



Introduction

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A university student in the United Arab Emirates watches a Spoken Word channel on YouTube, and, feeling more confident, starts to draft a poem on his phone for a campus performance poetry event. A student in Beirut, Lebanon and another in Dearborn, Michigan reflect on the information gathered during their Skype call as they begin to compose a literacy narrative about their partner. In Doha, a student educated only in English since kindergarten who speaks Spanish and Arabic at home wonders what to write on a survey that prompts her for her “second language.” Two faculty in Beirut struggle to facilitate an authorial research voice in English for students whose heritage languages are French and Arabic, while two colleagues in Qatar worry their students might not relate to the topics and perspectives in their assigned American textbooks. Long-term faculty in Cairo fear possible disenfranchisement when their department adopts a more U.S.-based curricular approach. Secondary school teachers in Bahrain who are obliged to employ Communicative Language Teaching to support student transition to western-style universities protest that the model’s objectives are not shared by students, their parents, or society at large. In Turkey, faculty express concern that micro- and macro-level institutional and state language policies seem to shortchange instruction in academic writing both in English and in Turkish. Kurdish faculty in Iraq, involved by their administration in “yet another” partnership with an international university contest the relevance of western-based approaches, particularly student-centered strategies, given Kurdish institutional and cultural constraints.

These scenarios, detailed in the chapters of this collection, *Emerging Writing Research from the Middle East-North Africa Region*, represent some of the many situated and strategic writing initiatives at postsecondary institutions in the area we refer to as the MENA region. These few examples, along with the multifarious negotiations described in the following 12 chapters, serve to

highlight how American “expertise” in writing studies does not always translate smoothly with(in) local institutional and community cultures of writing in the Middle East. Although events in the MENA region dominate world news, it is an area little understood by the rest of the world—certainly historically, politically, and culturally, but also within the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition. As Composition Studies and related disciplines make a “global turn” (Donahue, 2009; Hesford, 2006; Muchiri, Mulamba, Myers, & Ndoloi, 1995), perspectives from the MENA region have only very recently been included in the discussion (Arnold, 2014; Golson & Holdijk, 2012; Ronesi, 2011, 2012; Zenger, Mullin, & Haviland, 2014).

Consequently, there is an increasing need for research into post-secondary writing practices and pedagogy in the MENA region. This is particularly so as the MENA region has been the site of longstanding and revered institutions of American-style liberal arts institutions of higher education—in particular, the American University of Beirut in Lebanon (founded in 1866) and American University of Cairo in Egypt (founded in 1919)—as well as, in the last two decades, the location of a steadily growing number of English-medium universities and international branch campuses (IBCs), particularly in the Arabian (or Persian) Gulf States. Given the all too frequent perception of the MENA region as ideologically, politically, and culturally opposed to “the West,” the curricular trajectory of these institutions, “in all [their] contradictory complexity” (Hall, 2014, p. 6) offers an important opportunity for examining the interactions between various cultures, different educational systems, and diverse faculty and students. Indeed, given prevailing assumptions about the East-West polemic, many of our readers may well wonder whether, and how, a mutually agreeable balance among stakeholders could ever be struck in these institutions.

The scholarship in this collection brings these exceptional collaborations and explorations to light and attests to the many strategic and thoughtful practices of teaching and learning writing that are taking place, as well as the varied challenges faced by writing faculty and administrators in the region. This scholarship needs to be shared globally, as it will shape how writing centers, writing programs, and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiatives, in the region and outside of it, will respond to the increasing globalization of higher education, as well as to international discussions about World Englishes and other language varieties, and translingual approaches to writing and writing pedagogy. Further, insights from MENA writing studies have the potential to help composition and language scholars in North American and Europe expand their theorizing and practice in more globally informed directions.

Situating Writing Studies in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) Region

To fully appreciate the chapters in this volume, it is important for readers to have some understanding about the MENA region. The World Bank designates the following countries as comprising the MENA region:

Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen (World Bank, 2013)

However, by all accounts, the area understood as MENA has not been officially standardized. Citing religious and historical commonalities, Alan Weber (2010) describes MENA as “delineating regions where Islam is the dominant religion and which encompasses nations and peoples who were formerly part of an Islamic empire or Caliphate” (p. 16.2)—a definition which includes Turkey in the MENA region, as we did in this volume.

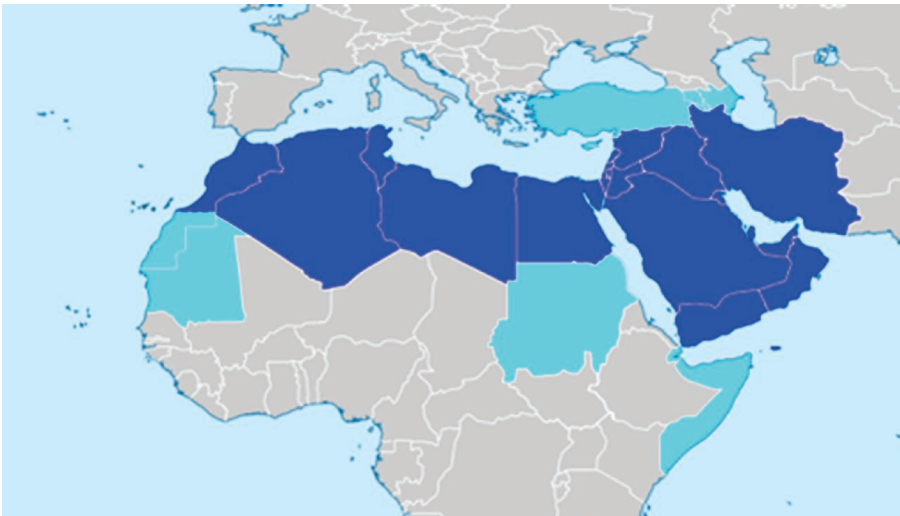


Figure 1. MENA (2011). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Even under this umbrella definition, the MENA region is one of extreme diversity. Economic disparity characterizes this region of 300 million, with some of the wealthiest countries in the world, such as the oil-rich Gulf States of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, and resource-scarce countries such as Egypt and Yemen (World Bank, 2013). While Islam and Arabic are uniting features of most of the MENA countries, there

is religious and linguistic plurality, and Arabic dialects very widely, as do traces of the linguistic and cultural practices of former British and French colonizers. The *lingua francas* of English and French today figure largely in the identity of many countries, the effects of colonization and globalization. MENA residents often negotiate a number of languages and dialects, and incorporate both local and global approaches and practices in their lives—a flexibility and accommodation people from predominantly monolingual contexts would find unfamiliar and challenging. As such, we understand the MENA region as a truly globalized one, in which historical and political realities have resulted in hybridity where different traditions, ideologies, rhetorics, and practices are navigated by its peoples—those whom Edward Said (1993) has referred to as “the political figures between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages” (p. 332). Surpassing the notion of hybridity, MENA becomes a site of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007), where increased flows of peoples, cultures and languages intersect and interact, aided by advances in technologies and communication systems, in ways yet to be fully explored or understood.

As such, negotiating within that complex site “in between” is the over-arching theme of this volume, as scholars investigate institutional policies and practices, writing pedagogies, and actual writing practices in MENA-based first-year writing (FYW), WAC/WID, and other writing programs in a variety of postsecondary institutions. While these models are well known to U.S.-educated writing scholars and professors, the intricate “in-betweenness” these models occupy in a MENA context requires an abandonment of prior assumptions and are, perhaps, best viewed as constant negotiations. And, indeed, understood as such, these contexts offer rich opportunity for growth, knowledge, and innovation; emergent writing scholarship from these sites can only serve to open up new ways of assessing our pedagogies and practices.

Positioning Ourselves

Without a doubt, some of our readers will have questions about our positioning as editors, as well as the voices included (and not included) in this collection. From the beginning, we were well aware of our positions as relative “outsiders” in the MENA region—we are three Caucasian, American-born, and American-educated women who do not speak Arabic fluently. Simply put, we do not, and cannot, represent the vast majority of those who teach writing in higher education across the region. At the same time, we collectively have more than 28 years of experience living and working in the region. When we sent out the call for chapter proposals (CFP), we were all situated in the

region—Arnold at the American University of Beirut as an assistant professor of English and writing program administrator (WPA); Ronesi at the American University of Sharjah as an assistant professor in the Department of Writing Studies; and Nebel at Georgetown University Qatar as an instructor of first year writing, Assistant Dean and Director of Academic Services. Arnold has an educational background in rhetoric and composition, Ronesi in TESOL and curriculum and instruction, and Nebel in applied linguistics.

We were each invested in pursuing the collection for a variety of reasons. Generally speaking, we wanted to do our part to overcome the dearth of published writing research in the MENA region by collecting diverse perspectives that could shed light on the state of writing research in the region. In addition, we wanted to facilitate a conversation across the region about how different writing faculty have responded to the challenges and opportunities of their institution's writing programs and how they are researching and theorizing writing practices in MENA. Much of Arnold's interest in developing the collection emerges out of her work as a WPA at AUB, where she collaborated with colleagues and students to develop a culture of writing through the creation of a permanent WPA faculty position, professional development activities, seminars, an annual celebration of student writing, and building a network of writing teachers across Lebanon. Ronesi's involvement in the collection is grounded in her experience with WAC/WID in Morocco and in the UAE, particularly with undergraduate writing initiatives such as writing centers and writing fellows programs, and a research focus on curricular adaptation and student negotiation and positionality. Nebel's interest in the project arises from her experience teaching first-year writing in the US, Europe, and the Middle East, and her research as an applied linguist in the analysis of complexity in writing development, as well as from her work establishing and directing a writing center and writing program in Qatar. Together, we were intrigued by the complexities and challenges of our contexts, and the potential of bringing together multidisciplinary insights on the research and practice of writing studies in MENA.

In spite of our positioning at three different institutions in three countries, one of the primary challenges of editing this collection occurred as we disseminated the CFP and solicited diverse perspectives in response. Notably, we found very few avenues for reaching out to and connecting with writing scholars and practitioners in the region; apart from international lists originating in North America or Europe, there is only the Middle East North Africa Writing Center Association (MENAWCA) and TESOL Arabia which aim to support regional connection and collaboration. There is yet no professional infrastructure specifically for MENA writing faculty. Consequently, our

initial CFP was disseminated via various academic listserves in the MENA region, in Europe, and in the US, as well as through personal contacts. In response, we received 32 proposals representing only nine out of the 22 MENA countries noted in the previous section (for our purposes, we have included Turkey as a part of the region). After a year and a half of the review process—which included careful vetting of the proposals and multiple revisions of the chapters submitted following editorial and peer review—our collection represents voices from only seven countries (Lebanon, Turkey, UAE, Qatar, Egypt, Iraq, and Bahrain). What’s more, many of the authors included in this collection are like us—not native to the region, its language, or culture, but with on-the-ground experience conducting research and building programs at local institutions.

We were not at ease with these limitations. During the process of reviewing proposals and chapter submissions and providing revision suggestions for authors, we struggled with recurring concerns that point to larger problems inherent to transnational work. As we distributed the CFP, we asked ourselves whose voices we were (not) hearing in the proposals submitted, and how we might locate and promote voices representative of the diversity of the MENA region. We wondered how professional situations and (lack of) resources or support may have prevented potential contributors from submitting a proposal. And as we vetted proposals and, eventually, chapter submissions, we often found ourselves uncomfortable with our role in determining who and what belongs in a collection such as this, when we were positioned as relative outsiders, culturally, linguistically, and educationally. By way of example, in a few instances, we had to make decisions about the viability of chapters whose research was not guided by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or an institutional policy for research ethics. While seeking IRB approval is a standard part of such scholarship in the US and elsewhere, educational institutions in other countries often have quite different policies whose parameters may not be commensurate with U.S.-based IRBs, or, as in the case at some MENA institutions, no instituted provisions for ensuring ethical research practices. We wondered again and again how to negotiate between our cultural ideals of best practice in scholarship and standards and the practical realities of MENA-based research.

Additionally, international branch campuses (IBCs) of U.S. universities, which often recruit faculty from the US and abroad, are flourishing in the MENA region. And as transnational partnerships between foreign and Arab institutions and faculty are created to develop programs and curriculum, as well as to engage students, international faculty are exposed to the region through research collaboratives and in consultant capacities. As a result,

U.S.-oriented faculty may have been better positioned than their MENA counterparts to contribute to our volume.

Also, our own institutional positioning and educational backgrounds, in combination with our intention to publish the collection through a U.S.-based publisher, likely suggested to potential contributors that research based at English-medium, American-style universities would be the most appropriate for our volume. And finally, because of our own linguistic limitations, we accepted chapters only written in English—this decision may have discouraged some potential contributors from submitting proposals, especially those who do not work at English-medium institutions in the region.

We could not escape these factors, nor could we escape our conviction that this volume was needed, in spite of its (and our) limitations. We appreciate the reflective and critical eye that our authors have brought to bear on the complicated realities of this region. We recognize the many perspectives that remain un(der)represented in the present volume, and we hope this collection will be understood by our readers as a first glimpse, rather than a comprehensive representation, of writing research in the MENA region. Ultimately, we are proud of the strength of the final collection and for the perspectives that each contribution provides about the state of writing research for our readers in and outside of the region.

Locating MENA Writing Scholarship

At the 2012 Middle East-North Africa Writing Centers Alliance (MENAWCA) conference in Doha, Qatar, Terry Myers Zawacki delivered a keynote speech in which she urged attendees to pursue research about writing practices and pedagogies in the region. Published the same year, Thaiss, Bräuer, Carlino, Ganobcsik-Williams, & Sinha's (2012) volume, *Writing Programs Worldwide: Profiles of Academic Writing in Many Places*, reports on writing programs at three MENA-based institutions: American University of Cairo in Egypt (Golson & Holdijk, 2012), American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates (Ronesi, 2012), and Sabanci University in Turkey (Tokay, 2012). And recent studies by a number of MENA-based scholars—Gülşen (2012) on Turkish higher education, Rajakumar (2012) on Qatari female Facebook practices, and Zenger (2012) on Lebanese college students' use of digital media—highlight literacy practices in the region.

These publications and presentations signify growing interest in MENA-based writing scholarship. This increased activity demonstrates that the culturally and linguistically rich MENA contexts are emerging in English language scholarship as an exciting site for writing studies. Recent book chap-

ters and conference presentations, as well as the responses to our own call for proposals, highlight the complex negotiations of identity, language, culture, institutions, and pedagogies within the MENA region and indicate the potential of making significant contributions to emerging bodies of scholarship.

The issues raised in recent MENA-based presentations and chapters intersect with themes that the chapters in this volume address. One strand of ongoing research examines the politics of language and its effect on institutions and practices (see Hayes & Mansour; Nebel; Ronesi; and Uysal, this volume). At the 2014 Writing Research across Borders (WRAB) conference, for example, a number of presentations by Algerian scholars highlighted the country's pluriliteracy and its manifestation in the educational system: Benali (2014) addressed the writing styles of Algerian student learners in French; Bounouara & Legros (2014) investigated whether student planning in Arabic and French produced a better persuasive essay in French; and Graoui & Chelli examined English as a foreign-language curriculum modification at Algerian high schools (Chelli & Graoui, 2014; Graoui & Chelli, 2014). Additionally, a chapter included in *International Advances in Writing Research: Cultures, Places, Measures*, edited by Bazerman, Dean, Early, Lunsford, Null, Roger, & Stansell (2012), focuses on the political implications of Iranian academics writing in English (Riazi, 2012).

Along similar lines, scholars have begun to theorize the teaching of academic writing in linguistically diverse contexts, such as those found in the MENA region (see Hodges & Kent; Nebel; and Ronesi, this volume). Cox and Zawacki's (2011) special issue in *Across the Disciplines* on "WAC and Second Language Writing: Cross-field Research, Theory, and Program Development," and Zawacki & Cox's (2014) multi-authored volume, *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research Toward Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices*, have made tremendous strides towards a foundation of research on L2 writers in U.S. university classrooms. Two of those studies—Ronesi (2011) and Zenger, Mullin, & Haviland (2014)—consider L2 writers based at universities in the MENA region.

Another line of research found not only in this collection but also in various conference presentations and book chapters is related to the challenges and opportunities of conducting transnational partnerships and exchanges in the MENA region (see Annous, Nicolas, & Townsend; Arnold, DeGenaro, Iskandarani, Khoury, Sinno, & Willard-Traub; and Theado, Johnson, Highly, & Omar, this volume). At the 2014 WRAB conference, for example, Karatsolis from Carnegie Mellon-Qatar joined scholars from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Australian Council for Education in a panel discussion of the use of computers in writing assessment research (Perelman,

McCurry, Karatsolis, & Lane, 2014). Also at WRAB, Gitsaki and Robby represented the Higher College of Technology in the United Arab Emirates at a round-table discussion focused on the intersection of writing, language, and new media across educational contexts (Hicks et al., 2014).

Additionally, a number of researchers have pursued questions related to the viability of importing western pedagogical, curricular, and programmatic models in the MENA region (see Annous, Nicolas, & Townsend; Austin; Hayes & Mansour; Hodges & Kent; Jarkas & Fakhreddine; Miller & Pessoa; and Rudd & Telfici, this volume). At the 2014 WRAB conference, colleagues from Texas A&M-Qatar provided insights on interpreting western-style honor codes in light of Middle Eastern values and practices to an interdisciplinary and international discussion on ethos in writing and writing instruction (Johnson et al., 2014). At the same conference, along with American and Australian colleagues, Iskenderoglu-Onel & Ronesi highlighted WAC-WID challenges from their respective English-medium universities in Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (Tarabochia, Ronesi, Iskenderoglu-Onel, & Chanock, 2014).

These chapters and presentations reveal a need to explore writing pedagogies, programs, and practices in the region, a need this collection addresses while also raising additional questions that point the way to further research. For example, chapters in this collection raise issues that resonate, explicitly and implicitly, with work in applied linguistics and translingual theories of writing (see Hayes & Mansour; Nebel; Ronesi; and Uysal, this volume). Scholars such as Blommaert & Rampton (2012), in their ethnographic studies of linguistic superdiversity, and Blommaert (2010), who explores the sociolinguistics of globalization, consider the linguistic consequences and realizations of today's unprecedented levels of diversity, which opens new frontiers for the study of writing in sites like MENA. Likewise, Yildiz's (2012) work on the "post-monolingual condition" takes up an interdisciplinary lens through which to view and interrogate the ideologies of mother tongue and bilingualism and to examine the tensions among the languages multilingual writers claim. This scholarship offers new directions for theorizing academic writing from diverse and evolving sites such as the MENA region.

Given these growing areas of research and the plethora of English-medium universities and IBCs—structured similarly, or connected directly, to universities in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and others—in the MENA region, a volume dedicated to writing pedagogies and practices in this context was imperative. Moreover, the research highlighted above, particularly from the 2014 WRAB conference, suggests that scholars in the region are poised to study and theorize their context. As such, we anticipate that this collection will be

the first of many to provide new lenses through which we can understand and learn from the diverse writing practices and pedagogies in the region and that it will spark interest in transnational collaborations.

Volume Overview

Collectively, the chapters included in this volume consider questions and themes that are familiar to those of us who teach, conduct research, and live in the MENA region. For example: How can we build a culture of writing at MENA institutions when many students and the regional population more generally do not recognize or value the rhetorical nature of writing? Through what methods might we persuade faculty across disciplines to take responsibility for ongoing writing practice and pedagogy in their classrooms? How should teachers, researchers, and administrators in the region respond to western writing studies scholarship and writing curriculum, such as textbooks and program design? What can we learn by examining how and why MENA-based writing faculty incorporate, extend, or ignore western scholarship and curriculum? How can teachers, researchers, and administrators make use of and identify potential resources for curriculum and program development in their immediate surroundings and with their own students in mind? How can we make use of existing ties across institutional, national, linguistic, and cultural borders to promote effective teaching and learning?

In view of these questions and considerations, we are eager to offer this volume to our local, regional, and international colleagues as a resource and a starting point. This collection has been divided into four sections, each containing three chapters. These chapters overlap in their exploration of four major themes: complicating prevalent assumptions in writing studies scholarship; questioning the viability and value of importing western programmatic and pedagogical models into the MENA region; negotiating national, cultural, institutional, and disciplinary borders while implementing change; and creating innovative spaces for student learning.

Section I: Complicating Assumptions

The three chapters included in this section highlight the ways in which writing programs, curriculum, and theories must evolve in response to the realities of globalization and linguistic diversity. Together, these chapters, representing Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey, complicate long-held assumptions in writing studies and applied linguistics as they demonstrate how the interaction of the global and the local demand critical responses by scholars, teachers, and ad-

ministrators. These chapters also illustrate the challenges faced by institutions and educators as they negotiate the politics of language policy.

In "Linguistic Superdiversity and English-medium Higher Education in Qatar," Anne Nebel of Georgetown University Qatar introduces the volume with a theoretical overview of the complicated socio-linguistic landscape of the MENA region. Nebel begins with the changing global landscape of learning and scholarship in Qatar which has resulted from large-scale shifts in migration patterns and dramatically increased connectivity, creating a condition of extreme diversity. Against this background of "linguistic superdiversity," a concept developed by Jan Blommaert, Nebel reexamines vexed concepts and categories from writing studies, such as native speaker and second language learner, adopting a sociolinguistic framework which she argues can help scholars better understand and theorize writing studies in Qatar, the MENA region, and elsewhere in the world today. Challenging the monolingual ideology that still circumscribes writing scholarship and practice, she uses the example of Qatar to explore a post-monolingual paradigm for reimagining writing studies in a polycentric and transnational world.

The second chapter in this section, "Global Spread of English in Academia and its Effects on Writing Instruction in Turkish Universities," offers both an historical analysis of the state-level policies governing the role of English in tertiary education in Turkey and a contemporary exploration of how these macro strategies have impacted national scholarly outcomes and language instruction at two universities in Ankara. Author Hacer Hande Uysal, from Gazi University, provides close examination of the consequences of an imported monolingual ideology as realized in scholarly production over time, the positioning of Turkish versus English in the university curriculum, instructional methods, and ultimate language attainment. Uysal argues for greater critical awareness of Anglo-centric discourses and pedagogies and their hegemonies in order to preserve the value and place of the Turkish language in Turkish higher education and global scholarship. Uysal's chapter offers important insights on the political dimensions of writing at one MENA location, which has relevance to many others.

The final chapter in this section recounts the revision of a writing minor at the American University of Cairo (AUC) in an exploration of the internal and external influences that shaped its realization. In "Expanding Transnational Frames into Composition Studies: Revising the Rhetoric and Writing Minor at the American University of Cairo," James Austin of Fort Hays State University in the US (and formerly with AUC) investigates the development of a program that both drew from U.S.-based models and arose organically from local needs and expertise. Emphasizing the distinction between an exported

approach as imposed and hegemonic and an imported approach which underscores the choices and agency of the local actors, the author urges the field to move beyond the entrenched binary thinking of local versus western to explore richer and more nuanced relationships and interactions with MENA sites of writing scholarship and practice. Further, Austin calls for the field to make use of more expansive and contextually sensitive frames from literacy studies in attempting to understand and engage new global educational environments. Austin's description of the process of curriculum revision at AUC provides an apt transition into the volume's second thematic section, which questions how western pedagogical and programmatic models can or should (not) be imported into MENA-region institutions of higher education.

Section II: Considering the Importation of Western Models

In this section, the three chapters consider the complexities of importing western pedagogical, curricular, and programmatic models in the MENA region. Speaking from their positions in Lebanon, Qatar, and Bahrain, the authors of these chapters suggest that student and faculty identity, as well as their beliefs about writing, must be considered when integrating western models of writing pedagogy or curriculum into MENA-based educational institutions. These contributions underscore the need for sensitivity to socio-cultural realities when considering western models for MENA classrooms and programs, particularly as to how these models may discount the perceptions and practices about writing that local teachers, students, and the community hold. Ultimately, these chapters emphasize the value of critical reflection and engagement as teachers and administrators consider adopting western models across national, linguistic, and cultural borders.

The first chapter in this section, "Territorial Borders and the Teaching of Writing in English: Lessons from English at the University of Balamand," highlights the complexity of writing development at English-medium universities where the teaching of writing is not valued or sustained across disciplines. Two faculty members at the University of Balamand in Lebanon, Samer Annous and Maureen O'Day Nicolas, and one WAC scholar based in the US, Martha Townsend, analyze data from a review of the Faculty of Business' syllabi, interviews with faculty and students in the Faculty of Business and the Cultural Studies program, and Townsend's observations during her visit. They find that faculty and students, who often struggle with English in the multilingual context of Lebanon, share a sense of "territorial borders," which works against a productive transfer of writing knowledge or a sense of responsibility for writing pedagogy outside of the English department.

Just as Arnold, DeGenaro, Iskandarani, Khoury, Sinno, and Willard-Traub's and Kendall Theado, Highly, Johnson, and Omar's chapters in later sections present a variety of challenges related to transnational exchange, Annous, Nicolas, and Townsend argue that the context of English-medium universities in multilingual contexts pose particular obstacles to the successful implementation of writing across the curriculum.

In the second chapter of this section, Mysti Rudd and Michael Telfaci, based at Texas A&M-Qatar, explore the viability of American-authored textbooks and the development of writing curriculum at IBCs of American universities in their chapter, "An Arabian Gulf: First-Year Composition Textbooks at an International Branch Campus in Qatar." Noting the linguistic, cultural, and national diversity of the student body at their home institution and other IBCs in comparison to their U.S. counterparts, Rudd and Telfaci draw on their own experiences and observations of teaching first-year composition at Texas A&M-Qatar, as well as surveys of students, to study the appropriateness of two textbooks commonly used in the US to teach composition—*They Say/I Say* (Graff, Birkenstein, & Durst, 2012) and *Writing about Writing* (Wardle & Downs, 2011)—for their own IBC's first-year writing classes. While Rudd and Telfaci see both benefits and drawbacks for the incorporation of either textbook, they leave readers with a set of questions and suggested practices that will prove valuable for writing faculty using any American-authored textbook at IBCs or other institutions of higher education with similar demographics.

In the third chapter of this section, "Great Expectations or Great Outcomes? Exploring the Context of English Language Policy Transfer in Bahrain," authors Aneta Hayes of Keele University and Nasser Mansour from Exeter University, both in the UK, investigate how societal factors have impacted the perceived viability and effectiveness of a western curricular and pedagogical model (Communicative Language Teaching) in Bahrain's secondary schools. The authors highlight the challenges perceived by teachers of negative student and society views of the value and practice of English language pedagogy and the obstacles these present to classroom learning and preparation for post-secondary success. Reporting on their qualitative study of teacher perceptions, Hayes and Mansour contribute to the debate on the effectiveness of imported pedagogies and ideologies in light of traditional societal views of education, and the associated methods of teaching and learning, in Bahrain. They argue that the perceptions of teachers reflect a juxtaposition common to many MENA countries, in that students' sociocultural context competes with general economic developments in the country. This juxtaposition, Hayes and Mansour contend, results in discordant read-

ings—by teachers, students, and the local community—of the importance of curricular reforms.

Section III: Striving for Balance across Borders

The three chapters that comprise this section of the volume examine important social, cultural and political dimensions of negotiating institutional, disciplinary, national, and cultural borders, particularly when implementing curricular, pedagogical, or programmatic change. With a focus on universities in Qatar and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, these chapters demonstrate that global-local negotiations and exchanges aren't always smooth or equal. These chapters present readers with the innovative responses to teaching, curriculum, and program design that emerged in the midst of change, and they offer openness and critical reflection as well as the willingness to negotiate, as stances that others in similarly complex situations might take.

The value, and difficulty, of faculty collaboration across borders is described in the opening chapter of this section, Connie Kendall Theado, Holly Johnson, Thomas Highley, and Saman Hussein Omar's "Rewriting Resistance: Negotiating Pedagogical and Curricular Change in a US/Kurdish Transnational Partnership." The four authors of this chapter report on the results of a government-sponsored University Linkages Partnership between the University of Cincinnati (UC) and Salahaddin University-Hawler (SUH), in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. One of the goals of the partnership was to facilitate an exchange among faculty members at both universities to help shape the revision of the SUH English department's curriculum through monthly online discussions and in-person workshops at both universities. The contributors consider how initial moments of "passive resistance" to these exchanges by the SUH faculty—including a lack of participation on the part of SUH faculty and a pointed critique of the readings chosen by the UC team by the department chair—led to important reconsiderations of the partnership's structure, a more nuanced understanding of differing educational realities and expectations, and a deeper appreciation for the assumptions at play in any cross-cultural work.

In the section's second chapter, "Integrating Writing Assignments at an American Branch Campus in Qatar: Challenges, Adaptations, and Recommendations, authors Ryan Miller from Kent State University and Silvia Pessoa from Carnegie Mellon University (Qatar) consider the recent proliferation of IBCs worldwide—particularly in the MENA region—and provide a rigorous review of the research. Miller and Pessoa problematize the IBCs' role vis-à-vis the host country, the main institution, and the adaptation of

curricula and instruction to accommodate the requirements of both. Culling data from a broader four-year longitudinal study of academic literacy development at an American IBC in Qatar (see Pessoa, Miller, & Kaufer, 2014), Miller and Pessoa analyze interviews from 65 IBC faculty across the curriculum who had previously taught at the U.S. main campus or at other American universities. This analysis culminates in wide-ranging recommendations for designing writing instruction for IBCs.

The last chapter in this section, "Hybrid Writing Positions within WAC/WID Initiatives: Connecting Faculty Writing Expectations and MENA Cultures," makes a second compelling argument for considering how WID or WAC programs can be localized or hybridized within the MENA region. Like Miller and Pessoa, Amy Hodges and Brenda Kent draw on interviews from faculty at an IBC—their colleagues at Texas A&M University at Qatar—to determine challenges they faced in the writing component of their courses. Their analysis of 10 multilingual engineering faculty who teach writing-intensive courses determined that, while acknowledging the importance of writing in their discipline, the faculty did not feel it part of their responsibility to instruct students in the discourse of their discipline. That perspective, coupled with the IBC students' primary and secondary experience with more teacher-centered learning environments, led Hodges and Kent to argue for hybrid writing consultants—staff positions with the combined roles of tutor, teacher, and writing fellow—as a locally relevant way to communicate cross-cultural differences in writing expectations between faculty and students.

Section IV: Creating Student Spaces

In this final section, the three chapters feature qualitative research studies that explore the culturally sensitive approaches to the teaching and learning of writing at English-medium, American campuses in Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates. The American University of Beirut (AUB) and the American University of Sharjah (AUS) are campuses that are linguistically rich and superdiverse (see Nebel) and characterized by students with multiple and translingual—particularly oral—competencies. Highlighting faculty and student responses to the challenge of reconciling cultural, linguistic, educational, and institutional realities with American-style academic writing, these chapters showcase innovations and adaptations that intend to prepare students for writing both in their coursework and in the international arena. Notably, these campus-based responses reflect deep concerns about preparing students to enter transnational discourse communities and finding ways to create space in which students can organically engage in the learning of writing.

In "Literacy Narratives across Borders: Beirut and Dearborn as 21st-Century Transnational Spaces," writing faculty at the American University of Beirut and the University of Michigan-Dearborn describe a transnational collaboration in which first-year writing students interviewed their overseas peers about their literacy practices. Lisa Arnold, William DeGenaro, Rima Iskandarani, Malakeh Khoury, Zane Sinno, and Margaret Willard-Traub found that in the process of interviewing and writing literacy profiles of their peers, students became more aware of their locatedness—their rhetorical positioning in the world and in relation to others. And in the process, students entered and identified themselves within a transnational discourse community. While the authors noted a number of practical and intellectual limits of the project—including the logistics of the interview process across large time differences as well as the short duration of the assignment, which may have prevented students from arriving at complex understandings of their peers' and their own literacy practices—they argue that such transnational exchanges are valuable for their potential not only to motivate students, but also to inspire curricular and institutional change.

The section's next chapter, "The Dance of Voices: A Study on Academic Writing at AUB," focuses more specifically on a particular challenge in academic writing faced by student writers in the MENA region—that of authorial voice. Najla Jarkas and Juheinna Fakhreddine, based at the American University of Beirut, analyze the academic, personal, and reflective writing of 44 students in order to test their hypothesis that first-year composition students benefit from explicit instruction in developing their authorial voice. Jarkas and Fakhreddine suggest that although L2/3 students coming from the MENA region gradually learn to incorporate external voices into their texts through explicit instruction, they struggle with maintaining and interweaving an authorial voice in relation to other voices in argumentative writing.

The volume's final chapter ends on a celebratory note, portraying student learning through extra-curricular engagement. In "Students Running the Show: Performance Poetry Night," Lynne Ronesi at the American University of Sharjah chronicles how participating students, interviewed over the course of three semesters, situate a performance poetry night—an event known to most of them only through western-origin digital media—to accommodate their interest in engaging in multivocalic expression and community-building. Drawing from New Literacies research, Ronesi likens the development of the poetry event to the creation of an "affinity space" (Gee, 2004, 2005) where student diversity and creativity in writing can be appreciated even as the AUS writing curriculum focuses exclusively on academic English. Ronesi underscores the need for writing faculty to investigate student participation

in out-of-classroom literacy practices to shed insight on novel and contextually appropriate approaches for supporting literacy development.

Here and Beyond

Our aspirations in editing this volume are several and can be outlined as follows: First, we want to make MENA-based writing research available to those who conduct research, teach, or administer writing programs in higher education within the region, so as to foster intra-regional dialogue and exchange about writing. Currently, there is a dearth of knowledge or discussion about how writing in English is taught and learned at the university level in the region, by whom, and with what approach(es). Additionally, we have very little knowledge about how writing programs have been theorized or evolved, or where these programs fit into different institutional structures throughout the region. This volume provides a starting point from which our current understandings and knowledge can be shared and built upon.

Second, this volume will foster international dialogue and exchange about writing by making MENA-based English-language writing research available to scholars outside the region. Scholarship in writing studies has, thus far, generally elided the MENA region, and the international writing community is largely unfamiliar with the region, its students, teachers, and scholars, and/or the unique linguistic, cultural, and political characteristics of the region that inform regional teaching and administrative practices. At the same time, the number of English-medium institutions of higher education in the region has grown considerably over the last two decades, and many of these institutions purposefully recruit western-trained faculty to teach within and administer their writing programs. The discipline must address the unique challenges and possibilities inherent to teaching and conducting research in the region, as long as the cross-national and cross-cultural exchange of scholars and practitioners continues.

While many writing scholars may not be cognizant of the MENA region specifically, a growing number have a vested interest in fostering and maintaining a well-grounded international perspective in line with best practices of teaching, research, and administration in writing studies. This is particularly true of practitioners, scholars, and administrators who work with international and multilingual MENA students outside of the MENA region. This collection makes MENA-based writing research available to those writing studies scholars who do not live or work in the region but who work with students or scholars from the region. These audiences will benefit from this volume in that it provides much-needed background knowledge about the

diverse educational opportunities and experiences that individuals coming from this region may have had.

Finally, this volume provides a starting point from which teachers, administrators, and scholars can articulate gaps in knowledge about writing practices and pedagogy in the MENA region—a region rich in cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity with a long tradition of writing and rhetorical practice. We hope readers will feel driven to explore further the variety of questions and considerations that have emerged from this work, and, to that end, we suggest the following future avenues of inquiry, which range from practical to theoretical and cross the four section themes. To start: Our experience working on this volume suggests that MENA scholars would benefit from more networks and venues to inspire and consolidate research. What immediate steps can we take to respond to this need? And, how can MENA practitioners be encouraged and supported to engage in research and theorizing in their contexts? From a praxis perspective, this volume has revealed a number of pedagogical challenges and responses emerging from IBCs and from western-style standalone universities. For the IBCs, challenges and responses emerge as they adapt an already established and required curriculum to local needs. And for the latter, comprised of both U.S.-accredited universities and universities modeled on western curriculum, challenges and responses evolve as a result of practitioners and administrators having more latitude in developing “grassroots,” locally-driven pedagogical approaches. Developing a research framework for both IBCs and standalone institutions that is grounded in this understanding would prove fruitful.

More considerations and questions emerge from the linguistic complexity highlighted in several of the chapters: How can scholars in plurilingual MENA contexts extend the work in applied linguistics and translingual theories of writing, particularly in developing language that can complicate vexed concepts such as “native speaker” or “second language learner.” How can scholars accurately reflect the positionalities of individuals who negotiate life using more than one language? And just as pertinently, how do practitioners both honor and acknowledge student pluriliteracy and the translingual context, yet also attend to the needs of students at English-medium MENA institutions, who, by rights, should graduate with a level of English proficiency that is commensurate with that of their peers at western-style institutions? While we do not conflate a translingual approach with reduced rigor in writing instruction and assessment, from our perspective “on the ground,” we can easily understand how the notion of theorizing translingualism into the curriculum might be perceived as a misguided “foreign luxury” at MENA institutions, which justifiably seek to bring their students to a level of proficien-

cy deemed adequate for university academic writing and a globally-oriented career (see for example Arnold, 2016). MENA scholars must consider the weight of English in a context where it cannot be taken for granted. Further, scholars must take pains to ensure that moves toward a translingual approach indeed support plurilingualism and promote linguistic proficiency and do not inadvertently result in a weakening of the high standards to which we need to hold our MENA students accountable. Further theorization of these questions and considerations is paramount.

As these questions suggest, the complex contemporary realities and socio-political histories of this region are fundamental to what we do as writing practitioners, and this collection speaks to how much more we have to learn. As such, this volume thus points toward the need for continued research and the value that accumulated data, representative of other positionalities and perspectives, will give us over time. Indeed, with more volumes such as this one, we can arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of writing research, administration, and pedagogy in the region. What's more, and perhaps just as importantly, this volume—and hopefully others like it—will give scholars and teachers based outside of the region a better understanding of the diversity of experience, language, and culture that is often collapsed under the “Middle East-North Africa” umbrella.

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