discrete spheres of “official” authority—authority sponsored either by the state or by the corporate sector, or by a combination of the two, as the chart below describes⁶:

The Disciplines and Their Sponsors			
	State Sector	Corporate Sector	Civil Society
Technology	Physics Biology	Chemistry Forestry Agronomy Engineering	Medicine
Administration	Political Science Sociology	Economics Business Administration Psychology Corporate Law	Civil Law Social Work Labor Studies Labor Law
Cultural Normalization	English History Philosophy Art History		

The term “sponsorship” comes from Deborah Brandt’s recent work on literate practices—practices which always owe their existence to powerful institutions. Of course, the disciplines too must be sponsored in this sense. As we all know, research in physics has depended quite heavily on the sponsorship of the Cold War state. On the other hand, the discipline of chemistry has been largely a client of the corporate sector. In the case of disciplines like agronomy and forestry, the state and corporate sector have tend to exercise joint sponsorship. But the sponsorship of the social sciences and humanities differs from those crucial to the sciences. For the most part, the social sciences have enjoyed the closest relation to the state. A young physicist, for example, might start his career by working at the government labs in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Then that physicist might be transferred to the Bell Labs facility in Albuquerque, a corporate concern. By

contrast, most political scientists or sociologists have seen themselves as “leaders” of the administered society, members of a distinct professional-managerial class. Typically, the young political scientist has aspired to become a foreign service officer or a paper-pusher in a federal agency. By the same logic, a professor of political science aspires to write for journals like *Foreign Affairs*, journals meant to guide “policy makers” and those who carry out their decisions.

But what about the humanities—where do they belong? We can convince ourselves that the humanities speak for ordinary people in some way, but in fact their rise and persistence has been closely tied to a thoroughly state-building agenda: the development of an American high culture, on terms to be adjudicated by the best and the brightest. Whatever existential value the humanities might possess for individual learners, they have served for much of this century to promote normalization in the realm of behavior and belief, as they still do: hence our continued emphasis on the “canon,” standards of interpretation, and so on. In the course of their ascent, the academic disciplines had to exclude the great majority of their fellow citizens, but at the same time, they drew everyone into a new economy of values. “Lowbrows” were free to watch TV, for example, but departments of English helped to ensure that no one confused “I Love Lucy” with a genuine “work of art.” While we like to think that things are different today, we ought to ask ourselves if the economy of values has changed much in its basic contours. When we turn “Beavis and Butthead” or “The Simpsons” into grist for the cultural-critical mill, aren’t we really extending our authority over a domain we were formerly content to relegate to our “inferiors?”

To some readers, none of this may come as a surprise, but the chart above helps to underscore one social fact that generally passes unremarked upon: almost none of the academic disciplines have direct or organic “ties to civil society—that is, to real historical communities, neighborhoods, and so on. As an enclave of specialists, the university has always had to seek legitimation by underscoring its distance from precisely these primary, “unofficial” institutions; and it has always had to demonstrate that academic knowledge is somehow superior to or more penetrating than the “common sense” of the ordinary citizen. Yet the degree of separation from organic interactions was less extreme earlier in this century. The sociologist E. A. Ross and the anthropologist Margaret Mead both wrote for large “lay” audiences, but in the postwar years, with the full flowering of the administered society, many academics abandoned that goal. After Ross came the ultra-theorist Talcott Parsons; after Mead came the structural-functionalists, who dismissed the very idea that the mechanisms of a social system could be learned by asking the natives themselves. Only the professional could know the truth.

The situation of the humanities is even more complex than the situation of the other disciplines because the humanities have always had the weakest links to lay culture, since they produced no new, exciting technologies and played no significant role in improving the conditions of everyday life. So why did the humanities exist at all? Taking our cue from Bill Readings, we might conclude that the very need for the humanities testifies to the *structural weakness*

of American society a century ago.⁷ Precisely because the mechanisms of overt control left so much of daily behavior unmolested, the control of culture or ideology presented itself as the next best thing to a coercive power still out of reach. Today, of course, the regimentation of everyday life has become much more extensive and profound than in times past, so much more that cultural normalization no longer plays the crucial role it once did, especially with the defeat of ideologies that might rival "social progress," the "free-market," and "objective truth." Nowadays we all act in much the same way no matter what we think. Whether one happens to be a Marxist, a Nietzschean, a Neoplatonist, or a fundamentalist Christian, one will probably awaken around 6:00 in the morning, take a shower, dress, and arrive at work around 8:30 or 9:00. One will ordinarily work for 8-10 hours, returning home to eat dinner around 6:30 or 7:00, followed by an evening of television and snacks. Every two weeks, generally speaking, one receives a paycheck, and from this check one deducts the costs of a mortgage, groceries, cable, and so on. Given the extent of this regimentation, who can really be surprised that ideas have become "free floating," in the parlance of poststructuralists—have grown weightless in their utter inconsequence? And who can fail to see the futility of "cultural critique" except as a more alienated and resentful style of consumption—unhappy but consumption all the same?

In a certain sense, everyone already understands that a change of this kind has taken place. And perhaps this is why party politics, and political programs generally, have lost so much of their cogency for most Americans. But in that case, what happens to the university, and to an enterprise like composition? I suspect that for most people in our field, the way out—a renewed sense of mission—lies with some version of "critical consciousness" or critical reason, practiced in the name of Freire, Habermas, or the Frankfurt school. Yet if my account so far is right, then critical analysis can only demonstrate the pragmatic irrelevance of critique itself, which leaves nothing changed except ideas in a world where new ideas are readily embraced because they have become merely commodities or styles. No matter how "unruly" critique may seem, no matter how "counter-hegemonic," its real-world effects seldom go beyond the production of 20-minute talks for the MLA and another line in the publications section of a curriculum vitae. Nothing could be safer than "contestation" and "resistance": an alienated and embittered citizen is perhaps the most tractable citizen of them all.

But the celebration of academic criticism as a form of political action, though futile by its own explicit standard—the capacity to transform our social order—is also profoundly conservative in a rather different way, not simply in the kind of knowledge it makes but also in the kind of power relations it perpetuates. After all, the much maligned tenured radical is sometimes little more than a repackaged version of the old pipe smoking professor in tweeds. Clad now in a leather flight jacket or a baggy sweater, such a person still imagines himself as a cultural leader, a modern-day Socrates in a world of mass-culture Glaucons, all his intellectual inferiors and all needing a well-reasoned kick in the pants. But no less than their pipe-smoking predecessors, many so-called "left intellectuals" find themselves unable even to suppose for a moment that ordinary humans,

exercising their judgment and acting in ways of their own devising, might achieve something lasting or good. And so, finally, the class interest of the left intellectual often lies with the professional-managerial elite, though now reconceived as a “political avant-garde.”

The Pedagogy of the Administered: Reconstructing Lifeworlds

It seems to me that composition can do nothing to escape from this impasse so long as it continues to ally itself with the professional-managerial class—and to embrace the image of our fellow citizens as the hypnotized, or as outright savages. In my view, this denigration of the lay citizen is the principal means of domination now that overt violence has become passé. The more we attempt to “liberate” our students by proving to them their own incapacity and error—which I take to be the goal of our Freiristas—the more completely we reinstate a deadening, and dying, status quo. What we need to do instead is to recognize that the state and the corporate sector have become powerful by weakening civil society over the course of the last century. Economic disruption caused by endless industrial growth has persistently torn our real communities apart, and once these were sundered and their traditional ways of life overturned (good or bad as those ways of life may have been) only institutions increasingly distant and organized along bureaucratic lines—the schools, the police, and so on—could stave off a complete collapse, in a vicious circle endlessly repeated, even to the present time. Every economic disruption, every market collapse, has strengthened the power of the state against society; and every political failure, every abridgement of popular sovereignty, has given the corporate sector a lengthening reach over our affairs.

The university itself is quite clearly allied with the destruction of civil society—that is, with the discrediting and erasure of our various local knowledges. When students study politics, they typically study political theory, not the actual processes of political life in their city, region, or state. When they study economics, they study abstract economic laws and principals, not the pragmatics of doing business in their own communities. When they turn to history, they encounter, not the primary documents, but the narratives constructed for them by professional historians. And when they study English lit, they read the monuments of England and New England more than anything else, with the occasional American modernist thrown in. Only rarely might a student from, say, California learn something about the literature and arts of California. The “culture” of the university, if we want to use that much overworked term, is not the culture of a place, but the culture of a class, the professionals and managers. Almost never, consequently, do our students learn how to perceive themselves in concrete ways as members of real-world communities. Although I cannot prove it, I would be willing to bet that the average university graduate could not explain how her own home town is governed—could not identify the representative from her own congressional district or describe the justice system in her own county. Nor could most of that student’s professors. But the trouble here goes farther than an erasure of the local: if the privileging of abstraction makes the social world as lived invisible, the fragmentation of knowledge into

micro-disciplines undermines any sense of connection between world affairs and our individual experience from one day to the next. How many recent college graduates could speak about the causes of the hard time they themselves have had in trying to land a decent job?

It seems to me that few of the academic disciplines are prepared to correct this problem. On the contrary, most disciplines have structurally based vested interests in the continued fragmentation and rarefication of knowledge: English in particular, since anyone can read and enjoy a work of literature without the mediation of professional critics. But composition might play a rather different role than the other disciplines. As far as I know, composition is the only place where students can bring together economics and history, philosophy and biology, anthropology and ethics. Composition is the only place I know where students might have the opportunity to translate abstract formulations into everyday language, and to test totalizing claims against the evidence of their own senses. Composition is, as well, the only place where they might be free to think "meditatively," to propose and imagine rather than merely to critique.

We need to recognize more clearly than we have that the future, if this society has a future, lies with those who can imagine something better—those who have not yet lost the power to imagine or to hope. But imagination by itself is not enough. The schooling of imagination also needs to cultivate other indispensable qualities—curiosity, patience, and a toleration for uncertainty. And here again the writing class may be the only place where such qualities stand some chance of developing. Other classes in other departments might ask students, as we do, to read about the breakdown of the cities or the ecological crisis, to assess the history of the family or predict the likely results of the global economy. But in all the other courses these students might take, they will play a familiar and enervating role—as the dutiful consumers of expert knowledge. Only in a writing class, so far as I know, might they have the chance to discover what it feels like to be the maker of one's own truth, the maker of one's own life. While I admit that English 101 is hardly the place where the tyranny of expertise will face its last stand, I am convinced that the significant changes never happen in a big way, all at once and on an enormous scale, but always moment by moment and one person at a time, which is also how we teach and how we learn.

Notes

1. The classic account appears in Weber's "The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization: An Ideal-Type Reconstruction."
2. For a discussion of the history behind our resistance, see Richard E. Miller, *As If Learning Mattered: Reforming Higher Education*.
3. To see how things might be differently arranged outside the university, see Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U. S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920*.
4. Of course, Scott is not the only person to think so. See Ronald L. Glassman, "Conflicts between Legal and Bureaucratic Systems of Authority." But perhaps the most comprehensive and lucid recent treatment of this subject is Charles Derber, *Power in the Highest Degree: Professionals and the Rise of the New Mandarin Order*.
5. I have taken the phrase "dialectic of control" from Anthony Giddans, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*, page 6.
6. Needless to say, the relations between society, the state, the corporate sector, and bureaucracy are quite complex. One recent work that I have found useful is Bernard S. Silberman, *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain*, especially pages 411-25. Silberman thoroughly discredits the Weberian idea that bureaucratic organization is intrinsically rational. Instead, he sees the emergence of bureaucracies in the modern world as an ad hoc response to the "experience of uncertainty" occasioned by a widening separation between society and the state (418).
Though I am indebted to Silberman, we disagree on a number of key issues. First, he believes that bureaucracies have been largely successful in mediating between society and the state. I feel, however, that bureaucracies have strengthened themselves, and the state as well, at the near-fatal expense of civil society. Second, Silberman supposes that there are two different kinds of bureaucracies: 1) organizational (state) bureaucracies, and 2) professions, operating more entrepreneurially. But I believe that professions should be seen as a social formation distinct from bureaucracy. Historically, professions are much older than bureaucratic social organizations, and they have existed without such complex and hierarchical arrangements. Third, Silberman tends to treat capitalism as a phenomenon of civil society, but I believe that the market has become a sector of its own, separate from both civil society and the state.
7. As Readings argues in *The University in Ruins*, the nation-state created the university, and, by the same token, the nation-state's impending decline "has effectively voided" the university's "social mission" (89).

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The WPA Annual Bibliography of Writing Textbooks

Eric Martin

Two years ago I left Illinois State University for The University of Findlay. At the time, I had been at ISU both as a student and faculty member for close to ten years and when I accepted the position at Findlay, I knew I was in for a great deal of change given the significant differences between the two schools.

Of course, I knew the obvious differences before ever visiting Findlay's campus. Illinois State is public institution which enrolls approximately 20,000 students, whereas Findlay is a small, private school which enrolls perhaps 4,000. The English Department at Illinois State had some fifty full-time faculty members back then, whereas the English Department at Findlay had ten. There are hundreds of English majors at ISU, but only a handful at Findlay. I anticipated that such vast institutional differences would change my day-to-day activity as a teacher and administrator, but I couldn't imagine just how.

Since starting at Findlay, I have discovered many more institutional differences and find myself negotiating change on a daily basis. I embrace some of these changes, tolerate others, and am highly frustrated by a few. For instance, I welcome the more personalized teacher-student interaction that Findlay offers. I often find myself confused by the different kind of bureaucracy at a private school, but I am learning the system and am willing to play by its rules. However, I am troubled by the professional isolation that threatens to swallow the English faculty up if we rest even for a moment. This problem manifests itself in a variety of ways, but one I certainly didn't anticipate regards textbooks. The crux of the problem? We don't get many desk copies, and we rarely see the people who sell textbooks.

I know. After reading the last line, many of you are asking, "So what's the problem?" I understand the impetus for your question. I met with numerous sales representatives at Illinois State and very few of the meetings took place at convenient times. Moreover, the exchanges themselves were flat-out painful on more than one occasion. I remember meeting one young representative who wore a bright blue stocking cap with his suit and bounced off the walls of my office for twenty minutes as if he were in a mosh pit. He rattled off names and titles faster than any rap artist I've ever heard, and I was exhausted by the time he left.

But such occasions were rare. More often, I found myself having intelligent discussions with dynamic people who could summarize trends in the field, connect them to the goals of our writing program, and put me in touch with a

great deal of information. In no time at all, dozens of textbooks filled a room of the Writing Program Office at Illinois State. Some were immediate candidates for adoption and others had no chance whatsoever, but all were there for future reference. I appreciated this ever-growing resource but not to the extent that I should have.

Desk copies do come to Findlay, but they arrive infrequently, almost like messages in bottles. It's easy to figure out why. Our writing program is not even a quarter the size of that at Illinois State. Textbooks are recommended but the full-time faculty who teach the introductory writing courses are not required to use any book in particular. Although we do require students to purchase a designated handbook to use as a reference tool, the same book is good for several classes and changes every few years at best. In short, there isn't a lot of money to be made off of Findlay's writing program, so most of the sales representatives keep moving. I suspect that they stay on I-75 and steam either north to Bowling Green State University, The University of Toledo, and the University of Michigan or south toward Ohio State and its various regional campuses. Sometimes the director of writing and I even get calls from representatives trying to "ascertain our needs" as they speed by Findlay at 80 m.p.h. Their car phones crackle as 18-wheelers blow passed them. Other times, we get calls from representatives who simply want to let us know that they dropped some textbooks off for us while we were in class. They invite us to call back if we have questions.

Lest I sound too forlorn, I do meet regularly with a few representatives. I have come to know one quite well. He is a "senior representative," and I enjoy listening to him as he reflects—some would call it lecturing—on changes in the field. Whenever I make a comment, he looks at me from over the top of his glasses and challenges my idea the way some of my professors used to do. I think UF has become one of his priority stops not because we buy a lot of books, but because he likes to debate with us. (That or he just hates to fight the traffic on the interstate.)

Recently, I told him about this bibliography, and he was pleased to see his company so well-represented. I explained how this annual project has grown over the last three years both in terms of the number of entries and the number of contributing publishers. I also explained how my view of the document has changed after three years of working on it. In 1996, I treated the bibliography as a sacred artifact. New to the journal and the organization itself, I looked to preserve that which had been done before. Later that year, I realized that the bibliography has scholarly as well as practical value. As a result, I started collecting and analyzing past issues, and I mentioned in last year's introduction the need for more such work. Since last year, I'll confess that I haven't accomplished that work myself; instead, I have been profoundly (re-)struck by the utility of the bibliography. In the past, I have regarded this document as helpful. However, recent "non-experiences" such as those sketched above suggest that it is a vital way for those of us at small schools to stay connected to the field. In the coming years, I hope that the bibliography of writing textbooks grows in its

breadth and depth for the benefit of us all. On this point, my publisher friend and I agree.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Doug Hesse for giving me the opportunity to work with him on this publication for the last three years. Doug, it seems like only yesterday when you invited my help. We had just finished a meeting at your house in which we planned the fall orientation for the new teaching assistants, and I was making my way through the kitchen toward the front door when you brought it up. That was August 1995 (573 entries ago).

—EM

I. Freshman Writing Texts

A. Rhetorics

Baker, Sheridan. *The Practical Stylist*, 8th ed. Longman Publishing. Based on the premise that all writing involves arguing a thesis, this guide to eloquent and persuasive writing provides a variety of organizational techniques to help students create structurally sound essays. Includes a brief handbook section.

____. *The Practical Stylist with Readings and Handbook*, 8th ed. Longman Publishing. Emphasizing the thesis and the structural integrity of the essay, this text provides a variety of organizational techniques to help students create sound essays. Features over 50 readings, eighteen new to this edition.

Bauman, M. Garrett. *Ideas and Details: A Guide to College Writing*, 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace. With a focused approach to composition, this compact rhetoric provides examples and encouragement throughout the writing and learning process. Special chapter sections have been designed to make a student writer more self-reliant outside the classroom.

Cambridge, Barbara A. and Anne C. Williams. *Portfolio Learning*. Prentice Hall. This text demonstrates how portfolio classrooms foster learning as students write, revise, assess, and present themselves as thinkers and writers in their portfolios. It also includes the narrative of one student's journey to portfolio completion.

Covino, William A. *The Elements of Persuasion*. Allyn and Bacon. This brief text covers the basics of persuasive writing and provides contemporary case studies in nonacademic contexts so that students can examine the way in which persuasion is affected by class, belief, desire, etc.

- Crusius, Timothy W. and Carolyn E. Channell. *The Aims of Argument: A Rhetoric and Reader*, 2nd ed. Mayfield. Available with or without the reader, this text focuses on argumentation's aims (to inquire, to convince, to persuade, and to negotiate), linking those aims together in a learning sequence.
- Decker, Randall E. and Robert A. Schwegler. *Decker's Patterns of Exposition*, 15th ed. Longman Publishing. This accessible essay collection aptly illustrates the rhetorical modes. Flexible writing apparatus is featured including expanded sections on critical reading and writing. New thematic clusters of readings within each chapter highlight timely topics.
- Dietsch, Betty M. *Reasoning and Writing Well: A Rhetoric and Handbook with Readings*. Mayfield. Available with or without a reader that includes 39 selections, this text covers all aspects of writing and provides numerous student models.
- Ede, Lisa. *Work in Progress: A Guide to Writing and Revising*, 4th ed. St. Martin's Press. From essays to email, this brief rhetoric presents the process of writing as a series of rhetorical choices that writers have to make. New edition includes chapters on the rhetorical situation and on collaborative writing.
- Flower, Linda. *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing in College and Community*. Harcourt Brace. This community-based writing text focuses on the three kinds of writing most often used in outreach courses: reflection about community experience, public texts about and for use by agencies, and sustained inquiry into issues.
- Hall, Donald and Sven Birkerts. *Writing Well*, 9th ed. Longman Publishing. This concise text teaches originality and elegance in writing. Encouraging students to develop their own written voice, it covers all aspects of writing and has a signature chapter on words.
- Langan, John. *College Writing Skills With Readings*, 4th ed. McGraw-Hill. This rhetoric/reader/handbook is designed to help students master the essay. Features Langan's clear style and numerous writing activities and assignments.
- Lannon, John M. *The Writing Process: A Concise Rhetoric*, 6th ed. Longman Publishing. This accessible guide presents the writing process as a series of critical-thinking decisions about audience and purpose. Argument and research writing are discussed, and numerous readings (including fiction, poetry, and memoir) are provided.
- McCuen, Jo Ray and Anthony Winkler. *From Idea to Essay: A Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook*, 8th ed. Allyn and Bacon. Teaches writing in nine rhetorical modes by following the same pedagogical structure in each chapter. Includes annotated student essays, poems, photo writing assignments, MLA and APA documentation styles, and a handbook with exercises and answers.

- Murray, Donald M. *The Craft of Revision*, 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace. This rhetoric takes an approach toward writing and revision which challenges students to apply what they have learned. Murray demonstrates methods used by successful writers to refine their own work.
- Nicholas, J. Karl and James R. Nicholl. *Effective Argument: A Writer's Guide with Readings*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. This rhetoric-reader offers instruction on how to read and write arguments. Fifty-two readings are organized by types of claims, pro-con debates, multiple perspectives on an issue, and classical arguments.
- Ramage, John D. and John C. Bean. *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*, 4th ed. Allyn and Bacon. Integrates a comprehensive study of argument with a process approach to writing. Includes a thematic anthology on contemporary issues, full chapters on reading and writing, and numerous student examples. (Also available in a brief edition.)
- Reid, Stephen. *The Prentice Hall Guide for College Writers*, 4th Ed. Prentice Hall. Emphasizes writing purpose and process and considers the impact of technology on contemporary writing. Also addresses the importance of research, critical reading skills, organizational ability, and assessment and development of rhetorical contexts. (Available in a brief edition.)
- Richardson, Peter K. *Style: A Pragmatic Approach*. Allyn and Bacon. Combines a guide to stylistic revision and a mini-anthology of seven professional prose stylists. Three stylistic guidelines—relevance, proportion, and clarity—link revision to everyday conversational practice.
- Root, Robert L. *Wordsmithery: A Guide to Working at Writing*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. This brief rhetoric offers an apprenticeship in composing based on the practices of working writers. Shows students the approaches, attitudes, and strategies the writers use to complete work-in-progress.
- Rose, Mike and Malcolm Kiniry. *Critical Strategies for Academic Thinking and Writing: A Text with Readings*, 3rd ed. Bedford Books. A cross-curricular text and reader that presents the six thinking and writing strategies at the heart of academic discourse. Features 104 readings including thematically linked selections at the end of each strategy chapter.
- Trimmer, Joseph. *Writing With a Purpose*, 12th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A comprehensive, 3-in-1 rhetoric with readings, research guide, and handbook. This new edition is completely current on using technology and the Internet.
- Wells, Randall A. *Stretch: Explore, Explain, Persuade*. Prentice Hall. With flexibility as its goal, this rhetoric-reader encourages students to try a wide-range of aims and types of writing. Each chapter focuses on a single assignment and includes one professional and two student examples.
- Wiley, R. J. and Jennifer I. Berne. *Process of Discovery: A Writer's Workshop*. McGraw-Hill. Incorporating contemporary pedagogy, this brief rhetoric addresses writing concerns related to topic, audience, and purpose within the context of the student's work.

B. Readers

- Ackley, Katherine Anne. *Essays From Contemporary Culture*, 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace. A thematic reader which uses timely essays and short stories to encourage students to develop informed opinions about topics that matter to them. Covers a variety of forums such as expressive writing, classroom discussion, and formal essays.
- Annas, Pamela J. and Robert C. Rosen. *Against the Current: Readings for Writers*. Prentice Hall. This thematically arranged anthology offers a diverse collection of nonfiction readings designed to introduce students to an array of social issues relevant to their lives.
- Atwan, Robert. *Best American Essays, College Edition*, 2nd ed. Houghton Mifflin. A reader with 36 (13 new) of the best contemporary essays. Now organized around three basic types of writing: personal, informative, and argumentative.
- _____. *Our Times: Readings from Recent Periodicals*, 5th ed. Bedford Books. Features fifty-four contemporary selections from fifty periodicals. Selections cover a range of interesting topics. This text also offers an apparatus to help students move from discussion to writing.
- Bachmann, Susan and Melinda Barth. *Between Worlds: A Reader, Rhetoric, and Handbook*, 2nd ed. Longman Publishing. Featuring 70 essays, poems, and short stories, this text explores feelings of “in-between-ness” when individuals find themselves alienated by issues of gender, race, age, or morality. Includes a process-oriented rhetoric.
- Bloom, Lynn Z. *The Essay Connection: Readings for Writers*, 5th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A rhetorically-arranged reader with 78 (28 new) selections. Several chapters have underlying thematic connections to encourage critical thinking, reading, and writing.
- Bridwell-Bowles, Lillian et al. *Identity Matters: Rhetorics of Difference*. Prentice Hall. Exploring the interconnections between race, class, and gender, this multicultural reader introduces basic rhetorical strategies for analyzing the complex variables which define identity in the postmodern world.
- Buscemi, Santi V. and Charlotte Smith. *75 Readings: An Anthology*, 6th ed. McGraw-Hill. Arranged rhetorically. Continues to offer a collection of 75 of the most widely anthologized essays.
- _____. *75 Readings Plus*, 4th ed. McGraw-Hill. The alternate edition of *75 Readings*, 6th ed. Provides fully integrated apparatus in the text.
- Cavitch, David. *Life Studies: An Analytic Reader*, 6th ed. Bedford Books. With 72 selections (44 new), this thematic reader gets students to think about the topics that they find most relevant, and it helps them move from personal to more analytical writing.
- Clouse, Barbara Fine. *Transitions: From Reading to Writing*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. A comprehensive reader which teaches students how to read actively, structure essays logically, and employ the writing process effectively.

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- Colombo, Gary, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle. *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*, 4th ed. Bedford Books. This thematic reader continues to challenge students to think and write critically about the myths at the heart of American culture. Includes Instructor's Edition and web site.
- Comley, Nancy R., David Hamilton, Carl H. Klaus, Robert Scholes, and Nancy Sommers. *Fields of Reading: Motives for Writing*, 5th ed. St. Martin's Press. This collection of well crafted essays exposes beginning students to minds and voices from all of academia.
- Divakaruni, Chitra B. *Multitude: Cross-Cultural Readings for Writers*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. Balancing tragic readings with positive, life-affirming ones that assert a common humanity, this reader's positive approach to the experience of diversity succeeds without trivializing issues or glossing over our problems.
- _____. *We, Too, Sing America: A Reader for Writers*. McGraw-Hill. Divided into eleven thematic sections, this anthology of brief readings illuminates the ways in which lives connect in spite of differences that derive from ethnicity, community, age, class, or gender.
- Fitzgerald, Kathryn R., Heather Bruce, Anna M. Vogt, and Sharon Stasney. *Conversations in Context: Identity, Knowledge, and College Writing*. Harcourt Brace. This text's conversational arrangement allows students to critically examine the intertextual subtleties of discussions in which writers agree with, disagree with, build upon, exemplify, and explain each other's ideas.
- Ford, Jon and Elaine Hughes. *Responding Voices: A Reader for Emerging Writers*. McGraw-Hill. Thematically arranged, this innovative reader includes student essays and encourages students to write in response to a range of essays, stories, and poems. Helps students develop their own position on contemporary issues.
- Ford, Marjorie and Jon Ford. *Dreams and Inward Journeys: A Rhetoric and Reader for Writers*, 3rd ed. Longman Publishing. This collection explores the theme of dreams to highlight the relationships between self-understanding, reading, and writing. Thirty new readings and student essays are featured on topics like memory, myths, popular culture, and gender.
- _____. *Streamlines: Health Views*. Houghton Mifflin. A brief, single-theme reader with fifteen selections on health issues.
- Streamlines: Learning Dynamics*. Houghton Mifflin. A brief, single-theme reader with seventeen selections on learning issues.
- Goshgarian, Gary. *Exploring Language*, 8th ed. Longman Publishing. Presents selections on how language is used and abused. Includes a writing apparatus to promote thoughtful student papers. New readings include more poetry and fiction and a stronger focus on cultural issues.

- Gould, Eric H. *The Accommodating Reader*. McGraw-Hill. Available only on McGraw-Hill's electronic custom publishing system. Offers more than 450 essays, poems, short stories, and plays chosen specifically for freshman writing courses. A fast and flexible way to create a customized anthology.
- Hilbert, Betsy S. *Progressions: Readings for Writers*. W. W. Norton. Offers readings on topics of human interest which progress from short, accessible works to longer, more challenging selections. "In Focus" essays following readings pinpoint aspects of reading and writing. Instructor's Guide.
- Hirschberg, Stuart and Terry Hirschberg. *One World, Many Cultures*, 3rd ed. Allyn and Bacon. A truly global, multicultural, and cross-cultural reader. Contains 71 selections (essays and some short stories) by major authors from 35 countries. New edition includes an introduction on critical reading.
- Holeton, Richard. *Composing Cyberspace: Identity, Community, and Knowledge in the Electronic Age*. McGraw-Hill. This reader addresses the social, cultural, political, and educational implications of today's burgeoning information and communication technologies.
- Hoy II, Pat C. and Robert DiYanni. *Encounters: Readings and the World*. McGraw-Hill. This reader explores a spectrum of essays by both students and professional writers. Includes visual images which stimulate thought, evoke feeling, and serve as springboards for writing.
- Jacobus, Lee. *A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers*, 5th ed. Bedford Books. A "great-ideas" reader built around selections by 41 great minds (e.g. Plato, Darwin, Woolf) on eight important ideas. Offers extensive critical reading, thinking, and writing apparatus.
- Kirsznner, Laurie G. and Stephen R Mandell. *Patterns for College Writing*, 7th ed. St. Martin's Press. This text offers students engaging, accessible readings and comprehensive coverage of the writing process.
- Klein, Thomas, Bruce L. Edwards, and Thomas Wymer. *Searching for Great Ideas*, 2nd ed. Harcourt Brace. This thematic reader illustrates the development of nine ideas using an evolutionary approach through its readings. This edition has a more conscious focus on first-year composition with strengthened apparatus on thinking, reading, and writing.
- Knepler, Henry et al. *Crossing Cultures: Readings for Composition*, 5th ed. Allyn and Bacon. Features nine thematically organized chapters with readings (essays, short stories and poetry) on cultures in the U.S.A. Now includes a photo in each unit as an alternative writing assignment and a new theme on working lives.
- laGuardia, Dolores and Hans P. Guth. *American Voices: Culture and Community*, 3rd ed. Mayfield. Offering provocative readings from various genres by Americans of diverse backgrounds, this text helps students hone their writing skills through a series of thirteen extensive Writing Workshops.

- Marback, Richard, Patrick Bruch, and Jill Eicher. *Cities, Cultures, Conversations: A Reader for Writers*. Allyn and Bacon. Includes fifty-two readings focused on various urban issues and realities. Attempts to connect with the experience of many students and thus provide a springboard for more thoughtful writing.
- Marting, Janet. *The Family Tree: Classic Essays on Family and Ancestors*. NTC College Division. A thematically organized collection of thirty-four essays that explore the importance of family and ancestors. Themes include Brothers and Sisters, Mothers and Fathers, Husbands and Wives, Children, Grandparents and Ancestors, and Families.
- _____. *From the Cradle to the Grave: Classic Essays on Coming of Age and Aging*. NTC College Division. A thematically organized collection of thirty-three essays that examine the self-discovery and growth that people experience throughout their lives. Themes include Childhood, Adolescence, Early Adulthood, Middle Age, Aging and Old Age, and Death and Dying.
- McCuen, Jo Ray and Anthony C. Winkler. *Readings for Writers*, 9th ed. Harcourt Brace. This text groups readings contained in each chapter according to function such as Advice, Example, or Discussion in an attempt to increase student awareness of the principles addressed in each exercise.
- McQuade, Donald and Robert Atwan. *Thinking in Writing: Rhetorical Patterns and Critical Response*, 4th ed. McGraw-Hill. This rhetorically-arranged reader shows students, through accessible language and examples, how underlying rhetorical structures stimulate and direct all clear thinking and effective writing.
- Miller, George. *The Prentice Hall Reader*, 5th Ed. Prentice Hall. With an emphasis on revision, this modes reader offers an abundance of interesting essays, easily implemented classroom suggestions, and varied writing assignments. This edition includes new reading selections and a focus on the Internet.
- Morrow, Nancy and Marlene Clarke. *Currents of Inquiry: Readings for Academic Writing*. Mayfield. Offering challenging selections that highlight the exchange of ideas between academic and nonacademic communities, this topically-arranged reader also acknowledges the interdisciplinary nature of much academic exploration.
- Muller, Gilbert H. *Here and Now: Current Readings for Writers*. McGraw-Hill. Thematically arranged around current issues that serve to define campus life, American culture, and emerging global realities for college students today, this reader features essays from recent periodicals.
- _____. *The McGraw-Hill Reader: Issues Across the Disciplines*, 6th ed. McGraw-Hill. Addressing the continuing interest in core liberal arts issues, interdisciplinary themes, and multicultural perspectives, this anthology provides students with a full range of prose models spanning a wide variety of subjects.

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- Muller, Gilbert H. and Harvey S. Wiener. *The Short Prose Reader*, 8th ed. McGraw-Hill. This reader provides an excellent collection of brief, lively essays that are arranged rhetorically and offer a diversity of voices.
- Murray, Patricia Y. and Scott F. Covell. *Living in America: A Popular Culture Reader*. Mayfield. This popular culture reader contains ninety thought-provoking selections by students and professional writers from diverse backgrounds. It is organized around ten themes and issues relevant to contemporary American society.
- Petracca, Michael and Madeleine Sorapure. *Common Culture: Reading and Writing about American Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. This energized textbook on pop culture helps students develop critical thinking skills while teaching them how to write clear prose regarding subjects they find interesting.
- Raicu, Irina L. and Gregory Grewell. *Transitions: Lives in America*. Mayfield. This thematic reader offers six sections linked by transitional selections. Concise writing instruction—including coverage of argumentation and research—complements more than eighty readings.
- Roberts, William. *About Language*, 5th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A thematically-arranged reader focusing on issues of language. This new edition includes a new chapter on Language and Technology and twenty-seven new reading selections.
- Robson, Andrew E. *Thinking Globally: Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*. McGraw-Hill. Recognizing that composition courses are a natural place for the disciplines to meet, this text offers a collection of essays selected for their academic usefulness, intrinsic interest, and demonstration of good writing techniques.
- Rosa, Alfred and Paul Eschholz. *Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition*, 6th ed. St. Martin's Press. This text offers model essays as well as abundant support to help students master the writing skills that they need for college work.
- Shrodes, Caroline et al. *The Conscious Reader*, 7th ed. Allyn and Bacon. A thematic anthology. Offers 174 nonfiction prose and literary selections (plus four-color art) which are multidisciplinary and culturally diverse. Selections range from Plato to the present.
- Skwire, David and Sarah E. Skwire. *Writing with a Thesis*, 7th ed. Harcourt Brace. This rhetorical reader is unique in its emphasis on the “persuasive principle.” It describes the development and support of a thesis through short, accessible essays.
- Webb, Suzanne Strobeck. *The Resourceful Reader*, 4th ed. Harcourt Brace. This rhetorically-organized reader is designed to work with all three versions of the 13th edition of the *Harbrace*. The exercises after each reading are keyed to corresponding sections in all three handbooks.

Wiener, Harvey S. and Nora Eisenberg. *Great Writing: A Reader for Writers*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. This reader includes essays, fiction, poetry, and drama and emphasizes excellence in structure and argument.

Wood, Nancy V. *Perspectives on Argument*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. This rhetoric-reader provides comprehensive instruction in reading, writing, and critical thinking. It helps students develop their abilities to argue clearly, to analyze their audience, to find common ground, and to practice various techniques to communicate their ideas.

C. Handbooks and Workbooks

Aaron. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 3rd ed. Longman Publishing. Designed to be student-friendly, this comb-bound, tabbed handbook features a clear writing style, "key terms" boxes, integrated ESL notes, and coverage of argument and writing about literature.

Axelrod, Rise B. and Charles R. Cooper. *A Writer's Guidebook*. St. Martin's Press. A new handbook which offers practical advice for students writing in college and beyond. Includes brief guides providing specific advice for the most common writing assignments.

Bazerman, Charles and Harvey Wiener. *Writing Skills Handbook*, 4th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A brief, spiral-bound handbook. It provides rules and advice about the matters of grammar and usage students most frequently need help with.

Buscemi, Santi V., Albert Nicolai, and Richard Strugala. *The Basics: A Rhetoric and Handbook*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. More than just a grammar reference, this comb-bound handbook provides a reference for the complete writing and research processes. Now with expanded coverage on using and documenting electronic resources, especially the Internet.

Clouse, Barbara Fine. *Working It Out: A Troubleshooting Guide for Writers*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. Organized around the writing process, this brief guide helps students write better by helping them discover writing and revising procedures that work well.

Corbett, Edward P.J. and Sheryl Finkle. *The Little English Handbook: Choices and Conventions*, 8th ed. Longman Publishing. This pocket-sized handbook addresses the most prevalent writing problems students face. It also provides artful prose explanations on matters of grammar, style, paragraphing, punctuation, and mechanics. Includes a guide to research writing and documentation.

DiYanni, Robert and Pat C. Hoy, II. *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. Emphasizes the reading, writing, and thinking connection. Includes extensive coverage of invention, separate chapters on writing different types of essays, new "Grammar and Writing" boxes, more student essays (14), and extensive Internet coverage.

- Dodds, Jack. *The Ready Reference Handbook: Writing, Revising, Editing*. Allyn and Bacon. This brief, spiral-bound handbook includes action-oriented “How-To” boxes as well as full coverage of the writing process, argumentation, and writing about literature. It also covers Internet research.
- Fowler, H. Ramsey and Jane E. Aaron. *The Little, Brown Handbook*, 7th ed. Longman Publishing. An accessible but carefully-crafted reference which covers all aspects of writing. This edition features expanded ESL notes and more on conducting electronic searches.
- Correll, Donna. *A Writer’s Handbook From A to Z*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. Brief and spiral-bound, this handbook is distinguished by its alphabetical organization in the grammar section. Separate chapters cover writing, research, and special types of writing. Icons for common errors and ESL notes are provided throughout.
- Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, 5th ed. Bedford Books. A handbook intended to work both as a full classroom text and as a reference that students can use on their own. The new edition offers more guidance for students writing in the electronic age.
- Horner, Winifred B., Suzanne S. Webb, and Robert K. Miller. *The Harbrace College Handbook*, 13th ed. Harcourt Brace. Featuring a complete reorganization of chapters, this handbook includes new examples from contemporary writers, and offers a writing style that is more descriptive than prescriptive.
- _____. *The Harbrace College Handbook, Brief Edition*. Harcourt Brace. The first Harbrace brief edition. Offers all of the features of its larger counterpart in a compact format.
- _____. *Hodges’ Harbrace Handbook*, 13th ed. Harcourt Brace. This handbook retains the traditional chapter organization that the *Harbrace* has always had, but it includes expanded information about finding, using, and citing electronic sources.
- Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Brief Holt Handbook*, 2nd ed. Harcourt Brace. This text covers critical thinking and reading, argumentation, writing about literature, writing essay exams, and writing in the workplace. It also addresses the use of computers and the Internet in every stage of writing.
- Lunsford, Andrea and Robert Connors. *Easy Writer: A Pocket Guide*. St. Martin’s Press. A guide to the essentials of writing and research with tips for online discourse and a directory of resources in fifteen academic disciplines.
- Nickerson, Marie-Louise. *The Scribner Exercise Book for Writers*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. Designed to accompany *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*, this workbook can also be used on its own. It includes exercises on the writing process, grammar and punctuation, and the research process.

- Rosen, Leonard L. *Decisions: A Writer's Handbook*. Allyn and Bacon. A tabbed and spiral-bound handbook which covers critical thinking, Internet research, and arguing across the disciplines. Also offers "Computer Tips" and Spotlight icons that highlight common errors.
- Schiffhorst, Gerald J. and Donald Pharr. *The Short Handbook for Writers*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. This streamlined edition features an easy-to-use reference format, a comprehensive Annotated Instructor's Edition, and a selection of supplements.
- Troyka, Lynn Quitman. *Simon & Schuster Quick Access Reference for Writers*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. Designed to allow students and teachers alike to access information more quickly, the new edition offers fuller coverage of critical thinking and grammar basics, plus instruction and tutorials on how to use the book itself.

II. Developmental Writing Texts

A. Rhetorics

- Agee, Anne Scrivener and Carolyn E. Phanstiel. *The Basic Writer's Book*, 3rd ed. Prentice Hall. This book's three-part organization has student writers understand basic sentence patterns and paragraph patterns as they relate to the writing process. It also covers grammar and mechanics, and their impact on effective writing.
- Anker, Susan. *Real Writing: Paragraphs and Essays for College, Work, and Everyday Life*. Bedford Books. This text connects the writing course to the worlds of college, work, and everyday life. It covers active learning and includes "Profiles of Success"—stories of former developmental writers who have made it in the "real world."
- _____. *Real Writing with Readings: Paragraphs and Essays for College, Work, and Everyday Life*. Bedford Books. A second version of *Real Writing* that includes a rhetorically-arranged reader.
- Biays, John S. and Carol Wershoven. *Along These Lines: A Course for Developing Writers*. Prentice Hall. A basic, comprehensive rhetoric-reader-grammar text designed with accessibility for both students and instructors. Focusing on paragraph construction, it introduces students to the essay and takes them through the stages of the writing process.
- Choy, Penelope, Dorothy Goldbart Clark, and James R. McCormick. *Basic Grammar and Usage*, 5th ed. Harcourt Brace. This developmental writing text offers a clear, concise explanation of the grammar rules that many students find troublesome and a step-by-step approach to teach students to overcome grammar weaknesses.
- Eggers, Philip. *Process and Practice*, 4th ed. Longman Publishing. This paragraph-to-essay text balances process writing instruction with a traditional

emphasis on correctness. Units combine advice about composing strategies with writing assignments and collaborative exercises. Readings reflect the challenges of our times.

Flachmann, Kim et al. *Mosaics: Focusing on Essays*. Prentice Hall. Part of a three-level developmental writing series, this text teaches the processes and skills common to all good academic writing by focusing on the important purposes for writing and by integrating reading, writing, revising, and editing throughout.

____. *Mosaics: Focusing on Paragraphs in Context*. Prentice Hall. Part of a three-level developmental writing series, this text focuses on paragraphs of essays. Grammar, syntax, and mechanics are also covered in detail in the Revising and Editing sections.

____. *Mosaics: Focusing on Sentences in Context*. Prentice Hall. Part of a three-level developmental writing series, this text focuses on sentences of essays. Grammar, syntax, and mechanics are also covered in detail in the Revising and Editing sections.

Kanar, Carol. *The Confident Writer*, 2nd ed. Houghton Mifflin. A rhetoric with readings that build writing confidence by building writing skills. Progressing from the idea to the finished essay, the text combines process and skills approaches.

Langan, John. *English Brushup*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. This quick and practical guide reviews the most commonly occurring student errors.

____. *The Primis Langan Series*. McGraw-Hill. This series allows teachers to create their own customized texts. Information ranges from reading and study skills, to sentence skills, to paragraph and essay writing.

Meriwether, Nell. *Strategies for Writing Successful Essays*. NTC College Division. This developmental rhetoric helps basic writing students master the writing process and apply it to the most common types of academic essays. Includes both student and professional sample essays and suggested topics for writing.

Rich, Susanna L. *The Flexible Writer*, 3rd ed. Allyn and Bacon. Focuses on writing complete essays. Includes a greater number of writing assignments, numerous student examples, forty professional essays, and strategies for using a computer.

Smilkstein, Rita. *Tools for Writing*. Harcourt Brace. Centered on the "Natural Human Learning Process," this unique developmental text employs the approach of empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning by using and explaining grammar in their own writing.

B. Readers

Adams, W. Royce. *Viewpoints*, 3rd ed. Houghton Mifflin. A thematically-arranged, short-essay reader on contemporary issues. The 70 selections (38 new) are grouped into eight units such as learning, cultural heritage, and the media.

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- Clouse, Barbara Fine. *Cornerstones: Readings for Writers*. McGraw-Hill. Found only on the Primis electronic database system. Allows teachers to create their own customized texts. Offers a vast selection of professional essays, student essays, and short stories—all with extensive accompanying apparatus.
- Conlin, Mary Lou. *Patterns*, 5th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A rhetorically-arranged reader containing 95 (30 new) paragraphs and short essays by professional and student writers. Helps students gain a basic understanding of paragraph and essay writing.
- Joy, Anna. *We Are America*, 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace. Combines a reader, rhetoric, and handbook in one manageable text. Reading selections reflect culturally and ethnically diverse points of view.
- Seyler, Dorothy U. *Patterns of Reflection: A Reader*, 3rd ed. Allyn and Bacon. Features 84 brief readings which are organized both rhetorically and thematically. Also includes four annotated student essays, short stories, poems, a cartoon, and six pages of four-color art.
- Warner, J. Sterling, Judith Hilliard, and Vincent Piro. *Visions Across the Americas*, 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace. This rhetorically-organized, multicultural reader includes eleven new essays. Appropriate for developmental writing courses, this text can also be used in first-year composition.

C. Workbooks

- Brandon, Lee. *Paragraphs and Essays*, 7th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A worktext noted for its well-integrated opportunities for critical thinking. This text thoroughly covers the writing process from paragraphs to essays.
- Emery, Donald W., John M. Kierzek, and Peter Lindblom. *English Fundamentals, Form A*, 11th ed. Allyn and Bacon. This skill and drill workbook focuses on grammar skills. Each topic includes three exercise sets and some of the answers are provided. A test packet with additional exercises is also available.
- Fawcett, Susan and Alvin Sandberg. *Grassroots*, 6th ed. Houghton Mifflin. This revised sentence-level worktext more effectively emphasizes the connection between grammar and writing, and it offers a major software assessment program. Accompanied by a website.
- Glazier, Theresa F. *The Least You Should Know About English, Form A*, 6th ed. Harcourt Brace. This workbook for sentence-level developmental writing courses covers the essentials of sentence structure, punctuation, mechanics, and the writing of simple papers.
- Hacker, Diana and Wanda Van Goor. *Bedford Basics: A Workbook for Writers*, 3rd ed. Bedford Books. A workbook which builds off of *The Bedford Handbook*, 5th ed. Offers numerous exercises developed for basic writers.

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- Hansen, Barbara and Rebecca McDaniel. *Simplified Sentence Skills*. NTC College Division. By focusing on sentence-level concerns, this perforated worktext simplifies the learning of basic grammar and writing skills.
- Kelly, William J. and Deborah L. Lawton. *Odyssey: A Guide to Better Writing*. Allyn and Bacon. This worktext on sentences, paragraphs, and essays features incrementally challenging exercises, more on the connection between grammar and writing, more help with common problems, and professional as well as student essays.
- Langan, John. *Sentence Skills*, 6th ed. McGraw-Hill. This worktext continues to help students master the essential grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and usage rules needed for clear, thoughtful writing. It now features a brief guide to writing effective paragraphs and essays.
- Page. *Checkpoints*, 3rd ed. Longman Publishing. Integrating reading, writing, and grammar, this worktext covers paragraph and essay writing skills. Readings serve as springboards for discussion and models of the rhetorical patterns. Writing process coverage leads students through each stage of writing.
- Silva, Marilyn. *Basic Grammar in Many Voices*. NTC College Division. The goal of this book is to demystify grammar and help students develop an understanding of the fundamental rules underlying English grammar. An accompanying workbook with 150 additional exercises is also available.

III. Advanced Writing Texts

A. Rhetorics

- Clark, Irene. *The Genre of Argument*. Harcourt Brace. This brief rhetoric defines argument as a separate genre, thus helping students understand the purpose and context of successful college argumentation.
- Hairston, Maxine C. *Successful Writing*, 4th ed. W. W. Norton. Offers practical advice for advanced writers. Includes a new chapter on document design; new professional and student examples; quick-reference boxes; and coverage of searching, evaluating, and documenting electronic sources.
- Jacobus, Lee A. *Substance, Style, and Strategy*. Oxford University Press. Incorporating the author's belief that advanced writing courses should offer refinement of the mind and make vague thoughts explicit and examinable, this rhetoric focuses on style and strategy in the writing of five common essay types. Includes thirty professional essays.
- Wood, Nancy V. *Writing Argumentative Essays*. Prentice Hall. A brief, rhetoric-only version of *Perspectives on Argument*.

B. Readers

Miller, Robert K. *The Informed Argument*, 5th ed. Harcourt Brace. Contemporary issues are addressed through paired arguments from a variety of sources. Introduces students to several approaches to argument as a means of conflict resolution.

C. Advanced Grammars

Barry, Anita. *English Grammar: Language as Human Behavior*. Prentice Hall. Designed primarily for native speakers, the book encourages students to view English as an evolving system of grammar rules.

Kolln, Martha and Robert Funk. *Understanding English Grammar*, 5th ed. Allyn and Bacon. Provides students a systematic way to understand grammar principles. Includes a new chapter on the history of grammar pedagogy, and "Classroom Applications" are provided throughout. (Also available: *Exercises for Understanding English Grammar*—a workbook which offers students additional, self-instructed grammar practice.)

IV. Composition and Literature Texts

Abcarian, Richard, Marvin Klotz and Peter Richardson. *Literature: Reading and Writing the Human Experience*, 7th ed. St. Martin's Press. Combines new instruction on reading and writing about literature with engaging selections and a thematic focus to provide a practical and flexible text for literature courses and composition courses.

Ford, Margorie and John Ford. *A Web of Stories: An Introduction to Short Fiction*. Prentice Hall. This text explores the human condition through short story. It begins with students' own responses to a story and then helps them refine their responses to develop a clearer understanding of the story and themselves.

Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays About Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet*, 5th ed. Harcourt Brace. This introductory text provides guidelines for reading and writing about literature. This edition contains updated information on searching the World Wide Web, citing and evaluating computer sources, and writing with computers.

Lynn, Steven. *Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory*, 2nd ed. Longman Publishing. This text presents accessible explanations of the various critical theories (new criticism, reader-response, deconstructive, biographical, historical, etc.), and explores their underlying assumptions to help students write about literature.

Roberts, Edgar V. and Henry E. Jacobs. *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*, 5th ed. Prentice Hall. This anthology of fiction, poetry, and

drama treats reading and writing as interdependent processes. Sample essays are included in every chapter, and a comprehensive supplements package is available. (Also available in a compact edition.)

V. Creative Writing Texts

DeMaria, Robert. *The College Handbook of Creative Writing*, 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace.

This text provides many of the tools of a traditional English handbook with special instruction for the creative writing student. Coverage spans fiction, poetry and drama, following the basic elements of theme, setting, character, and plot.

Diamond, Rick and Candace H. Schaefer. *The Creative Writing Guide: Poetry, Literary Nonfiction, Fiction, Drama*. Longman Publishing. Covering four genres, this accessible text opens with creativity and the writing process followed by discussions of the elements of literature and techniques for writing. Integral to the presentation are the text's four different types of exercises.

Minot, Stephen. *Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction, and Drama*, 6th Ed. Prentice Hall. This introductory text addresses the dynamics of the creative process while analyzing each genre. It also encourages writers to find their own voice, and it offers advice on how to write creatively and get published.

VI. Business and Technical Writing Texts

Allen, Jo. *Writing in the Workplace*. Allyn and Bacon. For courses in technical and business writing. Offers a practical, real world approach to writing with lots of application exercises. Emphasizes the workplace context and the social/political realities that affect the creation of documents.

Andrews, Deborah C. *Technical Communication in the Global Community*. Prentice Hall. Prepares students to become resourceful, authoritative, and effective technical writers in a rapidly changing global community. Three major themes (internationalism, collaboration, and technological innovation) provide a helpful framework for students.

Barker, Thomas T. *Writing Software Documentation: A Task-Oriented Approach*. Allyn and Bacon. Takes a task-oriented approach that focuses on the needs of the user. Apparatus includes checklists in each chapter, exercises, complete programs to work on, project tracking forms, and a range of examples.

Greene, Michael T. and Johnathan G. Ripley. *Communicating: For Future Business Professionals*. Prentice Hall. This comprehensive, practical guide provides useful tools for career planning, while presenting a variety of writing and speaking tasks that students can expect to encounter in the workplace.

- Houp, Kenneth W., Thomas E. Pearsall, and Elizabeth Tebeaux. *Reporting Technical Information*, 9th ed. Allyn and Bacon. This edition offers new coverage of electronic communication and international communication, it condenses the arrangement strategies into one chapter, and it features a new web site with information and tools for students and instructors.
- Jones, Dan. *Technical Writing Style*. Allyn and Bacon. Designed for courses in technical editing or writing style, this text combines theory and practice in a simple 12-point approach. Case studies illustrate appropriate writing styles.
- Kolin, Philip. *Successful Writing at Work*, 5th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A comprehensive textbook for business writing, this edition offers an abundance of realistic situations and problems; a wide-range of examples; and guidelines for drafting, editing, and producing professional documents and graphics.
- Kostelnick, Charles and David D. Roberts. *Designing Visual Language: Strategies for Professional Writing*. Allyn and Bacon. Focusing on document design and visual communication, this text enables students to extend to visual design the rhetorical approach that they assimilate in writing and editing courses.
- Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication: Situations and Strategies*, 5th ed. St. Martin's Press. Covers every aspect of technical communication including the stages of the writing process, writing strategies unique to technical writing, and other applications including oral reports and job application materials.
- Oliu, Walter E., Charles T. Brusaw, and Gerald J. Alred. *Writing that Works: How to Write Effectively on the Job*, 6th ed. St. Martin's Press. This text is designed for students from varied academic backgrounds whose jobs will, or already do, require writing skills. It offers abundant examples and realistic exercises.
- Pattow, Donald and William Wresh. *Communicating Technical Information: A Guide for the Electronic Age*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. Centered on the premise that writing is a step-by-step process, this text considers the changing roles and needs of today's technical writer and places a heavy emphasis on writing with computers.
- Pfieffer, William S. *Pocket Guide to Technical Writing*. Prentice Hall. An alphabetized handbook with brief chapters on organization and efficiency, this reference for on-the-job writing helps solve problems encountered by various technical and professional writers.
- Roebuck, Deborah Britt. *Improving Business Communication Skills*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. Clear and concise, this text delivers vital communication skills that future professionals need for success. It does so by helping the reader become a self-directed learner.
- Rude, Carolyn D. *Technical Editing*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. This text moves beyond mere sentence-level revision. It assumes that an editor's responsi-

bility includes the overall effectiveness and usability of a document. Includes new information on technology, globalization, and an accompanying website.

Sims, Brenda. *Technical Writing for Readers and Writers*. Houghton Mifflin. This complete guide to technical writing emphasizes that technical writing involves a series of deliberate problem-solving activities and that understanding audience is essential to creating successful documents.

Treece, Marla and Betty Kleen. *Successful Communication for Business and Management*, 7th ed. Prentice Hall. This text offers a comprehensive treatment of the communication principles applied to letters, memos, reports, and resumes. It also covers oral, nonverbal, and intercultural communication to help solve communication problems in business and personal life.

VII. Software, Computer-Assisted Instruction, and Internet Guides

Allyn and Bacon Interactive. *The Writer's Toolkit*. Allyn and Bacon. This CD-ROM is designed to help improve writing by offering a complete writing environment. Includes a wealth of tools to use in assisting students in each stage of the writing process.

Anderson, Daniel, Bret Benjamin, and Bill Paredes-Holt. *Connections: A Guide to On Line Writing*. Allyn and Bacon. Offers both instruction in rhetoric and practical advice for composing with on-line media. Four major parts include argumentation, research, collaboration and design. An interactive website is also available.

Branscomb, Eric H. *Casting Your Net: A Student's Guide to Research on the Internet*. Allyn and Bacon. A comprehensive guide to conducting Internet research. All of the major search modes and search engines are covered. Includes exercises and explanations of APA and MLA styles.

Buscemi, Santi V. and Publishing Innovations, Inc. *Allwrite!* McGraw-Hill. This interactive software program combines three learning modes: Help Mode (includes on-line handbook), Practice Mode (provides numerous exercises) and Test Mode (diagnostic pre-tests and post-tests). (IBM and Macintosh formats available.)

Campbell, Jennifer and Michael Keene. *Mayfield's Quick View Guide to the Internet for Students of English*. Mayfield. This brief but comprehensive introduction to the Internet and World Wide Web includes coverage of finding, using, and documenting sources; assessing source reliability; job searches; virtual communities; and more.

Clark-Powell, Carol Lee. *A Student's Guide to the Internet, 1997-1998*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. This small, easy-to-read guide helps students navigate their journey through cyberspace. It demonstrates how to connect to the Internet and then explore the information superhighway.

- Crump, Eric and Nick Carbone. *Writing Online*, 2nd ed. Houghton Mifflin. This text was formerly titled *English Online*. It is a concise, spiral-bound reference which provides resources, instruction, and projects to help integrate the Internet into the classroom. (Accompanied by a website.)
- DiYanni, Robert and Pat C. Hoy, II. *The Scribner Online Handbook for Writers, Version 2.0*. Allyn and Bacon. The Windows online version of *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*. Available on disk and CD-ROM. Extensive hyperlinks allow users to find information quickly and easily. Also includes on-line resources and web addresses.
- Dodds, Jack. *The Ready Reference Handbook: Writing, Revising, Editing, Revised Edition with Expanded Internet Coverage*. Allyn and Bacon. The Windows online version of *The Ready Reference Handbook*. Available on disk and CD-ROM. Extensive hyperlinks allow students to find easily the information that they need. Also provides connections to on-line resources and web addresses.
- Hacker, Diana. *The Electronic Bedford Handbook*. Bedford Books. Presents all of the topics in *The Bedford Handbook*, 5th ed. in an easy-to-navigate software program. Over 600 interactive exercises are linked to the text.
- Harnack, Andrew and Eugene Kleppinger. *Online! A Reference Guide to Using Internet Sources, 1998 edition*. St. Martin's Press. A pocket reference guide to using Internet sources with guidelines on choosing, evaluating, citing, and documenting Internet sources in MLA, APA, CBE, and Chicago styles.
- Rosen, Leonard. *Decisions: A Writer's Online Handbook, Version 1.0*. Allyn and Bacon. The Windows online version of *Decisions*. Available on disk and CD-ROM. Extensive hyperlinks allow users to easily and quickly find the information they need. Provides a connection to on-line resources and web addresses.
- Tuman, Myron C. and Ann Arbor Software. *Norton Connect.Net*. W. W. Norton. Combines a simple menu of options for sharing work over the Internet with Word for Windows. Ideal for distance learning.
- Vitanza, Victor J. *Writing for the World Wide Web*. Allyn and Bacon. Applicable for any course in any discipline where students are creating web pages, this text helps students make the transition from writing for a print to an electronic media. An accompanying web site is available.
- Wresch, William. *Writer's Helper, version 4.0*. Prentice Hall. Offers a unique collection of prewriting activities and revising tools to help students work through all stages of the writing process. Available for single copy purchase, classroom adoption, and site license. (IBM and Macintosh formats available.)

VIII. Research Paper Texts

- Ballenger, Bruce. *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. This text is organized into a five-week structure designed to overcome procrastination with weekly assignments. It includes more on choosing a topic, writing a thesis, and using the Internet.
- Hacker, Diana. *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*. Bedford Books. This handy, spiral-bound booklet covers everything students need for college research assignments at the library and on the Internet. (An online version is also available.)
- Veit, Richard. *Research: The Student's Guide to Writing Research Papers*, 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon. A combination research paper textbook and handbook. It includes sample papers to show the final goal of the process, and it covers other modes of research such as interviewing.

IX. Reading and Study Skills Texts

- Alexander, Jan and Jan Lombardi. *Joining a Community of Readers*. Longman Publishing. This thematic approach to reading instruction engages students' interest while covering essential reading and study skills. The text features critical thinking and vocabulary sections and provides ample skills practice through numerous activities.
- Allen, Sheila. *Reading and Understanding College Textbooks*. Harcourt Brace. This upper-level developmental reading text teaches the basic skills necessary to read and assimilate effectively information from college-level textbooks.
- Carter, Carol, Sarah Kravitz, and Joyce Bishop. *Keys to Effective Learning*. Prentice Hall. Focuses on developing effective learning techniques which will help students excel in school, in their careers, and as lifelong learners. Involves students in the active learning process and helps them develop confidence.
- Cortina, Joe and Janet Elder. *Opening Doors: Understanding College Reading*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill. Building strong comprehension skills applicable to all college disciplines, this new edition helps students "open doors" to academic success.
- Fjeldstad, Mary C. *The Thoughtful Reader*, 2nd ed. Harcourt Brace. This book is based on a psycholinguistic approach to reading which argues that students read poorly because they have not read, rather than they cannot read.
- Hancock, Ophelia H. *Reading Skills for College Students*, 4th ed. Prentice Hall. Designed to give students hands-on help to improve their vocabulary, comprehension, reading rate, and test-taking techniques, this text offers a variety of interesting, relevant readings from various sources.

- Johnson, Ben E. *The Reading Edge: Thirteen Ways To Build Reading Comprehension*, 3rd ed. Houghton Mifflin. A worktext aimed at developing and refining reading comprehension skills. This text is especially suited to students preparing for state proficiency exams.
- _____. *Stirring Up Thinking*. Houghton Mifflin. A practical and entertaining worktext which provides an introduction to twenty-one important critical thinking skills. It encourages students to learn by doing.
- Kanar, Carol. *Reading and Writing with Confidence*. Houghton Mifflin. A text designed for the integrated reading and writing course. It teaches skills, provides ample opportunities for application, and builds students' confidence.
- Langan, John. *Reading and Study Skills, Form A*, 6th ed. McGraw-Hill. This comprehensive worktext provides students with the essential reading and study skills that they need to become independent learners in college.
- Lenier, Minnette and Janet Maker. *Keys to College Success*, 4th ed. Prentice Hall. This text addresses important reading and study skills that students need for college success. It covers how to take effective notes, read more efficiently, memorize material, identify concepts, and ultimately do well on tests.
- McGrath, Jane. *Building Strategies for College Reading: A Text with Thematic Reader*, 2nd ed. Prentice Hall. This text approaches reading as a holistic, complex process rather than as a series of discrete tasks. It covers reading strategies and offers authentic college reading materials to provide student examples.
- McWhorter, Kathleen. *Academic Reading*, 3rd ed. Longman Publishing. Emphasizing metacognition, this text teaches students to adapt and modify reading comprehension techniques to suit different disciplines. It covers interpreting, organizing, and processing information from textbooks, notes, and sources.
- _____. *College Reading and Study Skills*, 4th ed. Longman Publishing. Emphasizing critical thinking, this text covers fundamental reading, vocabulary, and study skills. It encourages students to interact with textbooks by anticipating, predicting, reorganizing, and evaluating information.
- Nist, Sherrie and William Diehl. *Developing Textbook Thinking*, 4th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A content-based reading text. Features actual college textbook chapters to teach students practical strategies to use before, during, and after reading textbooks. Also covers strategies for studying and taking notes.
- Reynolds, Marianne C. *Vocabulary Connections, Book 1*. McGraw-Hill. The first book in a three-volume series devoted to building vocabulary. Designed to serve as a supplement to any developmental text or as a main text for vocabulary enrichment courses. Includes exercises and self-tests.

- ____. *Vocabulary Connections, Book 2*. McGraw-Hill. The second book in a three-volume series devoted to building vocabulary. Covers prefixes, suffixes, and roots and emphasizes learning vocabulary in context. Designed to serve as a supplement to any developmental text or as a main text for vocabulary enrichment courses.
- Ruggiero, Vincent. *The Art of Thinking: A Guide to Critical and Creative Thought*, 5th ed. Longman Publishing. This unique text presents a process for problem solving that involves searching for issues, expressing the problem, investigating the area, questioning bias, producing ideas, refining the solution, and presenting final thoughts.
- Smith, Lonna H. and Robert J. Ramonda. *Read, Write, React: An Integrated Approach to Reading and Writing*. McGraw-Hill. Designed for developmental reading courses and courses that integrate the teaching of reading and writing. Actively involves students in their own language development through a variety of readings and integrated writing activities.
- Smith, R. Kent. *Building Vocabulary for College*, 4th ed. Houghton Mifflin. A vocabulary worktext that provides students with successful strategies for learning words and practical activities for mastering their use.

X. Professional Texts

- Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, 2nd ed. Bedford Books. This guide offers writing center tutors suggestions and strategies to build their confidence and skill as they work with other students. Includes a new chapter on computers.

XI. Additional Texts

- Benjamin, Jules. *A Student's Guide to History*, 7th ed. Bedford Books. This guide to the discipline covers study skills, researching (including Internet research), and writing.
- Clark, Virginia P., Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa. *Language: Readings in Language and Culture*, 6th ed. St. Martin's Press. Provides a foundation in linguistic theory with readings that give personal, cultural, and political contexts for examining how language functions in our lives.
- Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 3rd ed. Longman Publishing. This brief writing guide covers six approaches to writing about film and discusses the terms used in film criticism to help students write thoughtful and well-formulated papers.
- Faulkner, Ann and Dana Stahl. *Reading Strategies for Nursing and Allied Health*. Houghton Mifflin. A reading text for students pursuing nursing and

related health professions. This unique text allows students to develop and practice their reading skills in the context of their anticipated profession.

Fromkin, Victoria A. and Robert D. Rodman. *An Introduction to Language*, 6th ed. Harcourt Brace. This text provides a comprehensive introduction to all major topics including morphology, syntax, phonetics, phonology, pragmatics, writing, and historical change.

Hansen, Kristine. *A Rhetoric for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Academic and Professional Communication*. Prentice Hall. This text provides social science majors a systematic way to write in their fields, and it shows them how to use the language of their fields to propose, report, and criticize research.

Oaks, Dallin D. *Linguistics at Work: A Reader of Applications*. Harcourt Brace. This reader takes a new approach to the study of linguistics by illustrating how linguistic theory affects change in the "real world." Readings focus on law, medicine, business, education, social policy, translation, and literary analysis.

Penrose, Ann M. and Steven B. Katz. *Writing in the Sciences: Exploring Conventions of Scientific Discourse*. St. Martin's Press. An innovative text for technical writing courses with large numbers of science majors, scientific writing courses, or for instructors seeking to integrate more writing into their science courses.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 2nd ed. Bedford Books. This supplement for history courses continues its thorough coverage of documenting sources to include new information about the Internet. Also offers abundant models for footnotes and bibliographic entries.

Note

1. Descriptions were provided by the respective publishers of the books and have been lightly edited for length and objectivity.

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Good-bye and Thanks

Chuck Schuster phoned on a Sunday night in February, 1994, fairly late. I'd just driven back from Chicago in the snow with a family friend, Stephanie, who had just landed from Lillehammer and the Olympic Games. Stephanie brought gifts, a set of crystal glasses with stylized etchings of the events she'd seen.

An Olympiad ago, I was still an associate professor, Christine Hult was still editing *WPA*, most of the names on the journal masthead were still only names to me, my daughter Monica was still in seventh grade, my son Andrew in fourth, my wife finishing a master's degree, and I imagined my life continuing as I'd always imagined it. I was honored to tell Chuck that I'd become the new editor of *WPA*.

In letters from the editor since then, I've indulged myself and taxed readers with bits from a personal life that has turned in ways I didn't imagine. This recent Easter, for example, we had more friends than place settings over for dinner, and I reached to the back of the cupboard for extra and seldom-used glasses. There was the Lillehammer crystal, though now a broken set, half of it gone through the divorce that refracted my professional life the past three years.

My main regret as editor of *WPA*, and this comes as apology, is that I wasn't able to give its writers and readers the kind of attention they deserved. I'm excited, then, by the plans that Marguerite Helmers and Dennis Lynch have been generating, and am confident that they'll be able to bring them off. My main lesson as editor, and I share it inadequately now, is that the personal can and should not be cleaved from the professional. Performing the right balance is perhaps the *WPA*'s toughest role. Collaborative work, as reflected by the pieces in this issue and by the new co-editorship, promises a way of getting it right.



I scanned volumes 18, 19, 20, and 21 for patterns in the 55 articles published in the journal over this time. 35 were single-authored, 20 co-authored. Of the single-authored articles, many more were written by women (25) than men (10). 35 were written by people affiliated with PhD granting institutions, 20 by people at other types of schools. 32 articles were written by tenured faculty or by groups that included a tenured faculty member; 23 were written by untenured faculty or graduate students. I'd sensed as editor that a high percentage of submissions came from women, and my rough counts bore this out. My theory, too long for explication here, is that for caretakers (in the best sense of this term) *WPA* is the place to send "their best work," as Christine Hult encouraged in her final Editor's Note.

Christine edited *WPA* for six years, Bill Smith five years before her, Ken Bruffee, the founding editor of the journal, everything before that. Four years ago Ken sent a nice congratulatory note about my first issue, casually mentioning

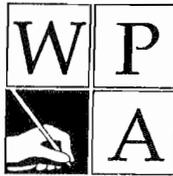
along the way that he was surprised by the cover's change from a red cover to yellow. How blithely, unwittingly, even callously I'd ignored tradition.



On behalf of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, I thank the English Department at Illinois State University for its support of this journal. I thank the Executive Committee and the members of the organization for trusting me with the editorship. I thank the readers on the Editorial Board, many of whom have transcended their referee's roles to become friends. One of them, Jeanne Gunner, did a splendid job guest editing this issue, and she's moving on to bigger editing efforts. Well done, Jeanne! I thank Eric Martin for his support, good humor, diligence, and friendship. Mostly, I thank Monica and Andrew and, since March, a new daughter Paige, and her mother, Becky, my wife.

—Doug Hesse

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Peter Blakemore writes and teaches at the University of Oregon, near the confluence of several large, western rivers, at the top of the Willamette Valley. He will finish his doctoral work on phenomenology and narratives of inhabitation this spring.

Sallyanne H. Fitzgerald is Division Dean for Language Arts at Chabot College, a San Francisco Bay Area community college. She has previous administrative and teaching experience at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Her publications and research have been in basic writing and writing centers, and her current writing interest is a proposed critical thinking textbook and an edited collection on mainstreaming basic writers, for which she is associate editor. She is presently the co-chair of the CCCC Special Interest Group in Basic Writing and a regional representative to the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges.

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Tere Molinder Hogue is a lecturer in IUPUI's English department. She coordinates the University Writing Center and has served on the Writing Coordinating Committee for 11 years.

Christine Hult is Professor of English and Associate Department Head at Utah State University. Her research interests include computers in writing and program and teacher evaluation, as reflected in recent publications including

Wired for Writing (forthcoming, Allyn & Bacon, 1998) and *Evaluating Teachers of Writing* (NCTE, 1994). She has published books and articles on a range of composition and administrative topics along with a series of WAC textbooks and is a former editor of this journal.

Katherine L. Keller (Kitty) is a PhD student at the University of Mississippi, studying rhetoric and composition, American literature, and Southern literature. Currently, she is the Assistant to the Director of the Writing Program. She has presented papers and workshops at several national conferences and co-edited *Writing About Identity in the South*, a Freshman English textbook.

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Eric Martin is Director of English and Writing Across the Curriculum at the University of Findlay. He is Associate Editor of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*.

Ben W. McClelland is a Professor of English and Holder of the Otilie Schillig Chair of English Composition at the University of Mississippi. He directs the University's comprehensive writing program, including the Freshman English Program, the Writing Center, and the Writing Project. Among his book publications are a freshman textbook, *The New American Rhetoric* (HarperCollins, 1993) and *Perspectives on Research and Scholarship in Composition* (co-edited with Timothy R. Donovan; MLA, 1985). He also contributed a chapter to *Twelve Readers Reading*, edited by Ronald Lunsford and Rick Straub (Random House, 1993), a chapter to *Writing Theory and Critical Theory* (ed. John Clifford and John Schilb; MLA, 1994), and a chapter co-authored with Barbara L. Cambridge, to *Resituating Writing: Constructing and Administering Writing Programs* (ed. Joseph Janangelo and Kristine Hansen, Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1995). Ben is a past president of the Council of Writing Program Administrators and past director of its Consultant-Evaluator Board.

Lynn Langer Meeks is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Prior to that she was the Language Arts Coordinator for the State of Idaho Department of Education and taught high school English in Scottsdale, Arizona. Current publications include "When World Views Collide: The Curriculum Explodes," which won an award for best essay of 1996 in *English Leadership Quarterly*. Her article "The Problem Graduate Instructor" (also co-authored with Christine Hult) is forthcoming in Linda Myer's NCTE collection *Administrative Problem Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers*.

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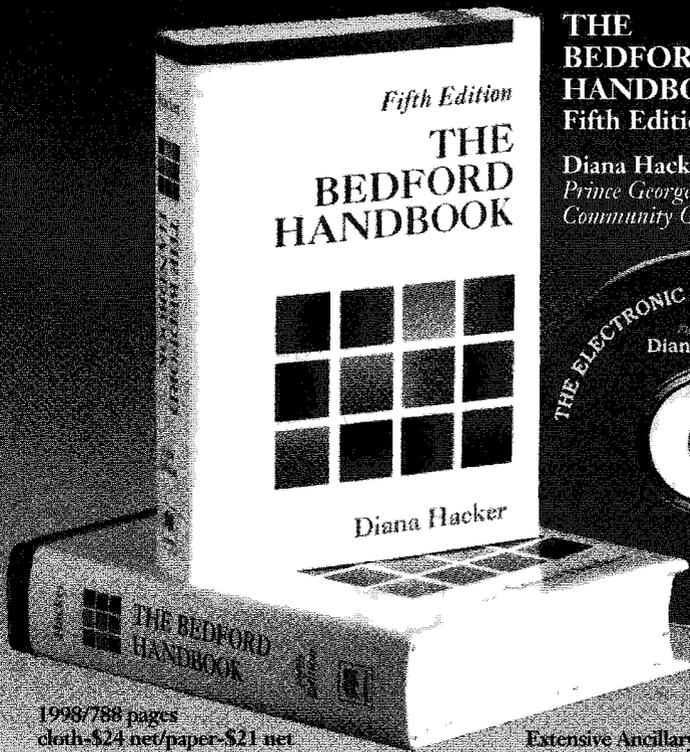
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