

INTRODUCTION

TOWARD A SCHEMA OF INDEPENDENT WRITING PROGRAMS

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Independence. In American society in particular, the very word invokes notions of revolution, of severing bonds with oppressors. With this come the concepts of self-reliance, progress, and social betterment. It is noteworthy that Maxine Hairston's work in the 1980s, particularly her 1985 article in *College Composition and Communication*, "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," is thick with the language of revolution. Likewise, in her canonical 1985 address at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, "Breaking our Bonds and Reaffirming Our Connections," considered by many in our profession to be the declaration of independence for Writing Studies, she invokes yet more language of rebellion by proposing the separation of writing specialists from the English department. More recently, Barry Maid has argued that Writing Studies should be considered an applied discipline that can comfortably exist outside of the humanities (2006, p. 99) and that the missions of professional colleges are more closely aligned to Writing Studies than the liberal arts (2002b, p. 455).

The appearance of independent writing programs and departments at this moment in history may be a product of the continuing evolution of the professional university. In *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900–1985*, James Berlin traces the origin of the split between literature and writing to the birth of the American professional university in the nineteenth century. If nothing else, this work convinces us that the origins of what is variously characterized as the lit/comp split or disagreements over current-traditional and social-epistemic rhetorical models are much more complex than a simple binary opposition can describe and are deeply rooted in our institutional models and histories. As Scholes observed, the divide is largely cultural, if not elitist, in nature when he writes that literary scholars honor "literature as good or important and dismiss non-literary texts as beneath [their] notice" and as an extension of a "culture that privileges the consuming class over the pro-

ducing class” (1985, p. 5). As a discipline that serves the “producing class,” i.e., workers, Writing Studies can sometimes be viewed by our English colleagues as a mere skill of little cultural value. All the same, Berlin remarks that “[a]t some historical moments . . . rhetoric is the larger category, including poetic as one of its subdivisions” (2003, p. 23). This a reference to the dominance of rhetoric in the Classical-model university before the rise of English departments within the American “professional” college at the end of the nineteenth century. It is possible that we may be experiencing another one of these historical moments as rhetoric assumes a broader place in the university by addressing the writing needs of all disciplines. Whether this emancipation has led us to a “ruined” (aka “corporate”) university, as Bill Readings (1997) might suggest, remains an open question.

What is less questionable is that by the turn of the century we had entered a new era of scholarship for the field of Writing Studies and the subfield of independent writing program studies. Though many of us trace the origins of the Independent Writing Programs (IWP) movement to Hairston’s CCCC address cited above, *A Field of Dreams: Independent Writing Programs and the Future of Composition Studies* (2002) was the first collection dedicated exclusively to IWP scholarship. Noting that “that any ‘divorce’ requires a certain attentiveness, rhetorical savvy, counseling, and models for ‘how to’ avoid simply shacking up with another ‘oppressor’” (Crow & O’Neill, 2002, p. 3), in the introduction two of the editors pondered the future of IWPs:

An independent writing department moves away from literature traditions and then aligns itself with communications, which calls forth another set of traditions; or, an independent writing program announces itself and evokes the traditions of programs and disciplines in formation, such as women’s studies programs. If astute, we learn from the experiences of others as we work to form new structures, new traditions, and new identities; but often, having the time and distance necessary for such reflection and research eludes us as we are caught up in immediate events, daily obligations. (Crow & O’Neill, 2002, p. 4)

Fourteen years after the publication of *A Field of Dreams*, we put out a call for chapters for a collection that we hoped would demonstrate a growing maturity in the field of independent writing programs and departments, which have not only been increasing in number, but flourishing and achieving the equity with English (as Lalicker reports in his chapter in this book). However, the chapters we received tell a much more nuanced story. While there certainly have been

laudable successes and IWPs continue to grow in number, progress has been slow, and the way ahead often obscured and fraught with unforeseen obstacles. With this in mind, we decided to name this collection *Minefield of Dreams* not only to honor the work of those who have come before us, but to recognize that a difficult path lay ahead. But like all minefields, though the course before us is difficult, it is not impossible.

Though the reasons writing programs might want to become independent are complex, at the core of these discussions are often two related considerations. One is the role of the English department as the primary “owner” of writing across the university, and the second is whether literature must play a special role in the general preparation of writing outside of Literary Studies. As initiatives to create writing across the curriculum programs grew in the 1980s, whether English departments should “house” (and thus control) writing across the curriculum (WAC) programs became a matter of debate. Catherine Blair and Louise Z. Smith debated this very issue in *College English* in 1988. Blair argued that, since writing is necessarily situated in discourse communities, “each of the disciplines is a separate culture,” and that experts in that discipline should teach writing in that area. Further, she insisted that “[w]e cannot let the inhabitants of only one imaginary world [English departments] control the teaching of a vital language use like writing” (1988, p. 384). In her response, Smith argued that within literary theory “the literary/non-literary distinction is collapsing” (1988, p. 393) making “open-house” English departments capable of “initiating and sustaining dialogue throughout the curriculum” (1988, p. 391). Rebecca Moore Howard responded with a comment a year later, noting the success her program had at Colgate hiring writing teachers outside of English, and that “an even better solution may be composition specialists who are part of the regular teaching faculty (and therefore its power structure) but not part of the English department” (1989, p. 434). This, of course, would be followed with her own separation narrative in *WPA* in 1993. The rise of writing across the curriculum programs, then, became one justification for creating independent writing programs.

Another issue that would become a battleground for independence would be the role of literature in the teaching of writing. This issue was energetically debated by Erika Lindemann and Gary Tate at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 1992 and in the pages of *College English* in 1993, though the matter of disciplinary independence was not taken up in this discussion. The publication of the Tate/Lindemann debate led to a series of strong responses, including Lindemann’s own attempt to put the matter to rest in her 1995 follow-up, “Three Views of English 101,” where she calls for a dialog between writing and literature teachers to find common ground. This is

something Fitts and Lalicker would again argue almost 10 years later (2004). The debate has been taken up more recently by others in *Composition and/or Literature*, where the looming specter of the corporate-model university was openly discussed. Though the matter is far from settled, the current trend of writing departments to focus on professional writing, writing in the disciplines, and literacy, while English departments continue their traditional focus on poetics, would seem to reflect the split Berlin described over 20 years ago. Rhetoric may be evolving into the “larger category” again, but that destiny is far from certain.

INDEPENDENCE . . . OR NOT

Still, prospects for independence, whether through institutional reorganization or disciplinary drift, make some writing specialists nervous. Catherine Chaput expresses this anxiety when she argues that Writing Studies should “continually work . . . at the intersections of rhetorical humanism and cultural studies in order to arrive at a writing program that matches the diversity of persuasive symbolism comprising the social and historical world we inhabit.” This approach, she argues, places its “foundation in the liberal, rather than mechanical, arts” (2008, p. 16). Similarly, Fitts and Lalicker have argued that Literary Studies and Writing Studies must remain unified “if English departments are to remain integral to the liberal arts curriculum” (2004, p. 428). Using a slightly different approach, Turner and Kearns describe partnering their independent program with the English Department to avoid the stigma of devaluing the program in the eyes of the larger academic community (2002, p. 98). These views may be contrasted with Maid’s argument that independent writing programs can fit as comfortably in professional colleges as within traditional homes in the liberal arts. Just as disciplinary drift may be cited as a concern, so can the separation from a home department—most likely an English Department. The metaphor of divorce has been used to describe these difficult transitions (Crow & O’Neil, 2002). As Zebroski writes of one separation, “The English faculty at Syracuse were, to an extent, probably happy to see writing go, but so were the composition and rhetoric faculty. There was not so much disagreement on that, only on the specifics of the divorce decree” (2002, p. 166). Zebroski observes that independence, particularly for writing faculty, presents a danger when they are viewed as possessing only “procedural knowledge”—“how-to”—without “propositional knowledge”—“knowing that” (2002, p. 177). This hearkens back to Chaput’s concern that too much emphasis on the mechanical aspects of writing could trivialize the profession.

While disciplinary independence is a site of anxiety, it is also a place of opportunity. As Maid argues, “Whereas some might fear the lack of security which

comes with being safely tucked inside an English Department . . . many others will feel the excitement of having more control over their program's destiny" (2002b, p. 453). This control can take several forms. One of those forms is the recognition of disciplinarity that can alternatively be articulated as power within the college structure. Writing about their independent department, Aronson and Hansen observe that "independent writing departments have institutional power that is usually unavailable to writing programs embedded within other departments" (2002, p. 60). This invokes Ed White's frequently cited WPA article, "Power and the WPA: Use It or Lose It," which illustrates the problematic position of WPAs who have administrative responsibility without any real institutional power—unless, by following White's advice, "assert that [they] have power (even if [they] don't) and [they] can often wield it" (1991, p. 3). That power, Berlin reminds us, was at least at one time largely situated within what we today call the first-year writing program: "The English department has, moreover, commonly used the power and income gained by performing this 'service' to reward those pursuing the 'real' business of the department—the study of literature" (1987, p. 25). Whereas in the past that power may have been used to reinforce class hierarchies (Berlin, 2003, p. 3) and professionalize the study of literature, today it is used by Writing Studies to promote its own place in the university. That power may be vertically distributed, or perhaps even magnified, through a vertical writing experience or other programs. It is that power, along with the perceived need for improvement in writing across the disciplines, that has begun the process of liberating rhetoric from second-class status in English departments.

Related to power is the importance of the need for the wider academic community—and particularly colleagues on campus—to understand the disciplinary distinctiveness of Writing Studies from Literary Studies. At the core of this problem is the sense of a hierarchy within the English department with the literature faculty at the top of the food chain and the writing faculty at the bottom. Though some have recognized the need to identify common ground when they exist side-by-side in the same department, others have chronicled the difficulties that arise when departmental hierarchies and factions fail to recognize the disciplinary authority of Writing Studies specialists. Ed White, in fact, has argued that in at least some cases recognition must be found outside the English department because they often believe "any money spent on writing is a diversion from the serious nature of teaching" (1991, p. 8).

Bergmann has described the organizational structure of English departments in terms of class hierarchies:

in many departments, literature faculty not only continue to maintain numerical superiority in tenure-track faculty

positions but also assert superiority over composition faculty on aesthetic, moral, or political grounds, claiming to eschew “service,” to rise above workplace skills, or to foment opposition to corporate values. (2006, p. 7)

This is similar to the situation Ed White describes when he advises WPAs, when they find themselves in this position, to seek recognition of professionalization outside of their departments because their own colleagues are locked in an ideology that prevents them from perceiving their Writing Studies counterparts as equals. However, the search for professional recognition outside of the relative “protection” of the English department can be far from easy. Zebroski discusses the problems encountered because “The Writing Program at Syracuse, from its inception, has been something other than a department” (2002, p. 166). This led to a situation where “a small core of a few overworked full-time workers [were] paired with peripheral labor, increasing[ly] managed by WPA faculty” (Zebroski, 2002, p. 172). In other words, the writing faculty were viewed by the administration as low-level workers on the academic factory floor. Nor is the situation necessarily any better in a stand-alone department. Hindman learned that institutional hierarchies, not just those in former departments, can result in low status and limited resources for writing faculty. Though tenure-track hires and department status may improve the faculty’s status within the institution, if the administration views writing as having a mere service function, then “creating a stand-alone department will not of itself resolve the class problem in composition” (Hindman, 2002, p. 118). Though the programs described in these examples are independent, the working conditions and overall status within the university are hardly different than those Bergmann describes within an English department.

The professionalization and independence of writing specialists need not be bleak, however. Barry Maid uses the mixed metaphors of emancipation (2002a, p. 130) and going home (2002b, p. 149) to frame his discussion of the creation of writing departments at two different institutions. McLeod prefers the metaphor of a “child now grown and ready to establish a separate home” (2006, p. 529), emphasizing the maturity of the discipline 20 years after Hairston’s talk. Rebecca Moore Howard describes the process of gaining departmental status through taking advantage of administrative initiatives and using “non-adversarial methods” (1993, p. 44) to create a “curriculum valued by the students and faculty” (1993, p. 45). These methods, she argues, allowed her faculty to elevate their status from a position of subordination to equality without engaging in confrontation. Aronson and Hansen also describe an opportunity to create a writing department in a non-adversarial environment. Having emerged from a period without academic departments, they did not have to separate

from an English department, and were most closely aligned with “communications and media studies” (Aronson & Hansen 2002, p. 51). They divide their creation of a professional identity into four categories: practice, art, profession, and discipline, and see their greatest tension as that between practice—their service function—and their recognition as a discipline. Their conclusion was that their departmental status was important for the establishment of institutional power, attainment of tenure (hence “professionalization”), and recognition as a discipline (pp. 60–61). O’Neill and Schendel conclude that the establishment of a department alone “doesn’t mean that composition studies is becoming more of a mainstream discipline” (2002, p. 206) and that ultimately moving from the institutional margins to a more mainstream position may not be in the best interest of the teachers and the students (2002, p. 209). Miller similarly argues that focusing on the “marginal” work of teaching writing can be a source of empowerment (2002, p. 266), and that writing specialists should not lose sight of this in order to achieve higher disciplinary status. What these observations reveal is that the idea of “professionalization” within the field of Writing Studies is a complex issue. For some, it entails the desire for legitimacy and equality with other programs, which may, as some have observed, replicate the hierarchies of the English department. For others it is important to maintain a focus on the core work of writing specialists—teaching writing—even if this problematizes the movement from the academic sidelines to a position of higher status.

Once independence is gained, an independent program or department has to establish for itself a new place in the university. This is often in response to a lack of place and control over those things that give it a place in the university or college hierarchy: control over budgets, hiring, and curricular decisions. Crow and O’Neill express the concern that the creation of an independent writing department can reproduce the same labor conditions that are present in the English department (2002, p. 6) which may result in reinforcing the class bias issue that Bergmann describes. Assuming that this situation is avoided and the new department or program is collaborative and democratic, then it is faced with two problems. One involves establishing its place as an equal member of the university community. This is largely associated with the problem of “professionalization” we have already discussed. The second concerns the logistics of being an independent program or department. These matters include supervising faculty, obtaining tenure, managing budgets, strategic planning, and other common departmental functions. Tenure and promotion, as Aronson and Hansen point out, are perhaps the most important and linked to the establishment of the department’s place in the university hierarchy. In an independent writing program or department a writing specialist is more likely to receive credit toward tenure for excellence in teaching (Aronson & Hansen, 2002, p. 61). The awarding of

tenure for administrative work, excellence in teaching, and pedagogical research may play important roles in establishing a new program or department's place alongside longer-established disciplines within the university hierarchy.

Last, but not least, one of the best ways of establishing one's place in the university is by setting up desirable, visible majors; or, as Susan McLeod puts it, "you are what you teach" (2006, p. 532). The best endorsement of the value and importance of writing programs should, in effect, be demonstrated by the majors we teach, which would give us a chance to escape the inevitable stigma of "service" courses taught solely or mostly within general education programs. In her powerful 2004 CCCC address, "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key," Kathleen Yancey outlined the seismic shifts in the landscape of writing skills in an era of plural literacies (including digital and multimodal), noting, "First-year composition is a place to begin; carrying this forward is the work of the major in composition and rhetoric" (2004, p. 315). While we have established successful graduate writing programs, undergraduate writing programs have been lagging behind, although they are crucial to the well-being and independence of the profession. Still, there is reason to hope: an ongoing effort by the CCC to catalog the trends in writing majors across the country has listed, as of 2009, 72 undergraduate majors and tracks in the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition at 68 different institutions, a notable increase from 2005–06, when there were only 45 institutions with such a major (CCC Committee on the Major in Writing and Rhetoric, 2009). To McLeod, a "robust research agenda and a thriving writing majors" will offer writing programs the best chance to achieve independence (2006, p. 532).

THE CENTRAL ISSUES: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In this introduction we have considered the relatively brief history of the evolution of independent writing programs and departments, along with the issues that have been raised (primarily) in the literature on writing program administration. Our first observation is the dominance of the "separation narrative" in this literature, particularly after 1990 when most independent programs and departments began to separate from their home departments. (Of course, we recognize that a number of independent departments existed before this date. However, before this time, generally speaking, they were likely anomalies; following this they may be considered to be part of a disciplinary trend.) A second observation, drawn largely from the work of James Berlin, is that institutional and disciplinary issues that have led to separation have a long and complex history connected to the evolution of the American professional university. As the university continues to evolve there is not a single trend, but many. Liberal arts

colleges continue to invest in the disciplinary model that appeared just before the turn of the last century, whereas schools with an emphasis on professions have developed, in some cases, toward what is sometimes called a “corporate” model. This is especially evident at the new trend toward “for profit” colleges focused more on preparation for particular jobs as opposed to disciplinary expertise. At comprehensive universities both approaches may be present. Since independent departments are appearing in all of these settings we can conclude that whether or not a program becomes independent is based less on the organizational structure of the university and more on local conditions within the school at hand. Third, a central concern for independent programs and departments is power. However, this power is not expressed as a desire to have power over others as much as it is to be liberated from the restrictions sometimes imposed by being housed in English departments where writing faculty are often outnumbered and easily outvoted. The bargaining chip for that power is commonly control over the first-year writing program, and often the particular battleground is whether or not literature should be the focus of writing instruction. Fourth, related to power is a desire for recognition as a profession—in most cases—equal in status to that of Literary Studies. This quest for professional recognition commonly takes two forms—one inside the former department and the other within the broader academic community. The first struggle usually takes place within the department when the writing faculty seek equal status and share of resources compared to the literature faculty. Failing to achieve this recognition and control over their own program(s), these faculty may propose an independent program (or have the decision made for them independently by an administrator). Following independence, newly independent programs must seek their own place within the college hierarchy along with recognition of their discipline as equal to, and distinct from, poetics. This struggle takes place primarily outside of the former home department, where the writing specialists must work to educate their colleagues across campus about the nature of their profession and its differences from hermeneutics. Fifth—and less frequently mentioned in the literature—are professional issues related to the mechanics of independence and disciplinarity, including tenure, budgets, strategic planning, writing majors, and place in the university hierarchy. These decisions are usually out of the hands of writing specialists housed within an English department but become important tools for new programs seeking their place within the broader college culture.

THE LAYOUT OF THE BOOK

We have divided the book in four parts: *mythos*, *topoi*, *techne*, and *praxis*, which we define and describe in what follows. However, we realize that many of the

chapters we include could easily straddle two or more categories, as most of them provide comprehensive histories (*mythos*) of transformation (*praxis*), some of them focusing on the place of IWPs (*topoi*), and some on the methods employed (*techne*). We fully admit, therefore, that some chapters are hard to pigeonhole. Nevertheless, we identified kernels in each chapter that speak to our larger organizing themes and therefore serve our metanarrative arc: IWPs, despite a documented history of rich transformations, continue to face challenges, some of which could be addressed by employing the histories, arguments, and stories in this collection.

MYTHOS: THE STORIES WE TELL

Much of the literature associated with independent programs has taken two forms. The first form is a proposal or manifesto about what should take place, and the second, as already reported in this introduction, has taken the form of “separation narratives” which detail the outcomes of attempts to establish independent programs or departments. Though it may not be the first of its kind, Maxine Hairston’s “Breaking Our Bonds and Reaffirming Our Connections” (1985) has certainly become the best known of separation proposals. Manifestos and proposals generally argue for institutional changes such as separation from English or the establishment of independent departments. The second type, separation narratives, typically pose institutional problems, detail how those problems were addressed, followed by a reflection about the implication of those changes. Rebecca Moore Howard’s “Power Revisited; Or, How We Became a Department” (1993) is one of the earliest examples of this genre. These are not all success stories, as Chris Anson relates in “Who Wants Composition? Reflections on the Rise and Fall of an Independent Program” (2002). In some cases separation narratives may report thwarted attempts to gain independence, or may relate what happens when independent writing units are absorbed back into English departments or elsewhere.

To describe this type of scholarship we would like to use the term *mythos*, particularly in the sense of telling stories that convey established patterns that reveal the underlying beliefs or assumptions of a particular discourse community. For example, when Chris Anson reflects on the absorption of the writing program he directed back into English, he concludes “that in spite of the politics and hierarchies in which we work as administrators of writing programs, it is the human moments, the connections we make and the lives we touch and improve, the ways we live and work *in* and *through* our places in higher education, that really matter” (2002, p. 168; italics in original). This, it seems to us, is particularly characteristic of *mythos* as we are conceiving it. We have noticed many

such moments in the manifestos and separation narratives within the literature related to independent writing programs. These statements connect the stories of separation to the values that motivated the quest for independence. In this section of the book, Dan Royer and Ellen Schendel pick up the narrative thread from where it was left in their 2002 *Field of Dreams* chapter; this is not an “origins” story of divorce and separation anymore but one which documents and demonstrates the viability of the IWP at Grand Valley State University. In the same vein, Judith Kearns and Brian Turner reprise their earlier *Field of Dreams* essay and describe the growth of their program. Their focus is on “four issues crucial to Writing Program Administration: student enrollment, labor issues, faculty engagement, and institutional status” from a Canadian perspective. Finally, Keith Hjortshoj discusses his own professional trajectory and how it led to the creation of a unique writing space—the “interdependent” writing program hosted by Cornell’s Knight Institute. These (hi)stories document the evolution of writing programs that were allowed to thrive independently and touch upon the familiar themes of labor, enrollment, faculty training, and service.

TOPOI: THE PLACES WE INHABIT

The literature reviewed in this introduction reveals the very crucial role that place plays in the establishment and maintenance of independent writing programs. An often-discussed problem is the hierarchy of the English department, which often places the writing specialists at the bottom. Scholes, Miller, Lauer, and Berlin (*Rhetoric, Poetics, and Cultures*) have all written about the “feminization” of composition that relegates writing teachers to “fairly well-enclosed cultural spaces” (Miller, 1991, p. 39) as low-status and often part-time, predominantly female workers. Similarly, Linda Bergmann explains that compositionists have traditionally “been treated as second class members of the profession” (2006, p. 7). Royer and Gilles even reported that one of their literature colleagues compared teaching composition to “cleaning a toilet” (2002, p. 23). Secondly, and particularly when a program becomes independent, is the sense of place within the university structure. This may involve, as discussed above, the quest for recognition as a relatively new discipline as an equal in the eyes of more established disciplines. The question of the best place within the university structure is also an important one. Many independent programs and departments are located either alongside English or in the same college. However, as Barry Maid has argued (2002b, p. 455), the time may have come to discuss whether the appropriate place for Writing Studies is within the humanities at all.

With these issues in mind, this book will consider the idea of ideological and institutional places in the dual sense that Aristotle defines *topoi* as both

lines of argument and structural locations within a text. This may include the place of writing within the university structure, the positioning of first-year writing program, the role of writing across the curriculum, and relationships with former (usually English) departments. Thus, Jennifer Johnson examines how composition and literature TA training in an independent writing program matters significantly in mitigating disciplinary divides. A very different TA story comes from W. Brock MacDonald, Margaret Procter, and Andrea L. Williams, who describe an alternative writing program (Writing Instruction for Teaching Assistants or WIT) that has proved successful in a Canadian context; in this case, graduate instructors coming from a variety of departments are trained to provide writing instruction at the University of Toronto. Georgia Rhoades, Kim Gunter and Elizabeth Carroll remind us of how much work there is still to do for independent writing programs to find a place of their own: they describe the effortful, ongoing saga of their writing program at Appalachian State University, which they describe as “balancing rhetoric from above and below”; their chapter documents their process of enlisting non-tenure-track faculty in writing (in more ways than one) the fate of the department and of the university. Finally, Chris Thaiss, Sarah Perrault, Katharine Rodger, Eric Schroeder, and Carl Whithaus argue that the writing program is “part of the fabric of the university” by providing a comprehensive narrative of the University Writing Program at the University of California–Davis, which displays strong WAC/WID roots and great insights for those interested into developing professional writing majors. All essays explore themes of disciplinarity, labor, and professionalization, which are consequential for the place of writing in the university.

TECHNE: METHODS WE EMPLOY

Cicero’s *On the Orator* features a long dialogue discussing whether a rhetorician needs only to have skill in the techniques of public speaking or if specific disciplinary knowledge is also required. In the current era writing teachers have often been confronted with the notion that they are teaching a mere general education skill devoid of disciplinary subject matter. By focusing primarily on pedagogical research, Downs and Wardle argue, “our field reinforces cultural misconceptions of writing instead of attempting to educate students and publics out of those misconceptions” and thus “silently support the misconceptions that writing is not a real subject” (2007, p. 553). The “Writing-about-Writing” model is one attempt to address this criticism and establish for Writing Studies a subject matter recognizable to outsiders. In addition to this, our field draws upon the rich and ancient history of rhetoric as well as popular culture, technical/professional communication, and other areas. All the same,

Downs and Wardle are correct that our field is often perceived as a service to others and not a field in its own right.

In this book we intend to address the question of the proper role of *techné*, or *art*, in the teaching of writing. As Aronson and Hansen point out, *techné* may be viewed both in the sense of a set of rhetorical practices and an art employing creativity and intuition (2002, p. 57). This description implies a stratification, with “rhetorical practices” easily falling into the category of “skill” and “creativity” suggesting a higher form of art. This section considers the tension between our service function as teachers of first-year writing and the theoretical and (multi)disciplinary content often associated with the idea of an academic discipline, including teaching first-year writing as a “skill” vs. a “discipline”; the role of rhetoric as disciplinary content. More recently, the appearance of writing minors and majors that are distinct from English majors are particularly transformative and contribute to professional recognition outside of our own units. In this section, Michelle Filling-Brown and Seth Frechie describe their work at Cabrini University to get an independent writing program off the ground and to revamp a writing curriculum so that it responds both to the university mission and to the demands of the times by grounding it in the theme of social justice “and the writing accomplishment that is essential for it.” Cristina Hanganu-Bresch discusses the writing-about-writing curriculum, and pitches it against the more inclusive project of rhetorical education, arguing both that IWPs should use these approaches as sustainable arguments for independence and that IWPs should have a more decisive role in both approaches. Finally, Laura Davies examines the long-term effects of using teachers in administrative roles in Syracuse’s independent writing program—on the program as well as the teacher’s professional identities. Common concerns are curricular reforms, program transformations, and faculty training and empowerment.

PRAXIS: TRANSFORMATIONS WE ENACT

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire writes that “[w]ithin the word [or message or text] we find two dimensions, reflection and action” and “[t]here is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world” (2005, p. 87). Though we would not presume of our profession the truly world-transforming practices that Freire endorses, we would like to contemplate the idea of *praxis* within our profession as consisting of the two functions of reflection and action. Reflection presumes a conscious act of self-identification and definition. At the very least it may be said that our field is now in the process of defining itself as a field distinct from Literary Studies—distinct enough to warrant separation and the formation of indepen-

dent departments. On the other hand, actions such as the formation of independent programs and departments, the establishment of the writing major, the maintenance of the vertical writing experience and more—are visible not only to ourselves, but to our students, our colleagues across campus, and the employers who hire our graduates, and the various publics who learn about us from the media.

In this section we consider the ways we practice our profession on campus and beyond, including the administrative functions associated with running independent programs and departments, such as management techniques, strategic planning, assessment, placement, faculty management, and so on. Valerie Ross provides a comprehensive overview of leadership styles and identities of writing program administrators (partly based on personal interviews) and offers some sound advice on how to approach change as WPA. Justin Everett discusses ways in which independent writing programs can use branding and strategic planning to pursue their goals, as illustrated in the trajectory of the writing program at the University of the Sciences. Finally, William Lalicker explains his “five equities” program—that is, the five equities that must be met so that a writing department may be truly independent and “equal” in standing with an English department: equity in hiring, governance, core of the major, options of the major, and graduate offerings. All chapters are entrenched in a rhetoric of transformation and justice, both of which are difficult to achieve but reveal themselves as driving factors of IWPs.

In a *sui-generis* category, we round up the volume with an epilogue by George Gopen, who recounts his long and illustrious career in the service of writing in a fascinating personal narrative, which ends with his own perspectives for the future. Finally, Louise Wetherbee Phelps looks back at the chapters in the book and draws upon them as well as on her vast experience to generate a final “snapshot” of where IWPs are and where they may go in the future, speculating that they will “move toward increasingly complex ecological interdependencies.”

Becoming part of an IWP is a transformative experience. A generation ago only a handful of IWPs existed, and faculty were trained almost exclusively in English departments—most in literature majors. Today, Writing Studies Ph.D.s are common and new faculty enter the job market without ever having stepped foot in an English department. Whether the new faculty members grew up in English, Education, or Writing Studies, joining or participating in creating an IWP may force them to confront issues of identity and make life-changing professional choices. The chapters in this collection, while unavoidably limited in their description of the state of the field, offer nevertheless a representative snapshot of IWPs in the wake of the revolution envisioned by Hairston, that is still complicated and turbulent in some places, but shows incredible promise and

growth in others. It looks like breaking our bonds led to stories of initiation that helped form new identities; voyages of discovery as writing programs left English behind to occupy new institutional places; the introduction of methods that become the stigmata of our pedagogically-based discipline; and tales of transformation as we emerged from the chrysalis of English to become something else. What that something is, or will be, is illustrated, in part, by the chapters that appear in this volume.

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