



Resistance and Reform: The Functions of Expertise in Writing Across the Curriculum

Daniel Mahala
Drake University

Jody Swilky
Drake University

I. Change at the Margins and Center: WAC Reform in its “Second Stage”

In the 1990s, as the writing across the curriculum (WAC) movement enters what some reformers call a “second stage,” there is conspicuous concern for what David Russell defines as the fundamental problem of WAC — “how to place it firmly in the complex organizational structure of the university” (“Some Lessons” 191). During the 1970s and much of the 1980s, WAC reform was fueled mostly by compositionists’ fervor rooted in humanist concepts of process pedagogy, administrative support for improving students’ ability to read and write, and the desire of some faculty to reconsider their teaching practices. Reform occurred primarily at the margins, so to speak, of disciplinary practice, and largely in spite of institutional incentives and structures. To reformers of the 1990s, however, this dynamic of reform no longer seems adequate. Even *Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum*, a recent collection of essays edited by Toby Fulwiler and Art Young that represents the movement’s growth and impact, concludes with an anonymous “Afterword” concerned with resistance to reform. “Institutions must develop,” Fulwiler and Young write, “a more or less permanent structure whereby writing-across-the-curriculum advocacy is ever renewed and expanded. Otherwise the best that can be hoped for is to keep the enemies at bay” (294).

One of the most intractable obstacles to reform is the resistance that stems from expertise — resistance that informs not only the thinking of faculty but the very organization of the university. While WAC advocates often speak about the shared purposes of postsecondary schooling,² which is conspicuous, indeed, at some colleges, academic

life is characterized more by division and difference than by common cause. Faculty are separated by specialization, and this compartmentalization of academicians and knowledge discourages conversations across disciplinary divisions. These conditions are at odds with the goal of having everyone share the responsibility for teaching students to write or using writing as a means of learning. In other words, expertise often produces resistance to incorporating cross-curricular writing instruction as an integral part of higher education.

Today's WAC reformers, and those of the past two decades, are not the first to contend with the obstacles that expertise poses for institutionalizing cross-curricular writing programs, James Fleming Hosis addressed this issue as early as 1913, when he identified "over-specialization" as a "chief stumbling block" in attaining "co-operation" among faculty in cross-curricular writing instruction (481).³ Although WAC reformers still face this problem, Hosis spoke in another era and about another context (the secondary school). Current impediments to reform are shaped by our historical era and the conditions of the postsecondary institution. How, then, do dominant conceptions of expertise in American colleges present problems for WAC reform? How has the WAC movement, during what some reformers call the "second-stage," addressed the resistance that stems from expertise? What other ways might we respond to and use expertise in the interest of effecting change?

In addressing these questions, we want to consider both the programmatic structure and research initiatives of WAC reform. We will consider how competing forms of expertise are currently affecting the practices of undergraduate education, at both the center and the margins of the curriculum, and how these competing forms enable and constrain WAC reform. Thus, we will discuss not only how WAC has been conceived in relation to dominant programs and structures, but how alliances among programs informed by emergent and residual forms of expertise present possibilities for WAC reform that have yet to be adequately explored. In the next section, we present a strategy of reform based on an analysis of how various concepts and uses of expertise in American universities produce resistance or receptiveness to the goals of reform. In the third section, we examine how some "second-stage" reformers have conceived of expertise in establishing WAC's research agenda, illuminating how this agenda ignores the ways WAC research might harness forces of change already powerfully at

work within the institution. We also briefly outline an alternative to the research agenda of these reformers.

We wish especially to query the notion that WAC reformers should, in the belief WAC is now in its “second stage,” redirect their energies primarily towards placing programs permanently within existing institutional structures. The recent surge of research on discipline-specific writing has been advocated as the means to achieve long-term institutional legitimacy (Bazerman, “Second Stage” 209; see also Jones and Comprone 62-63). **Certainly**, WAC programs need strong administrative support, and reformers will have to make compromises to build the consensus necessary to attain and preserve such support. But what principles will determine the extent to which WAC reformers might be willing to compromise in order to achieve mainstream legitimacy? By pursuing WAC reform as a “second stage,” what kinds of accommodations with dominant conceptions of expertise will reformers be pressured to make? What possibilities might we explore of collaborating with emergent groups and programs outside the mainstream who are already working against the grain of the postsecondary institution?

We contend that WAC reform should be guided by a vision of change that goes beyond considerations of strategic possibility in this or that locale, at this or that moment in time. Indeed, such a vision can and should be linked with other challenges to dominant conceptions of expertise that are emerging alongside WAC programs in postsecondary institutions. In this next section, we examine a few such challenges, and how they advance what we believe are the most crucial goals of WAC reform.

II. Dominant, Residual, and Emergent Cultures: Expertise as an Obstacle to and Impetus for Reform

In his historical analysis of writing in the disciplines, David Russell argues that academia is an aggregate of distinct disciplines which expanded through accretion, by dint of external pressures more than institutional logic, and therefore comprises independent groups of scholars “characterized more by their differences than by their similarities” (“Writing Across” 54; also see Bledstein 327-28; Veysey 337-41; Graff, *Professing* 6-9; *Beyond* 135-141; Ohmann 290-95). Academicians often perceive closer linguistic and ideological ties to professional communities outside academia than to their colleagues in other institutional departments (Russell, “Writing Across” 54; see also Bledstein

303-04). Distinctions in identity are evident not only in the institutional order, which arranges faculty into colleges, divisions, departments, and specialized fields within departments, but in the partitioning of knowledge on a specific subject, which can result in courses concerned with language study, for instance, offered by philosophy, speech communication and English departments.

In such an institutional order, power is dispersed, flowing, if you will, at different rates and from different sources. The dominant structure of expertise in such an order may seem immovable, producing division among practitioners even on a common subject. But as Raymond Williams explains, culture, institutions and practices are always evolving, shaped by dynamic relations between competing determinants — what Williams defines as the dominant, the residual and the emergent (121-26). Understanding the complexity of the institutional culture, then, entails identifying the dominant domains of power and corresponding conceptions of expertise, as well as alternative domains and conceptions that are having an impact on curriculum.

The dominant features of expertise in the university are familiar. Acquired through educational training, expertise is predominantly understood by faculty as a specialized body of information and specific methods of investigation. When involved in research, scholars apply expertise as a means of investigating a question, problem or issue, addressing a professional community (or several communities) through arguments that add to the community's lore and knowledge. By contrast, when academicians teach they often assume the role of "representative of expertise," transmitting information and "facts," and translating principles in reductive ways (Larson 54-55). A storehouse of specialized knowledge is presented to students, covering "facts," principles, methodologies, and sometimes theory. Such practice often simplifies or withholds the controversial or unsettled aspects of such knowledge, reinforcing the faculty member's status as expert yet distinguishing this function of expertise from its use during research (Larson; see also Graff, *Professing* 7-8; *Beyond* 106-114).

For several reasons, these dominant practices create obstacles to implementing cross-curricular writing programs. First, there is the fundamental conflict between the dominant conception of expertise and the notion, promoted by WAC reformers, of an institution-wide commitment to writing instruction. Since many instructors hold the view that teaching is the act of "representing" one's expertise, they often consider writing instruction either the domain of the expert "writing

specialist,” or the province of the non-specialist, and therefore not the responsibility of disciplinary instructors who should focus on covering their specialized knowledge (course content). Second, since this view of expertise locates writing and language outside the essential operations of knowledge-making, the writing specialist (or, worse, the writing non-specialist) tends to be cast primarily as a service provider in her collaboration with disciplinary practitioners.⁴ Rather than raising questions about the nature of knowledge, academic “objectivity,” and tactics of disciplinary socialization, the writing specialist is cast as a facilitator who helps faculty develop their teaching in an exclusively technical sense. However, WAC reform should, as many advocates acknowledge, encourage teachers and students to question disciplinary conventions, and to reconsider the priorities of disciplinary practice. The obstacle this poses for WAC is that asking faculty to change their understanding and use of expertise, which for many instructors requires philosophical and pedagogical transformation, also increases the likelihood of significant resistance to reform. Finally, reformers and many disciplinary instructors are likely to disagree about the specialized knowledge in composition that often informs WAC programs. When reformers first introduce colleagues to WAC theory and practice, they often present them with ideas about language and learning derived from education and composition theory (Fulwiler, “Writing Workshops” 8; Fulwiler and Young 2). Some reformers boldly claim that this theory often “challenge[s] traditional classroom writing pedagogy ... [and] the nature of teaching and learning” (Fulwiler, “Writing Workshops” 8; see also McLeod, “Defining” 23-24). At the same time, reformers claim that many disciplinary instructors have little respect for education theory (Fulwiler, “How Well” 122; see also “Evaluating” 66). Thus, significant resistance to reform could emerge when a writing specialist presents ideas that challenge what many faculty members believe and practice, especially if such ideas go beyond narrowly technical advice.

What programs represent possible alternatives to educational practices informed by this dominant conception of expertise that we have been describing? A general answer would be those programs that: challenge traditional views and uses of expertise in the following ways: by underscoring interdisciplinary study that disrupts the conventional division of knowledge; by encouraging active participation by students in the classroom; by legitimizing teaching and classroom discourse as sites where knowledge is produced and not merely distributed and assimilated; by emphasizing reading and writing as investigation of the

nature of disciplinary knowledge and the ethical and political implications of such knowledge; and by breaking down the walls between the academy and the “real world” through critical examination of relationships between disciplinary cultures and popular cultures. In other words, residual and emergent programs (Williams) that share some of the assumptions about language use, literacy and learning that inform the deepest goals of WAC reform.

Some interdisciplinary programs that have emerged at American postsecondary institutions during the last two decades--and thus might be called emergent (Williams 123) — share some of these philosophical and educational goals associated with WAC reform. By classifying these programs as emergent, we mean that they are in some way alternative or oppositional to, rather than merely a new form of, dominant practices (123). However, by identifying emergent programs, we do not mean to imply that traditional disciplines are univocal sites where the dominant culture of expertise holds absolute sway. In Williams’ words, “no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention” (125). Therefore, when we cite women’s studies and cultural studies as examples of the emergent, which we will soon proceed to do, we do not wish to represent them as strongholds of public, non-disciplinary practices opposed to the univocal hegemony of traditional disciplines. Rather, challenges to the dominant culture of expertise which are consolidated in these programs also exist as dispersed, local practices in most, if not all, disciplines. In the context of our analysis of expertise, then, we wish to identify our examples of alternative and oppositional programs as consolidations of counter-hegemonic practices that exist within and between many disciplines. We cannot emphasize enough that by classifying particular programs as emergent and opposed to the dominant culture of expertise, we are distinguishing between competing forms of expertise, not identifying programs and practices somehow miraculously “pure” or “outside” of expertise and disciplinarity.

As we have suggested, in cultural studies and women’s studies there is much work that challenges traditional notions of expertise. Discourse in these fields is dispersed within and across many traditional disciplines and is often characterized by its engagement with issues of wide public concern and its use of materials derived from mass culture. Teachers with whom we have worked often encourage students to break down barriers between academic and non-academic worlds, to question

the ideological dimensions of disciplinary discourse, and to use journals as means of exploring the different worlds in which they live.

Recent literature on pedagogy in women's studies discusses similar activities and goals. Donna Perry, for instance, explains how she has begun "Making Journal Writing Matter" in an introductory-level course. In this course, journal writing is not "merely practice in writing," but rather a way to subvert "the structured, hierarchical relationship" between teacher and students as well as a means for providing "students with a 'safe place' in which to critically examine their worlds" (151). Through journal writing, students "explore the implications for their own lives of ideas raised in the course," as well as "write about what for them were taboo subjects (homosexuality, abortion, etc.)" (152-53).⁵ Rebecca Blevins Faery expands Perry's concern to all classrooms, contending that "the new approach to using writing to learn " is important for "revising the educational circumstances of women students" (202). The way to change the circumstances of women (and men) students, Faery argues, is through curriculum that encourages students to talk and write frequently, in every discipline (212); through education that emphasizes active student participation, the transformation of knowledge, and writing as a way to learn how language practices shape student identities (204,212).

More recently, Bonnie Spanier, a molecular biologist, has explored the implications of this feminist vision of WAC for science and science education. Her revision of dominant conceptions of expertise in science is worth quoting at length:

As a scientist and feminist, I see writing across the curriculum as providing a fruitful partnership of the humanities and the sciences, one that encourages science educators to confront neglected humanistic aspects of their disciplines: values, dominant beliefs, and societal influences that shape the content of science and science education. More precisely, writing-across-the-curriculum projects *that address ideology in the discourse and practice of science* are potentially transformative and may help alleviate the exclusion of women and people of color from the scientific professions, the crisis in scientific literacy in the United States, and the vast gulf between scientific experts and the public in issues of science and society. (193, emphasis Spanier's)

In Spanier's view, by focusing attention on issues of language and representation, WAC can help increase "scientists' awareness of the

norms of their profession a necessary change if we are to attain equity . . . and eliminate distortions in our understanding of nature” (207).

Even in such a seemingly “neutral” field as molecular biology, Spanier shows how teachers can help students recognize how scientific knowledge is socially positioned both in relation to scientists and students. For instance, Spanier analyzes the discourse of molecular biology, showing numerous examples of how this discourse reflects “culturally generated distortions” (199) by superimposing stereotypical gender attributes onto the natural world. In one example, Spanier shows how biologists often describe bacteria as “male” or “female” “based on the presence (male) or absence (female) of a ‘fertility’ (or F) plasmid,” thus projecting a cultural sense of sex in a way that falsifies the scientific description since these bacteria do not make eggs or sperm (200). By giving her students writing assignments that encourage this kind of analysis, Spanier helps them “find a voice” and situate themselves in relation to subject matter (204). Thus students learn to develop “an active analytical stance, not that of passive recipients of knowledge” (206), and to recognize how the social profile of scientific communities shapes hypothesis generation and scientific description.

Spanier’s vision of WAC’s potential importance is remarkable in the degree to which it foregrounds the depth of possible change when reform aligns itself with ideas and practices currently at the margins of disciplinary ideology. Of course, Spanier’s expansive view of disciplinary expertise — as including the study of the political, cultural and linguistic aspects of knowledge-making — is not, as she admits, widespread in scientific communities. But for Spanier the likely resistance to attempts at WAC reform in such contexts is also a measure of WAC’s deepest possibilities for transformation (207). Significantly, Spanier, Perry and Faery all suggest that the role of WAC reformers goes well beyond technical facilitation to broad questioning of disciplinary rhetoric, the power-effects of knowledge and the goals of undergraduate education.

Other programs that might be aligned with WAC reform may not be as obvious in their potential challenges to institutional culture. Such programs may have been in existence for a long time, and might be called residual, to borrow Williams’ term, because the practices they sponsor have been incorporated, to a limited degree, into postsecondary education, yet have often remained at some distance from dominant practices. While the residual is formed in the past, it is active in the present (Williams 122-23). Also, as Williams explains, while residual

cultural forms may operate in the service of the dominant culture, they also may, in other contexts, have an oppositional or alternative relationship to it.

Honors programs, for example, have been part of the postsecondary school since the 1920s. While such programs have historically been implicated in the practice of tracking as a means of reproducing social class in schools, such programs frequently distinguish themselves from mainstream schooling by the quality of learning they sponsor, the validation of student experience as a source of evidence in argumentation, and the degree to which they expose students to the unsettled aspects of knowledge. According to Anne Ponder, a recent president of the National Collegiate Honors Council, “the discussion class...the collaborative seminar, is the locus, the prevailing language, the central practice, of honors [today]” (1).⁶ Such programs, if made democratically accessible, can present a legitimate challenge to dominant educational practices.

At Drake University, for instance, the honors program was instrumental in the formation of an interdisciplinary Cultural Studies Program that emphasizes many of the goals that WAC reformers advocate. The honors program attracted teachers from the humanities and social sciences who were interested in teaching interdisciplinary courses that encouraged high levels of student participation, critical investigation of issues and subjects, and different uses of writing. According to the university’s “Course Guidelines for Honors,” an honors course encourages “active participation by students in the class,” to the degree that “discussion should be a primary part of the learning experience”; “invites connections among several disciplines of study” and “involves frequent writing assignments, offering multiple opportunities for feedback and evaluation.” The honors program was unable by itself to institutionalize a cultural studies curriculum. But it did link together faculty concerned with cultural studies who eventually developed a new program, rooted in methods and principles of cultural materialism, affording students the opportunity to develop a concentration of courses in which they could examine in writing connections between cultural theory, their experiences of daily life, and the production and reception of music, film and printed texts. In this particular case, then, honors offered an area of the curriculum that linked faculty who were dissatisfied with dominant practices and were quite receptive to the deep goals of WAC reform.⁷

Programs such as women's studies, cultural studies and honors represent potential networks of faculty who can institutionalize writing reform in local, and perhaps eventually more expansive, areas of the curriculum. Of course, the list of such programs might easily be extended to include interdisciplinary programs of many sorts, for instance, programs that focus on ethnicity or race, political and cultural change in the third-world, environmental studies, medical anthropology, ethics, etc. Many teachers are drawn to these programs because of conviction and commitment, and therefore they are likely to be open to considering new ideas such as how writing can be employed as a means of extending disciplinary insights to daily life. In some cases, such teachers are already experimenting with emergent practices arising locally in their own disciplines. These programs also offer reformers a greater possibility of moving beyond the technical service role in which the dominant culture of expertise often casts them. Thus, this sort of collaboration can be as liberating to WAC reformers as to faculty in the disciplines.

In arguing that the best way to pursue WAC reform is to look for allies in programs where the dominant ideology of expertise is already being questioned, we are acutely aware that many of the programs we mention are also among the least powerful or secure in the university. Women's studies, cultural studies, and other interdisciplinary programs are often, like WAC programs, run on soft money, without adequate staffing (usually borrowing faculty from other disciplines), and with little support. However, we must point out that our strategy of establishing alliances between residual and emergent programs does not preclude WAC reformers from working within traditional programs. Working with traditional faculty whose view of expertise reflects the dominant institutional culture is essential, indeed, if writing-intensive courses are to be offered regularly to large numbers of students. However, we believe it is equally essential for WAC reformers to find ways of connecting such work at the center of the curriculum with work at the margins where the deep goals of reform are easier to realize. For instance, WAC reformers might work with others in establishing linked courses on the same subject that are informed by contrasting ideologies, and use writing in contrasting ways. What we are suggesting is somewhat like the curricular agenda Gerald Graff has offered in *Beyond the Culture Wars*, which foregrounds the ways in which differences within and between disciplines can be dramatized in teaching and curriculum. Rather than focusing on conventions which highlight a

lowest common denominator of agreement within disciplines, Graff's proposal highlights differences between disciplinary conventions and ways of understanding, thus constituting a significant revision of the dominant uses of expertise in teaching wherein differences are reduced for student consumption. Just as important, programs that highlight differences in institutional culture oblige faculty to debate alternative conceptions of expertise and the alternative uses of writing those conceptions sanction.

Graff shows how early attempts at curricular reform in higher education have often failed because they did not accommodate faculty research obligations, were too rigid in their restriction of faculty and student choices, and confused reform with the goal of achieving consensus on the fundamentals of knowledge (177). Hence, under the rubric of "turning conflict into community," Graff cites a number of reform programs that dramatize differences between faculty understandings of themes like "Power and the Person: Looking at the Renaissance" (Seattle Community College) which focuses on "three periods of re-awakening" in 15th century Europe, in Harlem during the 1920 and 30s, and the American upheavals of the 60s (181). These programs are interdisciplinary and, most importantly, explicitly situate competing perspectives within and between disciplines in relation to one another. For instance, the Queens College World Studies Program, a lower-division general education program, encourages that instead of "treating works from and about different societies and cultures in isolation or simply as examples of variety, works shall be studied in relation to each other, each offering a commentary on the others" (qtd. in Graff 188). In this program, then, learning is a process of becoming engaged with competing disciplinary perspectives that constitute current debates, rather than being informed of a single argument that is part of a debate.

These integrative programs can bring emergent practices and programs into contact with dominant practices and programs. They present possibilities for representing programs such as women's studies and cultural studies as components of core curricula or general education programs that dramatize disciplinary and methodological differences. They can rebuild an academic community by clustering the established and the emergent, in a fashion similar to interdisciplinary programs such as the Federated Learning Communities at State University of New York, Stony Brook, or the integrated studies program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, which cluster courses from differ-

ent departments, providing classes that focus on how these disciplines complement and contrast with each other (Klein 168-69; see also Graff, *Beyond* 181-85).

Only some of the interdisciplinary programs Graff cites are allied with or part of WAC programs (181). However, these sorts of programs, if WAC reformers are successful integrating writing into them, constitute an opportunity for faculty to see and argue about differences between pedagogies that enact WAC's deep vision of change and those that use writing in more superficial ways. As writing is used in some classes as a means of internalizing dominant discursive practices, it can be used in other courses as a means of learning and interrogating dominant modes of discourse, and thereby serve as a form of inquiry into the political implications of discursive practice. Programs that offer students such opportunities allow them access to the conventions of dominant practices while encouraging them to develop their critical understanding of how dominant ways of knowing are relative, culturally positioned ways of knowing. This sort of clustering of courses correlates differences between changes WAC is achieving at the margins and the center, rather than keeping various faculty appropriations of WAC isolated in separate institutional spaces.

III. Disciplinary Rhetoric, Power, and Permanence in WAC Research and Reform

Of course, our strategy of underscoring differences between appropriations of WAC may seem dangerously retrograde, given the emphasis in recent WAC discourse on accommodating each discipline's conventions and practices in the interest of promoting and preserving WAC reform (McLeod "Translating" 7; Jones and Comprone 61-64; Russell, *Writing in the Academic* 301-07; Bazerman, "Second Stage" 212). Indeed, prominent recent thinking in WAC discourse suggests that WAC programs must establish a research component, and a central administrative structure to link discipline-specific WAC research to teaching, ensuring that new teaching practices are, in Jones and Comprone's words, "substantiated by knowledge of actual disciplinary knowledge and conventions and by theory firmly based in that knowledge" (64). Jones and Comprone warn that "if we do not do this, WAC will continue to be primarily a general education program with little or no direct effect on graduate programs, and no guaranteed long-term effect on undergraduate curricula" (63-64). David Russell goes so far as to argue that "[i]f writing is to become a central focus of pedagogy,

then it must be structurally linked to the values, goals, and activities of disciplines; faculty must see a connection between encouraging better writing among their students and advancing the value and status of their disciplines — and of their own individual careers” (302). But what if, as we have been arguing, the deepest goals of WAC reform are mostly opposed to the interests of the dominant culture of expertise and those disciplinary practitioners that most profit from it?

By noting the incongruity of the deep goals of WAC and the dominant culture of expertise, we are by no means suggesting that discipline-specific rhetorical research should not play a crucial role in institutionalizing WAC reform. We are suggesting, however, that discipline-specific research can never play a neutral role in this process. Such research is always a social act positioned in relation to “internal” disciplinary conflicts (which are, of course, never simply internal but always positioned themselves in relation to “external” social formations).

It is our contention that the role of discipline-specific rhetorical research in WAC reform should be twofold. First, such research should clarify the dominant culture of expertise while illuminating and linking emergent challenges to it; and secondly, it should facilitate, as Bruce Robbins has suggested in his recent critique of the rhetoric of interdisciplinary discourse, the formation of a critical “public sphere” between and within disciplines. Since the dominant culture-of expertise does not encourage publicizing “internal” disagreements among experts to outsiders, a key goal of WAC research should be to open such a sphere of informed debate where relationships between competing discursive practices can become visible to non-specialists, and where the validity and social effects of such practices on the public can be debated. As Robbins puts it,

the interdisciplinary role of rhetoric. . . would approximate role some have ascribed to “theory”; an opening of what appears private [that is, the exclusive province of experts] in disciplines to public scrutiny and accountability. This task could be described as “public-making”: making public or visible, opening to a variety of perspectives and judgments, but also the interdisciplinary *fashioning* of new publics, new instances of judgment, new collective viewpoints. (116, emphasis Robbins’)

Since the “public” and “the public interest” are never simply given or agreed upon, the role of discipline-specific WAC research should not be

to autocratically pronounce on how “the public interest” is or is not served by disciplinary rhetorics, but to clarify and delineate dominant, residual and emergent discursive practices so that informed argument about the public import of these practices can be undertaken. Such research should seek to open a discursive space within the institution where disciplinary rhetorics become visibly situated both in relation to one another and the contested needs of society at large.

However, as we will show in this section, the problem with most second-stage calls to base WAC in discipline-specific research is that they usually emphasize, as in Jones and Comprone’s article, the strategic expediency of muting criticism of disciplinary rhetoric and accommodating disciplinary conventions and dominant ways of knowing in order to achieve “permanence” for WAC. Moreover, much of this new research does not emphasize conflicts between competing disciplinary rhetorics nor their relationships with the “public.” On the contrary, the rhetoric of this new research often encourages WAC reformers to mute criticisms of dominant uses of expertise on the grounds that each discipline is a culturally relative world that must be respected for its intrinsic differences and neither judged in relation to “public needs” nor the values of deep reform.

For instance, Christine Farris’ recent “Giving Religion, Taking Gold: Disciplinary Cultures and the Claims of Writing Across the Curriculum” echoes our belief that “in isolating a reason to use writing, WAC advocates must work from some vision of schooling” (121). However, in her article, Farris reports on ethnographic observations of two classrooms in which, as she recognizes, the writing assignments discouraged students from developing their powers of independent critical thinking. Farris states that the teacher’s instructions either stressed “form and stylistic matters, outlining. . .and footnoting” or emphasized that students use “class notes and textbook to write formally and intelligently” (117, 119). It is not surprising, then, that in an art appreciation classroom many students wrote art interpretations in which they “cut-and-pasted their lecture or quiz notes into a received pseudo-interpretation” (119). Farris explains that the research team believed that this approach to the assignment “may have reflected the more accurate assessment of [the professor’s] real objectives” than the assessment of students who did not take this approach (119). “[W]riting for [this professor] was still the act that takes place after learning has happened. Papers, even informal ones, were not exploratory. . . but fait accompli interpretations sanctioned by the critics” (129).

Farris recognizes that WAC reformers “are charged with transforming that culture” which they observe and not only describing it. However, despite her team’s observations, Farris refrains from criticizing reductive uses of writing because she believes that, if she does, “I am as guilty as Columbus in conquering the Indians” (120). The belief that each discipline, and each instructor’s classroom, is a culturally relative world where outsiders apply their values only at the risk of “colonization” (113, 114, 120, 121) leads Farris to relativize (and mute) criticisms of the pedagogy she is observing. Indeed, we would argue that this metaphor of WAC as a “colonization” of the disciplines misrepresents the real power relations surrounding writing instruction, which has long been viewed as a “service function” and has long been carried out, disproportionately, by women and low-ranking faculty.

Despite our criticisms, we applaud Farris for raising some key questions for the future of discipline-specific rhetorical research. Should WAC reformers base their judgments of pedagogical priorities on composition theory or discipline-specific rhetorics in cases where the two conflict? If, say, rhetorical research in some discipline shows that most faculty don’t revise substantively in this discipline, don’t see their writing as a medium of critical reflection, but only as a mechanical tool for communicating results, should majors in this discipline be taught to see writing this way? If, to suggest another example, most molecular biologists, as Bonnie Spanier argues, do not consider the “humanistic aspects” of their disciplines as a part of science education, should teachers such as Spanier be warned against introducing such concerns into writing courses on the grounds they don’t reflect, in Jones and Comprone’s words, “the considered results of interdisciplinary research”(64)? We doubt that rhetorical research that invokes disciplinary relativism will be able to sustain emergent challenges to dominant uses of expertise that reduce students to consumers of knowledge. To sustain such challenges, rhetorical research will need to clarify dominant discursive practices by showing how disciplinary discourses always specify relationships between observer and observed, how classificatory schemata focus attention in ways that include as well as exclude possible objects and methods of study. Obviously, by situating dominant practices among alternatives, such research will not be able to escape subjecting dominant (as well as emergent and residual) practices to public assessments of their value. On the other hand, research founded on the premise of disciplinary relativity is more likely to shift dialogue about WAC towards how writing can serve isolated interests

of disciplinary socialization, thereby moving discussions away from the goal of establishing a critical public sphere between and within disciplines.

The focus of many second-stage arguments about how discipline-specific research and writing instruction can reinforce disciplinary norms is, in our view, evidence of such a shift. First-stage reformers in the 70s and early 80s often defined WAC in opposition to dominant educational practices -- to the "banking model of education," or other models which envisioned teaching as primarily a transmission of knowledge (Jones and Comprone 62; Fulwiler, "Writing is Everybody's" 2 1-24; "Quiet" 182). However, second-stage reformers like Jones and Comprone say that such criticism must be "leavened with the considered results of interdisciplinary research into writing conventions and processes" (64). From this perspective, as Jones and Comprone put it:

permanent success in the WAC movement will be established only when writing faculty and those from other disciplines meet halfway, creating a curricular and pedagogical dialogue that is based on and reinforced by research. This dialogue must work toward balancing humanistic methods of encouraging more active and collaborative learning in WAC courses with reinforcing the ways of knowing and the writing conventions of different discourse communities. (61)

Jones and Comprone are no doubt right that a negotiation of expertise must occur to advance dialogue between reformers and disciplinary practitioners. Fulwiler and other early reformers have long noted that such negotiation of expertise would be necessary in reform ("Showing" 55-56; "Writing Workshops" 9-10). But given the service ethos in which writing instruction has long been embedded, given the dominant tendency in universities to see writing and teaching as outside the real processes of knowledge-making, what shape are such negotiations likely to take, if conducted in the terms Jones and Comprone recommend?

We welcome the dialogue Jones and Comprone foresee, if it really is collegial activity through which writing teachers and disciplinary practitioners "meet halfway." However, Jones and Comprone's overtly egalitarian language belies a subtle division of labor between humanist writing teachers and disciplinary practitioners. Indeed, Jones and Comprone imply acceptance of the dominant culture of expertise by dichotomizing and then seeking to "balance" the pedagogical and research functions of expertise: classroom "methods" on the one hand

and disciplinary “conventions” and “ways of knowing” on the other. In reflecting on how a “balance” between these opposed functions of expertise might be achieved, Jones and Comprone significantly associate the expertise of humanist first-stage reformers only with classroom “methods,” not with possible insight into disciplinary “ways of knowing” or “writing conventions” which are presumably relative to each (disciplinary) discourse community. The suggestion is made that such conventions and ways of knowing, as revealed by authoritative discipline-specific research, should be “reinforced” by writing teachers. This division of labor between humanist writing teachers and disciplinary specialists implies not reversal, but reinforcement of the service ethos long surrounding writing instruction.

By conceiving the division of expertise between reformers and disciplinary practitioners in these terms, Jones and Comprone leave reformers and teachers with little room for criticism of disciplinary cultures, effectively relativizing the ways of knowing articulated in WAC pedagogies. Indeed, we suspect that, egalitarian rhetoric aside, the terms of dialogue that Jones and Comprone recommend will effect a power play, making writing serve not as an opening where the heteroglossia of disciplines (and of WAC pedagogies) can come under public scrutiny, but as a technology for reproducing dominant disciplinary values and discursive practices. Although Jones and Comprone claim that rooting WAC teaching in research on disciplinary conventions “does not mean that those conventions need to be slavishly imitated” (65) in classrooms, we believe that dominant discursive practices are unlikely to be interrogated in classrooms if teachers are charged with reinforcing conventions revealed by the “considered results” of research. Such language situates writing teachers as technical implementors of research conclusions about disciplinary conventions. We would argue, on the contrary, that writing teachers should feel empowered to draw on personal knowledge and research that situates dominant practices among oppositional alternatives. Without such recognition of alternatives, discipline-specific research may make it more difficult than it already is for teachers to represent academic writing as an activity receptive to student perspectives and intentions.

Recently, a number of compositionists and prominent WAC reformers have raised similar concerns about the direction of the American WAC movement. For instance, Gary Tate considers the possibility that “the recent interest in academic discourse and the various communities of writers that exist within the college and univer-

sity is a small part of . . . the increasing professionalization of undergraduate education in this country” (320). Along similar lines, both Nancy Martin and James Britton, two prominent founders of the language-across-the-curriculum movement in Britain, have recently questioned attempts to align WAC interests with those of the dominant culture of expertise. Nancy Martin suggests that the American WAC movement’s concern for “adequate standards of written language” distinguishes it from the British movement whose goal “represented a big shift in the concept of subject English” and was not primarily “to improve language but to improve learning” (4-5). Martin warns that the interests of LAC in postsecondary institutions

. . . is not seen to serve the interests of the specialist or the specialism. However, . . . there is a direction in teaching, as distinct from research, that is by nature a shared one. . . This, and not the vanishing commonality of the different subjects, is the promise of language across the curriculum (21; see also Britton 47, 59-60).

The danger of WAC research that implies that rhetorical pedagogies should be relative to each disciplinary culture is that it suppresses the ways in which relationships with other cultures and other ways of knowing, often hierarchical and contestatory relationships, are now and have always been aspects of disciplinarity. The historical s&ordination of rhetoric and writing instruction both within English departments and within the scientific ethos of the late nineteenth century university, is a case in point (see note 4). When research focuses on dominant conventions without tracing their relationships with emergent and residual conventions, the outcome is likely to be reinforcement of the “patterned isolation” of different forms of knowledge (Graff, *Professing* 60; Veysey 337-38) which we believe WAC should work against. Moreover, the more such research focuses on how writing instruction can “reinforce” disciplinary norms, the more likely emergent challenges to institutional culture (such as the ones we linked in the previous section) will become fragmented and be pushed into the background.

Norms and conventions are, after all, representations of majority practices in a community. But where does discipline by discipline investigation of norms and conventions locate Spanier’s feminist critique of the language of molecular biology (which we cited in the previous section)? Spanier readily admits that her desire to “address ideology in the discourse and practice of science” is shared only by a relatively small minority of scientists, and is likely to be resisted by

larger disciplinary communities. Indeed, feminist critique is located both everywhere (as a marginal set of alternative perspectives within all the disciplines) and nowhere in the disciplines. (For accounts of how the legitimacy of feminism as a field of specialization is undermined by disciplinary cultures, see Scott, "Campaign" 37-38; *Gender* 17-18, 29-30; and Bauer 386.) We believe that since feminist critique challenges dominant discursive norms across the disciplines, there are powerful reasons why WAC research in discipline-specific rhetorics might not adequately represent it, especially if researchers regard their efforts as serving dominant disciplinary values in a bid to make WAC permanent.

Before we conclude by expanding on our view of what WAC's research agenda should look like, we want to acknowledge that some researchers of disciplinary rhetoric have given serious thought to the likely social effects of this research. Charles Bazerman's recent writing in particular gives significant attention to the dangers that a narrow focus on disciplinary socialization presents for students. Bazerman criticizes rhetorical critics of the disciplines (among whom we number ourselves) who may, by relying on textbook accounts of the disciplines, "make disciplines seem more like purveyors of hegemonic univocality rather than the locales of heteroglossic contention they are" ("From Cultural" 63). Bazerman shows how his own inquiries into disciplinary rhetoric "have not at all fostered the enclosed dominance of this discourse" (66), since they demonstrate a heteroglossia that can always be redirected. In Bazerman's words,

"[t]eaching students the rhetoric of the disciplines . . . does not necessarily indoctrinate them unreflectively into forms that will oppress them and others. . . . Explicit teaching of discourse holds what is taught up for inspection. It provides the students with the means to rethink the ends of the discourse and offers a wide array of means to carry the discourse in new directions" (64-65).

Bazerman illustrates this possibility of redirecting discourse by showing how the discourse of ethnography transformed itself from its nineteenth century beginnings in the service of imperialism to its currently vital self-consciousness about power relations between self and other (65).

We applaud Bazerman's professed goal as a researcher of disciplinary rhetorics to reveal disciplines as "locales of heteroglossic contention" and as never fully "enclosed." However, by criticizing the use of textbooks as indicators of disciplinary practice, Bazerman

neglects to explore how disciplines actually limit heteroglossic contention in practice, especially in relation to students and alternative sources of cultural authority. The textbooks, lectures, and short-answer tests, etc. on which rhetorical critics of the disciplines often base their critiques are the dominant vehicle through which “research” is represented to students in universities. The point is that textbooks are so stereotypically reductive (and difficult to change) *across the curriculum* because they express a dominant institutional culture which sharply dichotomizes the pedagogical and research functions of expertise. If WAC researchers neglect to explore how disciplines limit heteroglossia in practice, especially in pedagogical practice, they may, perhaps unwittingly, reinforce this dichotomy. Indeed, many WAC texts produced during the 1980s have perpetuated this reductive mode of representing scholarly behavior and practice. (See Mahala 779-781; also for an excellent account of how textbooks on research writing continue to suppress heteroglossia and reproduce dominant forms of knowing, see McCormick). Bazerman ignores the fact that textbooks, far from being naive distortions of the heteroglossia of disciplinary practice, reflect the results of extensive discipline-specific rhetorical research that textbook publishers have long conducted to guide their decision-making. (How many of us have filled out cards explaining exactly what we like and don't like about a particular textbook, often in exchange for a desk-copy of a text of our choice?) Textbooks are actually a fairly good reflection of the dominant pedagogical uses of expertise in schools and colleges.

We differ from Bazerman in believing that if students are to experience the messy and embroiled interchanges that produced a transformation in ethnographic discourse, the dominant pedagogical uses of expertise must be significantly transformed. Classrooms must be recognized as sites where knowledge is resisted, queried and produced (and not merely distributed), and where students read and write to appropriate and interrogate dominant discursive practices. Writing instruction should help students gain awareness of the power effects of dominant practices, the relations of these practices to alternative or oppositional discourses, and the multiple possibilities for students to inscribe themselves in discourse. Lastly, research must come to be valued less for its abstract “contributions” to knowledge and more for how teachable it is, and how it can contribute to informed social practice.

Fortunately, alternative and oppositional practices will continue to emerge in most disciplines. Therefore, the work of WAC reformers is not the work of converting disciplinary practitioners to their own “politically correct” points of view, but of intervening creatively in disciplinary conflicts and ambivalences that are already developing locally. If WAC reformers begin to develop rhetorical research that foregrounds fault-lines between various research communities, and between these and the public, perhaps they will succeed both in making education more spacious for students and in giving a legitimate place to different kinds of faculty expertise in reform. Such research can make criticisms of institutional culture more informed, specific, and locally applicable. However, to perform these functions, we believe WAC research must focus not on disciplines conceived as cultural monads, but on how dominant, residual and emergent ways of knowing and doing have evolved in historical, often hierarchical, relationships to one another and to cultural authorities outside the university. WAC research must also make visible how disciplines have historically tried to limit, contain, and even deny such heteroglossic contention. Such inquiry is more likely than research agendas informed by disciplinary relativism to put emergent cultures between and within the disciplines on the curricular map.

The programs, sites, and emergent uses of expertise described in the second section of this essay might be especially valuable to study. There is often a strong public character to such interdisciplinary programs, especially when they focus on bringing knowledge from a variety of disciplines to bear on urgent communal problems, as for example, in the Program in Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine, which emphasizes, in Julie Thompson Klein’s words, “direct interaction between the intellectual life of the university and recurring problems of social and physical environments” (174). Similarly, Klein describes a program at the University Center of Roskilde in Denmark which has sponsored interdisciplinary projects on community interests such as working conditions in Danish breweries, educational problems, and Danish volunteers who fought in Germany on the Eastern front during World War II. In such programs, Klein reports, interdisciplinarity is highly valued because “it is conceived as politically and socially engaged work on problems that arise in contemporary society. Thus interdisciplinarity is not considered an asset in and of itself, but rather a consequence of the kind of problems in which faculty and students are engaged” (158-61).

Klein also describes many courses and programs that go beyond traditional aims of liberal education towards the establishment of a rhetoric of inquiry that questions the values and epistemologies of traditional disciplines (166-67, 172-75, 195-96). Some of the programs are general education programs, but others are interdisciplinary undergraduate concentrations, and some are graduate programs. Unfortunately, as Klein notes, “interdisciplinary graduate programs tend to be more ‘multidisciplinary’ than ‘interdisciplinary,’” partly because graduate education focuses so heavily on training specialists (169). However, even such “multidisciplinary” graduate programs offer WAC researchers an important opportunity to correlate epistemic differences between disciplines by examining how advanced learners struggle to achieve a professional voice among competing disciplinary discourses.

We contend that the study of discursive practices in such emergent public spheres represents the most desirable course for WAC rhetorical research the course that offers the best chance of opening more such public spheres and including students in them. But WAC research can also play a valuable role in traditional disciplinary settings if it attempts to illuminate how writing often poses itself for students as a struggle to negotiate between competing discourses and ways of knowing — not only those of the university, but those of the home, of religion, of ethnicity, of mass culture, etc. Mike Rose’s *Lives on the Boundary* is an excellent example of this kind of research. Learning the discursive practices of many disciplines at once (as undergraduate students are called upon to do) is never a simple linear process of socialization, and WAC research can reveal the cultural detours and conflicts along the way. In some ways, then, classroom-based research in traditional disciplines, if it makes visible how some students struggle to negotiate between competing cultural affiliations in their writing, can be as interdisciplinary and “multicultural” as research focusing on learning in interdisciplinary programs. Both kinds of research can help make faculty more ethically and politically aware as they learn how the practice of their expertise in teaching interacts, and often conflicts, with ways of knowing students have already internalized.

Of course, this strategy does pose dangers. If second-stage WAC research follows this path — becoming in effect a forum where differences between ways of knowing can become visible and debated — it could revitalize the challenge WAC poses to the institutional culture of the university. Such research, if WAC reformers can gain institutional sanction and support for it, might even provide, in Fulwiler

and Young's words, "a more or less permanent structure whereby writing-across-the-curriculum advocacy is ever renewed and expanded" (294). But new research structures, and the teaching practices they sanction, will not be as stable as long-established disciplines. Plainly, such structures are likely to make entrenched practices and perspectives more open to public questioning, even if reformers make it clear that they are not enemies of disciplines. However, in noting the danger of resistance from entrenched positions, we must also point out that permanence can never be an unqualified value in reform. Reform means change, and change will always have its enemies.

Notes

1. References to a transition in the WAC movement can be found as early as 1985, when C.W. Griffin asks, in "Programs for Writing Across the Curriculum: A Report," "the *first act* is now over; what do we do for the *second*?" (403, our emphasis). In the late 1980s, however, there is more pervasive talk about a transition, centered on how to strengthen and preserve the reform effected by WAC during the 1970s and 1980s. See, for instance, Anne Walker's "Writing Across the Curriculum: The Second Decade" (1988); Susan H. McLeod's "Translating Enthusiasm into Curricular Change" (1988) and "Writing Across the Curriculum: The Second Stage, and Beyond" (1989); and Charles Bazerman's "The Second Stage in Writing Across the Curriculum" (1991).

2. Claims about WAC effecting common educational goals and promoting a community of scholars are conspicuous in literature published in the 1980s. This is not to say that reformers ignore the obstacles to achieving these objectives. Rather, it is commonplace for reformers to claim that WAC should and does effect these ends. See, for instance, Toby Fulwiler's "How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work," (121); James L. Kinneavy's "Writing Across the Curriculum," (13-20); Elaine Maimon's "Cinderella to Hercules: Demythologizing Writing Across the Curriculum," (3, 1 I); and Susan McLeod's "Defining Writing Across the Curriculum," (24). Also see David Russell's comments on WAC reformers and the idea of a "return to a homogeneous academic community and a common learning," articulated in "Writing Across the Curriculum in Historical Perspective: Toward a Social Interpretation," (66).

3. Hosis 'argued that "co-operation in the teaching of English" necessitated overcoming certain "difficulties," particularly the fact that among faculty "each goes his own way, quite unfamiliar with the attitude of the other," a state of affairs partly caused by "the overspecialization of students in the universities and of teachers in the high schools" (478-79).

4. In a recent article, Robert Connors examines the historical roots of the service ethos that has long surrounded writing instruction. Connors documents the transformation of rhetoric and writing instruction from "one of the most respected fields of higher education" in the early nineteenth century to "a grim apprenticeship, to be escaped as soon as practicable" (55) in the late nineteenth century. Connors connects this fall with the rise of the belletristic study of literature and the philological study of language as the dominant fields of "English" (63), as well as with the rise of the modern departmental structure of the university (58-63). Connors explains how this structure was imported from German universities in the nineteenth century to form the basis of undergraduate education in the U.S., even though the German system had "no undergraduate component" and "was devoted to higher study and research rather than to any pedagogical end" (58). Connors follows Veysey in arguing that the German system privileged empirical scientific research and reflected an ideal of "pure science" (61) in which expertise in rhetoric and writing had no place, since study of rhetorical practices was not perceived as "scientific," was not amenable to laboratory methods, and evinced an ethically suspect worldliness that corrupted the expert's objectivity (61-63).

5. It should be noted that Perry acknowledges Fulwiler's work on journal writing (155), particularly 'The Personal Connection: Journal Writing Across the Curriculum.'

6 The importance of these activities, formats and approaches to learning are evident in much discourse on honors. For a discussion on the idea and practice of the seminar, which emerges in the early 1920s, see Swarthmore College Faculty's *An Adventure in Education: Swarthmore College under Frank Aydelotte*, particularly chapters 3 and 4. *The Superior Student in American Higher Education*, a volume edited by Joseph W. Cohen and published by the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS) in 1966, speaks about the importance of the seminar, colloquia, and discussion-oriented classroom in honors (46-47, passim). For an overview of early honors programs that identifies important issues pertinent to the quality of

honors education, see Arnold B. Danzig's "Honors at the University of Maryland: A Status Report on Programs for Talented Students," (4- 10).

7. Faculty involved in the honors program collaborated with other faculty to institutionalize the Cultural Studies Program at Drake University. Some faculty who were involved in DUFA (Drake University Faculty Association), a group concerned with institutional reform, joined with honors faculty to form a Cultural Studies reading group. Starting with this reading group, this alliance of faculty developed courses, then a curriculum that offered a university-sanctioned concentration, as well as eventually secured a budget line for the program.

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