

## Magic, Agency and Power: Mapping Embodied Leadership Roles

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### ABSTRACT

*This article contributes to the ongoing debate about WPAs and instantiations of their leadership through power, influence, and authority. Drawing upon the metaphor of the Marauder's Map, taken from the Harry Potter series, the article presents a WPA Leadership Chart that facilitates acting in(to) leadership roles and enacting rhetorical agency through the primary activities of collaborating, imagining, proving, and conducting. Understanding rhetorical agency as a means to enact power, influence, and authority, the article contextualizes the chart in light of scholarship in leadership studies and writing program administration from a feminist perspective to argue for an expanded and more fluid conception of the WPA as a leader. The piece concludes by inviting readers to see themselves in a scenario that enables them to think through the options the WPA Leadership Chart offers, thus providing a heuristic for responsible rhetorical agency and ethical leadership.*

### INTRODUCTION

In J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, a blank parchment transforms into a magical map if one possesses a wand and recites, "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good" (192). "The Marauder's Map" illustrates The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, depicting the location of everyone on the premises at any given moment. It even discloses passwords when one ventures near secret passages. No one can escape being plotted on the map—an invisibility cloak, disguise or transfiguration offers no protection. Harry Potter is initially so concerned with others on the map and their movements that it takes him a moment to realize he, too, is plotted on the map (Rowling 194–95). On the one hand, the map allows him to see his

surroundings as an abstract representation of space and works much like an everyday map. On the other hand, he is simultaneously embodied on the map in relation to others. Given that the map captures everyone actively engaging with one another as part of their lived experiences in real time, the map functions on a material (and magical) level. To reverse its powers, one must announce, “mischief managed” (194), and the magical map returns to ordinary paper.<sup>1</sup> While Rowling’s language suggests whimsical disobedience, for Harry, the map becomes a way to maneuver in an increasingly complex environment while developing his own powers to accomplish good. Even though that fictional description overdramatizes our own roles and situations as new WPAs, we, too, needed a map that would help us understand our positions and power within institutional contexts and among constituencies. Our various and varied WPA duties placed us at differing locations on our institutional landscapes and we could not always recognize how we were positioned. Even when we could, we were often unsure of how to use our position (both figuratively and literally) to accomplish the goals of our programs. We found ourselves with mischief to manage, along with a multiplicity of WPA roles.

At our respective institutions, we both tried to understand how we could act in(to) our leadership roles, uphold our feminist principles, and enact rhetorical agency to improve our writing programs. Achieving these goals seemed very much like trying to “manage mischief” at both the mundane, day-to-day level and at the more conceptual level, as we tried to visualize our own tacit conceptions of ourselves as leaders of writing programs. A map would provide directions, guidance, solid information about which way to go—all things that initially felt just out of reach for us as new WPAs. Therefore, we needed a tool for charting leadership that would enable us to see how WPAs might progress through potential leadership roles to enact various kinds of power. Unable to create a Marauder’s Map, of course, we developed a WPA Leadership Chart (Figure 1). Through the chart, we present both a metaphor and a heuristic for WPA leadership. The value of our chart as a metaphor for WPA leadership lies in its theoretical power. The chart inscribes ways in which the administrative persona can be created, conceived of, and adapted. This new lens enables us to generate ideas about enacting power within the sites we occupy as WPAs. However, there is a wide gulf between seeing possibilities and knowing how to act in any given situation, which is why we argue for the chart as not only metaphor, but also heuristic.

The WPA Leadership Chart is a tool for self-reflection and decision-making/action-planning. It presents readers with roles (including combinations of roles and liminal spaces between roles) that could be enacted in

a WPA's typical day, month, year, or career—anything from mentoring a new colleague to conducting program-wide assessment to re-envisioning the writing curriculum. This heuristic is useful whether the WPA has fifteen minutes to plan a strategy before entering the dean's office for an "emergency meeting on class caps" or has a year to develop a proposal for a new media center. The heuristic value of the chart is that it takes WPAs through various roles, prompting us to ask what must we give up or give into and what might we gain—it also helps us clarify our goals vis-à-vis different possible audiences. Such a heuristic prevents us from falling into knee-jerk reactions without fully considering all of the ways we might (re) act, including modes that do not come naturally to us or are not expected given our institutional cultures. By enabling us to think through multiple leadership configurations—not just the familiar or comfortable ones—the chart ultimately can help WPAs grow into more multifaceted leaders, who will, by extension, better understand the boundaries of their power, authority, and influence.

To this end, we offer a framework for thinking about faculty leadership as a dynamic process that takes place amongst internal and external audiences and competing institutional values. First, we describe the Leadership Chart and all its nuances. Next, we explain our model in light of scholarship in leadership studies and writing program administration from a feminist perspective. We conclude with a specific scenario to illustrate how a WPA Leadership Chart generates multiple positions from which to develop and direct programs, strategize and secure improvements, and, occasionally, work magic and manage mischief.

#### OUR MARAUDER'S MAP: A WPA LEADERSHIP CHART

The WPA Leadership Chart (Figure 1) is our graphical conceptualization of administrative work. The vertical axis represents the continuum between progressive institutional change (Evolving) and conservation of the status quo (Preserving). The horizontal axis spans the productive tension between internal and external motivators and audiences. Each of the quadrants represents a primary activity—collaborating, imagining, proving, and conducting—that we enact as we shift among the roles of colleague, innovator, producer, and coordinator.

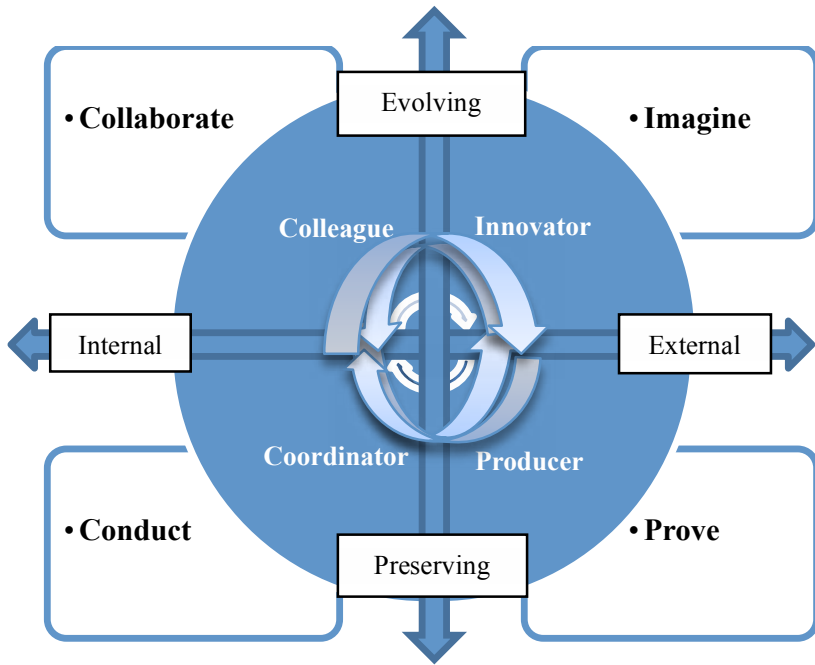


Figure 1: WPA Leadership Chart<sup>2</sup>

Ideally, the WPA moves synergistically among the four quadrants in the Leadership Chart, letting *kairos* be her/his guide in determining which quadrant to occupy when and where. New administrators in particular may not be conscious of their loci of agency, of the possible roles they could and should don<sup>3</sup> in the various aspects of their professional duties. In fact, when we were first-year WPAs, we found ourselves falling into leadership roles before knowing why we were embracing them—moving among the quadrants of the chart “in a prereflective way” without having assessed which one(s) would be most kairotic (Thompson qtd. in Cooper 435). Thus, we developed the WPA Leadership Chart to inscribe<sup>4</sup> possible stances for ourselves and others.

Administrative work, like so many other facets of faculty work, is hard to generalize from and about. Yet, “the administrative genre privileges abstraction over the complexities of local material conditions” (Gunner “Checking” 19). Jeanne Gunner problematizes the administrative genre for herself and other authors in “Checking the Source(Book): Supplemental Voices in the Administrative Genre.” Gunner’s description is apt and eloquent: “the administrative genre can perhaps be said to operate from an erotics of administration, if a perverse one—a patriarchal system that plays

to the desire for stability and control. It rises above the individual body and its material conditions and promises the pleasures of a disembodied moral order” (“Checking” 22). Like Gunner, we recognize the genre’s potential for normalization and centripetal pressure; we also hold that local enactment can counter-balance (but not erase) the Platonic pitfalls. For example, our process in developing our model was decidedly feminist and inductive, having grown out of a year’s worth of email correspondence (everything from updates and success reports to laments). As a result, the chart remains messier than models we encountered in leadership theory and WPA scholarship. So while the chart is a heuristic, its purpose is not to “promote[ ] a rhetoric of efficiency and efficacy” (Gunner “Checking” 21) but to intentionally serve as a centrifugal force—to attempt to supplement the options for rhetorical agency. Clearly this article is subject to the constraints of the administrative genre: readers themselves might feel interpellated by a seemingly possible perfection. However, through the WPA Leadership Chart and our process, we have tried to resist essentializing and idealizing to the extent that the genre permits. Initially desirous of a Marauder’s Map with an omniscient view, we present the chart as shorthand for potential avenues for successful leadership.

### *Colleague*

As readers can see in the chart, the “Colleague” role calls upon us to collaborate, first and foremost. *Collaboration*, of course, is one of those fabulously slippery words. Leadership theory emphasizes the need to mentor and develop others while managing groups and leading teams (Cunha et al. 200; Komives et al. 404–05; Quinn et al. 35–6; Rost 107–23). Closer to home, Gunner reminds us: “Collaboration is not simple. It’s more than having meetings; it’s more than consultation—it’s a form of power-sharing, of recognizing unequal power relations. It’s not a means of erasing dissent or suppressing conflict” (“Portraits” 90). Disagreements and differences should take the form of *constructive* conflict. WPAs—and compositionists in general, we argue—are schooled to act upon the nuances of collaboration and listen to voices throughout the power structure: from students to adjuncts to TAs to senior faculty.

As the axes in the chart show, this quadrant tends toward the internal or personal side of a leadership role, embracing ideas and practices that are evolving. In order to collaborate and create collegial relationships, leaders need to cultivate personal relationships. Sometimes called “invisible work,” this kind of internal leadership is vital when working for and with vulnerable populations in the university hierarchy (such as adjunct faculty or TAs).

Not only do we want to earn the trust of our fellow writing instructors, we also need to be ready and able to let good ideas inform the program. This may be the most “quiet” of the four quadrants in the model, for it is based on informal conversations in the hallways, shared lunches, and unscheduled appointments.

This quadrant is most likely an easy role for us to understand and embody. Numerous studies have pointed to the feminization of composition studies and the attendant “ethics of care” (Flynn; Gillam; Susan Miller; Noddings; Ratcliffe and Rickly). The collegial qualities required in this quadrant have been long associated with our profession: listening, empathizing, working together, and employing collaborative decision-making models. Rather than advising new WPAs to practice this role, we may need to warn our counterparts (and ourselves) not to get “stuck” in this quadrant and therefore miss/avoid other leadership styles and the opportunities said styles represent.

### *Innovator*

An Innovator’s main strength is the ability to imagine. As Gail Hawisher succinctly puts it in response to the question “What do you consider the essential qualities of a good administrator? Of a good feminist?”: “Develop a vision” (qtd. in Ratcliffe and Rickly 220). But, imagination is not the only facet of an innovative leader. The ability to create and live with change—internally and externally generated—marks this role. In addition to being an “idea person” (one who conceives of projects, program revisions, or even strategies for arguing for more resources), the Innovator can multi-task and work comfortably (or at least functionally) in the midst of change. As a leader, an Innovator can also help colleagues to reconcile themselves to fluctuating environments.

Like the “Colleague,” the “Innovator” champions ideas and projects that are moving away from the status quo, thus its position along the “y-axis”—“evolving.” For feminist administrators in particular, “[t]his desire for change is not part of our official job description, but nevertheless informs the way we fulfill our official duties” (Leverenz 4). For most of us the key task—imagining—is attractive. What may be less attractive or just simply harder is moving from imagination to innovation. New ideas generally cannot be implemented alone; the Innovator needs allies. Some of those allies may come from the collegial relationships fostered in the previous quadrant (including those among WPA teams and other collaborative administrative groups) and others will have to be cultivated. The Innovator must use rheto-

ric, of course, to attract others to her/his ideas and visions; more external work is required in this quadrant than in the previous one.

Once again, our academic training makes the “Innovator” a familiar role: researching, hypothesizing, and adding to the conversation. The romantic notion of a “pure innovator” is a solitary figure; however, like the Colleague, Innovators must work with others to implement ideas. For example, WPAs in this quadrant may join interdisciplinary projects (e.g., service-learning, WAC, technology initiatives) or become involved in seeking resources outside the university (e.g., partnerships, grants, in-kind donations).

### *Producer*

Like the other roles in the chart, the Producer role is multifaceted. The word itself connotes output. This role hinges on tangibility more than the two preceding categories. While the Colleague and Innovator are situated in the ebb and flow of conversation and the evolution of ideas in progress, the Producer complements those roles by closing the open loop. To use the language of composing: the Producer’s leadership is embodied more in product than in process.

This role, as demonstrated by the x- and y-axes, is both external and preservative. It falls on the external side of the circle because it represents the “public face” role of the leader—in both the administrative sense (e.g., at university-wide committee meetings or in response to accrediting agencies) and in the scholarly sense (in as much as our publications serve as metonymies for ourselves as productive thinkers). Ed White reminds us that a WPA’s power and influence is tied up in the ability to prove oneself “as any other faculty member gains power, usually through publication and other professional activity” (10). While the production of scholarship could easily be categorized as “evolving” rather than as dedicated to the status quo, contributing to the larger scholarly conversation is an act of preserving the field of rhetoric and composition. In many cases, Producers fuse the categories of “scholarship” and “managerial document” to produce the kinds of texts many refer to as the “intellectual work” of administration. For example, when we create professional development texts or meaningful assessment reports, we must bring our formal training and intellectual insight to bear on these programmatic artifacts. In best-case scenarios, all of these kinds of texts and plans figure prominently in our tenure and promotion dossiers, where we *prove* ourselves worthy of institutional and economic recognition.

This quadrant might seem to most require what Laura Micciche has labeled *big agency*: “actions that intend structural results and effects,” for

example, when as WPAs we “participate in campus governance, design and lead assessment initiatives, revise curriculum, hire, train, and oversee new teachers, advocate for the writing program at college and university levels” (73–4). And while WPAs are expected to generate “results and effects” (as Producers), we may be able to do so using what Micciche calls “slow agency.” Instead of trying to reshape writing programs in our first year (prompted by the vision of the perfect program) or hurriedly reacting to all of the problems we perceive hurtling towards us as WPAs, we may “also come to see suspended agency as a valuable strategy,” producing public progress reports instead of wholesale changes, for example, thus making our incremental WPA work “visible to those outside the program” (Micciche 75, 82). Standing in the Producer quadrant, we may feel and exert traditional pressure to *preserve* the program, but we may also embrace the more radical notion of *conserving* (our own) energy: “[w]e embody raw human resources that can be depleted and hijacked as well as conserved and protected” (Micciche 76). As “producers” for our programs, WPAs may wisely prioritize a few high-profile goals over the short term and long term.

### *Coordinator*

This role, perhaps more than any other in the chart, could be called the “multi-tasker” role. The Coordinator *conducts*. We borrow the defining verb here from music: the conductor keeps all of the parts of the whole in harmony, moving along at the same time, at the appropriate tempo. Coordinators conduct information, logistics, projects, and people to keep the various elements in sync. The Coordinator’s leadership role is most akin to a manager (as opposed to a leader), for this quadrant involves performance and quality control, focusing more on functionality, standards, and compliance than on the constructive conflict, creativity, and change in the upper half of the chart.

This quadrant can have external (outside the department or program) aspects, but it tends to be an internal role: helping the daily business of the program move along. The Coordinator also preserves or upholds the status quo, for s/he coordinates what is there. Of course a leader can act as an Innovator and Coordinator simultaneously, for example, while integrating new ideas and practices into current structures.

For some, this is a nice retreat from the performative—and sometimes combative—Producer role where one is expected to prove, persuade, convince. The Coordinator role may feel more relaxed because the WPA is working with ideas and people already set in place, just keeping all afloat. For others, this aspect of the job may feel tedious, even boring: get the



meeting minutes sent out; assign classrooms; fill out perfunctory forms. In this vein, Alice Gillam reminds us how the Coordinator role—like the Colleague—may be marked more as a feminized service role than as the power-broker White envisions (116). Gillam describes her circumscribed power as a WPA: “My role was primarily that of a caretaker, [ . . . caring] for an already-formulated policy, one deeply imbricated in the local cultural ideal of certifiable writing proficiency for all. I was acting under its authority and executing my duties through its agency” (116–17). Gillam’s quote illustrates the feminized nature of this quadrant at the same time as the role underscores masculinist notions of efficacy. Feminists might encounter such tension in any of the quadrants, and perhaps especially as the Coordinator; one of the “dominant tropes” in *Performing Feminism and Administration in Rhetoric and Composition Studies* is the “oxymoron[ic] . . . tension . . . between . . . deeply held feminist beliefs and . . . daily administrative duties” (Ratcliffe and Rickly ix, vii).

Clearly all quadrants in the chart must be cultivated for—we were planning to say something like “optimal leadership”—but in these uncertain economic times, we are tempted to say “survival.” While Warren Bennis, a pioneer in the field of leadership studies, classically defined “becoming a leader” as “becoming yourself” (*On Becoming*), we see the WPA and other administrators as developing flexibility to grow in(to) and lead in the various quadrants and roles. This dynamic model is inherently strategic, perhaps even subversive, and works both within our constraints and pushes against them. Thus, when authority is denied, or when we ourselves feel limited by our own situatedness or even embodiment, we must devise creative ways of maneuvering around the institution.<sup>5</sup> We can enact rhetorical agency in various ways that don’t come from the official channels or aren’t sanctioned by the institution and maybe even discover (re)sources we didn’t know we had. Now that we have laid out our “map,” we review how scholarship on issues of leadership, power, influence, authority, and agency has contributed to our understanding of the roles we might employ.

#### PAST MAPS: CONCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND AGENCY

In his trailblazing work, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, Joseph C. Rost makes a somewhat startling claim: scholars in leadership studies cannot define *leadership* (given the range of definitions for *rhetoric* in our own field, we may not be troubled by this ambiguity). Rost not only explores various conceptions of leadership and posits his own, but he offers an excellent summary of the reigning schools of thought in leadership studies from the 1900s to the 1990s. Rost notes that the many adjectives—including but

certainly not limited to *business*, *educational*, and *political*—suggest leadership in one profession is not the same as leadership in another (1). Rost's well-detailed literature review attests to how "leadership studies as an academic discipline has a culture of definitional permissiveness and relativity" (6), leaving "no easily recognizable school of leadership that makes sense of the concept of leadership" (8–9). It's a cliché and

almost a ritual for authors of books and articles on leadership to make two statements at the beginning of their works. The first statement goes like this: "Many scholars have studied leaders and leadership over the years, but there still is no clear idea of what 'leadership' is or who leaders are." The second statement usually takes the form of several paragraphs summarizing the popular theories of leadership: great man, traits, group, behaviorist, and situational. (13)

According to Rost, "The ethos is: Anything that anyone claims to be leadership is leadership" (16). Given this lack of consensus, "leadership" has too readily been conflated with "management."

Even landmark texts like both of James MacGregor Burns' books on transformational leadership, *Leadership* and *The Power to Lead*, provide a "conceptual framework [that] has been co-opted. Transformational leadership has been redesigned to make it amenable to the industrial paradigm and all that it represents" (Rost 91). This paradigm leads to definitions of leadership focused exclusively on leaders themselves and on being on top (98). Thus, Rost, influenced by Burns and the need to adapt an understanding of leadership to a postindustrial world, defines *leadership* as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (102). In fact, Rost had, by the 1990s, already conceptualized all participants as leaders: "Followers are active, not passive, in the relationship. They do leadership, not followership" (112). Nevertheless, much of current leadership scholarship takes a reductive, often hierarchical approach, referring to any participants other than the leader as "followers." While Rost paved the way for an understanding of leadership as something anyone could potentially enact, mainstream leadership theory persists with this language of "followers" and continues to emphasize a solitary leader. Like Rost, we reject the leader-follower binary, particularly when applied to WPA work, which has been heavily influenced by feminist theory and its emphasis on flattened hierarchies.

Over two decades later, Rost's critique of his field remains valid. Leadership scholars continue to question the leader-centric literature and further complicate the models that have historically ignored how race, class and gender, among other factors, intersect with how leadership functions

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in a multicultural and global workplace. Barbara Kellerman, among others, argues for “a more expansive view of leadership—one that sees leaders and followers as inseparable, indivisible, and impossible to conceive the one without the other” (“What” 91).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in her study of African American female executives, Patricia S. Parker (who relies on Burns and Rost for the theoretical base she complicates) notes the “increasingly fragmented, multicultural and fundamentally raced, gendered and classed context of the postindustrial” organization that demands “a vision of leadership that would accommodate the multicultural, racialized, and contradictory viewpoints and paradoxical situational challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century organization[s]” (xxii). We need, Parker contends, “more dialogic both/and views of leadership and organizing” to “capture[ ] more completely the relationship of leaders and followers in a flow of contested and negotiated meaning production” (24). Our Leadership Chart, with its multiple mappings, facilitates a “both/and view” by revealing situated choices. It has grown out of not only the intersection of leadership studies and WPA scholarship, but of our individual experiences at both a large state university and a small private college. Despite different institutional contexts and programs, the need for mapping emerged as a strategy for development—of our programs and of ourselves as WPAs. In the spirit of this both/and view, we now move from this brief overview of contemporary leadership studies to the feminist and rhetorical considerations of power in the WPA literature.

Many of the most respected names in our field have weighed in on the issue of power. In fact, “the ‘P’ word continues to echo through our discourse” (Werder 9). Ed White has asserted in “Use It or Lose: Power and the WPA” that we have more power than we realize; we just need to seize it. In the oft-quoted excerpt from that piece, White states, “[t]o understand our situations, we need to assess where the enemies of our program lurk, what their motives and weapons are, and how we can marshal forces to combat them. We also need to see where our allies are and find out ways to strengthen them and to keep them friendly” (6). Some readers of White’s piece have found his advice unpalatable because of his military metaphor, but when we look at the underlying advice through the lens of our chart, he is suggesting a movement that requires reflecting (“understand our situations”), identifying our audiences and interlocutors along the horizontal line of our chart (“assess where the enemies of our program lurk . . . [and] where our allies are”), examining what their values are along the vertical axis from change-oriented to conservation-based (“what their motives and weapons are”) and tapping into the roles represented on each of the four quadrants on the chart to “marshal forces” both proactive and reactive.

Despite White's warning that we should grab and use power as WPAs, many in the field of rhetoric and composition have been schooled to prefer collaborative decision-making in which we influence (and are genuinely influenced by) our interlocutors. For example, Hildy Miller tempers White's advice by advocating for "the sort of bi-epistemological stance that characterizes a postmasculinist approach. It is resolving conflict from a 'both-and' rather than 'either-or' position, and exercising power from a position of equality" (59), especially in terms of balancing self-interest and the interests of others. Miller also recognizes the complexities of embodiment: "As a female teacher, establishing authority can be difficult; as a female administrator, it is even more challenging" (54). Hopefully, the WPA Leadership Chart does not represent the binaries of what Miller terms the "masculinist and feminist delivery systems" (56), however, and instead, offers—necessitates—several options. Even so, once any of the quadrants is embodied by flesh and blood, the situation is more complex—because of physical markers, ideological underpinnings, and personal preferences—than the labels might suggest.

Yet, despite these complexities, each quadrant in the chart provides a locus from which to enact potential power—by collaborating, imagining, proving, or conducting. Infused throughout the WPA Leadership Chart are access points for power, influence, and authority. In his book on political linguistics, mid-century Canadian scholar David V. Bell dissects the terms *power*, *influence*, and *authority*. While in everyday speech, we might conflate power, influence and, authority, Bell maintains that these terms are "not perfectly congruent synonyms" (15). Bell likens influence to credit; he states, "someone who 'has a lot of influence' is an individual who either has influenced many people in the past or is likely to be able to do so in the future" (18). The influential person's "analogue in the economy is the person who 'has a lot of credit,' which is not equivalent to 'having a lot of money'" (18). In this analogy, Bell avers that power is more formidable and "stable" than influence (84). By extension, authority is more institutionalized, functioning like the bank in this analogy and linked to formal titles and hierarchy (e.g., our administrative titles).

As Bell astutely points out, audience or interlocutors have a great deal to do with constructions of power. Throughout WPA scholarship we find statements similar to White's: "power is ultimately a matter of perception" (11). Likewise, scholars in leadership studies largely agree that "leaders and followers literally cocreate, coconstitute, leadership" (Kellerman qtd. in Cunha et al. 201). Bell argues that we do not "possess" power, but only "the *potential* for exercising power effectively" (17) in the same way that Michel Foucault describes power as "exercised from innumerable points"

(94). Various spaces on the chart—some of the “innumerable points”—correspond to different energy, actions, pace, and effects. These various energies—emotional energy, physical energy, and energy levels<sup>7</sup>—are embodied in different ways depending on the moment, the space, and our institutional culture.

In admitting that we wanted or needed power and its cousins, we felt a twinge of feminist guilt. We wanted to be able to embody the roles in the chart but not behave in a “masculinist way.” At times, we worried, like Carmen Werder, that both power and authority are “ethically suspect” (11) because they underscore control and undermine collaboration. Werder states that “[i]f we see ourselves only in terms of power, authority and influence—we risk limiting ourselves to coercive action” (21); to avoid this risk, she adds a fourth option to Bell’s framework: rhetorical agency (12). She defines “rhetorical agency” thusly: “as the potential for effecting change based on the extent to which the collective resources, titles, and expertise of a particular situation are made available for the individual and common good” (12). We argue that “rhetorical agency” does in fact operate within the so-called “controlling” categories that Werder takes from Bell, and all three categories—power, authority, and influence—*can* be used for ethical purposes. Even Werder eventually concedes that she came “to appreciate the value of all three modes of action [power, authority, and influence], not only as linguistic frames as Bell first proposed them, but also as discursive practices” (18). Rather than seeing rhetorical agency as an additional category, we see it as a means.

As a means, rhetorical agency—which may take the form of power, authority, and/or influence—has the potential to be equally effective and ethically appropriate in any of the quadrants on the WPA Leadership Chart. In fact, the Leadership Chart could not work if we didn’t enact rhetorical agency—it’s what compels movement throughout the chart and what drives others to respond and enact their own forms of leadership. In her CCC article on rhetorical agency, Marilyn Cooper complicates postmodern representations of agency, representations that constrain the possibilities for rhetoric. While Cooper is not discussing academic roles (her focus is national public persuasion, specifically a speech of Barack Obama’s), we see in her definition and defense of *agency* many resonances with our quests for situated leadership, power, influence, and authority. Leadership scholar Miguel Pina e Cunha and his co-authors offer a view of postmodern agency that dovetails with Cooper’s and sets the scene for exploring a WPA scenario through the lens of the Leadership Chart:

The individual leader is not merely a cipher being shaped by extraneous factors of culture and organization, but is a moral agent freely choosing courses of action within the discursive possibilities that appear to be available, including those deemed as ethical and those deemed as unethical by the [differing parties involved]. (192)

Our WPA Leadership Chart can be read as “discursive possibilities that appear to be available” to WPAs. Being a WPA (and even the use of the chart) is corporeal.<sup>8</sup> As literary critic N. Katherine Hayles argues: embodiment is always “contextual, enmeshed within the specifics of place, time, physiology, and culture” (196). Thus, using Bell’s terms, the “potential for exercising power” is embodied as soon as the power is wielded, as soon as the “potential” is “exercised.” Just as Cooper argues that “individual agency emerges ineluctably from embodied processes; agency is inescapable for embodied beings” (443), we see power operating in a similar vein, even if that power is more akin to what Bell characterizes as influence or authority and even if the power might be constrained or run a spectrum.

We developed the Leadership Chart to bring to our own consciousness ways we could be(come) situated agents, using the rhetorical strategies associated with each role in the quadrants (collaborating, imagining, proving, and conducting). No single role—for example, the more “feminized” Colleague or the more “masculinized” Producer—can serve as the site for enacted agency in all situations. Indeed, in a study of women in academic leadership roles, “hav[ing] a wide range of possible reactions for any situations” and “adapt[ing] their leadership approach to specific strategic situations” were components of effective leadership philosophies (Madsen 262). Now, we invite you to analyze a scenario and all of its co-constructing constituents along with us. Throughout the scenario, we offer interpretations of the chart as might be mapped onto this situation, and we provide heuristics for responsible rhetorical agency and ethical leadership.

#### A WPA SCENARIO: A RESISTANT MINORITY

You’re in a small liberal arts school with a program staffed primarily by two dozen part-time faculty, many of whom have taught at the college for decades. Most part-time faculty regularly attend professional development workshops, share resources and ideas, and offer both thoughtful feedback and legitimate objections to programmatic changes. As a new WPA, you welcome and appreciate the department’s writing faculty, who are genuinely engaged teachers. Just as it is always the negative student evaluation that we dwell on, you (perhaps predictably) find yourself focused on one part-time

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faculty member who has spent the academic year criticizing and rejecting your suggestions.

Your first major task in the fall term was to initiate an approved textbook list for first-year writing (FYW) courses and to revise the learning outcomes to comply with the new General Education Program, which you did in tandem with both full-time and part-time faculty who teach in the writing program. Your major task for the spring term is classroom observations. While junior tenure-track faculty is observed by the chair and by faculty members within and outside the department as part of the review and tenure process, the department has not been conducting regular observations of part-time faculty. The files suggest that new hires were observed during their first semester by the chair but that post-observation meetings sufficed for a documented observation report. In light of this change to observe part-time faculty on an ongoing basis, the full-time writing faculty collaborates on the observation form and offers to conduct observations themselves and thus “collective resources” and “expertise” are being used for the “common good” (Werder 12). Overall, the adjunct faculty is engaged in the observation process and actually seem grateful for feedback; the process seems to be going well and departmental culture may be slowly shifting. But then one instructor, whom we’ll call Betty and who has been at the college for over 20 years, has a strong response to curricular changes, to the observation process, and to *you*. She sends you numerous emails voicing her complaints. You later find out that she has sent even more emails to the chair airing the same concerns.

Per the new plan, you will observe Betty’s research writing course in which students have just finished a “thesis paper,” as Betty calls it, on *Dr. Faustus* and are about to begin reading Sophocles’ *Antigone*. When reviewing Betty’s syllabus and assignment sheets prior to the classroom visit, you note that Betty is off track with the course texts and the newly established learning goals. The revised programmatic guidelines require faculty to choose a rhetoric and a reader from a list of approved books, a list that you developed and that was vetted by part-time and full-time faculty who attended meetings in the fall term. Neither *Dr. Faustus* nor *Antigone* is on the list, and Betty is not using any rhetoric textbook, let alone one from the approved list. The learning outcomes for the course, which were revamped in the fall along with the approved textbook list, state that students should engage in rhetorical analysis not literary analysis. Also according to the learning outcomes, students should be finding academic sources in the library relevant to arguments of their own making, not listening to lectures on works of fiction and drama. Furthermore, during the classroom observation, you conclude that the students are not engaged. The students

are not participating in discussion or taking any notes; several students are performing other tasks, such as studying for a chemistry midterm or updating their status on Facebook. Various aspects of the course give you the impression that Betty is teaching a literature course masquerading as a first-year writing course.

At the post-observation meeting, you express your concerns about her chosen texts, over-reliance on lecture, and insufficient class time dedicated to research and drafting processes. Perhaps because of her extensive teaching experience and longevity at the college, Betty hears your points as illuminating pedagogical and disciplinary differences as opposed to incongruities between her course and the FYW guidelines. Betty's course evaluations have ranged from competent to good and she has been rehired every year, so Betty may be inclined to see your perspective as abruptly changing the expectations or as the idiosyncratic response of one faculty member. Given that classroom observations are a new initiative, the composition course is part of the new general education curriculum, and both Betty and her students have perceived her teaching and course as, overall, successful, your critical comments are unanticipated. Betty might be feeling increasingly destabilized.

Ultimately, Betty insists that you both must “agree to disagree,” that you both have a valid approach to the course and can each teach it “our way” and arrive at the same outcomes. She portrays these differences in an individual rather than programmatic sense: *you* (not you-as-WPA) are attempting to interfere with her academic freedom even though she has “always done it this way with great success.” In contrast, you value the departmental documents—written and approved by both adjunct faculty and full-time faculty during previous workshops—as something akin to a contract between the WPA and the faculty teaching first-year writing courses.

After the post-observation meeting, Betty openly disagrees with you during a professional development workshop that you are leading by simply stating that the best liberal arts schools do not use textbooks in writing courses but rely on “excellent readings” and instructor expertise instead. She explicitly argues that the college does not have the resources to “micro-manage” each section of FYW, and thus not every instructor should be required to revise their course content and assignments to adhere to the newly agreed upon learning outcomes. Betty, schooled in literature at a top humanities program, dismisses your authority on two levels—your position as WPA does not persuade her to “agree” to any of your constructive criticism, and your scholarly expertise based on a body of knowledge in rhetoric and composition is similarly ignored.



In “An Anatomy of Radical Anger in Writing Program Administration,” Brad Peters sees “radical anger” as “an explicable, recurrent action that fairly reasonable, but inexperienced people will sometimes take against shifting working conditions that they find socially or politically overwhelming” (145). Even though Betty is highly experienced, her response to the changes in the writing program can be read as a form of radical anger. Peters argues that “WPAs need to pay attention to its emergence, to consider what re-actions are most appropriate both on the personal and administrative levels” (145). Along with these emotional components, which may include fear (of change, of tenuous job status, of adaptability, etc.) are the power dynamics. While Betty might ostensibly lack institutional power or authority (in terms of title), she in fact could create a toxic environment that thwarts the recent and emerging changes. What if other adjunct faculty frames the process as she has, as an issue of “academic freedom,” or begin buying into dichotomies that separate outcomes from practices? Though she *seems* to have little power, this instructor could undermine program initiatives through her *influence*. Conversely, what options might you, the administrator, exercise: power, authority, influence? Do you seek to preserve institutional structures and/or hierarchies in this scenario, or push them to evolve?

#### MAPPING YOUR RESPONSE

The scenario above and the range of available responses below (certainly not exhaustive) are offered to help us and readers become better leaders. Although there are no shortcuts in WPA work, the section below is meant to serve as a momentary “Marauder’s Map,” making visible roles and locations that WPAs can occupy and enact. Working through the scenario, readers will bump up against the tensions articulated by E. Shelley Reid when she says she is “both the boss compositionist and a feminist woman . . . a ‘both/and’ woman by inclination and education” (126). The process before you act matters, for “[a]s Trevino and Brown (2004) have noted, ethical leadership is not only about doing what is right, but also about deciding what is right” (Cunha et al. 192). By moving through the quadrants below, you can explore options for enacting agency. In their case studies, Lee G. Bolman and Joan V. Gallos recognize “strong academic leaders” as “skilled in the art of reframing—a deliberate process of shifting perspectives to see the same situation in multiple ways and through different lenses” (13). The chart thus provides a framework to (re)frame this scenario in various ways.

### *Colleague*

Attempting to collaborate with Betty keeps the dynamic internal, with the WPA and Betty perhaps scheduling informal meetings to further discuss course materials and teaching strategies. The benefits to this option include drawing upon your ethos as an instructor, engaging with Betty as a partner, and opening yourself up to criticisms of curricular and pedagogical changes and ideas. As a Colleague, you understand the anxiety that comes with observations and such an identification minimizes power differentials more so than any of the other quadrants. This response illustrates a more “feminist vision of personal power,” as Miller characterizes it, and your leadership relies on your ability “to facilitate, to share power, and to enable both self and others to contribute” (52). Professional development workshops lend themselves to collaboration both in preparation—with other faculty members, with graduate students, with participants across the campus (such as the librarians or committees on writing policy)—and in their execution—collaborating with the participants to achieve the goals of the workshop. Specific tactics for sharing power and enabling others to contribute are aspects of the scenario such as the co-authored program goals and textbook list, discussion-based meetings, and collaborative workshops.

The Colleague focuses on mentoring as the primary leadership strategy, striving to form mutually beneficial bonds. While the attributes of the Colleague are often gendered as “feminine,” Reid identifies mentoring as capable of “creat[ing] space for feminist action within the academy and within the writing program” (129). She offers the notion of two-pronged mentoring: fostering a fruitful program and “self-mentoring” by minding one’s own energy levels and capacity for giving (and one’s pace, Micciche would say). Reid’s model resists the tendency “to see mentoring as a feminist administrative cure-all” (129), while also working against the masculinist model of mentoring in which the mentor fills up or fixes a deficit in the mentee.

How do we foster rhetorical agency—what Werder defines as “the potential for effecting change based on the extent to which the collective resources, titles and expertise of a particular situation are made available for the individual and common good” (12)? How can Betty’s seemingly resistant behavior be a form of participation? How is Betty’s dissent contributing to the program? How is the conflict between the program goals and Betty’s reaction an expected facet of a healthy, collaborative process? What is our commitment to and capacity for long-term support of individual instructors? How do other stakeholders factor in (e.g., students who might benefit from the programmatic changes)?

### *Innovator*

Imagining other ways to move forward brings external audience members into the scenario and requires the WPA to think more creatively. What are the benefits of moving across the external axis? Could you take advantage of changes outside your program or department (such as a new Dean, program, or initiative) to talk about initiatives in light of your program's (or department's) larger role at your institution? For example, Ed White recounts how after the Dean of Humanities eliminated the budget for the WAC Program, he appealed to the new Dean of Undergraduate Studies and successfully moved the entire program. White "discovered a kind of power that does not appear in flow charts, power that most WPAs have, and . . . was able to use it to save the program" (5). This creative response allowed White to adapt to change and even transform the rhetorical situation. Similarly, "naysayers" like Betty might enable the WPA to do her job even better in that listening to counter-perspectives may enable us to consider even better ideas and discover broader implications and audiences. For instance, the Chair is a strong advocate for adjunct faculty and, at a small liberal arts college, needs people who teach a range of courses. Betty's course might be a perfect fit for a different General Education category or might be used as a model in the department for a writing-intensive course focused on drama or a special topics course. The evolution might result in the WPA making a case for a new course to outside constituencies, such as the WAC program. As Kathleen J. Ryan and Tarez Samra Graban note, "even well-run programs encounter resistance that, if not embraced as a site of possibility, can lead to a quiet but perpetual programmatic undervaluing on the level of communicative and rhetorical ideology" (278). Approaching such resistance as *possibility* can lead to inventing alternatives and expanding our audiences.

How can we be receptive to the opinions of others and capitalize on the strengths the participants bring to the program? How could those alternatives improve our program or department? How do we benefit if we think beyond the current program (and even beyond a present "issue") and consider larger audiences who might see, instead, opportunities and improvements? What if the scenario is more complex than this one in that external audiences are restricting the changes (such as lack of funding for a technology initiative)?

### *Producer*

The products in this scenario include documented classroom observations (by the WPA and the rhetoric and composition faculty) that can be sum-

marized more generally for external readers, whether accrediting bodies or audiences outside the department (a WAC Committee or a report to the Dean or Provost as examples). Departmental materials that give cohesion to the program and General Education documents that articulate learning outcomes for FYW, while they function as written products by and for the department, also serve as tangible evidence the WPA uses to support arguments to outside audiences.

Mapping yourself in this quadrant could help this scenario if the upper-level quadrants have failed to work for you. For instance, you might feel the need to document problems with Betty's performance or the assessment of her sections if they are undermining the objectives of the course or if her practices are not in keeping with the vision the WPA or WPA team has for the program. In other words, if Betty's resistance is not productive (the "constructive conflict" of the Collaboration quadrant) and if fostering change internally (through the classroom observations that would fall under the Coordinator quadrant) has stalled, then an external measure might be necessary, such as documenting lack of adherence to course guidelines, comparing assessment results in Betty's section with the departmental norm, or making the case for dismissal.

At what point does the WPA exert power (such as the decision not to renew an employment contract) if effective innovations are being hindered by resistance? When do you use your "position of power as a hierarchical advantage, for imposing order and structure" (Gruber 49)? When do you work with the administration? When do you preserve the status quo?

### *Coordinator*

The Coordinator role moves us clockwise and back into the internal realm but still aligns with preserving programmatic goals. This role, more than the others, may make you vulnerable to the "bureaucrat within" (Goodburn and Leverenz) as it connects you to your institutional title and may feel at odds with feminist praxis. However, Amy Goodburn and Carrie Leverenz contend that these very "[s]truggles over power, authority, and leadership are not barriers to enacting feminist principles; they are the embodiment of them" (Goodburn and Leverenz 289) As the Coordinator, you function as the de facto manager of the program even as you may push against the capitalist/masculinist/patriarchal forces that conflict with feminism.

In this role, the "administrator" in the "feminist administrator" title is drawn to the principles of efficacious management. The Coordinator might exert power as a strategic move towards preservation and might need to value compliance over other responses from the group. For instance, at the

faculty workshop, the WPA might challenge Betty's objections or might even use silence as a rhetorical strategy (such as not responding to a disruptive comment<sup>10</sup> by Betty). Even though this instantiation of the role appears bureaucratic, a Coordinator may privilege hearing from most or all of those in attendance rather than risking that one participant might dominate the discussion and/or hijack the collaboratively constructed agenda.

Conflicted between supporting all of the instructors on the composition faculty and maximizing the two-hour window devoted to faculty development, you might be experiencing radical anger or some other strong emotion. Debra Frank Dew claims that WPAs too often curtail "best practice commonplaces for WPA-adjunct faculty relations" due to "a strong measure of ideologically entrenched adjunct guilt." In this scenario could you be susceptible to foregoing programmatic changes informed by best practice commonplaces because of "adjunct guilt"? Or, could "adjunct guilt" lead the WPA to let one rogue adjunct onto center stage and end up silencing the other adjuncts in attendance? Are there enough safe channels for feedback in the program?

Can we ever give in to our "bureaucrat within" and still enact feminist leadership? In this scenario, can Betty be read as behaving in a "masculinist mode"? If so, is "feminist resistance" on the part of the WPA warranted? What might that look like? Is silence, which Cheryl Glenn classifies as a "linguistic strategy to demonstrate power" (177), appropriate in this scenario? How might silencing Betty hinder the trust the WPA is trying to build among the composition faculty? In tandem with silence, could "stillness" work as a response here? To avoid falling prey to the "perceived need to respond to a problem before [knowing] enough," could we try "residing longer than is comfortable in the complexity, stillness, and fatigue of not knowing how to proceed?" (Micciche 80). How might we serve the stakeholders (faculty, students, administrators) and best enact leadership in order to ensure cohesion without undermining morale (our own or others)?

## CONCLUSION

The scenario above, rather than serving as a lesson on best practices or as a cautionary tale, provides a springboard for questions for readers and a means of further theorizing possible sites of leadership. In advocating for this chart to map the work of a WPA, we might seem to be suggesting that every decision be the "slow agency" that Micciche discusses. Instead, as noted above, we see the map as a heuristic that can and should be used whether one has just a few moments before a last-minute meeting or whether one is embarking upon a multi-year project. In any case, using

the map allows one not only a *process* for arriving at a decision but a *rationale* for the choice one ultimately endorses. That rationale seems especially important as one's professional identity evolves.

The chart does not ensure success. In *GenAdmin: Theorizing WPA Identities in the Twenty-First Century*, Charlton et al. note that

just because some WPAs were specifically prepared for WPA work in graduate school—or taught to think administratively—does not mean they won't make mistakes on the job. It is quite likely, however, that they may be prepared to treat their administrative mistakes as an opportunity for reflection and theorizing because they see WPA work as an area of scholarly inquiry, and they will look to work collaboratively with their colleagues to build consensus and a stronger program than any one person could create. (72)

Similarly, the map neither prevents “mistakes” nor guarantees the “right” or “best” decision every time. It allows one to weigh options and try to (to the extent that we can) predict results. One must ultimately decide what results to most value (or to hope to achieve) in a particular situation. Each result not only suggests a different goal, but a different level of tolerance: for conflict, for sacrifice, for accommodation, for inertia and for change. For instance, one of our outside reviewers said in reference to our previous section that “I'm one of those administrators who would not want to produce a bad review of Betty or even fire her.” Thus, that might be a choice that a particular WPA does not make. We argue that even if we are similarly uncomfortable with that alternative, we are limiting our possibilities for enacting leadership and agency if we are not willing to think about the range the chart offers. If we consistently select options in the lower quadrant, we risk stifling a program. If we consistently default to the upper quadrant, we may jeopardize having any sense of institutional identity and stability for a program. As we hope our descriptions make clear, one approach—one quadrant—is often not enough for thorny WPA work.

In their review essay, “Feminist WPA Work: Beyond Oxymorons,” Laura R. Micciche and Donna Strickland lament that they feel “this nagging sense that feminism stands for practices disassociated from politics” (173). We have had similar conversations about this chart, which is not inherently feminist but encompasses power and thus politics. For us, the WPA Leadership Chart provides a means of embracing a feminist epistemology and acting daily in our professional worlds. While the chart does not promote one worldview over another, we see our roles as WPAs as infused with feminism. In part, this infusion is due to our training in rhetoric and composition. Almost always we perceived a common ground

between the fundamental assumptions of our discipline and our understanding of feminist theory. Also influencing our enactment of the chart is the fact that we strive to shape our entire lives—professional and otherwise—around our own sense of feminist principles. Given this orientation, we see the WPA Leadership Chart as one way to push forward both WPA scholarship and conceptions of feminism.

While the chart is not necessarily feminist, it was conceived as a means to enact power as feminist WPAs. It has, we hope, the characteristics of “a feminist administrative model,” one that “shifts not just power, but understandings of power” (Charlton et al. 191). To return to the above scenario with Betty, can one reconcile one’s feminism with firing Betty? It would seem to us that for each WPA, that answer would be a personal/political one and not the same one. Micciche and Strickland write that their “guiding assumption is that we all need thinking tools for rejuvenation, for learning how to ask fresh questions, for reframing the ordinary in less familiar terms so as to experience and examine it anew” (173). While the Innovator quadrant most requires a WPA to pause and think “big,” employing all four quadrants of the chart allows us to examine a situation or problem in these “fresh” ways, offering potential for the evolution that Micciche and Strickland see missing in recent WPA scholarship. They “suggest[ ] that it’s time to release the worries about contradictions and to move toward new visions of feminist WPAing,” tellingly concluding their review with a quotation from Donna Haraway that includes the metaphor of “bag-lady storytelling” (175), what Charlton et al. call “metaphoric reflecting” (119). Thinking metaphorically is crucial to thinking “anew.” Thinking spatially has been a productive way for us to conceptualize “WPAing.” Of course, “spatial metaphors,” as Nedra Reynolds memorably articulated, “have long dominated our written discourse in this field (‘field’ being one of the first spatial references we can name)” of composition (14). A chart for mapping leadership positions and enacting agency can reinforce attention to the local and the material, as Reynolds promoted (30), the very approach that feminist “WPAing” demands.

However slowly or suddenly one comes to a leadership position, the institutional landscape requires plotting. While we once sought a Marauder’s Map to figure out our campuses, what we found we needed is a map to orient ourselves as leaders. Thus, we developed a (non)magical Marauder’s Map: the WPA Leadership Chart with its interactive and dynamic quadrants for enacting agency. While the chart provides a theoretical understanding of leadership roles and helps us analyze our ethos, values, and audience(s) to strategize responses to and sources of power, the embodied reality involves complex human beings and institutional constraints that

make this work radically situated. WPA work is captivating but haunting, with tidiness and perfection as elusive as magic and just as unnecessary.

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#### NOTES

1. Although the Marauder's Map is meant to "manage mischief," the mischief managed is not the illegal or unethical activity discussed in managerial theory or even the shenanigans perpetrated by previous keepers of the map in the *Harry Potter* series.

2. This chart is loosely based on the work of Robert E. Quinn, Sue R. Faerman, Michael P. Thompson, Michael R. McGrath, and Lynda S. St. Clair.

3. We are tempted to use the German verb *tragen* here, which means both to carry and to wear, and also to bear; these leadership roles are like masks or clothing we wear as well as burdens and/or mantles we carry.

4. We are using inscribe to connote the discursive aspect of the chart (versus the corporeal).

5. Similarly, Harry Potter acquires the Marauder's Map as a gift from the Weasley twins, who give it to Harry to enable him to move to a new space: Hogsmeade. Harry can't leave Hogwarts for Hogsmeade because his guardians refuse to sign the permission slip.

6. Moreover, the field itself has been commercialized and commodified to such an extent that Kellerman dubs it the "leadership industry," a "catchall term for the now countless leadership centers, institutes, programs, courses, seminars, workshops, experience, trainers, books, blogs, articles, websites, webinars, videos, conferences, consultants, and coaches claiming to teach people—usually for money—how to lead" ("Leading" 136).

7. We take this description directly from George A. Kennedy's definition of rhetoric in "A Hoot in the Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric."

8. Our thinking about embodiment is informed by Tina S. Kazan's discussion in "Dancing Bodies in the Classroom." See that piece for a more detailed description of the discursive vs. the corporeal, what Hayles distinguishes as inscription vs. incorporation.



9. As Ryan and Graban analyze it, “the adage ‘let’s all agree to disagree’ . . . shows a lack of commitment to transgressing the disagreement and represents the disagreement as normative” (296n9).

10. We use “disruptive” here because it can have negative (destructive) and positive (subversive) connotations.

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