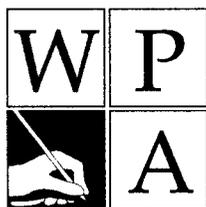


Writing Program Administration

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Writing Program Administration

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Council of Writing Program Administrators

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Authors' 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 and between writing and other academic 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 editors welcome empirical research (quantitative as well as qualitative), historical research, and theoretical, essayistic, or reflective pieces.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please prepare all manuscripts consistent with the following guidelines and include the cover sheet that follows. Doing so will facilitate anonymous, fair review and efficient handling of your work. Submissions that do not follow these guidelines or that are missing the cover page will be returned without review.

The length of submissions should be approximately 2000-5000 words, though occasionally longer articles will be accepted if the subject warrants. Format your article following the *MLA Style Manual*, 3rd edition.

Send your article as a regular Word document; if you have special formatting needs or are submitting for the online issues (to come soon), please consult the editors for advice. Use Times New Roman font, 12-point type. Add a running head with a short title and page numbering at the upper right corner.

Please check your manuscript carefully prior to submission to ensure that any and all comments have been deleted if the "track changes" function was used. Please clear the "properties" function so that your article is completely anonymous for the purpose of review.

Provide the following cover sheet information and abstract (see the journal's website, <http://wpacouncil.org/journal>, for a form for your convenience): title of the article, your name, date of submission, your email and regular mailing addresses, home and office telephone numbers, and an

abstract (200 words maximum). Editors will acknowledge receipt of articles and will strive to respond within 4-6 weeks from the date of submission.

Authors whose work is accepted for publication will be asked to submit final versions in both print and electronic form. Please double-check all citations. Tables should be saved in the program in which they were produced; authors should indicate program type in their correspondence with the editors. Images and line-art should be submitted as image files in uncompressed TIF or JPG format and as separate files, at 300 dpi or higher. Authors are responsible for seeking and securing permissions to use images that they did not create themselves. Authors will also be asked to submit a 100-word biography for inclusion in the "Contributors" section of the journal.

REVIEWS

WPA publishes reviews of books related to writing programs and their administration. Publishers are invited to send appropriate professional books to Ed White, 3045 W. Brenda Loop, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, who assigns reviews.

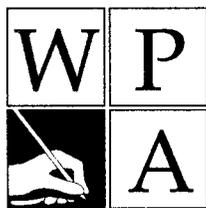
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CALLS

Relevant announcements and calls for papers will be published as space permits. Announcements should not exceed 500 words, and calls for proposals/participation should not exceed 1,000 words. Please include contact information and/or links for further information. Submission deadlines in calls should be no sooner than January 1 for the fall/winter issue and June 1 for the spring issue. Please e-mail your calls and announcements to journal@wpacouncil.org and include the text in both the body of the message and as an MS Word or RTF attachment.

ADDRESSES

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Writing
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Contents

From the (New) Editors.....	9
Consortia as Sites of Inquiry: Steps Toward a National Portrait of Writing Program Administration.....	13
Jill Gladstein, Lisa Lebduska, and Dara Rossman Regaignon	
Fellowship for the Ring: A Defense of Critical Administration in the Corporate University.....	37
Kelly Kinney	
Examining the Presence of Advocacy and Commercial Websites in Research Essays of First-Year Composition Students.....	49
Randall McClure	
Praxis and Allies: The WPA Board Game	75
Tom Sura, Jaclyn M. Wells, Megan Schoen, Cristyn Elder, and Dana Lynn Driscoll	
Composing in a Digital World: The Transition of a Writing Program and Its Faculty.....	89
Pamela Takayoshi and Brian Huot	
Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College: Ghosts in the Machine	120
Tim Taylor	

Review	140
Greene, Nicole Pepinster, and Patricia J. McAlexander, eds. <i>Basic Writing in America: The History of Nine College Programs</i>	
Susan Naomi Bernstein	
Review	144
Adler-Kassner, Linda. <i>The Activist WPA: Changing Stories about Writing and Writers</i>	
Doug Downs	
Review	150
Of Queen Bees and Queendoms: Fairy Tales, Resilience, and Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition	
Ballif, Michelle, Diane Davis, and Roxanne Mountford. <i>Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition</i>	
Kelly Kinney	
Contributors	155
Announcements	159

From the (New) Editors

We begin our tenure as the new editors of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* with an invitation: help us continue this journal's tradition of publishing work that represents the fullest range of thoughtful and rigorous research being done by and for WPAs. Send us your articles, consider writing reviews, share your ideas about how the journal might better serve its readers.

As we considered the kinds of articles we would like to publish, we developed a list of suggested topics that expresses our vision for the journal. We offer these topics as both representative and generative, including familiar, ongoing areas of inquiry and emerging areas of intellectual work in writing program administration. We look forward to contributions that address these topics:

- Writing Faculty Education, Training and Professional Development
- Writing Program Creation and Design
- The Development of Rhetoric and Writing Curricula
- Writing Assessment within Programmatic Contexts
- Advocacy and Institutional Critique and Change
- Writing Programs and Their Extra-Institutional Relationships with Writing's Publics
- Technology and the Delivery of Writing Instruction within Programmatic Contexts
- WPA and Writing Program Histories and Contexts
- WAC / ECAC / WID and their Intersections with Writing Programs
- The Theory and Philosophy of Writing Program Administration
- Issues of Professional Advancement and WPA Work

In addition to reconsidering the list of topics that will frame the kinds of contributions we encourage, we have identified two initiatives that we will implement as we begin our editorial term. First, Ed White, the new Book Review Editor, plans to review more books. Second, we will be exploring

ways to expand the journal into a digital environment, making content available online, exploring the use of tools to enable interactions among readers and between readers and authors, and developing ways for editors and readers to communicate more regularly. We will value your responses to these ideas and the sharing of your own ideas about how the journal can best serve readers.

OUR EDITORIAL TEAM

Although the journal's Web space <<http://wpacouncil.org/journal/index.html>> offers biographical sketches of each member of our team, we offer brief introductions here.

Managing Editor Alice Horning is Professor of Writing and Rhetoric/Linguistics at Oakland University, where she was the WPA for ten years. Debra Frank Dew is Associate Professor of English at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, where she directs the Writing Program. Glenn Blalock is Associate Professor of English at Our Lady of the Lake College in Baton Rouge, LA, where he directs the new campus-wide Engaged Learning through Writing initiative.

Our three assistant editors are faculty in Writing and Rhetoric at Oakland University. Greg Giberson has two years of experience as a WPA at Salisbury University. Lori Ostergaard served four years as assistant WPA at Illinois State University. Jim Nugent's background is in editing, print production, and technology. He established the copy flow and editorial policies for the *Community Literacy Journal*.

Donna Scheidt, who is completing her PhD in the English and Education Program at the University of Michigan, will manage advertising and announcements. Ed White will serve as Book Review Editor. His years of experience as a scholar, teacher, administrator, and head of the WPA Consultant Evaluator Service will be valuable in more ways than we can imagine now.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The present issue is a joint project. Outgoing editors Deirdre Pettipiece and Tim Ray developed and guided these articles and reviews through most of the editorial process. Members of the new team reviewed and copyedited this work for publication.

The articles in this issue address a variety of topics. Jill Gladstein and her colleagues examine the working situations of those who oversee writing programs in small, liberal arts colleges in "Consortia as Sites for Inquiry." Their report of their findings from survey research and open-ended con-

versations with those who work in these settings sheds much light on this distinctive type of WPA work.

Kelly Kinney's "Fellowship of the Ring" discusses the ways in which the often criticized corporate model for universities can be used by WPAs to improve the status of their faculty, especially those off the tenure track.

Randall McClure's "Examining the Presence of Advocacy" reports research he did under the auspices of a WPA Research Grant. His study of the ways students use and understand different types of websites offers important insights into the work we need to do with our library colleagues to improve students' critical and information literacy skills.

"Praxis & Allies: the WPA Board Game" is offered by a group from Purdue, and draws on their recent presentation at the WPA Conference. Tom Sura and his colleagues discuss the development of their innovative, award-winning board game. Their article explains how the game, which they designed to provide an interactive approach to training for prospective WPAs, articulates a specific vision about the nature of WPA work. The board game will be available for download on the WPA Council website in near future.

Examining the role of digital work, Pam Takayoshi and Brian Huot's study "Composing in a Digital World" reports survey research that examines the ways in which teaching in a digital environment is changing writing classes and writing programs. Their findings show the need for a deeper understanding of the impact and role of technology among teachers and program administrators.

Tim Taylor's "Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College: Ghosts in the Machine" reports on a survey of those who hold WPA positions at community colleges. Taylor reminds us that we know very little about WPA work in the two-year environment, and we need to know more.

Please visit with us at the upcoming annual conference in Minneapolis: We will be leading one scheduled session, we will be available at the WPA table as much as possible, and we will be attending sessions. Whether or not you talk with us in Minneapolis, please feel free to send article or review ideas, inquiries, or comments to our journal email address: journal@wpacouncil.org. We look forward to working with you as contributors and readers.

Finally, we thank Deirdre Pettipiece and Timothy Ray for their work during their term as co-editors, and for their generous assistance during this transition period. We are conscious of the excellent work that has been done by all of our editorial predecessors, and we acknowledge the vital role that *WPA: Writing Program Administration* plays in the advancement of writing program administration and its intellectual tradition.

Extending an invitation to join the Council of Writing Program Administrators

The Council of Writing Program Administrators offers a national network of scholarship and support for leaders of college and university writing programs.

Membership benefits include the following:

- A subscription to *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, a semi-annual refereed journal
- Invitations to the annual WPA Summer Workshops and Conferences
- Invitations to submit papers for sessions that WPA sponsors at MLA and CCCC
- Participation in the WPA Research Grant Program, which distributes several awards, ranging from \$1000 to \$2000
- Invitations to the annual WPA breakfast at CCCC and the annual WPA party at MLA
- Information about the WPA Consultant-Evaluator program

ANNUAL DUES

Members: \$30

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TO JOIN

Visit us online at <http://wpacouncil.org/membership> or send your name, address, email address, institutional affiliation, and dues to

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Consortia as Sites of Inquiry: Steps Toward a National Portrait of Writing Program Administration

Jill Gladstein, Lisa Lebduska, and Dara Rossman Regaignon

There can be a default assumption in conversations about writing program administration that it is synonymous with the work of administering a first-year composition program at a large and quite possibly public institution. Susan McLeod addresses this problem in her introduction to *Writing Program Administration*, explaining that she focuses on “the administration of first-year writing programs” because “this is still the most common kind of WPA work” (3–4). While McLeod’s book is a valuable resource, we would argue that there are many assumptions about relationships with faculty and with upper administration that do not translate neatly from a large to a small school.¹ In this article, we describe how and why we created a consortium of small selective private colleges—Small Liberal Arts College Writing Program Administrators, or SLAC-WPA—and what we learned about WPA work and WPA positions from an initial survey completed by 55 schools (see Appendix). In offering our resultant sketch of the small college WPA to the field as a whole, we hope that we will contribute to the larger project of building a more complete picture of WPA work and positions nationally and internationally. As a field, we need to demystify the work of WPAs, both to make such positions more accessible to graduate students and others new to this particular type of intellectual labor, and to provide a more transparent picture for those involved in evaluating the work of WPAs on campuses nationwide. Developing a more nuanced and diverse sense of how institutional context necessarily frames the work of the WPA is a crucial step in this process. While national pictures of writing instruction and writing program administration may be painted with a global brush—think of the work of Dan Melzer; the Writing Centers Research Project; McLeod and Shirley; and Thaiss—they may also be assembled from a collection of smaller images, cohorts that allow a multiplicity of perspectives.

Our understanding of writing program administration in the twenty-first century might then consist of such assemblages—data from the local in light of the global.

GETTING STARTED: LOCAL CONDITIONS

This project began, as many do, as a series of informal conversations (in our case, during the WPA conference in Arizona in 2007). Although we had known each other from our involvement in local and national organizations prior to the conference, the 2007 conference was the first time we seriously had discussed organizing a group of peer WPAs to engage SLAC-specific needs that did not seem addressed by national conversations. We realized that in order to advocate for our positions and our respective programs, we had to have a more complete understanding—a thick description, to use Geertz's term—of exactly who “we” are. We needed to establish a research context of peer institutions where we could gather data to inform ourselves and our institutions of the portrait of writing at SLAC schools, since this was something that we were unable to garner from other groups or our individual institutions.

While historians of the field discuss the role of small colleges as pioneers of writing-across-the curriculum and even as deeply influential forbears of major trends in writing pedagogy and program structure (Berthoff; Varnum), writing programs at small colleges can be marginalized from current conversations about WPA work.² Indeed, Carol Rutz notes in a 2006 article describing the development of the portfolio assessment program at Carleton College that “it is fair to ask why anyone should care how composition instruction is delivered at liberal arts colleges” (60), a question that both reflects and contributes to the isolation experienced by a small-college WPA. The small college Special Interest Group affiliated with CCCC and a small college writing e-list have helped to mitigate this isolation, and have also made it easier for us to develop and maintain conversations about the particular challenges and possibilities of writing instruction and program administration at small schools. As a result, small-college and -university writing specialists have begun to write our kind of institution “back into the institutional history of composition” (Delli Carpini 42).

In their introduction to the 2004 special issue of *Composition Studies* dedicated to “Composition in the Small College,” guest editors Paul Hanstedt and Tom Amorose contemplate the advantages of the small school environment, arguing that “the small number of students is seen as one of the school's strengths rather than as a weakness” (21). The ideal of “community,” so “nearly impossible at larger institutions” (Hanstedt and Amorose

22), is far more readily apparent on the small campus, creating a context that complements the values of rhetoric and composition in many ways. With a focus on undergraduates—who most likely reside on campus—and a faculty dedicated to teaching, the small liberal arts college creates an intimate learning environment. Faculty believe that “the way of knowing is grounded in the development of critical and analytical thinking, effective and persuasive communication, and active and ethical engagement” (Annapolis Group). This atmosphere enhances the opportunities for innovations to emerge in a grassroots fashion and to spread throughout the curriculum (see Jones 77).

Faculty from across the curriculum at small selective liberal arts colleges are frequently involved in teaching writing; in addition, these colleges routinely rely heavily on undergraduate writing tutors, who may function as peers supporting struggling writers or as co-learners engaged as writers or as designated writing fellows. This model of shared responsibility for writing instruction allows the small-school WPA to collaborate with many constituencies across campus. A small-school WPA will work closely with faculty in many departments—frequently faculty who may be her senior in terms of rank and years at the institution—as well as with the upper administration. Libby Falk Jones points out that “our smaller size makes it easier for us to understand the organizational structure—the players at all levels and their roles—and thus to effect visible change” (77). This access and understanding often means, as Amorose observes, that a small-school WPA is frequently if not routinely involved in “those junctures in the cultural life of the institution where issues or plans essential to how the institution defines itself are being considered” (95). The stories about writing and writing instruction that a WPA tells at such junctures can be deeply influential, re-framing curricular emphases and classroom practices for years to come (see Adler-Kassner 4). Our goal, with this project, was to discover the stories we needed to tell.

The challenge of identification and self-identification was unsurprisingly central to our project. Defining the “small” school, as Hanstedt and Amorose argue, is a vexing task because it encompasses a diversity of institutions. Rather than focusing exclusively on the size of the institution we defined ourselves according to two variables: size and selectivity. The tensions and contradictions embedded within both of these notions inform our programs and our work as WPAs.

“Selectivity” is as challenging a term to define as “small.” Michael Reder’s doctoral dissertation “Writing at the Small Liberal Arts College: Implications for Teaching and Learning” suggests one definition for “selectivity” by assembling a data set from 54 schools ranked in the top 50 of

the liberal arts colleges ranked by *US News and World Report* 2003–2005. However, because there are well-stated concerns about the methodology of those rankings (see Farkas), we decided against basing our cohort group exclusively on them. Recognizing that we would use our data to educate our individual administrations, we decided to build our SLAC-WPA consortium by drawing on the consortia to which our colleges already belonged (such as the Mellon 23, and the Consortium on High Achievement and Success). Our own administrations had, therefore, already defined our spheres of influence for us; we simply needed to tap the WPAs in those spheres. After conferring with our institutional researchers and other colleagues on our campuses, we created a preliminary list of 67 schools.³ “Selectivity” for each of these schools is a complicated term. On the one hand, each of our SLAC institutions is an organization gilded with affluence; many of our students come from families of economic means and privilege; many of the schools readily use the word “elite” to describe themselves; and endowments at some of these institutions are sizable. On the other hand, those endowments, however generous, are not necessarily devoted to composition, and *composition* as a scholarly field does not necessarily share the same status as other scholarly fields. Additionally, within the field of composition and rhetoric, SLAC schools do not have the same cultural capital as larger universities. Finally, while some of the SLAC schools (such as Amherst and Williams Colleges) have national reputations, others are less known outside of their geographic regions.

Jill Gladstein took the lead with our initial list and used websites to identify and contact the WPA/Writing Center Director (WCD) at each school. In many instances, web information about schools’ writing programs was surprisingly difficult to find—a casualty, perhaps, of a small-school tendency to look inward, as well as a lack of pressure to make private worlds public. Jill invited each WPA to join a small-school conversation by attending an inaugural meeting at Swarthmore College in January, 2008. The goal of the meeting was to initiate dialogues among selective small school WPAs and writing center directors around issues that were relevant to them. Using a grounded theory approach (see Strauss and Corbin), we did not assemble this group or the subsequent research with specific questions in mind; we sought simply to get a clearer picture of who we were and what our programs looked like.

These website searches led us to conclude that having a fuller understanding of who *we* were before the meeting would help us to shape the meeting itself, so we designed a survey in preparation for the gathering that asked questions about writing requirements; support for multi-lingual writers; support for underprepared writers; structure and staffing for the writ-

ing program and writing center; and job title and administrative responsibilities of the WPA.⁴ We also asked respondents to describe any elements of their writing programs that they wished to emphasize. The profiles that emerged from the survey data have allowed us to identify trends in how writing is taught and supported at this small group of peer institutions.⁵ Our sampling method is admittedly somewhat self-selective in that schools that did not respond to our call or did not seem to have a publically identifiable WPA were not surveyed. Our sample, then, consists of SLACs that have in some way begun to identify with composition, even if it is only to name a position or designate someone who is responsible for writing-related matters.

These data are far from exhaustive, but from the picture that emerges we can identify areas and issues for future discussion and research. For the purposes of this article we have focused on three areas: the nature of the WPA/WCD position itself, the existence and structure of writing requirements, and staffing and administration of the writing program. It is important to note that we have focused exclusively on “academic writing,” and have not included creative writing (typically an emphasis within the English department at SLACs) or the less common journalism or professional/technical writing.

SLAC WPAs: DEFINITION AND STATUS

Although the position of writing program administrator needs continuous defining, articulating, and, some would argue, shepherding at any institution, at the small selective college the position may be especially amorphous. Small colleges typically eschew complex administrative structures; often there is a great deal of pride in a relatively flattened hierarchy. Faculty tend to participate extensively in curricular issues, and administration may be associated with structures or individuals that threaten to distance faculty from that curriculum. Within this context, it is easy to imagine that the notion of a writing program administrator—both as a term and as a defined position—has not gained easy acceptance. Additionally, at a small school, many of the responsibilities associated with the work of a WPA may be shared among several individuals, rendering the work itself less visible and more difficult to codify than work that is formalized under a named position.

The precise configuration of the full-time WPA workforce varies widely across and within the SLACs we surveyed. Fifty-one of the 55 schools have (or soon will have) at least one full-time person overseeing the “writing program,” and 28 out of 55 have multiple full-time positions related directly to

the administering of the writing program. Four of the schools have multiple tenure-line positions that have responsibility over a segment of the writing program, whereas four schools have only a part-time faculty or staff person assigned as the WPA.

Table 1 illustrates the job classification of the WPA position at different schools. Of the 28 schools with multiple positions, 13 schools have at least one WPA/WCD on a tenure line. For the sake of clarity, the data point for each school represents the WPA/WCD with the highest academic rank. For example, at one school, the director of the writing and rhetoric program is on a tenure line, but her colleague who directs the writing center is classified as staff. Table 1 captures the existence of that tenure-line position and recognizes that this individual does not work alone by placing the school in the category of schools with programs administered by more than one individual. It is worth noting that several SLACs are in the process of converting WPA positions into tenure lines or creating new tenure-line WPA positions, and that there is a trend toward formalizing the responsibilities in one or more positions.

Table 1: Classification of SLAC WPAs

	WPA position is classified as tenure-line faculty	WPA position is classified as non-tenure-line faculty	WPA position is classified as <i>both</i> faculty and staff	WPA position is classified as staff only	Total
More than one full-time person administers program	13	5*	5*	5	28
One full-time person administers program	8	3* (FT) 1 (PT)	8 (FT)* 2 (PT)	4 (FT) 1 (PT)	27
Total	21	9	15	10	55

*At least one school was negotiating a change to a tenure-line position as of August, 2008.

As we expand our data set and continue our analysis, we plan to look more closely at the different academic ranks of the WPA position both within and across institutions in order to gain a better understanding of

how SLACs define the WPA position. What does it mean for a writing program director to be on a tenure line? Do tenure lines somewhat depend on the ability to situate a position within a department? If the program has multiple facets, who administers each one and what is the academic rank of each WPA? Does a higher academic rank lead to more or different responsibilities? What is the relationship between the job classification of the WPA and the institutional home of the writing program?

Because there has not yet been a comprehensive study of how WPA positions are configured nationwide, we do not yet know how the data in Table 1 compare nationally and across institutional types; however, if consortia conduct similar research projects as we have with SLAC-WPA, we will begin to develop a national picture of the WPA position.

SLAC WPAs: RESPONSIBILITIES

Many SLACs initiated first-year writing or writing-across-the-curriculum programs through the efforts of individual faculty in the 1970s or '80s (see Reder 27–28). Supervision of those programs then either became a rotating institutional service responsibility or (less frequently) the *de facto* domain of a single individual. As these individuals retire, the schools face major transitions that coincide with the growth and recognition of rhetoric and composition as a scholarly field. In many cases, these transitions are therefore becoming moments of true reinvention, where the implicit centrality of writing to a liberal arts education is being made explicit through the reallocation of resources. (As we note above, several institutions are currently considering the conversion of non-tenure-line faculty or staff WPA positions to tenure-line positions.) This change is happening not only because of internal transitions, such as retirements, but also because, nationwide, selective institutions are now under increased pressure to provide continuity and coherence in their required courses, to demonstrate thoughtful, nuanced mechanisms for writing placement and support, and to demonstrate the “value added” by a private education.⁶ By creating a well-supported, formal WPA position, a college can simultaneously demonstrate its commitment to writing to its stakeholders and can offer itself the promise of an expert in the field to support and guide its faculty.

This history, as well as these current conditions, make it unsurprising that SLAC WPAs wear many hats and that their work is unusually difficult to codify. As Table 2 shows, 22 individuals described themselves as primarily responsible for the writing center, but the responsibilities of 17 respondents are impossible to compartmentalize; they, themselves, are “all things writing” on their campuses.

Table 2: Primary Job Responsibilities for SLAC WPAs

Writing Center Only	22
All Things Writing	17
Writing Program Only	7
Other	5
Writing Center + Writing Fellows	3
Writing Fellows Only	1

The data for this table posed particular challenges; we extrapolated this information from the responses to the questions about job title and responsibilities, but there is some indication that the respondents interpret their positions and responsibilities in somewhat different terms. As we delved into related questions at the 2008 January meeting, it became increasingly clear that WPA positions are strikingly amorphous. Positioned at critical junctures of the institution, and as stewards of one of the foundations of a liberal arts education, SLAC WPAs can find their responsibilities constantly increasing. This challenge is exacerbated by the high value SLACs place on faculty service, and the high expectation that all faculty and staff are deeply involved in the college community. At our meeting in January, 2009, the SLAC-WPA Steering Committee will devote one workshop session to discussing job responsibilities and job descriptions in more detail; this is one area where face-to-face conversation provides a richer picture than survey data can. We also feel that sharing this kind of information can help us work for better support and working conditions for SLAC WPAs.

A ROSE BY MANY NAMES

The simple designation of a WPA, then, can be an important step for a SLAC toward formalizing the importance it (implicitly) places on writing. A writing requirement is a similar moment. Required courses, to a certain extent, seem antithetical to the liberal arts mission, which is predicated on encouraging students to sample knowledge broadly in their explorations of self and the world at large. Additionally, many of these colleges emphasize a commitment to lifelong learning, whereas complex systems of general education and universal requirements can suggest a check box approach—implying, for example, that students' education in writing has ended once they complete a designated course. Moreover, institutions that identify themselves as selective can believe that a *required* writing course suggests that the school accepts students who are in some way underprepared. If, for

example, the first-year writing requirement identifies its mission as preparing students to write for their other college courses, does that imply that the school admits students who are in some way not prepared to write in their other classes?

Writing requirements, as researchers have long pointed out, also bring with them a host of challenges, not the least of which are resource-related (see, for example, Moghtader et al.; Trimbur). While some research institutions are more likely to have dedicated writing positions and/or graduate students, SLACs instead typically rely on a combination of non-composition tenure-line faculty, adjuncts, and other non-tenure-line faculty labor (such as lecturers). Given that SLACs pride themselves on small student-faculty ratios and direct faculty involvement with students, the staffing challenges posed by required courses are particularly vexing. Without a freestanding writing program, the SLAC reliance on and preference for full-time faculty means that required writing courses take faculty away from their teaching in the major. Simply put, every required writing class that is taught means one less that is taught in an institutionally recognized department. And, while writing requirements at many large institutions might provide revenue in the form of graduate students, the writing requirements at SLACs do not offer any additional monies. Incentives to departments that participate in such requirements may be far less direct and may include added tenure lines (in instances in which every member of a particular department teaches the required course) or greater influence on the requirements themselves and/or resources such as writing centers. Many departments or individual faculty members participate in the writing program to be good citizens of the college.

These structural obstacles to creating writing requirements at SLACs actually underscore the importance of writing to the SLAC educational mission: despite the challenges, 43 of the 55 respondents (approximately 78 percent) reported that their colleges do indeed have a writing requirement in some form. From there, however, approaches diverged significantly, as did terminology. "First-Year Seminar" was the term most frequently used to designate a required writing or writing-intensive course. The choice of "seminar" may be a way to distance that curriculum from the traditional associations with "composition" or even "writing"; it is equally plausible that the preference for "seminar" offers more opportunity for locating a course across the curriculum and within the discussion/reading emphasis on which the liberal arts have traditionally been centered.

Courses involving writing included "writing-intensive," "writing-attentive," "writing-enhanced," "writing-centered," "writing-designated," and "writing-rich." Because our survey did not ask respondents to define their

terms (a place for future study), it is not clear precisely what these courses entail—whether they include explicit writing instruction, whether they use writing mainly as a way to enhance learning, or whether they simply require a specific amount of writing and/or revision. What is clear, however, is that the majority of these schools have some sort of writing requirement in the first year and at least two additional writing courses at later points in students' careers.

Table 3 shows the writing requirements at the different schools. The three most common models are: 1) writing-intensive first-year seminar (FYWS); 2) writing-intensive courses across the curriculum; or 3) a combination of a FYWS or first-year composition (FYC) with writing-intensive courses. The majority of schools emphasize writing in the first year: 31 of the 43 schools focus at least part of their writing requirement on the first year and of the 12 schools that reported no requirement, 7 mentioned having a required first-year seminar or first-year experience course where a focus on writing is strongly encouraged if not explicitly required. Even with an apparent focus on the first year, however, it is clear that many schools view writing development as more than a one-semester event.

Table 3: Writing Requirements at SLAC Schools

Writing-Intensive First-Year Seminar (FYWS)	11 schools
Writing-Intensive Courses [only]	7 schools
FYWS/FYC + Writing-Intensive Courses	14 schools
First-Year Composition (FYC)	7 schools
Portfolio	3 schools
Other	1 school
No Requirement	12 schools

The specific responses ranged from one institution that requires two foundational WAC courses, an additional five WAC-designated courses, and a senior writing experience to an institution that does not have a writing requirement but does require students with lower SATs to take a course. Three of the schools did not have a required writing course but instead had established a certain level of proficiency that students had to demonstrate through the submission of a writing portfolio.

Across all of these models is the attempt to have students focus on their writing development over the course of four years and to provide courses and support systems such as writing centers to support this development.

(Of the 55 respondents, only one school has little more than a writing center run by a part-time director.) The data suggest that SLACs feel strongly enough about the development of their students' writing to have a writing requirement, but there is less consensus as to how a school might help students fulfill that requirement and, as a result, who has stewardship of writing. Indeed, the simple fact of a requirement's presence or absence is not necessarily a straightforward indicator of the institution's relationship to writing. A culture of writing can be seen through other aspects of the curriculum: 40 schools reported having a WAC program,⁷ all 55 schools have a writing center or a learning center with writing tutors,⁸ and 25 schools have a course-based peer tutor or "writing fellows" program. Some schools have recently begun to require that students take a specified number of writing-intensive courses throughout the curriculum and over the course of four years. At several institutions, the very informality of their WAC programs is part of what ties writing to the school's mission; the absence of formally-designated writing courses, it can be argued, means that writing is a core piece of the liberal arts education that these schools proudly and rigorously offer throughout the curriculum.

WHO "OWNS" WRITING?

The very informality that characterizes SLACs can pose considerable challenges for the WPA. In several questions on the survey, individual respondents expressed frustration with the ways in which the implicit nature of their programs makes their job more difficult: in one case, the WPA described what she perceived to be their writing program, only to add that "WAC isn't really called WAC"; another respondent noted, "we'd benefit from a unified vision and plan that would bring together disparate elements/players offering writing support across campus"; and a third observed wryly, "We haven't had an official writing program for over ten years." These tensions are those that WPAs at small liberal arts colleges face: while institutional ethos and scale may make it easy for them to bring writing to the center of many conversations, to advocate for best practices, and to serve as a translator of our field to the local context (see Delli Carpini 42), the preference for implicit rather than explicit values, procedures, and norms can make it challenging to build and maintain *structures* that will foster a true college-wide culture of writing.

One of the promises SLACs make to prospective students is that they will be taught almost exclusively by tenure-line faculty, including very senior faculty, from their first semester onward. This commitment carries over to writing instruction and marks one of the most dramatic differences

between how writing instruction is delivered at SLACs and how it is delivered at larger institutions. Rather than traditional first-year composition programs, staffed by dedicated (non-tenure-line) lecturers, graduate student T.A.s, or adjuncts, SLACs typically disperse responsibility for writing instruction across the institution. As Table 4 shows, 36 of the 55 schools use tenure-line faculty to deliver first-year writing instruction. It is rare for either dedicated writing faculty or English department faculty to be solely responsible for delivering writing instruction. Only one school reported using adjunct faculty exclusively to teach writing. Overall, writing instruction is typically provided by a combination of writing and/or English faculty, faculty from across the college, and a handful of adjuncts. (Our current data do not provide specific information about the percentage of each group at each school. In follow-up surveys we plan to pursue this question, as well as to acquire more information about the departmental distribution of the tenured and tenure-track faculty who regularly teach FYWS or writing-intensive courses.)

Table 4: Staff Teaching First-Year Writing

Full-Time Departmental Faculty	36 schools
Adjuncts	27 schools
Full-Time Writing Faculty	11 schools
Other	1 school

In addition to the commitment to undergraduate education and the resources to make sure that that education is provided, for the most part, by tenure-line faculty, SLACs are deeply committed to the notion that undergraduate students are already junior or apprentice scholars. Recognizing this assumption further explains the integration of writing into the curriculum broadly through WAC programs. Because undergraduates are involved in faculty research and faculty (particularly in the natural and social sciences) routinely co-author papers with undergraduates, there is a deep commitment to helping students learn the specific expectations of the different genres of academic writing. The dispersed nature of this responsibility for writing instruction is both an advantage and a challenge. While it can make for a sense of institution-wide enterprise around the teaching of writing, facilitating interdisciplinary conversations about pedagogy, writing, and academic work more generally, it can also be difficult to administer and assess such a diffuse structure. What does faculty development look like when the faculty come from seventeen different departments and all ranks? What does program assessment look like when students don't all ful-

fill the requirement in the same way? In many ways, SLAC WPAs have the strongest affinities with WAC administrators and writing center directors, but the nature of our requirements and our programs mean that we are—*de facto* but also often *de jure*—the writing program administrators, the individuals responsible for creating and maintaining programmatic coherence within the structure of a loose and ever-shifting confederacy.

FROM SKETCHES TO STORIES

Our purpose here has been to provide a preliminary sketch of the WPA position at a set of small selective private liberal arts colleges. As we've noted, there are numerous questions that remain, and as we expand the membership of SLAC-WPA we plan not only to ask our questions of a larger group of comparably-sized schools but also to refine and augment our initial questions to fill in some of the gaps we have noted here. This larger and more heterogeneous data set also will allow us to ask more wide-ranging questions: does selectivity make a difference in how schools structure writing requirements, writing instruction, and WPA jobs? Are these considerations imagined differently at schools of fewer than three thousand students and those with more than that? Because SLAC-WPA is a national group, we will also be able to explore possible affinities between schools with a historical sense of connection (Pomona's founder expressly modeled it on Amherst and Williams; the so-called "Seven Sisters" may well have a historically-rooted habit of sharing information), and schools that are clustered geographically and, as a result, find themselves in closer and more regular conversation. In addition, as we proceed in using the data from this group on our home campuses, we will be able to describe in more detail the ways that this consortium can help WPAs work for change. (For example, one of the authors of this article was able to use early SLAC-WPA data to advocate successfully for the creation of a WCD position.)

We also hope that this is a first step in building a layered portrait of WPA positions nationwide. As we have noted, surveys of WPA positions have tended to be large-scale research projects conducted by one or two people. While such projects are invaluable, research conducted by cohort groups of institutions may provide for greater detail and more complex understanding. It will also help cultivate the notion, *pace* Rose and Weiser, of the WPA as inquirer. Brought into dialogue with others, the WPA is perhaps more likely to engage in the reflective practice so crucial to the creation of fresh, responsive and responsible writing program administration.

By combining our process of inquiry with the process of building a consortium of similar institutions, we are advocating for change on two

fronts: at the local level of our own institutions, we are connecting administration to larger conversations about the diversity of ways in which writing instruction is and can be delivered; at the national level, we are building a more diverse and comprehensive picture of writing programs in the scholarly record. In an analysis of a passage from Robert Coles' *The Call of Stories* early in *Activist WPA*, Linda Adler-Kassner discusses how Coles "moves between explanations of the power of personally grounded stories for individuals (himself, his patients) and the ways in which those stories, when seen as a collective body, testified and gave witness to a larger one that had gone relatively unexplored" (4). "Stories," she points out in conclusion, "build cumulatively to form larger narratives" (4). It is our hope that the sketch we provide in this essay will help stories about writing instruction at small colleges accumulate and that, as a result, this picture will help to change—to re-frame—how we understand WPA work at small schools and how, as a consequence, we understand the diversity of WPA work. We also hope that our story about the usefulness of such research in re-framing local conversations about writing, writing instruction, and writing program administration will inspire others to undertake similar projects so that we can build the stories from individual consortia into a national self-portrait of writing program administration.

NOTES

Our thanks to Mary deBoer, the 2007–2008 intern for Swarthmore's Writing Associates Program, for her efforts tracking down various SLAC WPAs, as well as for her extensive work at making the initial meeting of SLAC-WPA a success; our audience at the 2008 WPA conference in Denver, CO; and Carol Rutz, Jessica Swienkowski, and our anonymous WPA readers, for their feedback on earlier drafts.

1. Amorose addresses the related assumption that because "large programs are the norm . . . their practices are therefore normal" (99); he argues that the exclusion of small schools from the national conversations about writing instruction and program administration has "resulted in the over-valorizing of power as a tool for the WPA" and, as a consequence, has installed an "inexact description of the concept of WPA power in the record" (87); see also Ianetta et al., and Jones. Fremo argues that graduate courses in writing program administration fail to prepare their students for work in a small school context.

2. On the origin of WAC at small schools, see Reder 26–27 and Rutz et al. 8–9. Robin Varnum develops the argument that the pedagogy and programmatic structure of English 1–2 (a required first-year writing course at Amherst College from 1947 through 1969) foreshadowed many of the "innovations" in composition in the 1970s. Varnum, Ann Berthoff, and John Brereton ("Symposium")

all contend that the “Amherst Mafia” (Berthoff 72) significantly influenced the development of our field; see also Horner. For more general studies of writing programs in the first half of the twentieth century and the role of elite small colleges in the development of the field, see also Breerton, *Origins*; Donahue and Moon; and Kitzhaber. There has also been significant scholarly work on writing programs at institutions such as Mount Holyoke, Smith, Vassar, Wellesley, and Bryn Mawr Colleges as part of larger projects to identify women’s contributions to the history of rhetoric and composition; see, for example, Bordelon; Campbell (“Freshman” and “Women’s Work”); George; Mastrangelo; Mastrangelo and L’Eplattenier; and Spring. Mastrangelo and L’Eplattenier provide a fascinating glimpse into the workings of an early consortium of writing program administrators from small colleges in their discussion of the meetings of “writing faculty from Mount Holyoke College, Wellesley College, Vassar College, and Smith College” from 1919 to 1922 (118). While these archival projects restore small schools to their place in the historical record, they do not address the comparative absence of such institutions from conversations about writing instruction and writing program administration since the 1970s. Rutz’s work is a notable exception to this; see also Gladstein; Lebduska’s section in Ianetta et al., and Simpson and Carroll.

3. Twelve schools were dropped from the original list of 67 because we couldn’t identify a WPA or because the apparent WPA didn’t respond to repeated inquiries. Initially we wanted to keep the project manageable so we shied away from larger consortia such as The Annapolis Group (see <http://www.collegenews.org/theannapolisgroup.xml>) or all of the baccalaureate institutions participating in The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (see <http://www.e-heds.org/>). In August 2008, we redefined our membership through these two groups since our presidents and institutional researchers use these two consortia for comparable data on other campus matters. The total number of invited institutions was brought to 134.

4. It is worth noting the difficulty and importance of delineating writing program administrator/writing center director positions, and also to underscore—as do Ianetta et al.—that local context is essential to understanding the programmatic and personnel structure best suited to foster a college-wide culture of writing. At SLACs, writing center directors often *are* WPAs.

5. All participants have full access to the results of the survey once they have completed it. Although the members of SLAC-WPA have given one another permission to share school-specific information with their home institutions for purposes of comparison and advocacy, we do not have permission to identify individual schools here.

6. By and large, SLACs are learning about assessment much later than public institutions have. Historically, SLACs have relied on rankings by private organizations (such as *US News*) and reaccreditation by the regional accrediting agencies (such as the Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC] and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges [NEASC]) and have had a

minimal culture of assessment. Leading institutions of higher education have now made this difficult, to put it mildly. Pressure comes not just from the Spellings Commission and the Department of Education but also from organizations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities, Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Teagle Foundation; there is a general call for a reform in liberal education that includes, among other things, “a culture of evidence based on assessment and accountability” (American Association of Colleges and Universities). See Rutz and Lauer-Glebov for the challenges and possibilities in building a culture of assessment at a liberal arts college. Although we included assessment in our survey, that issue lies beyond the scope of this article.

7. Many respondents mentioned that *they* believed they had a WAC program but that others on their campus did not recognize this terminology.

8. The one school without a center has a curriculum based on the tutorial model of instruction, so the writing coordinator herself serves as the writing center by offering one-on-one tutorials for those students requesting extra assistance with their writing.

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APPENDIX

List of schools in the SLAC-WPA consortium as of 8/1/08

Agnes Scott College
Amherst College
Bard College
Barnard College
Bates College
Beloit College
Bowdoin College
Bryn Mawr College
Bucknell University
Carleton College
Colgate University
College of Holy Cross
College of Wooster
Colorado College
Connecticut College
Davidson College
Denison University
Dickinson College
Earlham College
Franklin & Marshall College
Grinnell College
Gustavus Adolphus College
Hamilton College
Hampshire College
Harvey Mudd College
Haverford College
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Illinois Wesleyan University
Kenyon College
Lafayette College
Mount Holyoke College
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Rhodes College
St. Lawrence University

St. Olaf College
Sarah Lawrence College
Scripps College
Skidmore College
Smith College
Southwestern University
Spelman College
Swarthmore College
Trinity College
Union College
University of the South
Vassar College
Washington and Lee University
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University
Wheaton College
Willamette University
Williams College

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Demographics

1. Please tell us the name of your home institution:
2. Please tell us:
 Your name
 Your position title
3. Your preferred email address:
4. Your program's website:

Your Position

5. To whom is your Writing Program accountable? Under what department/which individual's purview?
 The Dean of:
 The Department of:
 The Administrator of:
 Other:
6. Is your position classified as faculty and/or staff?
7. Is your position a tenure-line position?
8. Do you work:
 Full-time

Full-time but only part-time as a WPA
Part-time

9. What are your job's responsibilities?

Program Staffing

10. Do you have any staff or faculty members to assist you in running your program?

11. How many?

12. What responsibilities does each staff member have?

13. Are your staff/faculty assistants full-time positions?

14. Are the duties of your staff/faculty assistants exclusive to the Writing Program?

Composition of your Writing Program

15. Does your institution have a writing requirement? Please Explain.

16. Does your writing program consist of: (Please check all that apply.)

WAC

First year writing

Writing Center

Writing Fellows

Other (please specify)

First year writing

17. If you have a first year writing program, please briefly describe it. Is it a traditional first year composition program, interdisciplinary, topic-based, etc.?

18. Are sections of FYC staffed by: (Please check all that apply.)

Full-time writing program faculty?

Full-time departmental faculty?

Adjuncts?

Other (please specify)

19. What is the enrollment cap for sections?

12

15

18

Other (please specify)

Writing Center

20. Does your institution have a writing center or a learning center with writing tutors?

21. Is the writing center free-standing or part of a larger institutional unit?
22. Where is the writing or learning center located?
 - Academic building
 - Library
 - Own building
 - Dorm
 - Other (please specify)
23. How large is your staff of WC tutors?
24. Are your tutors:
 - Undergraduates
 - Graduate students
 - Professionals
 - Other (please specify)
25. What are they called?
26. How are they paid?
 - Semester stipend
 - Hourly wage
 - Other (please specify)
27. How are they trained?
28. Do they receive course credit or money for training?
29. How frequently do they have meetings?
 - Once per year
 - Once per semester
 - Twice per semester
 - Monthly
 - Twice-per-month
 - Weekly
 - Other (please specify)
30. What kind of reports do tutors file about their sessions with students?
31. What kind of data about WC appointments do you collect? (Please check all that apply.)
 - Appointments made
 - Appointments kept
 - Appointments canceled
 - By discipline
 - By course
32. Does your WC provide online tutoring?

Writing Fellows

33. Does your program have a writing fellows program?
34. Do your writing fellows work both as fellows and in the writing center or are fellows and writing center employees two separate groups?
35. What kinds of courses do WFs typically work with at your institution?
(Please check all that apply.)
- First year composition
 - First year seminars
 - Introductory courses
 - Courses throughout the curriculum
36. Where do you place most of your WFs?
- First year composition
 - First year seminars
 - Introductory courses
 - Courses throughout the curriculum
37. Do you hire fellows to work with a particular course? Do you require the fellow to have specific, disciplinary knowledge?
38. How are your writing fellows trained?

Faculty Development

39. Are you responsible for faculty development?
40. Please describe your faculty development program.

Assessment

41. Are you responsible for the assessment of any aspect of the writing program?
42. What efforts around writing assessment are taking place at your institution?

Working with Diverse Writers

43. How do you identify underprepared writers? (Check all that apply)
- SAT scores
 - Placement exam
 - Faculty recommendation
 - Student advisor
 - Student self identifies
 - Other (please specify)
44. Are they required to take a first semester writing course?

45. How does your program support underprepared students? (check all that apply)

- required course
- summer bridge program
- self selection into a writing course
- peer mentor
- professional mentor
- workshops
- Other (please specify)

46. Do you have resources for students whose primary language is not English? Please explain.

47. How do you address the needs of students with disabilities?

Overall

48. What do you consider the highlights of your writing program?

49. Are you satisfied with the current state of your institution's writing program? What would you change/keep the same?



Fellowship for the Ring: A Defense of Critical Administration in the Corporate University

Kelly Kinney

The debate goes something like this. In corner one, critics argue that by creating full-time, non-tenure-track positions, writing program administrators are mimicking corporate tactics to build an Empire of Composition, a place where a few superstars win accolades and status, and the rest wallow in the pedagogical trenches. In corner two, WPAs push for equitable working conditions for the disproportionate segment of composition's labor pool paid part-time wages for full-time work. The conflict over non-tenure-track appointments has been escalating since the beginning of the decade: like the flame-throwing over the place of politics in the classroom we saw during the 1990s¹, the great debate of the '00s is the degree to which writing program administrators are complicit in the McJobbing of the University.

James Sledd and Joseph Harris wage this textual fistfight in the September 2001 issue of *College Composition and Communication* (CCC). The year previous, in "Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss: Class Consciousness in Composition," Harris argued that "rather than persisting in fantasies of escaping [a two-tier, second-class faculty] system" (51), we recognize that we "already have a third- or fourth-class faculty in place," and thus "should attempt to do better by [our non-tenure-track] colleagues" (66). While Harris spends some of his argument describing how the interests of many instructors are undermined by an obsession with tenure lines, at the heart of his piece is economic compromise: because inherited circumstances require most writing programs to staff courses with non-tenure-track faculty, WPAs should fight for a mitigated form of tenure for the non-tenure-track—that is, WPAs should strive to develop positions that afford instructors full-time status, equitable salary and benefits, and job security.

In the most on-the-nose commentary I've read since Maxine Hairston and John Trimbur duked it out over politics a decade before, Sledd

responds directly to Harris, characterizing WPAs—especially luminaries like Harris—as self-serving corporate climbers. As Sledd writes in “On Buying In and Selling Out: A Note for Bosses Old and New,” such luminaries are “the good professionals who accept the system uncritically, push hard for their own status and privilege, yet genuinely believe that they are liberators, empowerers, transformative intellectuals. They pave hell” (146). The wrath conveyed in Sledd’s writing, no doubt, comes both from his disdain for a multi-tiered faculty hierarchy and his belief that WPA-superstars have built their success on the backs of exploited labor—specifically, adjunct labor. The function of WPAs is not to resist labor exploitation, Sledd suggests, but to obey university administrators, revenue-driven bureaucrats who “want cheap labor and flexibility—and the chance to treat teachers like disposable diapers” (“Disciplinary” paragraph 24). Clearly, Sledd is distrustful of administrative bosses of any stripe, and highly suspicious of their intentions.

While rhetoric and composition lost a leader when it lost Sledd, and while I will miss his intelligent, pull-no-punches prose, this essay functions—at least in part—to reexamine his criticisms. Although I too find it reprehensible that some composition instructors are handled like polluted Pampers, the full-time, non-tenure-track positions Harris proposes in his essay—and those similarly developed in writing programs across the nation—have led not to the increased exploitation of composition instructors, but to exactly the opposite. In this essay, I draw on my work in the Department of Writing at Grand Valley State University, describing how the full-time non-tenure-track positions developed there helped me and others overcome the challenges many non-tenure track writing instructors face. In the pages that follow, I explore the problems of the budding professoriate, and describe how WPAs can work within corporate strictures to create more equitable working conditions for writing instructors reaching for the tenure-track, as well as for those who are not. Along the way, I examine current criticism waged against management models of writing program administration and argue that, although always influenced by institutional constraints, WPAs can be powerful advocates for traditionally exploited writing instructors.

PRE-PROFESSIONALISM, THE CORPORATE ACADEMY, AND GRADUATE EDUCATION: SOME PERSONAL HISTORY

I joined the Department of Writing at Grand Valley after my graduate stipend ran out. During my PhD studies, I attended a mid-sized public research university, one with a long-standing graduate program in English,

a newly developed concentration in rhetoric and composition, and a four-year limit on doctoral stipends. While I had no delusions of grandeur about the academic job market, I was committed to rhetoric and composition, and soothed by the word on the street: there were positions to be had in writing studies, a field which drew me to it because of its activist allegiances and emphasis on students, civic engagement, and political empowerment. Although I understood there were no guarantees, I reasoned I had a pretty good shot at breaking into the tenure-track.

So like most graduate students, I began my PhD program with a simple motto: *build your vita, the jobs will come*. I was genuinely excited when the graduate program awarded me a teaching assistantship. Although the pay was predictably lousy, I figured I could live on Ramen noodles for a few more years. To supplement my income and pay my way to professional conferences, I waited tables, trying—not always successfully—to stave off more student loans. During my third year I accepted a graduate student administrative assistantship. Yet unaware of the debate over the value of WPA work, it never occurred to me to construct my duties as a form of corporate kowtowing: contrary to the criticism waged at Boss Compositionists, I found administrative work politically empowering. It gave me a sneak peek into the mechanisms of university bureaucracy, allowed me to see how incremental change *was* possible, and taught me how I might become an agent in institutional reform. I had to quit waiting tables to make time for my new responsibilities, but administrative work enhanced my institutional acumen and professional qualifications. *Don't worry too much about the loans*, the voice in my head kept repeating, *it's just a matter of time before you land on the tenure-track*.

Plunging head-first into the deep end of the service pool, I tried to mirror the professional responsibilities of my tenured faculty mentors: I volunteered for department and university committees; I helped run faculty workshops; I served as a graduate student senator; I even tutored for a short time in the campus writing center, pro bono to boot. I finished my coursework, passed my comprehensive exams, and during my fourth and final year on stipend began collecting my dissertation research. Consumed by the day-to-day hysteria of it all, I had little time to worry about my stipend running out. *I'll be able to land one of those adjunct positions*, the Pollyanna in me repeated; *but everyone who goes "part-time" is so overwhelmed*, the Pessimist barked. *Many adjuncts never finish their degrees, and the pay certainly won't cover my student loan payments*. Although some warned me not to take a full-time job before completing the dissertation, I applied for the few I saw advertised, and accepted a Composition Fellowship at Grand Valley State University, a teaching-intensive, research-oriented institution

of roughly 20,000 students. As a fellow, I earned a good wage, had solid benefits, and enjoyed positive working relationships with specialists in my field. All in all, the vitae building kept me afloat professionally as I inched closer to degree. But the question remains, at what price?

I continue to wonder.

Some critics argue that graduate students' eagerness to gain pre-professional experience stalls their intellectual growth. In as much as positions like fellowships are yet another distraction from finishing the dissertation, they sidetrack candidates from degree completion. John Guillory makes just this claim, asserting that the current frenzy for job-placement in English studies has turned graduate education into "a curious sort of on-the-job-training" (4). Adding fuel to the fire, writers in the vein of Cary Nelson's "What Hath English Wrought" conclude that English studies' surplus labor force is akin to the fast food industry's, as more and more overqualified workers become primed for exploitative adjunct positions (Glenn A12; Miller "Let's" 98; Downing, Hurlbert, and Mathieu 1).

I am persuaded by these arguments, and agree that English studies must address the challenges associated with pre-professionalism, degree completion, and labor exploitation more seriously. Certainly my economic and professional insecurities prompted me to pre-professionalize, just as my limited stipend prompted me to consider adjunct work. Still, I feel compelled to make clear that the non-tenure-track position I accepted at Grand Valley strengthened my job prospects and allowed me to garner a reasonable wage well before most of my graduate student colleagues. While Sledd, Guillory, Nelson and others have produced powerful and important critiques of the state of the profession, critique is slow to effect change, and often neglects institution-specific exigencies. As David Downing, Claude Mark Hurlbert, and Paula Mathieu maintain in *Beyond English, Inc.: Curricular Reform in a Global Economy*, "whatever curricular innovations we imagine, we must negotiate our visions within specific institutions and against specific constraints of powerful corporate-management models commanding our educational system" (4).

ONE PROGRAM'S SOLUTION: SITUATED LEADERSHIP—
OR—A MODEL FOR CRITICAL ADMINISTRATION

In "Student Needs and Strong Composition: The Dialectics of Writing Program Reform," Francis Sullivan et al. argue that WPA work necessitates what they call "situated leadership," a concept which reinterprets the ethic of service and helps theorize active ways of applying institutional critique.

They call on administrators to use their critical skills as rhetoricians as they negotiate institutional life. As the writers assert:

it is only within the social location we have inherited (and which we continue to choose) that we can do the work of fashioning professional practices and reflecting on them, the work of situated leadership. [. . .] Composition's claim to disciplinaryity is based on something more than our willingness to be of use: it is expressed most fully in the intellectual work of critical analysis, including the analysis of the university as hierarchical and exclusionary, and of the discourses of the university—including our own—as rhetorical exercises of power. (Sullivan et al. 387)

Writing program administrators at Grand Valley practiced a similar kind of situated leadership.

Located just outside of Grand Rapids—a politically conservative, predominantly Protestant pocket of west Michigan—Grand Valley State University (GVSU) boasts huge growth, expanding from 8,000 to roughly 20,000 undergraduates in its forty-plus year history. During my time there, the university administration had close ties to local families who run multi-billion dollar enterprises, including Meijer Corporation, Amway, the Prince Group, and the now infamous (and subsequently rebranded) private defense contractor, Blackwater Worldwide. Wealthy benefactors associated with these corporations contribute substantially to the development of the university, most notably in the form of multi-million dollar donations toward state-of-the-art business and health sciences complexes: both of these high-rises are centerpieces in downtown Grand Rapids' ever-expanding and increasingly gentrified cityscape. While GVSU's professoriate remains a politically diverse lot, the faculty is not unionized, and the local community by and large upholds the conservative, entrepreneurial values of university contributors.² While the institution has made progress in recent years to distinguish between its entrepreneurial partnerships and educational agendas, it is fair to say that corporate influence was particularly acute while I taught at the university.³

Even within this socially conservative, corporate-friendly environment, however, the Department of Writing managed to fund two different kinds of full-time, non-tenure-track positions, positions which *garnered better wages and benefits for non-tenure-track faculty*. The real improvements in work life for composition instructors are not to be underestimated. The Composition Fellowship I held offers ABDs,⁴ MFAs and newly minted PhDs good pay and benefits (about 80% of what junior faculty on the ten-

ure-track earn), financial support for conference participation, and other standard tenure-track perks, including office space, a computer, and supply and copy privileges. While as a fellow I taught the same course load as ladder faculty, I had no formal committee or service obligations, and WPAs restricted my teaching assignments to two days per week. On the remaining days, I had at least some time to devote to scholarly projects other than teaching: completing the dissertation, publishing, preparing for job searches, and so on.

Perhaps even more significantly, during the era it instituted the Composition Fellowship, the department also converted most of its adjunct lines into full-time Affiliate Faculty positions. Staffed by highly qualified local professionals, Affiliate Faculty earn an annual salary only a few hundred dollars less than Composition Fellows, have slightly better benefits, and are not limited to a single three-year contract⁵: in fact, given good performance, Affiliate Faculty can be renewed indefinitely. All in all, both positions result in a better quality of work life for the vast majority of composition instructors at the university, modeling the kind of “prorated compensation” Bill Hendricks recognizes as ideal in “Teaching Work: Academic Labor and Social Class” (614). As an anonymous reviewer of my essay wisely commented, while both positions offer substantially better employment packages than traditional adjunct work, they tender decidedly different perks: while Composition Fellows enjoy a better job title and thus more professional status, Affiliate Faculty enjoy stronger benefits and job security.

As I came to understand, both of these non-tenure track positions also helped maintain a stronger faculty for the newly formed Department of Writing, which separated from English the year I joined the department. Although full-time, non-tenure-trackers had previously been integrated into English, that department relied on a pool of instructors whose teaching preferences were literary. Hiring literature enthusiasts led to staffing concerns, because like many of their ladder faculty colleagues, they preferred not to teach composition. As a result, during the 1990s, almost 90% of Grand Valley’s writing courses were staffed by part-timers. As GVSU writing program administrator and inaugural chair of the Department of Writing, Roger Gilles reported, “something needed to be done.” By performing both local and national searches and seeking candidates who had interest and experience in writing instruction, the Department of Writing helped decrease the number of composition sections taught by adjuncts by upwards of 60%. Factors such as these helped to create a more professional climate for writing instructors at the university.

A COMMITMENT TO WRITING AND THE DISCOURSE ON ACADEMIC LABOR

Through their commitment to the teaching of writing as a legitimate academic pursuit—a commitment that necessitated creating quality working conditions for all writing instructors—Grand Valley’s WPAs were able to attract and maintain a stable, experienced, and well-credentialed staff of composition faculty, committed pedagogues eager to engage in innovative practices such as directed self-placement, multi-grader portfolio assessment, and the development of an undergraduate writing major. As Grand Valley’s Dan Royer and Roger Gilles describe in their contribution to *Field of Dreams: Independent Writing Programs and the Future of Composition Studies*, a department with a commitment to writing studies helps foster a university culture that sees first-year composition as a central part of its mission, rather than an urban “ghetto” connected to—but utterly different from—the “thriving suburban literary landscape” (28). When writing specialists are valued on a campus for their contributions to “general-education and majors courses, both lower and upper-division” (29), the university begins to see writing “within the context of the liberal arts most generally—rather than as a ‘basic skill’ relegated to preliberal education” (36). Through their commitment to writing studies broadly defined, Gilles, Royer and other department members helped reshape campus perceptions about the value of writing instruction on all levels and—in turn—successfully lobbied for an increase in the number of full-time instructional lines needed to support composition.⁶ Working within a tradition of pragmatic reform reminiscent of Harris, as well Richard Miller in *As If Learning Mattered*, Michael Murphy in “New Faculty for a New University,” and James Porter et al. in “Institutional Critique,” WPAs at Grand Valley were able to persuade the campus community that more full-time non-tenure-track positions would help—rather than hurt—the university community.

Of course, the most common criticism against the proliferation of the instructorate comes from a concern for the diminishing number of ladder faculty lines in universities across the nation. This concern was also raised by ladder faculty at Grand Valley. As the logic goes, if universities consistently staff courses with non-tenure-track faculty, what’s to stop the downsizing of the professoriate? I find this logic persuasive to the extent that it decries a real loss of academic job security and seeks to expand the number of tenure-track positions in composition. Nonetheless, a crucial distinction such arguments often ignore is the legion of composition instructors *who have always and who already* teach without job security. These are the overworked “adjuncts” who, depending on whose figures you quote, make up between 40% and 60% of the academic labor force in general. The number

of adjuncts who teach composition in particular, of course, is likely much higher. So, like Cheryl Glenn, I decry the McJobbing of the university—that is—I decry the “managerial decision to employ part-time workers who often enjoy neither job security nor fringe benefits” (A13). But one might argue that a preoccupation with tenure lines is also a form of McJobbing, at least to the extent that it subordinates the interests of the many to the advantage of the few. When ladder faculty ignore their non-tenure-track colleagues by single-mindedly campaigning for tenure-track positions, exploitation ensues.

Still, one might ask, why not work for change in a more time-honored way? Rather than relying on reform from within, why not turn to organized labor to help improve working conditions? Marc Bousquet makes this point in his essay “Composition as Management Science: Toward a University Without a WPA.” By relying on pragmatic rhetoric rather than on the labor movement, Bousquet suggests, WPAs reveal their complicity with corporatism. As Bousquet writes, “current trends in [composition] discourse away from critical theory and toward institutionally focused pragmatism, toward acceptance of market logic, and toward increasing collaboration with a vocational and technical model of education” coincide with “the historical reemergence” of “laissez-faire ideology” (495–96). While I find Bousquet’s conflation of composition studies with market logic and vocational education more than problematic, his work compellingly reveals how WPA scholarship has traditionally ignored the academic labor movement. To this end, Bousquet denounces Harris, Miller, Murphy and Porter et al.⁷, noting that while their work is most often a “genuine attempt to explore a level of institutional critique,” they fail to imagine an academy free of the tyranny of management (518). In contrast to Bousquet, however, I am not convinced that the goals of academic labor and pragmatic administrative rhetoric are at odds.

As most union leaders would tell you, compromise is at the heart of collective bargaining strategy—the trick is using the right kind of language to get both parties to talk and listen. To suggest that pragmatism is contrary to collective organization is to distort the central place pragmatic rhetoric holds in the contemporary labor movement. As the Midwest Academy’s *Organizing for Social Change* maintains, getting the “other side” to the bargaining table implies a considerable degree of open-handed acumen. Negotiation is careful business: worker-advocates can neither agree to compromise too readily nor “automatically assume that every offer is some kind of trick” (29). Bargaining is by definition a give-and-take that works toward compromise. My experiences as a non-tenure-track worker, a writing program administrator, and a member of a tenure-track labor union suggest

that WPAs are far from co-opted cogs in the corporate university. Quite the contrary, it has been the writing program administrators on the campuses where I've worked who have most openly voiced their concerns about worker exploitation: these are the WPAs who successfully garner better contracts for non-tenure-track instructors; the WPAs who take professional risks to decrease graduate students' teaching loads; the WPAs who openly challenge the exploitation of ABD labor.

While not all of these gestures are equally risky or groundbreaking, and while not all WPAs gesticulate in the same ways, such actions help to illustrate that many writing program administrators work in concert with academic labor unions. While it is important to concede, as Bousquet points out, that the rise of rhetoric and composition is in part connected to the rise of non-tenure track workers in the academy, his argument rings hollow when it does not acknowledge the empowering potential WPAs have to support progressive labor reform in their programs, departments, universities, and unions. As most seasoned WPAs will tell you, uncompromising critics often interpret administrative negotiation as selling out. Such attitudes are a painful reality of our work. Although some equate all forms of administration with a dance with the devil—and of course there's an undeniably romantic appeal to such an equation and dismissal—most people involved with the labor movement understand that negotiation is at the heart of collective struggle. As we move toward better working conditions for composition instructors, we must continue to negotiate with the corporate university. For non-tenure track workers like me, such negotiation provided a vehicle to traverse the space between graduate school and the professoriate, a pony I rode while reaching for the brass ring.

Indeed, for most Composition Fellows I worked with at Grand Valley, our full-time, non-tenure-track position was a stepping-stone, a job we took on the way to something else. But it's worth pointing out that while the fellowship provided me an alternative to the adjunct conditions many ABDs face, such positions only stave off exploitation for a limited population, and only for a limited time. In sum, such positions are a Band-Aid for a disciplinary malignancy.

Perhaps the biggest professional compensation I received at Grand Valley, then, was not the solid wages and scholarly status I earned as a Composition Fellow, but the administrative imagination to envision better working conditions for *all* writing instructors, but particularly adjunct workers. Because of the time I've spent in a department that fosters equitable working conditions, I have recognized the power of administrative agency, and the empowering potential of WPA work. In my current role as Director of Composition, I actively champion the cause of non-tenure track writing

instructors, enthusiastically support campus labor unions, and earnestly negotiate with university administrators. And we're working together to realize alternative labor possibilities.

NOTES

1. See Maxine Hairston's "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing," John Trimbur and others' "Responses" to it, and Hairston's "Reply."

2. I grew up just thirty miles from GVSU, and thus my perspective of west Michigan is grounded in a relationship to the community that extends beyond my work in the university.

3. For example, shortly after then GVSU President and MBA-holding Mark Murray took office, while the faculty senate voted to support same-sex partner benefits, the Board of Trustees overruled this decision. As a statement by the GVSU Board read, "it is not in the best interest of the university to add this benefit at Grand Valley" (para. 4). At the time, the university administration argued it had a responsibility to respect the local community's values, and many of us who worked in and grew up in that community understood references to values and interests as code for beliefs held by the socially conservative local business families who supported the university. In 2007, however, Murray left the presidency to take over the Fortune-500 Meijer Corporation, and the new administration has since instated benefits for all household partners, regardless of sexual orientation. As my former colleagues have more recently commented, the corporate influence at GVSU is less overbearing now that Murray has left the presidency.

4. Referring to PhD candidates who have finished their coursework and exams, ABD stands for "all but the dissertation."

5. After I left GVSU, in order to reflect its temporary status, the title of the "Composition Fellow" position was changed to "Visiting Assistant Professor." That said, the position description and compensation rates remain consistent, as do the terms of the Affiliate Faculty position.

6. While my focus here has necessarily been on Grand Valley's creation of full-time positions for writing instructors who traditionally work off the tenure-track, I also wish to note that the Department of Writing has successfully increased its tenure-track faculty: as of spring 2009, there are thirteen ladder faculty in total.

7. In his 2008 monograph, *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*, Bousquet republishes "Composition as Management Science" and revises his tone—at least in reference to Porter et al. Therein, he concedes that at the very least, he shares "common cause" with the authors of "Institutional Critique" (160). His criticism of Harris, Miller, Murphy, and others, however, remains intact.

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Examining the Presence of Advocacy and Commercial Websites in Research Essays of First-Year Composition Students

Randall McClure

Network technologies have the potential to reach large audiences instantaneously and support a variety of publication sources. At times, this immediate exchange of texts overwhelms our ability to discern the credibility and usefulness of information sources. Nowhere is this struggle more evident than in the increasing dependence on Internet research in composition classes; often, the speed of change in the information age presents new challenges before even we (the “experts” of such literacy) are prepared to engage them.

—Michelle Sidler

INTRODUCTION

Advocacy. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, this term—advocacy—has achieved buzzword status. For some groups, particularly those in higher education, the rise of advocacy is a direct result of the changing economic landscape. Calls for advocacy fill the halls at professional meetings and conferences and line the pages of campus newspapers and academic journals. Advocacy’s presence is even more defined and refined on the Internet. Flying under the radar of the user-developed, highly social nature of what is commonly referred to as Web 2.0 is the rise in digital advocacy, and this development has manifested itself in three ways.

First, organizations that historically have had missions other than to advocate, particularly those founded to inform others or share in the mutual interests of their members, have taken on advocacy roles. Whether out of necessity or opportunity, many traditional organizations now in

some way maintain an advocacy presence, especially on the Web. Just looking within my own area of interest—composition studies—highlights this first face of digital advocacy. Take, for example, the website for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) which supplements its traditional legislative platform with position statements and talking points for its 2008 Advocacy Day on topics such as the following:

- Change Adequate Yearly Progress Measures
- Change Support for English Language Learners
- Change Type of Support for High-Quality Teachers in High-Need Schools
- Substitute Scientifically Valid Research for Scientifically Based Research and Change Appointment Process for Peer Review Panels. (NCTE “Take Action”)

Compiling information in its online “Action Center,” the NCTE encourages members to “take action” and “let your voice be heard” (NCTE “Take Action”). The NCTE is no longer solely or primarily an organization about membership, publication, and teacher development; it is in many ways an advocacy group, using the Internet to amplify its voice and extend its reach. In the Web 2.0 world, however, NCTE is similar to many organizations that now blend information with commercialism and advocacy.

Second, take a look at almost any website of a for-profit company and you will see this mix. For example, consider the hot online insurance company Esurance which uses its website to inform consumers through its “Learning Center” and its “Esurance Insights” as well as advocates its “green” position on the environment and its care for creating “healthy communities,” all the while trying to sell insurance to visitors on the site (www.esurance.com). Mega corporations like McDonald’s have been doing this for years, using advocacy projects and informational tips in the pursuit of improving sales. McDonald’s new “365BLACK.com” campaign is a perfect example of how advocacy has been reshaped on the Web. The “365BLACK” website is accessible from McDonald’s homepage yet is a distinct URL (www.365black.com/365black/) and pitched to visitors as part of McDonald’s corporate position that “African-American culture and achievement should be celebrated 365 days a year—not just during Black History Month.”

The website not only contains information on scholarships and employment opportunities for African Americans, but also allows visitors to share their stories on how McDonald’s has benefitted their lives as well as contains links to video ads for three stereotypically black meals and to

McDonald's own website. Comparing itself to the African Baobab tree, McDonald's cites its commitment to "nourishing" the African American community through this web-based campaign. In the Web 2.0 environment, the three components of advocacy, information, and marketing blend seamlessly and invite users to participate in ways that make it increasingly difficult to separate out the chief enterprise of selling McDonald's to consumers. Sites like 365BLACK.com and Esurance.com are just two examples of those that more subtly package advocacy and require a sophisticated level of critical thinking to fully understand.

Third, organizations with clear advocacy intentions now have the reach and facets of Web 2.0 to extend their ideas in ways never before seen or imagined. Take, for example, one of the better-known advocacy groups, PETA. In addition to its own website (www.peta.org), the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals maintain, support or contribute to dozens of websites designed foremost to advocate, sites like kentuckyfriedcruelty.com and marscandykills.com. Unless visitors to these two sites recognize the small "peta.org" logo in top corner of the screen, the connection could be difficult to make. Also, the PETA website itself is far from static, as users can watch PETA-sponsored, YouTube-like videos, join in discussion forums, and contribute to the PETA blog. When considering the reach of such organizations in decades past, even a powerful advocacy group like PETA has benefited significantly from Web 2.0 developments. Apply this idea to the large number of sites for advocacy groups on today's Web, and this type of website should be cause for concern for all teachers, particularly first-year composition teachers whose students do a large part of their research on the Web and seem to find these sites with regularity. The reformulation and rise of advocacy on today's Web create the need for increased attention to fostering students' critical thinking skills, as digital advocacy is clearly more blended, subtly packaged, and inviting, even on overt advocacy sites like PETA's website.

So what separates NCTE from Esurance, 365BLACK, and PETA? Some would argue quite a bit. In today's Web 2.0 world though, the difference is perhaps much less than we think or are willing to admit. Now, some might say that NCTE's calls to action are secondary matters, not the main reason for joining and participating in this professional organization or, for that matter, visiting its website, whereas Esurance and McDonald's use advocacy as part of their larger commercial enterprises and PETA claims advocacy as its reason for existence. A quick examination of websites for these organizations supports this claim to some degree. The home page of PETA's website places its "Action Center" directly under its logo and mentions the words "action" and "activism" several times as it lets its members

and website visitors know in big, bold letters that “your voice [is] needed today” (www.peta.org). With visual references to Ku Klux Klan activities and animal slaughterhouses on its front page, it likely takes visitors only a few seconds on the PETA website to understand its advocacy mission and how this organization chooses to enact advocacy on the Web.

These startling images are absent, of course, on the websites for NCTE and 365BLACK, and their calls to action are not foregrounded on their home pages. It takes some drilling down to find these calls. It also takes some searching to find the advocacy pages on Esurance’s site, though these items are also often used in its commercial campaigns. Still, looking at the language, the purpose and the presence of it on these sites, digital advocacy clearly should not be overlooked or undervalued. Further, the complicated nature of the Web in the 2.0 era makes providing students with the critical thinking skills necessary to understand and use the information they find on it imperative, especially with regard to the complex purposes and arguments, potential biases, and authority concerns common to advocacy and commercial claims found online.

Consider first-year composition teachers for a moment. These teachers might still prefer their students to use traditional print sources in their research essays, as they recognize the filtering done by editors, peers and writers themselves to these sources. Students need to be able to locate, understand and use print sources, but the amount of critical examination needed for understanding and using them is manageable for teachers to present and for the students to implement. Tell teachers who prefer traditional print sources that a student wants to use information found on the NCTE website, and the teachers will likely readily consent. Who wouldn’t? However, what if the information the student wants to use is from NCTE’s advocacy forum? Does this use now come into question? Now, switch from the NCTE to Esurance or PETA. The role of advocacy and how it is conducted are different on these sites, but how so? Is the information contained on Esurance’s, 365BLACK’s or PETA’s website unfiltered, unedited and unreviewed, or filtered but just filtered differently? It is true that the uses and definitions of advocacy range quite a bit—from basic consciousness-raising to fomenting radical ideology and action, from covert to overt, and from peripheral to central—still, it is clear that digital advocacy weaves together a large part of today’s Web. Understanding these differences and subtleties, how do teachers explain them, and how can their students take this understanding and apply it to sites where the purposes to inform, advocate and sell are more seamlessly blended? The answers to these questions point directly at critical literacy skills that appear essential to navigating information in the digital age.

The success of Howard Dean's MoveOn.org campaign aside, it is too early to tell just how much Web-based advocacy will shape the larger landscapes of politics, economics and education in the United States and worldwide. However, we can see the seeds of change being planted, even if it is just in first-year composition classrooms. Digging into students' essays and asking them about their research practices, the emerging coalescence of Web 2.0, digital advocacy and Generation Y is clear.

To this end, this essay reports on how first-year composition students make sense of and use advocacy as well as commercial websites as sources of information and support in their writing. This essay reports not only on how many advocacy and commercial websites are used by first-year composition students, but also how these websites are used as source material in students' essays. An investigation of more than one hundred student research essays suggests a number of students are relying on advocacy and commercial sites for their information with little or no apparent understanding of both the information and sponsors of these sites. While strategies exist for helping students recognize and write about information that advocates or sells, it is critical that writing program administrators (WPAs) and teachers acknowledge these types of sources in their curricula on research writing. Further, WPAs and teachers can and should work with college and research librarians to more fully integrate information literacy instruction in writing courses.

This research evolved from a study completed in 2005 and published in 2009 that focused on "sources students use in their research essays for first-year composition courses and what students and teachers say about this use" (McClure and Clink 115). The researchers examined one hundred student essays to analyze the types of sources that students use as well as determine the amount of attention students give to analyzing and crediting the sources of their information in their essays. Focus groups were also conducted with participating students and their teachers on the use of sources in these essays and the instruction given to students on source use. The study concluded that students still use traditional resources for their essays, often only to meet the requirements imposed by their teachers. Otherwise, students relied almost exclusively on source information retrieved through search engines on the Internet, finding online versions of traditional resources such as dictionaries and encyclopedias but also regularly utilizing personal websites. Students largely understood that sources need to be current, but were less agile in thinking through the authority of their information. In addition, students did not typically articulate the authority and reliability of their source information, such as detailing the appropriate

credentials, research methodologies, or even just the names of the sources. Finally, students were least able to recognize or articulate bias.

The research presented in the pages to follow examines one of the unexpected findings from the previous study—the use of advocacy and commercial websites as sources of information in research essays written by first-year composition students. This finding led the researcher to pose the following questions: To what extent are first-year composition students using advocacy and commercial websites as sources of information in their research essays? What kind of attention are they paying to them and how are they framing these sources in their writing? Why do students say they are using these sites? And how are composition teachers addressing these sites in their instruction on conducting academic research?

REVIEW OF CURRENT LITERATURE

Despite the countless number of research papers written on college and university campuses each term, surprisingly few studies have been conducted on how undergraduates conduct scholarly research, including how students locate, analyze, and use source material. In fact, only a couple of studies consider the ability of students to identify and evaluate different types of websites, including advocacy and commercial ones. In “Of Course It’s True; I Saw It on the Internet! Critical Thinking in the Internet Era,” Leah Graham and Panagiotis Takis use an email survey of 180 college students enrolled in a “Computers and the Internet” course to determine students’ understanding of what the researchers label four “areas of misinformation: advertising claims, government misinformation, lobby group propaganda, and scams” (72). Graham and Metaxas summarize their “disheartening” findings when they write that students were “overwhelmingly susceptible” to misinformation, ideas they routinely found on the Internet. Citing one example of the biased advocacy website *getoutraged.com*, Graham and Metaxas note that 48% of students believed the statistics provided by the group to be accurate and would be confident about using them in academic writing (74). Other than this research from Graham and Metaxas, there appears to be no other work in the area of web-based advocacy and commercialism and its effects on students’ researching and particularly their writing habits. While such research has likely been conducted at the institutional level, none seems to have found its way into publication. In fact, the most comprehensive study to date of students’ research practices might be Wendy Austin’s 2000 dissertation *The Research Paper in Cyberspace: Source-based Writing in the Composition Classroom*; however, Austin focuses

her research more on students composing hypertext essays and support for them given in writing centers.

The study of students' research habits in the digital age began in earnest some ten years ago with Mary Ann Gillette and Carol Videon's essay "Seeking Quality on the Internet: A Case Study of Composition Students' Works Cited" published in a 1998 issue of *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. In this study, Gillette and Videon examined forty-eight Internet citations in composition essays written by two-year college students and found that half (50%) of the verifiable citations were links to research papers composed by other students (189–91). Based on this and other findings, Gillette and Videon offer guidelines for librarians and teachers to assist students in finding "quality" websites (193–94).

Gillette and Videon note in their literature review their surprise over the very limited amount of scholarship on students' research practices prior to 1998: "While we found several reports on research habits of published academics and doctoral candidates, we located only one aimed at the undergraduate level" (190). In this way, Gillette and Videon's work is significant, as other studies investigating students' research behaviors and practices in the digital age have since been published (Lorenzo and Dziuban; Van Scoyoc and Cason; Davis; Graham and Metaxas; Jenkins; Grimes and Boening; Burton and Chadwick). In all of these studies, there is common ground regardless of the discipline under examination, as they examine "undergraduate research behavior at both the national and individual institutional level [and] have unanimously found that the vast majority of students turn to the Internet first for academic research" (Van Scoyoc and Cason 48). Further, these studies often conclude that students "lack the ability to distinguish credible academic sources from popular materials on the Internet and have difficulty citing what they find" (Davis "Effect" 42).

Recently, researchers from University College London (UCL) have argued the widening access to technology has not improved students' information literacy skills, suggesting instead "their apparent facility with computers disguises some worrying problems," such as spending "little time evaluating information, either for relevance, accuracy or authority" and focusing instead on the speed of searching. Further, the heavy use of finding information via search engines like Google and Yahoo, with as many as 89% of students beginning their searches this way, has some researchers believing it is difficult for students to assess the relevance of materials presented to them given the long lists of materials to choose from in search engine returns (University College London). While the UCL researchers focus on the "Google Generation" (students born after 1993, those in the 11–15 age group), they maintain these findings could easily be applied to

students in the previous Generation, Generation Y, those currently enrolling in large numbers in first-year composition courses. The researchers concede that there is little to no evidence that students' information skills were stronger at any time in the pre-Internet era; however, they contend that Google searching may be evidence of a significant shift in researching habits, in information behavior. Clearly, this behavioral shift suggested by the UCL researchers deserves the attention of the providers of information literacy skills, including composition teachers.

Aside from the UCL study, most if not all other recent studies on student research practices rely on three sources of information to draw their conclusions: bibliographic information taken from students' research essays; perceptions of students gathered from interviews, surveys and focus groups; and observations from teachers and academic librarians. These studies consider what sources students use and what teachers, students, and librarians say about this use; however, these studies continually omit or fail to consider how students use their source material in the texts of their essays. An analysis of the rhetorical use of source material seems necessary before stronger recommendations can be made on how to improve information literacy instruction. The study presented in the pages to follow presents such research as it also reflects the growing trend of creative research and scholarship on the habits of undergraduate researchers, such as that offered in the 2007 special issue of *Computers and Composition Online* (www.bgsu.edu/cconline/edwelcome_special07.html). Two of the editors for this special issue, James Purdy and Joyce Walker, have recently published the beginnings of their work, documenting the research steps or protocols used by today's college students, another new twist on the subject of how students research and write in the digital age. Still, the total number of published works remains low, and much more research is needed.

METHODOLOGY

More than one hundred research essays written by first-year composition students in a second-semester composition course are mined in order to determine the degree to which students rely on advocacy and commercial websites as sources of information for their essays and how students negotiate the use of these sources in their essays. The essays were collected with IRB approval in sections taught by five experienced composition instructors and were written in response to an assignment that called for either an informative or argumentative thesis on any topic of the student's choosing and required a minimum of five sources. Since the researcher wanted to examine what sources students choose on their own, the only information

provided to participating students and teachers was the study's focus on research papers.

To replicate previous studies, the citations listed in students' bibliographies are examined and surveys of student and teacher participants are used. The bibliographies reveal what types of sources students use, and comments garnered from the teacher and student surveys indicate how students select sources, how much instruction on advocacy and commercial websites composition teachers provide, and how their students interpret these particular websites. Unlike previous studies, however, the bibliographic examination is extended beyond the frequency of citation types (website, book, journal, etc.) to consider the frequency of website type (advocacy, commercial, government, etc.), information previously unrecorded in studies on undergraduate student research practices. While other studies have considered student and teacher perception of source selection and use, no study has looked closely at advocacy and commercial websites. Further, no study has mined student essays to see how advocacy and commercial sites are used. The bibliographies are studied here, but the examination then moves inside students' research essays in an attempt to identify source use patterns. These findings are then connected with student and teacher feedback on source selection and use.

"SIGHTING" SOURCES

Five categories have been identified for sorting the sources used by students in the 106 essays that are a part of this study: websites, books, print articles, PDF articles, and other sources (CDs, DVDs, personal interviews, etc.). The total number of sources used by students is 875, or 8.25 sources per essay. Not surprisingly, the raw count of the 875 sources illustrates the heavy use of the Internet for source retrieval:

- websites: 265 (30% of all sources)
- PDF articles: 219 (25%)
- books: 181 (21%)
- print articles: 178 (20%)
- other sources: 32 (4%)

First, the bibliographic entries validate the findings of several recent studies that show students' heavy use of the Internet for locating information. If the two types of digital sources identified above—websites and PDF articles—are taken together as they likely have been in previous studies since they are both accessed using the Internet, then the percentage of

web-based sources used by students in this study is 55 percent. This count confirms the findings in other recent studies that students are becoming increasingly reliant on the Internet for their research. In looking at research from 1996 to 2008, it is safe to conclude that student use of the Internet for conducting academic research has grown by more than 500 percent. Published findings show the percentage of Web-based sources in bibliographies for student research essays at 10% in 1996, 20% in 2000, 24% in 2002, 48% in 2005, and now 55% in 2008 (Davis "The Effect" 55, Jenkins 164, McClure and Clink 118). In fact, information found in other reports suggests the percentage might be significantly higher (Van Scoyoc and Cason 49; University College London).

Certainly, this rapid increase parallels the development of the Web over the last decade. Take, for example, the number of sites now on the Web as well as the development of online holdings in college and research libraries over this period. Andrea Foster reports in the *Chronicle of Higher Education Online* that the number of websites has grown from 18,000 in 1995 to more than 100,000,000 in 2007. In addition, we have been witness to the near doubling of online databases over the last ten years with now more than 18,000 such databases available (Foster), as the national average for expenditures for electronic materials has increased by 119% during the period from 2000–2003 and with the average research library now spending between 30–50% of its materials budget on e-materials (Mischo et al. 30). For example, one regional state university in the upper Midwest reports expenditures for electronic journals grew from \$170,496 in 2000 to \$488,609 in 2005, a figure now consistent with the 2008 national average of \$456,238 (Library Services; Primary "Survey"). The increased expenditures are reflected in the use of full-text PDF articles as sources, with one study reporting that PDF downloads at a University of North Carolina regional campus increased 1007% after the school entered the statewide e-library consortium (Mischo et al. 31).

The exponential growth in the number of traditional print articles now available in PDF form is affecting students' research practices in the digital age. Most previous bibliographic studies tend to compare the number of websites with the number of traditional print sources, yet the identification of a significant percentage of PDF articles in this study is significant. Students are still getting the majority of their information from websites, yet it appears many are using online research databases and other avenues to retrieve PDF versions of traditional print documents. In fact, 69% of all the sources used by students in this study are library-based (books, print articles and PDFs), a statistic some eighteen points higher when compared to data collected just four years ago (McClure and Clink 119). Further, this

statistic calls into serious question the recent lamentations over the impending death of the academic library, or at least its second-class status in the research process, the “last stop” for students (Davis “Effect” 45; Purdy and Walker). In fact, future investigations on the presence of PDFs might confirm that the research pendulum is swinging with force back into the library, especially as more and more libraries invest in electronic materials as well as research and learning commons models¹ that aim to facilitate the research process for students, especially the library-based process.

The findings from several studies over the past decade-plus confirm the heavy use of the Internet by students for conducting academic research; however, this study may be the first to focus on the types of websites students are using. Only a short time ago, it was common advice to tell students not to use the Internet at all for academic research. As it became clear that the Internet was pervasive in students’ lives, this advice changed to helping students distinguish credible websites, a la Gillette and Videon. For example, personal websites have typically been viewed as untrustworthy sources for academic research. However, this advice is no longer good, as many have pointed out that some of today’s most respected minds—from Maya Angelou (<http://www.mayaangelou.com/>) to Stephen Hawking (www.hawking.org.uk/)—have their own websites.

Educating students about today’s Web can no longer be reduced to simple lists of dos and don’ts. The challenge should not be “to get students to use the right online sources . . . [but] to move beyond the notion that students’ use of the ‘wrong’ online sources means that they are not serious or engaged researchers” (Purdy and Walker). In other words, it is no longer a simple activity of drawing the line between right and wrong online sources in an attempt to have students only use traditional scholarly sources. Resources today, particularly websites, are too accessible, too plentiful and too complicated to draw such a line. We need to help students understand and use all types of information, especially Web-based information that is coming at them unrelentingly from all sides. Therefore, it seems time to look closely at the kinds of websites students are using as sources of information and to shape both information literacy and writing instruction from this understanding.

To this end, eight categories have been used to group and describe the 265 websites that students in this study chose as sources of information. These categories include commercial, advocacy, personal and community, government, search engine, dictionary, educational institution, and topical websites, and the definitions and frequency of these types of websites are provided in Table 1:

Table 1. Website Types as Sources of Information

Website Type	Frequency
Advocacy: Sites associated with promoting a political, social or ethical agenda. Information is biased toward the agenda of the organization. <i>Ex: peta.org; prochoice.org; natvan.com</i>	46 websites (17% of all websites)
Commercial: Sites associated with selling a product. Information provided on the site is used to promote the “need” for a certain product. <i>Ex: gatorade.com; siemens.com; nike.com</i>	20 (8%)
Dictionaries: Sites providing definitions and brief descriptions of a term. <i>Ex: WebMD.com; dictionary.com; merriam-webster.com</i>	9 (3%)
Education Institutions: Sites for schools, school districts, colleges and universities. <i>Ex: leeschools.net; csuohio.edu; laurelschool.org</i>	28 (11%)
Government: Sites associated with government agencies. These may be the sites of specific government departments or organizations associated with a specific government agency. <i>Ex: irs.gov; dea.gov; uspto.gov</i>	38 (16%)
Personal & Community: Sites setup and maintained by individuals. These sites include personal web pages, blogs, and community sites where individuals may post comments and information with limited or no censorship. <i>Ex: blogger.com; my.execpc.com; cyberend.com</i>	19 (7%)
Search Engines: Sites that allow individuals to perform keyword searches for all available information on the Internet and provide links to sites related to the search criteria. These sites often have their own informational pages providing news coverage, reviews, health information, etc. <i>Ex: msn.com; yahoo.com; about.com</i>	20 (8%)
Topical: Sites related to organizations and associations not selling a product. The information provided tends to be subject-specific and unbiased for the purpose of educating consumers, researchers or the general public. <i>Ex: nih.gov; apa.org; hrdailyadvisor.blr.com</i>	83 (30%)

In looking at these eight categories of websites, it is clear that students are using a significant number of websites whose primary purpose is to inform. Sixty percent of the websites used by students in this study are

online dictionaries, sites for educational institutions and government agencies, or topical websites. Still, this research illustrates the marked use of websites produced by advocacy groups as well as for-profit corporations, with 25% of all websites falling into one of these two categories. Advocacy and commercial websites have a significant presence on the Internet; the above data indicates they have a notable presence in student research writing. Now, it is true that advocacy and commercial websites only represent 8% of all (print and digital) sources used by students in this study, but when students are choosing to use websites such as *peacepilgrim.com*, *biblebelievers.org* and *abortionfacts.com* as sources of their information—information that in the pre-Internet past would have been much harder to come by—a research writing trend and possible concern might be emerging, especially if students do not fully understand the types of advocacy enacted on these sites. This concern, coupled with the growing use of the Web for conducting research makes this trend worthy of our attention. In fact, 39 of the 106 essays or more than one out of every three students in this study use either advocacy or commercial websites as sources of information. Further, this study only considers websites easily recognized as overtly commercial or advocacy-based. As was suggested earlier, many websites that traditionally would not be seen as advocacy or commercial sites now serve these purposes, with some doing it in very blended, indistinct ways. Therefore, the amount of advocacy and commercial information used by students in this study could be even higher and the need for fostering student awareness and understanding of these sites could be even greater.

Returning to the analysis of bibliographic information in this study, it is clear that this information only completes part of the picture in terms of how much students rely on advocacy and commercial websites as sources for their writing, and taken by itself might be seen as undeserving of more attention. However, this data only provides *how many* sites are used, when the more revealing information is *how often* and *in what ways* these sites are used. This puzzle is only complete with the addition of two other pieces: a close examination of students' use of these sites within their essays and analysis of teacher and student responses to using them.

MINING THE ESSAYS

As noted in the last section, advocacy and commercial websites only constitute eight percent of the total number of sources used by students in this study; such a low percentage may not deserve attention. Examining the essays more closely, however, it is found that fifteen percent of all in-text citations made by students are for commercial and advocacy websites.

Closer examination of the 106 essays, 875 total sources, 46 advocacy and 16 commercial websites comprising this study shows that awareness of the purposes and biases of advocacy and commercial websites is only communicated in five (13%) of the thirty-nine essays that reference such sites. An example of such communication occurs in an essay on the rising costs of college where the student writes, “The initiative to End Grade Inflation [www.endgradeinflation.org], obviously a biased source, still makes a good point stating that as the value of a degree drops its cost in tuition steadily rises.” Writing nothing more about the site, the student moves on to another point. It is clear from this example that the awareness of bias as it has been communicated is at best limited.

Perhaps the strongest and clearest example of awareness of bias comes in a two-line passage from a student essay on Catholicism in which the writer comments on the advocacy site www.roman_catholic.com: “[T]hese people assume they have the right to evaluate the worth of one life compared to others. One cannot possibly see this point of view as anything but self-absorbed and hypocritical.” Despite a somewhat more effective discussion here, this student and the four others who at least attempt to communicate the purposes and limitations of their advocacy and commercial sources fail to provide clear discussions of their own reasons for using advocacy or commercial websites as sources. Further, these findings conflict with those presented in the oft-cited *ICT Literacy Assessment Report* produced by the Educational Testing Service. In this 2006 report, ETS claims that 52% of the more than 6,300 high school seniors and two- and four-year college students in its study were able to identify the objectivity of sources (Educational Testing Service). This number may be accurate, but the percentage of students here who articulate or even mention their understanding of objectivity and subjectivity is much lower. It is not one out of two students as ETS suggests; it is closer to one out of ten. Students might know bias when they recognize it, but they do not seem compelled to discuss it in their writing.

In essays on more controversial topics, students often gravitate toward advocacy sites, but they do not recognize them as such, at least in how they present the information from them in their essays. Whether students are writing on abortion or the legalization of marijuana, gender stereotypes or organ trafficking, eating disorders or green power, they only use information from these sites to support their point of view without ever acknowledging the limitations of their sources or discussing their reasons for using them. For example, one student supports her pro-choice stand with ideas from several advocacy sources, never once acknowledging these sources could be biased. Another student arguing for the legalization of marijuana

presents twelve “facts” from three different advocacy websites, including this interesting factoid from www.briancbennett.com: “In 2001, out of the 2,416,425 people that died, only 138 deaths are marijuana related.” This example shows that advocacy and commercial websites have not only authority and objectivity issues, but also accuracy issues. As Lorenzo and Dziuban note in their 2006 white paper for *Educause*, “[S]tudents [who] increasingly rely on Web sites and Internet archives for information [increase] the likelihood that they will stumble across and cite false or incorrect information” (9). This comment from teachers Lorenzo and Dziuban is confirmed by college student Carie Windham in her white paper for the same series: “We [students] know how to track down an answer on the Internet, but we’re often quick to accept it without a critical evaluation of its source or content. We are . . . information illiterate” (3). Windham’s acknowledgement of Generation Y’s acceptance of all things Web, in which most students lump all websites together in the belief they all contain quality information, suggests that students need additional information literacy training across all criteria (Sidler 59).

Even in essays with informative thesis statements or on less controversial topics, students fail to acknowledge advocacy and commercial websites as such. Interestingly, two essays on body image both cite a website titled “Campaign for Real Beauty” (www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/home.asp) sponsored by Dove soap. This commercial site promotes the use of Dove, a use the company suggests will contribute to a woman’s self-esteem; however, both students treat the website as an authoritative, unbiased source in the texts of their essays. One student writes

Dove is making a personal effort to change the imagery of females in advertisement . . . Their campaign plans to target young teens to “golden-aged” women to appreciate their beauty . . . I think Dove’s promotion of the gorgeousness of ordinary women is important . . . In the decades to come, Dove is in hopes [sic] that their company can make a dramatic change in changing the perception of true beauty.

The other student buys (yes, buys) into Dove even more convincingly:

One company has taken responsibility for their actions in their attempt to change social norms. Dove launched a campaign called *Campaign for Real beauty*. Their goal is to help change the stereotypical views of women and to help women feel more beautiful each day.

In both essays, these students do not acknowledge that Dove wants to sell soap, especially to its target market—women. Instead, both students see

this website and its information in its community-minded, socially-responsible spin. While it would be interesting to talk to these students about the commercial aspects of this website, it would also be interesting to observe these students in their research processes to see how they both came to this website, along the lines of the work being done by Purdy and Walker.

The lack of discussion and disclosure of sources as well as the seemingly quick and unmeasured acceptance of them might be the result of poor instruction, poor assignment design, or simply poor execution from student writers. Some might also contend the lack of metadiscourse on source information in research essays from first-year composition students is nothing flawed; it is the result of informed decisions by students on audience, on the rhetorical situation, on their understanding of what academic research papers should accomplish. For example, it is certainly possible that students who used advocacy and commercial websites as source material for their essays refrain from discussing these sources in such ways that would force concessions, force them to wrestle with inconsistent data, inaccuracies or biases, or force them to add or acknowledge the complexity of certain topics. These students might be making the rhetorical move deliberately, to avoid critical references to these sources, seeing it as weakening their writing. It is also possible that students in this study believe one genre is more suited for academic research writing. Students might think that overt advocacy or persuasion papers, papers that typically ignore opposing or differing views, make the best research essays. It is also possible that students believed their readers to be aware of the sources, thus removing the need to discuss them fully. Some of these claims suggest a high level of sophistication in writing skills which is not consistent with the findings here, yet future research into student use of Web 2.0 source information should consider more closely what students and teachers believe to be the purpose of the research paper.

The lack of discussion or disclosure might also be due to changes in students' researching practices, changes brought on by the explosion of information in the Web 2.0 age. Nicholas Carr in his article "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" believes the Web is having profound cognitive effects, reprogramming its users to skim and know only superficially rather than read and fully understand ideas they encounter. Carr argues the style of reading common to users of the 2.0 version of the Web is a style that puts immediacy first and in doing so affects students' abilities to read deeply and critically, to make "rich mental connections" (online). Carr comments on his own experience as a Web 2.0 user, "For me, as for others, the Net is becoming a universal medium, the conduit for most of the information that flows

through my eyes and ears and into my mind . . . Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.”

Carr’s self-assessment is supported by research that he cites from scholars at University College London whose five-year-long study of Web users published in 2008 suggests that “new forms of ‘reading’ are emerging as users ‘power browse’ horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins. It almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense” (University College London). It is important to mention that power browsing, as the UCL researchers call it, is not particular to the Google Generation. In fact, the UCL researchers concede their studies show undergraduates as well as professors “exhibit a strong tendency towards shallow, horizontal, ‘flicking’ behaviour [sic]” and that “power browsing and viewing [skimming titles, contents pages and abstracts for information] appear to be the norm for all,” leading the researchers to conclude, “Society is dumbing down.” This conclusion might be overstated. Still, these “quick wins” are evidenced here in student use of advocacy and commercial websites, and this finding suggests that attention to fostering deep and critical understanding of Web-based information will only become more important as the 2.0 version of the Web continues to evolve.

Throughout the essays in this study, the finding remains that students do not seem to understand the difference between sources with an informative purpose or objective analysis and those that support a specific point of view or promote a particular product. They appear to perceive all web-based source material—advocacies, commercial pitches, and scholarly works—as equal types of support, especially in strengthening the writer’s point of view. As several other studies have concluded (Graham and Metaxas; Van Scoyoc and Cason; Sidler), students are using the Internet to gather much of their source information, but they appear to lack the information literacy skills needed to understand and use it effectively. Despite the prevalence of advocacy and commercial websites in the bibliographies of student essays and the apparent lack of understanding in the bodies of the essays themselves, participating teachers and their students seem to feel that they are respectively providing and receiving adequate information literacy training, even in regard to advocacy and commercialism and the corresponding issues of authority, bias and accuracy among others.

SURVEYING THE PARTICIPANTS

All five participating teachers responded to an online survey at the conclusion of the study. All of the teachers indicate on this survey that they provide information literacy training, with four of the five responding that

they provide training throughout the entire course. This training comes in various forms including readings from course texts (3 out of 5 teachers), assignments and class activities (5/5), teacher-developed handouts (4/5), links to websites (4/5), a single library instruction session (3/5), and multiple library instruction sessions (1/5). However, four of the five teachers also indicate that they spend less than 25% of class time on information literacy concepts, with two indicating they spend less than 10% of the time. Despite what seems like limited instruction in terms of class time, teachers rate the incoming and exiting information literacy skills of their students as a “7” and “9” respectively on a ten-point scale.

All five teachers comment that they teach the information analysis concepts such as authority, bias and accuracy, concepts important to the dissection and use of advocacy and commercial websites, with four teachers responding that they spend at least some time discussing these two particular types of websites. One teacher comments: “[The students and I] rank types of sources in terms of reliability and specificity, talk about what kinds of sources carry the most authority in papers we’ve been reading, and discuss how we might make our readers aware of potential biases or agendas” (“Teacher Survey”). Since teachers were unaware of the focus of this study, these responses are significant. From these teachers’ perspectives as gathered in this end-of-study survey, students are getting the training they need to understand and use commercial and advocacy websites, even after these same teachers have read and evaluated their students’ essays that appear to the researcher to be almost completely devoid of such understanding. This disconnect certainly suggests the need for more teaching training, or as one teacher participant comments, at least the need for more library instruction sessions (“Teacher Survey”). As I have contended in the past, it is likely that only a small number of first-year composition teachers have received a significant amount of training in the teaching of research skills, though they are likely competent researchers in their own right (McClure and Baures). Still, first-year composition teachers like those in this study find themselves the lead providers of information literacy training on most college campuses.

Students also find their information literacy training sufficient. Of the 106 students submitting essays for this study, forty students (38%) completed the online study offered at the conclusion of the course, and responses from these students indicate their teachers spent significant time providing information literacy training. In fact, 35% of the students surveyed claim their teachers dedicated at least nine class sessions on information literacy topics, and more than 90% of all respondents claim their teachers provided

information literacy training on bias and objectivity. One student comments on the information literacy training provided by her teacher:

She had us look at the website “Snopes.com” [A site that claims to be “the definitive Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation”] to actually check sources and information. It was a great exercise that led us to seriously question many sources. (“Student Survey”)

Interestingly, the percentage for having received instruction on bias and objectivity of source information is higher than responses for any criterion, including accuracy (87%), authority (73%) and timeliness (60%). Further, 83% and 56% of student respondents indicate their teachers provided training on advocacy websites and commercial websites respectively.

Training provided by teachers was supplemented by library information sessions, as 70% of student respondents note they participated in one or more sessions with an academic librarian. Again, this additional instruction focused on bias and objectivity, with 59% of students reporting such training. Advocacy and commercial websites were topics also covered by most librarians, as 63% and 52% of students claim they received some training on these types of sources during their library sessions. For example, take the following student comment on the information analysis training she received during a library instruction session:

We had a great session . . . [The academic librarian] put up the first Google result on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the Smart Board and analyzed the website, which was absolutely terrible and did not represent anything Dr. King stood for. Upon first glance, though, it looked reputable, and after all it was the first Google result! She did a terrific job of getting us to question our sources and to be aware of the information we were accessing.

The claim by this student and the finding it represents are significant, since librarians were also unaware of the study’s focal points. Similar to the survey responses from participating teachers presented earlier, academic librarians appear to be providing some training on digital advocacy and commercialism, though students seem indifferent in applying this training to their academic writing.

Still, all forty students responding to the survey note they pay at least some attention to using timely or current sources of information in the research essays for their first-year composition courses. This finding is consistent with both statistical and anecdotal evidence offered in other studies, as most report that students use timely sources, often concluding that

both the currency of information available on the Internet and the criterion itself make it easy for students to apply in their research and their writing. Looking at other criteria, however, the percentages do not drop off much. In fact, 97% and 92% of student respondents indicate they pay some attention to using sources with an appropriate level of authority and those free from bias respectively. While the close examination of student essays suggests otherwise, students themselves believe they understand and use information analysis skills effectively in their research writing. This finding is consistent with students' overall rating of their skills which students rate as a "6" entering their first-year composition courses and a "9" exiting their courses, and it supports conclusions presented in other research that finds "a big gap between [students'] actual performance in information literacy tests and their self-estimates of information skill" (University College London).

CONCLUSION

So what to make of this apparent disconnect between training in and using information literacy skills, especially in terms of advocacy and commercial websites? To answer this question, perhaps it best to return to one of the organizations used to frame the concept of digital advocacy in the introduction to this essay, the NCTE. The parent organization for all English teachers, including and especially first-year composition teachers who participate in the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), has recently adopted and published its "Definition of 21st Century Literacies" which includes the following statements that define literacy for today's Generation Y students living in a Web 2.0 world:

As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possesses a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. (NCTE "Toward a Definition")

Going on to articulate several skills needed by our students to be digitally literate as readers and writers, the NCTE believes today's students need to "manage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information." The UCL's claim that today's users are more power browsers than readers certainly complicates the process of managing information found on the Web. What also complicates this already-difficult process is that today's Web delivers these "multiple streams" in many ways, even within one website. Though it is often thought that the user-defined nature of the

Internet in the Web 2.0 era makes it an easier space, this ease is really only an ease of access, of entering the conversation. In fact, the level of sophistication in critical thinking skills needed to understand and use information on today's Web—to manage, analyze, and synthesize information—is a level never before seen in higher education or any other part of contemporary culture. Never before has information been so abundant, so available, and so complex. As Lorenzo and Dziuban remark, “[T]he volume of information being generated [on the Web] means no one will ever be “educated” for long—we will have to continually educate ourselves, searching, retrieving, and synthesizing information. It is no longer a college skill; it is a lifelong skill.” This comment seems true enough; however, it is argued that these information literacy skills are a large part of what makes first-year composition a college and university requirement across this country. For this reason, more attention to fostering students' critical thinking skills particularly with regard to information available on the 2.0 version of the Web is clearly needed in first-year composition courses.

Much like the expression that it takes a community to raise a child, it certainly will take the efforts of not just composition teachers, but all working in higher education to foster students' information literacies in the 21st century. Andy Guess in a 2008 article for *Inside Higher Ed* explains it this way: “[T]he gap between students' research competence and what's required of a modern college graduate can't be easily solved without a framework that encompasses faculty members, librarians, technicians and those who study teaching methods.” Fortunately, some work in bringing more collaboration to the teaching of information literacy skills is being done. For example, University of Central Florida's “Foundation for Information Fluency” (sacs.ucf.edu/cct/report/qep_summary.htm), Cornell University's “Undergraduate Information Competency Initiative” (infocomp.library.cornell.edu/?q=institute), and the California State University system's “Information Competence” program (www.calstate.edu/ls/Archive/info_comp_report.shtml) are three initiatives designed to take more institutional responsibility for information literacy training (Lorenzo and Dziuban). For example, the developers of Cornell's program acknowledge that today's Generation Y students are digital natives, but they lack the “research practices and mindset that encourages critical thinking about competing online sources.” Faculty participating in the initiative work in teams with librarians, IT staff members, and representatives from Cornell's Center for Learning and Teaching in an attempt to infuse information analysis skills into their curricula (Guess).

Though these programs exist and though the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) maintains that “nearly every college library has

a staff member charged with integrating information literacy into the curriculum” (Foster), it is safe to argue that many working in higher education today still believe information literacy to be the work only of librarians and composition teachers. A recent study of forty-five major research libraries finds that nearly three-fourths of libraries spend less than 20% of staff time on information literacy issues with more than half of the libraries spending less than 10% of staff time on such issues (Primary Research Group “Newsletter” 3). As this data suggests and as most librarians and WPAs know, the lion’s share of this work often occurs in first-year composition, particularly with assignments that prompt or require students to conduct research.

Another recent study from the Primary Research Group of more than 110 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada points out that only 9% of the schools surveyed actually require a course in information literacy whereas 23% of these schools require information literacy training be integrated into first-year composition courses. In addition, more than a third of the schools surveyed believed they could be doing a much better job with information literacy training (Primary Research Group “College”), a thought that has been echoed by many corporations and businesses (Lorenzo and Dziuban). Now, the Primary Group’s survey does not list the respondents in this research. More importantly though, the reliance on first-year composition programs to steward information literacy training may be even more pronounced than its report suggests. For example, seventy percent of the students responding to the survey here, of which nearly half were beyond their freshman year, note that they have written research essays in only one or two courses, including their first-year composition courses (“Student Survey”).

Since students are possibly not gaining significant exposure to working with sources in other areas of the curriculum, it appears first-year composition courses whether by choice or mandate are on the front lines of information literacy and critical thinking, and both the public perception and the sample of student research writing presented here suggest that this training is falling short. Graham and Metaxas draw a similar conclusion, “As students continue to view the Internet as a primary source of information, without a significant shift in training methods, this problem will only worsen” (75). Students will continue to go to the Web, and information literacy and critical thinking training for living and communicating in a Web 2.0 world is vital to students’ success in higher education and beyond. As researchers from University College London conclude, “Information skills are needed now more than ever and at a higher level if people are to really avail themselves of the benefits of an information society.”

Therefore, WPAs and composition teachers must make this 21st century literacy work even more a part of their curricula, most logically through a close partnership with their academic and research librarians. To echo Purdy and Walker, we must “bring together the fields of library and information science and writing studies to offer fuller insight into online research practices and their relationship to writing.” In fact, it has been my experience that many WPAs and composition teachers are unfamiliar with the extensive work the ACRL has put into the development of its *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm), a document similar to the WPA’s *Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition* (www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html).² WPAs should take the leadership role in forming these partnerships, since they are the ones in charge of courses that nearly all undergraduates take, courses that frame much of the undergraduate experience, particularly in regard to research methods and information literacy skills. A good starting point for such partnerships could be using the WPA and ACRL documents in local conversations among compositionists and librarians to determine what values, outcomes and standards for researching and writing they share.

It is true that library staffing is not what it once was, yet research librarians remain underutilized resources for students and uninvited partners of many faculty members, including those teaching first-year composition. Few WPAs and likely fewer faculty understand the kinds of things that librarians know about and how fully they are immersed in this world of source material, including non-traditional, non-academic, and even Web 2.0 sources. Inviting librarians more into undergraduate courses is an important move to make, and these partnerships can take on many forms. For example, teacher-librarian partners could work together to design assignments in order to build in research and analysis concepts at the points of need in them. Librarians and teachers could then co-facilitate tailored research sessions that address the subtleties of source information, like that common to advocacy on today’s Web. In the process, librarian-teacher partners will certainly learn more about their shared writing and researching goals, thus likely to improve both library and writing instruction in the process.

It is also true this solution presents a host of challenges for WPAs and librarians alike, but it presents a tremendous number of opportunities, including taking a lead role in providing a richer, more defined vertical starting point for integrating information literacy across the curriculum. In fact, faculty in writing and other programs have recently entered into such partnerships with academic librarians, and two partnerships of note

are those at Auburn University (media.cla.auburn.edu/english/news/EC11-14-07.html) and Utah State University³ (library.usu.edu/instruct/eng2010/index.php). Even working together as they are at these schools, it will not be easy for WPAs, composition teachers, librarians and others in higher education to help students understand the complex nature of information on today's Web.

In fact, it is possible that forming partnerships between libraries and writing programs might not significantly impact the researching practices, information analysis skills, and critical thinking abilities of undergraduates like first-year composition students. Some researchers believe that "intervention at university age is too late: these students have already developed an ingrained coping behaviour [sic]: they have learned to 'get by' with Google" (University College London). Until the outcomes of library-writing programs as well as other partnerships at the undergraduate level can be richly studied, however, these partnerships should continue. Depending on the findings from studies of library-writing programs, it might be necessary to extend these partnerships to include primary and secondary teachers and students. Embedding information literacy training throughout the P-16 curriculum might be the only way to effectively improve the information literacy skills of today's students.

Time is of the essence here, as recent research suggests that Internet users worldwide are developing their own "unified set of online attitudes, activities and behaviours [sic]" (University College London). And as the findings presented here show, these behaviors or practices might not be good ones. Students in this study continually fail to negotiate just one facet of today's Web—digital advocacy and commercialism—and this failure significantly affects their understanding of information and weakens their writing. More than a decade ago, Gillette and Videon voiced such a concern. Perhaps now in the Web 2.0 era, it is all that more important to listen. Five years ago, Kathleen Blake Yancey suggested that composition is "in a new key" (297) and that learning to understand and use Web 2.0 information is very much a part of the tune. In such an information age, the question remains how should we play it best?

NOTES

1. The topic of information/research/learning commons models for academic libraries has been discussed in the literature of library and information science for some time. See Lippincott for a discussion of such models and their related issues.

2. See McClure and Baures for a demonstration of how these two documents can be combined.

3. See Holliday and Fagerheim for a detailed discussion of the Utah State library-writing program partnership.

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Praxis and Allies: The WPA Board Game

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INTRODUCTION: THE WPA BOARD GAME AS A RHETORICAL TEXT AND A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

The story of the development of *Praxis and Allies: The WPA Board Game* is a narrative about not only the creation of a game but also of a rhetorical text. As we designed the game, the members of our WPA seminar (a semester-long graduate course about the theory and practice of writing program administration) became acutely aware that we were instantiating a particular vision of writing program administration, a vision shaped together over time by discussing our class readings, personal experiences, and beliefs. We came to understand that *Praxis and Allies* is not only a practical pedagogical tool for pre-service and practicing WPAs, but also a rhetorical document that articulates particular arguments—arguments we are making about the nature of WPA work and how prospective writing program administrators can learn about such work.

To understand the rhetorical foundations of the game, it is first necessary to understand the context of its inception. *Praxis and Allies* began as a class project for Purdue's Spring 2008 WPA seminar. As we thought through the game's ultimate purpose and audience, we imagined it as an engaging learning activity for use in seminars like the one we were taking. During the early stages of the game's development, it became clear that our purposes rested on some important warrants about what WPA work fundamentally is and how knowledge of it can be acquired.

The first important argument implicit in the creation of the game is that valuable knowledge about WPA work can and should be taught through formal coursework, observation, and practice during graduate school. In

“Turtles All the Way Down,” Louise Phelps states, “Administration is such a multifaceted, context-dependent activity that it is tempting to conclude it can’t be taught at all, only learned” (29). She goes on to argue, however, that this temptation must be resisted because it reifies the false distinction between theory and practice. The argument for the importance of explicit teaching about WPA work in graduate school is one that has reverberated through much of the field’s literature. Scholars such as Edward White, Trudelle Thomas, Sally Barr-Ebest, Shirley Rose and Irwin Weiser have written about the need for graduate-level WPA coursework and training. By creating a game that can contribute to the knowledge development of prospective WPAs, we have conveyed support for these assertions. In other words, *Praxis and Allies* not only provides a tool to help graduate students engage in WPA learning, it also underscores the argument that such learning is possible and desirable.

Closely related to our argument that WPA work can and should be taught formally is a second contention that is inherent to the game: the belief that WPA work is intellectual and scholarly. Rose and Weiser argue that the most persuasive reason for including WPA preparation in graduate study is because “writing program administration is intellectual work that is not only worthy of serious and rigorous formal study, but in need of it” (167). In recent years, many WPAs have asserted that writing program administration is an intellectual activity requiring the support of scholarship and research. Foundational documents such as “The Portland Resolution,” “Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration,” and Christine Hult’s “The Scholarship of Administration” have successfully advanced this view. We see our game as yet another persuasive text that contributes to this conception of WPA work.

In addition to arguing that WPA work can and should be taught, and that it is intellectual and scholarly work, *Praxis and Allies* also promotes a particular notion of one extremely complex and contentious issue in WPA work: the role of power. The game follows a team-play format in which players work together, inhabiting the same WPA role and jointly moving a single piece around the board to different locations on a fictional campus in order to acquire the necessary resources to meet a specific objective. The decision to use a team-play format was the most contentious issue we dealt with while designing the game. As we worked through this decision together, it became apparent that we were embroiled in a debate about a fundamental quality of WPA work. The game’s team-play design supports a view of WPA work consistent with the model of collaborative administration espoused by scholars such as Jeanne Gunner. Thus, the third major argument inherent to *Praxis and Allies* is that power and leadership are most

productively shared, and that individual WPAs almost never act with complete autonomy.

The rest of this article is divided into four sections. In the first, we describe the specific types of administrative knowledge areas present in *Praxis and Allies* and explain how game play provides low-risk experiential learning that focuses on these knowledge areas. The second section discusses the importance of narrative in representing WPA work and demonstrates how the game incorporates narrative as a pedagogical tool. The third section describes how the game acts as a procedural rhetoric and explains how the board game medium grew out of this procedural rhetorical purpose and the rhetorical context we envisioned. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of how we intend to distribute *Praxis and Allies* and how this distribution approach aligns with the game's collaborative philosophy.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY: HOW PRAXIS AND ALLIES PROVIDES LOW-RISK EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OF KEY ADMINISTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE AREAS

As discussed in the previous section, two central arguments of *Praxis and Allies* are that WPA work is intellectual and scholarly and that knowledge about this work can and should be taught to prospective WPAs. What, though, does the game teach? For us, this is fundamentally a question of what we believe WPAs must know: in deciding what we wanted players of the game to learn, we had to consider what we believed to be the major knowledge areas of writing program administration.

The question of what constitutes administrative knowledge has been raised in much WPA scholarship. In "Politics and the WPA: Traveling Through and Past Realms of Experience," Doug Hesse offers one possible area of WPA knowledge. He argues that first, "WPAs simply must be politicians" and that second, "the most meaningful political decisions generally involve competition for resources: time, space, and money" (42). If we look at these claims rhetorically, Hesse's syllogism sounds something like this:

Major Premise: WPAs must be politicians

Minor Premise: Politicians compete for resources of time, space, and money

Conclusion: WPAs must compete for resources of time, space, and money

So, in the effort to figure out what constitutes administrative knowledge, it seems that we have one possible answer: a WPA must know how to compete with other "players" for resources.

But understanding how to compete with others for resources is not the only knowledge a writing program administrator needs. It is commonly acknowledged in WPA discourse that a major challenge of administrative work is the need to balance many diverse roles and responsibilities. In the introduction to *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours*, Diana George likens this balancing act to plate twirling. WPAs, she claims, find themselves “on stage, trying to sustain the illusion of perpetual motion, worried over how to end the show without losing control as those plates go crashing onto the stage floor” (xi). Further, a WPA must balance her many administrative responsibilities and juggle that administrative work with teaching and research. It seems that another area of WPA knowledge that future administrators must cultivate is how to juggle a number of responsibilities and roles.

All this responsibility juggling relates, again, to resources, though perhaps not exactly the same types of resources for which WPAs must compete with others. Instead of external sorts of resources like money, space, and time, demands on the WPA compete with each other for the WPA’s personal stock of resources. What is less commonly acknowledged than WPAs’ need to balance responsibilities and roles is that the sheer amount of responsibilities delegated to writing program administrators—and the diversity of these responsibilities—requires that WPAs learn to use wisely (and sometimes conserve) their supply of personal resources. Again, not only do administrative responsibilities demand the WPA’s resources, but the WPA’s resources are also typically drained from the demands of teaching and research. The WPA is engaged in a one-person game that requires her to balance her own resources to win: knowing how to use wisely one’s personal resources constitutes another important area of WPA knowledge.

Praxis and Allies clearly focuses on the administrative knowledge area of competition for resources because a major element of game play is gathering resources. During the game, players must complete a task similar to something a writing program administrator would do (set up a WAC program, complete an assessment project, etc.). To complete the task successfully, players must obtain resources—specifically knowledge, funding, and *ethos*—from different places on the board that signify places in the university and department (library, faculty lounge, etc.). As the game progresses, players may gain or lose resources from chance cards. These chance cards are meant to represent the inevitable problems, as well as the positive experiences, a WPA will face and that she is often unable to control. Examples include: “A grant you wrote that would fund a WAC program is rejected—Lose 2 funding points” and “Interviews of student writers that you’re conducting go really well—Gain 2 knowledge points.” Because players win by

collecting the different resources they need to complete their given task, the sense of struggling for resources is central to the game.

Game play also focuses on the administrative knowledge area of juggling multiple roles and responsibilities because throughout the game, players get to try on different roles and must take on multiple responsibilities. Again, the chance cards are fundamental to this aspect of the game, since they reveal the breadth of WPA responsibilities and roles. For example, during game play, a player may receive a chance card that says she has gotten an article accepted to a journal, received a prestigious teaching award, or been awarded a grant to buy her writing program new computers. These positive chance cards would award the player with knowledge, energy, or funding. On the other hand, a player may receive a chance card that tells her an article she submitted was rejected, or one of her students filed a grade complaint, or her writing program is suddenly short a few teaching assistants. These negative chance cards would take away one of the player's resources. Importantly, the chance cards refer to different roles that the WPA has, not only as a WPA, but as a teacher and researcher as well. These chance cards are a continual reminder that the player is juggling a number of different roles and responsibilities.

During game play, players must not only gather resources and negotiate multiple roles and responsibilities, but they must also use wisely one of their own most precious personal resources: energy. Players are given a certain amount of energy at the start of each round. This energy, as happens in life, does run out. When players are low on energy, they must return home to replenish their supply. If players run out of energy, they suffer burnout and are unable to complete the game's task (in other words, they lose). Because players must manage their energy points wisely to finish the task—and therefore win the game—knowledge of how to conserve energy is also central to the game. This is important because, as Susan McLeod reminds us, successful WPAs must avoid burnout by managing stress and caring for themselves.

In considering how, through game play, *Praxis and Allies* facilitates learning about these three areas of administrative knowledge (competing for resources, juggling multiple roles and responsibilities, and conserving one's personal resources), we return briefly to Louise Phelps' "Turtles All the Way Down." Here, Phelps points out the complex methods by which learning most productively takes place at the intersection of three modes: "explicit formal learning through curricular study and research; experiential learning, a convenient term for an array of indirect practical learning modes; and pragmatic learning through the direct exercise of leadership in positional administration" (30). It is our contention that *Praxis and Allies*

incorporates all three of Phelps's modes to maximize learning: first, the game is intended for use as a formal learning tool in the context of coursework and requires students to draw on knowledge from their research and scholarship; second, it requests students to reflect on their own observations and experiences collaboratively; and third, it provides pragmatic opportunities to role play and simulate the leadership positions and decision-making processes that students might experience in real WPA positions.

Praxis and Allies can add to graduate students' preparation for administration by providing them with a low-risk opportunity to practice with key knowledge areas that are fundamental to writing program administration. When used in a course, the game can add an experiential element to supplement other more traditional activities like reading and discussion. The game also has potential to supplement graduate students' experiential learning in administrative internships and jobs by giving them a lower-risk opportunity to experiment with WPA work before they actually have to do so in a graduate student administrative position. In other words, *Praxis and Allies* allows prospective WPAs to *play with* some of the most important areas of WPA work.

REACHING AND TEACHING AN EXTERNAL AUDIENCE: THE IMPORTANCE OF NARRATIVE IN WPA LITERATURE AND IN PRAXIS AND ALLIES

In "The Next Generation of WPAs," Barr-Ebest remarks, "If we want the next generation of WPAs to avoid the problems and prejudices [the first generation of WPAs has] encountered, we need to ensure that they learn what we know before they graduate" (82). One of the ways in which administrative knowledge has traditionally been shared is through narratives. Narratives are ubiquitous throughout WPA scholarship because they help WPAs situate their reader within an otherwise possibly foreign context. It is through narrative that WPAs are best able to share with a larger audience what they do and why and how their work is intellectual. *Praxis and Allies* incorporates narrative into game play as a learning aid, with the central focus on creating a team narrative. The game provides prospective and current WPAs an opportunity to create, tell, or rewrite their own stories.

The importance of narrative creation to *Praxis and Allies* reflects the ubiquity of the narrative in WPA literature (Enos and Borrowman; George). As newer and established WPAs work to convey the knowledge they have gained through practical experience and research, WPAs have often struggled against the lack of understanding with which their audience may view their profession. One reason for this is the situatedness of WPA work. Rose writes:

Writing program administration is deeply embedded in and dependent upon the cultures of the particular institutions in which individual writing programs are located, the disciplinary culture of composition studies and English studies more generally, and the broader culture of faculty life and work in higher education [. . .] WPAs frequently turn to narrative as a way to impose order, meaning, and value on their experience. (221)

As a result of the “embedded” nature of WPA work, a WPA’s reading audience may reside largely outside of the author’s working context and may misunderstand or devalue the work a WPA does. This external audience may be composed of those working outside academia or across disciplines and may perhaps be composed of other WPAs who work in very different contexts. Future WPAs currently enrolled in graduate programs also comprise this external audience. It is particularly for this group that *Praxis and Allies* was created.

In WPA scholarship, the narrative is a very appropriate tool for narrowing the knowledge gap between a WPA’s external audience and the intellectual work in which the WPA is engaged due to the narrative’s accessible nature. Readers’ familiarity with narratives in other contexts make the scholarship of WPA work written in a narrative form more accessible to an audience otherwise unfamiliar with the WPA’s context. Rose explains how narratives may be used to increase understanding among readers who perhaps lack familiarity with the context being described:

[Narratives] impose order and coherence by sequencing and suggesting cause-effect relationships, making experience predictable by fitting it into familiar patterns and making it make sense by transforming it into stories with recognizable characters, conflicts, and resolutions. These stories allow their narrators to integrate the experiences of the individual agent into the broader social experience by naming them, describing them, and contextualizing them. In this way, they can give meaning and value in a broader culture to what might otherwise seem to be singular, inexplicable experiences without significance, representing them in terms of familiar shared metanarratives. (222)

During game play, narrative construction promotes learning and discussion about administration, and also encourages prospective WPAs to draw from their previous experience and reading about WPA work. Specifically, as players strategize how to move about the game board, they construct nar-

ratives based on previous experience, inhabit narratives by WPAs in the literature, or imagine the actions they might take themselves. The game seeks to move players beyond the traditional role of a narrative's external reader and allow the players to become a character in their own narrative.

As an aid to narrative construction, *Praxis and Allies* incorporates the use of situated performance activities into its game play. Rose and Finders argue that these activities allow participants to “enact the subject positions being examined” and that they “impose a narrative structure on what might otherwise be inchoate experience . . . allow[ing] participants to at least temporarily inhabit those subject positions they might have assigned to the Other” (38–9). As players of *Praxis and Allies* are put into the subject position of the WPA, the “situated performance supplies a dynamic text for interpretation and revision by temporarily transforming fluid, fragmented subjects acting in dynamic settings into agents in structured narratives that can be examined” (36). In this way, *Praxis and Allies* allows graduate students the opportunity to try out and learn from their own narrative creations within a low-risk environment that has relatively little consequence. Rather than simply remaining part of the external audience of someone else's narrative, players begin constructing their own WPA histories.

INTERSECTION OF PURPOSE, MEDIUM, AND RHETORICAL CONTEXT: THE CHOICE TO MAKE A BOARD GAME

Of *Praxis and Allies*, one might reasonably ask, “why did this text have to be a board game as opposed to some other medium?” Our choice of medium grew out of decisions we made about both the rhetorical context and the purpose that we envisioned for the game. Following Anne Wysocki's argument in *Writing New Media*, our foremost concern was with *how* and *why* we would produce our text, not *what* we would produce (15). In other words, the purpose and rhetorical situation of *Praxis and Allies* drove our decisions about medium, rather than vice versa.

When we imagined our audience for this game, we pictured a class like our own: six graduate students and an instructor gathered together in a classroom to teach and learn about writing program administration. Therefore, we needed something that each person could participate equally in and something that would afford the audience the opportunity to interact. Our response to this rhetorical context was a board game similarly fashioned to the ones we had played as children. First, a board game requires the physical presence of a group of people. Second, it enables players of different ages and expertise to participate in meaningful ways. And finally, it is largely dialogue driven. Therefore, developing a game based on the pro-

cedures of writing program administration enabled us to capitalize on the rhetorical context of class meetings.

Not only was the board game format crucial for the rhetorical contexts we imagined for our audiences, but it was also crucial to the purpose of the game, namely, facilitating the understanding of writing program administration processes prior to actually engaging in those processes. In *Persuasive Games*, Ian Bogost argues that procedural rhetoric, the practice of persuading through processes, is an especially useful means of understanding the potential and real effects of video games because the “procedurality” helps us gain a better understanding of the “methods, techniques, and logics” that operate systems (3).

For an example of the complex procedurality of writing program administration, consider Trudelle Thomas’s 1991 essay on the “Graduate Student as Apprentice.” She writes:

This morning I teach two classes and hold conferences with students. Then I meet with the academic vice president and my department chair to discuss plans for a writing assessment program for the six hundred students who move through our composition program each year. By mid-afternoon, I hope to escape to the library to fine-tune plans for a faculty workshop later this week. It’s a typical day in the life of this writing program administrator. I delight in the variety of tasks and relationships that make up my job, but sometimes I think back on graduate school and wonder: how did all of those captivating seminars in Barth and Berthoff and Woolf prepare me for this? (41)

What’s missing from Thomas’s education is not the theoretical knowledge of working as a WPA but the procedural knowledge of operating within this larger academic system. Returning to Bogost, we see that “procedurality refers to a way of creating, explaining, or understanding processes. And processes define the way things work: the methods, techniques, and logics that drive the operation of systems, from mechanical systems like engines to organizational systems like high schools to conceptual systems like religious faith” (3). With *Praxis and Allies*, we have attempted to extend that notion of procedurality, that definition of how things work, to writing program administration.

But simply writing or reading about the procedurality of writing program administration is not sufficient for understanding it. Bogost also contends that simple oral, written, or visual rhetorics “inadequately account for the unique properties of procedural expression” (29) and that “procedural

representation itself requires inscription in a medium that actually enacts processes rather than merely describes them” (9). Therefore, as the designers of this text, we needed to select a medium that would allow us to represent and enact the processes of writing program administration over other media that would merely enable us to describe those processes. As Bogost argues in his book, games provide an excellent medium for enacting these processes.

In considering procedural rhetoric and video games, Bogost argues like Wysocki that the *how* and the *why* of media can be more important than the *what*. When commenting on the discourse surrounding games on online message boards, he suggests that they reveal something about procedural rhetoric: “It’s not just about winning; it’s also about telling people what you did and how you did it” (39). To put it another way, part of the value of games is the discourse produced about the game’s processes. *Praxis and Allies* is a valuable rhetorical text because it articulates administrative processes and also creates discourse about those processes in a way that no other type of medium can do in this context.

FUTURE PLANS FOR PRAXIS AND ALLIES: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO AUTHORSHIP, OWNERSHIP, AND DISTRIBUTION

We created *Praxis and Allies* with the idea that the game could be played, expanded, and adapted by other WPAs and graduate students. In distributing the game, we hope to maintain this collaborative philosophy while also protecting our original intellectual contributions from being commercialized. To this end, we drew upon the philosophies of copyleft and Creative Commons while exploring issues of authorship and ownership. Copyleft, a philosophy opposed to “copyright,” encourages individuals to share their works freely in the public domain, fostering community revision and free redistribution. Although copyleft philosophies were originally conceived for the computer software industry, today copyleft has a host of uses, including for intellectual and educational materials. Creative Commons is one such organization that promotes the ideals of copyleft philosophy while offering some protections for authors.

Creative Commons and copyleft philosophies closely align with many values WPAs share and can provide an alternative model for distributing works like *Praxis and Allies* and assist in developing collective WPA knowledge in other contexts. In “Coding with Power: Towards a Rhetoric of Computer Coding and Composition,” Robert E. Cummings argues that copyleft philosophies can closely align with the work that Rhetoric and Composition scholars, researchers, and academic writers do. Cummings

makes the case that with a few exceptions (such as textbook publishing) academic authors do not write primarily for the purposes of making a profit but rather for intellectual and educational purposes (431). Since the entire “copyright” system was designed for protecting the profits gained from original creations, if profit is not a primary goal, alternative models can—and should—be considered.

Applying Cummings’s arguments directly to the intellectual products of WPAs, like *Praxis and Allies*, we can see how copyleft philosophy is potentially linked with much of the intellectual work of WPAs. WPA work is inherently collaborative—WPAs collaborate with teachers of writing, students, administrators and other WPAs to create and share knowledge. For example, Laura Brady in “A Greenhouse for Writing Program Change” describes the collective ways in which faculty and administrators made considerable changes to their programs through collaboration. As discussed elsewhere in this article, collaboration and collaborative learning were key components of *Praxis and Allies*. We want to encourage an ongoing collaboration that extends beyond the context of the immediate development of *Praxis and Allies*; Creative Commons and copyleft philosophies provide us with the tools to do that.

The philosophy of Creative Commons can be summed up in their statement, “some rights reserved.” Unlike the traditional copyright that authors or publishers hold, Creative Commons allows for individuals to protect their works while still encouraging others to build upon them freely. Their range of licensing options includes Attribution, “you let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work—and derivative works based upon it—but only if they give credit the way you request” and Share Alike, “you allow others to distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the license that governs your work” (CreativeCommons.org). By applying a Creative Commons “Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike License” to the WPA Game, we are able to protect our original intellectual work while still distributing it to others.

To further illustrate this point, consider the following two distribution scenarios for *Praxis and Allies*. In the first scenario (under the copyright philosophy), we distribute the game via PDF on the web and retain full authorship, ownership, and copyright. The game is downloaded and played by WPAs and graduate students in various contexts. If revisions are made to the game, they are most likely made by the original authors and redistributed to those who are interested in playing. This creates a very one-way creation and consumption ideology—we create the game and others consume it. This philosophy does not fit with the game’s own collaborative and shared knowledge focus, nor does it reflect the day-to-day collaborations in

which WPAs engage. In the second scenario (under the copyleft philosophy), we create and distribute a PDF of the game on the web, but apply the Creative Commons “Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike License.” Under this license, we forgo exclusive rights to ownership of the game and open the game up for revision, expansion, and shared ownership to the WPA community. Others download and modify the game, adding to it and expanding it with their own experiences and insights. *Praxis and Allies* and its modifications continue to be distributed and redistributed, becoming a community-driven, collaborative text of shared experience.

If we compare the Creative Commons philosophy to a standard “copy-right” philosophy of distributing the game, we end up with two different contexts and underlying ideologies. The copyleft/Creative Commons model has much to teach WPAs about the role of shared texts, knowledge, and experiences. By engaging *Praxis and Allies* in this mindset, we initiate an ideological shift in ownership and a commitment to collaboration.

CONCLUSION

Praxis and Allies: The WPA Board Game is a rhetorical text that suggests that WPA work can and should be taught and that this work is scholarly and intellectual. The game is also a pedagogical tool that provides prospective WPAs the opportunity to try out their own future narratives as they begin constructing their individual WPA histories through game play. However, the game is not just for those “players” new to writing program administration. On the contrary, the game offers future, junior, and seasoned WPAs an opportunity for dialogue.

We would like to conclude this article with an anecdote that illustrates how this game may be relevant to the work of experienced WPAs as well. In our initial piloting of *Praxis and Allies*, we invited graduate students and professors from the English Department to play the game while we observed. During the game-play session, we witnessed the English Department Head defer to the Writing Lab Director on matters of writing center theory while graduate students offered relevant experiences from their first-year composition classrooms. Although the game players maintained different statuses in the department, each individual’s knowledge and experience were valued as they worked toward the game objective. In short, the game brought together players with diverse experiences and insights, and allowed these players to learn and reflect collaboratively about WPA work. Such was our goal for *Praxis and Allies: The WPA Game*. *Praxis and Allies: The WPA Game* will be available soon for download at the Council of Writing Program Administrators website (<http://wpacouncil.org/>).

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Composing in a Digital World: The Transition of a Writing Program and Its Faculty

Pamela Takayoshi and Brian Huot

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

In 2002, the provost at a large state-supported university charged the English Department with the task of revising the writing program to make it more “more effective and efficient.” The program had not been revised in over a decade, and the provost provided a small grant of \$10,000 to support this substantial work. Committees were formed within the English Department and Writing Program, and two rhetoric and composition faculty spearheaded what came to be known as the Writing Program Initiative (WPI). While the majority of the curriculum revision improved the current curriculum to make the courses more effective, the WPI also moved the second course to the sophomore year (the year following freshmen attrition), so that the new program would ultimately teach fewer students and therefore be more efficient. Admittedly, the move to a vertical curriculum capitalized on our substantial attrition rate in making the program “more efficient,” though we believe that such a design for efficiency is more defensible than other alternative responses such as increasing class size or separating grading from teaching (Hester; Rickly). More significantly in pedagogical terms, though, the move of the second required writing course allowed us to create a more rigorous second course in which students with greater experience with writing for college and with a greater sense of their own academic goals and majors can be asked to accomplish more ambitious projects and be held to more exacting standards.

One outcome of the provost’s charge was a renewed interest in the teaching of writing in the English Department and across campus. Within a short period of time, writing instruction, curriculum and outcomes became important, conversational topics for a variety of faculty and university

administrators as the university community discussed the kinds of experiences students needed to have in order to be successful in a variety of majors and professions. While the old curriculum focused on humanities-based, print-only approaches to the teaching of writing, the new curriculum—supported by current composition scholarship (Selfe; Shipka; Wysocki et al.) and grounded in a process and rhetorical approach to the teaching of writing—encompassed a wider range of composing options and products, including visual, audio and multimodal artifacts. Groups of writing faculty met and wrote the various goals, objectives and requirements (see below) for each of the two required courses. The new writing courses which emerged from these objectives and goals were designed to support students composing in a digital environment and to give them experience in composing multimodal and digital texts. Different versions of the WPI were proposed and vetted across the university, especially with the curriculum committees that would eventually have to approve the new writing courses. While there was concern among certain humanities faculty that courses including multimodal forms of composition would shortchange a traditional focus on the print-linguistic scholarly essay, faculty across the curriculum agreed that students learning to write for the academy and a variety of professions need experience and instruction with composing in multiple, digital media.

The flurry of activity and burgeoning interest in the writing program across campus provided the impetus for the hiring of a writing program administrator at the senior level three semesters after the initial charge from the provost. At that point, the vertical curriculum and focus on including multimodal forms of composing was already in place. The new WPA's initial duties were to chair the committees that finalized the goals and objectives of the new courses and to shepherd the new curriculum through the various university committees. The following is an abbreviated version of the goals and objectives for the two courses eventually approved by the university (a complete version along with the course requirements is provided as Appendix A).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE TWO NEW COURSES

Course 1

1. To learn how to recognize and strategically use the conventions of academic literacy.
2. To understand and use rhetorical principles to produce public and private documents appropriate for academic and professional audiences and purposes.

3. To practice good writing, including planning, revising, editing, evaluating sources, and working with others.
4. To practice the processes of good reading.
5. To learn web and digital environments valued by the university.

Course 2

1. To build upon students' rhetorical understanding to compose documents that reflect the authors' recognition of using information to influence readers.
2. To use a variety of organizational strategies to integrate authorities smoothly into documents that explore issues and answer questions appropriate for liberal education.
3. To read and evaluate various sources and modes of information important to research and inquiry in academic and professional settings.
4. To learn web and digital environments necessary for conducting and writing research.
5. To acquire and practice information literacy.

Although the new curriculum incorporated the use of composing technologies and web-based practices, prior to the WPI, there were no required writing courses offered in a computer classroom. During one of many meetings with the provost, prior to the piloting of the new courses during the academic year 2005–2006 (AY 05–06), the WPA pointed out that he had a curriculum which could not be delivered without computer classrooms. In a subsequent meeting, the provost announced the funding of a new computer classroom for the piloted courses. The WPA invited rhetoric and composition faculty with expertise in computers and composition to help design what eventually became a wireless laptop classroom, complete with twenty-five laptop computers, a smartboard, a computer projector, a DVD player, a laser printer, a scanner, and a document camera.

As AY 05–06 progressed, and the WPI began to move through the various university committees, it became apparent that the new curriculum would be in place for AY 06–07. Still, there was only the one laptop classroom available for the entire writing program. Again, the WPA repeated his assertion that the writing program had a curriculum it could not deliver.

While the English department and the writing program had done their work in responding to the provost's charge to revise the writing program, the limited classroom resources available to the program threatened to block any substantial change from taking place. The provost's office responded by organizing a flurry of meetings that included the vice president for information services (IS), members of the IS staff, the WPA, rhetoric and composition faculty expert in computers and composition, the English department chair, and members of the provost's office.

From these conversations, the VP for IS and the computers and composition scholar in the department presented a proposal to computer company representatives who were working with the university's IS. At the formal presentation of the proposal to the computer company representatives, the computers and composition scholar shared the new writing program curriculum goals, summarized scholarly arguments for the value of teaching with technologies, and shared an undergraduate student's video essay. While the reps listened solemnly to the presentation of curricular goals and theoretical arguments, minutes into the presentation of the student video project, they had eagerly leaned forward in their chairs, asking questions, offering their responses, and engaging with the theoretical issues in substantial understanding. One representative commented, "I have a staff of 30 people under me—and I wish all of them knew how to make such a composition." The grant proposal was successful, and the university received more than \$450,000 worth of computer technology and software to equip its new computer classrooms. It was the multimodal possibilities for composition instruction that excited the reps.

In the fall of 2006, in conjunction with the implementation of the major curricular change in the writing program's goals and objectives, the writing program opened the doors to five new wireless, laptop computer classrooms (six computer classrooms in total). The classrooms not only support our writing curriculum, they extend the multimodal possibilities for students in the program. In addition to computer technologies which support traditional written practices (computers, word processing programs, page design programs, printers, scanners), the classrooms include technologies supporting a range of compositional possibilities: document cameras, DVD players, built-in speakers, ceiling-mounted projectors, visual design software, digital audio recorders, digital still cameras, video cameras, transcription machines, and software for teaching and learning multimodal compositions. Prior to the arrival of these classrooms, writing program faculty incorporated composing technologies into their classes in numerous ways: technology carts (with laptops, speakers, and data displays) which could be wheeled into traditional classrooms, scheduling classes (mostly

professional communication classes) in the sole computer classroom, scheduling classes in other buildings, or sending students to the Student Multimedia Studio in the library for instruction. Without programmatic access to computer classrooms, however, the integration of composing technologies into the curriculum was idiosyncratic, relying on individual faculty's interest in teaching with technologies. With these six new classrooms, every section of first and second year writing has at least one class meeting per week in a laptop classroom.

Our faculty are diverse in both their institutional rank and their disciplinary commitments, including part-time adjuncts with mostly MAs in literature; graduate students in literature and in rhetoric and composition at both the MA and PhD level; full-time, non-tenure track lecturers with MA and PhD credentials in literature, and tenure-track rhetoric and composition faculty. Recognizing that the new curriculum and the laptop classrooms presented new possibilities and challenges to such a diverse writing program faculty, prior to and throughout the first semester of the new curriculum the writing program organized a book discussion group, teaching groups, and, a series of weekly workshops focused on the curricular goals and composing technologies. This moment in the Writing Program involved two distinct yet indivisible kinds of work: one, the significant theoretical work of processing the new curricular goals and designing new writing classes which supported those goals and objectives; and two, the equally demanding work of thinking about and incorporating composing technologies in meaningful and relevant ways for writing students. Although these two types of work were intertwined with one another, the WPA was able to articulate them as distinct kinds of work in order to argue the need for a coordinator of digital composing who could be responsible for the latter kind of work. A tenured associate professor whose research involved composing technologies thus received one course release per semester for directing the new office for digital composing; additionally, a graduate student in rhetoric and composition received a course release as assistant coordinator of digital composing. The designation of a digital composing coordinator (and the accompanying commitment of financial resources) was a recognition by the university and departmental administration of the work necessary for a smooth transition into the new curriculum. As importantly, the institutionalization of the digital composing office also underscored the substantial, intellectual work involved in working with composing technologies and the ongoing nature of learning with technologies (see Appendices B and C for descriptions of the coordinator and assistant coordinator's responsibilities).

The writing program faculty began the first semester of the new curriculum scaffolded by this structure, and even then, the enormity of the transition was revealed in surprising ways. For example, the design of the laptop classrooms creates a very different learning space from most traditional classrooms (see Figure 2). Although constrained by the limitations of physical space, architectural concerns, regulations involving disabilities services, and fire codes, the design of the laptop classrooms provided an opportunity to instantiate into the physical space a theoretically and disciplinarily supportable pedagogy. In his interesting book chapter on design and the delivery of composition with computer technology, Todd Taylor points out that questions about the ways in which technology can be used to deliver writing instruction are often questions that can be answered by paying attention to design. As we implemented a new curriculum in a new, specifically designed physical space we realized that the classrooms we designed promoted a specific kind of pedagogy—the physical space, itself, had theoretical, pedagogical and political implications for the ways teachers would work with their students. We echo Taylor’s point about the importance of design in delivering composition instruction as we enlarge the discussion about design to include the physical space of the technology-rich classroom. This attention to design for technological instructional spaces can also be seen in Morgan Gresham and Kathleen Blake Yancey’s article on designing the Pearce Center at Clemson in which faculty worked with architects to develop a curricular space, emphasizing the importance of the design of the space and the authorship of that design. Gresham and Yancey make the important point that architecture is essentially rhetorical as it seeks to create something for a particular purpose for an audience or group of users.

As Figure 1 shows, space in the room is not clearly demarcated *teacher* or *student* as in most traditional classrooms, where a larger desk occupies the front of the room (that is, what is clearly the front of the room given that it is where the teacher’s desk is and all the student desks are oriented toward it). In the laptop classrooms, there is no larger desk, and the chairs don’t all face one direction. While the projector remains fixed in its ability to project onto one particular wall, the laptop connected to the projector is one like all the others, sitting at the end of the row. With this design, the writing program administrators made a conscious choice to design the space to:

- support and encourage a distribution of power among all participants in the classroom space
- foreground students, students’ writing processes, and their products;
- encourage active, collaborative learning (rather than learning as a passive act of reception);

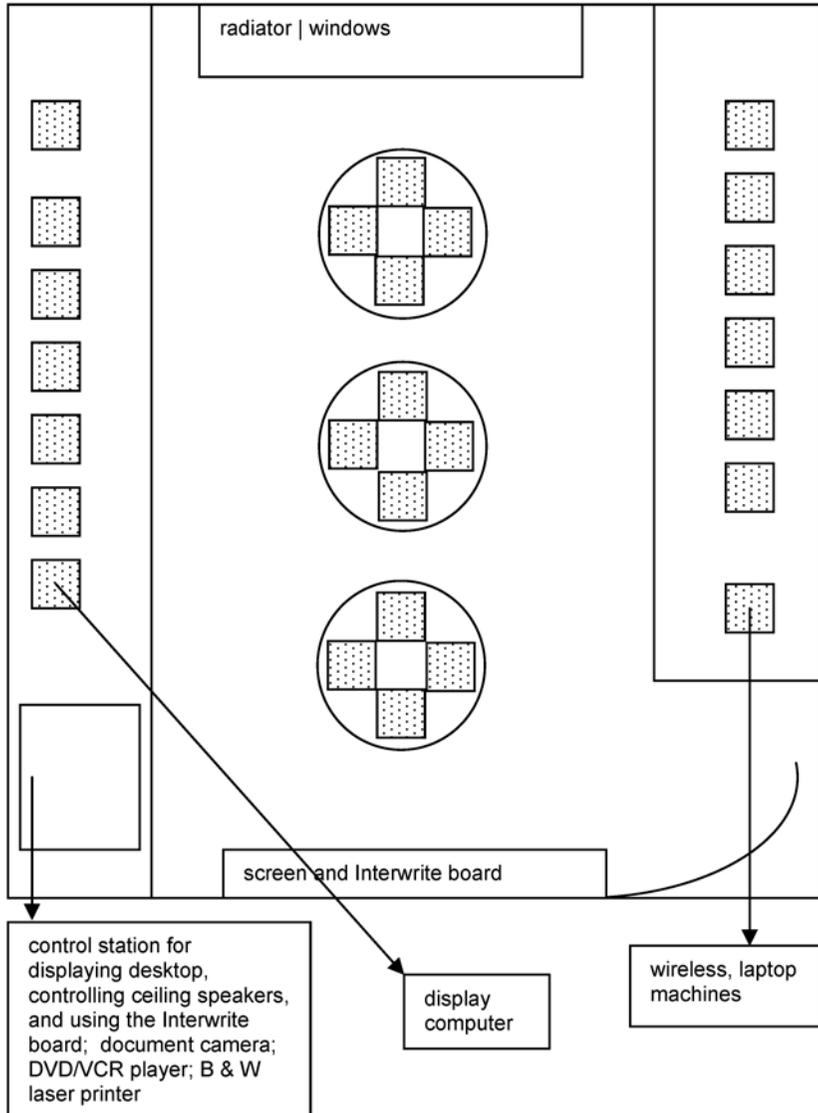


Figure 1. Map of the laptop classroom.

- support learning in process (rather than coming together to share final work done outside of class); and
- emphasize the classroom as a space for a variety of kinds of performance as teachers and students take on a variety of roles—as learner, as expert, as teacher, as coordinator, as participant, as peer.

We knew the classroom design, along with the new curriculum and the computers, would require a practical and theoretical transition for teachers who are used to a more traditional curriculum, classroom, and classroom design. One day during the new curriculum's first year, we encountered that transition in conversation with one of the instructors. While she praised the classrooms and their capabilities for allowing students to access the world while they worked together, she also confessed that, at first, she "didn't know where to sit." This uncertainty about where to sit reveals the complexity of this transition the program was undertaking—it is a space where theoretical, practical, administrative, and instructional expectations and experience met head-on. While de-normalizing the classroom space for teachers is theoretically supportable as widespread changes are made to a writing program, writing program administrators also need to understand how hard teachers have to work to make a successful transition.

While the literature in writing program administration addresses similar curricular and technological changes at other institutions, our article focuses on the impact these changes had for faculty who had taught a current-traditional curriculum in a traditional classroom. Irwin Weiser writes about the major curriculum change at Purdue in which the overall writing requirement was reduced to one course. As part of this change, all writing courses met at least once a week in a computer classroom or computer lab that could be used as a classroom. While this is certainly a huge change, Purdue had been offering computer-based composition courses since 1985 and presumably had a cadre of teachers and culture of working with students in a computer environment. Beyond a single sentence detailing that ongoing workshops were offered for teachers, Weiser does not focus on the main issue we address in our article. Like the curriculum reform about which we write, Dennis Lynch and Anne Wysocki examine the curriculum change at Michigan Tech (MTU) which was initiated at the behest of an outside push for curricular reform. While ours came from the provost's office, the change at MTU was spearheaded by a report from the North Central Accreditation Association. Again, while Lynch and Wysocki mention the role of preparing teachers for the new curriculum, it is not the focus of their article nor is an increased use of technology, since the MTU curriculum revision focused on integrating speech and other communication into required composition courses.

Mary Hocks' article about the infusion of multimodal assignments and teaching in writing across the curriculum courses probably comes closest to the focus of our work, since she does talk more extensively about the impact of the curriculum change on teachers, teachers responses to this impact, and the process of preparing teachers to deliver a new curriculum

involving the use of technology. We agree with Hocks' suggestion that "we need to make arguments at our institutions and also nationally for faculty development and support that is truly modeled on the best WAC practices, practices that actually transform our experiences as teachers" (38). We also believe that the curriculum reform and infusion of technology in the required writing courses at the institution we studied offered writing faculty these opportunities. However, what we are able to offer in the conversation about curriculum reform, design, and the use of technology in writing course are the voices of the teachers themselves, since we are one of the few if not the only researchers who actually asked teachers about their experiences in transitioning into a technology-rich curriculum and teaching environment.

In order to understand the transition into the new curriculum and the new laptop classrooms by faculty and students, we designed two surveys—one for faculty, one for students—which asked parallel kinds of questions about what was happening in the classrooms and what the users of these spaces thought about those practices. We knew that student and teacher attitudes toward the classrooms and the curriculum varied widely—some were enthusiastic, some were resistant, some began the semester with a strong commitment to the new curriculum and to instruction in composing technologies, others had very little interest, and still others had an interest and commitment but not a lot of background experience. We wanted our survey to capture as many of these perspectives as possible. Whereas it would have been an easy matter to send an email to the writing program faculty listserv asking faculty and their students to complete an electronic survey, we worried about the return rate and accurate representation across faculty institutional ranks, experiential levels, and commitment to the new curriculum and the new technologies. For these reasons, we organized a team of survey proctors to visit the classes, describe the study, and invite participants to complete the survey while the proctors remained in the room to troubleshoot.¹ Additionally, we identified technologically-savvy faculty who were comfortable distributing the survey to their own classes. In the end, 31 instructors (out of 71 total writing program faculty teaching that semester) and 862 students (out of approximately 1,500 enrolled across the three writing courses) completed the surveys on technology use given at the end of the first semester of our curricular revision.²

As programmatic research, the surveys offer important details on how this diverse faculty transitioned to a new, digitally based curriculum meeting in new laptop classrooms—information important for improving as a program in subsequent semesters. As a snapshot of a unique—yet increasingly common—moment in one writing program's transition to a new

multimodal curriculum, however, we believe these surveys provide a better understanding of how writing program faculty make such a transition. While writing studies scholars have theorized many reasons why writing programs must take seriously multiple modes of communication (Cushman et al.; Selfe; Shipka; Wysocki et al.), there is little data-based scholarship that reports on faculty making the transition to multimodal composition teaching.

Understanding what happens when teachers undertake the complex and involved theoretical work necessary to shifting their writing pedagogy is an important step in understanding contemporary written communication practices and instruction.³ As Anthony Atkins has argued,

Research assessing the preparation of our teaching assistants (TA) and future tenure-track faculty members is crucial, for it will let us know where we are and where we need to go in order to offer the best preparation for our graduates. The need for such research is even more pressing when we consider the extent to which undergraduate literacy has been affected by pervasive digital technologies.

In addition to attention to teacher preparation, attention to the complex networks in which teachers engage digital technologies is important. Danielle DeVoss, Ellen Cushman, and Jeffrey Grabill argue that understanding the infrastructures required for new media composing is crucial because “these often invisible structures make possible and limit, shape and constrain, influence and penetrate all acts of composing new media in writing classes” (16). They suggest that

An infrastructural analysis of the spaces and practices of composing new media gets at some basic and powerful issues with respect to new-media composing: the ways in which new-media writing becomes defined, shaped, accepted, rejected, or some combination of all of these (and more); who gets to do new media; who gets to learn it, where, and how; and what values get attached to this work (and to its writers and audiences). (17)

Our survey data add another layer to our disciplinary understanding of the spaces and practices of composing new media by capturing how teachers themselves negotiate this transition—how prepared they felt, how they learned to work within this new curriculum and these new spaces, and how they negotiated the materiality of the new spaces which encouraged and demanded new roles and relationships among teachers and faculty.

This faculty perspective is an important piece in understanding the interface between people and the often invisible infrastructures in which they work. The three major themes which emerge from our surveys suggest that even when the technologies are new (and thus, might be expected to be most visible in their disruptive possibilities), faculty negotiating the transition into a new curriculum and technology classrooms foreground what is made possible by the technologies rather than focusing on the technologies themselves. In this article, we organize the results and discussion around three lessons we learned that appear to be relevant to any writing program considering widespread technological change:

- faculty saw themselves as learners and especially took advantage of opportunities within their pre-established communities of learning and working;
- an increased visibility of work was made possible through the composing technologies; and
- both of the previous points contributed to a shifting configuration of people, their identities, their roles, and their relationships with one another.

These changes to theoretical understandings, pedagogical relationships, and teaching and work practices are permeated by the presence of the technologies. But significantly, faculty participating in the survey were focused not on the capabilities of the technologies or any inherent value or feature of the technologies; instead, they remained focused on and committed to the work and relationships made possible by the technologies. At the heart of these three themes lies the teaching and learning relationship, not the technologies, and in the end, our experiences with the new curriculum and the new classrooms demonstrate that rather than causing a radical disruptive change, new technologies are often successfully incorporated into strong pre-existing contexts of learning and teaching.

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

As might be expected, faculty tended to use composing technologies with which they were familiar. More than half of the teachers reported using computer technologies in at least seven ways: word processing, email, data display, web research, word processing with visual elements and/or sound, PowerPoint, and accessing the course management software known as Blackboard Vista. What teachers already knew how to do prior to the addition of the computer classrooms to the program remained the most

common uses of computer technologies. Interestingly, the third most common way faculty reported using the computers in class was displaying data through the computer projector. Throughout the semester, at the change in classes, the coordinator and assistant coordinator of digital composing were stationed outside the six laptop classrooms to troubleshoot, answer questions, and talk informally with teachers as they entered and exited their classes. Observing from the halls outside the classrooms, we were struck at how few of the faculty used the data display projector, although it was a simple process of turning on the projector and the document camera (and the steps were posted on the wall next to the display computer). Knowing how quickly faculty could learn the data display and document cameras, we asked at the change of classes if we could have five minutes of the instructor's time to demonstrate it for them. Rather than expecting faculty to come to us, that is, we went to them to show them something that would be helpful to their teaching, something that was quick to teach, something that they might not even know they wanted to know. The fact that data display is the third most common use of technology suggests the influential role faculty development plays in effective uses and the complexity with which this issue is fraught. It also suggests that given the right circumstances, faculty were open to learning new ways to teach and support their students' learning.

Indeed, the day-to-day reality of using classroom technologies which were unfamiliar to them (yet familiar to their students) pushed faculty to learn and see themselves as learning from their students. When asked to identify all the ways they have learned to use computers as teaching and learning tools, 31 faculty identified at least 133 ways (see Table 1). This faculty were consulting a large variety of sources—with all individual faculty consulting multiple sources—to further their learning about teaching with the technologies. Nearly 94% of the faculty responded that they had figured things out on their own or with others in the building they were located in—by working with friends and colleagues (74%), from writing program workshops (71%), and from their students (58%). In addition, in response to a separate question, 83% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that they've learned about composing with technologies through their teaching and that they are comfortable with students teaching each other and the faculty. As one faculty respondent put it, "Working with computers has been a good experience overall. It has enabled me to help students with their own use of technologies and it has allowed me to learn a few tricks from my students as well."⁴

It's interesting to note that less than half of the ways faculty learned involved print materials or help centers located in other parts of the campus

(the Faculty Professional Development Center and the Student Multimedia Studio).⁵ Although there is support across campus for teaching and learning to teach with technologies, the writing program faculty overwhelmingly learned from within their own environment and with others in that environment: both colleagues and students (as opposed to printed materials). These faculty responses suggest that strong connections to the immediate communities within which they work can be highly influential in how faculty respond to new technologies. Bringing new learning situations (and professional development opportunities) into those environments and tapping into those existing comfort zones as much as possible might lead to a higher success rate in getting faculty to experience and integrate new practices into already full work lives. Although there were already established infrastructural support locations across campus, faculty in the writing program stayed close to home in developing their approaches to the new curriculum and the new technologies.

Table 1. Responses to the question "How have you learned to use the computers as teaching and learning tools?" ($N = 133$).

By figuring it out on my own	94%
By working with friends and colleagues	74%
From writing program workshops	71%
From students	58%
From print materials (handouts, books, web sites)	48%
From the University's Faculty Professional Development Center	29%
From computer labs	26%
From Student Multimedia Studio	16%
Other ⁶	13%

Faculty also viewed themselves as learners in the responses to the final open-ended question which asked for overall comments on their experiences. As this was the first semester implementing the new curriculum and the computer classrooms, there were lots of technical bugs being worked out (from an unfamiliar login procedure to the inability of the existing wireless router to handle upwards of 150 logins happening at one time). Whereas we might expect faculty responses to involve the technical difficulties, instead, overall responses to the experience overwhelmingly focused on learning, learners, and students. 85% of responses involved learning and growth on the part of the instructor and enhancement of learning and teaching, as these faculty responses indicate:

- It was a humbling experience—but flexibility and a sense of humor made it doable. I know a lot more know than I did at the beginning of the semester. Next semester should be much easier.
- This has been an exciting year! I've learned how useful computers can be in the everyday tasks involved in teaching and am excited to expand on the ways in which I will further incorporate technology in the classroom. I wanted to start small because it was a little overwhelming, but now I feel more confident and am ready for more challenging ways to incorporate technology.
- I am dependent on students or my own resources [for learning HTML to build final projects]. I know that I can access the university's faculty resources but time is a factor—I will see what I can learn over the semester break.

In each of these responses, faculty suggest the enormity of the transition from one learning environment to another, the amount of work involved in learning new ways of teaching, and the difficulty in finding time and sometimes energy to accomplish the task. But these faculty, across their survey responses, remain optimistic that the work is crucial in teaching in a digital age and see themselves as needing to change their practices to better fit with students' needs and desires. Faculty in this survey indicated a range of ways they embraced the role of learner in response to the major pedagogical shift being asked of them.

THE INCREASED VISIBILITY OF WORK MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE TECHNOLOGIES

Against this backdrop of activity in which teachers were learning to teach within these laptop classrooms, survey participants revealed the contours of the changes taking place in their classes, particularly in the increased visibility of the work of the class which the technologies supported. Responses to the open-ended question, "What has been the most effective use of the computers for your teaching in this class?" were coded into 60 effective uses,⁷ broken down into the five categories identified in Table 2.

Table 2. Responses to the open-ended question, "What has been the most effective use of the computers for your teaching in this class? Why?" ($N = 60$).

In-class work

20

When I give students time in class to compose or research their assignments, I like being able to intervene during their composing processes.

Being able to have students compose with visual elements in class has been extremely effective both in terms of meeting course goals but also in terms of engaging students on levels with which they are more comfortable and familiar.

Demonstration 15

Computer classrooms have been very effective to show students practically the things we want them to do, not just the technical but also the aesthetic elements.

Access to digital resources 13

The classroom has multiple programs from which students can choose to compose digitally.

Engagement of learners 7

Computers give students the agency to become active in their learning because they can apply their skills and become more invested in their projects.

Organizational support 5

Since I've asked my students to post all work on Vista, I've found it effective to refer them back to comments I had posted to them earlier, refer them back to assignments or aspects of assignments they posted earlier, or refer them to each other's posted work when applicable.

Eighty percent of the faculty responses identifying effective uses of the computer technologies involved (1) in-class work (done in a workshop setting or through modeling particular activities), (2) demonstration (through the display computer, projector, and document camera), and (3) access to digital resources (presumably, as they were involved in both in-class work and demonstrations of work). All three of these uses of the classroom technologies involve visibility and seeing: students watching demonstrations projected onto the overhead, students and teachers seeing each other writing during composing workshops, students workshopping projects as the teacher circulates through the room, and faculty and student access to digital resources like search engines, libraries, video sites, and podcasts. These are all types of work which demonstrate, both implicitly and explicitly, the range of work composers negotiate in a digital world. As one enthusiastic teacher responded in her survey, "With computers in front of us, it is great to use the word processing feature to compose together and work on skills like creating a great thesis or claim. As my abilities to use the computer,

Vista, and the internet become more creative and developed, most of the writing process can be done online.” This teacher’s response is suggestive of the range of work that can be done in the classrooms. In-class work (as students compose individually, in groups, or as a whole class following a demonstration) opens up the instructive possibilities, as another teacher points out in her comment about the digital world the classroom opens up: “Isn’t that the real direction that we are going? The possibilities are limitless.”

In addition to the implicit knowledge writers might gain from working in class, the demonstration capabilities of the classroom technologies support more student engagement and experiential learning, as another teacher noted: “projecting [my desktop] on the screen . . . allows me to take notes on class discussion, to demonstrate how to do things online (such as search for a source, analyze the rhetoric of a website), and to compose and revise together as a class.” Through demonstration, faculty can *show* students steps in a process, the complexity in a task, or the aesthetic elements in their work. Through in-class work, students and faculty *witness* the work being done, work which might otherwise be invisible vis-à-vis the final product brought into class. While work becomes more visible, though, faculty responses suggest that the computers which allow for stronger student engagement can also be used to control and constraint students: “The most effective use of the computers is the ability to use the projector. That way students are literally on the same page and can follow along. I don’t have to compete with the computers for their attention when I’m directing their attention towards the front of the room.” With the demonstration capabilities, in other words, teachers can capture students’ attention and direct it to the front of the room as they watch what happens on the screen, or they can capture students’ attention and direct it back into their work as the students follow along with what happens on the screen as someone (not necessarily the teacher) demonstrates. Indeed, the demonstration capabilities of the laptop classrooms—like any technology—can be used in the service of quite different pedagogies.

Situated within the larger infrastructure incorporating the classroom design, the new curriculum’s goals and objectives, and the focus of the professional development opportunities offered by the writing program, however, the demonstration capabilities, in-class work, and digital access to a world of writing resources were most often in our surveys represented as ways of revealing the complexities of composition in a digital age. For these teachers, one of the most positive benefits has been in engaging students in the work of writing together. As one teacher described it, “So far, the most effective use for me is to have students working on their assignments—both research and composing—while we are all together in the same room. This

facilitates anything from invention to revision.” More specifically, working together in the same room allows teachers entry points into students’ composing processes when students might best benefit from intervention: “Having students compose in class allows me to help them at the point where they are having difficulty. Instead of sending them off to do an assignment completely out of class, I can help them get started, alleviating some of the biggest concerns they have before they try to go it alone.” Indeed, *together* is a concept frequently used by faculty to describe the engagement of learners in the classroom activities:

- The computers have enabled me to really illustrate and encourage students to compose multimodally! The computers have facilitated more hands-on lessons about how to conduct effective research, illustrating search patterns and scholarly versus non scholarly sources instantaneously on a large display screen instead of having to give a drier lecture in which we don’t apply the principle in a real research situation until after class or on our own time.
- When I give the students time in class to compose or research their assignments. I like being able to intervene during their composing processes. Also, since I’ve asked my students to post all work on Vista, I’ve found it effective to refer them back to comments I had posted to them earlier, refer them back to assignments or aspects of assignments they posted earlier, or refer them to each other’s posted work when applicable.
- Teaching in these rooms has opened avenues of learning that I never realized were possible, not to mention the fact that my students this semester have been more engaged, I believe, than in the past several.

These faculty indicate that the computers have allowed them to foreground the actual work of composition by leading demonstrations as students follow along, by intervening during students’ actual composing process, and by being a hands-on resource as students are engaged in their composing process. The faculty emphasis on working together and seeing the classroom as a workspace makes the work of composing more visible in these positive ways but also carries with it the necessity for rethinking the expectations teachers and students might have about the kinds of work in which each should be engaged. In the next section, we turn to faculty responses to those shifting expectations.

SHIFTING EXPECTATIONS ABOUT STUDENT AND FACULTY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In a classroom where writing machines are now present and available for in-class composing, students and teacher need to have a clearly understood notion of what productive work looks like and what to do about work which doesn't meet those expectations. These expectations are especially central when faculty are asked to think about the least effective use of computers for their teaching (see Table 3). Responses to this question broke down into one of three categories: no difficulties noted (12%), technical problems (28%), and problems with classroom participants related to the physical setting (60%).

Table 3. Responses to the open-ended question "What has been the least effective use of the computers for your teaching in this class? Why?"

Problems related to the physical setting 60%

Computers do tend to encourage students to multitask in class, checking e-mail, visiting websites, etc. Walking around and talking to specific offenders does not stop this behavior. However, this behavior occurs in multiple settings, from board room meetings to schools, so I think this is a cultural problem, not necessarily a problem just occurring in computer classrooms.

Technical problems 28%

Vista has SO many glitches and user-friendly problems that my students have developed a strong dislike for the site. . . . my students see Vista as an evil entity that is constantly out to "get them." I have had to cut back on Vista simply because of the negativity it was creating in my classroom.

Few problems reported 12%

Now that the network issues are resolved I have no concerns.

It is somewhat surprising that 12% of respondents identified no difficulties, given that this was the first semester of a widespread curricular change accompanied by newly designed and completed computer classrooms. Indeed, the fact that less than one third of the faculty (28%) identified technical problems as the least effective use of computers that semester was encouraging as it suggests that for these faculty, the technical difficulties which can be present even in smoothly running systems are not an

over-determining factor in their classrooms. Instead, more than half of the faculty responses identified problems of how people worked. Problems with classroom participants were rooted in the arrangement of bodies in the space, the limitations of the physical setup of the room, and pedagogical failures, but mostly the problems were rooted in control (and lack thereof) of students' engagement and attention. Problems of controlling students' attention were often linked to the other problems of how people arranged themselves in the space and the limitations of the physical set up of the room, as one faculty noted: "The least effective use of the computers would be the physical orientation of the computers. When I assign work to be done on the computers I have to constantly circulate around the room to make sure students are on task."

Faculty identified various difficulties involving classroom participants, the most common of which involved faculty's difficulty in keeping students on task and/or being in control (and aware of) what is going on with every student in the class, as the following faculty's survey responses suggest:

- I find that when I have the students work on the computers, it is hard to make sure that they are all keeping on task.
- The only problem, really, is that several students log on to chat rooms or personal sites while they are supposed to be working on class activities. They simply minimize the screens when I come around. It is difficult to control this type of behavior. It would be nice if we, as teachers, could place certain locks on the computers for what they can and cannot access during class.
- [T]he inability to monitor student's activities is problematic. Many would "surf" sites other than those needed for the assignment (myspace, facebook), but a simple click of the mouse would allow them to close the window before I, as the instructor, had a chance to catch them wasting class time. Short of random, spur of the moment commands for them all to put their hands in the air, followed by a walk around the entire room to check computer screens, I don't know how to fix this problem.

As these faculty responses indicate, the configuration of the classroom itself and the presence of the computers interfered with faculty expectations for control over the classroom. These responses suggest that faculty might be ill-equipped to deal with new forms of student underlife mediated by technologies. Robert Brooke describes student underlife as "the range of activities people develop to distance themselves from the surrounding institution [. . .] and assert something about their identity. Underlife allows individuals to take stances towards the roles they are expected to play, and to show

others the stances they take. When the kinds of student behaviors normally seen as misbehavior are examined in writing classrooms, what appears is exactly this sort of constructive, individual stance-taking” (144). Student underlife, in other words, “primarily attempts to assert that the individuals who play the role of students are not only students, that there is more to them than that” (151). Through observations of students in writing classrooms, Brooke concludes that underlife is always present in classroom settings and can often times be more productive and connected to learning than it appears to outside observers.

Faculty response to our survey suggest that this underlife is not only present in computer classrooms, but that computer classrooms—especially ones designed to redistribute power throughout the classroom—present new opportunities for underlife to surface and take new forms. Underlife mediated by computer technologies is, these faculty responses suggest, visible in new ways and calls upon faculty to develop new ways of responding. More importantly, though, this faculty’s frustration at knowing how to respond to attention management issues suggests that writing program administrators need to pay attention to the ways computer technologies create new situations and call for new strategies. Responses by this program’s faculty suggest more specifically that faculty teaching in computer classrooms need to understand underlife at a theoretical level as well as at a more practical level involving strategies for responding to it in their classes. “Random, spur of the moment commands for students to put their hands in the air” is a response to new technologically mediated concerns (student attention management) grounded in a traditional pedagogical framework at odds with the computer classrooms—one where the teacher mediates and controls the work being done and students are answerable at all moments to the teacher. Instead, in a multimodal, computer-mediated curriculum and classroom, the teacher is less likely to be the locus of control and work in the classroom as students multitask, work together and with their teacher, and mediate their classroom experience through the computers. As one faculty respondent put it, “Computers do tend to encourage students to multitask in class, checking e-mail, visiting websites, etc. Walking around and talking to specific offenders does not stop this behavior. However, this behavior occurs in multiple settings, from board room meetings to schools, so I think this is a cultural problem, not necessarily a problem just occurring in computer classrooms.” Computer classrooms and multimodal curricula call on new ways of being and working in response to a new culture of composing. The role of the WPA is to create infrastructures which facilitate the learning and professional development opportunities teachers need to negotiate this transition.

CONCLUSION

Writing instruction—indeed, teaching in higher education more generally—is largely a privatized affair. The glimpses we receive of what is happening in individual classrooms in our programs are not necessarily representative of what’s happening across a program. Our survey is limited by participant size, historical moment, and its particular location. But we believe it is a beginning move toward understanding what happens in writing programs as they transition into new curricula that can expand the kinds of processes and products teachers and students work with and integrate computer technologies into those processes. The faculty who participated in our writing program survey demonstrate through their responses that faculty development plays an important role in helping faculty do what they want to do and understand what is possible for them to do. Specifically, these survey respondents have helped us form some hypotheses about the work WPA’s need to engage in as they help writing program faculty transition and revise their curricula, learning and teaching theories and practices:

- Administrators should bring professional development opportunities and resources to faculty rather than waiting for faculty to come to them—because faculty might be unaware that some technology or use of technology could enhance and support their learning and teaching goals and—being receptive to learning and making a move to learn are two different things.
- Bringing new learning situations into the teaching community might lead to a higher participation rate and more widespread successful adoption than expecting faculty to know where to find resources and search them out.
- The more widely known and understood the writing program’s goals and objectives, the more likely they will serve as an infrastructural support shaping the uses faculty put technologies to.
- Computer technologies can create new ways of being, learning, and working in the composition classroom which sometimes require new theoretical grounding and innovative practices.

DeVoss, Cushman, and Grabill suggest that “writing with multiple sign systems within technology-mediated environments pushes on systems and established ways of working with a pressure that other ways of writing don’t exert” (17). While composition studies scholarship offers many reasons why we should teach with technologies or teach multimodal composing practices, we don’t have as rich an understanding of what teachers encounter

when they make such a commitment to change. We believe that systematic data-based understandings (what Richard Haswell has called RAD research: replicable, aggregable, and data-based) of what is happening in such programs and individual teachers' lives are crucial at this historical moment. Writing program administrators need these kinds of understandings in order to build on what is working and intervene for what is needed. Writing program researchers need these kinds of understandings in order to build a disciplinary understanding of the work writing programs do both in the university and in the larger lives of their participants. Technology classrooms call upon new ways of being and working from administrators, faculty, and students. Our survey data suggest that the writing program faculty making this transition understand that the change is not about learning how to turn on the machines and use them but that the change is a more complex, conceptual one—how does the use of these machines affect the ways of being a teacher or a student or an administrator and the relationships among these different constituencies in the writing program?

NOTES

1. Even though our effort was to avoid faculty slipping through the cracks, it is likely that several of the more highly resistant faculty are not represented in this survey data. For example, one teacher was known to the writing program coordinators and the digital composing coordinators to be resistant to both the new curriculum and to the integration of computers into her classes. She did not reply to email requests to meet with her classes, ignored a hard copy note taped to her office door, and cancelled class on two occasions when arrangements had finally been made to visit her class. These resistance tactics carried well into the end of the semester, so that the semester ended before we were able to survey her or her students.

2. The survey was distributed through surveymonkey.com, an online survey instrument which supports survey design, collection, and analysis. Survey participants log onto the survey and the results are tabulated in various forms (by individual, by question, in extended or abbreviated excel format) for downloading by the researcher. In our analysis, we read the individual question responses multiple times, becoming familiar with the themes as they emerged from the individual questions and from the survey as a whole. Guided by Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory methodological approach, we worked iteratively with the emerging themes, returning to the data to identify specific instances of the theme, finalizing them into codes with which we returned to the data. In this way, the open ended responses to survey questions were coded until all the responses were accounted for. The codes then evolved, in this article, into the items on the data tables.

3. This article reports on the faculty responses to our survey. The student survey responses contribute a valuable perspective on this issue. Dealing with that data, however, falls outside the scope of this article.

4. Quotes from faculty are taken verbatim from the open-ended survey responses.

5. The Faculty Professional Development Center is a university-wide center which supports faculty in teaching and research involving technologies from technical (how do I do this?) to pedagogical (why might I do this?). The Student Multimedia Studio, located in the University Library, provides similar types of support for undergraduate students. In both locations, faculty can ideally find support, educational opportunities, and resources for teaching.

6. Responses in the “Other” category included: “previous institution,” “teaching computers previously,” “my life as a student,” “From my second B.A. degree, which is in Mass Communications (my Mass Comm. courses required heavy computer skills.)”

7. Thirty-one faculty responded to this question, yielding 60 coded instances of effective uses of computer technologies. These responses are not discrete from one another; they are often inextricable from one another. For example, in-class work might have been an implicit part of engagement of learners (in-class work being one way to engage learners in a computer classroom). But unless the response explicitly made reference to in-class work, it was not coded as in-class work. Coded responses, then, were explicit statements of the code. Additionally, the responses in almost every case involved more than one of the six types of response.

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APPENDIX A: COMPLETE COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR TIER I

- 1) To learn how to recognize and strategically use the conventions of academic literacy.
 - a) Control formal features of syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
 - b) Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
 - c) Demonstrate appropriate means of documenting their work
 - d) Learn common formats for different contexts
- 2) To understand and use rhetorical principles to produce public and private documents appropriate for academic and professional audiences and purposes.
 - a) Focus on a purpose
 - b) Respond to the needs of different audiences

- c) Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
 - d) Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
 - e) Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
 - f) Use various technological tools to explore texts
- 3) To practice good writing, including planning, revising, editing, evaluating sources, and working with others.
- a) Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading
 - b) Use writing as an open process that permits writers to revise their work
 - c) Learn to critique their own and others' works
 - d) Learn the advantages and responsibilities of writing as a collaborative act
- 4) To practice the processes of good reading.
- a) Experience and use the many layers of meaning implicit in "texts"
 - b) Interact with a text to question the ideas it presents and the language it uses
 - c) Read and respond to written and visual texts
 - d) Learn to proofread and edit documents for academic and professional audiences
- 5) To learn web and digital environments valued by the university, for example, some or all of the following.
- a) Use the internet as a research tool
 - b) Use word processing
 - c) Back up files on disks, CDs or jump drives
 - d) Send and receive email
 - e) Enter discussion in chat rooms
 - f) Access WebCT or Vista
- 6) To learn and practice how writing, at the university, is often based on previous research and inquiry and how to use this research in their writing.
- a) Use writing and reading for inquiry, rather than merely reporting
 - b) Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
 - c) Integrate their own ideas with those of others (that is, integrate sources to support their own stance)

APPENDIX B: COMPLETE COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR TIER II

- 1) Build upon students' rhetorical understanding to compose documents that reflect the authors' recognition of using information to influence readers.
 - a) Define a problem
 - b) Find appropriate information
 - c) Evaluate information
 - d) Use appropriate rhetorical, linguistic, cultural, genre, disciplinary, and academic conventions
- 2) Use a variety of organizational strategies to integrate authorities smoothly into documents that explore issues and answer questions appropriate for liberal education.
 - a) Recognize and use strategies, formats and conventions from different fields of knowledge in writing assignments
 - b) Recognize choices in the development of writing to create documents that are appropriately organized in their larger structure, developed in paragraphs, and developed in tone
 - c) Demonstrate the ability to integrate a variety of sources while following the conventions of academic citation
 - d) Employ a varied style that includes sophisticated syntax and diction chosen for specific audiences, while avoiding errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling
 - e) Recognize and use process strategies for writing: Build on previous process objectives geared to specific audiences by proposing, planning, and undertaking more complex research projects that involve a number of information literacy and writing activities
 - f) Continue to identify and evaluate relevant sources, in this case, of the student's own choosing. In general, the sources are longer, more complex, and more reflective of the student's understanding of discourse communities than in Tier I
 - g) Recognize the social nature of writing by engaging in both individual and collaborative inquiry projects, group brainstorming, research, composing, and peer review throughout the several stages of the writing process
 - h) Identify, recognize and critique the intellectual and social contexts and cultural assumptions in which one frames the inquiry/ argument
 - i) Begin to integrate visual and/or auditory material into print texts
- 3) Read and evaluate various sources and modes of information important to research and inquiry in academic and professional settings.

- 4) To learn web and digital environments necessary for conducting and writing research, for example:
 - a) Understand the effect that computing is having on the culture
 - b) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous discussions that extend learning beyond the classroom
 - c) Engage in interactive multi-media projects to connect the insights gained from practice with theory.
 - d) Use various software, especially those that shift the traditional time and space for learning, to practice cooperative and collaborative strategies
 - e) Use university-supported course management software
 - f) Seek innovative ways to connect scholarly inquiry with the world beyond the academy
- 5) Acquire and Practice Information Literacy
 - a) Build on Tier I goals by effectively integrating research into a more formal inquiry project
 - b) Use more specialized or appropriate databases than Academic Search Premier
 - c) Become more aware of academic honesty issues and ramifications of records privacy, plagiarism and copyright issues, especially on the web
 - d) In the final project demonstrate mastery of all information literacy skills introduced in Tier I and Tier II

APPENDIX C: JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE COORDINATOR OF DIGITAL COMPOSING

The Coordinator of Digital Composing for English supervises the teaching staff of approximately 75 teachers using the 6–7 departmental computer classrooms and the Technology Support Staff person. This work includes serving as a contact person for technology-related issues in the Department of English, working with the departmental administration regarding issues of technology, working with teachers scheduled to teach in the computer classrooms, and creating structures which encourage innovative and creative teaching with technology.

Working with administration

- Working with the Writing Program to design and utilize computer-classroom teaching environments.

- Working with administration (in the department, the College, and the University) to maintain and upgrade the software and hardware in the computer classrooms
- Serving on University technology committees
- Responding to requests from administration (departmental, College, and University) regarding technology (for documents such as equipment proposals, program reviews, plans for funding, departmental needs, etc.). Response takes form of meetings and written documents.
- Hiring and supervision of the technology support staff
- Coordinating the maintenance of the computer classrooms (the Technology Support Staff person is responsible for the technical maintenance of the machines; Coordinator coordinates with the Technology Support Staff these needs)
- Collaborating on design and upgrades of computer classrooms.
- Serving as contact person for requests for information about teaching with technology in the department (i.e., coordinating computer classroom open houses for campus tours, responding to on-campus and off-campus requests for information about the uses of technology to teach in our department)

Working with teachers scheduled to teach in the computer classrooms

- Orientation of teachers scheduled in the computer classrooms (this orientation usually has taken the form of a two to four day meeting prior to the beginning of the semester)
- Coordination of twice-monthly teaching group meetings (these teaching groups alternate between open-ended agendas and meetings focused on some issue/reading in computers and composition)
- Supervision of the teaching staff
- Trouble-shooting and conflict resolution among the teaching staff
- Observations of teaching staff
- Program-wide workshops on digital media for the Writing Program
- Conferencing on individual, as-needed basis with individual teachers on integrating technology into their teaching
- Setting lab policies in conjunction with Assistant Coordinator and teaching staff

Creating structures which encourage innovative and creative teaching with technology

- Offering workshops on technology for the department as a whole

- Maintaining the digital composing listserv
- Working with the Assistant Coordinator to build a web-based resource for all departmental teachers interested in writing technologies for teaching (some resources include sample syllabi and assignments, excerpts from classroom observations, connections to online sources)
- Working with the Assistant Coordinator and other technology-savvy teachers to build summer outreach programs using our knowledge of writing technology-based pedagogies and the availability of the computer classrooms.
- Working with the Assistant Coordinator and interested teachers on scholarly projects (conference presentations and publications) based in questions which arise from administrative work with technology.

APPENDIX D: JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE ASSISTANT COORDINATOR OF DIGITAL COMPOSING

The Assistant Coordinator of Digital Composing (AC) works with the coordinator to address the practical and pedagogical needs of teachers using the computer classrooms and to create structures which encourage innovative and creative teaching with technology. The AC serves a two-year term.

Coordinating the practical needs of teachers

- Maintaining technology program specific web pages
- Setting lab policies with Coordinator
- Scheduling with composition staff
- Maintaining a drop-in schedule for teachers not regularly scheduled in the computer classrooms

Coordinating the pedagogical needs of teachers

- *This is predominantly a pedagogical position*—the more technical aspects of computers for teaching fall under the technology position. Our biggest resource is our teachers. AC helps faculty and students teach and research computers and composition.
- With the Coordinator planning and conducting orientation meetings at the beginning of the semester
- Scheduling and leading teaching groups throughout the semester (once a month meeting)
- Co-leading (with Coordinator) whole staff discussion throughout semester (once a month meeting)
- Two self-designed Workshops per semester on continuing education for teaching staff

- Working one-on-one with current teaching staff on teaching issues

Creating structures which encourage innovative and creative teaching with technology

- Working with the Coordinator of digital composing to build a web-based resource for all departmental teachers interested in writing technologies for teaching (some resources include sample syllabi and assignments, excerpts from classroom observations, connections to online sources)
- Working with the Coordinator of digital composing and other technology-savvy teachers to build summer outreach programs using our knowledge of writing technology-based pedagogies and the availability of the computer classrooms.
- Potentially working with the Coordinator and interested teachers on scholarly projects (conference presentations and publications) based in questions which arise from administrative work with technology.

The AD must maintain

- professional standards in working with other faculty
- confidentiality as a representative of the program who is privy to private interactions between staff and the program
- her own schedule. The position is for 10 hours per week, though no time sheets are required. The time commitment varies depending on the time of the semester.

APPENDIX E: FACULTY SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey was distributed and collected online through surveymonkey.com. Questions 9, 10, 12, and 13 were open-ended. Other questions included multiple choices, including “other” with a space for participants to write in their answer.

1. What is your institutional rank?
2. How often does your class meet in the computer classroom?
3. In what ways have you used the computers in class?
4. In what ways have you assigned computers to complete our of class assignments?
5. How often have you used the computers in this class?

6. How have you learned to use the computers as teaching and learning tools?
7. What has been the most effective use of the computers for your teaching in this class? Why?
8. What has been the least effective use of the computers for your teaching in this class? Why?
9. What are the required assignments for this course? What relationship do you see between the assignments, the computer technologies, and the goals and objectives for the course?
10. What are the required readings for the course? What relationship do you see between the readings, the computer technologies, and the goals and objectives for the course?
11. Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements: [strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree]:
 - I feel knowledgeable about using computer technologies
 - I am familiar with technological resources and support programs on campus for students
 - I am aware of the professional development opportunities provided by the writing program
 - My class has regularly used the computer technologies in our class meetings
 - My students feel comfortable asking me for further instruction in how to use composing technologies
 - I am comfortable letting students teach each other and me about composing technologies
 - I have learned a lot about composing with technologies from teaching this class
 - My class has used the composing technologies to their fullest potential/capability
12. Please comment on your experience in the computer classrooms this semester.
13. What kinds of additional support or professional development opportunities would you find helpful? What would you like to know more about?

Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College: Ghosts in the Machine

Tim Taylor

“Invisible is a word that keeps coming up as I read about two-year college faculty.”

—Powers-Stubbs and Sommers (28)

INTRODUCTION: MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

In “Arguments with Which to Combat Elitism and Ignorance about Community Colleges,” Doucette and Roueche contend that “[t]he potential of community colleges remains largely untapped, in no small part due to persistent elitism among leaders in the media, business, and government that is fueled by their relative ignorance about these institutions” (1). But with community colleges expanding their roles in higher education, teacher-scholars at two-year colleges publishing and presenting their scholarship more frequently, and the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) offering a more prominent voice in composition-rhetoric, some elitist and ignorant attitudes about two-year colleges might be weakening, at least in our profession. One aspect of the potential of two-year colleges that has been largely untapped, however, is our knowledge of WPA work at community colleges and technical colleges. Like Sommers’ reflection about faculty members at these institutions, WPA structures at two-year colleges are largely invisible to the profession as a whole—many of us know little about them.

This void is a significant hindrance to our knowledge of writing program administration. To address this gap in our knowledge, the present study attempts to create an introductory picture of WPA work at two-year colleges by a) providing the voices of two-year college WPAs and b) identifying and acknowledging the types of writing program administration at

two-year colleges. Besides a handful of articles published during the past two decades, there has been little discussion about writing program administration at two-year colleges, institutions where over half all of all undergraduates take first-year writing classes (“Facts” 3). This lack of visibility represents a serious challenge because an understanding of this WPA work can inform and influence the WPA structures at both two-year *and* four-year institutions. Looking at the WPA work at two-year colleges can help us question and critique WPA structures at our own institutions, especially since some two-year college writing programs answer the call for a “post-masculinist” (Miller) or “decentered” WPA (Gunner) while also questioning the efficacy of those models.

Overall though, to examine writing program administration at two-year colleges is to grapple with diversity. At some two-year colleges, department chairs or even deans work as WPAs since the majority of “English” departments at two-year colleges are essentially writing programs, and often times budgetary constraints or institutional cultures hinder the establishment of separate WPAs. But a significant portion of WPA structures enacts a team approach that effectively decenters the WPA role. Two-year colleges have often created collaborative WPA structures out of necessity, thus answering the call for decentering the WPA, but those power structures offer a host of challenges. The paradox is that some two-year colleges have established “postmasculinist” models of WPA work (Miller) while yearning for a traditional WPA to hold it all together and exert power within institutions. So, while some might perceive writing programs at community colleges as chaotic or even existing under “tribal anarchy” (Dickson 142), the collaborative or ecosystem model at some two-year colleges provides flexibility, stability, and respect for differences in pedagogy.

THE MACHINE

The sheer number of sections of first-year writing courses across the country coupled with the fact that approximately half of all of those sections of first-year writing are taken at two-year colleges is a daunting statistic. A first-year writing machine churns along and produces sections upon sections of composition courses, and two-year colleges are significant factors. The highly relevant question for those who work at two-year colleges is how do you create a strong *writing program* from diverse faculty who usually teach writing classes as most of their full loads each semester. With a staff comprised of full-time instructors with usually a four or five section slate of writing courses every semester along with part-time instructors, how do writing courses at a two-year college become *programmatically*? Do two-year

colleges need to have similar programs as four-year colleges? Who should be in charge? Or should responsibility be shared? These are questions that I contended with as an Assistant Chair (see Appendix A) and chair of the composition/curriculum committee at a two-year college at one time. And these are questions that, in part, drove this study.

There are obvious differences between many two-year colleges and four-year institutions that complicate writing program administration. Besides the notable exceptions of writing programs divorced from English departments or separate writing across the curriculum programs, people who teach writing courses at community colleges may not necessarily be housed in an “English” department. Rather, they could be part of a division or a grouping that includes various disciplines related to general education or literacies in academia. In some two-year colleges, it is not uncommon to see the majority of course offerings at the developmental or basic writing levels. As Victoria Holmstein relates about the nature of many community colleges across the nation, “developmental education is usually defined as an essential part of our mission to meet community needs” (432). Instructors at two-year colleges usually teach, according to Helon Raines’ study, an average of 4.7 courses per term, with the bulk of those being writing courses (“Is There a Writing Program . . .” 157). In this sense, community college English departments “do not house writing programs as much as they are writing programs, so this has important implications for WPA work in such an institution” (Holmstein 429). In sum, for instructors at community colleges and technical colleges, “[c]omposition is what we do” (432).

PAST RESEARCH

Past research provides some strong leads about the types of WPA structures at these institutions. Helon Raines has a significant voice on this subject because, of the four major articles written on this topic, she authored one and was the co-author of another. The most comprehensive study that relates to WPAs at two-year colleges is Raines,’ in which she sent detailed surveys to 956 regular members of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and garnered 236 responses that cover 47 states with a good distribution among four regions of the country. As she begins her article, she provides her mindset at the beginning of the study: “[E]ven though I began with no hypothesis to prove, I did hope to find a pattern, to see some model of community-college writing programs emerge. None did. In fact, as I interpret the situation, two-year schools are, in many respects, as different from one another as they are alike” (152). She also adds, “[a] clear answer to the question ‘Is there a writing program in this college’

remains teasingly elusive” (153). Most germane to this study, however, is the fact that 13% of the schools that responded had a designated “director of writing” and 7% with “a coordinator of writing directing a separate program” (154).

Following up on that large study, Raines co-authored “Two-Year Colleges *Explaining and Claiming Our Majority*” with Elizabeth A. Nist. Although they state that “. . . making generalizations about two-year college writing programs is problematic because each institution has a unique history, mission, philosophy, and administrative structure” (Nist and Raines 61), they do offer some useful generalizations that square with some of this study’s findings detailed later. The first one is that in respect to course design and mandating textbooks, in larger departments a heavily scripted syllabus is uncommon because two-year colleges have veteran teachers and “academic freedom is valued highly by teachers who enjoy it and fought for it adamantly by those denied it” (63). In contrast to large graduate programs that often have graduate teaching assistants who may have little experience teaching composition, community colleges can have both full- and part-time instructors who have taught basic writing and first-year writing for multiple years, if not multiple decades.

Second, Nist and Raines sketch some collaborative forms of writing program administration:

Often a few faculty who have time and interest, or faculty who serve under a rotation system, carry out the duties of the composition “director” after consultation with others at department meetings. Decisions on curriculum planning, class scheduling, and managing of department resources are generally made by committee or department consensus. Sometimes a department chair or coordinator of several disciplines assumes these responsibilities, and occasionally a faculty member may have released—time to coordinate the composition courses or the writing center. (65)

As Nist and Raines relate, the web of administration can get complex, but the focus on collaboration seems to have been created with a democratic aim in mind, or perhaps out of necessity. As Lynn Z. Bloom states well, being a writing program administrator is a “protean job, which inevitably encompasses a myriad of endeavors from the mundane to the magnificent” (xi). The nature of WPA work at two-year colleges, however, complicates Bloom’s assertion because the administrative structures for these writing programs may not be just one person (“job”) who is doing the mundane and magnificent. These WPA structures could likely be a collection of prac-

tioners and administrators. And these professionals, unfortunately, as Nist and Raines argue, are “unidentified and unacknowledged as WPAs or even as composition specialists” (64).

In a similar vein, Victoria Holmstein in “This Site Under Construction: Negotiating Space for WPA Work in the Community College” argues that in regard to administering writing programs, WPAs have different names, such as “department chairs, assessment coordinators, assistant deans, writing administrators, lead instructors, and more” (430). Reflecting on her own experience as a WPA, she provides her typical duties:

I am building the English schedule; managing enrollment in English courses; recruiting, hiring, and mentoring adjunct faculty; coordinating assessment activities for English courses; coordinating English course articulation with local high schools; sitting on committees to represent English faculty as deemed necessary, chiefly hiring committees for new full-time faculty; and working as assistant to the division dean. (437)

To WPAs at four-year colleges and universities, these tasks probably look very familiar, so it makes sense that she argues that “[w]e in the community colleges are part of a broader WPA tradition in our discipline. We are also inventors of a new tendril of the larger web as we work to invent ourselves and our WPA roles in community colleges” (438). From this view, two-year college WPAs are in a similar situation to “small-school” WPAs were at one time. In particular, Thomas Amorose’s claim that the “erasure” of small-school WPAs is “detrimental to small- and large-institution WPAs alike” (91) rings true for WPAs at two-year colleges.

This point by Amorose has been taken up recently by Jeffrey Klausman in “Mapping the Terrain: The Two-Year College Writing Program Administrator” where Klausman asserts that “the WPA at the two-year college (and perhaps small four-year colleges without a graduate program in English) is not only an essential function but is significantly different from the WPA position at universities and larger colleges” (238). Speaking from his experience as a designated WPA at a community college, he perceives composition programs at two-year colleges aligning themselves with the ideals of “liberation and service” (242) for students, while a WPA works with colleagues to improve instruction and “to establish common goals and then work to achieve them. As ‘change agents’ we must be colleagues, catalysts, and leaders simultaneously, a difficult balancing act” (244).

Just as Amorose argues for greater visibility of small-school WPAs, the study of WPA structures at two-year colleges is crucial to understanding the diversity of writing program administration, and our knowledge of

two-year college WPA work can help us critique and inform our own WPA structures.

SURVEY: WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AT THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

In early part of the fall 2006 semester, I devised a survey and crafted an introductory letter about WPA work at two-year colleges that I then sent in mid-September to 107 departments of English, with packets divided evenly among the seven regions of the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA). By early December I had received only a dozen surveys. Faced with a return rate in the teens, I sent a follow-up email at the time and also added eight more schools to my list. After winter break and a month or so with a disappointing response rate, I posted a call on the WPA Listserv and garnered ten responses from professionals at community colleges across the country, some of which progressed into surveys being completed. In the end, I was able to gather 21 survey responses out of 125 total distributed for a 17% response rate. All of the respondents provided consent for using their data and comments, and the 21 surveys came from a diversity of colleges, with all seven TYCA regions represented.

This low response rate was irritating but understandable. As has been discussed by scholars at community colleges for quite a while (Andelora, "The Teacher/Scholar . . ."; Sommers; Tinberg; and Ziolkowski, for example), some faculty members may not value research as much as faculty at four-year colleges, or they simply may not prioritize research-related activities, especially while teaching under a typical 5/5 load.¹ And as Speigelman and Day point out, a low response rate is not uncommon.² Besides those factors that might have affected the response rate for my survey, there was a question that I had to seriously consider before sending out the letters and surveys: If so many community colleges do not have WPAs, to whom do I send surveys?

Prior research did not provide much help in this regard. As Nist and Raines contend, "The absence of WPAs in two-year colleges reflects the overall absence of faculty titles," and "[s]ometimes a department chair or coordinator of several disciplines assumes these responsibilities, and occasionally a faculty member may have released-time to coordinate the composition courses or the writing center" (65). While I found that contention to be true, that point proves unhelpful when devising a research study about WPA work. Regardless, my letter to department chairs enlisted their help in my research, and I presented my preliminary research questions in a cover letter and provided the survey (Appendix B).

SURVEY RESULTS: GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

Although this study is not as comprehensive as Raines' 1987 survey, it is certainly more focused on the role and scope of writing program administration, and the nature of the survey offers WPAs at two-year colleges voices. The ability to do a comprehensive and well-funded survey like Raines' was not a luxury I had at the time since I was doing this research in a compressed time frame and a limited budget. While 21 responses is not a strong sample size, the results provide a thought-provoking look at the different WPA structures and the challenges of WPA work at two-year colleges, structures and challenges that can inform writing program administration at four-year institutions.

To provide a context, here are data about the twenty-one respondents:

Enrollment Numbers:

Range: 3,500–30,000 Average: 13,333

Number of Full-Time Faculty:

Range: 2–98 Average: 21

Number of Part-Time Faculty:

Fall Range: 6–105	Fall Average: 38
Winter/Spring Range: 6–105	Winter/Spring Average: 35
Summer Range: 0–60	Summer Average: 13

Unlike Raines' study in the late 1980s, this survey relies more heavily on larger institutions since her research indicates that "from 66% to 86% of two-year colleges have FTE or headcount under 5,000" (153). Because of a much smaller sample and more results from larger institutions in this study, we see an average institution size of approximately 13,000, with the average number of full-time faculty in departments or divisions at 21. As can be expected, the range of part-time faculty was wide (6–105), which to some would indicate an over-reliance on adjunct faculty, a justifiable criticism at some two-year colleges. But one has to consider that at two-year colleges the number of full-time, tenure-track faculty teaching basic writing, first-year writing, and professional writing courses is quite strong in contrast to numbers of tenure-track faculty members teaching writing at four-year institutions. From a student's or a parent's or perhaps some compositionists' viewpoints, the part-time/adjunct situation is better at some two-year colleges because tenure-track faculty are more likely to teach writing courses

compared to many English departments at four-year colleges and universities that use mostly graduate teaching assistants and other parts of the contingent labor force to staff first-year writing courses. But such a contention radically simplifies the differences between two-year and four-year schools, a simplification that does not square with some of the comments by two-year college WPAs—the use of contingent faculty and the lack of tenure-track lines are serious issues that need to be addressed.

Especially at community and technical colleges where higher administrations have been enacting the business model for some time, the threat against tenure is even more acute because the duty of the tenure-track instructor is to teach—not also produce scholarship. So contingent labor is an easy way to cut costs. As one writing program coordinator at a community college put it in response to the survey, “We probably over rely on adjuncts who we have little control over, compared to graduate students at a university, for instance, or non-tenure track faculty who are hired for a couple of years.” Or as another instructor states, “I think the main challenges inherent to any program at a 2-year are lack of adequate budgetary lines for full-time faculty, so that a great percentage of comp classes are taught by part-time faculty, many of whom are only marginally qualified. . . .”

In regard to administrative structures, the location writing instructors call home deeply affects whether a community college has a WPA or not. There is no predictable pattern of where “English” tends to be housed. Of the twenty-one responses, three two-year colleges grouped these disciplines as a department—composition, creative writing, ESL, and literature—which is a pretty traditional grouping. In some cases, there were variations on that grouping with other disciplines like journalism, philosophy, women’s studies, reading, or folklore included. In some instances, however, writing courses were part of a larger communication division that included speech communication, drama, art, music, and mass communication. The results show a diversity of institutional organization contingent on the traditions and institutional memory of each college.

These diverse contexts present a distinct challenge when trying to pin down the state, lack of, or *ad hoc* nature of writing program administration. While the administrative structures are diverse, for the sake of codification, I offer five general groups of writing program administration:

- 33% English Dept. Chair, Dean, or “Team Leader” hires, evaluates, mentors FT and PT faculty, develops curricula, etc. (n=7)
- 9.5% Day Chair and Night Chair (n=2)
- 14% Designated WPA (n=3)
- 5% De Facto WPA (n=1)

- 38% have some type of Chair/Dean-Coordinator system and/or Teacher-Administrator/s collaborative effort (n=8)

What the surveys showcase at the outset is that, as in four-year college English departments or departments of language and literature, department chairs can wield a great deal of power, and some are burdened with responsibilities. They work as chairs *and* WPAs. Similar to other community colleges in my study, one chair remarks that the composition committee does a great deal of work about “issues pertaining to writing instruction,” but “the department chair generally makes most of the decisions about administering the program.” And while such chairs effectively administer the program, some also indicate that they need help in making the right decisions. One respondent adds, “At our particular institution, too much is the responsibility of the chair largely because it involves last-minute decisions. Many of the decisions that I have to make very quickly should be subject to further contemplation by a wider group of people.”

In addition to chairs working as WPAs, sometimes deans and associate deans also work as WPAs. One Associate Dean describes his position in this way: “My position is 100% administrative; while I’m tenured and still teach, I am not a member of the collective bargaining group at the college and do not accumulate seniority in the department. I coordinate hiring; manage course offerings; evaluate faculty; represent the department at meetings internally and externally; lead process improvement efforts within and beyond the department; and teach composition.” In addition to some deans and traditional chairs acting as *ad hoc* WPAs, one administrator whose official title is “team leader” (instead of chair) sums up how a lot of WPA work gets done at two-year colleges:

I serve as the WPA—I hire adjuncts and provide training for them; coordinate assessment. I also lead discussions about what we are doing in our 2 semester comp sequence. But I must also say that we are a very collaborative department. We discuss writing and course expectations, etc. all the time in an informal way.

Adding in the fact that two very large community colleges from this study have both day and night chairs within their departments (43% of the structures dominated by chairs), the burden for chairs is heavy, and the percentage of chairs or deans acting as WPAs is substantial—a percentage that demands its own study.

In contrast though, my study found three officially designated WPAs or writing program coordinators along with one “lead faculty member” with

an appropriate amount of released-time (two courses) who works essentially as a WPA. With those four, 19% of the survey represents a designated WPA, which compares to Raines's findings of "13% of 201 responding indicated they have a director of writing, and only 7% have a coordinator of writing directing a separate program" (154). While it is difficult to compare our studies because of the stark differences in sample size, it is surprising that the approximate percentage of WPAs at two-year colleges appears to have remained fairly static over two decades. In comparing Raines's study conducted in 1987 and this one in 2006/2007, I expected some significant increase in that percentage—at least something that cohered with writing program administrators being more vocal in the profession and the rise of composition/rhetoric as its own discipline.

Counter to a WPA represented by one position (centered), however, many two-year colleges offer decentered WPA structures because collaboration is valued and necessary and/or because there is a lack of appropriate released-time or budget for WPA positions. In situations where diverse staffs of part- and full-time instructors teach multiple writing courses every semester, a single person directing writing programs at two-year colleges may not be effective. Instead, counter to two-year colleges that have the luxury of an officially designated WPA, collaboration might offer coherence, sanity, and respect for pedagogical difference. In some cases, collaboration through very influential composition committees and/or lead faculty members in charge of specific course offerings reflect that instructors are quite invested in the writing courses that they teach almost every semester—whether developmental, basic, ESL, composition, or professional writing. Jeff Andelora sums up this predicament well in one of his responses to a "WPAs@Two-Year Colleges" online discussion forum:

In contrast [to four-year college English departments], two-year college English departments aren't built around literary studies, nor do they have writing programs—they are writing programs. We may teach a lit/hum class or two, but most of us teach mostly writing. So, the way WPAs are defined in four-year colleges (and I recognize this varies greatly) doesn't transfer readily to two-year colleges. We never needed to carve out a new space. (Andelora, "Hi Everyone")

Working collaboratively within the basic writing and first-year writing sequences is exactly what instructors have done at two-year colleges. As can be seen by the last grouping, 38% (n=8) of those responding to my survey indicated very strong collaborative structures in administering their writing courses. In a few cases, a chair or dean is involved, but there is a

diversity of teacher-administrators who observe classrooms, develop curricula, craft learning outcomes, direct assessment activities, lead professional development initiatives, and represent their department or division to the higher administration. At some institutions, they are named “lead faculty” or “coordinators of development writing” or “assistant chairs” or “course coordinators” or “composition coordinators.” In one instance that does not factor into the 38% quotient, an institution had a chair, a designated writing program administrator, and course coordinators for all three of the main composition courses—the latter positions holding no released time. Some institutions offer released time for designated WPAs or *de facto* WPAs, but unfortunately many other program coordinators or lead faculty do not have appropriate released-time for their duties on top of their regular teaching loads. As one instructor relates, the serious challenge to offering a true writing *program* rather than atomistic sets of writing courses is “support from the administration that some kind of released time (or in my case overload time as I haven’t been allowed to use it as released time) is needed.” Many lead faculty or coordinators provide influential “macrolevel teaching” (Gebhardt 35), but they receive little if any compensation or reduction of workload in return.

Moreover, this study not only connects to but also offers a sobering critique of calls to “decenter” the WPA (Gunner), to have WPA work utilize “coordinators” (Olson and Moxley), or to create a “postmasculinist” WPA (Miller). In many respects, the use of multiple coordinators, *de facto* WPAs, and influential composition committees provides a positive and productive sharing of responsibility for writing programs as many have argued (Phelps, Gunner, Miller, and Olson and Moxley). In writing programs at community colleges, sharing responsibility and respecting instructor autonomy is key. In programs that, in Holmstein’s words, attract full- and part-time faculty members who “tend to be more experienced than typical twenty-something graduate teaching assistants” and “tend to be more experienced than grad assistant teachers most freshmen will meet in the research universities” (433), the fact that only three surveys (14%) indicated that part-time faculty members have to follow a scripted syllabus for specific courses signifies that most campuses offer the majority of faculty members (86%; n=18) professorial autonomy in conducting their classes and crafting their assignments and syllabi as long as they correspond to the intellectual integrity of the courses that they are assigned to teach. One instructor’s comment is emblematic of most of the responses received in that “[a]djuncts have nearly as much freedom in their courses as full-time faculty have. We do have model syllabi available for consultation.”

In addition to honoring faculty experience and autonomy, the use of a systems-like approach to WPA work—a collection (an ecosystem) of positions, leaders, and collaborative events—corresponds to research about leadership since as Phelps relates, “leadership is understood today as an interdependent function of a dynamic system” (5). For example, one two-year college lacked a designated WPA, but the responsibility of separate courses was divided among various faculty members who acted as “lead faculty” or “coordinators.” In other cases, composition committees did the bulk of the work in regard to providing model syllabi, observing instructors’ classes, running assessment measures, and sponsoring professional development activities. And some assistant chairs worked as *de facto* WPAs while chairs, course coordinators, and other instructors worked together within the writing program. Positional authority can only take one so far. So this collaborative WPA work connects to Hildy Miller’s idea of merging both feminist and masculinist tactics because “[l]eadership is therefore characterized as relational. Personal authority may appear as being receptive, willing to promote discussion, listen to divergent views, and look for common interests” (82) while “masculinist assumptions about power, leadership, and administrative structure permeate the academy, affecting feminist approaches at every turn. Merging the two requires a WPA to take a bi-epistemological stance” (87). This interplay is often evident in conversations in the hallways, in professional development workshops, and in formal evaluation reports after observing classrooms, to name a few. Such collaborative efforts among committees, assistant chairs, coordinators, and lead faculty members espouse this model in *praxis*.

The distinct difference between this postmasculinist approach at four-year and two-year colleges, however, is institutional history. The model that many four-year colleges are working from is a hierarchical one that was created when literature displaced rhetoric as the “valued” discipline as colleges mimicked Harvard’s “English A” model (see Connors). Later in the twentieth century, colleges and universities created WPA positions to manage the “service course” of college composition and perhaps basic writing. So there was an established *center*, a position of authority. What many two-year colleges are grappling with, in contrast, is the lack of a center, a lack of institutional authority on writing matters. While the model that Gunner describes in “Decentering the WPA” is laudable and one that could be emulated at other campuses, the model progresses from a previous structure that had a WPA, a person who (one can assume) is given proper released time for his or her duties.

In the case of some two-year college writing programs, instructors are creating postmasculinist models out of necessity. These professionals have

created systems of collaboration—composition committees, course coordinators, mentoring programs, composition chairs, professional development workshops, lead faculty—to construct a community of teachers with minimal support from higher administration. Decentering the WPA is perhaps a democratic model for many four-year colleges, but in many two-year college programs those citizens do not have a right to vote, in a sense. They have created collaborative/democratic models that hold a great deal of responsibility but sometimes very little power.

So from the perspective of some instructors at two-year colleges, a *centered* WPA is necessary because they have never really had a center of power on writing matters. For example, Jeff Klausman argues that a WPA is needed at two-year colleges because there is a significant “difference between a writing ‘program’ and writing ‘courses.’ My contention is that we have the latter and a WPA is needed to create the former. The problem, of course is how” (“I appreciate . . .”). And as one respondent to my survey puts it, “From my perspective [Associate Dean], departments need a WPC or Writing Program Coordinator. Such support is essential for a successful ecology of writing. My question is whether this person should be tenured or administrative.” In this vein, many of the respondents to my survey indicate that some manner of designated WPA is desired since such a person could provide a stronger direction for their writing courses (and a base of power institutionally) and create a program that is more in line with current best practices in composition-rhetoric, assessment, and professional development.

But respondents who expressed interest in a designated WPA wanted a colleague and fellow practitioner who can provide direction for a writing *program* while honoring, respecting, and productively critiquing diverse approaches to teaching writing. There is still a desire that all instructors should be able to provide input about the program since everyone teaches various writing courses, so some sharing of responsibilities could still enact a postmasculinist model. So at some institutions decentered WPA work might work well, but in other programs, colleagues desire a more traditional WPA power structure. Regardless, many writing programs at two-year colleges already exemplify methods of decentered writing program administration through these methods: workshops where instructors share ideas and materials; lack of heavily scripted courses; composition committees that have decision-making power on textbooks and curricula; shared responsibilities for all writing courses through course coordinators who get rewarded through this “service” activity in their promotion portfolios; various systems of both evaluative and non-evaluative classroom observation; and mentor groups such as teaching partners, teaching squares, and theory-

practice discussion groups. However, fighting for better working conditions and more support for instructors is paramount for developing communities of teacher-scholars and serving the greater good of students. The most important question is how to create a centered or a dynamic, decentered system of writing program administration (multiple positions) that has significant power within an institution and can also work effectively and productively with diverse instructors. So the WPA structure necessary at each two-year college depends on the writing program's population and location along with the niche desired for the WPA.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSION

Germane to two-year college writing programs, David Schwalm asserts that

[t]here is no agreed-upon concept of 'writing program.' There is no reason why there must be agreement, and, again, no particular model is necessarily better than another, but you ought to know the scope of your program and responsibilities and be aware of opportunities to do more, or less, or differently. (11)

In this light, it will benefit teacher-scholars to delve into more detailed research about WPAs at two-year colleges since we all can learn from alternate models of WPA work. Moreover, a well-funded study underwritten by both the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) is an opportunity to consider. Research developing from such collaboration could present extensive, qualitative, and ethnographic studies of two-year college WPAs for the benefit of professionals at both two-year and four-year colleges—detailed studies with the goal of “rich description of people, places, and conversations” (Bogdan and Biklen 2). Collaborative research about two-year college WPA work could show us a more detailed picture of the diversity of writing program administration while also letting us see the effectiveness, weaknesses, and strengths of various WPA models. Even if TYCA and WPA do not choose to collaborate on this endeavor, co-authored, cross-institutional scholarship is sorely needed.

Because over half of the first-year writing courses that students take across the country are at two-year colleges, this figure begs our profession to undertake more detailed studies of writing program administration at two-year colleges. Creating partnerships between two-year and four-year college professionals as I and others argue (Nist and Raines; Tinberg) would result in more significant data and more detailed models of designated or unnamed WPAs—those ghosts in the machine of first-year writing sequences, some of whom are enacting a postmasculinist approach with-

out a center. Extensive scholarship about writing program administration at two-year colleges could help diverse institutions prosper while discovering the diversity of WPAs within the machine.

NOTES

1. Tinberg in *Border Talk* and Helon Raines in “Reseeing the Past . . .” both discuss this challenge at length. Raines, in particular, avers that faculty at two-year colleges sometimes have a mindset that isolates themselves, so that they “. . . are often hostile to those among us who create the programs, who do research, and who speak out to the larger community” (104).

2. Kami Day’s research survey about plagiarism is revealing since from 1000 surveys distributed, only 100 surveys were returned—a paltry 10% response rate (140).

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APPENDIX A

V. Assistant Chair/Adjunct Faculty

1. This person is chosen by the Department Chair from those applying. The Staff Activities Coordination Committee is required to review the applications and to advise the department chair about the appointment. Deadline for application is the first working day of March of the academic year preceding the one in which the position will be filled. The person appointed to the position will be announced no later than the last day of class the following May.
2. As an advisor to the Department Chair, this person has the following responsibilities:
 - a. keeps accurate and up-to-date records of all departmental action pertaining to adjunct faculty, including addresses, phone numbers, memos, class schedules, and office and key assignments;
 - b. helps select and maintain a supply of desk copies of textbooks for adjunct faculty use;
 - c. conducts in-person interviews with each applicant;
 - d. evaluates each applicant using a form acceptable to the Department and the Chair;
 - e. maintains an up-to-date file of acceptable applicants;
 - f. conducts orientation sessions for newcomers as well as regular staff development meetings for everyone;
 - g. administers classroom evaluations according to prescribed District and Departmental policy;
 - h. maintains a rotating schedule of class visitations, writes impressions of the visit on an approved classroom visitation form, meets with the instructor to discuss the visit, and has the instructor sign the form;
 - i. gives the student evaluation summaries and the classroom visitation form for each faculty member to the Department Chair for review;

- j. assists the Department Chair with the scheduling of and communication with the adjunct staff;
 - k. makes office and key assignments;
 - l. is a liaison for the adjunct staff to the Department Chair, the College, and the District;
 - m. and provides informal as well as formal advice, organizes social functions, encourages professional growth and high standards of teaching, is an advocate for the special concerns of adjunct faculty, and does as much as possible to maintain a positive atmosphere among adjunct faculty.
3. Evaluation: The Assistant Chair/Adjunct Faculty will be evaluated by the Department Chair in a format developed by the Chair and the Department at the end of the first and third semesters of the Assistant's tenure.
 4. The term is six consecutive regular semesters. Compensation is six hours released time per semester.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College

If you want to simply email your replies, please send them to ttaylor@stlcc.edu with the email subject line titled "TYC WPA." Here is the mailing address for the surveys: Tim N. Taylor; English Department; St. Louis Community College at Meramec; 11333 Big Bend Blvd.; St. Louis, MO 63122-5799.

- 1) What is name of your institution?
- 2) What is the approximate enrollment of your college?
- 3) What academic disciplines comprise your "English" department?
- 4) How many full-time faculty members are in your English department?
- 5) Approximately how many part-time (adjunct) faculty members does your English department typically employ during the fall term?
during the spring term?
during the summer term?
- 6) Please describe the administrative structure of your English Department. What are the responsibilities of the Chair? Does the

- department have Assistant Chairs and what are their duties? How much “released-time” (reduction in courseload) is provided for these administrative duties?
- 7) If you have a single person who you consider a writing program administrator at your community college, what is that person’s title? What is his/her responsibilities? Or is administrating the program a collaborative effort? Explain.
 - 8) Who is responsible for hiring, observing, and evaluating part-time faculty members in your department? How is this observation and evaluation done?
 - 9) Who is responsible for scheduling/coordinating classes for full-time faculty members?
 - 10) Who is responsible for scheduling/coordinating classes for part-time faculty members?
 - 11) Please provide the required college credit (transferable) composition courses that are part of your college’s General Education curriculum. Also offer a short description of the course (such as general expository writing, argument/researched-based composition, literature-based comp, etc.)
 - 12) Who makes decisions about textbooks for composition courses? Is it done by a committee, or does a single person make that decision? What is the process for making these decisions?
 - 13) For part-time faculty members, are sample/model syllabi and assignments provided for the courses? Would you consider the courses they teach “heavily scripted” or do adjuncts have a degree of autonomy with how they teach their courses? If needed, explain how adjuncts are supported before and during they teach their courses?
 - 14) Do full-time faculty members follow the same sample/model syllabi and assignments provided for adjuncts? Do they use the same default textbooks for composition courses?
 - 15) How does your college place students into specific composition courses? Does your institution use an assessment method based on a writing sample of some sort, or are students placed by standardized test scores or other indirect testing mechanisms?
 - 16) What type of program-wide assessment is being used for your institution’s college composition courses?
 - 17) What professional development activities are offered within your department to support the teaching of writing? Are there any initiatives devoted specifically for part-time faculty members?

- 18) Please provide any thoughts or observations you have about Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College. Are there any distinct challenges writing programs have at two-year colleges? Do you have any suggestions on how to better support full-time faculty and part-time faculty members at community colleges?



Review

Greene, Nicole Pepinster, and Patricia J. McAlexander, eds. *Basic Writing in America: The History of Nine College Programs*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2008. 260 pages.

Susan Naomi Bernstein

A recent thread on the WPA listserv asks for a book that would present the stories of WPAs and their programs. *Basic Writing in America: The History of Nine College Programs*, edited by Nicole Pepinster Greene and Patricia J. McAlexander, fulfills this request. Readers will find a microscopic examination of nine basic writing programs at public and state-related universities, spanning the United States from New York to California and many points in between. WPAs and others, writing as participant observers, provide details of the day-to-day and year-to-year operations and events that allow these programs to function and, in some cases, to thrive well into the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Readers will discover, however, that not all of these stories lead to satisfying endings. Despite the hard work of WPAs, faculty, and staff, basic writing programs remain subject to the scrutiny of outside stakeholders, often with no knowledge of or interest in the needs of students who are best served by open enrollment to public universities. Such stakeholders usually include state legislators and university administrators who eliminate funding, raise admissions standards, and otherwise implement measures designed to reduce the need for “remediation” at the college level. As the authors of *Basic Writing in America* suggest, a crucial factor in the survival or demise of basic writing remains who defines and selects the terms to describe the ways in which basic writing functions in the university.

Terms like “remedial” and “developmental,” far from being neutral descriptors, carry heavy and problematic rhetorical associations that can alter the material realities of students’ access to higher education. Programs rise and fall as definitions shift and change over time. Indeed, the reintroduction of the term “remediation” often leads to diminished access to uni-

versity education for students who are variously defined as “at-risk,” “non-traditional,” and “diverse.” The end of basic writing programs, as several of the authors show, most severely impacts working-class and poor students, who often identify as students of color, and who are extended many fewer opportunities to continue post-secondary education.

Location plays a significant role in how and why basic writing programs come into existence and then suffer retrenchment and elimination. Nonetheless, as the authors of *Basic Writing in America* clearly demonstrate, many of the issues surrounding the demise of basic writing programs in four-year public universities derive from global concerns. Many of these stories share the same trajectory. Programs are founded at workers’ colleges in the 1930s, or to support the needs of returning veterans after World War II. Some programs come into existence or grow stronger with the advent of the civil rights movement and federal desegregation orders. However, as recession grips the country and as universities attempt to boost their national ratings by admitting a more elite student population, basic writing programs become easy targets for elimination.

In the interest of full disclosure, I need to state that the stories of my previous and current institutional homes (University of Cincinnati’s Center for Access and Transition and a City University of New York community college, respectively) are documented in *Basic Writing in America*, although the events described in the book had already transpired long before I was hired. George Otte tells the story of basic writing at the City University of New York, poignantly rehearsing Mina Shaughnessy’s contributions to the education of open admissions students at City College and her contributions to the field, at CUNY and beyond. In the wake of Shaughnessy’s death, the fortunes of basic writing rose and fell, following the trajectory described above. As Otte writes of City College: “Both the sunrise and the sunset were brilliant, but the sun has not set where it once rose” (44).

Similarly, Michelle Gibson and Deborah T. Meem present their story of the prolonged demise of the University of Cincinnati’s (UC) University College and its basic writing program. Unlike City College’s senior college status, University College was a two-year, degree-granting, open-access college on the main campus of the university. After University College was dissolved and many of its faculty reassigned throughout the UC system, the Center for Access and Transition (CAT) was created in its place. The CAT, as Gibson and Meem emphasize, is not a degree-granting Center, but a developmental program designed to move students through remediation in a year’s time. After successfully completing remediation, students would be eligible to transfer to one of UC’s bachelor’s degree-granting colleges. Gibson and Meem suggest that, “one of the (unstated) purposes of the CAT is

to ‘weed out’ those students incapable of transferring to baccalaureate colleges” (64).

The pattern described by Otte and Gibson and Meem is repeated elsewhere in *Basic Writing in America*. Nicole Pepinster Greene writes that the University of Louisiana at Lafayette

has adopted a new mission that no longer supports a BW program. Having begun its history as a racially segregated institution that denied admission on the basis of race, now as a result of its selective admissions policy, ULL in effect limits admission on the basis of class. Poorly prepared students, who are usually from low-performing schools in economically marginalized neighborhoods, are not admitted. (95)

The difficulties of contingent faculty who teach the majority of basic writing courses at many institutions are also addressed throughout *Basic Writing in America*. Mark Wiley notes that at California State University at Long Beach, “the multiple sections of basic writing courses continue to be taught overwhelmingly by part-time lecturers. With little power and several consecutive years of bad budgets, they have not protested, and are not likely to protest” (118). As dwindling budgetary resources play an ever-growing role the distribution of resources in public universities, basic writing once again receives short shrift.

Nonetheless, as Greene and McAlexander describe in their very helpful introduction, not all of the news is bad. Basic writing, coming of age alongside composition studies, has generated new pedagogy and provides fertile ground for teacher-research. Such research is presented throughout the histories of *Basic Writing in America* and was, as Otte reiterates, strongly encouraged by Mina Shaughnessy in the 1970s as a means of experimenting with and evolving innovations in the field. Contemporary examples of innovation include Karen Uehling’s (a founding chair of the Conference on Basic Writing) work with redesigning the basic writing program at Boise State University in Idaho and Mindy Wright’s description of the ever-evolving first-year writing program at the Ohio State University.

Yet Wright’s reference to “stricter” admissions standards enacted at Ohio State in the late 1990’s (216–217) points to the stories not included in *Basic Writing in America*. Greene and McAlexander state the book’s purpose is “recovering stories of programs that have been threatened, diminished, or eliminated.” As universities raised their admissions requirements and dropped basic writing programs, conditions for educational equity also changed. A generation ago, students from a wide variety of backgrounds had access to the material resources of large state universities. In a section

of the introduction subtitled “Basic Writing Programs Today,” Greene and McAlexander suggest that such students now frequently enroll at community colleges or other non-baccalaureate-granting institutions (14–16).

By comparison, such institutions are frequently underfunded and under-resourced and, as several recent studies by educational foundations have noted, often enroll a majority of students from underrepresented populations. Since community colleges are increasingly the present and the future of basic writing, this omission gives an incomplete picture of the complex contexts of basic writing programs today. Stories by teachers and administrators of color are missing as well, an omission that Greene and McAlexander note in the introduction (8). The absence of such stories is particularly unfortunate, since *Basic Writing in America* emphasizes the links between basic writing programs and civil rights initiatives.

Even with these omissions, however, *Basic Writing in America* would still serve as a helpful book for graduate students and new WPAs who may be encountering basic writing for the first time in their careers. Besides the detailed introduction, the chapters include extensive lists of Works Cited, interviews with teachers and administrators, and archival research. Readers gain a sense of the stakeholders involved in creating and sustaining basic writing programs, as well as an idea of how and why course goals and program goals change over time.

Indeed, this catalog of histories reminds us that the significant work of composition studies takes place both inside and outside of classrooms and faculty offices and meeting spaces. As Greene and McAlexander and these nine histories demonstrate, the minutiae of WPA work for basic writing goes hand-in-hand with passionate engagement with the field. The cover of *Basic Writing in America* features an archival photograph of a 1995 student rally to preserve remedial education at California State University at Fullerton. The late Mary Kay Crouch, who served for more than twenty years as the coordinator of developmental writing at CSU-Fullerton, spoke at this rally as a means of persuading hearts and minds beyond the corridors of the university. Her work exemplifies an embodied commitment to basic writing.

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Review

Adler-Kassner, Linda. *The Activist WPA: Changing Stories about Writing and Writers*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2008. 208 pages.

Doug Downs

Another day, another news story on poor writing skills among college graduates or declining literacy among high-schoolers. As WPAs and writing instructors, we are used to the steady drip-drip of stories painting students as struggling writers, teachers as incompetent at instruction in “the basics” of writing, and generations stumbling on the streets of grammatical ignorance. Since long before Johnny couldn’t write, the never-were-news stories of his ancestors’ similar ineptitudes have powerfully shaped writing instruction. When we weary of these stories, our instinct has almost always been stubborn resistance, shouting down—amongst ourselves—these arguments.

With *The Activist WPA: Changing Stories about Writing and Writers*, Linda Adler-Kassner offers an unexpected approach to publicizing *our* stories of writing and writers. Rather than confrontational tactics which reinforce stories we disagree with by retelling them, Adler-Kassner proposes that our best move is much less direct. “The first step to story-changing work,” she suggests, “is not addressing the stories that we want to change, but building a base and developing alliances” (184). She equates this with community organization: taking account of and working from our values and principles, and finding those who share them through dialogue and conversation. Then, working with this base to develop a positive message that is delivered and enacted locally and strategically, *making* stories instead of *reacting* to them, and stating what we want, rather than what we do not want. Adler-Kassner would have us reframe the role of WPA, imagining us as organizers who transform our world through action, reflection, and dialogue, with an ethic of care for people. This approach to re-framing narratives about writers and writing instruction is not without its difficulties,

and it is no public-relations manual, which might *feel* more immediately useful—but the path it recommends seems far more powerful.

The Activist WPA begins with an extended description of Johnny-can't-write stories that commonly frame public discourse on writing and writing instruction. Adler-Kassner dramatizes the consequences of this framework of lack, inadequacy, and incompetence through reference to the Spellings Commission and its influence on our work. What is at issue, she argues, are these points:

- How should students' literacies be defined when they come into composition classes?
- What literacies should composition classes develop, how, and for what purpose?
- How should the development of students' literacies be assessed at the end of these classes? (14)

She presents us with a choice: ignore the dominant framing of these issues and hope it goes away, or recognize “we have the brains, the know-how, and the tools. By changing stories at the local level and then working outward to our communities and with our colleagues, we can make a difference” (22).

That gauntlet thrown, Adler-Kassner starts with the historical root of narratives of student and teachers' lack and the need for outside expertise in literacy instruction. She traces these to a particular current framing of the *progressive pragmatic jeremiad*, a form of pragmatism that views America as being on a mission (from God) to establish a virtuous democracy. The jeremiad is a foundational narrative that identifies a central purpose for education: to develop critical intelligence which individuals can collectively apply to better their circumstances. But the current dominant approach to education is a “technocratic interventionist” one in which students are told what to believe by outside “experts” who, unlike the students' teachers, understand what is needed to bring about a virtuous democracy (48–49). Adler-Kassner welds the current chorus of stories surrounding the inadequacy of writers and writing instruction, and their cost, to this technocratic interventionist account through case studies of high-profile “interventions” in higher-ed literacy instruction. She begins with the Spellings Commission's report *A Test of Leadership*, whose assertion of the failure of higher education is a key script in the interventionist frame. Next, the American Diploma Project's *Ready or Not* report embodies an “experts waiting in the wings” script: if teachers can't fix the problem, outside experts will. Adler-Kassner offers as an example the ACT and its National Curriculum Survey, which

“knows” what students need, what they are actually getting, the resulting gap, and what curricula would close that gap (which, naturally, ACT has written). At this point, we are convinced of Adler-Kassner’s argument that this interventionist frame is not only present but difficult to refute.

But Adler-Kassner then turns to a fourth case, the SAT Writing Exam and NCTE’s success in changing the story about it from the standard “combating failure in the schools” narrative to framing *the test* itself as the failure. Analyzing NCTE’s work, Adler-Kassner derives four principles that the second half of the book examines:

1. Reframing is a long-term process that involves rewriting a story *before* it’s news, through analysis of a community’s principles.
2. It demands not response to threats but organizational examination involving large numbers of people asking, what is it we *do* here?
3. It demands forming alliances with lots of others with related concerns based on those clarified principles.
4. It demands focus: a very specific message, careful training of spokespeople, and managing multiple news outlets. (79–80)

What Adler-Kassner takes up next, then, is an explanation of the first three points above: how changing stories is first a problem of organization. She interviews leaders of nine progressive community action organizations including MoveOn, the RockRidge Institute, Wellstone Action, and the Strategic Press Information Network, in order to walk readers through three approaches to community organizing: interest-based, value-based, and issue-based. Her analysis demonstrates that all involve discovering principles, clarifying goals, identifying allies and connecting people in and through self-interest, developing a base (through dialogue, conversation, and listening), and developing leaders. Smart WPAs, Adler-Kassner concludes, will “mix and phase elements of all three models,” the key being balance: “Techniques without ideals, tactics without strategies, actions without principles—a menace. But ideals without techniques, values without tactics, principles without compromise and reality-checking—a mess” (127).

It is through organization that WPAs will find firm ground for the more obvious activity in changing stories: writing new ones, and getting them out. Drawing from her interviews, particularly with Wellstone Action and SPIN, Adler-Kassner summarizes and analyzes seven steps these organizations all use in reframing stories:

- Identifying an issue and a goal for change
- Identifying what we know, and what we need to know, to achieve the goal

- Developing a message
- Identifying audiences for that message
- Crafting specific messages for specific purposes/audiences
- Creating an overall plan to circulate our messages among those audiences
- Assessing our work (130–31)

In explaining these steps, Adler-Kassner is at her most directive, which is welcome: readers can feel like they really are receiving a primer on message development and media strategies.

At the same time, Adler-Kassner chooses not to examine message development specifically from a perspective of frame theory, something of a disappointment in a study that premises itself on a problem of framing to begin with. An extensive tradition of research on how frames actually work, beginning in brain science and working outward to issues of social organization and enculturation, is entirely skipped. For Adler-Kassner's purposes, this work is not important, but attending to actual mechanisms of framing might well influence those purposes to begin with. Thus, more sustained attention to message development as itself a problem of framing, along the lines of work by van Dijk, Snow and Benford, Donati, and Fisher, would have been welcome.

Still, Adler-Kassner finds a more crucial point in her ultimate argument: that one must know one's values clearly in order to be most effective in changing stories, because the new stories must derive from those principles. In the final chapter, Adler-Kassner examines her own principles, explaining how the ideals espoused throughout the book both derive from and dovetail with them. For example, she finds parallels between the cultural frame of *prophetic pragmatism* (a current version of pragmatism centered in pursuit of social justice) and the ethic of *tikkun olam*, as enacted through her own secular humanistic Judaism. Prophetic pragmatism sees the power of individuals to make a difference and improve democracy even while enmeshed in differences in power; the importance of forwarding human progress by addressing profound differences in power; and adapting old and new traditions to promote innovation and resistance in order to enhance individuality and promote democracy (172). As such, it shares with the ethic of *tikkun olam* an emphasis on *present action, combined action and reflection, and communal dialogue*.

It is clear in such examples how Adler-Kassner “telescopes,” in her words (168), between these principles as an individual personal ethic and as a zoomed-out, field-wide set of strategies for changing stories about writers and writing. In fact, one of the most impressive aspects of Adler-Kassner's

work is the book's consistency in enacting the very principles it propounds. Adler-Kassner lists a number of these:

Value students, their ideas, and their writing. Never, never, never make someone feel as if they can't do something. Treat everyone enthusiastically and in open and welcoming ways; work from what writers *bring*, not what they *do not bring*, to a class or a writing program. Care about people. Listen, and listen some more, to hear what they have to say and not what you think about what they have to say. Advocate for writers and writing. (169)

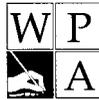
But how do we reconcile a desire to listen, converse, negotiate, and reach decisions communally and democratically, to be indeterminate and non-judgmental, with an ultimate need to *do* something, to make a decision, to arrive at a judgment on which action can be based? How does a listener advocate, or an advocate listen? Adler-Kassner writes, "I *am* advocating for particular ideas, stances, and approaches. . . . Clearly I have some strong beliefs about the ways that writing instruction and the work of writing instructors and WPAs *should* and *should not* be framed," promoting a civic literacy that can assess social conditions and find ways of improving them (179). Recognizing such values as pre-existing and shaping the dialogue she advocates, Adler-Kassner asks, "But does this perspective jibe with the notion of engaging in dialogue, of listening, of making alliances between my own ideas and those of others?" (180). This is a moment where the book lives its principles, as Adler-Kassner *recognizes* this difficulty and gives an honest, felt answer: that there *is* no good answer, but instead only a perpetual wrestling match in which one must "try—try—to be respectful of divergent positions" through ongoing negotiation and listening even while honoring one's own principles (180).

Adler-Kassner's proposed solutions are no neat and pat method. Rather, they present difficult thinking problems that will be worked out differently, and locally, with every story to be changed. Significantly, the book's own statement of these principles is an enactment of them. Very few scholars pull that off; how often do we in this field hear yet another statement claiming that "writing is messy business" made in the precisest and most self-assured way? Adler-Kassner is not afraid to say that neither the issue nor her discussion of it has a neat resolution. Her book is *not* an easy walk-through or a clear how-to manual. Rather, the book demands and supports reflection; it is written from the personal; it refuses to replace vexed dialogue with easy and quick decisions; and it finally clarifies a set of values that, if readers agree with them, provide a thoughtful basis for *action*. (And if they don't

agree with them, nevertheless provide hope for listening, dialogue, and conversation to find common ground.) It's a new idea—the *activist* WPA—and Adler-Kassner articulates it well.

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Review

Of Queen Bees and Queendoms: Fairy Tales, Resilience, and *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition*

Ballif, Michelle, Diane Davis, and Roxanne Mountford. *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 342 pages.

Kelly Kinney

Fairy tales intimate that a rewarding, good life is within one's reach despite adversity—but only if one does not shy away from the hazardous struggles without which one can never achieve true identity.

—Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*

I have to admit my initial skepticism after reading the opening chapters of *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition*. The book, the authors reveal, “was inspired by the desire to spy on the closets—or the personal and professional choices—of the successful women in our field” (viii). While learning about the career paths of thriving scholars was certainly intriguing to me, references to closet-spying, the merits of skirt length, and the “scheming” and “cattiness” of the “senior woman scholar” sent up red flags (12). Dangly earrings vs. pearl-studded posts (viii)? Obnoxious “Queen Bees” (11) and anointed key-keepers of “the Queendom” (119)? I began to wonder if the Wicked Witch and Snow White would appear in the following pages. And yet, while I was initially unsettled by its sometimes superficial conceptions of womanhood, it is through familiar representa-

tions that Ballif, Davis, and Mountford paint an archetypal, almost mythic portrait of the field: upon reflection, I now see that the book's magnetism lies in its predictable narrative thread, and that its traditional depictions of gender maintain its palpable fairy tale appeal. As Bettelheim suggests, while often unduly dismissed as clichéd or puerile, the normativity of fairy tales serves a narrative function: through their familiarity they help readers see themselves in stories of conflict, and thus move them closer to naming their anxieties, facing personal obstacles, and embracing mature and confident identities. Similarly, it is through its focus on the positive outcomes of struggle that *Women's Ways of Making It* distinguishes itself, casting women in rhetoric and composition not simply as tragic or insecure, but as leading scholars with self-possessed professional identities.

Let me make clear, however, that *Women's Ways of Making It* does not ignore the still-present sexism, low status, and labor exploitation that often plague women in the field. Carrying on in the tradition of texts that demonstrate women's marginalization in the academy and culture—including celebrated works such as Enos' *Gender Roles and Faculty Lives in Rhetoric and Composition*, Miller's *Textual Carnivals*, and Schell's *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers*—the book nonetheless distinguishes itself, seeking not to “repeat the careful and convincing work done by others” (4), but to “demonstrate how women have succeeded in spite of [professional] challenges” (3).

Fittingly, then, the book begins by synthesizing these challenges, but then moves quickly to advice on how to thrive in the field. Using a survey instrument reminiscent of Harzog's in *Composition and the Academy*, the authors reveal common themes conveyed by 142 women holding faculty positions in the field: such themes include “dealing with sexism [. . .], maintaining a balance between career and family, struggling for scholarly and/or administrative respect, mentoring junior women, finding one's voice in scholarship, and struggling to say ‘no’ to unrewarded service work” (4). Divided into four parts—“Becoming a Professional,” “Thriving as a Professional,” “And Having a Life, Too,” and “Being a Professional: Profiles of Success”—the final section contains interview chapters documenting the histories of leading women in rhetoric and composition, each of whom reflect on the adversities faced on the road to success.

Graduate students and job seekers will find valuable information in chapters one and two, which offer guidance on managing course work, finding a mentor, finishing the dissertation, and navigating interviews. Geared to readers on the tenure-track and beyond, chapters three and four argue for ways to develop successful tenure and promotion cases and avoid common professional snares, while chapters six and seven offer advice on

how to balance work with personal life. Of particular interest to readers of *WPA*, chapter four, "Succeeding Despite It All: Administration, Politics, and Difficult People," contains advice on how to contain the "Queen Bee" compositionist—among other menaces—but more importantly, profiles the possibilities and pitfalls of WPA work. The authors report that the vast majority of their survey respondents warn junior faculty against accepting administrative positions. As they extrapolate,

It is no secret that the time and energy required to administer a writing program is time and energy not spent on researching and publishing—often resulting in negative consequences when an untenured WPA is reviewed for tenure and promotion. But what [our research articulates] here is the unspoken challenge faced by writing program administrators: often one is ostensibly hired or appointed as a WPA in order to effect change and innovation; however, the dirty secret is that the powerless (untenured, most likely female) WPA is hired or appointed precisely so that no change could be effected. And damn the earnest woman who tries. (119)

While this revelation is not breaking news to *WPA's* readership—the dirty secret to which the authors allude is well-documented in collections such as *The Promise and Perils of Writing Program Administration* and *Untenured Faculty as Writing Program Administrators*—it nonetheless reinforces the painful double-bind many pre-tenure administrators inhabit. True to the book's intent, however, rather than dwelling on obstacles, the chapter offers practical advice for junior WPAs, arguing that we can secure tenure if we: 1) educate our committees about the intellectual nature of our administrative work; 2) maximize our administrative work by publishing on it; 3) negotiate our administrative roles in relation to our publication expectations; 4) renegotiate those expectations if our administrative workload expands or changes; and 5) get absolutely everything in writing (121–23). By following these guidelines, Ballif, Davis, and Mountford suggest, WPA work can be much more than a burden: it can earn junior faculty the institutional presence that tips the scales of tenure in our favor (119).

Even more intriguing than chapter four, my favorite chapters reveal the Cinderella stories of leading lights in the field, including Patricia Bizzell, Sharon Crowley, Cheryl Glenn, Susan Jarratt, Shirley Wilson Logan, Andrea Lunsford, Jacqueline Jones Royster, Cynthia Selfe, and Lynn Worsham. Incorporating interview methods akin to Belenky et al.'s in *Women's Ways of Knowing*, these chapters engage in part because of their archetypal character, but also for their strikingly candid themes: the rebel daughter who rejects the sexist expectations of her father; the loyal undergraduate

who returns to her alma mater, but is betrayed on the road to tenure; the scholarly giant who narrates the satisfactions of publishing with her spouse, but adds a post-script announcing her unexpected divorce; the young mother whose brother's death compels her not only to pursue a more fulfilling career, but a new life on the opposite side of the continent. A little Disney-esque? Perhaps. Still, these true-life tales do more than shed light on the proverbial chimney-sweeping before (or despite) the pumpkin coach's arrival: they reveal the public perseverance and private principles of the interviewees. My favorite quote comes from Dr. Tell-It-Like-It-Is, Sharon Crowley, who stands out as the book's renegade protagonist. When asked what she would do to support a colleague being discriminated against, Crowley deadpans. "[I would] console her, make sure she's okay, and then I would go beat the shit out of whoever was doing the discriminating" (231). Not your traditional glass-slippered princess, this Cinderella's got the punch of Rocky Balboa.

Another way the interview chapters move beyond the normative is in how they reveal the diverse habits of well-published writers. As the authors note, writing-productivity experts suggest that the most prolific scholars write in brief, daily intervals, knowing "that long, exhausting practice sessions [. . .] persist beyond the point of diminishing returns" (112). Once again bucking the norm, however, Crowley describes her tendency to write in "pushes," that is, three-to-four day marathons in which she composes around the clock (226). Although Worsham reports a less epic regimen, she too devotes full days to writing (310), while Glenn and Jarratt often only find time to write during summer and holiday breaks (241; 256). Moral of the story? Just as the writing process differs from person to person, leading scholars have diverse writing routines. As a junior professor balancing administration with research, I am reassured to see that the book maps many paths to publishing success.

Because of this and other heartening aspects of the book, the strengths of *Women's Ways of Making It* clearly outweigh the weaknesses. Aside from its sometimes distracting gender archetypes, most shortcomings result from necessary limitations in scope and method. One can hardly fault the authors, for instance, for limiting their definition of success to tenured women working in PhD-granting institutions; such a definition, reductive as it is, remains the gold standard. The authors also shouldn't apologize for embracing an empirical design, as many of the strengths of their work would be diminished by a strictly quantitative or analytic methodology. Still, there are places in the book where I would have appreciated more analysis of their qualitative premises. A case in point is the notion that women in the field make less than men. While the authors point to Enos' 1996 study to sub-

stantiate this claim, I was surprised they did not re-examine how the wage gap may have narrowed over time, or how—given the ever-worsening job market in literature—composition specialists of all genders tend to negotiate as good or better wages than their English department peers. Other questions the study suggests but doesn't answer: How much are women who have made it actually making, and what strategies did some use to negotiate spousal hires? (Four of nine interviewees bargained for partner packages.) Less than genteel questions, to be sure, and ones privacy would dictate answered anonymously. Given the intended audience of the book, however, such questions were not beyond the asking.

That said, the answers to closed-ended questions may have undermined the therapeutic integrity of *Women's Ways of Making It*. After all, the restorative value of the book, like any good fairy tale, does not lie in its direct instruction, but through its ability to inspire resilience—and hope for the future. As Bettelheim concurs, “the fairy tale is therapeutic because the [reader] finds [her] *own* solutions, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about [her] and [her] inner conflicts at this moment in [her] life” (25). As rhetoric and composition moves out of its figurative childhood and toward disciplinary maturity, perhaps such narratives are fitting—and to be celebrated. To be sure, the stories of adversity and triumph catalogued in *Women's Ways of Making It* are to be taken seriously not just for their proverbial pearls of wisdom, but for the confidence they inspire in readers. A professional happily-ever-after, after all, is within women's reach.

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Jill Gladstein is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Writing Associates Program at Swarthmore College. She has presented conference papers and published on the topics of the peer tutor's role in a WID context and the construction of tutor identity when working with ESL students. She is currently working on a project where she used a mixed methods research design to explore the role of peer tutors in an introductory biology course from the perspective of the faculty, peer tutors, and students enrolled in the course.

Brian Huot has administered writing programs for over twenty years at five different colleges or universities. He has authored and co-authored numerous articles and book chapters and co-edited five scholarly books, the most recent being *Assessing Writing: A Critical Sourcebook* (edited with Peggy O'Neill). In 2002 he published the monograph *(Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning*. Recently published is a co-authored (with Peggy O'Neill and Cindy Moore) book *Guide to Writing Assessment*. He is Professor of English and Coordinator of the Writing Program at Kent State University.

Kelly Kinney is Assistant Professor of English, General Literature and Rhetoric at Binghamton University, State University of New York, where she co-founded the Binghamton University Writing Initiative with Rebecca Moore Howard and is Director of Composition. Previously, she served as the Coordinator of First-Year Composition at the University of Notre Dame and as a Composition Fellow in the Department of Writing at Grand Valley State University. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in rhetoric and writing, and her scholarship examines the relationship between rhetoric and politics in the history of writing instruction, academic labor, and writing program administration.

Lisa Lebduska is an Associate Professor of English at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, where she teaches writing and directs the college writing program. Her work includes publications in the *Writing Center Journal* and *Composition Studies*. Her most recent article, "Sustainable Digital Ecologies and Considered Limits," appears in the anthology *Technological Ecologies and Sustainability*, edited by Dànielle Nicole DeVoss, Heidi A. McKee and Richard Selfe and published by Computers and Composition Digital Press.

Randall McClure is associate professor of English and Director of First-Year Composition at Florida Gulf Coast University. He has held similar posts at Minnesota State University, Mankato and Cleveland State University. His scholarship has appeared in *Composition Studies*, *Computers and Composition Online*, portal: *Libraries and the Academy*, and *The Journal of Literacy and Technology*. His current work includes studying the information behaviors of primary and secondary students, authoring an update to his dissertation on interaction analysis, and writing a textbook for first-year composition.

Dara Rossman Regaignon is assistant professor of English and Director of College Writing at Pomona College. She publishes in Victorian Studies as well as Writing Studies and is currently at work on a book-length manuscript in which she uses rhetorical genre theory to understand how anxiety became—and remains—one of the constitutive features of middle-class motherhood. Her articles have appeared in *Pedagogy*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, and *Women's Writing*.

Megan Schoen is a PhD student in rhetoric and composition at Purdue University where she teaches introductory composition, tutors in the Purdue Writing Lab, and serves as an editorial assistant for the *Sycamore Review* literary magazine. Her interests include writing program administration, comparative rhetoric, and theory and cultural studies.

Tom Sura is a PhD candidate in rhetoric and composition at Purdue University where he teaches introductory composition and serves as an assistant director of the university's introductory composition program. His interests include memory, visual rhetoric, and archives. He is currently beginning work on his dissertation, which investigates the use of archives and new media in introductory composition courses.

Pamela Takayoshi is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Kent State University, where she also coordinates teaching and learning technologies for the Writing Program. Her work includes *Teaching Writing with Computers* (co-edited with Brian Huot), which was the recipient of the *Computers and Composition: An International Journal for Teachers of Writing* 2003 Distinguished Book Award; and *Labor, Writing Technologies, and the Shaping of Composition in the Academy*, co-edited with Patricia Sullivan. Additionally, her writing has appeared in *College Composition and Communication*, *Computers and Composition*, and numerous edited collections. She

is currently writing a data-based book with Christina Haas on new media language forms and practices.

Tim N. Taylor is Assistant Professor of Composition-Rhetoric, Director of the Writing Center, and Director of Writing Across the Curriculum at Eastern Illinois University. He teaches undergraduate courses in basic writing, composition, and professional writing along with graduate courses in rhetoric, writing center pedagogy, and composition theory and pedagogy. His work has appeared in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* and *College English*. He is currently writing a basic writing textbook and working on projects related to writing center praxis.

Jaclyn M. Wells is a PhD candidate in rhetoric and composition at Purdue University, where she teaches introductory composition and serves as a mentor to new teaching assistants in the university's introductory composition program. Her interests include community engagement, public rhetoric, and writing program administration. She is currently working on her dissertation, which investigates a community engagement project that partners the Purdue Online Writing Lab with a local adult basic literacy organization.



Announcements

The **2010 International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference** will be hosted by the Campus Writing Program at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Conference dates are May 20-22, 2010. Deadline for proposal submissions is October 19, 2009. Notification of acceptance will be no later than December 4, 2009. The deadline for conference registration is April 1, 2010. (Those registering after this date will be charged a late fee.)

This biannual conference, the only U.S. conference dedicated exclusively to writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID), is typically of interest to people who are concerned with using writing to improve teaching and learning—faculty, administrators, and students from post-secondary institutions, as well as faculty and administrators from secondary schools.

Conference chairs Laura Plummer and Jo Ann Vogt welcome workshops, panels, and individual presentations on topics of true interest and concern; there is no delimiting theme. Potential WAC topics include: administration, assessment, curriculum, economics, faculty development, history of WAC, interdisciplinary collaboration, student learning, politics, research, school/college collaboration, sustainability, teaching, technology, theory, writing, and other forms of communicating across the disciplines.

Bloomington is located about fifty miles south of Indianapolis in the limestone hills of south central Indiana, a region noted for its rustic beauty and artistic traditions. Travel to Bloomington is easy, and lodging in the Indiana University Memorial Union (where the conference is to be held) is affordable and pleasant.

Further information is available on the conference website, <http://www.iub.edu/~wac2010> or by email (wac2010@indiana.edu) or phone (812-855-4928).

“Virtual Worlds,” Computers and Writing 2010, will be hosted by Professional Writing and Introductory Composition at Purdue University in May, 2010, in West Lafayette, Indiana. The onsite conference takes place from May 20–23, 2010. The online conference begins two weeks before the onsite conference. The request for proposals, submission portal, and clearinghouse for the conference are online at <http://www.digitalparlor.org/cw2010>. For additional information, contact conference co-chairs David Blakesley (blakesle@purdue.edu) or Samantha Blackmon (blackmos@purdue.edu).