"Singing Wonderfully": Remembering the Scholarship of Linda Bergmann

Lauren Fitzgerald, Rita Malenczyk, and Kelly Ritter

Linda S. Bergmann, director of the Writing Lab at Purdue University and former secretary of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, was friend, colleague, and mentor to many members of CWPA and the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA). She was also an active, engaged, and versatile scholar. After Bergmann's sudden death in 2014, the three of us—all of whom had been friends and colleagues of Bergmann's and whose familiarity with her work spanned a range of contexts and disciplines—organized a panel for the 2014 International Writing Centers Association Conference/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing that focused on Bergmann's contributions to the scholarship of writing centers, writing programs, and the relationship of literature to composition. Thanks to the editors of WPA: Writing Program Administration *for agreeing to reprint our papers here.*

Linda Bergmann's Writing Center Scholarship

Lauren Fitzgerald

My focus is on Linda's publications in writing center studies, but there were so many other ways in which she contributed to the field. She was an ambassador for writing centers—at several institutions, across the country, and abroad. Under her watch, the already well-known Purdue Writing Lab was one of the first two writing centers to win a CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence, and the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) expanded its services and reach. Moreover, she directed dissertations and served on PhD committees for many colleagues currently active in writing center studies. I want to convey some of the multi-dimensional nature of her contributions even as I focus on her scholarship by highlighting some-

thing I found quite remarkable as I was reading work by her and about her for this piece.

Memorials from the Celebration of Life to honor Linda were published in *Peitho*, and the Linda that emerges from these tributes is doubtless familiar to those who knew her: As a teacher, administrator, and scholar, she was a mentor, collaborator, and—necessary for both—a listener. She was also a supporter of research and, very much connected, a risk taker. What most strikes me about this portrait is how clearly it is reflected in her scholarship. If I'm honest with myself, the person I present in my own scholarship is more, shall we say, aspirational and idealized—someone I wish I were or will try to be later when I'm less busy or annoyed. With Linda, the person in the writing was the person in the life. Her scholarly *ethos* was authentic to who she was and therefore, ethical in several senses of this word.

As her colleagues and students remarked again and again at her memorial, Linda was an exemplary mentor. Her colleague and friend Irwin "Bud" Weiser noted her "commitment to the professional development of graduate students" (Sullivan et al. 63). The *Peitho* editors comment on how her students' tributes show us "feminist mentoring at work: generous and supportive without relaxing scholarly standards, intent on making the graduate experience for young women (and men) more humane than it was in the past" (Sullivan et al. 59). The same can be seen in her writing center scholarship. She consistently put a spotlight on the work of graduate students—for example, in her co-authored chapters for Macauley and Mauriello's *Marginal Words* and Bruce and Rafoth's *ESL Writers* as well as her chapter on writing center engagement for a Rose and Weiser collection. It's telling too that in the 2006 *Composition Studies* article that she wrote with five other writing center directors (including me), she was the only one to focus on graduate students and how writing center studies could better serve their needs.

Essential to Linda's mentoring was collaboration. For example, among her many co-authored publications in writing center studies, her last was written with graduate students (Bergmann, Brizee, and Wells). She collaborated in other ways as well, some of which were what Shirley Rose called "off-the-record collaboration" between friends (Sullivan et al. 65) but many on the record. Much of the writing center work that her scholarship describes was between and among different individuals, programs, and institutions, and she used these experiences to explicitly argue for the necessity of such cooperation. Her Purdue colleague Patricia Sullivan noted that Linda connected the Writing Lab to other disciplines while exploring "the knots and gnarls of the in-between" (Sullivan et al. 60, 62). In her co-authored chapter pointedly titled "Dialogue and Collaboration: A Writing

Lab Applies Tutoring Techniques to Relations with Other Writing Programs," Tammy Conard-Salvo and Linda link what Linda calls elsewhere the "highly communal environments" of writing centers ("Writing Centers and" 528) to collaborating with Purdue's First-Year Composition and Professional Writing programs.

Presenting writing centers as deeply collaborative is common in the field, but Linda had her own reasons for maintaining this position. Rather than independent operators, for Linda, writing centers and writing center directors are squarely within writing studies, as full-on writing programs and writing program administrators. In answer to the question of the title of the *Composition Studies* article, "Are Writing Center Directors Writing Program Administrators?" she wrote that

> Writing Center Directors' intellectual disputes with other sub-sets of Rhetoric and Composition are important ways of defining our specific place within that discipline, but in a larger context, we have more in common with Rhetoric and Composition than we have differences with it. (Ianetta et al. 32)

As a result, when Melissa Ianetta and I were editing *Writing Center Journal*, we asked Linda to review Linda Adler-Kassner's *The Activist WPA* because we knew that she could make this book relevant to the journal's readers.

Linda also acknowledged what distinguishes writing center directors from other WPAs, yet for her, this too was reason for collaboration. As she suggested in her chapter arguing for writing center engagement with the university and the community, working across boundaries is easier for writing center directors because they "have traditionally held mixed commitments that efface some of the boundaries that other faculty and even other WPAs have a greater need to remain within" ("Writing Center as" 160). And there are other benefits to this "life on the margins" since it offers "opportunities to experiment and change, [and] open up some time and space with which to develop new ways of thinking, learning, and interacting" ("Writing Center as" 160). As I discuss below, such interactions "create research opportunities for both graduate and undergraduate students" (Bergmann and Conard-Salvo 194).

Necessary both to her success as a mentor and a collaborator was her commitment to listening, which those at her memorial service repeatedly noted. Linda not only listened; she insisted that others do so too. Liz Angeli, a former student, said in her memorial that Linda mentored graduate students to "have the humility to listen" (Sullivan et al. 68). In Linda's chapter on writing center engagement, she similarly advised her readers to "*really listen*" ("Writing Center as" 167; emphasis in original), because, for

one thing, well versed as writing center practitioners are in "*listening* to clients*," it is already what we do. For another, it helps us solidify our collaborations ("Writing Center as" 174; emphasis in original).

I find evidence of the value she placed on listening elsewhere in her scholarship, in two articles not directly tied to writing center work but nonetheless relevant. Her well-known co-authored article "Disciplinarity and Transfer: Students' Perceptions of Learning to Write" and her chapter "Higher Education Administration Ownership, Collaboration, and Publication" are both testimony to her ability to pay careful attention to what others say. Both pieces report on research derived from deep listening, the first using focus groups with undergraduates who discussed the writing instruction they'd received and the second drawing on interviews with higher education administrators about the complicated nature of their authorship. In both cases, and as the result of such careful listening, these pieces honor and find meaning in what these individuals said, especially when their remarks did not follow the expected disciplinary script about writing.

Linda was a staunch advocate of research in a field that is only now fully embracing it and not yet always comfortably. She seemed to feel a profound sense of urgency about this issue; we *need* research less for individual advancement than to base our decisions and actions on knowledge rather than lore. We can see Linda articulating this sentiment in her 2008 review essay for *Pedagogy*. Describing then-recently published books in the field, she called out—albeit politely—one collection (to which I'm chagrined to admit I contributed) for lacking "sufficient critiques of the established assumptions most writing center administrators and staff rely on, as well as a critical agenda for future writing center research" ("Writing Centers and" 533).

Ever the mentor, Linda was especially interested in graduate student research. In her *Composition Studies* contribution, she recounts her graduate students managing to do what established scholars apparently could not—"reading [the field's] now-canonical literature critically and asking difficult questions about our ideas and practices, such as 'do they work?' and 'how do they work[?]' and 'how do we know?'" (Ianetta et al. 33). No doubt thanks to her mentoring, her students were "asking how accepted ideas and practices can be tested by empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative, with clear and repeatable methodologies and falsifiable hypotheses" (Ianetta et al. 33). In her memorial, Patricia Sullivan recollects that research was "the core" of Linda's graduate Writing Center Research and Theory course: "'For writing center faculty to reach their full potential,'" Sullivan recalls Linda saying, "'they need to be researchers'" (Sullivan

et al. 61). Sullivan goes on: "Often after that statement [Linda] would pause and twist her glasses and add, 'While there is more research than before, so much more is needed . . . we just need more research'" (Sullivan et al. 61). Of course, the real testimony to Linda's championing of research are the graduate students who have gone on to succeed as knowledge-producers in the field. Dana Driscoll, Linda's former dissertation advisee, for example, co-authored an article on writing center research that won an IWCA Outstanding Scholarship Award. In her memorial, Driscoll aptly described Linda's students "her living legacy" (Sullivan et al. 70).

Particularly in Linda's promotion of research, it is clear that, though a listener, a collaborator, and a mentor, she was no shrinking violet. Indeed, her friend Shirley Rose called her a "woman warrior . . . a warrior who had the courage to challenge dogma" (Sullivan et al. 65). Likewise, Linda's scholarship on writing centers is punctuated by calls to embrace what is dangerous and threatening. One reason we "need to embrace difficult moments" (530), she wrote, is that it's the "funny and frightening" issues of day-to-day work that "are of considerable use to developing students . . . into effective teachers of writing" ("Writing Centers and" 531).

Intriguingly, and I think insightfully, Linda identified research as the most dangerous area of writing center work. For instance, she attributed the changes in the field over the last ten to fifteen years largely to the newer generations of writing center directors with degrees in Rhetoric and Composition and expertise in social science research methods—a shift that those of us of a certain age who hold literature PhDs can find "threatening" (Ianetta et al. 32). Even as she asserted that we must embrace these changes, she acknowledged reasons for this fear. Research that demands that we look beyond the confines of our individual centers and practices and leads to

> comparisons across institutions *can* be dangerous, and empirical research can challenge established practices and those who rely on them, because they raise questions that might offer difficult answers, and because if we are doing genuine research (be it qualitative or quantitative), we cannot know in advance what the answers will be: we can only work with what we find. ("Writing Centers and" 534)

Yet, in a phrase that I want to hold on to, she wrote that "these dangers are good dangers" ("Writing Center as" 175). She used this phrase to describe the importance of our letting go of disciplinary language and assumptions when working across disciplines (which she did a lot of) because doing so "demand[s] that we question and test our beliefs" and in turn can "lead us to more and better empirical research into how writing is learned" ("Writing Center as" 175). But I especially want to hold on to this idea of good

dangers because it describes a way of finding virtue in—or what Linda Adler-Kassner might call reframing—potentially all threatening and frightening situations, not only in our work but in our lives.

Perhaps it is presumptuous of me to say that Linda in her life and her writing remains an example for us all, but I can say that she is so for me. Another of what Angeli and her fellow graduate students referred to as a "Linda-ism" that I want to remember is "Don't be a jerk (and if you have to be a jerk, don't be a discouraged jerk)" (Sullivan et al. 68). Instead—as the memorials and the scholarship exhort—be a mentor, a collaborator, a listener, a courageous researcher, and a warrior. I want to give Linda the last word, so I'll end with a quotation from her review of that other Linda's book, a review I edited—lightly because she was an immaculate writer—for *Writing Center Journal*. In another moment of her writing reflecting her life, in this passage, I think you'll agree that Linda could well be talking about herself:

> Her calls for conversation, for listening carefully, for finding allies and understanding opposition, and for making our own stories rather than trying to refute frames imposed by those who would cut our resources and diminish our influence—these are calls we should heed and projects we should join. (Rev. 133)

The "Truly Collaborative" Work of the Outcomes Collective

Rita Malenczyk

What I'd like to do here is revisit a classic essay in writing center scholarship, Andrea Lunsford's "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center" and read Linda Bergmann's work—specifically, her collaboratively written chapter in the 2005 *Outcomes Book* about the development of the first WPA Outcomes Statement—through the lens of that essay. I'll conclude by talking about what Linda herself brought to the process of developing the Statement and book chapter, both of which were, and are, unique in the degree to which they were what Lunsford would call "*truly* collaborative" (emphasis added).

Lunsford was arguably the first to make us all aware, twenty-three years ago, of collaboration's considerable appeal and significance for writing centers. She cautions, of course, about how authority can creep into seemingly-collaborative writing center sessions (that's the control part), but I want to focus on how she outlines the benefits of collaboration and the circumstances under which true collaboration occurs or can occur. Lunsford makes the following seven claims:

1. Collaboration aids in problem finding as well as problem solving.
2. Collaboration aids in learning abstractions.
3. Collaboration aids in transfer and assimilation; it fosters interdisciplinary thinking.
4. Collaboration leads not only to sharper, more critical thinking (students must explain, defend, adapt) but to deeper understanding of *others*. . . .
5. Collaboration leads to higher achievement in general. . . .
6. Collaboration promotes excellence.
7. Collaboration engages the whole student and encourages active learning (49–50; emphasis in original).

Collaboration, Lunsford argues,

> reflects . . . a shift in the way we view knowledge. The shift involves a move from viewing knowledge and reality as things exterior to or outside of us, as immediately accessible, individually knowable, measurable, and shareable—to viewing knowledge and reality as mediated by or constructed through language in social use, as socially constructed, contextualized. (48)

Lunsford then discusses the difficulties of developing, finding, or creating a truly collaborative environment. She writes that "collaborative environments and tasks must *demand* collaboration" and that research on collaboration in the workplace defines three such environments and tasks: "high-order problem defining and solving; division of labor tasks, in which the job is simply too big for any one person; and division of expertise tasks" (50; emphasis in original). Lunsford goes on to note that

> a collaborative environment must also be one in which goals are clearly defined and in which the jobs at hand engage everyone fairly equally. . . . In other words, such an environment rejects traditional hierarchies. In addition, the kind of collaborative environment I want to encourage calls for careful and ongoing monitoring and evaluating of the collaboration or group process, again on the part of all involved. In practice, such monitoring calls on each person involved in the collaboration to build a *theory* of collaboration, a theory of group dynamics. (50; emphasis in original)

I don't know if I can say that the group that developed the Outcomes Statement (or, as the chapter authors call that group, the Outcomes Collective) got as far as the kind of theorizing Lunsford speaks of at the end of that passage. This was in large part because the group's boundaries were so porous—people moved in and out of it, a circumstance I'll discuss in

more detail later. However, the chapter "The Outcomes Project: The Insiders' History" written by Keith Rhodes, Irvin Peckham, Linda Bergmann, and William Condon in *The Outcomes Book* reflects—as does my own experience as a member of the Collective—the benefits of collaboration as Lunsford defines them. Most importantly, however, it chronicles the development and history of what she would, I think, call "a truly collaborative environment."

That such an environment developed was due not only to the personalities of the people involved but to the fact that the Statement began so weirdly. It started with a question on WPA-L, about whether there existed any kind of document that articulated what students should know at the end of first-year writing. Hearing that there was none, the question "well, why isn't there, and shouldn't we be able to come up with such a document?" was asked. From there, momentum simply developed in discussion. Conversation took place on the listserv for about a month and continued at informal meetings at the annual convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Milwaukee. (Reading the listserv archives from this period is fun, as people try to nail down meeting dates and times, anticipating the chaos that will ensue when they all start running around CCCC trying to find each other.) After the conference, it became clear that a smaller group needed to be formed to really push the idea of a draft forward, so Bill Condon stepped up to submit a workshop proposal for CCCC the following year. Over thirty volunteers wanted to help lead the workshop, and so he had to select a limited number of leaders. He chose folks based on stage in career, geographical location, and institutional type. I was one of the people chosen; at the time, I was the most junior and had only lurked in the conversation up to that point. Linda was another (see the WPA-L archives, March–April 1996). She and I both became part of a group that held sessions to work on the Statement at the annual conference of the CWPA, CCCC, and elsewhere for a few years. In the end, as the authors write, "As many as twenty-five people spearheaded the writing and over forty contributed phrases and ideas" (13). It's the history of this continually-evolving group that the *Outcomes Book* chapter chronicles.

While all the characteristics Lunsford attributes to collaboration and truly collaborative environments were, I would claim, features of the group as well as of the chapter that describes it, I want to focus on the two that are most relevant for my purpose here and that were also, I feel, inseparable in the process of developing the Statement. First, Lunsford claims that collaboration and collaborative groups foster and feature not only problem-solving but also problem-defining (or, as she words it, *problem-finding*).

Second, she asserts that collaboration leads "not only to sharper, more critical thinking" because collaborators must "explain, defend, adapt," but to "deeper understanding of others" (49). Both of these characteristics reveal themselves in the Outcomes Collective's struggle with audience and content—more particularly, with conflicts about what should be in the Statement—and with the multiple audiences that would use as well as read it. While the Collective's initial problem or task was to develop a statement of common goals for first-year composition, it didn't take too long before that problem/task was redefined in a twofold way: First, how do we accommodate a range of sometimes conflicting ideas about what those goals should be? Second, how do we accommodate audiences from both within and outside the discipline (Rhodes et al.)? These two questions actually *became* the problem—after all, it could be argued that the initial problem of developing some kind of statement was more or less solved when people started to address it—and they remained the problem up until the final product was approved. The way that twofold problem was solved reflects, to my mind, true collaboration—in other words, it wasn't solved by imposing hierarchy.

The chapter authors describe the problem-solving process in some detail. Regarding conflicting ideas about what should be in the Statement and for whom it should be written, they write of the group's intention to present a set of professionally-validated outcomes that were nevertheless flexible enough to accommodate local circumstances (10). Noting that the document had been written by writing program administrators with a range of theoretical positions and from a variety of institutions, regions, and so on, they write that, though the group had many disagreements,

> we kept returning to the point that we were looking for what we had in common, what best ideas and best practices we could all agree on. Flurries of disagreement were most commonly resolved by moving to a level of generalization that could accommodate multiple positions. When there was a major argument in 1999 about whether the Outcomes Statement should mandate computer technologies, the issue was resolved with a line about technologies in general, to keep the issue open enough that it would not exclude particular institutions in the present or become obsolete a decade hence. (11)

You'll note the passive voice in that passage—for example, "the issue was resolved." It's used a number of times, and all writing teachers understand that the passive voice elides the question of agency: If you have to use the passive voice, it means you don't know who did something, and you go find out. However, in this case we really *didn't* know. As the chapter authors write,

> not only did we have a complicated reader who might lie anywhere on a continuum from rhetorician to concerned parent, we also had a complicated author. The number of authors expanded and their identities changed as some dropped out and new authors entered. The problem of revising for a complicated set of readers was additionally complicated by having to change a document with no recognized authors. (13)

As you might guess, then, the question of audience was an even more difficult one to address. Because the authors, all sixty-plus of them, were WPAs, and because the document was intended for use by WPAs, we considered ourselves "our own first audience" (Rhodes et al. 12–13). However, the Statement would also be read by people outside of the discipline, and that presented a conundrum. As the chapter authors put it,

> professional language, characterized by words like *rhetoric, genre,* and *conventions* (and *register*), is useful to people who have grown used to a common set of associations. . . . But to others, it smacks of snotty language people use to show that they understand because they are on the in—and of course people who don't understand are on the out. Having earned our PhDs, we sometimes display our badges through our language; people who have not similarly emblazoned themselves may interpret that display as self-privileging. (13–14; emphasis in original)

Various solutions to this problem were considered, including sidebars that were addressed to a variety of other audiences. However, the group decided that solution would be condescending, and in the end, the problem was solved only to a degree: The final Statement included a clearly-worded (readable by anyone) prologue explaining why the Statement was written in writing program administrators' professional language (13). It was the best we could do, and it was something we were all able to agree on.

Of course, other characteristics of collaborative environments, as Lunsford defines them, were present in the Collective's work as well. The task of producing the Statement, as it wound up being defined and completed, could not have been done by just one person. We rejected traditional hierarchy, which is reflected in our problem-solving about audience and content, and ongoing reflection on and monitoring of the group process was a feature of the process itself, as was division of expertise. For example, when it came down to the production of an actual draft statement for presentation to the CWPA Executive Board, we saw that this couldn't be done by a group of ten or more (we'd never get anywhere), so the process of decision-making was delegated. We wound up forming a small task force composed

of some people who were good at keeping things on task and pushing forward, as well as some who were particularly good at placing themselves in other readers' shoes and reconciling divergent points of view. Lastly, one trait of true collaboration I've identified in re-reading this chapter and remembering our work on this project—but that Lunsford doesn't discuss in detail—is its messiness. Not only does a range of minds at work on a project produce a certain chaos that is difficult to contain, it also generates ideas and circumstances that are impossible to predict in advance and that remain in existence because of the absence of hierarchy. The Outcomes Collective embraced this messiness. As the chapter says, "The collaboration we envisioned was always extending outward; the idea was to let the Outcomes Statement fly and see what happened, not to try to contain it" (10). And it continues to fly, in two subsequent versions, the most recent of which was just approved by the CWPA Executive Board this past July.

I wish Linda were here to see it. Her voice, however, remains present, both in my memory and in the *Outcomes Book* chapter. At the beginning of the chapter, the four co-authors explain that each of them had initially written a separate chapter for the book, but that space considerations required them to condense what they'd written into one. Talking about how that particular collaborative process influenced the chapter's style, they wrote:

> We hope to illuminate some key features . . . of the Outcomes Statement's rhetorical situation by presenting some part, at least, of the inside story in the inside voices. We will not be so dramatic as to make this an obvious dialogue; but along the way there will be some obvious changes in voice, some disjunctures of flow. Rather than smooth them all out, we have left just a bit of a textual reminder of the multitude of voices that came together in the Statement itself. (9)

I like to think I can pick out Linda's cadences in at least one of these textual reminders; she was always aware of the human element in all scholarly gatherings, so I hear her voice in the following:

> In the archived discussions, I see the flow of lives through the project, as we made our plans for meeting at conferences, said our goodbyes to the list as we left for vacations, disclosed pregnancy and birth, illness and recovery, retirements and job changes. The human factors helped keep our debates civil—for the most part—and helped build the community of human respect that allowed for this collaboration of cobblers. (11–12)

A "Genuine Complementary Relationship": Linda
Bergmann and the Comp-Lit Divide

Kelly Ritter

This is my first visit to the IWCA conference because, in part, I don't work
in a writing center. That's not really a valid excuse, though, and one I'm sure
Linda Bergmann would frown upon, were she here with us today. Despite
my woeful showing amongst my writing center colleagues, which illustrates
on a personal level a remaining split in our larger field—that between the
subfield of writing center teaching and research in relation to the umbrella
of teaching and research done in rhetoric and composition—I still knew
Linda and considered her a friend, a valued colleague, and an incredibly
important scholar. That's what brings me here to this panel today. As Rita
and Lauren have both outlined in their discussions, Linda Bergmann made
indelible contributions to writing center studies and provided a legacy for
others to model, in particular in working with graduate students. I knew
Linda from the profession more generally—and from great opportunities
to work closely with her in settings like the CCCC Executive Committee,
which showed me exactly how generous a colleague she was. But I want to
present an aspect of Linda's work here today that hasn't been spoken of thus
far in our panel, and that is her work on the fraught relationship between
composition studies and literature, particularly as it is executed in the first-
year classroom.

It's fitting that Rita has spoken of how Linda collaborated on both the
WPA Outcomes Statement and the chapter in the *Outcomes Book* describ-
ing that statement and process because my focus is on how Linda saw a
collaborative possibility between the fields of composition and literature.
Unlike many of her colleagues (myself included), Linda saw opportuni-
ties for dialogue between these two fields, most eloquently outlined in the
introduction to her book, co-edited with Edith M. Baker, *Composition and/
or Literature: The Ends of Education*. I want to talk about the value of that
endeavor and that overall attempt on Linda's part at cross-disciplinary con-
versations—assuming we all agree that rhetoric and composition *is* a disci-
pline and not just a subfield of English studies; more on that later. I want
to also frame the importance of this contribution as I currently see it, in my
role as a journal editor for the NCTE publication *College English*.

I will start by saying—as I've already alluded to—that I'm not the per-
son to be up here advocating for a warm and happy relationship between
literature and composition. I am not, nor likely will I ever be, as forward-
thinking and welcoming as Linda in this regard—or probably in any
regard, reflecting on what Lauren has shared with us about Linda's unwav-

ering dedication to writing centers and her graduate students' roles within them. We all should be so good to our future colleagues. While I embrace working in a large English department at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign that is, to a significant degree, dominated by literature faculty concerns and perspectives, I have my own separate concerns about the viability of freestanding writing and rhetoric departments, from both an administrative and a political standpoint. But these departmental politics and values aside, and regardless of where the first-year composition course is or may be located institutionally speaking, I am most deeply skeptical about the inclusion of literary works in first-year writing courses. As I frequently tell new teaching assistants when I justify why our first-year course at Illinois is rhetoric-based and essentially literature-free, the separation in this course of expository texts from imaginative/creative/literary ones (and I realize those labels themselves are problematic, but please work with me here) is because students in high school are amply exposed to the study of literature and are often asked to write mostly (or exclusively) about literary texts in their so-called English classes. First-year students really don't have the nuanced understanding of how composition is not English writ large; they further don't understand how writing an essay for English class isn't just dissecting a novel or short story. They call articles *stories* and typically have a poor understanding of the genres that comprise non-fiction writing, let alone the tenets of rhetoric that would inform those genres—even as they read and write more now than ever before due to portable technologies, digital texts, and social media spaces. So, I tell new teaching assistants, making first-year writing a pretty exclusively non-fiction experience is reasonable—to me—and does a service that's separate from other English courses. I also point out that not to worry, Susie (my standard exemplar student in these scenarios) will get her literature course in due time—maybe even in her first year, right after completing her composition course. There's always plenty of lit to go around, I say. What the students need now is immersion in other forms of writing, both to read and to compose.

But as we career closer to the mass implementation of initiatives such as Common Core Standards, my own justifications become less, well, justifiable, because the Grade 7–12 standards for English in the Common Core documents specify a pretty robust examination of both literary and non-literary forms, arguments, and writing exercises and conventions. In fact, the Common Core—if followed to a T—promises to school our incoming first-year students pretty deeply in writing about literature and writing about non-fiction texts. For a more interesting take than mine on this hypothesis, please talk with Doug Hesse, so he can summarize for you his excellent "Cloudy with a Chance of Rain" plenary talk from the October

2014 University of Maryland Writing Conference. No longer, from the perspective of the Common Core Standards document, does English mean just literature. Students will come to our courses, theoretically, well-versed in the very rhetorical techniques we aim to show them for the first time. It might be my old justifications are going to soon become obsolete, if they aren't already. Alternatively, I suppose, the bifurcation already in place will become even stronger. That would be unfortunate. But if a stronger merging emerges from this attempt at deeper secondary school literacy instruction, what will a naysayer like me do to ease her own conscience or at least understand the arguments of her vocal opponents—among them, in about five to ten years, the very high school students who were schooled under the Common Core, now graduate teaching assistants in my own program?

Enter Linda's important scholarly contribution to this age-old debate about what writing is or can be in the university setting. Unlike so many submissions that I see submitted to *College English*, Linda's work in this area recognized that the study of literature could have purposes beyond the replication of stock analyses of texts and authors—that it could mean something to a first-year student struggling to find her way into a discourse community whose boundaries are ever-shifting and whose values are bound up in (frequently illegitimate) institutional politics as much as legitimate curricular goals. There exists in many of the submissions to *College English* a fairly clear lit-comp divide: The submissions I typically receive on literary matters perceive that the journal is interested in only how to teach a particular literary text or author. Another type of submission, of course, is the type that doesn't know what *College English* does or is at all—and thus sends a jargon-filled literary analysis that is best suited for almost any other venue besides ours. Precious few submissions bring together the causes of the teaching of writing and the employment of literary texts in that teaching, let alone in meaningful ways. As a subset of all manuscripts, real and viable manuscripts on literature and writing are essentially zero. *College English,* perhaps, no longer means English to many potential contributors but instead means English as represented by Rhetoric and Composition which is where writing instruction is perceived to live. This is really a discussion for another day, but suffice it to say that in certain circles, Rhetoric and Composition is not only not part of English-as-literature, it's also more powerful and more omnipresent. This perception, borne out in the ratio of tenure-track Rhetoric and Composition jobs to literature jobs advertised each season, can only be threatening to our literary-focused colleagues, especially those who are assigned to teach first-year writing but truly don't know another paradigm for doing so other than comp-as-lit, or litcomp, to recall the Tate-Lindemann debates (which Linda also does in her book).

This problem with manuscript construction may be because the split between lit and comp is seen as finalized and longstanding—backed by folks like me, who don't want, figuratively, their chocolate in their peanut butter. But Linda and her contributors to *Composition and/or Literature* resisted that bifurcation in a particular way. In light of the convergences required in curricular design these days—secondary to Common Core but also to so many other models of "efficient" learning and shortened time-to-degree, not to mention the ever-in-jeopardy state of literary studies in Gen Ed curricular discussions—maybe it's time to revisit how valuable Linda's hypotheses were by focusing on her introduction to *Composition and/or Literature* as representative of many of the concerns voiced in the larger project.

In her introduction "What Do You Folks Teach Over There, Anyway?" Linda articulates that this book is not about the pros or cons of creating separate departments of writing out of literature-focused English departments but rather about "the pressures the relationship between literary and composition studies put on the teaching of writing" as well as whether a "broader examination of whether and how the study of literature can be compatible with and integrated into composition studies" (1–2). She additionally notes that the intellectual background of literature faculty is "substantially different" from those specializing in composition and rhetoric, and this either adds to or is the problem at hand. Linda acknowledges that the "common sense" of most writing programs is to exclude literature in their teachings, yet this practice is impractical in smaller colleges and/or programs where the teaching of writing is exclusively offered by literature faculty (2). There is, then, a need for productive discussions and "mutual accommodation" between literature and composition faculty, even as the move here would not be toward reconciliation, but instead a more productive employment of the tensions that exist, and will continue to exist, between lit and comp (3).

I especially appreciate Linda's mention of "literature through the back door" (4) as it gets practiced in the classrooms of graduate students training in literary studies. As a WPA, I think I may be overly concerned, at times, with how open this back door is—especially as I fret when I hear a TA go into a deep analysis of something like *A Room of One's Own* that veers fairly far away from understanding that text in relation to the students' own writing (as I heard just last week in an observation) or when I struggle with an instructor's entirely metaphysical take on a David Foster Wallace essay—which in itself is not "literature" but to my ears is quite literary and thus gets picked up by this instructor as the latter, bringing comfort to his own instructional experience when otherwise he's clearly out to sea. The end

result of both of these observations, of course, is a classroom of students *themselves* out to sea, as I ask, how again is this a *writing* classroom? Linda told us that this is the wrong question; instead, we should be asking how to make lemonade out of the sometimes-sour conditions we currently face and what the benefits of that might really be to ourselves and our students.

Because Linda makes no bones in the construction of this book that either my or my TAs' discomfort will be alleviated any time soon, even if one of us gives more into the perspectives and values of the other. She reminds readers that the useful paradigm for going forward might be not to say how composition courses *should* be taught, but rather recognize how they *are* taught alongside the lit-comp divide and work to making sense and meaning of that, especially since graduate training only lasts for so long, and more and more faculty are contingent—meaning the sites of writing that make up their working conditions are always in flux and frequently divorced from the instructors' own institutional origins or values. And, as Linda also notes, this is in addition to the existing perception amongst many literature faculty that the knowledge and teaching of literary texts is a higher calling, and a more dedicated activity, to English studies than the teaching of writing—a historical argument I doubt anyone here needs for me to rehearse. Citing Sharon Crowley, Linda acknowledges that this perception often leads to current-traditionalism, i.e., all the writing with none of the content or intellectual curiosity. This, too, is likely familiar to many of us, even as we think we are, as a field, past such bifurcations of skill or activity from the rhetorical situation.

I've certainly seen this in my own past WPA work: The instructors who were trained in literary studies thirty, forty, or more years ago, and who have taken to giving separate grades for content and for structure (or writing) which they think is actually quite progressive because they can't hear my teeth grinding as they describe this pedagogy. I've seen these instructors dig in their heels when I talk about the value of something like portfolio assessment or peer review or anything that complicates the notion that content can be separated from form (wherein form stands in for grammar, surface cleanliness, and document design). This is an important problem that undergirds Linda and her co-editor's attempts to understand, rather than simply re-educate, the faculty who see the value of literary approaches and literary content in a composition course. Her work makes me feel that I should be more generous and open to conversations about the teaching of writing that involve faculty who don't think like I do. Her work also makes me hopeful that mass initiatives like Common Core are going to be important building blocks, hopefully, rather than gross hindrances, in our having this conversation and including students in it. How will students

coming out of instruction in the Common Core Standards see the position of so-called imaginative writing? Where will their lessons on context and exigence lead them to in their analyses of literature, and will those lessons eventually bring literary-focused composition teachers back to the table with more willingness to listen to *us?* We can only hope.

As I close, and as I think about hope both personally and professionally, I am reminded that what characterized Linda's work as a scholar and as a person was her ability to combine a sharp wit and keen employment of skepticism—what we might today call snark—with an abiding sense of real hope. She saw promise in everyone she met. She inspired the people she worked with, and I know this because I attended her memorial service at Purdue in January 2014 and heard that very testimony of which Lauren spoke—and she inspired those who had only interacted with her through her words on the page. With the olive branches she extended in the form of works like *Composition and/or Literature*, she reminded us that we are all about the conversations in our work—and not about the shouting past one another. As a writing center scholar, she knew all too well the power of dialogue and coming together, across a table, to find a solution to a problem—whether that was a writing problem or something else. That eternal hopefulness is best expressed in the very last posting she made on her Facebook page before her death. Dated December 1, 2013, that posting reads:

> I took my son to see *La Traviata* at the Lyric last night. He really enjoyed it. I'm so pleased that he is beginning to share my passion (well, for him, perhaps appreciation) for the opera. I keep hoping that Violetta will not die at the end—but, alas, she always does, singing wonderfully as she dies.

I ask that we always imagine Linda just this way, thinking about the nature of possibility and singing wonderfully.

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