Introduction
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Writing across the curriculum (WAC) has been an important initiative
for educational reform in the nation's schools for more than a decade.
We have heard teachers report on WAC efforts at annual conventions
of the National Council of Teachers of English as well as at various
regional and affiliate NCTE meetings, at local sites of the National
Writing Project, at the Bread Loaf School of English summer sessions,
in classrooms and school districts, and in informal conversations in the
corridors of school buildings and convention centers. Numerous articles
and several books have been published recently that provide theoretical
perspectives and classroom strategies for incorporating WAC into all
kinds of courses and that report the results of innovative collaborations
by teachers in different disciplines. Most of these conference presen-
tations and published works have focused on small groups of teachers
working together to improve their students' learning and communication
abilities through curricular projects and classroom innovations. Thanks
to these teacher-scholars, we have a good deal of information about
how individual teachers employ WAC strategies in their classes. We
know a great deal less about how groups of teachers and administrators
work together to develop WAC programs that extend across schools or
districts.

In diverse locations across the nation, in rural, urban, and suburban
schools, efforts are now emerging to institutionalize WAC programs or
to sustain WAC initiatives by integrating them into other programs
such as statewide assessment. The major purpose of this book, then, is
to describe and critique some ways WAC has been incorporated into
schoolwide, districtwide, and statewide programs. WAC efforts, which
most often begin with small groups of teachers working in a limited
number of classrooms, can and often do expand to become the catalyst
for systemic change. In these pages readers will find the philosophical
foundations for WAC programs and numerous specific classroom appli-
cations that provide the explanatory power of practical experience. In
addition, teachers and administrators will discover ways others are
nurturing WAC by creating environments in which WAC becomes
central to an institution's educational mission. The goals of WAC—
improved learning and communication—are supported by many edu-
cational constituencies. Yet, for many reasons, ranging from lack of

funding to lack of models for sustaining in schools what is fundamentally interdisciplinary and collaborative, successfully institutionalizing WAC presents challenges. As individual schools, school districts, and state agencies begin to undertake this task, we believe that the nineteen cases presented here offer workable possibilities, imaginative solutions, and honest doubts about the problems of bringing the WAC movement to the nation's children.

Writing across the curriculum has its beginnings, for the three of us, in the late 1970s. As we and others in the United States were worrying about declining test scores and the lack of value our society and our educational system seemed to place on written communication, we became aware of the important work of James Britton, Nancy Martin, and their colleagues at the University of London's Schools Council Project. Theirs was a major effort to integrate and then study "language across the curriculum" in English schools in the 1960s and 1970s. Their work demonstrated in theory and practice that language was integral to *learning* as well as to *communication* in all disciplines. Many supporters who began WAC projects in the U.S. at that time were motivated by a desire to enhance student abilities in these two areas. First, they were concerned with students' ability to communicate, what was often called student literacy — functional literacy, critical literacy, academic literacy. Teachers, administrators, and funding agencies wanted students to read and write better. Second, supporters were concerned with students' abilities as learners — they wanted students to become more active and engaged learners, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. They believed that providing students with increased opportunities to use writing as a tool for learning would help achieve these goals. We might say that first-generation WAC programs founded on these premises focused on the cognitive development of individual students. They encouraged writing in all disciplines to enable students to become astute learners, critical thinkers, and effective communicators.

In the 1980s, teachers and scholars explored the social dimensions of written communication, an exploration that gradually shifted WAC theory and practice away from the purely cognitive to a more socially based perspective. This shift paralleled WAC's move from the individual classroom into the wider social arena of school, district, and state. Thus, to the first two premises for WAC programs (learning and communication), a third and fourth were added. The third premise is that writing is a *social process*; it takes place in a social context. If we want students to be effective communicators, to be successful engineers and historians, then we cannot separate form from content, writing from knowledge, action from context. We should not teach writing generically, in a vacuum, as if it were a skill unconnected to purpose or

context. Student writers need to join a community of learners engaged in generating knowledge and solving problems, to join, even as novices, disciplinary conversations and public-policy discussions. WAC programs, therefore, began to stress the role of collaboration in learning, the role of audience in communication, and the role of social context in learning to write and writing to learn. Each new context makes different demands on a writer and requires different understandings about what expressions of knowledge are valued in particular communities. Teachers began to change the social environments of their individual classrooms to nurture and challenge student writers. They began to advocate change in the way individual classrooms are connected to other classrooms within schools and in the way schools are connected to larger social units of community, district, and state. They began to lobby for the institutionalization of WAC within school systems.

A fourth premise, then, is that writing is *social action*; writers are advocates who write to further personal and social goals. If we want students to be effective communicators, we cannot continually ask them to practice writing separate from any community of shared knowledge and interests. Writers write to change their perceptions of the world and to change others' perceptions of the world. Thus WAC programs have added advocacy writing to their repertoire: students writing to audiences beyond the classroom; writing to audiences who want to hear what they know and what they think about what they know; writing on electronic networks to understand, monitor, and solve global as well as local problems; writing to change their world.

As we move toward the twenty-first century, WAC proponents understand more and more what is to be done. We do not replace the cognitive dimension of writing with the social dimension, but rather we continue to build on the knowledge and experience of others. Today, mature WAC programs attempt to use all four underlying premises as a way of empowering students as active learners and effective communicators: writing to learn, writing to communicate, writing as social process, writing as social action. Certainly, there are tensions and conflicts between teachers and scholars who prefer either cognitively or socially based instructional strategies, just as there are tensions and conflicts in each attempt to institutionalize WAC. The stance of most programs is to welcome competing viewpoints on such matters, to see WAC as an inclusive and evolving movement, one that seeks to encourage conversations about significant educational issues, and then to listen for opportunities that may lead to educational renewal based on consensus.

From one perspective, WAC is the individual teacher in all disciplines, supported and rewarded by a network of peers, administrators,

and community leaders. To introduce the four premises of WAC in meaningful ways into a mathematics classroom is a difficult and risky enterprise for a teacher. New ways of designing writing assignments, responding to students and their writing, and integrating writing into the essential learning of the course must be discovered and understood in practice. Few models are available to today's teachers from their experiences in college, where most classes were taught in lectures and writing was used to test knowledge rather than to generate it. Institutionalizing WAC will help create viable models for teaching and learning accessible to teachers in all disciplines. The traditional model has created educational systems in which most teachers are rewarded when they do not attend to the language abilities of their students. WAC seeks to change this unfortunate situation, but meaningful change must be a joint effort between teachers and the systems in which they spend their professional lives.

   At the level of the individual school, WAC programs have emerged from a variety of sources. Beginning with interested faculty, they have been administered and sustained in school writing centers, multimedia centers, and computer centers. They have been integrated into innovative programs in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, mathematics, and performing arts — programs often funded by state, federal, corporate, or foundation grants. School WAC programs need to be embedded in the essential values of the various communities that support them and to which they are accountable: school boards, parents, students, and taxpayers. In practice, they often establish mutual support systems with local colleges, community colleges, and businesses. With government and industry's recent interest in Total Quality Management, a management strategy that is based on empowering workers to work in teams and become involved in corporate decision making, has come a renewed interest in collaboration and workplace literacy. Thus liaisons with numerous constituencies to advance WAC goals appear more possible than they did even a few years ago.

   At the district and state levels there is much that can be done to foster successful WAC programs throughout the system. In particular, administrators can often generate supplemental funding to demonstrate that WAC is a priority, use such funding combined with shifts in scheduling to allow teachers time to plan and to collaborate, develop institutional structures that encourage collaboration in teaching, develop institutional reward systems for both individual teachers and schools that demonstrate excellence in WAC initiatives, and develop connections to important statewide programs, such as assessments of student, teacher, and school performance. In one example of activities to be encountered in the pages that follow, a school district creates the structures necessary for teachers to visit classrooms across schools to

give instructional demonstrations, to facilitate understanding of WAC among teachers, to collaborate as teacher-researchers assessing the impact of WAC in local classrooms, and to address thorny issues of curriculum and community involvement. In another example, a state department of education creates direct connections between successful WAC curricula in individual schools and statewide assessment of student performance. Students might demonstrate proficiency in science by presenting a portfolio of written work in science courses. Mathematics students might solve a problem by calculating the solution and then speculating in writing about the relevance of the process they used. Such concepts reinforce the connections between educational goals at the classroom, the school, the district, and the state levels.

While there is no formula for implementing and sustaining a WAC program in every conceivable context, there are patterns that emerge from a review of the successful programs described in this book. These patterns do not lessen the difficulty often associated with institutionalizing WAC, but they provide us with a clearer understanding of the issues involved and alternative strategies for initiating change at both local and state levels. Change consistent with WAC principles can begin at any point in the system with the building of a supportive educational environment by administrators in the district office, by a school principal, or by an interdisciplinary group of teachers. Often it begins with teachers who introduce WAC concepts to their classes and form a support group of professionals to offer encouragement and advice. The most successful programs are those that have attained support at all levels of the system, support that encourages and rewards innovative teaching practices associated with WAC. If a system and a school praise a science teacher who believes that her students' poor writing in science is someone else's responsibility, then WAC will be perceived as essentially a skills based, remedial program unrelated to generating and communicating knowledge in science. When the faculty reward system is structured around such assumptions, many teachers will not risk experimenting with instructional reform that may not be valued by the system or respected by their peers.

This book tells nineteen stories narrated by teachers in different disciplines and by administrators with differing responsibilities. Although there are many common threads in these stories, they have many different settings. They describe experiences in numerous states across our nation, in small, rural schools and in large, urban school districts, in public and private institutions; they describe programs created to serve ethnically and culturally diverse students and their communities, from Baltimore to Arizona, Brooklyn to Iowa, Detroit to Florida, Seattle to Appalachia; they describe collaborative networks of teachers and students that move from classroom to classroom across

narrow hallways in a single school, or that move from school to school across a school district or a state, or that connect through telecommunications writers and readers in one classroom with others across the nation and the world. Each chapter locates a WAC program in a specific context, a program that emerged in response to local needs, educational structures, and site-specific opportunities. Readers will learn how various collaborations were formed to work within local educational contexts to institutionalize reforms based on WAC principles. They will learn about structures and strategies that might well apply to their own educational environments. And they will learn the potential of WAC to improve education in individual classrooms and in educational systems across the nation.

We have organized this book into three sections, each prefaced with a brief description. Part One describes pitfalls as well as possibilities for WAC in schools. This section takes an honest look at several programs, demonstrating that while educational reform is never simple or easy, we can benefit from the experience of others who have faced similar challenges. Part Two focuses on collaboration as an integral component of successful WAC programs. This section explores various possibilities for collaboration in educational settings, suggesting why collaboration is a WAC prerequisite and how such collaborations come into being. Part Three describes how particular programs were implemented, have changed, and are being sustained. The institutionalization of WAC, its integration into educational goals and structures, is undoubtedly the most difficult problem faced by its many proponents. This book is dedicated to all the pioneers represented in its pages who are tackling this challenge so that others may learn and follow.