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Introduction to Key Concepts

Writing Across the Curriculum, like any academic program, arises out of a complex of institutional, intellectual, and social events and forces. The complex set of impulses, goals, and endeavors set forth by those events and forces have varying names and configurations. So before venturing into the detailed examination of programs and knowledge, it is useful to sort out some of the common terms used to describe educational programs. The definitions, in themselves, will begin to set out a larger historical, institutional, and intellectual picture to be filled in by the chapters that follow. The terms will be arranged in three clusters. The first cluster presents terms identifying the relations between literacy and schooling in historical and institutional contexts. The second cluster presents terms identifying ways of organizing writing and reading curricula with respect to other subject areas. The final cluster defines two terms central to thinking about the use of reading in academic writing.

Literacy and Schooling

The practices and development of writing and reading have been intimately tied to the histories of schooling. Indeed, literacy education has been the primary motivation for developing most educational institutions throughout history—that is, places of organized instruction apart from the daily flow and interaction of life practices. People in daily life are constantly learning from the people around them and the tasks they face, but institutions of schooling set up activities that are to some degree separated from the activities of daily life. Reading

and writing take one out of the flow of events and immediate activities, requiring some retreat to attend to words that somehow extend beyond the current moment. Reading and writing are not easily taught in passing, but require extended concentration away from other concerns, particularly in relation to the more complex and contemplative functions of literacy we have developed.

Reading and Writing Activities in Schooling

As social needs for literacy increased, so did schooling. Further, the reading and writing activities in school were often closely tied to the specific social functions that created the need for advanced literacy. Scriptural religions created the need for high degrees of literacy in the priestly castes and in some cases placed a literacy obligation on all believers. In schools associated with all the major religions, the primary reading matter and writing practices were associated with the scriptures and other religious obligations.

Insofar as literacy was driven by the needs of bureaucracies or commerce, these also then provided the matter and motive for literacy education. Even whether handwriting was taught and which style of script was practiced depended on the role students would take on in the economy. In America writing was first associated with commerce and handwriting particularly associated with business and administrative activities (Thornton, 1996). Women were taught to read, but since they did not engage in commerce, they were not taught handwriting, but instead needlepoint (Monaghan, 1989).

Literacy in the Rhetorical University

In mid-nineteenth century higher education in the U.S., literacy was tied to social, governmental, and religious leadership. The matter and motive of literacy education were therefore shaped around theology, homiletics, philosophy, government, and rhetoric within a largely integrated curriculum.

Literacy in the Research University

With the rise of the departmental research university in the later nineteenth century, however, the relationship between writing and subject matters changed. First, the various subject matters were separated from language and rhetorical study. Although one might continue to

read and write within moral philosophy or biology or history, there was little instruction or focus on the writing, which was viewed simply as the vehicle of disciplinary communication. Writing was taken for granted, and when students had difficulty with the literacy assignments it was viewed as a fault of their language instruction or the weakness of the students themselves. Second, the department gaining authority over literacy instruction was philology and literary studies, so that literacy instruction was placed in the service of and under the values and practices of literary studies.

Literacy in High Schools

The departmental arrangement of university education and the location of literacy instruction within departments of literature influenced literacy instruction in the modern high school. High schools emerged largely as a means of college preparation, though in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century only a small percentage of high school students went on to college (Tanner & Tanner, 1990). As a preparation for college, high schools, adopted the departmental divisions of the university and framed their curricula along the lines of the university courses. Thus language arts in the secondary schools were taught in the English class, whose definition of language was taken from literary studies.

Academic Literacy

Academic Literacy is a term that combines reading and writing. This is appropriate in that reading and writing never occur separately, but are always part of a shared field of activity. In the academic disciplines professionals students read and they write. They write about and use what they read (see definition of "intertextuality" below). And their writing forms the reading of their teachers, colleagues, and students. The term academic literacy is most widely used in reference to the lower and middle grades of schooling, to distinguish the kinds of reading and writing students are expected to do in school from the kinds of reading and writing children might do in their daily life outside of school. Sometimes, most narrowly, the term (or its close relation Academic English) is used to refer to conventions of language correctness that students are expected to adhere to in school. This narrowing of the term is unfortunate. While children in school are often moni-

tored for adherence to formal language conventions, academic literacy embodies a much wider range of practices, skills, and interactions that bring students into intellectual engagement with knowledge, thought, and the work of professions.

Academic Language Socialization

Academic language socialization is the process by which individuals learn to enter into the discussions and again access to the resources of academic disciplines through learning specialized language use and participating in academic activity settings. Learning to read and write in academic settings occurs through extended experiences in those settings, by meeting the expectations of those situations, and gaining from the opportunities for participation they offer.

Literacy and Curriculum

The assignment of reading and writing, though a necessary vehicle for the study of the various subjects, remained in the background as practices, receiving little instruction outside English and language arts classrooms. If students were unable to complete the reading and writing, or were otherwise found wanting the instructors often separated subject matter knowledge and competence from the language competence—thus marking the history part of the essay or intuiting what the student meant to say rather than holding them accountable for their precise articulation of the subject matter in writing. Failures in reading or writing in the subject matter might be penalized or might be gotten around through alternative instructional strategies, but they were not seen as matters for instruction within the context of the subject area.

These separations of literacy from content knowledge, here drawn with wide brush-strokes, set the stage for a re-engagement between literacy education and the particular subject matters, but only after the teaching of writing gained some degree of independence from the literary curriculum. This happened in the 1970s as the field of composition began to gather some professional authority and was able to assert some of its educational objectives apart from the literary curriculum. As literacy started to be understood more fully as distinct from literary education and the tacit reading and writing components of the

school and university curriculum became recognized more explicitly, several related pedagogical movements arose. They are closely related but are somewhat distinct, as will be spelled out in later chapters. We can, here, however, associate specific terms with distinctive aspects of this movement.

First-Year Writing (or Composition

Insofar as writing was explicitly taught within the research university it was typically taught in a first year course meant to prepare students for the writing demands of the university. This course often had a remedial or transitional character, so that students who were not writing well enough to meet the requirements of their other courses would be given developmental writing experiences. First year courses were frequently supplemented by even more basic writing courses, with placement determined by an examination at the time of entry into the university. These courses were typically staffed by junior faculty, lecturers, and graduate students, usually affiliated with the English Department.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) refers specifically to the pedagogical and curricular attention to writing occurring in university subject matter classes other than those offered by composition or writing programs (most often housed in the English Department). The movement provided systematic encouragement, institutional support, and educational knowledge to increase the amount and quality of writing occurring in such courses as history, science, mathematics and sociology. As will be spelled out in this volume, there have been many approaches to the kinds of writing encouraged, the kind of support offered, and the knowledge thought useful to student and teacher—but they were all directed to classrooms other than the writing or composition classes.

Writing in the Disciplines

Writing in the Disciplines (WID), although often associated with Writing Across the Curriculum, is distinct from WAC. WID refers to both a research movement to understand what writing actually occurs in the different disciplinary areas and a curricular reform movement

to offer disciplinary related writing instruction but within a program designed for that purpose (whether university-wide or departmentally located).

The research within the WID movement is based on the awareness that prior assumptions we had about what constituted good writing and what writing should be taught were based on literary models. In order to support writing across the curriculum intelligently we needed to know what kind of writing actually got done in the disciplines by professionals, how it got done, and what aspects of the writing were most highly valued. We needed, additionally, to understand better the writing that occurred within disciplinary classes, for it could not be assumed to be the same as that done by professionals. We need to understand the differences, similarities, and relationship between them to provide wise guidance for teachers and students writing within their disciplines.

The curricular movement is then to provide discipline-specific support for writing instruction and learning through writing. Often this is offered in upper division courses for students already committed to majors. Thus students might have the option of taking one of a series of courses with titles such as writing for sociology, writing for the biological sciences, writing for history, writing for business and economics, and so on. These courses would be offered usually within the writing or English programs by writing specialists who had developed particular expertise in the area. Sometimes, they would be offered within the different disciplinary departments. In some cases the first year writing course would take a writing in the disciplines approach, by offering students a survey of the kinds of writing they would encounter in the university.

Writing-Intensive or Writing-Emphasis Courses

In conjunction with a WAC or WID program, students may be required to take a set number of courses that require a minimum amount of writing and perhaps offer task specific writing support and instruction. Such courses are designated by such titles as writing intensive, writing emphasis, or writing requirement courses.

Writing in the Professions

Writing in the Professions is a parallel research and curricular movement directed towards professions that carried on their work largely

outside the university, such as the medical professions, law, and engineering. This movement overlaps with business and technical writing. A separate volume in this series will be devoted to Writing in the Professions. Writing in the Workplace is a similar research and curricular program associated with adult literacy programs.

Writing in Content Areas

Writing in Content Areas is sometimes used to describe Writing Across the Curriculum initiatives in high schools or occasionally primary schools. The use of the term content or subject area rather than curriculum suggests how secondary and primary study areas are less loosely tied to academic disciplines than in the university. Curriculum is defined as subject matters or content, packaged for classroom transmission, rather than disciplinary practices. The social spaces of the different subject classrooms within a school define the realm of activity rather than the nationally or internationally structured disciplines of knowledge.

Reading

The major terms concerning literacy within disciplinary contexts in relation to higher education have been cast in terms of writing. Writing Across the Curriculum practice and Writing in the Disciplines research have regularly run into the fact that most academic writing is closely tied to reading and regularly references reading. Often academic writing assignments specifically require particular use to be made of reading, such as summary or response. However, there has developed no substantial movement in higher education designated by the term reading across the curriculum. Nor has there been much formal programmatic support for reading in relation to particular disciplinary curricular areas in higher education. Further there has been only limited research into the uses of reading in writing or professional disciplinary reading practices, which will be discussed in following sections. The research on reading in disciplinary contexts is largely from the point of view of writing, that is, how a writer deploys and cites their source texts in their writing. Thus the focus of this research is intertextuality (defined below), though there are some studies focused specifically on reading practices.

Reading in Content Areas

Reading in Content Areas or Reading in the Subject Areas is a term used in relation to K-12 schooling, with particular reference to the kinds of reading practices need within primary and secondary classrooms. Thus there is a heavy emphasis on textbook reading, focussing attention on such skills as information extraction, main idea identification, and inferential reasoning. The field devotes little attention to other disciplinary reading activities or the use of the reading in a variety of writing settings.

Writing Using Reading

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is the way in which one piece of writing refers to, invokes, relies on, echoes, or otherwise uses other pieces of writing. The most explicit and direct form of intertextuality is direct quotation and citation. Paraphrase, summary, and mention of another's idea with or without formal reference to another text form a spectrum, which has as its other extreme the use of phrases and forms that echo earlier texts with no explicit mention. Because academic knowledge building and use is a collective enterprise, building on the ideas, research, and applications of prior researchers and responding to the proposals and arguments of contemporary others, intertextuality is a major visible phenomenon in academic writing. However, since all our language use responds to what others have said previously and draws on resources they have provided, all language can be said to be intertextual. See Chapter 7 for further elaboration.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of intertextual resources without giving adequate identification to the origin of those resources. However, we cannot and are not expected to give credit to the first place we heard every idea, fact, word, phrase, or rhetorical form. Only on some occasions are we expected to credit some particular sources in some particular formats. The transgression characterized as plagiarism marks the conventional and situational boundaries identifying what part of that intertextuality needs to be explicitly recognized and where explicit credit

needs to be given to prior authors and texts. That is, plagiarism is the failure to identify the words of others through marking of quotations or the source of ideas and information in those situations where such identification is currently expected.

Plagiarism is a recurrently important issue in academic and disciplinary writing for several reasons. First, professional credit and rewards are distributed to academics and other researchers and professionals on the basis of their discoveries, inventions, and other contributions presented in their publications. Not mentioning the sources of disciplinarily important contributions both denies credit to the innovator and appears to present the innovation as coming from the new author.

Second, students are expected in their assignments to demonstrate some degree of originality and thought based upon the knowledge and ideas of others. This expectation is both to encourage intellectual work for students and to assess their accomplishments. Not giving credit to sources allows students to take credit for the work of others and, even more, to evade the responsibility for doing serious intellectual work. If, for example, however, the entire class is answering questions based on a single textbook used by the entire class, the teacher has no difficulty in sorting out what is from the book and what is the students' work, so there is often no need for regular citation practices. In schooling citation and plagiarism are usually much more of an issue when the students are drawing on a range of sources that they have obtained on their own from beyond the shared work of the classroom.

Finally, the quality of both student and professional work depends on the quality of the work of others that they draw on. Not citing the sources of academic knowledge and thought leaves the writer without the authority of the prior work and leaves the reader without clues about how to assess the quality and contribution of the new work. These reasons for concern about plagiarism in the academy are somewhat different than those reasons that pertain to the marketplace, having to do with the economic value of intellectual property. Thus rules of plagiarism in commercial law are significantly different than those in the academy. Copyright, rather than recognition of intellectual resources, forms the center of the commercial legal definition of plagiarism.