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Abstract

Within Writing Studies, the tension between pedagogy and theory, between teaching and disciplinary status receives much commentary. This dissertation explores that tension within the context of the undergraduate Writing major. I begin by reviewing scholarship about advanced composition, advanced Writing, and the Writing major. I read this literature in light of concerns about student subjectivity, authorship, and disciplinary participation. Through that reading, I explore the conflicted status of the student subject imagined within this literature. The subject I discern contains elements of what Susan Miller describes as the normative subject of composition as well as elements of a revised and politically astute Writing Studies. In chapter two, I demonstrate how these elements also appeared in the discourse of students who participated in the two-institution study of undergraduate Writing majors upon which the remaining chapters of this dissertation are based. In chapter three, I argue that when students articulated the work of the Writing major, they privileged relational, affective labor in ways that may potentially affirm arguments for the Writing major as a vehicle for disciplinarity as well as assert pedagogy's continued importance within Writing Studies even as its practitioners pursue academic professionalization. Chapter four examines students' discourse and their writing for scholarly, professional, and civic purposes in order to demonstrate how students contribute to—and participate in—goals widely held within Writing Studies through academic, creative, and creative nonfiction forms. In the fifth and concluding chapter, I consider the implications of this research for scholarly writing practice and for writing pedagogy. I also acknowledge the limitations of this current project and outline an agenda for future research. Ultimately, this dissertation encourages a broad understanding of students' disciplinary contribution and participation.

A NEW FIELD OF DREAMS: A STUDY OF THE WRITING MAJOR

by

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DISSERTATION
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric.

Syracuse University
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Acknowledgements

I come from Syracuse University. I come from Composition and Cultural Rhetoric. I am humbled by the genealogy of teacher-scholars to which doctoral study in this program connects me; I also take pride in earning a degree from CCR. At the same time, a great weight of responsibility comes with this distinction. This place made me a Writing Studies professional, which means that I am accountable to Writing Studies' body of knowledge. My experiences in CCR, I feel, require me to act always and everywhere as an advocate for a capacious understanding of writing, for a new field of dreams about literacy and literacy education, for teachers and students. I acknowledge those individuals who made this dissertation and the career I chose achievable.

I cannot adequately express the debt I owe to my core dissertation committee members. Rebecca Moore Howard, the director of this dissertation, has made contributions of incalculable significance to my work as a researcher, writer, and teacher. The scholarship I do and the kind of scholar I am—my scholarly work and my academic identity—will be shaped for the rest of my career by her fierce commitment to writing research as a means of transforming the politics of literacy and literacy instruction. Her willingness to provide stylistic instruction also leaves an inedible mark on my writing. Lois Agnew has encouraged me to turn interesting insights into coherent arguments. Her ability to respond with thoughtful and copious comments quickly (astonishingly so!) ensured that I always had much to be thinking about throughout the writing process. This dissertation essentially began in Eileen Schell's research methods course. An idea that began in the fall of 2009, an idea that Eileen supported and disciplined, resulted in a research project that eventually evolved into *A New Field of Dreams*. Her feedback on the dissertation

consistently prodded me toward increased analytical depth and precision, especially in regards to how I contended with student participants' own words.

I am grateful to Sandra Jamieson for serving on this committee. This dissertation—and the state of the Writing major—would look very different if Sandra had not dedicated so much of her research and service agenda to advanced Writing and the Writing major. The *field* owes her a tremendous debt. Patrick Berry has provided invaluable editorial comments on the dissertation manuscript. More generally, however, Patrick has served as an encouraging presence during his time as a CCR faculty member. If I were to "tag" Patrick's contributions as a faculty member with two words, they would be "thoughtfulness" and "kindness."

I wish to name those current and former CCR faculty whose time in Syracuse overlapped with mine because—no matter how briefly or seemingly small the interaction—each of them have left some mark on me or my thinking: Minnie Bruce Pratt, Iswari Pandey, Gwendolyn Pough, Margaret Himley, Steve Parks, Collin Brooke, Krista Kennedy, Kevin Browne, Tony Scott, and Adams Banks.

Though Louise Wetherbee Phelps and Carol Lipson both retired from Syracuse University at the end of my first year in the CCR program, I feel a debt to both of them because of their lasting *and continuing* contributions to the SU Writing Program as well as the field of Writing and Rhetorical Studies. Additionally, both Louise and Carol provided support and encouragement as I undertook the dissertation and job search processes.

CCR students—my contemporaries and those students in cohorts that came before me—provided a humane network of support that made my progress possible.

The vibrant teaching and learning community that exists throughout the entire Writing Program has been an amazing space in which to do my scholarship focused on curriculum and

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Hugh Burns and AnaLouise Keating at Texas Woman's University gave me a vision of the academy I could believe in as an MA student. It's a vision I still hold.

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I want to note the importance of my social media communities (especially Facebook) to my writing process. There are too many individuals to name, but all y'all have been an endless source of encouragement.

I wish Daddy (Jerry Don Geiger) were here to see this moment. I am grateful for the support of Barbara Jean Geiger; Mama is always my biggest advocate.

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Introduction

The appropriate place to begin this dissertation focused on students' experiences within the undergraduate Writing major actually might be with a story about a moment from an introductory composition class. During the 2013 spring semester, I taught a general education writing and research course. Early one morning, while responding to student essays, I found myself composing this comment to one particular student: "Was there a specific reason for using a general reference source for a definition? Wouldn't be more productive to draw from a specific scholarly source?" In this instance, the student turned to an online dictionary definition of "rhetoric." The goal of the assignment was to work through ideas from course readings and engage in analysis of two or three pieces we examined together. Two of our shared readings included explicit definitions of the term "rhetoric."

As I wrote that comment, I felt myself transported back to spring 2002. It was the same sort of comment—one designed to teach the distinctions between and among different kinds of sources—that *I* received as a first-year college student in a general education U.S. history course. I'd cited an encyclopedia of biographical sketches, but no secondary or primary sources specifically addressing the person I discussed. And now I can't even remember the historical figure! However, I remember that comment from the instructor. That instructor helped me—and years later I helped that student in my class—to "invent the university." According to David Bartholomae, academics involved in university-level instruction encourage students "to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (134). To term academic discourse acquisition in this way does not mean that students act as the originators of college-level language expression or the heroic agents who utterly transform

scholarly knowledge and practice. It does, however, mean supporting students in the task of "finding some compromise between idiosyncrasy, a personal history, and the requirements of convention, the history of a discipline" (Bartholomae 135). In this way, *A New Field of Dreams: A Study of the Writing Major* might be considered an examination of how undergraduate students "invent the Writing major." Through an investigation of what undergraduate students value about their experiences as Writing majors, I explore an enduring tension within Writing Studies: the connection between pedagogy and theory, between the long-held commitment to teaching and the productive pursuit of disciplinary status. The ultimate contention of this dissertation is that an attention to Writing majors' potential as contributors to goals widely held within Writing Studies provides a way to productively complicate the supposed bifurcation of pedagogy and disciplinarity.

In chapter one, I review scholarship that investigates the role of student subjectivity and authorship within Writing Studies (e.g., Miller, Helmers, Herrington and Curtis, Howard, Horner, Trimbur, and others) with special attention to those scholars who argue explicitly or implicitly for the role of undergraduate students as participants in, and contributors to, the field. Some scholars (e.g., DeJoy, Grobman, Robillard) point to the predicament the field faces when it takes seriously its own most optimistic rhetoric about who students are and what they can accomplish. This field, built in no small measure on scholars' constructions and representations of students, has at times reproduced students as universal subjects, as narrow figures who act as supporting evidence in a case for particular pedagogies. Critiques of composition's knowledge making practices that reproduce such subjects have perhaps reached commonplace status, but they suggest challenges with which we must continue to wrestle, especially in light of the development of advanced programs of study. In light of the scholarship of student subjectivity

and authorship, I read the three connected areas of advanced composition, advanced Writing, and the Writing major with attention to the presences and absences of students. I explore how this scholarship tends to construct Writing majors and advanced Writing students.

My framework for understanding the field's constructions of students comes from Susan Miller. The *textual subject* is the term used here for what Miller calls the literary subject and the student subject of composition: a figure with low status within the culture's symbolic logic, a status marked the inconsequential nature of the student's texts. The *rhetorical subject* refers to the figure that exemplifies those features Miller ascribes to a politically transformed and powerful Writing Studies. In chapter one, I ultimately make two arguments regarding the scholarship about the Writing major as well as the scholarship that anticipates it. First, this body of literature acts as a continuation of the textual carnival described and critiqued by Miller, an operation of social dynamics that work to reinforce the low status of students, their writing, and composition instructors. Second, it contains the potential for its own revision by anticipating the figure of student-as-participant in Writing Studies. This chapter closes by describing the two schools I studied and the methods used to collect the data presented and discussed in the remaining chapters.

In chapter two, I argue that the subject of the Writing major—as constituted in the commonalities and differences in the discourse of students in this study—has the potential to mobilize elements of the textual subject as well as elements of the rhetorical subject I find at work in the professional scholarship. I offer a tentative demonstration of how textual and rhetorical subjectivities circulate within the Writing major. The argument of this chapter emerges through my engagement with students' descriptions of their experiences with first-year Writing,

required courses in the Writing major, research writing, and projects that student understand as having a life beyond a single course.

In chapter three, I contend that students' understanding of teachers' labor, frequently characterized in affective and relational terms, may provide a complicated affirmation of Writing Studies' disciplinarity and of teaching as a continued focal point within field. This chapter relies on Bruce Horner's critique of faculty attitudes toward academic work that privileges research activity over teaching, Deborah Brandt's notion of literacy sponsorship, and some of the work within Writing Studies on affect, intimacy, and disciplinarity. Through an examination of how students value teachers' relational labor, I argue that the work of Writing major programs sponsors students' literacy development in ways that promote rhetorical subjects and that challenge functionalist ideologies of writing. However, this sponsorship occurs in competition with lay, or non-disciplinary, conceptions of writing and of literacy educators, conceptions that might seem to position teachers as personalities more than as professionals.

In chapter four, I consider more precisely what student contributions might look like in the context of the Writing major, taking texts that students value and their motivations for majoring in Writing as my starting point. I understand student submissions to the current study, as well as their interview and survey comments, as what Janis Haswell and Richard Haswell call *authorial offerings*, as singular gifts to the audience that point to a writer's potential. In order to heuristically organize and consider these wide-ranging discursive gifts, I turn to Rebecca Moore Howard's three-part proposal for advanced Writing curricula: disciplinary knowledge, professional preparation, and civic writing. Howard's structure provides a way to think broadly about how to define undergraduate contribution. While I continue examine survey and interview

data, I also discuss and share excerpts of student writing that participants believed addressed their skills and interests as Writing majors.

In chapter five, I aim to articulate some of the implications of this study 1) for scholarly writing practices that represent and include students in Writing Studies scholarship and 2) for teaching practices that are grounded in a perspective that assumes students at all levels can contribute to the varied disciplinary, political, and professional goals encouraged within Writing Studies. By taking the Writing major as a site for inquiry about student subjectivity, I believe there is an opportunity to better understand and effect how systems of representation and knowledge production in both scholarship and teaching mutually inform each other. My hope is that my suggestions will be useful to two primary audiences: 1) scholars who conduct research on student subjectivity, the Writing major, and advanced Writing and 2) teachers committed to the project of positioning students as a constituency that makes varied and valuable contributions to the field and the politics of literacy.

Chapter 1. The Dynamics of Student Subjectivity: The Writing Major, Authorship, and Undergraduate Participation in Writing Studies

In 2000, Rebecca Moore Howard opened her introduction to the edited collection *Coming of Age: The Advanced Writing Curriculum* by noting the enduring problem of how composition theory and composition pedagogy interact with each other. Specifically, she writes, "As composition studies has gained disciplinary status, it has developed an increasingly troubled relationship to its own pedagogy" ("History" xiii). Susan Miller commented in 1991 on the conflation of the desire to end composition instructors' low-level status with the goal of extricating the field's "members from the defining activity of any sort of academic practitioner— teaching" (193). Even earlier, Stephen North predicted that, as composition continued to develop as a field, scholars would want to move away from teaching (367). It would seem that with the definitive establishment of a scholarly discipline, the relative desirability of theory rises and that of pedagogy falls. Howard views *Coming of Age* as challenging that hierarchy. By "describ[ing] ideal advanced writing courses," collection contributors "demonstrate that pedagogical practices—in this case, course design—are driven by theory that can be articulated and can then propel further theory, pedagogy, and curriculum design" (xiii). Thus, pedagogy is productively theoretical and theoretically productive.

Theory can get along just fine without students, taking anything as its object of inquiry; pedagogy *needs* students. Or does it? If the advanced Writing curriculum (or the Writing major) is "the missing piece in the argument for the disciplinary status of writing studies" (Howard, "History" xxii), then it becomes particularly important to pay attention to the representations of students within scholarship that articulates this missing piece. Emboldened with the new curricular possibilities that follow from disciplinary equality with scholars in other fields (such

as, for instance, those in English Studies), do Writing Studies scholars confront or accept what Miller identifies as the "fundamental structure" that "makes 'low' status intrinsic to student writing" (183)? Maybe full disciplinarity—and its attendant curriculum beyond introductory-level teaching—helps make Writing Studies even more of "a 'force to be reckoned with,' an entity that can achieve responses that would have been denied before" (Miller 183). Perhaps this curriculum enables undergraduate participation as contributing members to the fully realized discipline of Writing Studies. At the same time, might this entity empowered with disciplinarity simultaneously transform *and* continue the operations Miller identifies as foundational to composition instruction?

Published in 1991, Miller's *Textual Carnivals* provides a critique of the role of composition in the cultural hierarchy that celebrates the teaching of literature and diminishes the teaching of writing. Miller interrogates the stark contradiction between FYW's ubiquitous existence and its lack of departmental power—a contradiction maintained by the systematic devaluation of composition as the nonintellectual, sacrificial labor of low-status teachers upon the inconsequential and error-ridden texts written by a mass and undesirable student body. Within the critical analysis Miller sets forth, she challenges the notion that composition and literature exist as separate or opposing camps. A debased composition serves as the occasion for first-year students' unauthorized texts (i.e., culturally devalued writing). It also supports and buttresses English departments' promotion of literature as a collection of idealized, valuable texts. Basically, composition exists as a complement to literature within a structural and symbolic arrangement that preserves distinctions between high culture (i.e., literature) and low culture (i.e., student writing).[1] The movement of the textual carnival works not only to reproduce

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[1] For Miller's accounting of the history behind this arrangement, see her chapter "Rereading for the Plot" (especially 45-66).

social hierarchies, but it also acts on the personhood of those individuals engaged in its activities, on the subjectivities of students and teachers. This traditional hierarchical, subjectivizing function of composition may assert itself within the scholarship about advanced composition, advanced Writing, and the Writing major.

The central contention of this chapter is that scholarship on the Writing major (and its precursors) demonstrates a conflicted relationship between the disciplinary status of Writing Studies and the teaching of writing, a relationship that manifests itself in the student subject imagined within this literature. This contention rests on two supporting claims, which emerge from analysis of the scholarship, and those claims establish the exigency for my research methods and methodology. First, Writing major scholarship and its predecessors evince issues related to student subjectivity similar to those identified by Miller and others within Writing Studies scholarship more generally. Moreover, the student subject of advanced literacy instruction regularly functions *in absentia*: the stories, voices, and texts of specific students appear in this scholarship infrequently. Second, even as contemporary efforts within Writing Studies to redefine undergraduates as participants in the discipline demonstrate promise for revising these issues of subjectivity, elements of the student-as-contributive-participant frame can also be observed within scholarship about the Writing major as well as scholarship that anticipates it.[2] In other words, the discourses of advanced composition, advanced Writing, and the Writing major themselves contain (along with trends that may construct a constrained student subject) the potential for their own revision of the student subject. Finally, the methodology and methods employed in the present study respond to the relative absence of student voices in the relevant scholarship. The collection of student-generated data 1) fills a general gap in scholarly representations of how students engage with the project of being a Writing major and 2) extends

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[2] For example, see Grobman and Kinkead, Grobman, Greer, Downs and Wardle.

the ongoing project of imagining undergraduates as participants who make productive

contributions to scholarly, professional, and civic writing goals generally promoted within

Writing Studies.

In support of these claims, this chapter relies on several areas of scholarship within

Writing Studies: issues of student subjectivity (i.e., who students are understood to be),

authorship (i.e., who produces texts and how those texts are valued), and undergraduate

participation and research (i.e., how student activities contribute to Writing Studies). In the

following section, I consider an example that rests at the intersection of these issues. Next, I

review selected Writing Studies literature about subjectivity, authorship, and undergraduate

disciplinary participation in order to bring them into theoretical clarity. In light of that review, I

then read literature about the Writing major, advanced Writing, and advanced composition with

particular attention to the presence and absence of students in these texts. Certain questions

motivate this review: Where are the *students* in scholarship about the Writing major and

scholarship that prefigures the major? *Who* are the advanced students professional Writing

Studies scholars construct? Finally, I describe the methodology and methods employed in the

research study upon which chapters two, three, and four rely.

CITATION BREAKDOWN: PARTICIPATING IN A STORY *IN MEDIAS RES*

The current moment bursts with exciting potential for undergraduate involvement with

Writing Studies. More than a decade since the appearance of the groundbreaking collection

Coming of Age, undergraduate Writing major programs proliferate at a rapid pace with

disciplinary knowledge becoming more central to many of them (Committee on the Major).

Scholarship about Writing majors is published with some regularity. Also, important edited

collections on both the Writing major and the cultivation of a research culture in undergraduate English Studies appeared in early 2010. Indeed, not only is the Writing major on the rise, but many ideas and practices currently circulate that invite a reimagining of who students are and of what it's possible for them to accomplish. In other words, the field is, as Nancy DeJoy calls for in *Process This: Undergraduate Writing in Composition Studies*, "open[ing] spaces in which participation and contribution" might "become defining features of the relationships between and among" all constituencies in Writing Studies, including undergraduate students (6). For example, 2003 witnessed the debut of *Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric*, a journal that publishes scholarship about writing and rhetoric composed by undergraduates.[3] Thus, many recent efforts promote robust Writing Studies curricula and construct students as active agents within the field. This language about participation and contribution prevalent in scholarship about undergraduate research is relevant to considerations of the Writing major because students who make the choice to study writing have particular contributions to make to the field and to Writing programs. These must surely be labeled exciting developments among compositionists.

Let me not, however, weave an uncomplicated narrative of progress about developments surrounding either the Writing major or the student-as-participant in Writing Studies. Laurie Grobman contends that as "the proliferation of writing majors occurring nationwide" continues, the role of undergraduate research in Writing Studies will increase "and faculty-scholars will need to address the emergent issues" (W176). *Young Scholars*, one mechanism for the circulation of undergraduate research, is an important site that works to make the idea of students-as-knowledge-producers more than a lauded ideal—to make it an embodied reality.

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[3] However, it's still not a given that even professionally active teacher-scholars will be familiar with this development. Informal surveys at both national and regional conference sessions I've attended indicate that many composition teachers are still not aware of *Young Scholars*.

Consequently, issues that arise with regard to professional scholars' engagement with articles in *Young Scholars* potentially point to fault lines within the discipline. Such issues may highlight where progressive practices and optimistic rhetoric come up against recurring concerns regarding student subjectivity and authorship.

Discussion of a piece from *Young Scholars* will help make clear the theoretical and pedagogical stakes. In their 2003 *Young Scholars* article, "When Peer Tutors Write about Writing: Literacy Narratives and Self Reflection," Heather Bastian and Lindsey Harkness perform an analysis of literacy narratives composed by Writing Associates, undergraduate students working as embedded writing tutors in courses at Lafayette College. Bastian and Harkness, both English majors at the time of their research, investigate issues of writing identity among proficient students. As they end their piece, they acknowledge and thank four instructors, including William Carpenter and Bianca Falbo, for their encouragement and support (120). In 2006, Carpenter and Falbo published "Literacy, Identity and the 'Successful' Student Writer," an edited collection chapter that examines issues of writing identity in literacy narratives composed by Lafayette College Writing Associates, treating these narratives, as their title indicates, as texts from "'successful' student writers." It seems not insignificant to note that the 2006 Carpenter and Falbo chapter does not mention the Bastian and Harkness article published in 2003. In short, there are no words of acknowledgment that undergraduate students worked as research agents using similar data from the same institutional site to parallel purposes as professional scholars.

More important than her absence as a cited source, though, is the way Bastian does appear in the chapter and the effect of that appearance. She surfaces as a research participant only (104-05).[4] There is no sense that this student would or could or did publish her own

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[4] Considering the concerns raised by Amy E. Robillard about citing students pseudonymously or partially, it's encouraging that Carpenter and Falbo use Bastian's real and full name.

scholarship based on research that employed similar methods and materials as professional scholars. In other words, the presence of Bastian-the-*research-participant* and "'successful' student writer" makes clear the absence of Bastian-the-*researcher* who made contributive knowledge even as these figures were co-emergent with each other. Despite the fact that both subject positions (research participant and disciplinary agent) informed and implicated the other, this instance of professional Writing Studies scholarship recognizes only one while omitting the other.

Though not about the Writing major, this example dramatically illustrates the sort of issues that attend initiatives to position undergraduates as agents who make knowledge within Writing Studies, issues that the growing number of Writing majors may well exacerbate. Undergraduate majors are surely one kind of disciplinary participant. This moment of citation breakdown involves students who committed to the study of English, conducted research, and published their findings. The actions of these students position them as disciplinary participants who make contributive knowledge. This position and their work sounds similar to what a Writing major program might encourage among its students. Such an illustration proves suggestive, and it raises the question of under what circumstances students are understood as makers of valued knowledge. Literature reviewed in the following sections helps address this question with attention to how student subjects have been constructed.

THE STUDENT SUBJECT OF WRITING STUDIES

Disciplines contain and produce subjects. Through questions, methods, and knowledge claims, disciplinary practitioners acknowledge one kind of subject (i.e., its content). However, disciplines also produce certain sorts of consciousness, particular sensibilities. While I hope to

avoid the "enterprise of reducing human beings to a subject position" (Haswell and Haswell 154), the language of subjectivity facilitates productive inquiry into some of the effects of composition teaching and discourse. If the Writing major functions as a site for the disciplinary work of Writing Studies, then what sorts of human subjectivity might it promote? One way to approach this question is to consider arguments about the student subject constituted within traditional composition courses and composition discourse. If the Writing major exists in any degree of continuity with the historical pedagogical projects of composition, then these analyses could offer insight into the subject of the Writing major and early-twenty-first-century Writing Studies.

The *textual carnival* that Miller articulates provides insight into some of the traditional and continuing functions of composition; the genealogy of Miller's term and the subjectivizing work it articulates deserve closer attention. While Miller invokes Mikhail Bakhtin briefly, she primarily relies on literary scholars Peter Stallybrass and Allon White for an operational definition of the "carnival" and "carnivalesque" that develops throughout the entire body of *Textual Carnivals*. The logic of the "carnival" establishes "relations between high and low discourses," relations that link "'debased' and 'established,' 'marginal' and 'central' structures," and within the textual carnival of composition, those structures "define and constrain the nature and consequences of unauthorized [. . .] writing" (1). In this role, composition instruction infuses culturally dominant values throughout a mass student body by comparing "literary authorship [. . .] to the inadequacies of popular writing and especially to inadequate student authorship" (54-55). This attention to the inadequacy of students, which the required course itself *required* of students, found particular expression in "a pedagogic obsession with mechanical correctness" (57). Miller goes on to call early composition courses "the textual carnival of correctness,

propriety, and 'good breeding'" (91). As Miller develops her analysis of composition politics through the analytic of the carnival, she elucidates the one basic human subjectivity she thought universal composition sought to call into being.

Drawing on Terry Eagleton's explication of the subject imagined in the study of literature, Miller claims that the "literary subject" is also the student subject promoted by composition as generally taught. Throughout this dissertation, the *textual subject* is the term used for what Miller calls the literary subject and the student subject of composition: a figure who acquires a formalist and self-referential sensibility by following teachers' instructions about how to manipulate their inconsequential texts (84-104; see especially 89-98). Miller views the cultivation of this text-focused subject as a result not only of the traditional emphasis in composition on correctness. According to Miller, the emergence of the "process" movement for composition pedagogy also played a role in the promotion of the textual subject by 1) constructing writing as a series of intransitive efforts and 2) leaving the traditional student subject in tact as composition professionals began to articulate their disciplinary project through a social science and psychological research agenda that reinforced their difference from the literature faculty privileged within the context of most composition teaching, English departments (104-20).[5] While this textual subject is the one she contends was dominant in teaching and scholarship when she wrote *Textual Carnivals*, Miller also acknowledges that another subject is possible.

The *rhetorical subject* refers here to the figure who embodies those features Miller ascribes to a student of the redefined, or "alternative," Writing Studies with a fully articulated political consciousness: a figure with a democratic sensibility, situational awareness, and

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[5] Of course, Miller also discusses her own qualitative survey research of compositionists and does not utterly dismiss or disavow research other than the theoretical critique she undertakes throughout most of *Textual Carnivals*.

constructivist approach to knowledge production (186-87). This subject is called forth when compositionists concern ourselves less with disciplinary coherence than with supporting wide-ranging writing that achieves consequences that matter to writers and communities (195). I identify the student-as-participant that DeJoy calls for as one possible instantiation of this rhetorical subject, a student situated within a discursive field and whose writing achieves particular goals. These two constructs, textual and rhetorical, are not best understood as binary oppositions. They act, rather, as overlapping heuristics or fields. In other words, a situation that might seem thoroughly textual and divorced from writing of consequence may actually, if reframed, demonstrate rhetorical potential. Likewise, an apparent rhetorical development in pedagogy or writing may be constrained by a textual orientation.

It's possible that one such development, one that takes place within a rhetorical-textual matrix, is the expanding conversation about the Writing major. I contend that an interplay of the textual and rhetorical manifests itself in the scholarship that constructs courses and programs of advanced education in writing. This claim is not meant to dismiss the scholarship in this area. Like Miller, I want to keep track of the ways in which positive moves for Writing Studies may, at least potentially, maintain a status quo that limits the role of students as consequential agents. I don't accept that in the cause of academic professionalization Writing Studies practitioners "*inevitably* re-create the conditions that first established their identities" as low-status disciplinarians who engage in initiative language instruction in order to impart cultural hierarchies that maintain social relations (Miller 140, my emphasis). However, I do believe that the disciplinary status of Writing Studies signaled by the Writing major should invite reflection on how a "process of exclusion" may be at work (Miller 141). Who is included—and how—in the production of scholarly knowledge about the Writing major? Are *students* central to this area

of scholarship or does moving to exceed the first-year course mean moving away from students? Before discussing specific examples from advanced composition, advanced Writing, and the Writing major, it's necessary to examine how and through what mechanisms textual and rhetorical dynamics function in composition scholarship more generally.

Supporting the idea that composition scholarship may construct students as textual subjects, a tradition of representation exists whereby students and their writing are fundamentally identified by their inadequacies within composition practitioners' own stories. In the 1993 monograph *Writing Students*, Marguerite Helmers examines those representations of students contained in teacher testimonials published in the (now-defunct) "Staffroom Interchanges" section of *College Composition and Communication*. According to Helmers, teachers define students by what they lack, and this lack is hyper-absent. Moreover, students "simply *are* [. . .] essential, transhistorical" in nature (2, emphasis in the original). This "predictable" nature and these identifiable characteristics facilitate their controllability (48-49), which rests on the fact that the "stock character of the student is a passive entity upon whom pedagogy operates" (19). Bruce Horner makes a similar point about how students generally enter into pedagogical scholarship, "[S]tudents are represented not so much as moving themselves but as placed in some fixed location" (36). While keeping in mind the difference between written scholarship and the actual lives of students whose agency, purposes, and writing may achieve results that exceed teachers' representations (or the goals of official curricula), it matters what teacher-scholars say (and don't say) about students. It matters because of the relative value awarded to scholarly production within the academy and because scholarship is a vehicle that can work to influence teaching practices.

The student defined by lack does not simply exist, but this figure came into being through repeated, connected knowledge claims. This subject is not a given. Writing practices employed by compositionists made this "person," practices that include representational choices illustrative of rhetorical commonplaces as well as readily accessible values and beliefs: "[I]t should be emphasized that the referent for *the student* is a textual one" (Helmers 28, emphasis in the original). These assertions and stories about students found an audience and circulated within a community of scholars and teachers. Circulation of this kind is usually denied to student writing. Horner associates the limited circulation of student writing with its low status within the academic establishment (50). John Trimbur argues that the production and contained circulation of writing within a composition classroom resembles the drama of a middle-class family that seeks to ensure its children perform appropriately according to its conventions ("Composition" 191-96). Because of the subjectivity constituted for them within some streams of composition scholarship, the lack of *authorship* serves as one defining feature of the student subject.

STUDENT AUTHORSHIP: IS IT POSSIBLE?

Considerations of authorship within Writing Studies provide a way to make legible the traditional distinction between student writers and those figures whose texts are to be read and valued: *authors*. In *Standing in the Shadow of Giants*, Howard argues in 1999 that the modern period in western culture ascribes certain properties to authors: originality, autonomy, morality, and proprietorship. By writing original works without collaboration, the author signals *his* (and, for so long, authorship was always masculine) superior morality. This matrix of originality, autonomy, and morality marks authors as the proprietors of their own texts (75-94). The author is a special sort of subject whose qualities may provide a code by which to police undergraduates,

but whose status they are not generally afforded. As a field largely occupied with the study of textuality, it makes sense that some Writing Studies scholars engage explicitly with issues of authorship. While the scholarship examined in this section maybe identified with various communities within Writing Studies (e.g., Lillian Bridwell-Bowles with feminist composition or Bruce Horner with labor critique) their work has also been important to the development of different approaches to authorship within the field. It is in that regard that I draw on their work. This section does not follow a chronological approach, but it overviews recent and still-cited approaches within Writing Studies to the problematic of student authorship.

Modern beliefs about authorship have long held suspect status among Writing Studies scholars and critical theorists. These beliefs are exemplified in what Andrea Lunsford calls in 1997 the persistent "naïve construction of the author as originary genius" ("Rhetoric" 534). In 1977, Michel Foucault articulates the notion of the author as not a flesh-and-blood person, but as an ideological function. The author operates as "a certain functional principle" that polices reading and writing: "The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning" (159). Moreover, an author's text "is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten; neither is it accorded the momentary attention given to ordinary, fleeting words. Rather, its status and its manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates" (184). Thus, the *author-function* exerts social influence through its classificatory power, defining some texts (imagined as creations of figures who possess the properties of authorship) as worthy of consumption and valorization. Through the designation of culturally valuable collections of texts, the author-function acts to reinforce the social hierarchies identified earlier with the traditional carnival function of composition elucidated by Miller. Culturally denigrated or inconsequential texts and their producers may be identified through their

lack of recognized authorship. Lisa Ede points out in 2004 that "student writing" is understood as separate from "real writing" and "authorship" (221). Dominant conceptions of student texts within the university generally run something like this: student writing is not original, but derivative; it is not composed autonomously by morally superior authors, but by a plagiarism-prone and ethically suspect class. Within composition scholarship, student writing generally fails to achieve an argumentative purpose in its own right when cited in a teacher's text. Rather, it serves the purpose of demonstrating the possession, or lack, of competencies valued by composition instructors in a given historical moment.

Within Writing Studies scholarship, students' writing can perform functions that reinforce their status as non-authors. In 1977, Roland Barthes declared "the death of the author," arguing that once readers take up a text, the author ceases to hold any control over it. Its meaning and significance rests with the determinations of readers. If the author is dead and readers become the means by which to perpetuate the life of a text, then what exactly does Writing Studies scholarship do with students and their compositions? While there is no singular answer to this question, Helmers demonstrates that students are generally characters in other people's writing, not authors through their own writing. Elements of the figure of the student Helmers identifies in teacher narratives, Amy E. Robillard finds in pedagogical scholarship more generally. In 2006, Robillard observes that teachers tend to appropriate student writing as evidence in their own arguments about pedagogy: "To analyze student writing for what it demonstrates about a particular pedagogy—this is an authorizing move in the discourse of composition studies, perhaps *the* authorizing move" (256, emphasis in the original). Pointedly critiquing the practice of keeping "students nameless or pseudonymous" as the *de facto* practice within Writing Studies scholarship, Robillard claims that in this move "we perpetuate an

author/student binary that works against our liberatory disciplinary ideals" (257). Consequently, students' status as non-authors results not only from textual values within the general culture or their position within the social hierarchy those values promote. It also derives from the fact that their texts may serve anti-authorial functions within the writing of teachers and scholars. Students became subjects who are not authors and their texts became objects that teachers used for demonstrative purposes.

Writing Studies scholars forward several possible remedies (as well as critiques of these remedies) for the writer/author binary and the predicament of student authority. Scholars seek ways of constructing students as subjects with something important to say—and write. Some scholars argue for a change in teachers' attitudes toward student writing. For example, Stuart Greene calls on teachers to go about reading student writing *as* the work of authors (189). Attempting to move teachers away from an overly corrective reading of student writing and from a focus on student lack, in 1982, Nancy Sommers encourages composition teachers with expertise interpreting literature to "act upon the same set of assumptions in reading student texts" (154) as they would when reading valorized texts. Other scholars champion pedagogies that support students in making conventional or experimental choices in their texts as a means to authority and authorship. As a means of "teaching towards authority," in 1994, Ann M. Penrose and Cheryl Geisler seek to cultivate among students a "rhetorical perspective" through analysis of academic writing, a perspective that understands the social nature of knowledge production within the academy (517). Alternatively, Lillian Bridwell-Bowles draws on feminist discursive practices to create space for expressions "that do not fit into traditional academic forms" (350). Critiquing these approaches designed to achieve student authorship through attitudinal shifts or composing choices, Horner understands them as, respectively, reinforcing the ideology of the

autonomous author (39-40) and containing authorship to specific textual features that negate its

socially determined nature (220-22). In 2000, Horner refuses the goals of utterly dismantling the

traditional author and of "'authorizing' students," but he promotes teachers and students

interrogating together "mystified 'givens'" regarding writing and authorship (253). A

particularly promising set of proposals advocate a shift in beliefs and practices among both

teachers and students: position undergraduates as participants who make contributions to the

discipline of Writing Studies.

PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTION: UNDERGRADUATES IN WRITING STUDIES

        Participation is a familiar term among Writing instructors. Students often read statements

about the importance of "participation" on course syllabi. Such statements usually define the

practices and behaviors that make students and their learning (or simply their compliance)

known within a classroom: engaging in class discussion or otherwise undertaking course

activities. Miller's comment that "[t]he 'content' of any field is realized only in relation to those

who participate in it" (84) gestures toward a definition of *participate* that includes students in the

discipline, not only the classroom. However, this broad sense of the term and those course

policies don't exactly get at the idea behind DeJoy and others' articulation of students as

disciplinary participants.

        Disciplines adjust in response to changes among their participants and the relative status

afforded different constituencies. In their essay for the 2002 edited collection *The WPA as*

Theorist, the co-editors of *Coming of Age* offer this reflection based on their collaboration: "We

appreciate that the concerns and content of any academic discipline, including composition

studies, are found in the actions and interactions among its participants and in their discourse

about that discipline. That discourse is socially negotiated through meaningful uptake among participants and with surrounding institutions" (Shamoon et al., "Re-Examining" 74). If there is, as these scholars who are central to the development of advanced Writing scholarship suggest, a mutual reconstitution of Writing curricula (as well as a renegotiation of the discipline) through participants' uptake, then who counts as a participant—and whether and how that category includes undergraduates—takes on new urgency. Does a student become even more legible as a participant if she or he is not just an advanced student (the student imagined in *Coming of Age*), but also a Writing major? *Or* a first-year student who conducts and *publishes* research about writing, rhetoric, or literacy?

Efforts within Writing Studies to cultivate an undergraduate research culture engage significantly with the language of contribution/participation and provide compelling evidence for the rhetorical subject within the field's recent scholarship. The Council on Undergraduate Research defines undergraduate research as "an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the" field ("About CUR"). Grobman and Joyce Kinkead open their 2010 edited collection *Undergraduate Research in English Studies* by citing this definition and by highlighting what they view as the "most important" achievement of students who undertake undergraduate research: they "contribute their voices to creating knowledge through the research process" (ix). In a 2009 article, Grobman argues that students may be able to "obtain *authorship* and *authority* through participation in undergraduate research, a potentially democratic learning site in which students write themselves into disciplinary conversations and challenge faculty/scholar-constructed representations of them" (176-77; emphasis in the original). Through a discussion of three instances of students' scholarly publication, Grobman points to the academic authority students can establish through

their research (180-85). Even as Grobman acknowledges the thoroughly social nature of all discourse, she insists on the agency of writers (which she connects to the very fact and act of their writing) and on the right of students to authority and authorship (179). She urges the field to understand scholarly authority as operating relationally—as a spectrum (as opposed to a discrete entity one either possesses or lacks) along which both student-scholars and teacher-scholars move (180). In this way, through academic activity and writing that moves students toward recognized scholarly authority, Grobman views student authorship as an achievable possibility.

Even if students achieved authorship through undergraduate research or publication, a certain paradox would, perhaps, persist: namely, that of inviting students to "participate" in and "contribute" to the movements of the textual carnival. In other words, might undergraduate research function as asking students to contribute to the legacy of the necessary composition *course* that fueled the development of an academic *field* in which practitioners adopted anti-authorial practices toward students in their *scholarship*—all of which (course, field, and scholarship) have tendencies that potentially reinforce the cultural hierarchies that police valuable texts and the social hierarchies that degrade students as well as instructors? While the historical account implied by this question may contain some accuracy, the conservative and progressive potential of any practice emerges from specific enactments. Consequently, this theoretical wondering about undergraduate research should not, then, suggest that the troubles historically associated with composition are utterly inescapable or that they overdetermine the results of undergraduate participation in Writing Studies for student-scholars or teacher-scholars.

Many scholars identify and critique the persistence of conservative tendencies and politically ameliorative practices even among instructors with progressive commitments. Sharon Crowley examines the way process pedagogy operated as a response to the political energies of

the 1960s that was more managerial than transformative (187-214). Despite a commitment to process pedagogy among many teachers, Joseph Harris notes in 1997 the presentation of a textual orientation through a "new formalism" of standardized processes that make knowledge about writing and its instruction a technocratic proposition (56). While Horner claims a materialist stance, he acknowledges the ease with which he can slip into an "aesthetic" approach, praising the critical thinking demonstrated by features of a student text in a way that obfuscates the materiality required for the production of those features (240). This history adds credence to Peter Vandenberg's worry in 1999 that students engaged in scholarly production may "replicate our worst self-image" (79). With regard to undergraduate peer tutors who produce writing center scholarship through presentations or publications, Vandenberg argues that offering undergraduates the chance to "produce 'submissions' and submit them(selves) to authorities who will authorize them" may actually "harden the relationship between authority and authorship" (78), reinforcing a hierarchical arrangement of authority (75). And yet, Don Kraemer contends in 1991 that "asking students to be like us" is "simultaneously oppressive and emancipatory: oppressive because the students are enjoined [to teachers], emancipatory because the students' and teachers' discourse communities change as they join" (54). Through the simultaneous maintenance of hierarchical relations and cultivation of alternatives, scholarship about advanced curricula can replicate problems others have identified within composition discourse (the textual student subject) *and* it potentially promotes a participatory (rhetorical) subject.

DEFINITIONAL HUNGER: SURVEYS AND DOCUMENT REVIEWS

The opening years of the 1980s and the 1990s saw significant research conducted through surveys of, and reviews of documents from, institutions that taught advanced composition

courses.[6] So much of the heuristic passion that guided this work on advanced composition was directed toward answering this question: What exactly is an advanced course, and how are faculty teaching it? These researchers wanted to find out what courses were taught, what their outcomes were, what faculty ranks taught them, and what texts were used. This area of advanced composition scholarship evinces a *definitional hunger*, a drive toward a universal understanding of *the course* beyond first-year writing. Such a drive appears to also instantiate a version of the transhistorical student Helmers identifies and critiques within testimonial writing. The pursuit of a shared concept for advanced composition need not have been motivated by impulses toward student predictability and controllability, which Helmers associates with the universal student of teacher testimonials. That pursuit does comport—inadvertently perhaps—with the project of narrowing the scope of scholarship on advanced postsecondary writing instruction and reaffirming the low status of (universal) composition and its instructors. In short, by focusing on official curricula in multi-institutional surveys, researchers usefully documented programmatic and teacher practices while also promoting a research paradigm that allowed official accounts without student contributions to stand as synonymous with "advanced composition."

Survey studies offer a snapshot of what was happening at the official level of advanced composition curriculum and teacher practice. In 1980, Michael Hogan reports his survey findings in "Advanced Composition: A Survey," published in the first issue of the *Journal of Advanced Composition*. Hogan took as the starting point for question categories in his 311-institution survey those guidelines on advanced composition offered by participants in the 1966 and 1967 CCCC workshops on advanced composition: definition, variety and focus, humane emphasis,

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[6] Even earlier, though, Richard Larson published the results of a 1969 survey of seventy-eight institutions, which provided a glimpse into what advanced expository writing courses were required of prospective teachers: 74% of the institutions had a requirement for high school teachers and 23% had one for elementary teachers (114-15). Larson proposed that primary and secondary teachers enroll in a course specifically designed for them (117-19).

course content, qualifications of instructors, and modes of instruction. The guidelines were

reported in a 1967 issue of *CCC*. Hogan found that as advanced courses proliferated widely, so

too did the categories they fall into, with fifty different course types reported by respondents (8).

Likewise, although "a rhetorical emphasis" constituted the most common organizing force for

respondents, what knowledge, skills, and assignments such a focus entailed varied significantly

(9-10). The course texts and majors of enrolled students were similarly diverse (10-11). One of

the central concerns he highlights is the need for a more consistent definition for an advanced

course (15-16).

Significantly, the concern about articulating a universal definition of advanced

composition based on official statements and practices persists in the majority of the survey

research. For example, based on reviews of documents collected by the Association of Teachers

of Advanced Composition—including syllabi, membership applications, and course

descriptions—Rita Sturm reports similarly varied advanced courses them in her 1980 piece,

which appeared in the second issue of *JAC*.[7] Adopting a slightly different approach, Bernice W.

Dicks combines a discussion of selected samples from her 1982 sixty-school survey with a

bibliographic review of articles that address advanced composition. Her unhappy conclusion,

"Unfortunately, the wealth of models suggests again that advanced composition may well prove

impossible to define once and for all" (35). In the early 1990s, Ronald A. Shumaker, Larry

Dennis, and Lois Green published their review of 600 course catalogs and their 124-instituion

survey, a project which led them "to a rather somber assessment" of any effort to claim a

representative snapshot of advanced composition (39). In the 1991 edited collection, *Teaching*

Advanced Composition: Why and How, Michael L. Keene and Ray Wallace report and discuss

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[7] One major difference divides Sturm and Hogan. While Sturm's respondents took little explicit note of grammar
and mechanics, Hogan found a significant emphasis on these concerns in respondents' answers.

their findings from a twelve-institution survey that contained open-ended questions. Despite the diversity they found in their study of both large and small schools in geographically diverse regions, Keene and Wallace continue to hope that it is not "beyond our collective will" to "come to a consensus as to what the next level [course after first-year writing] should contain" (54). Each of these studies explicitly or implicitly evinces opposing impulses: to critique the lack of shared goals across advanced courses and to (more quietly) celebrate the documented diversity that invites teachers and programs into extended conversation about the directions of advanced courses. Prior to the new millennium, it seemed (and, perhaps, not without reason) "beyond our collective will" to work toward a whole curriculum in advanced Writing.

And yet, despite the absence of uniformity in approaching the course after FYW, the *will* to a standard advanced pedagogical approach evinced by these studies also points to an interest in promoting disciplinary coherence and expertise through advanced composition. Of course, advanced composition has existed as a course in U.S. colleges since at least the late-nineteenth century (Adams; Miller; Newkirk). Given its long history, the choice by late-twentieth century multi-site survey researchers to focus on official documents demonstrates a productive interest in promoting the professional expertise of teachers. At the same time, it also seems to limit the role of students as valued informants in the production of knowledge about advanced composition. These studies make use of questionnaires completed by faculty or administrators and/or involve reviews of course catalog. While none of these researchers offer a definitive and comprehensive image of "Advanced Composition" (and their data would question the very possibility of such an image), they still seem to hope for that clear image to evolve out of conversations furthered by their work. In Hogan's study, a hope for coherence explicitly appears in his conclusion that "[a] definition for the general course is needed" (15). A sense that disciplinarity might help achieve

that definition seems implied by the very structure of Hogan's survey. Hogan relies on the advanced composition guidelines from CCCC, implying that he could appropriate a definitional document from a leading professional organization and use it as the basis for a large-scale survey that attempts to gather data about how colleges and universities conceptualized and implemented advanced courses.

Beyond data gathering, using these guidelines speaks to the hope of developing a rubric that will account for all (or, at least, most) elements of an advanced course. This would seem a safe assumption. However, Hogan's data reveal the incongruence between whatever the writers of the CCCC guidelines might have envisioned and the reality of advanced composition as daily practice. Additionally, the subject of all the studies discussed above is advanced composition itself and its creators—faculty and program administrators. Teachers, administrators, programs, and course descriptions are privileged, with little attention to students who were, unsurprisingly, not understood as disciplinary stakeholders at that historical moment.

Of course, this period did produce curricular pieces that embrace diversity in advanced composition courses—that imagine or report advanced *curricula*. These accounts include Arthur W. Shumaker's 1981 *JAC* description of the DePauw University "major in composition," a major that included courses in exposition, creative writing, grammar, business writing, and journalism. Also, in the 1980 inaugural issue of *JAC*, Richard Fulkerson adapts a model from literary scholar M. H. Abrams and uses it to suggest a range of advanced courses. Fulkerson suggests, though, that most programs would not have the resources to support multiple advanced courses and that students might find themselves "in the unenviable position of having to take four or five advanced composition courses" (10).

In 2000, Lynn Z. Bloom reported her review of institutional and curricular documents that again affirmed the diversity of the advanced composition course. More importantly, though, her study also works to define the nature of teacher-scholars' participation in the production of knowledge about advanced composition. With her interplay of rhetorical analysis and personal commentary, Bloom attempts to answer the question of what advanced composition classes are and what materials they include through a combination of official curricular evidence and teacher-scholar experiential knowledge based on a lifetime of immersion in the field. This move indicates that reflecting on the personal experience of individual instructors (clear participants in the work of the discipline) constitutes evidence in the study of advanced composition alongside more decidedly empirical investigations. Bloom reviews course catalogs produced in each decade over a fifty-year period from fifteen different public and private colleges, universities, and community colleges (7).

This approach allows the researcher to see one dimension of the official history of a curriculum endorsed by departments and how it changes over time. Bloom supplements her work on course descriptions with a discussion of style manuals, rhetorics, and readers that she knows to be used in upper-division classes (12-16). Looking at such materials moves her investigation from course titles and descriptions to some of the content used in advanced courses and thus to an element of the course that is potentially more immediate to the experiences of teachers and students. Despite the impossibility of recreating a course from the textbooks used, these artifacts allow a researcher to glimpse some of the writing practices and values a course might enact. To identify books used in advanced writing courses, Bloom looks to Bernice W. Dick's 1982 survey, her own review of course descriptions, recent syllabi, and the WPA Annual Bibliography of Writing Textbooks. However, Bloom reports that since "publishers won't release their sales

figures, breadth of adoption must be inferred from endurance and from multiple editions of books. So I turn now to the volumes piled on my study floor" (13). In this way, Bloom suggests that a sustained, active professional life in the field offers opportunities for scholars to collect artifacts that might serve as data in arguments about important developments in Writing Studies. At the same time, her turn to the books on her floor illustrates the difficulty that attends crafting a program of empirical research (qualitative or quantitative) about advanced curricula. It also demonstrates the impulse within this arena of scholarship to privilege official curricular artifacts as sources of knowledge about the advanced course.

MAKING "ADVANCED" THEORY

Instructors' own experiences and memories, including experiences with and memories of students, also constitute a significant source of inspiration in efforts to theorize advanced composition. While many scholars of advanced composition certainly engage with important theories ranging from expressivism to postmodernism, several actively work to theorize the "advanced" nature of a course marked with that term. This work to build theory around what exactly the term *advanced* means when applied to courses and students often functions explicitly or implicitly as an extension of the search for consistent definitions. They serve, in other words, as another manifestation of definitional hunger. In a sense, theorists of advanced composition make students central to the course. Much advanced theory seems to operate more as "theory through" or "theory on" students than as theory from or with students. Such theorizing builds from descriptions of activities or assignments that teachers ask students to perform. "Theory on" students finds its validity via an appeal to students' rhetorical faculties and their areas for rhetorical development. In other words, advanced composition "rests on" the needs of students

and its practices can "work on" students. "Theory through" students points to how students become figures animated by the *energia* of a given instance of advanced composition. These vivid descriptions of pedagogical moves often evince a yearning for entelechy status, for the position of an organizing energy that structures students' development. The function of advanced theory in relationship to students seems to work in a way similar to the description Helmers offers of the general operation of pedagogy upon students. Students are moved about, not unlike an Ouija board planchette, by a pedagogical energy transmitted to them by instructors.[8]

Within theoretical treatments of advanced composition, students surface most notably in their absent presence—a psychic residue constituted within the memory of the teacher-scholar.[9] Both Russell Rutter in *JAC* in 1986 and Michael Carter in *Teaching Advanced Composition* in 1991 articulate a writing-across-the-curriculum/writing-in-the-disciplines (WAC/WID) approach to advanced composition theory. Using an anecdote to recount a positive experience of collaboration with faculty in another discipline to meet the writing needs of a physical education student, Rutter suggests "specialized" or discipline-specific research writing as the defining feature of advanced composition. Such specialized knowledge works to provide a mooring and real context for student writing.[10] Likewise, Carter also articulates a theory of expertise, which requires that increased facility with writing be tied to specialization. His theory emerges from familiarity with research in psychology, mathematics, and artificial intelligence (72-76). The expertise theory Carter promotes leads him to conclude that advanced courses are best taught as discipline-specific courses that urge students to achieve several objectives: understand how

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[8] Of course, as Christian Lundberg and Joshua Gunn point out, the Ouija board could actually be a generous metaphor for rhetorical agency because of the inability of observers to clearly assign a given movement to a particular source. However, in advanced composition scholarship, agency tends to flow from teachers and courses to students.

[9] This point is not to diminish the role and importance of memory and story in pedagogical scholarship. It is, rather, to ask, "Who are the students we construct and what purposes do they serve?"

[10] Implicit in Russell's account are the two (incredibly fair) assumptions that students' home discipline would not be composition and the subject of their "specialized research" would not be writing itself.

writing works to shape disciplinary epistemologies, identify disciplinary discourse features, and practice deploying their specialized discourse knowledge (78). Alternatively, in 1991, Richard M. Coe argues for a course that is not necessarily designed as a site for WAC/WID practice. Coe promotes a vision of advanced composition that seeks to make students aware of their own processes, the social nature of writing, and the connectedness of rhetorical situations and strategies (206-7). Other composition faculty at his institution apparently agreed with or helped to create these course goals. He narrates a set of assignments designed to help students meet these goals (207-14) with one brief excerpt from a reflective piece of student work included to demonstrate how students become more aware of what revision strategies they might use (209). Coe offers an anecdotal recollection of five advanced students who voiced an interest in learning how to write successfully for the academy in ways that would also allow them to explore and deploy styles and forms they personally enjoyed.[11] It is, however, unclear how or if these student voices explicitly informed his theory of advanced composition.[12]

Theoretical articulations of pedagogical practices or student learning in discussions of advanced composition need not necessarily emerge from, or be illustrated by, a reading of student work or other student generated artifacts. While the three theoretical articulations rehearsed above demonstrate a commitment to—and a concern for—students, what makes these cases interesting in this discussion is that the researchers' perceptions of student needs serve as the compelling exigency for the theoretical work of advanced composition. How are these needs determined? Based on these theories, those needs derive either from ongoing conversation between Writing teachers and "content" teachers or from institution-based conversations among

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[11] I should note that Coe includes a brief excerpt from a piece of student writing that addresses how the student gained a sense of efficacy concerning revision.
[12] I am also uncertain how these perspectives were solicited. My sense is that they emerged through informal conversations.

composition faculty. In both arrangements, teachers invoke students as the authorizing ground for their work, but students don't really appear in their texts. Rather, Rutter and Carter demonstrate how interdisciplinary collaboration and (other) discipline(s')-specific knowledge may influence literacy instruction. Coe implicitly argues that composition scholars' rhetorical knowledge and their conversations with each other may inform their teaching and lead to growth in advanced students' rhetorical performances. The staffroom is where theoretical action happens. And Helmers, as explained above, forcefully demonstrates the representational risks of "staffroom" discourse. This discussion would extend her insight to include theoretical "shoptalk" as well as teacher testimonials.

IT'S A COURSE! NO, IT'S A CURRICULUM!

In the context of pedagogical scholarship across advanced composition, advanced Writing, and Writing major, the Ouija board metaphor holds true in that students and how they encounter a course or curriculum (if they appear at all) take a secondary position 1) to the thoughtful plans of teachers operating on the assumption of a single advanced course or 2) to the focused interests of a teacher working within a wide-ranging curriculum. Within the arena of curricular and pedagogical scholarship, much of the literature might be characterized as new course designs and narrative/reflective accounts about program development as well as previously taught courses. At its best, this scholarship serves as a space for 1) forwarding creative possibilities that urge instructors and administrators to move beyond the narrow focus of "advanced composition"[13] and into a project of disciplinary formation and transmission through

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[13] To what degree this energy around definitional hunger has dissipated or has shifted to arguments about the shape of the major is an open question. Of course, conversations about crafting commonalities and shared outcomes to guide the creation and revision of whole Writing curricula seem of a different order than trying to describe, or staking claims to a particular way of approaching, the one or two additional courses after the first-year.

undergraduate coursework, 2) locating a particular course within a specific subfield, *and* 3) communicating venues for student agency. Occasionally, students are invoked as the exigency for the creation of a specific course or curriculum;[14] less frequently, their informal feedback is used to modify a course taught over a long period of time. Both of these instances (students as the reason for a course's creation or revision) name a form of agency that is dependent upon students, but not necessarily realized by students themselves. As mentioned earlier regarding those scholars developing theories of advanced composition, actual student voices or samples of their work appear infrequently in pedagogical and circular inquires. Extended discussions of student work appear even less often. Students are invoked, but rarely present. In this way, (abstracted and theoretical) pedagogy that provides energy for a disciplinary project thrives. Teaching that occurs alongside specific, contributive student participants appears in glimmers.

Advanced Composition Pedagogy

Scholars' engagement with advanced student work mirrors the field's engagement with student writing generally: as evidence for a particular pedagogy. During the days of sentence combining enthusiasm, Gary A. Olson published a 1981 article, in which he conducted a content analysis of senior-level student writing for indications that sentence combining might aid the development of syntactic facility in advanced writers.[15] Looking at students' first and last papers, Olson performs an analysis of T-units and words-per-clause at the beginning and end of the semester. He chooses randomly one student's paper to discuss in detail (124-25) and then he

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[14] Sometimes students' "need" presents the exigency. Other times, student demand or interest serves as the exigency. Beth Taylor uses the perception of student demand to argue for nonfiction classes. Sandra Jamieson offers an example in which her exchanges with undergraduate students about a graduate composition theory course convinced her that a desire existed for an undergraduate writing theories course.

[15] Other data analysis articles on stylistics appear in the *Journal of Advanced Composition*, but few are so grounded in student work.

reports the generally positive findings for the ten-student class (125-26).[16] This kind of thorough

attention to advanced student writing is refreshing and exceptional. However, student work

appears in this piece to argue for the potential usefulness of a specific teaching strategy, not for

the contributive nature of student participation in composition discourse. In this way, Robillard's

articulation of the pedagogical authorization for using student writing appears operative in this

instance of advanced composition scholarship.

Advanced composition scholarship also contains gestures that hail a rhetorical student

subject and that partially anticipate the student-as-participant. In her 1985 article entitled

"Bringing Rhetorical Theory into the Advanced Composition Class," Katherine H. Adams

presents a composite of advanced courses in which research and theory about rhetoric and

composition serve as part of the content (e.g., empirical writing research, experiences of

professional writers, and histories of rhetoric). While not becoming the sole focus of the course,

she argues that such disciplinary materials may productively inform student work. Even as

students engage with texts and questions from Writing Studies, they move through Adams'

content and tasks not as particular students, but much as Rutter's and Carter's students do—as

universalized students whose work we do not see but who clearly benefit from the expertise of a

Writing instructor. Another example of a pedagogical investigation that relies on a composite

course, Carol Snyder's 1984 "Analyzing Classifications: Foucault for Advanced Writers"

proposes a series of steps for students to work through when using classification as inquiry

device.[17] With an increased attention to the specificity of students, Felicia Mitchell's 1992 piece

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[16] The class results were as follows: 5.5 mean growth in words per clause and .03 mean growth in T-unit variation, which increases to .9 if the two students' papers showing negative growth are removed. These findings might usefully add to a conversation with other work about how stylistic instruction could enhance advanced students' and Writing majors' rhetorical facility (DelliCarpini and Zerbe; Howard, "Style").

[17] Other examples of essays in the vein that propose particular theoretical orientations for an advanced course include Helen R. Ewald's 1991 "What We Could Tell Advanced Student Writers about Audience," which advocates

provides an account that uses several brief descriptions of student projects (and their revisions

and extensions of those projects) to illustrate the blend of expressivist and constructivist

pedagogies she promotes. These discussions indicate an impulse to view the advanced course as

a disciplinary space and as a site in which to enact prevailing theories through inquiry *with*

students.

Along with the beginnings of a framework for understanding undergraduates as

disciplinary participants, pedagogical scholarship on advanced composition in the 1980s and

1990s might be construed as charting a course for a broad understanding of student *contributions*

through their writing. In other words, academic, professional, and civic writing (categories that

Howard names and that I discuss further in the next section as well as in chapter four) all appear

in advanced composition scholarship as areas for student composing and engagement. Wilma

Clark argues in a 1982 essay that the involvement of a magazine editor in an advanced course

constituted a real audience for students, which made them approach their school writing with

more seriousness than if there had been no professional audience (131). In their 1994 article,

Julia M. Gergits and James J. Schramer read students' reflective "personnel memos" for how

students engage in collaboration and attend to conflict. They assert that Writing classrooms

might enable students to bring their personal backgrounds to bear on, as well as to critically

negotiate corporate ideologies within, professional writing situations (230). Susan Hilligoss

examines in a 1989 piece some students' expressed preference for a variety of personal

compositions: letters, a coin collection inventory, a commonplace book of quotes—even

marginalia for school-based readings (155-58). Sandy Moore and Michael Kleine, a student and

an instructor, explore in their 1992 article the civic implications and personal risks of classroom

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the usefulness of discourse communities as an analytic, and Karen Pelz's "James Britton and the Pedagogy of
Advanced Composition," which argues for the place of sophisticated expressive writing in the advanced course.

writing when Moore writes about her job as a restaurant server and the harassment she experienced from patrons who worked in the Arkansas state capitol building. If such a diversity of student texts complements the lamented lack of uniformity across advanced composition courses at a time when few advanced options existed within a given institution, then perhaps an advanced Writing curriculum could capitalize on this rhetorical extravagance and allow multiple opportunities for study and practice across several genres for many purposes.

Coming of Age *with Advanced Writing Curricula and Pedagogy*

The movement toward discussions that connect advanced courses more directly to Writing Studies as a discipline, to a coherently articulated range of aims, and to whole curricula found significant momentum in the publication of the edited collection *Coming of Age* in 2000. Howard situates this collection as an attempt to move beyond the voluminous scholarship that tries to offer definitions of "advanced composition" ("History" xiv). Course designs, the genre that dominates this collection, offer ways to invite advanced Writing students into complex frameworks, questions, and problems through many different topical courses and a *set* of potentially core *courses* that provide disciplinary grounding and professional venues for writing.[18] As Howard overviews the arguments and heuristic energies that emerge throughout *Coming of Age*, she asserts the reciprocal connection of advanced Writing pedagogy in the form of course design to theoretical frames and to the political realities of academic life. Forwarded in this introduction is a generative, three-part taxonomy—a theory—of what advanced Writing courses should accomplish for students: occasions to gain disciplinary knowledge and identities, opportunities to write for the public, and preparation for writing careers ("History" xv). In other

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[18] In 2010, Sanford Tweedie et al. note, however, the current absence of a consistent approach to core and introductory courses in the major—if a required introductory course exists at all (263).

words, a curriculum should provide opportunities to write for disciplinary, civic, and professional purposes. Consequently, a wide-ranging curriculum potentially opens space for a capacious understanding of student participation in, and contribution to, goals widely held within Writing Studies.

At the same time, *Coming of Age* seems to mobilize a universalized and largely absent student akin to that observed in advanced composition scholarship. The collection contains thirty-nine contributions. Three include examples of student work (Fulkerson, "Teaching"; Yancey, "More"; McKormick and Jones) and six others tell stories of specific students (Lunsford, "Histories"; Bizzell; Locker; Trimmer; Walzer and Beard; Jamieson). The remaining thirty pieces discuss students in abstract or hypothetical terms. This finding may be unsurprising given the audience for *Coming of Age* (teachers and program administrators) and its purpose (proposing a whole Writing curriculum through descriptions of "ideal" courses). Several contributors offer straightforward descriptions of what tasks and knowledge students might gain from a range of courses with various topical emphases: Mary M. Lay, technical communication; Diana George, cultural studies; Mary R. Lamb, gender; Chris Anson, editorial practice; Dennis Baron, material technologies and literacy; and Johndan Johnson-Eilola, computers and communication—just to name a few. These and other contributors direct their efforts—based in anecdote, imagination, and professional expertise—toward furthering discipline-wide, as well as institution-based, conversations about what can happen in advanced course design and curriculum-building. In this regard, scholars interested in advanced curricula certainly express careful consideration for the experiences of students who might encounter these courses.

While concrete discussions of student work play a minimal role in *Coming of Age* because of the genre in which contributors work (designs for courses that may or may not have

been taught)*, some contributors do find ways to represent specific students' knowledge-making. For example, Andrea A. Lunsford documents the evolution of a course she taught multiple times over a number of years. She addresses how student input, and her own level of satisfaction, influenced the design of her histories of western writing course ("Histories" 56-57). Rather than offer a composite in which a course taught multiple times is rendered an uninterrupted whole, Lunsford provides a course genealogy with specific students' interests and voices figuring into the matrix of influences that give the course explicit shape. Kathleen Blake Yancey actually includes excerpts of writing from two students, and she provides first names for them ("More"). Likewise, Richard Fulkerson showcases an excerpt of student writing and describes and names the contributions of specific students in a legal writing course ("Teaching").

Students are also invoked by way of a warning. Even as Richard Bullock endorses and enjoys the other pieces in *Coming of Age*, he urges caution by comparing the will to professionalization and growth demonstrated in Writing Studies to that he witnessed in English departments that extended unrealistic employment hopes to graduate students. Those who study advanced Writing programs should keep in mind Bullock's warnings: to not lose track of the positive disciplinary identity of Writing Studies derived from its historic attachment to first-year Writing classes (20-22) and to not grow undergraduate and graduate programs absent a clear student need or an awareness of potential professional outcomes post-graduation (23-24).

Clearly, the editors of and the contributors to *Coming of Age* imagine the advanced student as a broadly capable, interested subject who can learn from—and participate in—the interrelated scholarly, political, and workplace projects pursued by Writing Studies scholars. It is potentially easy, then, to understand John Trimbur's position in that collection: an advanced course allows him "to pay undivided attention" to a particular topic "without feeling guilty that

[he's] not teaching students how to write," even as he stages the "critical and theoretically reflexive [. . .] *study*" of disciplinary and interdisciplinary concepts and practices ("Theory" 113). Even as advanced students devote intense study to compelling topics (Trimbur) and gain "a sense of disciplinary membership" from an advanced curriculum (Howard, "History" xvii), Trimbur and Howard establish the discipline and its practitioners as the primary agents. And this curriculum offers them a new source of agency. Thus, while the advanced curriculum "benefits the students and teachers" of first-year writing and "serves" students beyond that course or sequence, it functions as a means to an end that benefits the discipline and its teacher-scholar practitioners (Howard, "History" xxi). As disciplinary practitioners undertake the rigorous and compelling work that follows an advanced curriculum, the teaching *of* writing may, as Trimbur acknowledges, diminish even as a different kind of pedagogy *about* writing thrives. Investigating this dynamic rests at the heart of chapter three.

Writing Major Curricula and Pedagogy

As we approach the present moment, with more advanced programs on the rise, Writing Studies scholars show an increasing willingness to use the "m-word," the Writing major, and to argue for a wide-ranging and sophisticated vision of literacy education. And the excitement is palpable. Jennifer Clary-Lemon narrates the compelling pull she felt to accept a job offer because the institution had a Writing major, and a part of that pull is the way a major invites new thinking about what's possible for the academic and civic goals of Writing Studies (37-38). Some trends within Writing major scholarship include attending to the necessity of negotiating local circumstances, considering the possibilities and limits of a Writing major (particularly one that is "integrated" within English Studies), forwarding "hard sells" for particular courses or

curricular frames, and advising caution about the development of a Writing major. To explore

these developments, this section primarily draws on the 2007 special issue of *Composition*

Studies that focuses on the Writing major and the 2010 collection *What We Are Becoming:*

Developments in Undergraduate Writing Majors edited by Greg Giberson and Thomas Moriarty.

I explore pedagogical and curricular trends in discussions explicitly about the *major* in Writing.

While disciplinary status increases in this more recent scholarship, specific students don't appear

with any regularity. The special issue of *Composition Studies* contains thirteen contributions.

Two include examples of student work (DelliCarpini; Hill) and one short narrative was authored

by a student (Newman). *What We Are Becoming* contains fifteen chapters: one includes

examples of student work (DelliCarpini and Zerbe) and it is unclear that any other pieces recount

experiences of specific students. Celest Martin offers two brief paragraphs that might be

hypothetical or that might describe students with whom she worked (237-38). Jennifer Courtney,

Deb Martin, and Diane Penrod make the move of constructing three short "composite profiles"

depicting "fictitious" students who represent "the range of students" in their program's Writing

major (253). Throughout both the edited collection and journal issue, as it was with advanced

Writing and advanced composition scholarship, the focus largely still rests on the official

curriculum, not the ways in which it is taken up, challenged, or negotiated by students "on the

ground."

Nevertheless, within some of this more recent scholarship, a potentially broad

understanding of participation and contribution arises. For example, by arguing for the Writing

major as an activist site, Howard implicitly positions students as contributors to one normative

political project within Writing Studies: revising dominant, lay narratives about literacy through

disciplinary expertise. In "Curricular Activism: The Writing Major as Counterdiscourse,"

Howard calls in 2007 for Writing major curricula that might forward a disciplinary vision of literacy that counters the ideological force still carried by instrumentalist notions of literacy as a discrete set of skills (41-43).[19] She also offers selected course descriptions that enact the kind of curricular activism she promotes: her own course on theories of authorship and Adam Banks' on African American Rhetoric (49). The argument that the Writing major might revise dominant conceptions of literacy parallels Howard's earlier claim that an advanced Writing curriculum would enhance the disciplinary status of Writing Studies ("History"). If these arguments suggest a trajectory, then as the disciplinary locus intensifies through the movement from advanced Writing to the Writing major, a Writing major curriculum's influence widens to include a broad public. Moreover, students' own changed conceptions of literacy may contribute to the efficacy of that influence.

Writing major curricula frequently result from a negotiation among faculty in various areas often connected as English Studies. For example, in 2010, Lisa Langstraat, Mike Palmquist, and Kate Kiefer position the development of the Writing major at their institution (a concentration within an English major) as an opportunity to "restory" or revise moments of conflict among Writing Studies scholars and literature specialists within an English department. These revisions included shifting the department's vision of English Studies away from a literature-centric model (54-59), reshaping proposals for credit-bearing internships to deemphasize Writing Studies disciplinary values (i.e., pedagogical practices) and to emphasize specific course products and knowledge (i.e., knowable content) along with measures for evaluating student work (60-62), and leveraging state-mandated upper-division writing courses

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[19] There is a tradition in advanced composition and writing scholarship that similarly challenges the conservative ideological functions of writing. For example, Kate Ronald opens her 1987 inquiry into "the politics of teaching professional writing" by explicating the tensions between the skill-based ideologies of industry and the social justice-inclined ideologies of modern Writing Studies.

to encourage cross-institutional conversations, professional development, and curricular innovation (62-65). In 2007, Thomas Peele points to the need to define "writing" in particular departmental contexts (95-96). Also in 2007, Spencer Schaffner claims that pedagogical divisions within Writing Studies (i.e., critical pedagogy's interest in student consciousness and cultural studies' concern with a particular course content) reify a divide between writing as the medium of learning and the content of learning. He urges instead that a Writing major "abandon this double consciousness separating learning about writing from the activity of writing" (55). Consequently, the construction of Writing majors invites local and disciplinary negotiations about what constitutes writing, writing pedagogy, and the scope of Writing Studies.

Going beyond the recognition that curricula must be locally negotiated, several scholars actively promote some version of an "integrated" writing major—one that brings together rhetorical, literary, and/or creative concerns that run throughout English Studies.[20] Arguments for such integration contend that teachers can establish students as both readers and writers who might critically employ writing for their own purposes in a range of situations. Rodney F. Dick forwards in 2010 the concept that the Writing major should establish itself in "a disciplinary 'middle ground' of English studies" with "a shared commitment to literature *and* writing, rhetoric *and* theory, producing *and* consuming texts" (101, emphasis in the original). Furthermore, Randy Brooks et al., also in 2010, find this perspective one that allows faculty to "invite students into the field as participants" (43), participants "who might in fact change the assumptions of the field" (46). This disciplinary revision occurs through the integration of rhetorical theories across courses that focus on writing for circulation (35). As students form attachments to particular identities as writers and engage in "struggles to connect themselves to [.

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[20] Rebecca de Wind Mattingly and Patricia Harkin argue for the Writing major as a site for integrated rhetorical education: writing instruction and oral communication.

. .] rhetorical theories," instructors encourage students to continue integrative efforts that "work to move students beyond the narrow sense of identity that seemingly splits creative and professional writers" (41). Encouraging a similar ethic of participation, Beth Taylor shares in 2007 the story of how Writing faculty at Brown University revised their Writing curricula so that clearer connections would exist between students' nonfiction composing for class and the work those texts might perform beyond the classroom. This shift responded, in part, to the perceived or real need for students to see links between texts and their effects (77). To a degree, these articulations of the Writing major follow earlier integrationist traditions that span the latter half of the twentieth century: James Berlin (*Rhetorics*), Stephen North (*Refiguring*), and others who point to the possibilities that flow from a curriculum grounded in a rhetoric-literary-poetic fusion. These paradigms also bring to mind James Kinneavy's 1971 argument that rhetorical scholars attend to all of what he termed the aims of discourse: expository, persuasive, literary, and expressive.

Of course, the difficulties with this integrated or middle ground approach can be easily imagined and many have already been documented. Kelly Lowe suggests in his 2007 essay that a Writing major may not be desirable in a situation where a department doesn't have an adequate number of rhetoric and composition specialists or where the major is perceived by some faculty as lacking intellectual rigor (97-98). Expanding on this point, in 2010, Lowe and William Macauley address their experiences in a Writing major within an English department at a small college: the Writing major required more literature credits than Writing credits, Writing faculty were much fewer in number compared to literature faculty, Writing majors and their projects were the subject of belittling comments from some literature faculty, Writing faculty tended to be less involved when the introduction to the major course was team-taught by literature and

Writing faculty, and the major was in constant revision without a coherent set of guiding

principles to shape the curriculum and target hiring (86-92). Like the challenge Langstraat et al.

experienced with literature scholars' initial resistance to the curricular value of writing-intensive

internships with "no textual center" for students to master (80), Lowe and Macauley recount how

non-Writing faculty viewed "the production of texts, even multiple drafts in multiple genres" as

"less challenging than the theoretical engagement with literature" (89). Their report also includes

stories of Writing majors in tears because of literature faculty's comments. Describing an

instance of resistance to a different set of integrations, Shamoon and Celest Martin recall in their

2007 vignette an experience at a faculty meeting during which deep disagreement surfaced over

the idea of situating creative nonfiction within a "professional writing" curriculum. They suggest

that a conceptual divide in Writing Studies casts creative nonfiction as an "a-social, a-political,

and a-rhetorical" entity (53).

Negotiation will always be necessary and the integration of rhetorical-literary

frameworks may sometimes prove productive. However, the dangers of this model seem not

unlike those Susan Miller warns us of when compositionists argue for "integration" (i.e., parity

with English Studies within English departments): namely, "defending and maintaining the

'studentness' of a particular kind of writing, precisely *as* the student's right," which "allows

'movements' from composition to occur while student writing remains stably inside its regulated

frameworks of inconsequentiality" (181, emphasis in the original). Will these negotiations and

integrations recognize students as participants and their wide-ranging texts as contributions to

Writing Studies?

Similar to Trimbur's proposition that the attraction of an advanced curriculum might

partially stem from the freedom of instructors to focus on topics and forms of special interest to

them, several pieces in the 2010 collection argue for the value of specific courses or curricular

frames for the Writing major. For example, Thomas A. Moriarty and Greg Giberson urge

adoption of civic rhetoric as the foundation for the Writing major. They name the "field's three

subspecialties" (e.g., "rhetoric and composition," "professional writing," and "civic rhetoric"),

and they highlight what they perceive as the distinct limitations of the first two domains when

taken as the focus for a program of study (213-16).[21] Joddy Murray argues for the Writing major

as a space to harness the creativity that technological innovations make possible. More

significantly, he champions the image as a fundamental replacement for alphabetic text as the

organizing concept at the center of the Writing major (22). Creative nonfiction courses also find

their advocates. In particular, Martin claims "creative nonfiction as the most rhetorical of the

nonpublic (literary) genres" (232).

While the enthusiasm for these approaches might be energizing, the scholarship also

contains calls for caution regarding the development of Writing major programs and for

temperance regarding disciplinary zeal. A decade after Bullock's concerns about overdeveloping

advanced Writing programs, David Beard offers similar skepticism in 2010, suggesting that

disciplinarity does not—and should not—require the creation of an undergraduate major. This

warning about a potentially constraining drive to produce an undergraduate course of study out

of disciplinary interests is important. It is especially significant if the field is to remain open to a

broad notion of what constitutes undergraduate participation and contribution. The concerns

from Beard and Bullock also return us to the kinds of negotiations discussed earlier: faculty

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[21] What they call "subspecialties" align exactly with the three main categories that Howard names in the introduction to *Coming of Age* as a three-pronged foundation for instruction within a Writing major. Intriguingly, that piece by Howard is not cited in this argument that programs have overemphasized academic and professional composing and generally neglected civic rhetoric.

interested in a Writing major must respond to specific needs at local institutions as opposed to a disciplinary drumbeat.

Beyond local negotiation, a conversation currently exists about how best to understand the shape of the Writing major and to map its contours. These efforts examine the different courses, requirements, and emphases for the Writing major across the U.S. In 2007, DelliCarpini articulates three categories into which a given Writing major program might fall: "practical," "liberal arts," and "hybrid." These categories mean, respectively, what one might imagine: a focus on professional writing, a focus on humanistic inquiry that often involves literary studies and rhetorical theory, and a blend of the two. [22] Writing three years later, Balzhiser and McLeod draw on a slightly larger body of Writing major programs and name "liberal arts" and "professional/rhetorical" as the two primary models. Their first category is much like DelliCarpini's category of the same name, but they emphasize that courses in literature and creative writing dominate the "liberal arts" Writing major. The "professional/rhetorical" major includes professional and technical writing, but also those programs that include a Writing Studies focus. Balzhiser and McLeod say the programs offer little in the way of shared commonalities, causing them to call for consensus on general guidelines or principles. Also in 2010, Lee Campbell and Debra Jacobs use the metaphor of "mapping" to describe their effort to articulate a heuristic for course types in the Writing major. Based on their examination of

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[22] There seems in these categories some articulation with Howard's 2000 three-part advanced writing curriculum. "Practical" and workplace/professional writing are clearly linked. "Liberal arts" appears to contain Howard's call for disciplinary knowledge. However, while civic writing might in some sense be implicit within humanistic inquiry as contained within the "liberal arts" label, that's not exactly clear.

courses, they construct two continua with "general" to "specific" along the vertical axis and "liberal" to "technical" along the horizontal axis. They also suggest that this attempt to map the major "shows fours emphases: creative nonfiction, rhetoric and journalism, professional writing, and technical writing" (284). One productive issue this conversation raises, given the focus of this chapter, is that of how to classify programs. Official curricula provide one option, and this move harkens back to the definitional efforts within advanced composition. How we understand official curricula in light of student uptake and the knowledge they produce within a program of study should also figure into a map of the Writing major.

Official curricula and student consciousness, while mutually implicated with each other, are not synonymous. DelliCarpini's article is interesting not only because he offers a scheme that helps charts the various emphases Writing major programs may take. His work also provides a model of some of the most provocative scholarship about the Writing major because of the way he positions students and accounts for their perspectives as a source of data about how a program functions. He uses comments from colleagues at his institution to illustrate that some faculty in literature and philosophy understand the marketability of a professional Writing major (17). However, they also worry that students lose *something* that accompanies inquiry driven by humanistic commitments (24). As DelliCarpini shows, somewhat predictable desires for employability do arise from Writing majors themselves, yet he problematizes faculty sentiments that place professional pursuits in opposition to disciplinary and humanistic undergraduate inquiry. DelliCarpini provides written work from and discussion of scholarly efforts undertaken by literary majors and Writing majors whose inquiries emerged from their engagement with disciplinary and theoretical constructs from Writing Studies (24-31). Interestingly, DelliCarpini offers a brief description of the "afterlife" of a course, Teaching and Tutoring of Writing, a

course that led students to initiate several projects after the term ended. He also suggests this result is typical of student responses to courses, internships, and other opportunities throughout the Writing curriculum (30-31). It is important to investigate how undergraduates take up their programs of study, find disciplinary space, and make their contributions. Writing majors' voices should be brought more explicitly into the scholarly conversations about these programs. Engaging with students' contributions to the Writing major and Writing Studies may bring instances like the citation breakdown between the articles by Carpenter and Falbo and Bastian and Harkness into Writing Studies practitioners' awareness so that we see them for the difficulties they present and the genuinely transformative promise they hold.

METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

As a teacher and scholar, I feel a generally inchoate experience akin to Sondra Perl's *felt sense*—desires, excitements, yearnings, and understandings just beyond articulation until written through—about the potentiality that resides within Writing classrooms, curricula, and research. Like many Writing Studies scholars, my initial and ongoing attraction to rhetoric and composition is bound up with its historic connection to, and research interest in, teaching. Working with students, understanding their intellectual journeys and their affective engagements with writing both in and beyond the classroom, is central to my scholarship (Geiger). I acknowledge throughout this chapter that published scholarship and classroom teaching are not the same thing, readily conceding that the student subjectivities represented within the written scholarship may—indeed, likely do—differ from the realities of the Writing major as a daily practice among students and instructors. Despite this distinction between lived experience and written texts, the practices of scholarly writing matter. Lisa Ede explains, "[I]n terms of

knowledge hierarchies in the academy, [scholars'] practices are privileged and may circulate in unintended ways"—particularly in regards to how scholarly textual practices position the work and experience of teachers and students (127). As the above discussion makes clear, scholarship related to the Writing major and advanced curricula seeks to construct compelling learning situations that cultivate rhetorically prepared writers. At the same time, much of that literature often does not explicitly engage with student experiences and discourse. This issue is as much methodological as theoretical. The research upon which the remainder of this dissertation draws was collected through a design constructed with this concern in mind and with the particular goal of representing student voices and knowledge about the Writing major.

Following Sandra Harding's distinction, I account for both my methods as a "technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence" (2) and my methodology as a "theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (3). Principally, the present study works to fill the gap in the scholarship identified above through a methodological commitment to student-generated sources of data and through methods that enabled the collection of such data. Additionally, this research extends work 1) that centers on student voices (DelliCarpini; DelliCarpini and Crimmins; DelliCarpini and Zerbe) and 2) that argues for students as participants in Writing Studies and their texts as contributions to the field (Robillard; Grobman; Grobman and Kinkead). In the first instance, through the methodological assumptions active in this research, I hope not only to add texture to the portrait we might construct of what student knowledge looks like within the Writing major, but also to increase attention to issues of student subjectivity *in relationship to* what majors say about their experiences. In other words, I aim to articulate dynamics of subjectivity not solely from professional scholar's texts and official documents, but also from student-generated data. Moreover, with regard to how my methods

make a distinctive addition to Writing major scholarship, the collection of data from more than one site enables me to identify possible areas of convergence and divergence within students' discourse in different Writing major programs. In the second instance, I am indebted to those efforts that argue for the ability of undergraduates to produce contributive knowledge about writing and that position student as participants in the field. By starting with student discourse and texts, I hope to enact and promote the broad notions of undergraduate participation and contribution already operative within this area of scholarship.

Methodically, this study privileges student discourse as a source through which to investigate Writing major subjectivities. By focusing on the interests reported by students, I follow Marshall Alcorn's insight about the significance of desire and discourse to the functioning of subjectivity:

> The subject does not generally represent itself as whatever language it is given. The subject is not, like a mirror, a faithful reflection of the ideological discourse external to it. [. . .] The subject is not formed by the simple *presence* of discourse but by a rather specific interaction of rational and irrational, emotional and repressive, forces linked to a push that is somewhere or somehow in ideological practice and engages subjectivity in *particular* and *specific* ways. To understand the push of discourse, we need both more theory and more careful observation of subjective behavior. (20)

Within Alcorn's framework, particular instances of subjective behavior point to the relationship between institutionalized discourse and the subject interacting with that discourse. Subjective behavior would be inclusive of language use. It seems potentially generative, then, to attend to the discourse students mobilize to describe their experiences and work as Writing majors. Anne

J. Herrington and Marcia Curtis suggest that desire is central to the subjectivity that represents and revises itself in the knowledge students make and the writing they produce. In *Persons in Process: Four Stories of Writing and Personal Development in College*, they consider the question of subjectivity through students' negotiation of academic-focused writing and personally involved writing. Complicating the easy binaries of academic/public vs. personal/private, Herrington and Curtis find that, for the students in their longitudinal study, "a single impulse born of personal experience seems to motivate writing done for the most apparently distant and disparate assignments." Furthermore, their study participants experienced a "desire, [a] need [. . .] to make themselves understood in their writing and, quite literally, to remake themselves through the understanding achieved" (5). Thus, the student subject is located within a complex interplay—a process—of being and becoming, making and remaking, writing and rewriting.

My interest in soliciting and analyzing *interested* accounts of the Writing major from students with varied desires is also informed by treatments of embodiment, which further enable an exploration of the relationship between student discourse and subjectivity. Raúl Sánchez provides an account of composition scholarship that bifurcated along two lines: empirical studies of the figure of the *writer* and theoretical inquiry about the *subject*. He finds this research structure constrained by epistemological divisions that do not hold. Sánchez takes new media studies' interest in relationality within networks as a point of departure for arguing that the material and textual dimensions of new technologies demonstrate the long-accepted premise in critical theory that subjects, contexts, agency, and textuality are interwoven. Given how new media can make networks and distributed production visible, we are, according to Sánchez, able to speak of a more embodied subject (a figure who both produces empirically observable writing

and provides contextual grounds for theoretical analysis). N. Katherine Hayles's work informs Sánchez's conception of embodiment. In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles claims, "[E]mbodiment is the specific instantiation generated from the noise of difference" (197). Hayles's insistence on the particular and temporal dimensions of any instance of embodiment prompts Sánchez to articulate the act of writing as an act of embodiment. Sánchez goes on to suggest that acts of writing—what happens at the moment of composing—constitute acts of identity formation that the field can now understand as a writing-subject.

The present study follows Hayles by adapting her point about the difference between enactment and representation, making "the crucial move of distinguishing between the enacted body, present in flesh" in Writing classrooms "and the represented body, produced through the verbal and semiotic markers constituting it" in composition scholarship about advanced students and Writing majors (xiii). In other words, scholarship and classrooms are not synonymous. Writing majors and advanced students in Writing Studies scholarship seem not unlike "information [that] lost its body," concepts abstracted from material reality (5). Even as this dissertation includes more representations of students, my intention is to consistently bring my own assumptions and other scholars' representations into conversation with a corpus of student-generated material. Following Sánchez and Hayles, student texts and discourse are treated as effects of embodiment—what's produced in moments of writing or speech.

Janis Haswell and Richard Haswell might call such embodied moments instances of "singularity," an observable single event or artifact that points to a subject who engaged in or had a sense of herself as "authoring": "the human inner act of making texts" (1) and "the inward act that triggers the outward act of writing" (2). In *Authoring: An Essay for the English Profession on Potentiality and Singularity*, Haswell and Haswell propose "potentiality"

alongside singularly as another key aspect of authoring: "an ongoing capacity for creative work that needs to be constantly protected and nurtured" (20) and a sense "that lends coherence to people's understanding of their own lives" (32). They argue for placing the question of how authoring happens, and what the experience feels like, at the center of English Studies. Haswell and Haswell's concept of authoring aids the present exploration of what writing-subjects are constructed in the discourse of Writing majors by insisting on the singularity of each student's experience even as I looked for themes and patterns. Hopefully this dissertation centered on those undergraduate students most involved with the project of Writing Studies through their academic affinities and course enrollments will point toward a richer understanding of what's possible for all students.

In light of the concerns expressed throughout this chapter about need for attention to the specificity of particular students, the present study engaged in methods that solicited self-reports about the experiences of students in two Writing major programs. The study involved collecting data from Writing majors at two schools, Private Research University and Liberal Arts College. Data collection involved the following: a quantitative and qualitative survey, qualitative interviews, and analysis of written work that students felt demonstrated their skills and interests as Writing majors. Both of these private, non-religious institutions with full-time undergraduate tuition just above $37,500 are in New York, the state where I currently live and work as a doctoral candidate. My dissertation committee members and I know key stakeholders at the study institutions. Thus, geographic and institutional access served as central considerations in choosing these sites. Both schools have independent Writing programs with undergraduate majors named on the CCCC list of Writing major programs.

Private Research University's Writing major mostly aligned with what Balzhiser and

McLeod call the professional/rhetorical model for a Writing major with a focus on rhetorical theory, writing practices, and some attention to creative nonfiction. The Writing Program is a doctoral-granting unit within this university. At the time of this study, Private Research University enrolled 21,029 students, 14,169 of them were undergraduates. With roots as a seminary going back to the 1830s, Private Research University was chartered 1870 and has been non-religiously affiliated since the early-twentieth century. Vision statements at both the university-level and within the Writing Program seemed resonant with each other: the first addressed the "university as a public good" and the second framed its work around writing as involved with the project of creating "a just society." The Writing Program is responsible for the general education writing requirement and the professional writing course required for students in some colleges, such as those in business and engineering. It also staffs the university writing center. There were eleven full-time faculty, ten of whom held various specializations within rhetoric and composition and one who was a creative nonfiction and poetry writer. Forty-seven part-time faculty worked in the Writing Program. Sixteen rhetoric and composition doctoral students were teaching assistants, and eighteen English graduate students held TA positions in the Writing Program. All of these constituencies (except for English graduate students) taught upper-division courses. This Writing major enrolled seventy-five students.

Liberal Arts College's Writing Department mostly aligned with what Balzhiser and McLeod term the liberal arts model with a blend of creative writing, creative nonfiction, professional writing, and some attention to rhetoric. Primarily an undergraduate institution, total enrollment was 6,760 with 484 graduate students. Beginning as a music conservatory with no facilities of its own in 1892, the college's website marked the 1897 arrival of an elocution and rhetoric instructor who established a drama program as the first movement toward a curriculum

beyond music. Liberal Arts College's vision statement addresses a commitment to comprehensive education with intellectual, creative, and ethical dimensions. The Writing Department offered the first-year academic writing requirement for the college and held proprietorship of the college writing center. Highlighting the "social context" of all composing, the Writing Department declared an interest in the "public" dimensions of writers' work. This department had twenty-five full-time faculty and seventeen part-time faculty. While full-time faculty taught the majority of courses in the major, both of these constituencies taught upper-division courses. This Writing major enrolled 150 students at the time of this study.

The Institutional Review Board at Syracuse University approved the research activities described below. Before I was able to collect any data, I had to gain access to the research sites by building a relationship and establishing my credibility with stakeholders at the selected institutions. This task was made somewhat easier at Private Research University by virtue of being a graduate student in the program. Administrators in the Writing Program viewed me as a responsible scholar and teacher, a researcher interested in honoring the integrity of the program, teachers, and students. Consequently, the faculty member overseeing the Writing major granted me permission to conduct research there. The survey was distributed on the majors' listserv and was shared on class listservs by at least two upper-division instructors, resulting in thirty responses. I also visited three upper-division classes in-person and distributed paper copies of the survey. This step produced twelve more results from Writing majors as well as responses from several non-majors. Responses from non-majors are not considered in this research in order to keep the focus on students who chose to dedicate their academic attention to writing. However, data from minors and non-majors has been retained and may provide useful points for reference at a later date. At the second research site, Liberal Arts College, a member of my committee and

I made contact with the Writing Department Chair who agreed to distribute the survey through its majors' listserv. Three days after that e-mail went out, forty-four responses came in from students in that program.

While efforts were made to include a third site with a clear focus on professional writing, the returns from two such programs where the survey was distributed electronically through listservs produced five responses total. Such low returns could not provide enough data to make even tentative or suggestive claims about the experiences of students in those programs. Located at two state universities (one in New York and one in Pennsylvania), these programs with professional Writing majors within English departments were chosen based on my own contacts with faculty in those programs as well as the connections my committee members had with those faculty. Given the constraints of time, I decided to move forward with the data collected from the two Writing major programs on which this dissertation focuses. Perhaps this situation provides an opportunity for a clearer focus on two different kinds of Writing majors within independent Writing programs.

The research design employs mixed methods, blending quantitative and qualitative practices to investigate Writing majors' experiences and discourse. As is the case here, researchers may use mixed-methods research when they express the goal of using one kind of data to enhance or complement the other. For this research, a triangulation mixed-methods design was used. In triangulation mixed-methods research, quantitative and qualitative forms of data are examined simultaneously with the researcher treating both forms as relatively equal in their value. The three kinds of data collected were survey responses, interviews, and student work. All data were collected in order that they might be considered together and interpreted in concert. Such an approach provides a way to investigate issues of student experience and

discourse that quantitative or qualitative research alone might miss. Combining methods allows

for the identification of trends between and across different data sets and for bringing those

trends into focus.

In the first phase of this study, a cross-sectional survey was deployed. As John Creswell

reports, cross-sectional survey research solicits information from participants at one particular

moment (357). The survey consisted of mostly closed-ended questions (with fields for written

comments), and it was used to collect data from as large as possible a population of Writing

majors at the two research sites. Questions in the survey were designed to gain data about

students' attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and experiences as Writing majors. For the complete

survey, please refer to the Appendix. Participation in the survey acted as the gateway to the other

phases of data collection. At the end of the survey, students were offered the opportunity to

volunteer for a follow-up interview and/or to submit a sample of their written work to this study.

The second phase of this research involved interviewing Writing majors who volunteered

to be contacted about further participation in the study. My approach to interviewing is informed

by semi-structured interviewing techniques and feminist methodological principles as articulated

by Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey. Interviews were structured through the use of a guide

with set questions asked to all participants in an established order. These questions asked

students to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences related to life and work as a Writing

major: 1) How would you describe the academic culture at your school? In other words, what's it

like to be a student there? 2) How would you describe the social culture at your school? In other

words, what's life outside of class like? 3) How does the Writing major fit into that culture? 4)

What Writing classes have you taken? 5) Can you elaborate on your primary reasons for

majoring in Writing? 6) What kinds of topics or issues have you written about or researched in

your Writing courses? Which ones have mattered most to you or were meaningful to you? 7) Have you developed new writing practices, reading strategies, or attitudes about reading or writing because of your Writing courses? If so, what are they? 8) How do you approach research? In other words, what do you do when you need to conduct research? What kinds of research have you done? 8) If you also volunteered to provide a sample of writing for this project, what did you select to contribute? Why did you select this piece? What does it demonstrate about your skills and/or interests as a Writing student?

Feminist interview principles led me to two central practices and attitudes during my interviews (Fontana and Frey 368-69). First, I tried to establish a connection with participants and indicate my personal, as well as scholarly, interest in them. For example, I revealed a few facts about myself and my background, indicating my status as a graduate student, and I expressed interest in participants' own backgrounds and experiences. Such moves are not just about building rapport as a means to a research end. Rather, creating a humane interview space is important ethical and methodological labor. Second, I attempted a conversational approach to the interviews. When possible, I introduced questions from the interview guide by tying the next question together with elements of a participant's response to the preceding question. At several points, I also asked follow-up questions and invited participants to elaborate further on an answer. Instead of trying to keep my own positionality and all my reactions hidden from participants, if the situation seemed appropriate, I might briefly share my own experiences relevant to the topic as well as indicate my interest or excitement at a given response. My sense is that these moves opened space for undergraduate Writing majors to speak more freely; they put students at ease.

Perhaps most important, I consistently reminded myself that participants in this research are human beings with rich, complicated lives and desires. Fontana and Frey comment on the importance of this practice in interview research: "The 'other' is no longer a distant, aseptic, quantified, sterilized, measured, categorized, and cataloged faceless respondent, but has become a living human being" (373-74). Thus, I tried not to treat Writing majors who contributed to this research as a means to a set of data. They were not merely objects (or even subjects) to be studied. As makers of complex worlds and knowledge, the Writing majors in this study provided glimpses into their understandings of writing, rhetoric, and the task of undergraduate participation in Writing Studies. By letting their words wash over me, I enter partially, contingently into their worlds, worlds in which I became implicated and to which I stand accountable. To briefly illustrate what I mean, one first-year Writing major, Jane, asked if I would read and comment on a story she shared with me as part of my research, not to improve it for grade, but because she "loves getting feedback—whether it be critical or not." I gladly agreed. In this moment, one writer reached out to another writer in an encounter centered on the work of writing. She shared with me the gift of her time and her text. Jane did not demand a favor in return, but she made a desire known, presenting me with the opportunity not only to study her work, but also to respond to it.

Student writing constitutes the third source of data for this study. At the end of the survey, in addition to being able to volunteer for an interview, Writing majors could indicate their willingness to submit a sample of their work. The question used to solicit writing from participants read, "Would you be willing to share a piece of your writing for this research that demonstrates your skills and interests as a Writing major or as a student taking Writing classes?" By design, this question does not specify that the writing must come from a Writing course.

Neither was length or genre suggested. What kinds of texts would students submit in response to this broad solicitation? What might their selections indicate about what kinds of writing students value? What proficiencies do they understand themselves to possess? Why are some forms of writing meaningful to some Writing majors? These texts were examined for the genres, modes, topics, and issues they take up. Students' motivations for submitting particular pieces of work were also considered. These texts and students' interview and survey comments are also considered for how they might address the question of what contributions students make to the Writing major and Writing Studies.

I want to return briefly to Jane's request for feedback on her work. That scene points me to the truth Linda Brodkey articulates: "We study other people's stories not because they are true or even because they are false, but for the same reason that people tell and listen to them, in order to learn about the terms on which others make sense of their lives" (47). Indeed, my interest centers on what the field can learn when it takes as a site for inquiry the discourse of undergraduate Writing majors, the vernacular terms in which they articulate their experiences, motivations, and writing. What might Writing Studies specialists learn about our disciplinary curricula by theorizing at the point of student discourse? Building curricula, composing scholarship, and teaching courses based on disciplinary knowledge, institutional culture, and faculty expertise constitute worthy and necessary projects. These are the projects Writing Studies scholars have earnestly undertaken in the study of the Writing major and advanced curricula. Hopefully, this study adds to our knowledge base by taking student-generated data as a starting point for inquiry.

It's important to be clear about two issues. First, I believe in the value of examining student-produced data when providing material descriptions of the Writing major. Second, I want

to encourage the work of taking material descriptions and using them to theorize the nature of student subjectivity. Such theory building, I believe, is critical if we are to move in the productive direction of understanding students as participants within Writing Studies, participants who make multiple contributions to the field. Put differently, surveying and interviewing Writing majors and examining their writing is vital, but it's not enough. Those data must also fuel theoretical inquiry that can lead to new practices in scholarship, teaching, and program building. Thus, data was not pursued for data's sake. Rather, these materials serve as touchstones that ground and guide a hermeneutical engagement, enabling an exploration of what it means to be a Writing major at this moment in history, a moment so ripe with potential for Writing Studies and Writing students.

Chapter 2. The Subject of the Writing Major: Writing Majors' Shared and Divergent Curricular Experiences and Desires

Whereas the previous chapter traced student subjectivity through scholarly literature relevant to the Writing major, this chapter offers an account of some of the shared curricular experiences of Writing majors at Private Research University and Liberal Arts College. Specifically, I analyze survey and interview data in order to bring into focus a few of the elements that might define some of the contours of Writing majors' *life-courses* within and across the two institutions. Janis Haswell and Richard Haswell define the "life-course" as part of the context for the experience of authoring, defined earlier as the inner and outer work of producing texts. The life-course involves those activities undertaken by the student that precede, include, and exceed a particular academic course, but it also involves having "learned something that lasted" (93). Teaching to the life-course involves promoting learning long after a given academic experience ends (94). Describing "preparedness" as an element of authoring, Haswell and Haswell argue "that writing emerges from a feeling of readiness, and readiness emerges from material, or things to say that have long been experienced, collected, internalized, and finally are posed for the saying" (16). Within a Writing major's life-course while in school, the curriculum implicitly and explicitly prepares him or her for *something*.

What that something is, though, and how students will understand and value it remains, to an extent, unpredictable. Haswell and Haswell highlight unpredictability as another defining feature of authoring: "When authors find themselves writing things they had not set out to write, they feel surprised, delighted, self-affirmed, proud. They find they are more than they thought they were" (17). Given that Susan Miller suggests that a student may not "experience [introductory composition] as a divergent or idiosyncratic or unconventional instrument in his or

her community, but as a site for unifying and leveling differences" (103), how might Writing major curricula develop students' preparedness as particular and idiosyncratic writers engaged in the unpredictable work of authoring? In particular, how do majors view themselves as being prepared to participate in the various aims of their Writing programs through common curricular experiences particular to each school and that seem to span both institutions? And, in light of the central questions of subjectivity established in chapter one, what do the common and divergent discourses of Writing majors imply about the subject of the Writing major?

What students find meaningful and view as enhancing their capacities for rhetorical action is unpredictable and varied. This general comment may seem obvious given that Writing teachers are painfully aware that they do not know what students will do with the knowledge they gained and the knowledge-making processes they practiced after a course is over.[23] That awareness comes despite—and, perhaps, actually because of—some of the important longitudinal studies of student literacy learning (Carroll; Harrington and Curtis; Sternglass).[24] However, as my review of the relevant literature in the preceding chapter illustrates, it is not always easy for Writing scholars to recall the particularity of individual students when building curricula or when writing about advanced courses within scholars' own areas of interest or expertise. Thus, paying increased attention to the specificity of Writing majors' meaning-making practices, sense of preparedness, and unpredictable articulations of their experiences provides Writing specialists opportunities to identify the hegemonic and critical dispositions curricula may support.

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[23] If many of the observations I make about the curricula and the subject of the Writing major seem indistiguishable from points that might be made about the FYW, it should be noted that Writing major programs come from *somewhere*. They do not arise outside of history. Teachers and scholars who wrestled with the political and historical realities of FYW produced Writing major programs and the scholarship about them. That some continuity would exist between the issues of FYW and Writing major programs should not surprise anyone.

[24] On the one hand, such longitudinal studies provide Writing teachers with some sense of the writing students do beyond the first year of college. On the other hand, they simultaneously highlight the specificity of each student's struggles and successes.

The subject of the Writing major—as constituted in the commonalities and differences in the discourse of students in this study—has the potential to mobilize elements of the arhetorical textual subject as well as elements of the politically alternative rhetorical subject. As developed in the previous chapter, the textual subject is the term used here for what Miller calls the literary subject and the student subject of composition: a figure who acquires a formalist sensibility by following teachers' cues and laboring within a field of textual inconsequentiality (84-104). The rhetorical subject refers to the figure who embodies those features Miller ascribes to a redefined composition studies: democratic sensibility, situational awareness, constructivist approach to knowledge production, and counterhegemonic aims (186-87). I invoke Louise Wetherbee Phelps's philosophical reflections to suggest that these subjectivities circulate through "the dance of discourse" within a Writing program (147). Citing developments in quantum physics that describe reality as a dynamic and interactive dance that is "understood, and indeed constituted as we know it, through our interaction with it," Phelps interrogates the process-product polarity as an organizing energy in the discipline of "composition studies" (131). She critiques the 1960s elevation of "process" over "product" for its resulting understanding of discourse events as psychologized processes contained by writers and of products (i.e., texts) as "even more quintessentially objects—inanimate, static, self-contained, and rigidly organized" (135). Students in the present study point to programs and persons, written products and composing processes that develop as they interact, or dance, with each other.

Dance seems a particularly apt metaphor for thinking about the interaction of curricula and students; it encourages us to keep both "partners" in focus when we think about what constitutes "the Writing major." This dance of discourse suggests that Writing majors (as both persons and programs) experience continuity with the problems Phelps and Miller identify as

well as new possibilities for dynamic rhetorical education. By engaging with students'

descriptions of their experiences with first-year Writing, required courses in the Writing major,

research tasks, and projects that student understand as traveling with them beyond a single

course, I offer a partial and tentative sketch of this dance, highlighting features of the textual and

rhetorical elements that circulate within the Writing major.

WRITING MAJORS AND THE "UNIVERSAL" REQUIREMENT

In the early days of the field, rhetoric and composition professionals imagined their work

primarily in relationship to the ubiquitous first-year Writing (FYW) course—sometimes called

the "universal requirement." There exists no shortage of professional and scholarly activity

around FYW. Students in these courses form a central concern in the professional lives of

Writing teachers and scholars. Harnessing the power that comes from the sheer number of

students that attend the ubiquitous course, Miller names the popular—that is, the not privileged

or elite—nature of FYW as one of its counterhegemonic potentials: "[C]omposition was

culturally designated to teach *all* students, not an elite group, and it is therefore already an

encompassing site for empowering, not for repressing or 'correcting,' the discursive power of the

majority" (186, emphasis in original).

What, then, is the relationship of Writing majors to FYW? Do Writing majors even take

this course that is so central to the historical development of, and current concerns within,

Writing Studies? Do students experience it as an influence on their decision to major in Writing?

What connections do Writing majors perceive between themselves and this project at the heart of

Writing Studies' pedagogical enterprise? What contribution does FYW make to the textual and

rhetorical nature of the Writing major subject?

To the question of whether Writing majors even take FYW, for the students in this study, the answer seems to be that it depends on local culture and circumstances. Only twenty-six percent of Liberal Arts College Writing majors reported taking a required FYW course. That finding significantly contrasts with sixty-two percent of Private Research University respondents who took such a course. At both institutions, those students who commented on their FYW exemptions pointed to reasons one might expect: they received Advanced Placement credit or they enrolled in a high school dual-credit sequence. One student at each school mentioned theme-based, writing-intensive seminars offered outside of the Writing programs that substituted for their lower-division Writing credits. At Liberal Arts College, four students also noted that they matriculated with the intention of majoring in Writing, which meant that they took Introduction to the Essay with other Writing majors instead of the general course, Academic Writing. These results suggest that many students who declare a Writing major never take the generally required course. If students had previously demonstrated high levels of writing proficiency and teachers encouraged their writing, it may not be surprising that many Writing-majors-to-be managed to demonstrate the competencies assessed in dual-credit and testing-for-credit situations. This circumstance does raise questions, though, in terms of curricular sequencing and majors' vision of Writing Studies as a university project. If they have no connection with the task that has so defined postsecondary literacy instruction (i.e., FYW), from where do they acquire an understanding of the Writing major and its disciplinary location? Of course, disciplinarity (in the Writing major or in FYW) matters more to teachers and scholars than it does to students. Before addressing the question of how programs locate students within disciplinary or professional concerns, it is useful to understand how Writing majors who took FYW view its influence on their choice of major.

Even though required composition courses generally serve a range of functions, they typically do not try to introduce students to Writing Studies as an academic field, act as a gateway course to a major, or operate as a recruitment station for an academic major focused on the subject (i.e., the content) of the course.[25] While these first two functions likewise don't hold true in any widespread way at Private Research University or Liberal Arts College, FYW at both schools does factor into some students' reasons for declaring Writing as their major. At Liberal Arts College, all of the students who took FYW and then became Writing majors reported that the course contributed to their decision. Given that a much larger percent of respondents at Private Research University (sixty-two) took FYW compared to Liberal Arts College (twenty-six), it's impressive that half of those Private Research University students expressed the belief that it influenced their decision to become Writing majors. Individual encouragement from teachers to pursue the Writing major appeared as a motivation in two survey responses, one from each school. Thus, teachers, through their everyday practices and intentional recruitment, can make the Writing major an attractive option for some students. In fact, one junior at Private Research University wrote this comment about FYW: "It reminded me of my love to write." What Writing teacher doesn't take some heart in such a development? How does this student's sense of pleasure connect to a sense of preparedness for a range of writing tasks?

Despite the success these courses have in offering some students a compelling vision of writing, the perception of FYW among Writing majors is not entirely positive. These experiences point to how the hegemonic textual subject may be operative within the Writing major. One atypical survey response from a Private Research University junior, a double major in Writing as well as Speech and Rhetorical Studies, reported that FYW "at first discouraged me from

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[25] Of course, this situation may change given the growing conversation about writing-about-writing as an approach to FYW as well as its program-wide implementation at several schools—a move aided by the publication of the textbook *Writing about Writing: A College Reader* by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs.

pursuing my Writing major, but I ended up choosing it as my major anyway." Since this student

didn't volunteer for an interview, it's not clear why or how the course produced this effect for

her. Perhaps, the cause was peculiar to that course or the relationship with that instructor.

However, I wonder if a more general feeling evinced in student responses may help explain that

discouragement. One Liberal Arts College student articulated a sentiment about FYW that seems

implicit in several interviews and survey comments from both schools and that may relate to the

Private Research University student's remark: "It was Academic Writing (blech)." Since this

student also didn't volunteer for follow-up research, it was not possible to ask this junior about

what motivated her visceral response ("blech") to "academic writing"—whatever that means.

This revulsion at "academic writing," however, should not be understood as a fear of, or

disinterest with, challenging work. In fact, interviews at both schools revealed a desire on the

part of Writing majors to perform meaningful intellectual labor.

I suspect that this reaction is tied for some students to a desire to engage in a wider array

of writing practices than those generally assigned for school or to know a purpose for writing

that exceeds the compulsory nature of an assignment.[26] The perceived ubiquity and uniformity of

research tasks addressed later in this chapter may help explain what the student seemed to imply

by "academic writing." As recounted to me, throughout their educational careers, students

repeatedly encountered what they experience as similar researched writing assignments in which

they had little-if-any investment.

The textual subject, disciplined to move within a limited field of activity without a clear

purpose, may inhabit the Writing major by traveling with students from pre-collegiate writing

experiences or from FYW. As noted in chapter one, some scholars have argued current-

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[26] Two Private Research University seniors and one Liberal Arts College junior spoke about internships with a univeristy press, a college writing center, and a student publication as fulfilling these desires. Thus, in the context of a whole program of study in Writing, majors report these kinds of writing experiences.

traditionalism and excessive formalism are alive and well in FYW (Crowley; Miller).

Alternatively, resistance to finding value in FYW could also indicate that some Writing majors

hold culturally elite textual sensibilities and that they were trained elsewhere to balk at the messy

writing public found in the universal requirement. Speaking to the importance of FYW,

Jeremiah, a graduating senior at Private Research University, connected Writing teachers'

commitment to providing engaged feedback on student work to their FYW efforts:

> A lot of the faculty and graduate students who are teaching have a background in
> composition and know how to name writing strategies. Instead of looking at a
> sentence and saying, 'That's a wrong sentence,' they say, 'What you didn't do
> here was speak with your own voice or think in simple terms in relation to your
> audience.' They're able to put into words what's going on in that sentence rather
> than just saying 'this is off-register' because they work with so many, I don't
> know, beginner writers or lower-level writers—however you want to label that.

Jeremiah offered a sense of disciplinary knowledge as informing teacher practice throughout the

Writing curriculum. In this way, he points to evidence of the rhetorical subject within Writing

majors' discourse about the popular nature of FYW.

Given the finding that Writing majors neither always have FYW as a point of reference

for the work of their programs nor necessarily find compelling the task of traditional "academic

writing," what other arenas provide a setting or context for common experiences within and

between programs? What requirements do the two programs in this study establish? What

gateways exist to the major in Writing? What kinds of subjects do they produce?

R<small>EQUIRED</small> C<small>OURSES WITHIN THE</small> W<small>RITING</small> M<small>AJOR</small>: M<small>AKING</small> A<small>RGUMENTS</small>, L<small>ITERARY</small>
C<small>ONNECTIONS, AND</small> E<small>XERCISING</small> "V<small>OICE</small>"

Recently, there has been some discussion of courses that act as an introduction to the Writing major. Sanford Tweedie, Jennifer Courtney, and William I. Wolff note that most Writing major programs have a required course, a required set of courses, a range of options within course categories, or some combination of requirements and options. These courses, however, are not necessarily "introductory" in the sense of providing "foundational information that students should understand—the 'knowledge' and 'heritage' of the discipline" of Writing Studies as well as teaching "non-specialized writing within a disciplinary context" (Tweedie, Courtney, and Wolff 263). By "non-specialized," they mean courses not primarily focused on exposing students to particular genres or fields of production such as creative nonfiction, digital writing, or professional writing. Private Research University and Liberal Arts College have different mechanisms for establishing discourse and knowledge shared by all majors as well as opportunities for student choice. At the time of this study, Liberal Arts College's requirements included the following: a set of four courses focused on specific genres as well as argumentative strategies (i.e, Essay, Creative Writing, Argument, and Personal Essay); two course clusters from which students chose one course each; a senior-level topic-based seminar; a senior-level project-driven independent study; and requirements specific to each of the four elective concentrations. Of the four required courses at Liberal Arts College, Writing majors discussed only one at any length: Personal Essay. The Private Research University major required one specific course (Advanced Argument), an internship, and a set number of credits within two course clusters called "Genres and Practices" and "Histories and Theories." The one required course at Private Research University was considered a gateway course to the Writing major that, in some ways,

fulfilled the functions described above as introductory. In accounting for the similarities and differences in students' comments about these Advanced Argument and Personal Essay courses, it is possible to observe how students' interactions with courses specific to the Writing major hold the potential to simultaneously promote a textual orientation as well as a rhetorical subject.

Advanced Argument is a sophomore-level course designed to acquaint Private Research University students with rhetorical history and theory as well as encourage them to produce and analyze arguments for a variety of contexts. Writing faculty designed Advanced Argument so that it could be taught by all constituencies in the program with upper-division teaching opportunities: tenure-line faculty, part-time faculty, staff with teaching duties, and doctoral students. The course moves from a common first unit on selected ancient and contemporary rhetorical theories to two units chosen from a list of five options: autobiographical arguments, spoken arguments, web-based arguments, organizational arguments, and community-based arguments. Given its function as the one required course in the Writing major, it should not be surprising that Advanced Argument repeatedly came up in student interviews and survey responses at Private Research University. When I asked Jeremiah about what "shared experiences"—a term he used in his survey—define what it means to be a major, he mentioned Advanced Argument: it's "something we all have to take and it's pretty tightly structured, so even if you had it from a different instructor who taught it in a different way, you should still get some of the same words and knowledge." Highlighting both commonalities and variations in the comments students offered about this supposedly "shared experience" brings into focus what might constitute some common contours in the life-course of a Writing major and the singular nature of each student's experience as well as the textual and rhetorical strands of subjectivity hailed by study participants' discourse.

As a subject capable of resisting or negotiating hegemonic realities, a Writing major can benefit from learning rhetorical theory and vocabulary. Such competencies enhance students' options for rhetorical action. Critical frameworks from rhetorical theory make it possible for students (and teachers) to participate in the politically astute composition studies Miller describes: "an active existing site for dismantling particularly troublesome versions of hegemonic discursive 'common sense'" (187). Indeed, one shared benefit of Advanced Argument that Private Research University students named was their increased facility with rhetorical knowledge and terminology, which surfaced explicitly in three students' comments. Margaret, a sophomore who transferred to Private Research University from a community college, made a point similar to Jeremiah's:

> Before taking this class I just saw writing as something you did and I did not think of it as rhetoric. Now when I write, I think more about 'What is the rhetorical purpose of writing this?' and 'How does this persuade my audience?' I have also learned a lot of vocabulary to explain parts of writing, like *kairos* and exigency. These are concepts I had not encountered before."

Advanced Argument challenged and extended Margaret's vision of writing beyond what she encountered in her FYW sequence at another institution, courses she viewed as repeating lessons from high school. Her sense was that students in Advanced Argument take writing seriously as an academic and personal project. It certainly caused a revision in her thinking about literacy, and it introduced her to some key rhetorical terms and concepts. Likewise, Lisa, a sophomore with a passion for creative writing, acknowledged the value she derived from Advanced Argument: "After taking a whole semester, I think I have a more clear definition of what certain things are and how they affect a speech or how they don't affect a speech. [. . .] I mean, it was

actually very interesting." Jeremiah suggested that it made sense as a course early in a Writing major's career: if "that preceded all of the other courses, perhaps you would have a solid basis upon which to go into further rhetorical study."

Some readers might wonder if this attention to content (i.e., rhetorical theory and concepts) establishes a new textual hegemony that hails with new shibboleths the old textual subject. That danger certainly exists. For example, Dominic DelliCarpini and Cynthia Crimmins explain that Writing majors and minors who worked as peer writing tutors at their institution resisted "the idea that the tutoring 'theory' they had learned about was somehow more than good common sense—though the resistance, interestingly, was characterized in terms that drew liberally upon their reading and classroom discussions from the course on tutoring writing" (195). In this case, theory became for students an unquestioned common sense. It is entirely possible, then, for Writing majors to accept as natural or given rhetorical theories that are actually constructs that, as Jeremiah suggested in his interview, come from people situated in specific historical contexts. For example, asking Writing majors to read Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* or Kenneth Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives* without adequate background about the classical world or the post-World War II moment may divorce ideas from the contexts in which they arose. The ideas in those texts might be transformed for students from historically derived constructs that continue to serve productive ends into timeless essentials, a new dominant common sense regulated by a rhetorical, rather than literary, textual regime. Consequently, teaching theoretical constructs about communication can benefit from Miller's reminder that the making of knowledge involves "cooperation and conflict in struggles among ideas and classes" (187). The range of strategies and practices explained in Grobman and Kinkead's *Undergraduate Research in English Studies* provide some ways to imagine not just how to make the struggles of

knowledge production in English Studies and Writing Studies visible to students, but also how to involve them in their own generative struggles.

Depending on the institutional location of a Writing major (e.g., within a standalone program, an English department, etc.), students in that program may feel varied pulls toward identification with Writing studies and/or English studies more broadly defined. Whether students articulate similarities or differences among literature, composition, and creative writing, their discourse might indicate a complicated mingling of textual and rhetorical orientations. Claims of connection might not signal an imposition of literary sentiments over rhetorical concerns. Likewise, claims of dissimilarity made by championing rhetoric's practicality need not suggest a disinterest in humanistic inquiry. In a context where English and Writing are different departments (as they were at both study institutions), it's noteworthy that two Private Research University students discussed the introduction to the English major course and Advanced Argument to utterly contrasting purposes, reinforcing the point that each student's experience, though shaped by institutional discourse and culture, is unpredictable. One student wanted to highlight how rhetorical knowledge and English Studies usefully complement each other; the other sought to illustrate the stark differences between Writing Studies and English Studies.

Lisa, the sophomore interested in creative writing, majored in both Writing and English, and her claims of a connection between English Studies and Writing Studies suggested a rhetorical subject engaged in the goals of Private Research University's Writing Program. This program's webpage, "description of the major," places an emphasis on "genres and practices of writing as enacted in specific historical and cultural contexts." Though Lisa first encountered the concept of a literary canon in the gateway course for English majors at Private Research University, she named what she saw as a link between English Studies (i.e., canon formation as

she understood it from the English course) and Writing Studies (i.e., genre considerations as studied in Advanced Argument). Sharing an experience from Advanced Argument, Lisa informed me, "I brought it up in class because I felt like there was a connection between a literary canon and how it places authors and how we now have a ton more authors than we did before. So many new genres are coming out and people are placed in different categories now." Thus, Lisa pointed to an interest in how genre knowledge aids critics (of either a rhetorical or literary bent) in the task of situating authors within an expanding body of texts considered worthy of increased critical attention: "So I kind of saw the connection. I *think* my other classmates saw the connection." For her, this matrix of genre, canon, and authorship constituted one convergence of rhetoric and literature that Advanced Argument enabled her to identify.

Another Private Research University Writing major offered a diametrically opposed vision of the same two courses. Tyler, a graduating senior who had once been an English major (and a physics major), insisted on the differences between English Studies and Writing Studies because of his perception of the different post-graduation employment options and preparation they provided. For him, the gateway course to the English major and Advanced Argument provided clear evidence of how Writing and English constitute radically dissimilar enterprises:

> I was taking the introduction to the English major course with a woman who's now the director of that program, which factored into my decision to drop that major. We were studying *Wuthering Heights* and one of the essay topics was to identify themes of light and dark in it. I thought, 'This is completely and utterly useless.' This knowledge—I mean, if I'm going to go on in academia, this is good. But for a job, nobody's going to the care if I can do this.

Many an English teacher may bristle at Tyler's account because of his dismissal of an assignment they see as potentially useful in its invitation to use textual evidence from a compelling fictional narrative to promote critical thinking through comparison and contrast. This student, however, had a clear sense that this task did not develop his preparedness for writing that matters. His seemingly job-driven focus might suggest a too-narrow view of education and literacy as an instrumentalist means to certification for employment. And yet, given the economic and labor realities students and teachers face in a world of neo-liberal capitalism that comes with little security and no guarantees for workers, these are not concerns to neglect. In fact, the Private Research University Writing Program website acknowledges these concerns by listing the range careers for which the study of writing provides preparation. The Liberal Arts College Writing Program website does so as well. Even if readers balk at Tyler's separation of preparation "for a job" from preparation for "academia" (certainly there are time- and skill-intensive jobs *within* academia that are not utterly esoteric), he actually goes on to describe Advanced Argument in ways that point to the possible alignment of humanistic interests and practical concerns, that point to a rhetorical subject.

While discrepancies might exist between the ways faculty and students imagine and articulate the work of a Writing major (DelliCarpini), teaching and learning proceed by acknowledging the understandings students hold and by contending with the words they use to name those understandings. A Writing program's official documents might privilege theoretical and disciplinary terms for articulating its goals and for describing the subjects the program strives to form. Even if such keywords do not explicitly surface in all Writing majors' narratives about their learning, that silence does not necessarily indicate that they lack a concern for

disciplinary orientations and rhetorical theory. In fact, Tyler went on to elaborate simultaneously

theoretical and practical interests in writing:

> With Advanced Argument, taught by the director of the program, it was much
> more of what I was interested in. We looked at the mechanics of writing. With the
> first paper, we wrote a "This I Believe" essay. And there was another
> autobiographical argument a little later. We had to look at some piece of
> writing—analyze it, look at who its audience is, what kind of arguments it's
> making, how's it tailoring those arguments to those audiences. It was very much
> more looking at the mechanics of writing. And then the last essay was putting that
> into practice: taking a group or organization and looking at how they tailor their
> argument for their specific audience.

Readers who promote the humanistic value of English or Writing might take issue with this

description. Combined with Tyler's earlier focus on potential future employment, his comments

here about the positivist-sounding "mechanics of writing," a term he used multiple times during

his interview, might seem off-putting.[27] However, the broader context of its use indicated a

concern with how writers use their rhetorical repertoires to accomplish goals. Rhetoric is equally

pragmatic and theoretical. Rhetorical theory allows its practitioners to engage the world as it is

so that they might also imagine and work toward the world as they wish it would be (i.e.,

deliberative discourse).

Marshall Alcorn's reminder from the previous chapter is useful here: subjects are not

mirror images of the discourses to which they are exposed. Neither global capitalism's

injunctions to be a flexible worker nor humanities instructors' promotion of particular textual

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[27] See chapter four for a more extensive discussion of "the mechanics of writing" in the context of Tyler and other Writing majors' beliefs about, and definitions of, writing.

sensibilities—nor any other discursive forces—make up the sum total of students' subjectivities. In his expression of a seemingly commonplace hope for clearly practical applications and a possibly troubling scientific rendering of rhetoric, Tyler pointed to a complicated mingling of desire (e.g., for the ability to successfully *engage* writing as an *activity* or a verb) and discourses (e.g., ways of *thinking about* Writing as a *noun*).[28] He spoke to an interest in issues such as analyzing and making arguments, audience awareness and adaption. These interests are distinctly rhetorical, simultaneously attentive to the theory and practice of persuasive communication.[29]

In addition to rhetorical theory, given the conversations in the field about the place of personal writing in the classroom, it should come as no surprise that such writing can play a complex role in the formation of the Writing major subject. Constructing and navigating personal identity through writing emerged as a central theme in the shared experience of Advanced Argument. Responding to a question about what new attitudes toward reading or writing she developed as a result of being a writing major, Laura, a sophomore, referred to an autobiographical assignment from Advanced Argument: "[T]hat project helped me realize that writing could be kind of fun—even if it's something you don't show to people. I kind of discovered my own voice in a way—not if I were to write term papers or something like that, but if I'm just going to write for myself." Upon further explanation, what she seemed to mean by "voice" was that the course created space for writing about personal experiences and understandings.

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[28] See Amy Robillard for more on this distinction between writing as a verb and Writing as a noun.
[29] Tyler's articulation of how writing and rhetoric function resonates, in some ways, with James Crosswhite's definition of rhetorical theory in his proposal for a rhetorical pedagogy in *The Rhetoric of Reason: Writing and the Attractions of Argument*: "Rhetorical theory does not have access to the eternal truths of reason and communication. Rather, it has a purpose, a social purpose. It can be evaluated partly by whether or not its purpose is something desirable, partly by whether or not it really achieves its purpose" (17). The question of social desirability (i.e., the ethics of rhetoric) is something that Tyler addressed, and I discuss that element in Chapter Four.

One reading might conceptualize such moments in student discourse as textual negotiations divorced from the possibilities of rhetorical action. Following Miller, we might find such deployments of *the personal* instances of the "problematic personal situation" or the "narcissistic, self-directed manipulations" produced for students by "current practices in composition" related to the category of voice (103). However, subjects are hailed through specific acts of language that take on different valences and textures depending upon their situational use. In other words, it's not really possible to understand what terms like "voice" mean to students—or to teachers—without attention to the specific context. As Haswell and Haswell note, there are many competing views within Writing Studies about the notion of voice, including suspicion about claims from teachers or students about finding one's own "authentic voice"—and that concern was not born without cause (63-65). In fact, in *The Mythology of Voice*, Darise Bowden argues "that voice has served an important function in the movement away from current-traditional rhetoric, but that, as a metaphor, it has outlived its usefulness" (vii). And yet, Haswell and Haswell argue for the continued value of voice as a term and category because "for student writers in college the term still has appeal and use" (63). Indeed, Laura deploys "voice" to address one personally meaningful achievement gained from Advanced Argument. While "fun" doesn't appear in the course outcomes, I can't imagine a Writing teacher who would view as a bad result Laura's newfound sense that writing can hold the potential for pleasure—even if teachers might hope for a more critical vocabulary by which Laura might articulate that sense. It would seem that the particular challenge in a course such as Advanced Argument is to enable writing that students care about while facilitating the self-aware pursuit of many communicative objectives in varied contexts.

Given Laura's comments, the Writing major may promote a range of textual activity (e.g., personal, academic, professional, creative, etc.), but not necessarily a rhetorical subject who can explain the connections among disparate acts of writing—or who can articulate reasons for the apparent impossibility of connection. For example, despite the positive association some Writing majors might have with personally involved writing, Laura's interview comments illustrate that the Writing major as a subject may experience a split between the feeling of authoring and disciplinary knowledge about argument—academic or otherwise. The fact that Laura distinguished her insight about pleasure and voice from "term papers" is telling and is reminiscent of my earlier discussion of, as the Liberal Arts College student quoted in the discussion of FYW put it, "academic writing (blech)." As Laura elaborated on the Writing major's impact on her reading and writing, she displaced pleasure and voice from the center they initially occupied: "I guess the more important thing is that I've realized it's important to back things up with facts. If you're writing a paper, it's obviously important to cite your sources. But when you say a fact, it's really important to explain it and say why it's important." Did this resistance to placing primacy (i.e., determining which developments in her writing are "more important") on her first response stem from the knowledge she was talking to a Writing teacher? Or did it come from the more general fact that she was discussing writing in an academic context, which meant she had to name how a course contributed to her preparedness for paricular acts of composing, specifically "writing a paper" that relies on research (i.e., "your sources")? In either case, that would itself seem to be a modulation based on audience and context, indicating a rhetorical understanding—even if a nascent one.

The inability to connect the capable and pleasurable feeling gained from personal writing to other opportunities for rhetorical action points to the possible alignment of writing in a school

context, whether argumentative or personal, within a field of textual inconsequentiality. Interestingly, Laura did not see how Advanced Argument assignments in which she was asked to write about her own life added to her repertoire of rhetorical and argumentative practices: "For Advanced Argument, maybe I missed something, but I don't feel like I really learned anything about, well, argumentative writing. The two papers we wrote, one was autobiographical and one was about what home is to you. I mean, they were cool, but I just don't know exactly what argumentative writing is." She went on to question "how much [she] actually learned" in her first year as a Writing major.[30] In spite of this uncertainty, Laura acknowledged, "I guess I realized I really do like writing about myself because I can find my own way of saying things and not have to conform to the five-paragraph essay kind of thing." What strikes me about this juxtaposition is that her desire (that is, a desire for a range of composing options through which she would deploy unique expression and individual judgment in ways that a five-paragraph theme cannot contain) aligns easily with Writing Studies' pedagogical goals and its intellectual critiques of the traditional theme.[31] This student, one of the very few to indicate in her survey that the "study of histories and theories of writing and rhetoric" was her top reason for choosing to major in Writing, did not see how her work with personal writing and other forms of writing (for example, "argumentative writing") might mutually inform each other and support her rhetorical education. Perhaps this course, or this particular section of it, did not help her to make that connection. Though Laura separates the five-paragraph essay from writing that she cares about, she's

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[30] Apparently, the version of Advanced Arugment Laura took deviated from the standard version of course. Decribed earlier, the standard version asks for three assignments. Perhaps her sense of her own learning might have been different if that sequence had been maintained.

[31] It also aligns with satirical jabs at the theme, such as Ed White's "My Five-Paragraph-Theme Theme."

uncertain about the rhetorical usefulness of the *feeling* of authoring and the kind of writing that enabled it.[32]

For some of the students in this study, there existed a link between personal writing and writing as a process and body of knowledge, a link that connects writing to emotion in ways that might help move a student like Laura from uncertainty about her textual practices toward a rhetorical subjectivity that more confidently negotiates experience and discursive action. The issue of what work personal writing accomplishes and its relationship (or lack thereof) to more traditional forms of academic argument (characterized by a lack of emotion) also emerged as an area of shared interest in Liberal Arts College Writing majors' comments about their program's required Personal Essay course. It was the only one of the four required courses for Liberal Arts College Writing majors to come up in an extended way in any interview. Gail, a sophomore, explained,

> I didn't understand how a personal essay works. I took this class and it was kind of like a revelation. [. . .] One of the first things I learned in college as a Writing major was that the word 'essay' means 'to try.' That has always stuck with me. In Personal Essay, the teacher had us write at least four or five drafts sometimes before he would grade it. With each draft I got closer to what I wanted to say. He would say that I was circling, not really getting at what I was concerned about, what the problem is here. Every time I had to do a new draft, I found myself getting more emotional about what I was writing. [. . .] It was astounding to me

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[32] In some ways, I'm reminded of Nancy Welch's account of "a student who, in two writing classes plus an independent study with [Welch], had reveled in inquiry, using her writing to pry open ruling arguments and probe the corners of experience," yet who could not "defend a largely inchoate belief [opposition to the war in Afghanistan] in a potentially hostile setting" (*Living Room* 62). Though the intensities and contexts are different, this story speaks to the potential limits of rhetorical education in terms of its ability to cultivate students' preparedness for some communicative situations.

that it could be that personal in a personal essay. That's pretty much how I

determined that if I was doing it right: I would feel the emotion as I'm writing.

The instructor required multiple drafts and with each draft encouraged more revision on the part

of the student. It's possible that revision and invention are promoted here as processes that

potentially psychologize discourse events in the ways Phelps laments or that position the writer

as the sole agent of invention simply because she functions as invention's most obvious agent in

the way Howard critiques (*Standing* 57). But I don't think so. For Gail, Personal Essay

demonstrated that writing about the self is not an easy task and not one that can be undertaken

lightly. Her comments resonate with Min-Zhan Lu's claim that writers access "'experience' [. . .]

discursively, through the mediation of a complex network of power, desire, and interests" (174).

This process prepared Gail for an experience of writing that mattered to her, but that feeling did

not emerge from herself alone.

The possibility of Gail's experience arose from her interaction, or dance, with the

curriculum at Liberal Arts College. As described by the catalog, that curriculum as a whole seeks

to promote an understanding of the interplay between "theory and practice" and Personal Essay

asks students to produce "essays based on students' experience, ideas, and feelings. Emphasis is

placed on narrative, descriptive, and organizational techniques, as well as development of style.

Readings are intended to deepen students' understanding of their own lives and provide models

for creative interpretations of their own experience." According to Gail, genre knowledge that is

both general (i.e., the definition of the "essay" learned early in her tenure as a Writing major) and

specific (i.e., "how a personal essay works") created the conditions for her rhetorical and

emotional undertaking. Gail developed a sense of what work with this genre might *feel* like. In

this way, the attention Liberal Arts College affords to "styles and genres" as well "theory and

practice" encourages the course's work of engaging students with their own experiences through a specific genre.

It strikes me as telling, in the same way Laura's separation of personal and academic writing did, that Gail found it "astounding" that personal writing could so wholly engage her emotional self. Why would this writing experience surprise her to this extent? Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that even in when explicitly writing about the self, some students have learned well the lesson that writing in a school context must not be too emotional or personal in nature because that's not what's typically valued. To further develop students' critical capacities, a course such as Personal Essay or assignments in an Advanced Argument course could promote reflection about what conditioning prepares them to experience writing within academic situations as disembodied.

Writing that promotes self-reflexivity and that generates insights about students' composing processes can prepare them for experiences of authoring. Some students at Liberal Arts College seemed to encounter such work in Personal Essay. Gail and Jane, a first-year student, viewed personal writing not only as self-expression, but also as part of a broader capacity to act through language. The self performed in Gail's fifth-draft personal essay is not a transparent expression; that self is a conscious construction. She undertook a series of choices related to genre knowledge, instructor feedback, personal experience, and what she "wanted to say." In light of Haswell and Haswell's arguments, I'd call this work authoring. Jane addressed how Personal Essay provided space for self-reflexive work that increased students' sense of agency as writers: "Personal Essay makes you step back and makes you analyze your thoughts. In order to be a good writer, I think you have to have sort of a good sense of who you are or if you don't have a good sense of who you are, then your writing kind of reflects that." Jane's

comments, like Gail's, addressed the course aims. While both students' remarks clearly reflect the programmatic interest in genre at Liberal Arts College, I'm less certain that they demonstrate concerns expressed on the program's website: that students attend to "the public implications of their craft" and that they acknowledge how "every subject, no matter how private, is embedded within a social context." This stated programmatic commitment to interrogating the social nature of the experiences that informed student identities "not only as writers but as citizens" seems not wholly articulated by the majority students from that institution when asked to speak generally about the Writing major.

Students' discourse, as it pertained to courses at both schools required for majors, placed significant value on opportunities to write about their experiences and on engagement with issues of disciplinary knowledge and practice. However, at neither institution does this interest in personal writing reflect only a desire for expressivist outpourings or simple representations of their own experiences (Laura, Gail, and Jane). Nor does their attention to genre knowledge reveal an elevation of practical functionality above theory (Gail and Tyler) or the replication of literary hierarchies (Lisa). Rather, it's tied to several curricular concerns about writing instruction: engaging the whole person, developing students' reflexivity about their thinking and writing processes, and enlarging their feelings of rhetorical preparedness.

A WELL-INSTRUCTED DESIRE: A FOCUS ON RESEARCH

Where and how Writing majors see their capacities for rhetorical action enhanced is an issue at the heart of what a curriculum, a whole program of study, accomplishes. Whether they name the connections and disconnections they see between rhetoric and literature (Lisa and Tyler), fail to understand the relationships among their varied writing assignments and literacy

experiences (Laura), or speak to the interrelationship of genre knowledge and individual interests (Gail), students in this study provided evidence of their desire to undertake writing that held an individually felt importance. One curricular domain emerged as a conflicted focal point for this desire: research assignments. Writing majors' conceptions of research present a complicated challenge to Writing teachers about how we articulate what we value in researched writing. In light of the preceding section's concern with disciplinary and genre knowledge, as well as the ways in which these domains can work to produce rhetorical subjects, Writing majors' discourse about secondary research and source-based writing appeared to undercut rhetorical ends. Given that official documents from both schools in this study express a desire for students to understand the public consequences, and socially situated nature, of their composing across a range of genres and situations, students' remarks also seemed to work against those curricular goals with regard to students' research-based writing.

The Writing majors I interviewed spoke at some length about their perceptions, practices, and preferences regarding research. As addressed in chapter one, the promotion of undergraduate research is one of the central ways composition scholars work to reimagine students as not just passive consumers of disciplinary expertise, but as contributors to disciplinary projects. Thus, how Writing majors—those undergraduates who desire a relationship with Writing programs and who align with the goals of such programs—talk about and experience research seems like an important indicator of their preparedness as authors, academic and otherwise. Most students talked about wanting to achieve the goals teachers presented and to perform meaningful task representation. The data I've collected also suggest that the K-12 English and college literacy teachers these students have known have tried to teach research competencies they understood as important for their students and as valuable in school. However, Writing majors' discourse also

evinces what I describe as a powerful formalist and current-traditionalist vision of research that privileges form and presentation over inquiry, that places style and delivery over invention. Broadly speaking, researched writing seems, for many students in this study, textual and not rhetorical.

Table 1. Response percent to survey question eleven: "I feel more confident in my research skills since becoming a Writing major or taking Writing classes."

	Private Research University N=42	Liberal Arts College N=44
Strongly Agree:	14	16
Moderately Agree:	52	41
Neutral:	14	27
Moderately Disagree:	12	4
Strongly Disagree:	5	4
Skipped Question:	2	7

As illustrated by Table 1, the majority of respondents at both schools reported increased confidence with research since becoming Writing majors. That would seem encouraging. However, upon examining students' survey and interview comments more closely, I found what I would characterize as a largely procedural orientation toward research and a frequent equation of research with knowledge of citation conventions. In some survey responses, six from Liberal Arts College and two from Private Research University, Writing majors commented on their level of research confidence by noting their comfort with different citation conventions, specifically naming MLA, Chicago, and APA. To the same question, one Liberal Arts College

major noted he had no idea about how to set up "a Works Cited page without looking up" the specifications. Lisa (who argued for the connections between English Studies and Writing Studies at Private Research University) also made remarks in her interview that reinforced the centrality of citation conventions to research: "You have to make sure [. . .] everything has a citation. Make sure it's properly cited in your paper. I feel like they definitely stress that a lot in your Writing courses." In her next few sentences, Lisa twice more reiterated the importance of "proper citation." Tellingly, evaluating sources and identifying the broader conversations in which sources participate were not understood as part of "research" in Lisa's vision: "Actual research wasn't that necessary [in a sophomore-level Writing course]. We spent more time trying to find out how do you know a source is good? How do you know a source is reputable? How do you find gaps in sources?" What this recollection leads me to believe is that when the overwhelming number of written comments on the survey mentioned citation, students might have other terms for, and define separately, the range of processes that I think of as involved with "research." But the initial and overwhelming focus on issues related to citation—and citation primarily configured as convention knowledge—evinces the presence of a textual subject within the Writing major.

Remembering that each student brings an embodied self to writing and research activities, for some Writing majors, research provoked negative emotional experiences, potentially highlighting the disciplining power of a textual regime that manipulated students' subjectivities. Specifically, two students (Jennifer at Liberal Arts College and Lisa at Private Research University) named research as an activity that produced fear and anxiety. At Private Research University, Lisa described her reaction to research assignments: "It's kind of intimidating at first." For Lisa, her knowledge and use of the library's electronic databases

diminished her anxiety about research. This relief she connected, in part, to the technological aids the library offered, which helped her compile and document references: "It's easy because they have the source list—the MLA format. It's just right there. It's nice to have it there. There's nothing wrong with it, and I can't get in any possible trouble." Evidenced in this account is not the commonplace complaint about student "laziness." Rather, there is a certain delight in finding devices that lessen the anxiety research tasks produce and a desire to find ways of managing the expectations that teachers hold. In the digital age, when we often carry around memory through devices external to ourselves, citation generators provide a mechanism for addressing one of the primary and initial concerns this student named. It is possible to understand students' enthusiasm for these programs.

Task representation emerged as another way through which to alleviate some of the negative affective experiences bound up with research. At Liberal Arts College, Jennifer explained her anxiety and the process used to overcome it in this way:

> First, I get really stressed out about it. I usually try to think of it in the way I think about fiction, and then proceed with the actual research aspects of it. Because if I think of it as something too alien from the work I already do, I get way too freaked out. But if I think of it more like a narrative that I'm putting together with things that I'm reading and learning, it seems a lot less scary.

Jennifer described a process of task representation that relies on a kind of learning transfer. In other words, her strategy for making research intelligible and meaningful to herself involved applying her experience as a fiction writer to research assignments. Connecting her research writing to narrative writing in fiction gave rise to sense of agency and preparedness for the task. Of course, investigations of student research writing and task representation have long noted the

problem of knowledge-telling: a narrative structure that recounts "facts" overrides the need to craft an argument that relies on the writer's critical analysis of sources (Bereiter and Scardamalia; Haas and Flower; Kantz). Moreover, some scholars of learning transfer argue that negative transfer occurs when students inappropriately apply knowledge or discourse from one situation or community to another situation or community (Beaufort; Schunk). Given these two strands of research, there may indeed be issues with Jennifer's researched products. However, I do strive to honor her sense of where the power to write came from and how she overcame the anxiety that attended research assignments.

As may be obvious, the affective experiences detailed by Lisa and Jennifer that stemmed from their work with research contrast significantly with those experiences of personal writing described in the previous section. However, these differences should not be taken as evidence that one kind of writing activity is simply "easier" or more naturally enjoyable than another. When Gail wrote her personal essay, the work was not easy: deep satisfaction came from writing enabled by appropriate genre knowledge and pedagogical support. Even though Jennifer invoked genre knowledge as a resource to ameliorate the anxiety of research, it may well be genre knowledge inappropriate to the task.

A focus on form—the delivery of research—manifests itself not only in an attention to citation, but also in Writing majors' discussion of how they negotiated sources within their papers. Lisa asked a question that indicated an interest in moving beyond research as reporting on one's sources: "How do you not put in ten different quotes and say, 'It's my paper' when you just had one sentence?" Two other Writing majors, Mark (Liberal Arts College) and Margaret (Private Research University), expressed no such concern that their research writing reflect much more than a collection of interesting quotations. In his interview, Mark explained his research

writing in this way: "I'm just about the worst student in the world who still manages a 3.9ish

GPA. I don't really 'do' research. When I write academic papers, [. . .] I throw a bunch of quotes

from my provided source material in a Word document. I don't take it too seriously." Mark had

no desire for academic research tasks. The composing process he described resulted in a

quotation-collage. Apparently, he understood academic research as a task with relatively little

student agency as the "provided" sources presented an occasion for him to "throw" quotations

into a paper. Writing transitions between quotations allowed Mark to serve as a kind of apathetic

tour guide, an unengaged docent for the textual source gallery of his composition. Like Tyler

describing the *Wuthering Heights* assignment, Mark had no sense of secondary research or

writing for academic audiences as contributing to his preparedness as an author. Though

Margaret, a Private Research University sophomore, evinced an interest in achieving the research

goals teachers set (e.g., she had the desire to be a "good student"), her practices actually

mimicked Mark's: "When I write, I use a lot of quotes. My paragraphs tend to have two quotes

and be almost a page long. I always start a paper by finding the quotes I am going to use to back

up my argument." When asked how Writing classes might have influenced her research

practices, she said that they reinforced what she already did: "They have cemented the way I do

research because I have never been told a different way to do research and have never had

complaints about the research I have done. [. . .] [The FYW courses at another school] that I took

felt like relearning methods I already used."

     With a focus on citation and on creating texts that looked like researched papers with

quotations connected by transitions, at least a few Writing majors illustrate a textual subject who

holds a formalist vision of research. That vision appears to have been structured by repeated and

clear instruction at some point in their academic careers on the importance of form and

presentation in source-based writing. Students' concern about form and appearance is a well-instructed desire. Students are not born wanting to use perfect MLA format and style. They did not dream as children of wanting to mine sources for interesting quotations so that they could present their textual gems according to the precise specifications of a style manual. Nor are these the dreams of Writing teachers. Both Writing majors and their teachers want students to pursue projects that involve their whole selves and questions they care about. Of course, this attention to formal considerations may point to a decidedly rhetorical response on the part of students. Perhaps they were acting as rhetors trying to perform to the expectations of their audience. Students' responses also indicate that teachers signal quite well some of their values. Maybe by changing the nature and/or presentation of the task, teachers can transform students' concerns about, and understandings of, research and conventions into something more richly rhetorical. Indeed, as I discussed earlier, some Writing majors found in rhetorical concepts and theories (from Advanced Argument) a valuable set of resources and others spoke of genre awareness (from Personal Essay) as an enabling knowledge. These curricular accomplishments might be harnessed to help cultivate students' confidence with research as a rhetorical undertaking. In other words, these findings suggest that there are *already embedded within these curricula* ways to build students' preparedness for such work, ways that don't invite them to overdetermine research as procedural knowledge and that do enable students to feel the pleasure of capably responding to a recurring literacy task.

PROJECTS WITH A LIFE-COURSE: LEARNING THAT LASTS

The issue of how students pursue questions they care about is another area in which students' common and idiosyncratic experiences bring into focus the tension of textual and

rhetorical potentialities within the Writing major. Writing majors in this study reported several

occasions when they sustained an inquiry or a project beyond the framework of a single course.

Certainly, sometimes it's useful to be done with a project. However, it seems a given that

academic program builders and the teachers who labor within curricula desire that the varied

pieces work together in some kind of coherent way, that they achieve cumulative effects:

producing a subject who thinks in specific ways, performs certain tasks, and understands how her

or his various learning experiences worked together in such a way as to achieve these effects.

     This will to coherence need not reveal a desire for control or for the production of a

textual subject whose power is contained by a network of connected classrooms reinforcing a

hegemonic status quo. It comes from a number of sources, including the need for teachers to

have a sense of what mission binds together the wide range of courses they teach as well as the

hope that students can articulate the connections between Advanced Argument and Professional

Writing, Personal Essay and Poetics. Rebecca S. Nowacek calls students engaged in such

implicit or explicit articulations "agents of integration." Considering students' experiences with

Writing major curricula in light of the life-course concern raised by Haswell and Haswell, might

Writing majors understand new courses as part of a deliberately structured ecology that opens

space for learning that lasts, or might new courses present opportunities for radical breaks with

what has come before—chances to exercise agency by doing something different?

Table 2. Response percent to survey question twenty-two: "How often do you begin a project in one Writing course that you continue to work on in some way in another course?"

	Private Research University N=42	Liberal Arts College N=44
Frequently:	19	16
Occasionally:	28	41
Rarely:	36	27
Never:	17	4
Skipped Question:	0	4
Some Occurrence:	**83**	**84**

If the subject of the Writing major experiences a curriculum as a site for sustained projects that live beyond a single term, that experience opens up space for thinking about the limits and affordances of particular curricular structures.[33] The results from my survey, presented in the figure above, suggest that Writing majors at the two study institutions overwhelmingly (almost eighty percent of Writing majors surveyed at both schools) do encounter opportunities for projects or writing to live beyond a single course. Though this sample is small and not representative of Writing major programs as a whole, the difference between Private Research University and Liberal Arts College on this question centers on frequency. More than double the percent of students at Private Research University reported this phenomenon occurring frequently. Despite the range of complicated factors that produced what might seem like an encouraging finding (nearly one-fifth of the Writing majors from one program responded that

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[33] Of course, many other factors (e.g., institution type, student demographics, etc) are important to understanding what influenced any trend in student responses.

they frequently found occasions to continue previous work), I'd like to offer a potentially less-than-exciting contributing factor. Based on survey and interview data about students' confidence with research, Private Research University Writing majors reported slightly higher research confidence than Liberal Arts College Writing majors. Also, one Private Research University interview participant spoke at length about the ubiquity of secondary research-based essays he'd written for an imagined academic audience. In light of that information, Private Research University students may in part understand projects as traveling across courses because they are asked to compose similar products repeatedly for the same imagined audience, which raises questions about the rhetorical framing of the instigating assignments. Of course, that's not to say that these students are necessarily exceptionally proficient at those academic research and writing tasks, but it does invite me to wonder about for whom Writing majors believe they write.

Both schools' official documents call for their students to write for varied audiences. Private Research University aims to have students write for "academic, professional, and public" contexts, and Liberal Arts College encourages students to "connect to their world" and be "citizens and professionals." While it's not always exactly clear how students view projects as living beyond a particular course or who they envision as the audiences for these texts, when survey respondents offered comments, two program-specific trends emerged. Liberal Arts College students spoke in terms of genres, and Private Research University students tended to name topics. This finding suggests two different perceptions about how curricula operate as structures that promote students' preparedness for sustained authoring.

Courses dedicated to studying and producing work within particular genres can promote the development of a rhetorical subject by creating occasions for Writing majors to set or experience a range of purposes for writing. The Liberal Arts College majors who wrote

comments in response to survey question twenty-two focused on issues of genre and writing practices. All ten identified particular genres in their responses: short story, fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and academic essays. Half of these comments focused on how students were able to extend or further develop a shorter piece of writing begun in a previous class. For example, one participant wrote, "Usually these are short stories that are started in one course and then expanded on in other courses." Another student reported, "I've worked on some longer form fiction that I've continued after the original class, particularly my senior project which became an independent study (it's a novel length work)." Two respondents addressed how some courses created space for remediation, taking a piece written in one form and transforming it into another. The first noted how she took fiction projects and reworked them into screenplays, while the second remembered an essay she turned into a poem. She also turned "a poem into a fiction essay." Intriguingly, the language of "bones" as a metaphor appeared in two responses: "I sometimes recycle the bones of forsaken creative projects to start new ones" and "Sometimes, I will take the concept or bones of a previous project from a course and rewrite or rework it in another course; in one instance, I revised an a short story for one course I had created in another."[34]

For Liberal Arts College students, projects traveled as a result of writing logics and practices. Given the discussion of genre practice and knowledge in the preceding sections, this finding might be expected. Gail, whose comments informed my earlier discussion of the Personal Essay course, offered an illustrative example of how a project might continue in her program:

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[34] I'm reminded of the biblical story of the prophet Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones, which were reassembled and made to walk again by the word of the divine. Either these student projects were not dry bones or a new course, instructor, or genre created an opportunity for some "word" to breathe new life into them.

For Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy, our final project was to take one of the stories we had written for the class or from another project and to expand it–write a plan for it. Write an overall summary for how to make it into a full-length novel. I took a story that was maybe nine or ten pages and made a plan for expanding it to fifteen chapters. I hooked-up with a friend in Illustration and she did illustrations for the story. So turning in the plan for that was the final project. And, now, this semester, that has become my senior project, finishing that story. It's ninety-three pages now.

A book-length project began in a course devoted to specific genres and developed further in a course where the student's own project set the semester-long agenda. Skeptics of the focus on genre—or on *these* creative and creative nonfiction genres—or of students reworking projects not just within a course, but also across courses, might worry about how this phenomenon could position the Writing major as a whole curriculum of intransitive processes without "real" content or a political project to offer. However, a common perception among some Writing majors in this study, that later writing can build on or emerge from earlier work, could indicate that curricula with a greater emphasis on creative nonfiction and creative writing (and potentially professional writing) are established in a way that allow students to create opportunities for long-term project development.

The attention given to genre in Liberal Arts College students' survey responses contrasts with the comments focused on topics for rhetorical analysis from Private Research University students. Of the seven respondents who offered comments about projects that they carry with them beyond a single course, six named specific topics about which they have written: the Iraq war, blogging, "ideas of rhetoric," literature, community, and social media, which appeared

twice. In his interview, Tyler explicitly named the freedom to choose what to write as something he valued greatly about his Writing classes. Even if Miller might find the composition student "freely choosing among topics for writing" a hegemonic subject only imagining himself or herself to be free (89), for Private Research University Writing majors, projects had a life-course that exceeded a given academic course because students found multiple opportunities to take up topics they cared about. Students implied, but did not always state, that they would engage in rhetorical inquiry about those topics. In other words, it's *not* just topical theme-writing students valued. It's the opportunity to use the rhetorical theories and concepts they've learned to better understand an artifact or phenomenon that interested them. Students' comments contain evidence to support this interpretation of their topical interests as embedded within the Private Research University focus on "inquiry-based" teaching that promotes rhetorical competencies. For example, Tyler valued the ability to choose his own topics, but he also wanted to understand and practice the "mechanics of writing" with regard to those interest areas. Thus, Tyler and the student who listed "ideas of rhetoric" point to subjects who might view their concerns about particular issues as enmeshed with a commitment to examining how writing works.

In addition to enhancing students' rhetorical sensibilities, at least one Writing major also linked his ongoing rhetorical inquiry into particular topics with an interest in social justice, affirming the curricular goals of his program. Such a connection aligns with the Writing program vision statement at Private Research University, which "promotes the development of skills, practices, and knowledge about writing that are central to a just society." The most comprehensive example of this intersection came from Jeremiah, a senior who was also a returning student and staff person at Private Research University. I quote at length:

In almost all of my classes, I've incorporated LGBT work. Maybe I can just carry a theme through different courses. [In a creative nonfiction] summer course, I talked about romantic relationships I had, what they had to do my identity as a queer person, and how I thought about my ability to achieve and succeed in the world was bound up in romantic relationships. For me, that had to do a lot with intersections of queerness and family. [. . .] That was a really intersectional approach to thinking about things like LGBT studies. It was in that sense that I was able to think about my own value as a queer person with a unique story that might speak to issues, that might be helpful to other people—or that might meaningfully challenge some of the ways we think about LGBT people. In a queer studies course [taught by a full professor in the Writing Program that] *I'm calling a writing course*, I got a much more historical basis for what I was talking about. I was able to relate what I was doing and what theorists were doing now to histories and think of theories as arising through time as opposed to just thinking about them as coming from a person. [. . .] In Writing with Video, I was able to continue some of this creative nonfiction approach to telling my story, and I was able to bring in some of what it means to a student/staff person/queer person— however long you want that to list. But I do a lot of projects on navigating identity in such a way that my queer identity was really important. It was something always on my mind. My identity was on my mind. It was so important to label and identify and that comes from the fact that I am queer person. In [Advanced Argument], which is much more centered on different kinds of arguments, I was able to look at arguments about LGBT equality. I was able to give a speech on

complicating the way we think about the 'It Gets Better' project as perhaps

potentially productive, but maybe not necessarily the be all and end all to achieve

safe and happy lives for children that identify as queer or have been identified as

queer [by others].

Beyond illustrating the interest at Private Research University in pursing topics across courses, in

Jeremiah's story we encounter a stunning confluence of elements examined in this chapter:

writing that involves the personal, processes that unfold over time, reading and research that

enhanced critical capacities, and the *feeling* of authoring. Unlike in the earlier discussion of

personal writing, which spoke in terms of authoring's possibilities for pleasure, Jeremiah

addressed his authoring as an affirmation of not just his identity, but also his worth and dignity as

a person whose life is constantly under assault from normalizing, hegemonic forces. His

attention to LGBT issues and queerness involves both the working out of his own identity

through writing and the undertaking a political project that challenges status quo stories about

sexuality, family, and literacy. The variety of Writing courses he took created spaces in which he

felt able to pursue queerness as a topic and a lens through which to engage in rhetorical analysis

and action. These courses allowed him to examine deeply personal issues through an

"intersectional approach," a valued academic and political frame for inquiry, as well as engage

"histories" and "theories" through course readings and research. The narrative Jeremiah offered

serves as an example of a decidedly rhetorical subject.

CONCLUSION

        The data presented and analyzed in this chapter show that the Writing major has the

potential to encourage a rhetorical subject who explores a complicated array of personal

commitments, integrates wide-ranging rhetorical education, experiences authoring, and makes critical interventions in hegemonic discourses. Through rhetorical inquiry about many topics and through an array of genre practices, it's possible for Writing majors to consider the social nature of private concerns and pursue literacy as means to a more just world. At the same time, these civic-involved and public-oriented goals that speak to the political dimensions of rhetorical education seemed not always at the center of students' own understandings of the Writing major. A different set of survey or interview questions or a different sample of students might have yielded different results in this regard. But in general, for this group of students, civic concerns and attention to the public nature of all discourse was not the primary way in which they framed their experiences or their conceptions of the Writing major. While students' discourses about personal writing and research writing *don't* necessarily signal an ideology that constructs writers as isolated agents or writing as primarily psychologized processes of textual manipulation, they *do* suggest that elements of the textual subject inhabit the Writing major. Even as student comments may reflect a mechanistic approach to secondary research and uncertainty about the thoroughgoing sociality of all writing, these same comments also demonstrate a rhetorical attention to audience expectations as well as an interplay between genre awareness and composing practices.

This chapter argues that, with regard to the subject of the Writing major, one cannot easily dismiss those student practices and discourses that might ostensibly support a hegemonic and textual regime because they might very well contain within them rhetorical potential. The implication here is that context and close attention to the particulars of student discourse is important to determining how any given curriculum works. Such attention may show how frameworks, such as the one Miller provides, operate within student discourse as well as

curricula and scholarship. It may also suggest the need to qualify totalizing claims about the impact of a curriculum. In the next chapter, student discourse about teacher-student relationships becomes a resource for investigating disciplinary claims about the Writing major and claims about the various effects of academic professionalism upon Writing Studies.

Chapter 3. The Writing Major, Relational Labor, and Academic Professionalism

In the previous chapter, I made the case that Writing majors within, as well as across, given institutions may share some common curricular experiences. In this study, students' discursive representations of those experiences appeared to include both textual and rhetorical elements. Responding to Haswell and Haswell's call for attention to students' life-course, I examined some of the curricular structures that influenced Writing majors' efforts within their programs. A life-course also includes those relationships involved in having "learned something that lasted" (93). For at least some students in this study, relational labor characterized in affective terms rests at the heart of how they conceptualized their learning as Writing majors. Writing majors' goals as students and writers often rely on, and emerge from, the connections they forge with faculty and peers. The central contention of this chapter is that at least some students privileged the relational, affective labor that occurred within the Writing major. That labor also carried the potential to sponsor rhetorical subject formation. Moreover, students' emphasis on the role of interpersonal exchanges in promoting literacy learning may 1) complicate arguments that claim Writing Studies' increasing disciplinarity puts at risk its traditional commitment to teaching and 2) affirm (at least partially) conceptions of the Writing major as a disciplinary accomplishment or as an enterprise that disseminates professional expertise.

The Writing major involves a form of emotional learning that may promote professional/disciplinary conceptions of literacy and, thus, confront functionalist ideologies of writing that work not only cognitively, but also at the level of affect. Analysis of survey responses and interview comments from study participants about teacher-student interactions brings into focus a connection between affective and relational dynamics within the Writing

major and the promotion of a rhetorical vision of literacy. Several Writing Studies scholars attend to the connection between affective states and writing as observed among, or reported by, individuals and groups both in school (Harrington and Curtis 136-38; McLeod; Micciche 47-71) and out of school (Daniell; Gere *Intimate*). Tom Kerr argues that an "abundance of feeling [. . .] *always already* accompanies" the text-oriented enterprises occurring within English departments (Writing programs, too) and that "[t]he feeling of what happens, whether addressed directly or not, profoundly affects *what* happens" (26, emphasis in the original). In calling attention to the "pedagogic violence" inflicted by dominant pedagogies (and left unchallenged by some radical pedagogies), Lynn Worsham argues that the dismantling of hierarchical social relations "must occur at the affective level" (216). For example, the dominant culture's attachment to particular manifestations of Standard English evidences an affective investment in existing social relations. Donna Strickland and Ilene Crawford show that compositionists' research-based advocacy to challenge the link between "correct" standardized grammar and an idealized good in the popular imagination fails because of an emotional schooling throughout the culture that produces affective attachments to standardized language performance (68-69). Useful to recall here is composition instruction's historically hierarchical function that works to produce the textual subject who maintains the established order by learning politicized language practices *and* that contains the student's capacity to become a rhetorical subject who learns *about* language practices so that she might intervene into the politics of literacy. If writing and language learning involve affect, as Writing Studies scholarship and Writing major participants' discourse suggest, then it becomes important to consider the role of affect in sponsoring the subject of the Writing major.

Literacy sponsorship serves as an analytic framework for understanding how affectively engaged, relational labor within the Writing major promotes rhetorical or textual visions of literacy. By calling these interpersonal dynamics *labor*, I refer to Bruce Horner's *Terms of Work for Composition: A Materialist Critique*, in which he critiques the academic hierarchy that treats the commodifiable labor of scholarship as privileged work with teaching and service figured as necessary labor. I return to this critique later. In *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt defines *sponsors of literacy*, as "any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy. [. . .] Sponsors are delivery systems for the economies of literacy, the means by which these forces present themselves to—and through—individual learners" (19). As teachers promote literate activity within a Writing major, the interactions within classrooms—and throughout the program—shape and texture the literacies students acquire and the subjects they are encouraged to be. While they facilitate literacy learning, sponsors also, to varying degrees, oblige learners to their interests and causes, which are shaped by histories and circumstances beyond any individual's control (Brandt 20). Though Brandt contends that sponsors "set the terms for access to literacy" (19), Tony Scott observes that "writing teachers generally don't determine the terms of their own work" (*Dangerous* 9). Consequently, the context for sponsorship operates partially beyond the control of individual teachers.

Such contextual elements that influence the terms for work, as well as the scene of sponsorship, within the Writing major include the normative purposes of literacy instruction and the dominant frames for student authorship detailed in chapter one and the movement of higher education toward what Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades call the *neo-liberal university*. Slaughter and Rhoades argue that the proliferation of corporate models for higher education

places demands for greater efficiency and supervision on faculty. They also claim that students, while explicitly touted as "consumers," actually function as resources "that are transformed into the 'products'" created by institutions (74). As "managed professionals," faculty respond to the demands of upper-administration for more efficient productivity, feeling the pressure to increase their output: courses taught, students instructed, papers graded, etc. (77). Within the neo-liberal emphasis on efficiency, there's supposed to be only quick, clear, and measureable progress within a calculus that includes the "personally and socially enhancing" experiences of students more as necessary referents than as valued metrics (74). Yet even in the midst of the increasing management of faculty time and commodification of students, many Writing majors' remarks value (and teachers find ways to undertake) highly relational labor that supports literacy learning.

Students' attention to the affective and relational labor that works to sponsor their literacy acquisition is not easily located within the terrain of enthusiasm for, or concern over, Writing Studies' disciplinary status. First, claims that the pursuit of disciplinary status diminishes the role of pedagogy within Writing Studies (such as those discussed in the opening pages of chapter one) may appear justified. As a strategic move, some proponents of the Writing major understandably attempt to distance it from the ideological tradition of first-year Writing that narrowly circumscribes literacy. This distancing might appear implicated in a reduction of pedagogy if pedagogy is defined as the teaching *of* writing rather than teaching *about* writing, a critical distinction in the movement toward the Writing major. At the same time, the affective and relational labor long associated with FYW and the teaching of writing has its own lengthy history within *advanced composition* courses. Moreover, some scholars place "intimacy" at the center of Writing Studies itself (Newkirk) and of undergraduate disciplinary participation (Greer, "Editor's Introduction"). Second, study participants described highly rhetorical conceptions of

writing within the context of their affective and relational engagements with teachers and others. Third, in context, these relational dimensions of student discourse actually seemed to affirm that the Writing major can work through the teaching *of* and *about* writing to fulfill its promise as a vehicle for disciplinarity and for promoting awareness of professional knowledge. And yet, this promise appears only partially fulfilled because students sometimes expressed uncertainty about how the relational labor they valued and the rhetorical views they held were informed by teachers' professional knowledge rather than by the force of individual efforts. Additionally, while students' characterizations of this relational labor may mobilize cultural scripts that historically worked to marginalize teaching and Writing Studies within the academy, that mobilization is mitigated by students' awareness that some degree of professional expertise shapes teachers' actions.

DISCIPLINARITY VS. TEACHING? A QUESTION OF TRADITIONS

Student discourse within Writing major offers a productive heuristic for examining the contention that increasing Writing Studies' conventional disciplinarity means diminishing the historically important role of teaching within the field. Several scholars note how the pursuit of disciplinary status carries with it an interest in distancing Writing Studies professionals from the work of teaching (Miller 193; North, *Making* 367; Horner). According to Horner, this distancing results from accepting general hierarchies of academic labor. Horner critiques the logic within the academy that figures as valued work those elements of faculty labor most susceptible to abstraction and commodification. Following the lead of those in other disciplines, Writing Studies professionals tend to define their work in three ways: a compensated position, written scholarly texts, and the tasks involved with teaching. The third definition includes "interacting

with students in classrooms and writing responses to student writing," and it "is distinctly subordinate to the second and commonly subsumed by the first" (1). Simply put, Horner describes and confronts what he perceives as a general attitude among faculty that holds 1) scholarly activity as esteemed work—not because of an a priori affection for research, but because of the relative ease with which it can be commodified and thus acquire exchange value—and 2) teaching and service as necessary labor (2; 5-6). Such an arrangement, Horner claims, also entails devaluing practical *traditions* of composition instruction in order to establish a research agenda legible within academic frameworks, which means that the traditional focus on teaching within Writing Studies becomes subordinate to disciplinarity (172-73). Since many arguments for the Writing major position it as a significant development in the establishment of Writing Studies' disciplinary status, how do these arguments distance the Writing major from elements of composition's teaching tradition?

Potentially in line with Horner's concerns, calls for advanced literacy curricula illustrate a desire for some degree of separation from one piece of the past: first-year Writing. Some of the language used to characterize FYW within scholarship that promotes advanced curricula positions the course as a captor of the field that limits its options. Accordingly, Writing Studies professionals should seek to disentangle themselves from the harmful effects of the course. The pieces that bookend *Coming of Age* offer examples of this characterization. In the introduction, Howard claims that advanced "curricula help to move the discipline of writing studies out of the *confines* of the first-year sequence" ("History" xxii; emphasis added). Robert J. Connors concludes the afterward on a liberatory note: "Though emerging from the *cave* of the first-year requirement will be liberating, we must also face the fear that comes with letting go of *familiar chains* (149; emphasis added). Likewise, Susan Miller uses language of constraint when

comparing FYW to the diverse array of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century advanced composition courses: "[W]e *cage* ourselves by identifying with the freshman enterprise" (76; emphasis added). But these efforts to differentiate new and historical possibilities from limiting ideologies—ideologies that made FYW an instrument for promoting social hierarchies and controlling vernacular expression—need not equal the complete marginalization of pedagogy that Horner predicts when professionals seek full disciplinary status for Writing Studies.

Following Howard's claim that advanced undergraduate curricula complicate distinctions between theory and pedagogy ("History" xiii), we might question the totalizing nature of Horner's assessment of academic professionalism and it's implications for Writing Studies. At the same time, we do well to recall John Trimbur's acknowledgment that at least some courses acquire their "advanced character or feeling [. . .] because of what" they allow instructors to accomplish: "namely to pay undivided attention" to intellectual concerns "without feeling guilty that [we're] not teaching students how to write" ("Theory" 113). This differentiation the between teaching *of* writing and teaching *about* writing—or other issues broadly connected to literacy and rhetoric—doesn't devalue pedagogy. It claims space for a pedagogy of professional expertise that understands knowledge about writing as a content worthy of study in its own right. At the same time, though, such a distinction might potentially distance advanced courses from the teaching *of* writing—and from practices important to that tradition of teaching at both the first-year and advanced levels.

Highly relational, affectively engaged labor that promotes literacy learning constitutes part of the tradition of advanced composition instruction. Katherine H. Adams demonstrates that issues of student writing development and instructors' engagement with students run throughout

the history of general advanced literacy instruction (*A History*). Addressing the experiences of

women students in advanced courses in the early-twentieth century, Adams contends, "Many

students found their determination and confidence growing as they interacted with their teachers"

(*A Group* 72). In a collection assessing the impact of the process pedagogy movement, Thomas

Newkirk draws on the history of advanced composition to claim that the central conflict facing

Writing Studies involves "'the politics of intimacy,' the systematic devaluation of individual

contact that marginalizes" composition instructors (115-16). Focusing on Barrett Wendell's

junior-level composition course, English 12, Newkirk describes the intimate practices he

imagines at the heart of Writing Studies, "[Wendell's course] anticipated many of the reforms

that we have come to see as more recent—writing conferences, the use of student writing as the

primary texts of the course, peer critiquing, analytic evaluation tools," and these practices

contributed to "a stimulating relationship with individual students" (119).[35] Newkirk worries that

this tradition would lose out as composition professionals (himself included) achieved status

within the academy (128). However, according to Kelly Ritter, intimacy won. She claims that

"emphasiz[ing] the valuation of the personal (and interpersonal) in helping students acquire

literacy" stems from "now-idealized goals originally articulated by process pedagogy"

("'Ladies'" 390). This valuation that derives from the process pedagogy movement, now

prominent throughout the discipline, translates into thoroughly interactive in-person and text-

based practices that cultivate instructor-student relationships (Ritter, "'Ladies" 412-13). While

Ritter critiques these goals that privilege the interpersonal, and I take up this critique later, it

suffices for now to note that claims about relational labor characterized in affective terms (e.g.,

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[35] There are additional rich descriptions of English 12 and student response to the course (Adams, *A History* 47-53). These efforts offer a revision to the standard account that depicts late-nineteenth-century Harvard faculty, including Wendell, as primarily concerned with the invention and promotion of current-traditional values and practices.

intimacy) hold a critical place in the history of advanced instruction and in conceptions of

Writing Studies' disciplinarity.

Attempts to explain the transformative impact of undergraduate disciplinary participation

likewise mobilize a discourse of intimacy. In Jane Greer's "Editor's Introduction" to the tenth

anniversary volume of *Young Scholars in Writing*, she claims, "A calculus of intimacy [. . .]

would allow us, then, to account more adequately for the ways in which *YSW* has fostered new

relationships, destabilized hierarchies, and expanded possibilities for learning" (1). The three

outcomes Greer claims for *Young Scholars* and the logic that binds them deserve unpacking. As

a journal dedicated to undergraduate research, it encourages faculty and students to investigate

and identify with the discipline to such an extent that students make contributive knowledge of

interest to the field. As they do so, hierarchies that contain student authorship buckle under the

weight of evidence that student writing can participate in conversations of consequence and in

the production of scholarly knowledge. Following from the relationships involved in those

writing experiences, students (and teachers) learn in meaningful ways that go beyond the

traditional one-way movement of teaching and learning (i.e., the teacher shares knowledge with

the student who consumes that knowledge). Measured together by a calculus of intimacy, the

results of undergraduate research (e.g., writing, relationships, and learning) stem from moves

that reduce the distance between undergraduates and Writing Studies. This closed distance is not

intended as the forced intimacy of a colonizing demand upon students. It is, rather, a relationship

that emerges from the prospect of constructing knowledge in an enterprise that makes pedagogy

and theory come alive *in the work of students*. What relationships, then, characterized literacy

learning for the Writing majors in this study?

Through acts of relational labor characterized in affective terms, instructors sponsor students' efforts at self-making and self-revision that may support rhetorical views of writing. Following Raymond Williams view that the most important products workers produce are themselves, Horner argues that students, through the material social processes of writing, engage in processes of subject "(re)production," both "responding to and re-creating the context of" the self and its production (247). Interactions with faculty, part of the context for writing, sponsor not only Writing majors' literacy acquisition, but also a sense of themselves as individuals who matter, which in turn can fuel their capacity to write and take rhetorical action. Students in this study echo one of the conclusions reached by Herrington and Curtis in their longitudinal investigation of college literacy development: "Time gave [students] [. . .] opportunity to revise themselves in much the same way they revised their essays" (381). As they use it, "time" isn't just the passage of days and semesters. It involves what students and teachers do with their time. And while it certainly does not equal *time with faculty*, it is inclusive of those interactions. In abstract terms, "time may be infinite, but human time is terribly limited" (382), and exchanges between teachers and students that occur within that limited and increasingly managed resource inform the context of sponsorship.

Defining the work of the Writing major as connected with a thorough-going sense of interpersonal interaction may not seem at all surprising to an audience of Writing Studies scholars. Social interaction appears as central in scenes of literacy learning outside the academy that are both historical (Gere) and contemporary (Daniell; Brandt, *Literacy in American Lives*), in the deeply collaborative nature of modern workplace writing (Brandt, *Literacy and Learning* 119-21), and in the history of advanced composition within the university (Adams, *A Group*;

Adams, *A History*). Additionally, Carl Vandermeulen contends that working with the personal and interpersonal is central to creative writing classrooms. Within this study, student discourse about the interactive dimensions of literacy learning within the Writing major align with this professional interest. Gina, a Private Research University junior, offered a statement that spoke evocatively to how study participants articulated learning and teaching as deeply relational and affective: "The Writing professors I've met are just really committed to growth. I feel like it's always going both ways. I'm not just taking from them; they are getting something from talking to me. And that's a really nice feeling." In this student's experience, teachers within the Writing major positioned her not only as a consumer of their expertise and curriculum, but as a producer of writing and insights that deserved close attention, even as she still benefited from their "commit[ment] to growth"—to her writing growth. That commitment manifested itself through instruction (particularly feedback on her texts) that was responsive to her individual potential and concerns. She identifies this positioning and responsiveness in affectively positive terms (i.e., "a nice feeling"). Many Writing majors interviewed for this study experienced exchanges with faculty as personally meaningful at an individual level and as factors that contributed to their learning.

The mutually informing movement between an expanding sense of a student's own abilities and specific undertakings is hard to trace, but some students nevertheless claimed that the array of interactions they experienced within the Writing major sponsored their preparedness for varied rhetorical endeavors. Indeed, Mark, the Liberal Arts College junior who saw little value in researched writing assignments, commented during his interview on the difficulty of articulating precisely when and where he learned something that persisted beyond a single course

or moment. However, he insisted that his interactions with others over time contributed to his growth as a writer:

> [W]orkshops with other talented writers (and professors, especially) have been valuable for my personal development. The degree to which I engage with every word and space in a sentence I write now is far beyond the level of thought I put into an entire plot when I was in high school. I can't tell you 'this class taught me this' or 'I got better at A when I did B,' but I'm much better at writing now than I was four years ago.

While unable to recount the specific timetable of life-course learning, Mark felt his potential as a writer called forth through an interaction-rich environment and, over the course of his program of study, he realized that potential through increasingly accomplished expressions. Workshops with Liberal Arts College instructors in particular (but also distinguished visiting creative and creative nonfiction writers as well as fellow student writers) contributed to his "personal development," which functions here as synonymous with *writing development*. Such an equivalency reinforces 1) Kerr's connection between a feeling-self and texts authored by that self and 2) Vandermeulen's attention to the personal and interpersonal in creative writing instruction. Constructing a developmental portrait of himself as a writer, Mark highlighted how the increased attentiveness he brought as a college junior to "every word" exceeds what he exerted when crafting "an entire plot" in high school. In this regard, his workshop experience seemed to match what Anna Leahy envisions, a situation "structured around the concept that the learning process, particularly for creative writers, involves moving beyond what one already knows and can do" (15). The interactional scene Mark described led him to gain an increased sense of his own efficacy as a writer, appearing to affirm notions of writing as a social endeavor.

From the vantage point of some Writing majors, even as course design is important, the quality of the engagement between faculty and students forged a more rhetorical paradigm of writing. [36] For example, Gail, the Liberal Arts College senior who shared her surprise at the emotional intensity she found in the personal essay, spoke of the connections among individual and communal interactions, personal writing growth, and the complexity of literacy:

> The [encouragement of] faculty and community [among writing majors] work with each other because you have a community of people who understand what it is to write, which is really helpful. [. . .] In terms of improving myself, there were teachers who would give writing assignments and projects, but it was more about getting us to think than it was to just improve our writing. [. . .] Looking back on the four years that I've been here, I really have grown. That really has helped to prepare me for what's waiting beyond. None of the teachers say it's going to be easy. They don't sugarcoat writing, but they do offer encouragement. They get you ready for what it's going to be like because they know. They're here to help.

Despite the findings discussed in the previous chapter about Writing majors' mechanical understanding of research assignments, these comments suggested an understanding of writing that exceeded solely instrumentalist terms and that questioned the containment of authorship potential to only textual features. Gail recognized faculty efforts as directed not only toward the functional development of discrete skills (i.e., "just improve our writing"), but also as promoting critical engagement through writing (i.e., "it was more about getting us to think"). In scholarship that treats students' understandings of college writing in general, many undergraduates view

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[36] In terms of course design, at Liberal Arts College, Mark noted the productive nature of the workshop model and Jennifer called attention to courses that involved theoretical readings. At Private Research University, Tyler privileged the freedom to choose the subject of his writing and valued the diverse genres in which he was asked to write.

writing for school in overwhelming instrumentalist terms and treat peer compositions from a deficit stance, focusing on what students lack in contrast to recognized *Authors* (Durst; Horner 244-46). Contributing a different vision, Gail discussed teacher and student interactions in affective and relational terms. She valued faculty's "encouragement" and "help" along with the "community" of student and faculty writers. Taken together, these mutually informing dynamics cultivated a "helpful" environment that sponsored, over her four years at Liberal Arts College, Gail's recognition of writing as an activity embedded within social relations. Such accounts belie the oft-repeated claims that Writing Studies specialists could, in any course students take early or late in a college career, fully prepare undergraduates all-at-once and once-and-for-all for the whole range of composing tasks assigned to undergraduates. This story of development also complicates frameworks for writing growth that marginalize student experience or that focus solely on the cognitive aspects of literacy learning.

For some students, relationships became a vehicle through which the Writing major sponsored conceptions of literacy that questioned culturally dominant frames that figure writing as transactional textuality or neutral skills. One student actually characterized his encounters with faculty as manifestations of "justice." Jeremiah, the senior whose work on queer arguments I examined in the previous chapter, framed his interview by raising almost immediately the Private Research University Writing Program's vision statement and its explicitly articulated political commitments:

> One thing I did know about the Writing Program before I entered it—and it was
> major factor about why I decided to enter the Writing Program—was the vision
> statement. Almost directly language off the website. [. . .] There was a really

externally focused vision statement [. . .] [with] a focus on justice, a focus on

understanding the means through which people talk about justice and achieve it.

The program's website described its vision as one of writing as "central to a just society."

Inspired by this vision, Jeremiah went on to connect this socially engaged view of literacy to

relational labor within the Writing major. Interactions with faculty and graduate students

provided the basis for a sponsoring relationship. He linked his interest in the Writing major and

its ethical and intellectual commitments to issues of time. Time, as Jeremiah discussed it, meant

both the time he took to understand the program and the time he spent with Writing teachers: "I

feel like I definitely took the time I needed because I had such good relationships with the

faculty and graduate students. I was able to ask them questions and figure out what the

philosophy was." As he says, *because* of these relationships, Jeremiah felt empowered to not

rush through the degree, but to take time for himself to reflect on his learning, further cultivate

these relationships, and determine his place within the Writing major at his institution. By

emphasizing relationships within a particular place and writing as linked to a programmatic

concern with "justice," Jeremiah pointed to the situational attentiveness of a rhetorical subject

who seeks opportunities for writing that matters. Not unlike Gina's experience of learning within

the Writing major as a reciprocal exchange between co-inquirers or co-workers, Jeremiah did not

simply consume an institutional statement. Through dialogue that unfolded over time in "good

relationships," he came to not only understand, but also to identify with, the philosophical

orientation of this program. Moreover, his extended and wide-ranging inquiry into queer

rhetorics and narratives detailed in chapter two participated in this socially engaged stance, an

instantiation of his own concerns converging with his uptake of programmatic commitments.

Relational labor within the Writing major may exercise a deep regard for students in ways that sponsor their rhetorical faculties. Three excerpts from Jeremiah's interview bring into focus the affective, interactive scene of sponsorship that involves a sense of connection between students and teachers. He detailed the difficulty he had composing the application materials needed to apply for matriculated student status. A creative nonfiction instructor created space inside and outside the classroom to support his writing:

> There was something [off-putting] about producing those documents and being evaluated—not exactly sure what that was about. But I was in [a prominent poet and essayist's] summer creative nonfiction class. [. . .] I used that opportunity to start writing my admissions essay. It was the first time I had felt somewhat free to do so and felt somewhat empowered and felt somewhat like my voice and my ability to produce intertwined. From that point on, that class was so meaningful to me. I would go home and not be able to write anymore, but in the space of that class, I was able to write very freely. [. . .] Just the act of writing was terrifying to me. I wrote to [the professor] and talked to her many times about that kind of feeling—about wanting to say things, but being literally unable to write. [. . .] Her mentorship and the way she structured that course, in a clichéd way, it gave me a voice.

Jeremiah elaborated on the reciprocal nature of his classroom-based and out-of-class communications with faculty throughout the Private Research University Writing Program:

> I just have never e-mailed a professor within the Writing Program with a concern, an idea, a suggestion, for any reason why I would e-mail a professor, and not gotten a very thoughtful, empathetic—excited, even—response from them. [. . .]

I've met with writing professors and for the weeks that come, they'll keep

returning to those conversations that we had. They'll think of me in the hallway,

and they'll get excited about those kinds of relationships. It seems like they

sought out to be a professor because they thought they'd get to have those

[relationships], and they are able to find them in the Writing Program.

And these relations sometimes continued after a course was over:

I have been in courses that I didn't like at the same time that I had amazingly

close mentoring relationships with those faculty members. [. . .] Being thought of

when they sent e-mails to me about certain opportunities that became available,

and still keeping up those relationships even when I'm out of their classes. [. . .] A

part of it is me, but the faculty in the Writing Program understand themselves as

not just research producers, but also as people working with their students.

In Jeremiah's account, the texts consumed and circulated in the context of the pedagogical

exchange provided "sponsoring ground from which to speak" (Herrington and Curtis 370), and

that ground was cultivated through relationships laden with affect. Jeremiah identified Writing

teachers with a desire for relationships—named that desire, in fact, as an exigency for seeking an

academic career dedicated to writing. He implied and named several tactics teachers deployed as

they undertook relational labor with students. For example, by revisiting previous conversations

with a student and layering them into later exchanges, Writing teachers communicated that

students' words found an audience that attended to the particular interests, concerns, and life of a

unique person who is also a student. The quality of faculty engagement within these

conversations, its affective component, surfaced as centrally important. From Jeremiah's

perspective, those exchanges that carried an idea beyond a single conversation also expressed an

"empathetic" regard for—and "excited" engagement with—his projects, ideas, and him as a person. This affectively charged, relational labor worked to sponsor his ability to undertake writing that mattered to him and that faculty saw as valuable. In this way, teachers were still "research producers," but they also operated as "people working with their students." Given that Jeremiah attended a research-intensive institution, this representation of teachers as relational laborers within a Writing major would seem to question the devaluation of pedagogy that Horner argues would follow academic professionalization.

As demonstrated in the account above, positioning students as agents with intellectual projects often requires efforts that might be called *mentorship*. When Jeremiah described the creative nonfiction course, he explained that the instructor created space within the classroom for personally meaningful writing, but she also listened—and was present—to the anxieties Jeremiah had about writing. What he called her "mentorship" (i.e., the interaction itself and the textuality that surrounded it) became a source of encouragement as Jeremiah felt a connection to a power that enabled him to produce texts. He believed that this relationship helped him connect with his "voice" and his ability to write. Within discussions of undergraduate research in English Studies and Writing Studies, mentorship emerges as a central term that involves not only supporting research processes, but also, echoing Harrington and Curtis, persons in process. In their introduction to *Undergraduate Research in English Studies*, Laurie Grobman and Joyce Kinkead highlight that "mentorship is crucial" to meaningful student research accomplishments (xvi). The entire first section of that collection focuses on "mentoring." Affirming the importance of mentorship, Margaret E. Whitt and Matthew Henningsen treat it as an evolving series of interactions. Jane Greer frames the mentorship of undergraduates as labor that requires pedagogical, disciplinary, and institutional dimensions. Mentorship, according to Greer, prepares

students for participation in disciplinary discourses, and it involves the multiple identities that make up students' lives ("Nontraditional" 41). Joonna S. Trapp and David Elder understand mentorship as affective labor: a student undertakes his or her work "in the presence of someone who *cares* [. . .] to know and consider the values and beliefs of the student and how those are formed" (10, emphasis in the original). Such a relationship relies not only on the transfer of knowledge between expert and apprentice subjects, but also on the feeling of the engagement between them (Trapp and Elder 11). This attention to mentorship as bound up with the relational work of students' *becoming* also arises in creative writing scholarship in ways that may provide a context for student experiences at Liberal Arts College.

At Liberal Arts College, even as the point of initial contact between an instructor and a student may lie in a particular course, mentorship from creative writing specialists contributed to students' *ongoing* development as writers. In this regard, teachers appeared to enact Carl Vandermeulen's suggestion that students of creative writing "need people they trust to tell them who they are and what they are capable of becoming" (121). Three students mentioned the importance of independent studies, but Mark addressed at length how a small senior thesis seminar and an independent study helped him develop a mentorship relationship with one creative writing faculty member:

> It really comes down to having a relationship with a professor that extends outside of the classroom. Because I've worked one-on-one with [one professor] both during my thesis and my independent study, we've become comfortable talking about not only the work I bring in those days, but also fiction and writing/reading in general. She also became my biggest supporter in applying to MFA programs. [. . .] Since [she] and I were working on so many different things together, our

'senior project' and 'independent study' meetings often became catchalls: we'd talk about the project itself, my other fiction, applying to graduate school, readings and other works of interest, etc. She helped suggest literary magazines for me to submit work to, etc. All of it grew out of class work. [. . .] On 'down' weeks, we talk about what I have, but then about other stuff. In fact, I have a whole stack of books from her personal library on my desk right now that she gave me to read when I had free time.

Having the institutional sanction of an independent study course afforded them a combination of structure and freedom for teacher and student to determine the nature of their interaction. Regular meetings involved dedicated discussion of Mark's writing and other texts, as well as "'down' weeks," which provided space for activities he experienced as important work. Those sessions with discussion focused less on specific projects presented occasions to share reading materials, encourage publication opportunities, and support his applications to graduate schools. Mark also noted, though, the predicament instructors are in when they take on additional work through independent studies: "It's really up to having a lovely mentor like [this instructor], as profs don't get paid for the credits they teach through independent studies. But [she's] been my biggest advocate in the department and encouraged me to keep working." Again, the willingness of faculty to engage in relational labor is characterized in affective terms. Work with this "lovely" mentor sponsored Mark's acquisition of knowledge about writing and access to opportunities (e.g., applying to graduate school and submitting work for publication).

While Mark's account showed how mentorship is possible after a traditional course ends at Liberal Arts College, students may not always possess a clear sense of how to achieve that outcome when it is desired. In her survey, Jennifer, a Liberal Arts College junior, offered a

comment in response to a question about how often she spoke with faculty regarding

professional or graduate school options: "I want to! They're always overwhelmed." Likewise,

two other Liberal Arts College students interviewed for this study readily acknowledged the

multiple demands on faculty time and labor. Just prior to our interview, Jennifer conferred with a

professor from the previous year regarding a symposium presentation she'd be giving. While

such encounters took place, she also reported uncertainty about how to make them a more

regular occurrence—even when she has a specific concern (e.g., applying to graduate school):

> I don't know, sometimes it feels like there's this weird thing that after a class
>
> ends. Maybe I'm not supposed to talk to them, and I would really like to talk to
>
> some of my professors about, for example, how I don't have any idea how to
>
> research grad schools. It's something I'm interested in, but I don't know if it's a
>
> viable goal. [. . .] They're all busy with the classes they have right now. It's like,
>
> 'Oh, you just go ahead and research and do it.' But I don't know what that means.

In contrast to Mark's experience finding a faculty member who continued working with him,

Jennifer longed for those kinds of interactions, but she didn't know how to make them happen.

Like a few other students at Liberal Arts College, where full-time faculty's teaching assignments

are more than at Private Research University, Jennifer seemed particularly aware of faculty

members' teaching work "with the classes they have right now."[37] Without the framework of a

course or other structured occasion for conversation, Jennifer couldn't quite imagine how she

might overcome the affective barrier (i.e., the "weird" feeling) that generally prevented her from

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[37] While faculty do not generally have agency over the prioritization of their work given institutional guidelines regarding tenure and promotion, it may be possible to exert a more collectivized response to recurring situations, such as when students apply for graduate school. For example, a program may compile a resource guide or conduct regularly scheduled workshops on the application process. In other words, in some regards, the nature of sponsoring interactions within the Writing major might be shifted from the level of teacher-to-student and toward a programmatic level. At the same time, this proposal doesn't quite harmonize with the distinctly personal and affective approach discussed throughout this chapter.

reaching out to faculty after courses ended. The forthcoming public presentation she would make offered a specific rationale for making a request on a former teacher's time. Echoing Jennifer's desire, four Private Research University survey respondents indicated an interest in having more contact with faculty. They also seemed to think more faculty interaction would be possible because "professors [are] very open to such things" and "they're approachable." This approachability must surely be viewed as a positive attribute. At this point, it seems useful to consider how the interpersonal and affective labor examined thus far may operate as a complicated affirmation of arguments that depict the Writing major as an instantiation of Writing Studies' disciplinarity or as a means of disseminating professional knowledge.

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES: ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALISM AND RELATIONAL LABOR

Even as I suggest throughout this dissertation that some Writing majors hold rhetorical views about writing, students sometimes seemed uncertain about the connection between the relational labor they valued and the disciplinarity of Writing Studies or the professional expertise of creative writers. In other words, while Writing majors might value relationships with faculty that sponsor a preparedness for writing, it is not always clear to students how that labor intersects with discipline-specific or professional knowledge. As I noted in chapter one, for more than a decade, scholars in Writing Studies have championed the advent of advanced curricula and the Writing major because they signal the realization of full disciplinary status as well as disciplinarity's accompanying benefits. Earlier in this chapter, I considered how the prevalence of relational and affective themes in student discourse within the Writing major might illustrate the limits of critiques that suggest Writing Studies' professionalization necessarily results in a decreased emphasis on teaching. That relational emphasis may, perhaps paradoxically, affirm

claims for the Writing major as a disciplinary achievement. And yet, that relationality seems to simultaneously illustrate how a sense of the Writing major as connected to professional knowledge may be unevenly distributed among students.

From the students' perspective, disciplinary and professional commitments in among academic faculty general might interfere with relational labor. In the experience of three students I spoke with, they were quite clear about their sense that instructors in departments other than Writing understood that their primary relationship was to their subject area, not to student subjects. For example, Jeremiah understood his interactions with instructors in other disciplines as productive, but they also carefully contained the teacher-student relationship: "I've gone to office hours of people outside the Writing department, and I can have a really great meeting with them, but it's really understood that that's the time we have together—that meeting." In the context of a research-intensive university, faculty might perceive this restraint as necessary in order to properly balance teaching and research. Accounting for this phenomenon as he also saw it at Private Research University, Tyler, who argued for the dissimilarity of Writing Studies and English Studies in chapter two, explained,

> I guess the core requirement is the best example of this. [. . .] It seems like–and I
> used to understand it as a fault, but I am hesitant to call it that now—but it seems
> like a lot of the departments teach as if their classes exist in a vacuum. It's, 'You
> learn this. That's it. It doesn't matter if you're not in this major.' [. . .] On the one
> hand, the professors, they're there for that specific department, so you can't fault
> them for teaching what they know. At the same time, other than [introductory]
> Writing, I really didn't see any attempt to make the lower-level classes more
> available to a wider audience. [. . .] It doesn't matter if it has anything to do with

anything else you're doing. But I can't necessarily fault the teachers because

they're there to teach that specific subject.

By "available," Tyler meant that Writing courses provided both "content" (i.e., knowledge *about* writing) and practices that supported students' interests in—and goals for—writing. In calling attention to the interrelationship of knowledge and practice, Tyler potentially questions the value of Trimbur's claim that the importance of the teaching *of* writing might diminish in advanced courses ("Theory" 113). Tyler spoke here specifically about lower-division, introductory courses in which he found teachers who encouraged student composing that connected conceptual knowledge to material practices that enabled students to pursue their own purposes. This kind of encouragement was something he experienced to varying degrees throughout the Writing major. Thus, Tyler found within the Writing major teaching that promoted a productive negotiation of student and official goals.

That kind of negotiation is why I don't think that the focus throughout this chapter on what might seem like largely interpersonal issues diminishes the theoretical dimensions of pedagogy or reduces teaching to the exercise of heroic or "nice" personalities. Howard identifies the problem of Writing Studies scholarship that makes obvious arguments about—and that awards too much influence to—the particular efforts of individual instructors. In the case of this chapter, one might say 1) that it seems fairly obvious to claim that substantial personal involvement with students "is surely a Good Thing that will surely result in Better Learning and Happier People" and 2) that such a claim individualizes pedagogical efforts in potentially unproductive ways (Howard, "Postpedagogical" 225). At the same time, the actions described above are material social *practices* (e.g., *labor*)—not innate dispositions—that promote students' literacy learning. Recall that Horner, following Williams, places significance on the revision of

consciousness as a form of labor. According to some of the students in this study, teachers'

relational labor can embody an interpretive stance that may help produce a consciousness among

students that positions faculty, as Jeremiah put it, "not just as research producers, but also as

people working with their students." Such a consciousness views relational labor as central to the

Writing major, privileging activities connected with teaching and mentoring while not losing

track entirely of the ways in which professional expertise generatively informs teaching.

And yet, even if this interaction-focused discourse doesn't equate teaching with

personalities and even if the practices students described constitute a form of labor, might

student discourse about these practices construct teaching as a practical set of skills naturally

developed without reference to disciplinary or professional expertise? When Mark named the

quality possessed by his mentor that facilitated their work, he called her "lovely." When Gail

characterized teachers' efforts, she said, "They're here to help." Certainly, these and other

moments may simply indicate the readily accessible vernacular terms that capture students'

experiences of these professional interactions. However, they also seem closely connected to

cultural scripts that historically defined composition instruction as practically oriented, routine,

and non-intellectual labor (Strickland 19-37) directed toward the "mundane" (Miller 127) and

that coded (and devalued) teaching as feminine (Holbrook; Miller 121-41; Schell; Strickland 38-

44). It is in this regard that Ritter expresses concern over the valorization of teaching as

interpersonal labor and critiques it as a romanticized good in literacy instruction ("'Ladies'"

412). Susan Miller links the personally involved, self-sacrificial role adopted by (and placed

upon) composition instructors (14-15) with an ideological complex that figures the composition

teacher (of either gender) as a maid-mother-disciplinarian who urges students to master the

privileged vernacular and who regulates their use of it (137). Ritter argues that practitioners in

the field identify with this self-sacrificing stance and that the field "is also dependent upon it for its pedagogical imperative" ("'Ladies'" 392). This dependence leads Ritter to question, for example, the idea of writing as an "enterprise between teacher and student, deserving of lavish attention to personalized, repeated response" (413) because of how it relies upon a gendered ideology of "help" that may be "counterproductive to the discipline of composition studies as a whole" (390). This body of literature makes me pause when students in the Writing major mobilize an affect-laden language of help in relationship to teachers' labor.

While I have no response that fully accounts for the critiques just outlined that would tend to undermine my assertion that students' discourse on relational labor supports the idea of the Writing major as a professional achievement, I would highlight that students didn't see relational investment *alone* as enough to sponsor their acquisition of literacy. In other words, it was important that teachers "cared," but they recognized the need for more than that. For example, Mark valued his mentor's wide knowledge base and access to her library, and Jeremiah appreciated mentorship within a program that promoted a critical awareness of writing as implicated in power dynamics. As discussed in chapter two, Jeremiah linked teachers' insightful feedback to Writing Studies knowledge, Tyler learned from teachers the theoretical-practical "mechanics of writing," and Gail gained an understanding of genre from coursework and written responses.

Discussion of a final example from Gina about her experiences in the writing center may help clarify what I mean when I argue that students sensed the importance of teachers' professional knowledge alongside teachers' relational labor. At Private Research University, the writing center staff included part-time faculty in the Writing Program (the majority of the tutors), some doctoral students in the Writing Program, a few undergraduate students taking—or who

previously took—a peer-tutoring course, and occasionally full-time faculty. The writing center supported undergraduate and graduate students' writing development through (mostly one-on-one) tutoring sessions. During her interview, Gina connected the personalized and humane feeling created within Writing major courses to her writing center visits: "I've also encountered this [support] from professors who teach writing who are in the writing center, which I visit a lot. I can't even explain. It's just, like, imagination. Such nice people." This gesture toward explanation—for she finds a full explanation not quite possible—suggests at least two pieces of what Gina values in her writing center visits: 1) the way consultants help keep open compositional possibilities and writing options (what she calls "imagination") and 2) the affective nature of those encounters that she experiences as positive and affirming (i.e., "Such nice people"). While this comment might return us to the possible danger of conflating pedagogy and personality, I'd reiterate again how there are likely practices at work, not only personal qualities.

In Gina's treatment of the writing center, a site staffed mostly with professional instructors, the significance of these sessions seems significantly linked to feelings of validation from, and connection with, other individuals. These feelings and the labor that produced them acted as a ground for sponsorship. Gina further described the writing center: "Generally people there have just been so helpful. There was a time I went there before I wrote every one of my papers. I'm a procrastinator so they help me get all of my ideas in order without judging me at all for having waited till the last minute. But I used to try to find excuses to go there just because everyone was so nice." Gina expressed the importance she placed on having a judgment-free space inhabited by writing specialists who will work with her wherever she is in her process. Not only did this student seek out occasions to go to the writing center, at one point, writing center

conversations began each of her writing assignments. She needed space to talk about writing in affirming, generative ways and the writing center provided it. Gina also recognized—at least implicitly—these practices and this space as implicated with professional knowledge.

At the same time, while she valued the relational labor that generated an affectively positive environment, productive sessions primarily took place with professional tutors. Of her visits generally, Gina said, "They have been mostly great." She immediately followed up, though, to comment on her sessions with undergraduate students: "I mean, every once in a while you get someone who's not that experienced—one of the students who is helping out." Undergraduate "students" working in the writing center appear in Gina's account as aides—folks "helping out"—the more "experienced" tutors. This perception is, perhaps, not entirely surprising when a writing center's staff includes longtime and professionally knowledgeable teachers. Rather than this characterization originating from general assumptions about their expertise, Gina implied, without going into detail, that specific incidents with student tutors led her to this impression. While this moment is small, it's also suggestive of the interconnected nature of relational labor and professional expertise in sponsoring students' literacy learning. If, as Laurie Grobman suggests, scholarly authorship is best conceptualized as a spectrum along which students and teachers move, then this account from Gina suggests something similar for relational labor. For Gina, interactive engagement alone was insufficient to the task of creating a satisfying learning situation that sponsored her writing. Expertise was also required.

CONCLUSION

Through their comments about the relational labor involved with literacy learning, Writing majors articulated a capacious vision of writing that challenged instrumentalist notions

of writing as primarily a set of discrete skills or a means to correctness. Within a spacious curriculum filled with rich interactions between faculty and students, Writing majors pointed to the need to watch not only for demonstrable writing growth (i.e, competencies gained by a certain date), but also for how they come to conceptualize their object of study: writing. While what some students valued about Writing major programs may sound similar to arguments that figure FYW as a non-disciplinary service course, what I've described here is not simply a service major. It's not at the service of its students' desires and wishes, devoid of its own content. As demonstrated at various moments throughout this chapter and the preceding one, writing is often viewed by students in rhetorical terms: situated, not context-free; social, not solely personal; collaborative, not entirely individual; and (though less frequently) politically implicated, not neutral. It would seem that the relational labor many students valued functioned in tandem with the professional expertise of teachers and not as a negation of that expertise.

In contrast to the directives of efficiency, the message some students shared spoke to the (use) value students can derive from their interactions with faculty. The issue, though, is not the (unrealistic) total rejection of teachers' charge within the context of the neo-liberal university to efficiently prepare students as flexible employees. Neither is the task the subordination of teachers' objectives and other labor (research or management) to the desire of some students for the kinds of affective connections described in this chapter. There are certainly students within Writing major programs who desire to "get through" school as efficiently as possible and who "put in their time" until graduation. However, the function of relational labor in some students' accounts enables an understanding of how the Writing major sponsors the *process* and the *product* of students' revisions to their own subjectivities in ways that potentially maintain the

discipline's traditional emphasis on teaching and affirm the relevance of professional knowledge about writing.

Chapter 4. Writing Majors and Their Contributions to Writing Studies

The preceding chapter argues that the discourse of students in this study points to the complicated relationship between the teaching of writing and Writing Studies' disciplinary status because of the central value many students placed on teaching within the Writing major while also expressing uncertainty about the how that valued labor relates to scholarly expertise. One manifestation of that valued labor occurred when teachers interacted with students' writing. What texts were these that teachers treated with sustained intellectual engagement? What compositions did Writing majors in these programs produce? Which did they value and why? How did they understand and mobilize writing as scholarly knowledge, as professional practices, or as public action? And how might these texts constitute contributions to the field? This final data chapter relies on survey and interview data, but it also turns to the diverse pieces of writing student participants submitted.

Given the breadth of student texts and the variety of courses documented throughout the history of advanced composition (Adams; Miller; Dicks; Hogan), I undertook the present study not with the hope of pronouncing a unified, monolithic story about rhetorical production within the contemporary Writing major. But if that hope existed, then it surely withered when presented with the range of writing students chose to submit. Based on the student texts submitted as part of this dissertation research, written diversity manifested itself in the compositions valued by even just a few students dedicated to the advanced study of writing. Early-twenty-first-century Writing majors in this study shared multiple genres of writing, expressed varied interests in writing, and demonstrated wide-ranging purposes for writing. These participants refused to be contained by easy categories or firm boundaries. They shared researched essays, autobiographical pieces, creative nonfiction, short stories, and literary as well as rhetorical

analyses—with many pieces often residing at the blurred edges of these classifications. Their texts and discourse insist on a capacious, as opposed to a narrow, interest in writing. Such a broad set of interests should suggest multiple ways to understand and value student contributions to, and participation in, the Writing major and Writing Studies.

To treat students as contributors means to understand student discourses as sites about which professional Writing Studies scholars should speak *and* as sites to which we should listen. That listening and speaking should take many forms: neither uncritical embrace nor uninhibited critique. A careful attention, however, to the particulars of what Writing majors say and write may well teach teacher-scholars even as students also learn. While contributions (student or otherwise) are not exempt from general analysis or from more pointed critique, student discourse provides the field with much of value, illuminating the ways in which dedicated undergraduate participants understand literacy and writing. Viewing students as contributors means that the field offers insights that "can illuminate their own experiences" and opportunities in which students might "illuminate those discussions" taking place in the field's scholarship (DeJoy 90). Whether in more public forms (such as undergraduate publications and electronic portfolios) or more seemingly contained forms (such as classroom discussions or compositions), students make contributions through their diverse efforts to write and to conceptualize writing. Nancy DeJoy contends that it is not desirable—or even practical—to "maintain an either/or binary between the texts of our discipline and student discourses" (41) and that Writing Studies scholars must decide "whether the discourses of diverse people in the discipline are important to the discipline" (138). Her argument already accepts that those "diverse people in the discipline" include undergraduate students in composition classrooms. If they are in the discipline at the point of the classroom,

then DeJoy urges scholars in the field to recognize undergraduates as not only consumers of Writing Studies, but also as contributors to it.

    This chapter addresses two issues at stake in how the field conceptualizes student contributions: 1) honoring individual interests and 2) discerning connections between student discourse and disciplinary interests. Two frameworks from Writing Studies scholarship help suture these issues: Janis Haswell and Richard Haswell's concept of *authorial offering* and Rebecca Moore Howard's three-part proposal for advanced curricula. The use of student-generated data alongside frameworks from Writing Studies scholarship encourages a broad understanding of the ways students and their work may contribute to goals widely held within the field. By understanding students' discourse as what Haswell and Haswell call authorial offerings, I frame students' text and talk as singular gifts that point to their potentiality as writers. Students' texts as well as interview and survey responses contain expressions students "must have thought of as belonging only to" themselves, which they willingly shared with me and the readers of this dissertation, an act of sharing that points to a sense of having created singular "constructions that authors can rightfully believe bear their own stamps" (Haswell and Haswell 157). Haswell and Haswell maintain, "A mistake is to identify authorial offering with the 'personal'" (159). As the co-authors claim about writers in general, the Writing majors in this study seemed "motivated by the thought that they are adding something of their own to" a piece of writing and the programs in which they participate (157). Likewise, Anne Surma claims that "we are more likely to be committed to" various identities and projects "when we feel we actively contributed to our written texts' potential for interpretation and use" (23). The discourse of study participants pointed toward their own sense of how they might participate in—and contribute to—their programs and broader communities, including Writing Studies.

In order to promote an expansive vision of student contribution, the current chapter centrally relies on Howard's approach to building advanced Writing curricula. Howard's framework for curricula imagines both instructional content and writing purposes: discipline-specific knowledge, professional writing, and civic writing ("History" xv-xix). It works also as a way to frame a range of possible undergraduate contributions. In other words, it can provide an official staring point for building curricula as well as a way of thinking about the Writing major from the ground up—from the ground of student work and experience. This approach attempts to use student discourse and professional Writing Studies scholarship to produce flexible-yet-efficacious terms for articulating undergraduate contributions to Writing Studies. By employing Howard's framework heuristically, this approach potentially avoids the potential problem of privileging any particular point of reference as *the* ground for composing within the Writing major. As Miller contends, a politically "alternative" or rhetorical Writing Studies "would not give priority to internally coherent theories that unify and legitimize a 'discipline,' but to the ways that we can together make it easier for any group of people to write successfully to reach particular goals" (195). In this regard, an attention to scholarly, professional, and civic concerns proves more useful than analyzing student texts according to their forms because I want to keep the focus on the purposes and effects of texts. Moreover, students' interests and composing in academic, creative, and nonfiction genres span each of these three purpose-oriented domains. In what follows, I briefly situate study participants' submitted writing samples and their efforts to describe Writing major programs within advanced composition scholarship that highlights written and definitional diversity. Then, in successive sections, I examine student discourse and professional scholarship in order to articulate students' disciplinary, professional, and civic contributions.

THE SCENE OF STUDENT WRITING: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY

In some ways, the findings in this chapter echo historical accounts of diverse writing as a defining feature of advanced students' experience. As detailed in chapter one, a worry about the variety of approaches to advanced composition defines a strand of late-twentieth-scholarship about that course. However, historical studies of advanced composition and more specialized postsecondary writing-focused courses embrace multiplicity, particularly in terms of students' purposes for writing and their compositions. For example, Miller finds rhetorical promise in the diversity of English department catalog listings of composition courses (particularly advanced composition courses) offered in the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century (66-73). In fact, she characterizes the courses as demonstrating "a surprising variety" (68) and they are "impressive" in number (69). Miller emphasizes "the legitimacy" these developments "in nineteenth-century educational history temporarily gave to many kinds of writing, including the 'creative' sorts that are rarely mentioned in composition history or research" (76). Despite this diversity, she contends that contemporary "students in more advanced courses in writing, those with historical precedents different from" FYW—including those "professional and technical writing courses, and in some degree those in 'creative' writing"—find themselves "nonetheless implicated in the subjectivity generally assigned to composition" (Miller 197). At the same time, this history with advanced courses as its starting point makes *possible* "stories" different from those that confine and constrict composition and its teaching (Miller 1). Historical treatments of advanced composition also highlight the diversity of student writing and experiences. Katherine Adams' two book-length histories document and celebrate the wide-ranging written products students developed from the late-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. Through

readings of archival and historical materials generated by institutions, teachers, and students, Adams shows how education in advanced composition, creative writing, journalism, and professional/business writing was delivered and experienced in roughly the same period Miller covers.

If diversity in course constructs and student writing historically defined advanced postsecondary literacy education, then contemporary Writing majors' explanations of their programs continue this tradition. Across both study sites, students themselves diligently tried to accurately name what the Writing major is from the vantage point of what they do, individually and collectively—with mixed results given their range of experiences. Despite the finding that ninety percent of Liberal Arts College respondents and eighty-five percent of Private Research University respondents indicated that they could satisfactorily describe their program of study, some students found difficult the task of communicating what coherence existed within their own experience of the Writing major. Jeremiah, one of the most theoretically sophisticated participants with a clear interest in Writing Studies' disciplinary knowledge, reported frustration on this count: "This is probably my most significant complaint about being a Writing major. [. . .] I'm not really able to sum up exactly what it was and how what shared experiences I've had with other students might define us as a rhetorical or disciplinary community." He continued, "I feel the courses lack a cohesive identity, and it's difficult for me to dive more deeply into sub-disciplines without taking graduate level coursework outside of my degree plan." Other Private Research University students described similar struggles, including attempts to confront how "'rhetoric' is pretty largely misunderstood" and to differentiate the Writing major from the English literature major. At Liberal Arts College, survey respondents commented on related definitional efforts. One student insisted, "People generally want to assume that the major is

solely focused on creative writing, and this is incorrect. My official major is Writing." Another respondent resisted the caricature of the Writing major as an aloof, anti-establishment artist. Given the fact that scholars exerted much energy trying unsuccessfully to ultimately define advanced composition and given the ongoing nature of the conversation about the shape of the Writing major, it would make sense that students, too, encounter difficulty reconciling the diversity of their own experiences and production with comprehensive definitions. And, what exactly, did students produce? What texts held value or significance for some participants in this study?

Contemporary students' assorted compositions submitted for the present study constructed the Writing major as a site for varied writing. Responding to a question that asked if they would "be willing to share a piece of [their] writing that demonstrates [their] skills and interests as a Writing major," students submitted texts that illustrated an array of genres, topics, and lengths as well as multiple reasons for writing. Ten Writing majors provided sixteen contributions: six Private Research University students volunteered eleven pieces (with five students supplying two texts each) and four Liberal Arts College students volunteered five pieces (with one student supplying two texts).

Relying primarily on the language students used when characterizing their texts and the features of the texts themselves, three general categories emerge: academic, creative nonfiction, and creative. Submissions designated *academic* are source-informed texts that promote an argument or enable a topical exploration: three literary analyses, one film analysis, one rhetorical analysis, one definitional essay, one political position paper, and one art history paper. The five *creative nonfiction* texts include a commencement speech, a political speech, and three pieces that might be called personal or autobiographical essays. *Creative* contributions include three

short stories. Student work was produced within different departments and for various courses: Writing (Introduction to Fiction, Introduction to Creative Writing, Personal Essay, Advanced Argument, Creative Nonfiction, First-Year Creative Nonfiction), English (Independent Study, Thesis Seminar, and Literature and Nations), Political Science (Ethics and International Relations), and Art History. Eight pages is the median length for these sixteen texts. The longest (a book history approach to two Nathaniel Hawthorne stories) reaches twenty-eight pages and the shortest (a political speech composed as if to be delivered by John Boehner) reaches three pages. Student texts address far-flung topics, an incomplete list of which includes post-graduation employment prospects, the movies *My Beautiful Launderette* and *Fight Club*, U.S. politics after the 2010 mid-term elections, young adulthood in Hawthorne short stories, authenticity in Anne Frank's diary, family, defining the "lyric essay," torture, artistic influences on painter Edward Moran, vegetarianism, personal loss, romance, sexuality, and video gaming. Across their submissions and throughout their interviews, students demonstrated concerns about the nature of writing, the purposes behind composing, and the effects of texts.

SCHOLARLY AND DISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS

While Writing majors reported differing levels of identification with the disciplinary community of Writing Studies, theoretical concerns about writing surfaced for most students in this study. A majority of Liberal Arts College respondents (thirty-two) listed the study of histories and theories of writing as one motivation for their decision to become Writing majors. In light of the Liberal Arts College interview data (which revealed a widespread preference for creative writing) and writing sample data (which included only one thesis-driven, academic essay), this survey trend likely did not indicate an undergraduate research agenda with a focus on

disciplinary concerns within Writing Studies. Rather, it likely indicated but a more general concern with theories as productive frameworks that supported student writing. The reported interest in theory at Liberal Arts College *starkly contrasts* with Private Research University survey results: only seven students indicated a theoretical motivation at all and five of those respondents ranked it as least important to them. Given that Private Research University is a research-intensive institution, such findings may point to a discrepancy between instructor and student perceptions about the value of disciplinary knowledge to the Writing major. In the case of both institutions, students' goals appeared to differ from one of the primary ways of articulating undergraduate participation in the discipline: as the production of contributive knowledge in a form that one might characterize as *scholarly* or as *research*. However, even within the frame of undergraduate research, the examples considered in *Undergraduate Research in English Studies* promote a flexible understanding of what it means to—in the terms Grobman and Kinkead employ—make an "original intellectual or creative contribution to the field" (ix). This section argues that despite varying or absent attachments to Writing Studies disciplinarity, Writing majors contribute to Writing Studies through their own attempts to appreciate connections and divergences between different forms of literacy education: academic discourse, creative nonfiction, and creative writing.

While only one student text explicitly invokes Writing Studies-specific scholarship, many texts, interviews, and survey responses addressed questions about the theoretical work writing accomplishes. In one of James's two connected written submissions, this Private Research University sophomore relies on Sonja Foss to define rhetorical criticism and on Chris Thaiss and Terry Meyers Zawacki to define genre. Earlier in this chapter, I called attention to Jeremiah's concern with more disciplinary graduate courses. He sensed a greater coherence within the

doctoral program than what he experienced in the Writing major. From his perspective, disciplinarity was central to the coherence of the doctoral program, but it was not necessarily important to undergraduate students. Jeremiah went on say that he found significant variation in how rhetorical and theoretical vocabularies were distributed within the undergraduate program. He also took pains to distinguish his interest in rhetorical theory and creative nonfiction from an interest in creative writing: "When I tell people I'm a Writing major, it's very difficult to convince them that I'm not a creative fiction writer. When I talk about rhetoric and studying the way the people talk and persuade, they hear, maybe, political science. And it probably has something to do with the relationship of composition and rhetoric to all other disciplines." These concerns about Writing Studies' disciplinary status, as well as drawing lines between himself and the popularly accessible image of *the writer* as *the creative writer*, were important contributions from Jeremiah. Most interviewees, however, were not so invested in a "hard" disciplinary stance, a finding that agrees with Jeremiah's own experiential observation about Private Research University.

Even as Writing majors frequently seemed to rely on a bifurcation of creative writing and "academic" writing, many students also tried to reconcile (or to conceptually understand the lines between) these different literate and rhetorical undertakings. Admittedly, at the interview stage, two Liberal Arts College students (Mark and Gail) actively distanced their own interest in writing from the work of composing academic arguments with sources. With regard to academic literacies (particularly constructing academic arguments), students more commonly appeared to mobilize what Nancy DeJoy observes among FYW students: an understanding of academic writing as functionalist skills (32). But this understanding *also* occasions the possibility of

engaging them with disciplinary knowledge about writing.[38] Recall, for instance, students'

largely procedural approach to research discussed in chapter two. Two of the students who

provided two writing samples, Lisa at Private Research University and Jane at Liberal Arts

College, paired an academic essay with, respectively, an imagined college commencement

speech and a short story. They both linked their academic submissions (an analysis of the film

My Beautiful Launderette from Lisa and an analysis of the novel *Fight Club* from Jane) to the

grades those texts received. Lisa wanted to demonstrate that she "got As on both" imaginative

and critical texts. She went on, though, to explain, "If you're asking me to showcase my best

writing, I am not going to give you an academic paper at all." Jane said, "For that class [Writing

about Fiction], I wasn't doing very well. [. . .] That paper was my last effort to do something

about my grade." Perhaps this attention to graded assessment signaled a sense of academic

argument as a performance for teachers more than as a motivation for writing. And yet, Jane and

Lisa wanted to represent the range of writing they undertook and the variety of writing purposes

for which their programs prepared them.

When creative and creative nonfiction writing surfaced as central to students' accounts

and submissions, an often enthusiastic but similarly complicated story arose. If, as D. G. Myers

concluded in his history of U.S. creative writing instruction, "technique had been divorced from

theory" by the end of the 1980s (168), then Writing majors in the early 2010s hoped to know

them as an integrated pair. The efforts of students in this study followed Tim Mayers' lead in

believing that "creative writing ought not be conceived as a private preserve" and that scholars

(and I would include undergraduate scholars) can interrogate creative writing's

"interrelationships" with "other parts of the English curriculum" ("One" 224). Several students

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[38] Twelve study participants in the present research were first-year students *and* Writing majors: eleven at Liberal Arts College and one at Private Research University.

in this study pursued creative-academic interrelationships. In particular, a robust interest in

writing models served as one manifestation of students' efforts to integrate varied writing

theories and practices.

That some Writing majors displayed an interest in models of academic-creative

connections need not necessarily indicate that they celebrated what Kelly Ritter names (by way

of critique) a "pedagogy of emulation" in creative writing instruction. In that pedagogical

arrangement, students learn craft—and graduate students learn about pedagogy—through

"observation, mimicry, repetition" ("'How'" 81) as opposed to "learn[ing] actively by doing (and

reading and theorizing what they see)" ("'How'" 83). Rather, this interest in modeling might

mean that some students experienced themselves as benefitting from reading creative and

creative nonfiction texts alongside theoretical treatments as they also worked on their own

writing. Jennifer, a junior at Liberal Arts College, said that while there were "a lot of chances to

practice your writing" in workshop courses, she particularly praised the one course she had to

take that wasn't focused only on producing creative writing. She desired more chances to learn

about "the theory behind writing." Mark addressed how Writing courses stirred in him a desire to

read "as a writer," and they added to the collection of writers and texts to which he would turn

for ideas and for leisure. Both Jennifer and Mark seemed to believe, along with Kimberly

Andrews, that "[r]eading for creative writers must be viewed as a critical practice, one informed

and complicated by context, history, and theory" (242). During her interview, Gina spoke about a

course she took at Private Research University that focused on the "lyric essay," which she

defined as "sort of a blurring of the lines between standard creative nonfiction and a more poetic

form of writing. Really, playing with all your resources." For this student, determining—by

"doing" (Ritter, "'How'" 83)—how poetic, "playful" creative nonfiction and clear, "serious" academic discourse overlap constituted an important inquiry.

One of Gina's submissions, her final reflective essay from the lyric essay course, illustrates how students attempted integrations of their diverse literacy education and the value placed on exposure to models that blend (or put into dialogue) creative nonfiction and academic discourse. Given that the readings for the course featured the lyric essay form, Gina's final essay "was about trying to find this balance between academic writing and more poetic writing." As she writes in the piece, she "had planned for this essay to emulate a form while exploring it." Her piece opens with Gina in fifth grade, turning in an assignment and asking the teacher about the acceptability of several sentences beginning in a similar way—all with "I." The teacher replies to the young Gina, "'I think you can do better,'" which led Gina to this conclusion: "And suddenly, I could." While this account may appear to position writing as a mysterious process, opening with such a recollection points to the importance of the pedagogical exchange for a student who had not "since that day [. . .] met a writing format [she] could not master. That is, until the lyric essay." How she explains her struggle to write a lyric essay returns us to the issue of the relationship between knowledge about writing and writing practice: "I *plan* the structure of an academic essay, whereas I *feel* the structure of a poem. The lyric essay requires a hybrid of these approaches, and it seems all I can do is read and write until I find the balance." In other words, the consultation of other texts while also reflecting on her own composition becomes a staple of her writing process, a process that involves both cognitive and affective dimensions.

Obviously, while this process may involve what Gina calls "play"—and early in her piece, she playfully acknowledges definitional issues by parenthetically remarking on the lyric essay "(yes, we'll call it a 'sub-genre')"—significant work that blends genre knowledge, ongoing

reading, and composing also takes place. Upon concluding her essay, though Gina recognizes that her work has not resulted in a lyric essay, she nonetheless finds satisfaction:

> Though the piece has explored the form, I do not believe I have written a lyric essay. I have incorporated both poetry and academic writing, but each style is distinct. Though the styles are working together, I have yet to successfully combine them. After some consideration, I've decided I'm glad this piece is not the skillfully executed lyric essay I intended to write. Instead, it is both an explanation and a demonstration of the issues and ambiguities I am working through in my writing.

This reflection should not indicate a lack of follow-through or a purely textual desire on Gina's part. Observed here is not the textual subject that concerns Miller, a student "self-involved [. . .] in a matrix defined as his or her own 'thinking'" (101). What Gina's conclusion suggests, with its embrace of ambiguity and recognition of the text's limits, is a writer not content to settle for simple answers to challenging writing problems. She is not self-satisfied or text-satisfied. Rather, Gina is writing-problem engaged. A sense of accomplishment attends this act of production. Gina feels "glad" that her work resulted in something other than what she initially intended.

Students also connected the issue of models (or the absence of them) to enduring questions about authorship. If Gina raised modeling in connection with learning creative nonfiction in an academic context, then Gloria makes the need for models of reading-writing-theorizing combinations even clearer through her *lack* of models for integrating writing insights and experiences from creative nonfiction and literature courses. Specifically, Gloria wrestles with how to make use of the "discovery" that academic discourse need not strive for a completely impersonal vantage point:

Gloria: In creative nonfiction, we did a lot of creative stuff. It was nonfiction but it was. [. . .] I didn't even know you could write creative nonfiction in that way. [. . .] Well, honestly, I never did it before. So I never thought about it in that way. I thought if you added creative elements to your writing it wasn't—it wasn't academic anymore. And even a lot of our academic papers were creative in a sense. Yeah.

T J: What made them creative?

Gloria: I think if I use 'I' in an essay, then it's creative. [Laughter] I mean it's giving your own point of view and I think you have to completely remove yourself from your academic papers a lot of the time. And just being able to give your own point of view in the writing and still get a good grade was good. [. . .] If you do that in the English department *you're* not going to get a good grade at all. [. . .] [Laughter] I had an English professor freshman year, she went through and crossed out all the parts where I put 'I' in a paper. [. . .] So I never did it again. And I got in the habit of not doing it. Even when I came to write my thesis, my advisor said, 'Oh you can put your point of view in the introduction and talk about what you think specifically.' And it was so difficult doing that I because I'd never had a chance to do that before. [. . .] But I realize when you get higher up—as a freshman you're told not to do that because they're trying to get you to write sophisticated and professional, whatever. *But then as a senior* they'll tell you, 'Oh, it's fine. Do it sometimes, or whatever.' So, I don't know why that is.

For Gloria, the "creative" part of creative nonfiction, at least in part, equaled the "personal." That association stemmed from the license to use first-person in the creative nonfiction course she

took at the end of her college career, an experience in stark contrast to a literature course taken as a first-year student. It might be easy here to cast the English instructor from Gloria's first year of college as a "Miss Grundy"-esque figure who "consciously and unconsciously initiates students into the culture's discourse on *language*" (Miller 138; emphasis in the original), an initiation which involves the enforcement of "a consciously established menu to test students' knowledge of graphic conventions, to certify their propriety, and to socialize them into good academic manners" (Miller 66). Such a characterization might make it possible—perhaps even predictable—for a compositionist to celebrate this student's "discovery" of the personal in "academic" writing. However, that would not justly represent this story. The stakes for Gloria seemed not only about manipulating surface textuality or reveling in the use of graphic marks to impolitely insert a unique personality into academic discourse.

At stake for Gloria is the apprehension of an authorial hierarchy in which she acquired greater authority "*as a senior*" to make composing choices. As a first-year student, the lack of that authority led Gloria to excise first-person pronouns from her academic prose—an option later allowed her. With the recognition of this differential treatment came an interest in "what [students] will learn *about* such conventions" and how students are prepared to play the "language games" that often work to deny authorship to first-year students (Miller 112). In short, Gloria intuited an authorial hierarchy based on the conflicting visions of literacy education she received from, on the one hand, advanced literary and creative nonfiction study and, on the other hand, initiative literary instruction. Her efforts to reconcile these insights about language registers, discourse community membership, and situated authorship may support Grobman's argument to explicitly teach students how authority and authorship might function as a spectrum.

Just as undergraduate students may consider problems similar to those pursued in professional scholarship (e.g., Gloria interest in the negotiation of student authorship), it is also important to acknowledge how Writing majors' attempts to integrate different forms of literacy education may narrowly construct academic writing. While Gloria struggled to conceptually frame the permission to use a personal perspective in creative nonfiction and advanced literature courses, Lisa sought to escape a felt confinement within a creative-academic binary. In her interview, academic literacy appeared as staid and mechanical with creative writing figured as lively and organic. While this hierarchy might trouble some Writing Studies scholars, Lisa wondered about the possibilities of academic literacy and creative writing sharing common ground:

> If they do work together, I sure haven't seen it. If they can, that would be awesome. But if there was such a thing where you could see academic writing and creative writing kind of mesh together, I would love to do that because I'm not completely abandoning what I've learned [about academic writing], but I'm also doing what I love at the same time. If there was a way to mesh that, that would be amazing. But right now they're just polar opposites. You can't mesh them at all. They have to stay clear of each other. But I think you could try to mesh them together.

An intriguing line of thought might exist here, especially in light of the connections Lisa posited between literary study and rhetorical theory (addressed in chapter two). Yet what characterized academic writing for Lisa, at first glance, looked like drudgery:

> In terms of writing an actual paper, I have this really bad habit, which I'm willing to admit. I write it once. I read it to make sure it's cohesive and check it a second

time for grammar/spelling, and then I'm done. I don't touch it. I could write it a month in advance, and I won't touch it again because I feel like it's done. I'm finished. So *that* I'm trying to improve upon because you can always improve yourself. I'm trying not to just look at it twice and then leave it alone: 'Oh! It's perfect!' I've been told by teachers, 'Try it again. Look it over. You never know what you missed.' And I'm like, 'OK. I'll try.' But after the second time, I'm like, 'Eh. It's fine. It's fine.' So I want to improve upon that, but [the Writing major] really has helped me look at my own writing. And that's kind of where the academic and, I think, the creative mesh because when I write my own stories, I find myself looking at them to make sure they're grammatically correct or those sorts of things, to see if it's cohesive enough. And I feel like that's academic writing in itself.

What she called "academic writing" appears to operate as practices and convention knowledge that enabled her to "cleanup" her scholarly prose *and* that serviced her creative work. Lisa's remarks appeared to enact what Nancy Welch critiques: a pervasive sense among creative writers of composition as "'functionalist'" and creative writing as a privileged reserve of "pleasure and reward" ("No Apology" 118). Her comments might also have reflected "longstanding historical perceptions of where these fields [composition and creative writing] diverge in the curriculum," a divergence that "labels creative writing as the 'fun' course" (Ritter, "'How'" 92). Teachers' invitations to "[t]ry it again" and to "[l]ook it over" apparently fed into this conception that weds the academic with mechanical correctness. Of course, Kathleen Blake Yancey reminds us that "whatever it is that students *unpack* in [teachers'] responses, it certainly doesn't seem to be what it was we thought we had *packed*" (99). Consequently, teachers need not have meant to define

"academic writing in itself" as usage concerns for Lisa to receive that message or for her to recontextualize her experiences within the readily accessible cultural frame that treats college writing instruction as functional skills.

This issue of instructor feedback on student work (whether critical or creative) also emerged in connection with Writing Studies disciplinary knowledge. Though instructor feedback was addressed in chapter three, it bears revisiting in the context of this discussion about discipline-specific concerns raised by Writing majors. While a comment Lisa received in the past (i.e., "'You never know what you missed'") seemed in the context of her interview to frame revision primarily as editing in order to achieve a standard of correctness, it might *also* contain Nancy Welch's invitation to experience revision as a "restlessness" that asks of a text, "'Something missing, something else?'" (*Getting* 137). Such a question encourages choices not made in a given draft, choices that might make "something else" happen. Jeremiah connected the *something else* in their writing that students might realize as a result of teacher commentary not only to teachers' relational labor, but also to disciplinary knowledge in Writing Studies:

> A lot of the faculty and graduate students who are teaching have a background in composition and know how to name strategies. Instead of looking at a sentence and saying, 'That's a wrong sentence,' they say, 'What you didn't do here was speak with your own voice, or think in simple terms in relation to your audience.' They're able to put into words what's going on in that sentence rather than just saying something is off-register because they work with so many, I don't know, beginner writers or lower-level writers—however you want to label that.

Jeremiah named teachers' "background in composition" as an enabling expertise. He also named their work with introductory-level students and their texts as a valuable source of knowledge

about writing response. Indeed, his carefulness when referring to lower-division students

signaled both a rhetorical sensitivity to the power of labels and an awareness of the ease with

which demeaning terms regularly fall upon students new to the academy. Thus, at least one

student explicitly linked Writing Studies disciplinary knowledge, the importance of teaching and

responding to writing (and FYW at that!), and the question of how Writing majors gain

theoretical awareness about composing. And, recall in chapter two, Jeremiah's significant

attention to creative nonfiction. Like other students addressed in this section, Jeremiah had an

interest in understanding how various writing practices and knowledge about writing operate in

tandem with each other. These integrations, delineations, and rhetorical impasses constitute

important contributions from students to how we might understand the Writing major.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROFESSIONAL WRITING

One widely circulated set of arguments in favor of the Writing major connects it to

writing for workplace and professional purposes. Howard includes professional writing in her

three-part taxonomy of areas for an advanced curriculum. Claiming that Writing majors in

multimodal composing environments gain the ability "to create innovation itself," Joddy Murray

contends that these students are also "better prepared for a changing economy" (215). Such

preparation meets the employment-related concerns of some students discussed in chapters two

and three. Consequently, the Writing major might serve as one attempt to reshape humanities

education "to account for a more professionally-driven student population" (Dick 127). Rebecca

de Wind Mattingly and Patricia Harkin argue that the Writing major enables students "to gain

certification in skills they understand themselves to need to secure employment" (17). More

frankly, they further claim that such a "major is a good idea for multinational capital" because

business needs "workers with the ability to solve problems by writing" (22). Other scholars express caution regarding professional writing as the focus of a Writing major. Moriarty and Giberson warn that programs with such a focus might be "pushed into a supporting role" in the service of other departments (215). Though not embracing it himself, DelliCarpini documents the ambivalence among some literature faculty in his department toward the draw of employability that attends a professional writing-focused undergraduate program (17). When looking at the survey, interview, and writing data from students who participated in this study, an interest in broadly defined professional concerns surfaced. Writing majors themselves can productively contribute to the field's deliberations about how this degree might prepare students for theoretically informed work as writing professionals.

For some students, their motivations for majoring in Writing, as well as their experiences in internship or experiential learning situations, evidenced a framework that might appear to figure writing as a primarily practical pursuit. When students responded to the survey question about their motivations for majoring in Writing, thirty-five Private Research University students chose the answer "to have a range of career prospects." Forty-eight percent (or almost half) of that group listed career concerns as their primary motivation. For the same question, thirty-nine Liberal Arts College students indicated career prospects with forty-eight percent of that group listing it as their secondary motivations. Clearly, many students at both institutions think about post-graduation employment options. Expressing some uncertainty about her future, one Liberal Arts University student remarked, "There is that vague feeling that I'll never get a job." While one Private Research University student commented that there was a lack of effort "preparing students for jobs and internships" and that there was "no sort of career prep," this perception was not generally held at either institution. At Private Research University, sixty-two percent of

survey respondents indicated some level of agreement with the statement, "I am satisfied with the internships and 'hands on' learning opportunities offered by the writing program." Sixty-nine percent of Liberal Arts College respondents noted some level of agreement with the same statement. In both instance, "neutral" accounted for twenty percent of responses. One respondent from Liberal Arts College identified himself as a fifty-year-old man who "needed a change of career" with the Writing major as his "first college degree." Another student from that school named career preparation as one aspect of the Writing major that she valued highly. And, as discussed in chapter two, the writing centers at both study institutions arose in interview and survey comments about internships.

Even as these and other data demonstrated some measure of a practical orientation, they also gestured toward an interest in being *theoretically prepared*, *working* writers. This interest expresses itself alongside a special attention to issues of genre and student internships. One Private Research University survey respondent made this comment regarding internships and "'hands on'" learning: "There is a breadth of genres we explore. It's very diverse." There is, for this respondent, a sense of connection between engaged learning (the kind of learning often associated with "real world" and practical, if not necessarily professional, situations) and theoretical knowledge about—as well as practice with—genre. Tyler, a student who spoke honestly, directly, and frequently about his practical orientation and employment concerns, described a sequence of varied writing assignments in one course and how the affordances of the Writing major benefited his job search:

> In Rhetoric and Spirituality, I got to write definitions and how different terms have played into my life, then writing a research paper, and then after that writing a narrative. That's probably the biggest strength of the major—taking different

subjects and learning how to apply your writing to those different subjects. It's

something that I've been using as an aid in my job search. In lieu of experience,

I've been able to say that I've been in this major that's let me be able to write

about lots of different things in different ways.

What Tyler described is not evidence of the ancient complaint about a vague and content-less

rhetoric that engages freely and superficially with everything, yet substantively with nothing.

Rather, the sequence and its benefits pointed more to a kind of integrative *phronesis*—a concern

for theoretically informed action, for practical wisdom that moved across life domains (i.e.,

school and work). Tyler's attentiveness to rhetorical theory (i.e., the simultaneously practical and

theoretical consideration of what he called "the mechanics of writing") manifested itself in

relationship to internships:

I was still really interested in creative writing. I care more about actually being

able to take what I learn and being able to produce something rather than just

researching things. And so I looked into the Writing major. [. . .] Studying the

mechanics of writing was what really interested me and being able to take what I

learned and apply it to a lot of different things. And also the fact that an internship

was expected for students was the biggest deciding factor. The fact that the

program wanted you to get experience outside of school was something that I

hadn't seen before—at least within the humanities. So again it was that issue of

being able to take your knowledge and use it to do something. That was

something I saw on the writing program that I really didn't see elsewhere in the

humanities.

Tyler's interview brought into focus the interrelationship between conceptual knowledge about writing, composing practice, and situated rhetorical action. Even as Tyler expressed a concern about employment, he also claimed a desire to write creative work, a concern and a desire he actually connected through his focus on "producing something." Other Writing majors also addressed this link between creative writing interests and professional writing preparation in a slightly different way, demonstrating a desire to be theoretically informed *creative writing* and *creative nonfiction writing* professionals.

Within Writing Studies, Creative Writing Studies, and English Studies scholarship, many researchers note that the frames of "theory" and "professional" frequently appear to operate in tension with, or opposition to, writing called "creative." According to Mayers, the field of creative writing actively opposes itself to "'theory'" ("One" 219). Creative writing is often imagined as an endeavor in anti-professionalization, as what D. G. Myers calls "a *dissent* from professionalization" (7; emphasis in the original). Put otherwise, teaching and composing creative writing are not meant to produce academic commodities or impart quantifiable technical knowledge. Rather, they should promote a mode of life (Myers 12). Ritter points out the entrenched distinction among creative writers that figures themselves as artists and not academic professionals ("Professional" 208). However, Adams treats creative writing in *A History of Professional Writing* because of the emergence 1) of creative writing, journalism, and business/technical writing instruction within general advanced composition courses and 2) of more specialized courses in creative writing within English departments.[39] The development of

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[39] Several students at Private Research University, where journalism existed as its own college, sought to distinguish themselves and their Writing major from the project of journalism. This distancing occurred with students who expressed an interest in creative writing as well as those who actively resisted identification as a creative writer. Lisa commented somewhat begrudgingly on the general dominance of journalism in defining how students at Private Research University thought about writing that mattered. Gina said, "I think it's hard [to think broadly about writing] here because all the funding goes to [the College of Journalism]." And Jeremiah made clear that the Writing

courses focused on creative writing during the first half of the twentieth century "established an American tradition, a course type and teaching method," and these courses "would provide a primary training ground" for a particular kind of literacy education (70).

The concern for models that manifested itself within Writing majors' consideration of scholarly and disciplinary issues also surfaced as a feature of how they imagined preparation for life as creative writers. Lisa addressed the value of a creative nonfiction course that helped make explicit how a writer of creative and creative nonfiction texts might pursue publication and establish a career trajectory:

> We actually had [a renowned writer] come and we interviewed him. And that was really cool because he's written for various magazines and he's written books and not all of them have been strictly academic. So when he came and talked to us, I really enjoyed that because I got to see how you can go about writing when it's not research papers or when it's not supposed to be an academic paper. [. . .] I want to eventually become an author. But I can't just major in—authoring. [. . .] So I feel like if I had more preparation like that, where he said, 'You do one piece and then maybe a magazine picks up on it, and then another and then before you know it, you're writing for a bunch of magazines.' And *that* I like because now, I'm like, 'OK, now I know what I have to do.' I'm kind of getting a pathway into what I have to do.

This occasion to hear from a published fiction writer and essayist with a faculty position at Private Research University gave Lisa "a pathway into" what publication might entail and how one might establish a career trajectory. There seemed, though, a separation of publication from

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major was not his second choice to journalism: "It's not that I didn't want to be doing this. It's not because I didn't get into [the College of Journalism]."

the market realities that could make that path difficult to follow. Indeed, even with its emphasis on providing "a pathway" or model that makes a professional life as a creative writer more concrete, Lisa's account appeared to exemplify elements of "star" admiration in English Studies (Shumway) and creative writing, which provides the ideological basis for the pedagogy of emulation that Ritter critiques ("'How'" 84-92). In this instance, Lisa offered no acknowledgement of the fact that a position within an academic institution also supported the guest writer's current work. She focused more on the efforts of the writing, publishing individual. A more thorough understanding of economic, institutional, and ideological forces would help students with an interest in creative writing contextualize stories like the one Lisa presented as well as help them tease out the dynamics behind the desire for identification with some forms of writing work over others.

How Writing majors construct and value identities as writers that combine or exclude varied professional projects appeared to be at the center of issues raised regarding Lisa's recollection. David Franke explains that Writing majors in the SUNY Cortland program "instead of connecting to 'writing' and 'rhetoric,' broadly conceived, instead attached themselves with a passion to certain genres and formed small sub-groups that codified into and confirmed an increasingly restricted writing identity" (119). This process enacted itself in creative writers who desired a personal connection to a technical writing problem, technical writers uncertain about poetry writing, and students unengaged by new media theory (119-20). Brooks, Zhao, and Braniger likewise found that Writing majors might resist instruction that attempts "to move students beyond the narrow sense of identity that seemingly splits creative and professional writers" (41). These disassociations from (certain kinds of) professional or creative writing fueled students' own sense of writerly identity. Mark's provides one manifestation of this

phenomenon. At Liberal Arts College, Mark spoke of how access to models and curricular

opportunities to practice professional writing may not always confirm an interest. Access and

opportunity may, in fact, lead students to disavow an interest (and an attendant identity):

> I've told people I wanted to be a writer (and by this, I always meant "of fiction")
> since second grade, and that desire hasn't really changed. When I first started
> looking at colleges, my plan was to double major in journalism and English and
> pursue either a journalism job or a master's in English so I could teach. I quickly
> realized, however, that I wanted to work on my creative writing, rather than
> journalism, which I'd burned out on high school, and the best way to improve [in
> creative writing] was to major in it, which is why I went to [Liberal Arts College].
> Later I thought I might work in publishing, but an internship at [. . . a] university
> press and my Editing and Publishing class helped me realize that wasn't for me.

In this account, a student's writing education was filled with varied models for writing as a

professional, each of which confirmed for him a primary identity as a creative writer. To have a

sense of one's own investments in writing can be useful, but the early foreclosure on other

possible lines of work seemed to evidence the *over*investment to which Franke and Brooks,

Zhao, and Braniger call attention. Taken together, the narratives and experiences presented in

this section exemplify some of the ways in which students developed writing expertise and

identities in connection with professional preparation.

PUBLIC AND CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Students in this study also demonstrated a concern for writing as a public or civic

enterprise. Writing concerned with public purposes appeared in a few submissions and in

students' comments about texts and classes that mattered to them. This finding aligns with

Moriarty and Giberson's belief that "[c]ivic rhetoric [. . .] has the potential to support vibrant

undergraduate degree programs in rhetoric and writing" (215). Because of this belief, they worry

when many Writing majors programs fail to highlight or "even mention civic rhetoric" (211). In

the present study, Writing majors themselves were not uninterested in what Gerard Hauser calls

the "birthright" of those who study rhetoric: education for civic engagement (52). Indeed,

evidence suggests that students may receive some version of what Brian Jackson desires for the

Writing major: the "*training of a capacity* in the students" for undertaking a "public life" (185;

emphasis in original). Such interests surfaced explicitly and implicitly, and they point to the

ways in which undergraduates might participate in naming and shaping how Writing Studies

scholars think about power and civic writing within the Writing major.

Survey comments from some Writing majors about topics, questions, or issues of interest

to them suggested that politically engaged motivations might inform some of their writing. As

discussed in chapter two, when Private Research University addressed how they extended

writing projects beyond a given course, they tended to name topics, and Liberal Arts College

students generally listed genres. A similar trend emerged when students were asked specifically

to indicate "topics" that held significance for them. Eight survey respondents at Private Research

University named broadly political issues and topics meaningful to them that Writing courses

enabled them to explore. These "topics" (in the language of the question) included immigration

law, "civics," "civic writing," intimate partner violence, gender labels, sexuality, racism,

discrimination, and gay rights. At Liberal Arts College, most respondents either pointed to their

work within particular forms (e.g., flash fiction) or celebrated the relative freedom they found

within the curriculum. One student reported a topical concern with gender and feminism in her

projects. In short, political concerns sometimes appeared in relationship to some Writing majors' general interests.

Students might register political purposes for their writing based on the objectives of a given course. Laura, for example, actually took a Private Research University "civic writing" course in which students "analyzed a lot of nonprofit organization documents. It was really interesting to try to figure out how they got their message across." This course appeared in sympathy with John C. Bean's principles for advanced civic writing courses that support students in "seeking the good": a local focus, close rhetorical analysis, play with different forms, and the avoidance of binary arguments (76-79). According to Laura, analysis of texts produced by local, socially engaged organizations cultivated students' critical capacities. They also composed digital and non-digital multimodal materials for particular groups with socially conscious missions:

> We did one project where we got into groups and were assigned an organization to work with, to help them out and improve their image. My group worked with a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. Another group was working with the same organization and they built the website. My group, we made a twitter for them and a children's book. So we talked a lot about how to get their message across to different audiences and demographics.

In Laura's description, rhetorical analysis and production mutually informed each other. With an attention to varied composing tasks (e.g. creating a social media account and a children's book), Laura highlighted how the course created an opportunity to consider how genre, audience, and purpose connect in ways that enable writers and groups to achieve their goals.

In addition to courses that explicitly focused on civic writing, students' work in other courses sometimes hoped to achieve civic ends or responded to political exigencies. James composed a speech in November 2010 that he hoped would characterize John Boehner's remarks (and the deliberative direction of U.S. politics) following the Republican electoral victories in the U.S. House of Representatives. Written for an Advanced Argument course, James's speech oscillates between promoting what he says hopes for (i.e., an atmosphere of compromise) and partisan complaint about a Democratic agenda. Here's an example:

> Compromise must be made. Democrats had their shot at unchecked power and the results are unsettling. To make our government one of the people, the wishes of the public must be granted. Democrats in the Senate must realize that they must change their course. The White House must see that an indefatigable liberal agenda is not what the people want. Our Founding Fathers promised a government with powers spread throughout, and the American people, in their infinite wisdom, have chosen to call in that promise. In Congress we now have one house Republican and one house Democrat. Compromise is the only way.

Perhaps entering into the persona of a public figure can be a useful imaginative exercise. In so doing, James demonstrates that he accepts (or, at least, comprehends) certain terms upon which politics and political rhetoric take place: asserting a party agenda, claiming a place within a tradition, and demanding opponents' acquiescence to certain demands. While his document explaining the speech employs what might be viewed as a textual understanding of genre, treating it as a set of formal properties, James offers a sense of his awareness of genre's rhetorical, situational nature by identifying some of the differences between a political speech at a partisan rally and one at a press conference. In contrast to the way the course Laura presented

shared elements of Bean's approach, James's texts (the speech and its explanatory statement) engage "big public" concerns that "tend to reproduce [. . .] stock arguments" (Bean 77). I wonder about the value of reproducing, rather than intervening into or transforming, hegemonic discourse. By raising these points, I don't mean to criticize the student work or the course for which it was written. Instead, I seek to recognize the complicated scene of Writing majors' composing as well as to honor students' contributions (and their convictions). Students may find satisfying, as James did, occasions to imagine a particular role for themselves within hegemonic discourse and commonplace views.

By examining texts valued by Writing majors, unexpected and provocative blends of rhetorical practice for political ends may be found. Intriguingly, one student text points to the possibilities of combining two ostensibly opposing ways of engaging in rhetorical-political efforts: using uncivil rhetoric and practicing reconciling spirituality. In a position paper for an international relations and ethics course, Margaret directly engages with an ongoing political debate: the use of torture. Entitled "Torture: No Ground to Stand On, Legal or Moral," her piece begins by describing (in not overly graphic terms) a scene in which a detainee stands for long periods of time in contorted positions amidst disorienting conditions. Margaret argues "that torture is never justifiable, because torture is in defiance with international legal rights and common human morality." Her paper makes absolutist claims with appeals to the fundamentally "nonviolent" nature of humanity. In a display of rhetorical awareness, she acknowledges and responds to potential counterarguments actually made by some constituencies in public debates to support practices of torture. Despite that display, polemic language runs throughout Margaret's text: *impermissible*, *immoral*, and *irrational*. At the same time, some rhetorical scholars remind us of the value of "uncivil" and "unruly" rhetoric that breaks with standard rules

and procedures of decorum (Welch, "Informed"), including when these breaks in convention find

motivation in religious or spiritual commitments (DePalma, Ringer, and Weber). Additionally,

Beth Daniell's argument for Writing Studies to recognize *spiritual power* provide a context for

understanding the potential disciplinary and political dimensions of Margaret's text. Margaret

ultimately defends the efficacy of nonviolence as a means to political ends. A concept she

learned from reading Mohandas Gandhi, "ahimsa" serves as the basis for Margaret's interpretive

stance in the paper. She defines ahimsa as the avoidance of causing physical or mental harm to

any being. In light of this concept, she critiques U.S. militarism and promotes an ethic of

empathy. Margaret writes, "The power of love in the 'War on Terror' should take the shape of

understanding the people who want to hurt others through terrorism." Margaret promotes a

spiritual power that emerges when individuals establish a set of affective, empathetic relations

that might appear counterintuitive. In so doing, spiritual power (which might seem wholly

individual and private) and uncivil rhetoric (which might seem to close down possibilities) may

potentially open rhetorical space for intervening into the dominant political discourse and for

proposing alternative responses to terrorism.[40]

Scholarship in Writing Studies and creative writing helps bring into focus how some

Writing majors also engaged in creative writing that may achieve civic effects. Tim Mayers

argues that creative writing might "promote more active, engaged citizenship among its

students" ("One" 224). Providing a historical perspective, Mary Ann Cain connects creative

writing's expansion during the 1960s and 1970s with the social upheaval of those decades. She

notes that beliefs within creative writing programs aligned with the identity politics of the period.

Specifically, Cain names the belief that cultivating individual voices holds transformative

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[40] Margaret named a variety of religious and political topics about which she has written as meaningful to her. For example, she named "the lack of a place for women in the Christian Bible" and the revolving door between corporations and government agencies.

cultural power (231). Welch critiques the claims of some creative writers to the "'uselessness" of creative texts, arguing for "the dialectic between criticism and creation" ("No Apology" 129). Rhetorical scholars have also examined the rhetorical and political achievements of fictional endeavors (Mattingly 123-62; Adams, *A Group* 170-81). That historical or contemporary creative writing might achieve political effects is not, then, an idea alien to creative writing or Writing Studies scholars.

One example of creative writing with civic implications came from Jane. In recognizing the political potential of a narrative account Jane provided, I rely on Daniell's argument that power is often too narrowly conceived in Writing Studies. Daniell urges an attention to the everyday, to the dynamics of family and friends: "This politics is subtle, often hard for others to recognize" (148). Family history and personal observation served as the ground for a short story Jane discussed during her interview. She chose to carry a copy of that story in her backpack for several days after completing it instead of filing it away. During her interview, Jane commented on her intuitive sense of the creative as connected to the personal. When asked to elaborate, here's what she said:

> I've kept two things in my backpack for the last five days. One of them is a historical fiction. I've done a few projects on this in high school. I did community service for something called Angel Island immigration Station. It was open from 1910 to 1940. It's a very big deal from where I'm from. People have heard about it in San Francisco. But coming to the east coast, seems nobody has heard of it. They don't know what it is. I've done interviews with people who have emigrated here from China. My own grandmother came through Angel Island, which was apparently the west Coast version of Ellis Island. [In this piece], I've tried to

weave in stories of what I've heard from other people into one person's point of view. For example, there was this one part where the mom is telling the daughter a story of how, when she lived in China, they were very poor. There was this river that wasn't clean at all. I learned this story from my auntie, who emigrated from China. And there was something called 'paper names.' It's when people would basically sell their names. They would say to the immigration officials, 'I have ten children.' In fact, though, they only had four and were bringing other people's children to the U.S. My auntie had a paper name and for the longest time she couldn't be her real name. She had to be the name that was bought for her. I heard it from a lot of other people as well. I probably couldn't put it into an essay form, but the piece has historical essay-like qualities to it, and I felt it had poetic sentences in it. So it's weaving all of them together. I'm learning how to work with it.

Essentially, Jane told a living history. She spoke of composing a creative work that explores poverty in China as well as the ingenuity and resourcefulness of her family and others in the face of immigration barriers and restrictions. Even if this account of a student's writing and her family's intersection with a specific history of immigration did not take a form typical of how Writing Studies scholars imagine public writing, it did, as Christian R. Weisser encourages, "highlight the ways in which material forces shape what gets said, who gets heard, and how [. . .] forces have structured public discourse throughout history" (98). Jane seemed engaged in what Morris Young describes as "the process of 'minor re/vision' that intervenes into existing discourses of power, that both acknowledges and rewrites the American Story," a process by which those positioned outside the privileges of the dominant culture "both revise existing

narratives about America to include themselves and offer a re-vision of what America is and can be" (51). For example, Ellis Island certainly operates as a readily accessible image in U.S. cultural history, but Jane found that none of her peers at Liberal Arts College knew about a site important to the history of Asian American immigration. She used this readily accessible point of reference to contextualize the historical weight, cultural importance, and personal significance of Angel Island. While connecting Angel Island to Ellis Island might work to elide differences, it created space for Jane to rewrite the ideologically charged discourse of citizenship that is part of "the American Story." Additionally, the strategy Jane recalled, that of employing paper names to enable immigration to the U.S., required a complex system of rhetorical, literate, and material practices. In her representation of this collective experience, Jane sought to write a piece that (returning to the issue she raised of how the creative and the personal might interrelate) wrote her family and herself into U.S. cultural memory and—more immediately—that responded to the lack of historical awareness she encountered among her peers.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to take established scholarship and student discourse as sources by which to explore a broad notion of undergraduate participation and contribution within the Writing major. As I insist throughout this dissertation, the *Writing major* should not be taken as a synonymous with institutional curricula and official documents. Attention to students within a program is necessary. Student-generated data highlight the potential opportunities for, and limits of, literacy education that aims (as many Writing major programs do) for various combinations of academic, creative writing, and nonfiction writing for scholarly, professional, and political purposes. Like one of the students in Harrington and

Curtis's study, some participants in this research showed themselves "to be composing in a fully public medium and with political concern, without giving up the affective dimension of" their identities or commitments (147). Indeed, the students in this study and my representations of them are enmeshed with the politics of literacy. In this regard, I believe that they ultimately affirm Howard's claim that an advanced curriculum "asserts presence, not absence, for writing pedagogy" because "instruction in writing responds not to the absence of students' skills but to the presence of expertise that can be acquired through instruction" ("History" xxii). That presence may encourage an appetite for theory at the same time that students seek professional preparation. Students who have committed themselves to the study of writing have something to say to us—to professional scholars. They can contribute to our conversations about our work and about theirs. This chapter strived to listen to and articulate those contributions.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Implications: What's Next for the Writing Major?

Throughout this dissertation, I promote a vision of students as rhetorical subjects with the potential to usefully contribute to the field in a variety of ways. I have tried to promote this vision by accounting for some of the experiences reported by students in two different Writing major programs. Ultimately, my aim is to encourage a wholehearted embrace of the progressive possibilities that follow from the growth of the Writing major and from conceptualizations of undergraduates as contributing participants to goals widely held within Writing Studies. Toward that aim, chapter one considered the function of students in Writing major scholarship and its genealogical predecessors. Chapter two illustrated the unpredictable and idiosyncratic responses students at the two study institutions mobilized within the context of common curricular experiences, reinforcing the singular nature of each student's uptake within a program. Given the value many students placed on their relationships with teachers, chapter three engaged with student discourse as a way 1) to ameliorate the totalizing force of theoretical critiques that anticipated a diminished role for teaching within Writing Studies if the field's practitioners pursued disciplinarity and 2) to suggest the partial vindication of claims that argue for the Writing major as a means for promoting writing teacher's professional expertise. Chapter four argued for a broad understanding of undergraduate contribution to Writing Studies, an understanding that includes writing (in nonfiction, critical, or creative forms) for scholarly, professional, and civic purposes.

To bring into focus some of the stakes of the current study, as well as the ways in which I am implicated in the dynamics critiqued throughout this dissertation, I turn to a story from my own teaching and writing experiences. This story brings home for me the tensions that can abide at the intersections of scholarly writing, disciplinary commitments, and teaching practice. During

the 2013 spring academic term, I taught a general education, required, sophomore-level writing course that emphasized the rhetorical nature of research. I approached the course from a writing-about-writing standpoint. For a class session during the second week of the term, students read Margaret Kantz's article "Helping Students Use Textual Sources Persuasively." That essay consistently engages students in productive thinking about academic writing as a rhetorical enterprise and research as more than reporting disparate pieces of self-evident information. It became a point of entry for students to reflect on their own experiences as researchers and writers. For this class meeting, I wanted to do something that would complement our discussion of Kantz's piece and reinforce the notion of academic writing as a situated activity among actual human beings as opposed to disembodied specters. I shared copies of the bibliography of my article, "Unpredictable Encounters," published just a few weeks prior to that class meeting. Those citations to sources written by scholars I personally knew were bolded. After very briefly talking through my relationships with some of the scholars whose work I drew on (e.g., one recently sent me news of his daughter's birth, another posted political links on Facebook that I "liked," yet another and I share an affinity for Lady Gaga, and so on), I prompted students to consider those occasions when they wrote for individuals or groups they personally cared about. In general, that personal investment did not connect to their writing for school purposes even when their writing assignments in high school received high marks. For students, this prompting became a moment for imagining an "academic audience" as "real people." For me, it offered a different revelation about my article.

In writing that piece, I referred to the students whose texts I discussed by their given names (i.e., Ryan Graham and Lauren Spink) at their request, using their surnames (i.e., Graham and Spink) for subsequent references after their initial introduction. This practice was inspired by

work in the field that calls for the positioning of students as agents who make knowledge about writing and whose work can be cited through standard academic conventions (Robillard). Those calls also inform the hope of this dissertation: for greater inclusion of students in the making of knowledge about the Writing major. However, in that moment of going through my bibliography with students in that spring course, I realized that I did not include Spink's or Graham's essays in that list of references. Apparently, at no time during the drafting, revising, or copyediting processes did it occur to me that Graham and Spink were absent from the bibliography—even after copyeditors' queries about different issues sent me back into the reference list. Of course, the journal's editorial team also didn't question my inconsistent application of my stated intention to follow citation conventions acknowledging academic authorship with regard to undergraduate texts. So even in the context of a commitment to scholarly writing practices that promote undergraduate authorship and that acknowledge undergraduates' contributive potential within Writing Studies, it's entirely possible to realize that commitment incompletely.

In this closing chapter, I first highlight the implications of this research for the making of knowledge in Writing Studies. I then turn to implications for pedagogy. As the story that opens this chapter demonstrates, my work has limits. Thus, I also acknowledge some of the limitations of this current project and close by suggesting lines of inquiry for future research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR WRITING STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP

The findings of the present study and the discussion of the relevant literature suggest the following three implications for scholarly practice within Writing Studies. I derive these implications from my ongoing efforts to negotiate 1) my need to make generalizable knowledge as a professional scholar, 2) my debt to other scholars for their work to build the field and the

Writing major, and 3) my belief in the capacity of specific students to shape knowledge and practice within Writing Studies.

"The Writing Major" as Official and Student Negotiations: Efforts to create constructive taxonomies that "map" existing trends among Writing major programs constitute important Writing Studies scholarship (DelliCarpini; Balzhiser and McLeod; Campbell and Jacobs). Likewise, ongoing service to the profession in this vein includes work by the CCCC Committee on the Major in Writing and Rhetoric to establish a dynamic database of Writing major programs. Given that such efforts document the specifics of particular programs, identify trends across curricula, and rely on programmatic documents and administrator/teacher accounts, such projects resonate with the tradition of survey and document review research about advanced composition that occurred the 1980s and 1990s. This connection should not necessarily suggest a renewal of the sort of definitional hunger regarding the Writing major that I suggested in chapter one exists within some advanced composition scholarship. However, as we generalize about Writing major programs—and whether generalizations stem from, or feed into, conversations about disciplinarity (Campbell and Jacobs 277-79) or standardizing Writing major curricula (Balzhiser and McLeod 425-30)—we should find ways to situate student voices and contributions within or alongside such efforts.

As scholarly and service initiatives to chart the contours of the contemporary Writing major continue, and as they help us understand the terrain of the Writing major at the level of official curricula and institutional self-reports, we should also imagine how student discourse might affirm and/or complicate scholars' categories and assertions. For example, while Deborah Balzhiser and Susan McLeod's analytic labels of "liberal arts" and "professional/rhetorical"

seem to accurately represent a number of programs, do these distinctions hold or blur when examined from the standpoint of students' concerns, interests, and accounts? This dissertation found that "professional/rhetorical" concerns with writing theory and professional writing can surface among students in a "liberal arts" program. Likewise, "liberal arts" interests in the creative elements of writing can emerge among "professional/rhetorical" students. While Dominic DelliCarpini argues for a curriculum-based taxonomy of Writing major programs that includes "practical," "liberal arts," and "hybrid," he also urges close attention to the experiences and expectations of students. He notes that teachers must confront the ways in which student interests may differ from instructors' assumptions about their interests in surprisingly productive ways. Might something similar happen when scholarly constructions that seek to understand the state of "the Writing major" take into account student discourse?

Certain findings in this dissertation suggest how scholarly constructions that attempt to provide broad sketches of the Writing major may be affirmed by the inclusion of student-generated data. In the present study, clear patterns that are specific to one or the other site emerged from students' comments and their writing. Since my sample is so small, it's not possible to say whether these trends derive from curriculum types (e.g., liberal arts or professional/rhetorical), institution types (e.g., research university or liberal arts college), something entirely specific to a particular program, or any combination of these factors. However, these trends present an occasion for thinking about how student discourse fits within constructs such as the curricular categories forwarded by Balzhiser and McLeod. For example, the preponderance of fictional texts among those documents submitted from Liberals Arts College (where the curriculum offers a range of courses in creative writing) contrasts with the absences of such texts from Private Research University (where creative writing courses are not

offered by the Writing Program). This finding speaks to students' labors within a curriculum, and it suggests that students in a certain "type" of Writing major (e.g., "liberal arts") may evidence practices, concerns, and values that align with the typologies scholars construct based on official documents. In other words, scholarship that represents broad trends in curricula may encompass—or provide a way to think about—dynamics occurring at the level of student discourse.

While student discourse may confirm existing, productive generalizations about developments in the Writing major from the standpoint of official documents, student texts and experiences may also complicate such constructs. Just as it is a truism that each program is a local enterprise, student writing and self-reports may also point to 1) a trend not so easily covered by existing curricular categories and 2) the contextual specificity of students' composing and learning. For instance, the value students placed on creative writing production at Liberal Arts College fits within the "liberal arts" model of the Writing major. However, as I discussed in chapter four, students' production of—and discourse about—creative writing may involve scholarly, professional, or civic purposes. Are these wide-ranging purposes for composing in literary forms captured by a broad category that identifies programs with an emphasis or track in creative writing as "liberal arts"? To include these kinds of student-generated data in conversations about Writing major trends would seem to introduce new questions about how and why we construct broad frameworks for thinking about the Writing major. Such data from students also reinforce the particularity of each Writing major program. Private Research University's Writing Program offered a few creative nonfiction course options, but creative writing courses were held within the English department, which had an undergraduate creative writing track and a graduate MFA program. Consequently, as the broad charting of the Writing

major continues (often for the purpose of shaping the future of the Writing major), placing student discourse within the matrix of sources used in these charts may encourage us to keep generalizations tentative and to think about the context of each program, including the concrete experiences of its students.

If the work of generating metadata (e.g., descriptive categories for Writing major programs) or general "maps" of the Writing major is important to the field and it continues as a means to encourage future developments in curricular programming, then this work should include projects based in part on student discourse. The usefulness of such an approach may be that students' conscious articulation (or lack of articulation) of certain learning, experiences, or values within one kind of program (or across programs) encourages programs with different or similar emphases to understand their own potential affordances as well as areas for cross-talk with other programs. In other words, what students say about their work, capabilities, or experiences could bring into focus what different curricular emphases achieve and what areas of potential concern might span across different kinds of Writing major programs. For example, Private Research University students' found rhetorical analysis a useful way to inquire into topics of deeply felt interest to them. Liberal Arts College students expressed a pervasive interest in genre forms and knowledge, which seemed consonant with the program's publicly stated concerns. In both programs, FYW and upper-division course descriptions positioned academic researched as a situated and rhetorical undertaking. Some students at both institutions, however, described a much more mechanical and procedural understanding of academic research. My research leads me to suggest that with regard to the production of knowledge about the Writing major we should remember that close attention to the particulars of student discourse could bring into focus student/curricular convergences, as well as divergences, which provide useful points

for programmatic reflection and disciplinary inquiry.

In short, "the Writing major" or "the major in Writing" should not be conceived as synonymous with curricula. Similar to the way in which Susan Miller articulates the "subject of composition" as simultaneously the course's content and the personhood it seeks to produce, the Writing major is student and structure, individual and institution. To complement the robust array of teaching and program representations and meta-representations (e.g., practical, liberal arts, professional/rhetorical, hybrid, etc.), an increased attention to the student subject of the Writing major would help the field further grapple with the complex realities of designing Writing major programs as well as teaching and learning within them.

Theoretical Critique, Disciplinarity, and Teaching: Writing Studies scholars rightly celebrate the advent and growth of the Writing major. The possibilities the Writing major presents for teaching, research, and advocacy on behalf of a rhetorically oriented vision of literacy seem astonishing. However, the Writing major exists within institutions and within a long history of practices that implicate literacy instruction in a hegemonic project that sustains social and cultural hierarchies. Consequently, it serves us well to acknowledge and account for those dynamics within our knowledge-making practices as they pertain to the Writing major.

Theoretical critique of the sort Susan Miller undertakes and upon which I rely (especially as articulated in chapter one) is productive because it highlights the constraints of a given development. In this dissertation, theoretical critique enables a consideration of the limits and affordances of the last thirty years of scholarship within a historical landscape that includes various formations of advanced literacy instruction in the U.S.: the advanced composition *course*, the advanced Writing *curriculum*, and the Writing *major*. Without overstating the reach

of either the textual or rhetorical elements within the Writing major and its predecessors, it is useful to acknowledge the potential interplay of both tendencies within this scholarship. The critical lens of textual/rhetorical, derived from Miller's analytic of the textual carnival, also provided a productive way in which to consider the operations of student's own discourse within the contemporary Writing major.

At the same time, within theoretical critique, the temptation to make totalizing statements—as well as the risk of losing some measure of nuance in representing the practices and situations under analysis—is strong. Student experiences and learning—and the effects of those experiences and learning—certainly exceed accounts offered in any scholarly representation. Certainly, teacher-scholars who expend the time and energy to engage in pedagogical and curricular scholarship care about students, programs, and literacy. While the lacunae documented in this dissertation with regard to the presence/absence of student voices should be understood as a challenge to the field as we move forward, it should not be understood as diminishing the accomplishments and commitments of earlier scholars in this area.

Issues of Writing Studies' disciplinarity thoroughly saturate scholarship about the Writing major. Many Writing major programs are located within English departments, and literature colleagues, as they are depicted within some instances of that scholarship, create problems for program builders (Andersen; Langstraat, Palmquist, and Kiefer; Lowe and Macauley). However, the complicated dynamics that attend the Writing major come also come from within Writing Studies' own history and practices—such as the operations of the textual carnival—which practitioners experience in diverse ways. Writing Studies professionalization through disciplinary development, including designing and promoting Writing major programs, achieves many good outcomes. Still, at various moments, this dissertation acknowledges the

problems that can attend the fruits of disciplinarity. For example, both David Beard and Richard Bullock rightly warn about the risks of disciplinary professionalization and of proliferating undergraduate programs of study. They issue considered checks against unreflective programmatic expansion grounded in desires divorced from clear and beneficial outcomes for faculty and students. Likewise, Bruce Horner's concern about the diminished importance of teaching to Writing Studies in the context of disciplinary professionalization presents another well-considered warning to the field.

Even as these concerns are legitimate, the findings presented in this dissertation suggest that students in Writing major programs value both the teaching *of* writing and the disciplinary/professional knowledge *about* writing that instructors share with them. Students in this study placed a high premium on their interactions with teachers; they found meaningful relationships that occurred inside and outside the classroom. These interactions between teachers and students and the privileged place they hold in some students' accounts bring into focus how students themselves experience the work of teachers as important within the professional accomplishment of the Writing major. While Writing Studies need not be understood as a "teaching subject" (to invoke Joseph Harris), the pursuit of disciplinarity likewise need not be understood, as some have worried, as a pursuit that re-entrenches the field within traditional academic dichotomies that reduce the centrality of teaching to the field. Within the context of undergraduate Writing major programs that promote specialized and professional expertise, the discourse of students appears to blur the hard distinctions between disciplinarity/professional expertise and teaching, between writing as practices and writing as declarative knowledge. In other words, student discourse within the Writing major points to the productive interaction of those pedagogical activities traditionally associated with composition *and* the academic

professionalization of Writing Studies.

Define Consequences and Circulation Broadly: While Miller forcefully and insightfully argues that composition as generally taught contains the student text and makes it "inconsequential," this study encourages a capacious notion of consequences as well as contribution and circulation even when the written results are contained within the classroom. Writing Studies scholars who champion undergraduate research as a means to encourage student participation within the discipline also promote several means of distributing and disseminating the results of student research: undergraduate publication, institutional celebrations of student writing, and presentation at conferences. In this way, student writing achieves consequences both for the student and for the discipline by showcasing students' capabilities. Thus, student-scholars and teacher-scholars feed a discourse that argues affirmatively for the value of both writing pedagogy *and* writing students. However, as we continue to develop Writing major programs, they are not always—or even generally—going to be "Writing Studies" degrees. They are, as it has become a truism to say, locally negotiated enterprises that may evidence greater or lesser degrees of influence from Writing Studies, English Studies, or creative writing. As a result, it can be useful for those of us who study the Writing major to consider issues of consequence, contribution, circulation, and context in terms that fit broadly within or across these varied academic endeavors.

In scholarship about the Writing major, we should not dismiss the consequences that even seemingly limited and classroom-based texts and activities might achieve. Some scholars writing about undergraduate research address the positive consequences of writing research for students in their own lives and learning experiences (DelliCarpini and Crimmins; Greer "Nontraditional";

Wardle and Downs). Jane Greer encourages us to broadly imagine circulation and consequences, including forms that sometimes escape traditional valuing systems in the academy that privilege more public displays with exchange value. For example, Greer arranges for former students to conduct presentations on research practices to current students ("Nontraditional" 39-44). Not to suggest that student discourse matters in a privileged way above disciplinary discourse, but the writing and comments of students teach us as practitioners within a field and as individual instructors. Instructors learn constantly from students. This learning informs our teaching, influencing our engagements with students. The impact of classroom work might be contained, small, and local, but it matters nonetheless. It has consequences. These consequences seem connected to Greer's argument for the value of intimacy in any accounting of the impact of pedagogical experiences that involve students in the making of contributions to the discipline ("Editor's" 1-2). This intimacy is also involved when teachers and programs support student writing that seeks to make civic and professional, as well as scholarly, contributions. Whether circulation of these texts extends widely or remains within the classroom, the consequences texts and relationships achieve for students and teachers can work to cultivate students' rhetorical preparedness for a range of future writing situations and to promote a rhetorical vision of literacy. Scholars can strive to represent these issues through our written work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY

This dissertation has the following six pedagogical implications. These implications stem from my sense of the rhetorical promise demonstrated by students' survey, interview, and written data. The suggestions I make derive from, and build on, the rich literacy education students' responses imply already exists within the two study programs. In particular, these

recommendations might work to further inculcate among students 1) the value of Writing

Studies' knowledge and 2) a sense of instructors' as professional experts. Hopefully these goals

might be achieved while also encouraging students' efforts to understand the connections—and

delineations—among academic, creative, and nonfiction forms composed for academic, civic,

and professional purposes.

Make Professional Expertise Explicit: In chapter three, I wondered about the extent to which

students understood teachers' efforts as exercises in professional judgment instead of as evidence

of teachers' innate dispositions. To address this potential tension in Writing majors' conceptions

of teachers' work, instructors can make disciplinary values and professional experience explicit

to students. Whether the majority of the expertise within a program derives from Writing

Studies, English Studies, Creative Writing Studies, or a combination of these traditions, it seems

important to ensure that students within a Writing major understand that pedagogical

and programmatic practices involve certain commitments that are not universal to all programs

or solely based on teacher preferences. In short, without a framework that situates teachers'

activities within a context of professional knowledge, it may be difficult for students to

understand teachers' labor as something more than the accomplishments of personalities.

I'm certain that most teachers, including those in this study, locate their authority and

their pedagogical practice in sources other than their own subjectivity. At the same time, the

language most readily accessible to some students who described teachers' work on their behalf

often included that of personality: helpful (Gail), lovely (Mark), and nice (Gina). Of course,

these characterizations also appeared in concert with descriptions of activities that indicated an

awareness of a teacher's position as a writing specialist. Teachers might increase that awareness

by providing students the language to articulate what teachers do and why they do it. Such a goal is desirable because it works not just to acknowledge the professional status of teachers, but also to promote a rhetorical vision of literacy by positioning writing as a subject of specialized inquiry and instruction. In a classroom, encouraging this kind of meta-awareness of teachers' work might take the form of occasionally explaining to students the research, tradition, and experience behind a set of practices: Why does a teacher comment in a certain way? Why are workshops structured as they are? What purposes do disciplinary or theoretical readings serve?

This approach, however, might come up against ingrained cultural attitudes that expect teachers, especially "English" teachers, to "care" about students. Even if standard pedagogical practices (e.g., individualized response to student work, classroom discussion, peer review, and out-of-class conferences) point to teachers' exercise of professional judgment, students may well view these activities through a lens that frames them as individual efforts that reflect a particular kind of personality. Perennial lay (i.e., non-professional) framings of teachers' work would seem an issue of potential concern to those scholars who worry about the gendered problems that attend the high valuation of pedagogy as interpersonal practices laden with a discourse of "care" (Ritter, "'Ladies'") *as well as* to those scholars who champion intimacy within Writing Studies (Greer, "Editor's"; Newkirk). Why such framings would concern the former group is clear. Regarding the latter group, in order to promote the vision of writing instruction they hold, it would seem important that students (and other stakeholders) understand the professional commitments and specialized knowledge an intimate discipline requires. In other words, while I do feel the draw toward an intimate Writing Studies, I'm not interested in students recognizing me primarily as a "nice" person who they understand as "caring" about them. My hope is that they would recognize me as an expert engaged in a professional project made incarnate through

intimate practices. This insistence on students' apprehension of intimate practices as stemming from professional investments is not simply an issue of desiring status beyond the warm regards of students. Rather, my insistence stems from a desire to ensure that teachers and programs themselves get to deliver the curriculum they want at introductory and advanced levels without other agents intervening into pedagogical activities or curricular plans that might be perceived as easily malleable (or dispensable) because they're apparently only about being personable or kind.

Metacognitive Reflection and Disciplinary Concepts: Given that teachers might promote meta-awareness among students regarding instructors' activities, teachers might likewise encourage students to increased reflexivity about their own learning and writing. Writing Studies scholars promote the value of reflection as a means to enhance student learning (Yancey, *Reflection*). Even as Rebecca S. Nowacek suggests restraint with regard to claims for the value of metacognitive reflection as a practice that promotes learning transfer, she acknowledges it a resource (142). Students in this study pointed to the potential usefulness of metacognitive reflection and to the role disciplinary concepts might play in realizing the potential of such reflection. For example, Gail's discussion of her increasing awareness of what constitutes a personal essay, and what her writing might accomplish through that form, indicated her growing understanding of that genre. Her comments also spoke to how a student's conscious reflection on her efforts might be aided through the acquisition a professional language that helps students articulate those efforts. In this case, some knowledge about genre might be appropriate. Also at Liberal Arts College, by trying to conceptualize academic researched writing in terms of fictional narrative writing, Jennifer pointed to an interest in self-aware transfer activity. She consciously

took knowledge from one composing domain and applied it to another. If instructed in how to undertake pointed reflection on that act of transfer in relationship to the process and the final product, then Jennifer might more fully understand how and why that transfer strategy might have worked or failed in given instances.

An area in which interview participants demonstrated a keen sense of metacognitive awareness included their reflections on how their identities connected to their work as Writing majors. Jane addressed her writing about Chinese immigration in connection with her family history. Jeremiah made queerness central to much of his work. For some students, these identity matters manifested in terms of *writing* identities. Margaret was a politically engaged writer. Mark was a fiction writer. Tyler was a marketable and ethical working writer. Writing identity is also area in which students engaged in practices similar to what Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi call "not-talk": when students access prior knowledge about genre in a new situation in order to describe what an assignment is *not* asking them do. This kind of definition by negation surfaced for participants in the present study in relationship to the ways students described their identities as writers and Writing majors. Jeremiah was *not* creative writer. Gail was *not* primarily a writer of scholarly treatments. Gina, Jeremiah, and Lisa all talked about how they were *not* journalists-in-training. Given that Private Research University had a separate College of Journalism, institutional location and culture clearly play a role in shaping students' sense of writing identity as they move through a program. Teachers might support such reflection by students on their various identities (those they bring with them to college and those they acquire as college students) in relationship to their understanding of the Writing major through informal writing assignments, class discussion, or a portfolio project.

Value of Remediation Assignments and Portfolio Projects: As students may engage in ongoing reflection supported by their acquisition of rhetorical vocabulary or specialized terminology, the current research also suggests the potential usefulness of remediation assignments that prompt students to reflection on specific choices they make. In a remediation sequence, students take a writing project composed in one form for a particular purpose and reimagine it in some way. Students at Liberal Arts College addressed their ability to carry projects beyond a given course through the process of reimagining it in a different genre. At Private Research University, some students highlighted as an accomplishment of the Writing major their theoretical and practical knowledge of genre as a dynamic entity. Explicitly making the reconceptualization of a previous project part of a course (or courses) could invite students to more conscious reflection on how they accomplish this kind of work and the ways in which genre, audience, context, and purpose all interact. Teachers could explore with students how they make choices about what writing projects to revisit, what new forms they want practice, or why an audience might need their remediated project.

Another way to approach the kind of work described here might be to engage students in the construction of writing portfolios or electronic portfolios. Balzhiser and McLeod argue that a portfolio, especially as part of a capstone experience within a Writing major, "provide[s] students with a way of pulling together all that they have learned and applying it in some demonstrable way" (428). In a hardcopy portfolio or an e-portfolio, with a particular purpose and audience in mind, students might decide on the pieces of their work they want to showcase and frame through additional explication. Through such a venue, students can imagine the "afterlife" of a piece and offer projections of what might come next for a "finished" text. They might consider what writing would follow as a consequence of their completed work. To ask that

students explain these kinds of choices or articulate these plans would further their reflective thinking, thinking that might be productively aided by employing the rhetorical/theoretical concepts and terminology they've learned.

Roles of Reading: The research presented in this dissertation supports careful consideration of the multiple *roles* of reading within the Writing major. In some ways, these considerations are similar to what a FYW teacher might confront. Readings may serve as a set of content and ideas instructors want students to understand. They may also provide implicit or explicit models for student writing. At Liberal Arts College, Jennifer spoke to the value of course readings as instructional devices that help teach students "the theory behind writing" and the kinds of issues they might raise when responding to peer writing in workshop-intensive courses. At Private Research University, both Jeremiah and Gina addressed how reading model texts and theoretical texts played into their own writing. While Lisa Langstraat, Mike Palmquist, and Kate Kiefer note that their writing internship courses needed more content (that is, readings) to make the courses credit bearing in the eyes of their literature colleagues, assigning reading within Writing major courses is not about acquiescing to the demands literature faculty. It's also not necessarily about asserting Writing Studies' disciplinary status and thrusting it upon undergraduates. Course texts work to generate frameworks that can provide a context for students' rhetorical production and learning transfer. Students may well be drawn to a Writing major because writing is an area in which they've been encouraged or achieved success is the past. However, students enroll in an institution and select a major, in part, because a school or program offers them opportunities to gain new competencies, practice new techniques, and learn new concepts within a particular area.

Teachers' deliberations about readings include both the purpose and timing of an assigned reading. Texts assigned or recommended to students at different points in a course may support students' ability to acquire and apply particular competencies, techniques, or concepts. For example, asking students to read a theoretical text early in a term may establish a foundational-yet-flexible rhetorical vocabulary for students, a vocabulary that continues to develop throughout the term and throughout their program of study. Alternatively, to provide an opportunity for invention or reflection, teachers may assign a new (or revisit an earlier assigned) text that models those features teachers would like to see students experiment with as they draft or revise a project.

The Role of Secondary and Primary Research: The preceding concerns related to what kinds of assignments, reading, and reflection teachers might sponsor all relate to the issue of how to situate and facilitate students' research activities. Students' rhetorical production across all those domains named in chapter four as potential areas for student contributions (i.e., scholarly, professional, and civic) benefit from informed research. Study participants' explicit and implicit comments about research suggest instructional opportunities in this area. For example, Margaret acknowledged that her quotation-mining approach to secondary research went without comment from teachers, so she felt no reason to pursue alternative modes of engaging with sources. Jennifer acknowledged the importance of research activity even as she expressed anxiety about accomplishing her goals related to researched writing. One finding from the Citation Project shows that FYW students tend to make use of a range of sources that include books and peer-reviewed journal articles, not only internet sources (Jamieson and Howard). This finding suggests FYW students' willingness to receive—and respond to!—instruction with regard to

negotiating, collecting, and using available materials. What research processes or process revisions might the Writing major support among advanced students? In light of the preceding discussion of reflection, students might be encouraged to engage in guided reflection before, during, and after their source selection. Consequently, students' expectations of secondary research, and of source use, can be put up for examination and for potential revision. Given my comments on readings, teachers supporting students' research might assign texts that contextualize and make explicit professional and student research processes and projects: articles from *Young Scholars in Writing* could help students see what research projects are possible and pieces in professional journals like *College Composition and Communication* would show students what ongoing conversations they might enter into. Moreover, webtexts in the online, rhetoric-oriented magazine *Harlot* might help students imagine alterative forms for the presentation of researched inquiry.

Other participants in the present study pointed to what I would frame as issues of primary research and research ethics and did so in ways that connect with concerns I addressed regarding assignments and identity. Jane's comments on her short story about immigration to the U.S. from China suggested an interest in not just "personal" experience, but *research* activity that brings into focus the intersections of historical events, political concerns, and personal connections. Her story drew on accounts from family members as well as her own observations at Angel Island Immigration Station. These sources imply the importance of encouraging students to engage in 1) primary research (e.g., oral history-style interviews) and 2) reflection on the ethics of incorporating others' experiences and stories into creative, academic, and/or nonfiction writing. All these points raise the question of how assignments throughout a Writing major program use reading, reflection, and research to help students undertake projects that connect with personal,

political, social, historical, or other interests they hold.

Possible Connections with Writing-about-Writing: It would seem natural to find connections between writing-about-writing (WAW) FYW curricula and the increasing disciplinarity of Writing Studies. As an expression of that increasing disciplinarity, which further establishes Writing Studies as an academic field like biology or history, the Writing major might be seen as evidence in an argument for a WAW curriculum. Perhaps counterintuitively, my research leads me to suggest that it doesn't necessarily follow that the increasing number of Writing majors will or should lead to the spread of WAW approaches to FYW. We could certainly create WAW FYW programs and impress upon students our disciplinary expertise. At the same time that disciplinary concepts and readings may produce desirable pedagogical outcomes within the Writing major and within FYW, such findings fail to achieve the status of an effective warrant for the far-reaching and wholesale transformation of universal FYW into WAW. Certainly, WAW may position students in ways that prepare them as contributing participants in Writing Studies. And yet, the primary contributions for which WAW FYW would seem to prepare students are scholarly/disciplinary in nature, which acknowledges only one of the three potential domains explored in chapter four. Of course, one can argue, as I did in chapter four and as advocates of WAW have, that this set of scholarly undergraduate contributions are implicated in the politics of literacy and the politics of the university. Perhaps one of the assignments in such a course might include writing for civic purposes as defined by students and teachers in the context of the local situation: university, city, or region.[41] Or, more generally, teachers might create an assignment that blends genre analysis and production, allowing students to define the form and

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[41] Readers will recall that Laura described a course in civic writing at Private Research, which I discussed in chapter four.

audience for a course project (i.e., their contribution).

Every research project contains limitations. This dissertation is no exception. In particular, the number, and kind, of institutions researched limit the present study. Also, as indicated by the story that opens this chapter, my previous work engages unevenly with an agenda to position students as agents who make contributions to Writing Studies. To extend on that story, I consider how the representation practices in this dissertation point to the tensions that can attend efforts to position students as contributive participants in Writing Studies.

Institutional and Curricular Contexts: This study is limited by the institutional configurations and curricular emphases of the programs studied. The two programs in the current study were independent Writing programs. Both programs existed within private, non-religious institutions. Since the two programs both operate with a relatively high degree of autonomy given their independence from departments of English (i.e., literary study), they may provide students with experiences different from programs within English departments. My study does not have any point of reference to consider those potential differences. Questions of identity and the negotiation of official and student consciousness may also be different in the context of religious institutions. For example, I could imagine a student in a Writing major program at a Jesuit institution identifying strongly with its social justice mission or with its openness to an intellectual-spiritual fusion. While Writing majors in the intuitional locations included in this study provided useful information about student concerns and contributions, many other types of institutions offer Writing majors with different curricular emphases, including public institutions

as well as religious institutions. As a result, the data and claims of this dissertation don't engage with the wide range of institutional contexts that house Writing major programs.

The programs studied offered different curricular emphases. While both have courses that address writing for workplace purposes, and Liberal Arts College has a "professional writing" concentration, neither program is a dedicated "professional writing" major (of which there are many across the U.S.). However, the respondents and interviewees who participated in this study did not speak at length to those courses traditionally defined as "professional writing." A few students, as discussed in chapter four, addressed internship experiences and some framed their professional interests as connected to fiction writing. Given the curricular emphases of the study programs and the focus of students' responses, this dissertation fails to adequately treat students whose dedicated program of study might be labeled "professional writing."[42]

Practices that Indicate Student Authorship: This dissertation demonstrates an uneven employment of practices related to establishing student authorship. For example, even though the identification of specific biographical traits of an author or contextual information about a text can be useful, the author-function of texts depends not on these details. While a literary scholar interested in John Keats might note when in his career a particular poem was written, or a composition researcher might indicate the institutional affiliation of a scholar she cites, these details generally are not necessary in they way they are considered to be when citing students. Student discourse (comments and texts) functions as the result of a particular pedagogy or curriculum (Robillard). Consequently, if someone were to cite an article of mine, it would be odd for him to write, "Geiger, a junior scholar emerging from Syracuse University, argues," and it

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[42] However, as described in the methods section of chapter one, I tried to include two professional writing programs within English departments at state universities. Response rates, though, yielded inadequate data for discussion in this dissertation.

would be odd in ways it likely is not when I write, "Jeremiah, a Private Research University senior, said." These concerns offer no easy resolution, but they operate as a challenge to constantly put practices into dialogue with theoretical commitments.

The students in this study are identified by pseudonyms. They are capable subjects who are learning rhetorical theory, writing political speeches, aspiring to be fiction writers and poets, and tutoring students in writing centers. And yet, through the practice of pseudonymous citation that allowed students and myself to engage in frank discussion of the institutions under consideration, I have stripped them of the possibility of receiving credit for their experiences and texts as represented in this dissertation. In this sense, my work is implicated in the very problem of citing students examined in chapter one. We are in a complicated moment in terms of the status of the student subject of Writing Studies, a moment in which slippages—between abstract pedagogy and embodied teaching labor, between students-as-contributors and students-as-research-participants, between the textual and the rhetorical—will abound.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The growth of Writing major programs will continue. New opportunities for research proliferate. Specifically, this dissertation encourages future research that focuses on students and their discourse. As Lillian Bridwell-Bowles invokes Gloria E. Anzaldúa in her discussion of how feminist discourse offers tools for transforming the rhetorical conventions of academic writing and increasing student authorship potential (359, 366), I turn to Cherríe Moraga and Anzaldúa for a metaphor that might guide future research on the Writing major. If theoretical treatments of advanced composition, as I argued in chapter one, generally function as theory "on" or "through" students, then with the increasing growth of Writing major programs researchers will have more

opportunities to undertake something closer to what Moraga and Anzaldúa might call "theory in the flesh" of Writing majors, theorizing that arises from reflections on the details of subjects' everyday lives (21). Theory in the flesh of Writing majors could mean a serious engagement with the many ways that students produce knowledge and texts of value. Such an engagement might include examining a more complete range of writing they compose, attending to student discourse in different programs, and employing a wide range of methods to collect student-generated data. The frame Moraga and Anzaldúa articulate is derived from reflection on their experiences as radical women-of-color. Certainly, I do not mean to equate the political and epistemological position of advanced students and Writing majors to that of the position from which Moraga and Anzaldúa speak. At the same time, all human subjects (such as teachers and students) are embodied. We all have flesh. Consequently, theory in the flesh is a potent idea that points to the problem of students' generally absent status in much existing scholarship and to different ways of doing Writing major research. The following five sections propose areas for future research that might increase our representations of the complicated, messy, enfleshed lives and experiences of students.

Methods: While the current research collected three kinds of data (i.e., survey responses, interviews, and student writing), additional sources of data and methods could add to our understanding of the Writing major generally and student experience specifically. In this study, I only asked students about their learning and experiences *during their time as Writing majors*. Moreover, I only surveyed and interviewed students at one point in time. As they answered various questions, a few students gestured toward their literacy backgrounds and histories prior to entering college. Future researchers might conduct the kind of life-interviews Deborah Brandt

describes. This more extensive data about participants' lifespan experiences with regard to literacy learning and literate activity might provide additional points for comparison or contextualization. Other projects might engage in longitudinal studies of Writing majors. Those studies could involve many methods, including surveys of, and interviews with, students about their experiences at different intervals during their time in a program as well as after graduation. This research would provide us with data about students' sense of their *evolving* experiences and capacities as Writing majors. Also, observing particular classrooms and studying their attendant documents (e.g., syllabi, assignments, etc.) along with student responses and work presents another fruitful area for future research.

Internships, Experiential Learning, and Community Engagement: Balzhiser and McLeod propose that an internship or experiential learning component constitute part of students' capstone experience (428). While such practices turn up at moments in this dissertation, a wealth of knowledge from students involved in these opportunities went untapped. Private Research University has a long tradition of writing-related community engagement work that involves undergraduate students: facilitating writing workshops for residents in an assisted-living community, tutoring inmates in a GED program, and publishing community stories—to name a few such efforts. The Liberal Arts College program places students with internships in a range of writing and publishing contexts. Future research might proactively recruit students who held or currently hold internships or who participate in community engagement work. Such recruitment might help us better understand if/how Writing majors blend an interest in interaction-rich labor of the sort discussed in chapter three, professional knowledge gained from coursework, and experiential learning acquired at an internship placement.

First-Year Writing: As indicated in chapter two, different patterns emerged with regard to FYW and the Writing major based on institutional location. At Private Research University, the majority of respondents took FYW at the institution; at Liberal Arts College, the majority did not. In a few instances, FYW contributed to students' decision to declare a Writing major. There are several questions about FYW that future research might investigate. What do Writing majors recall and use from FYW? In other words, do Writing majors transfer knowledge from FYW? How do they understand the course in relationship to the Writing major? Do some versions of FYW produce among students a stronger sense of connection between the course and particular Writing major curricula?

Identity: Future research might attend more pointed than I have to the ways in which students' various identities (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, academic, etc.) contribute to, or are informed by, their work within Writing major programs. When and how do students draw on the rhetorical resources that attend their varied identities as they undertake production within the Writing major? When are these identity-informed deployments *successful*? Do identities students bring with them ever *conflict* with chosen or required undertakings within their programs of study?

Writing Centers: Writing centers constitute important sites in many colleges and universities, sites that promote students' development as writers and that encourage a dynamic vision of literacy learning. They've surfaced in Writing major scholarship as locations that promote the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge among undergraduates and contexts for undergraduate

research (DelliCarpini; DelliCarpini and Crimmins). Writing centers also surfaced incidentally in my research on the Writing major through two survey comments and two interviews. At Private Research University and Liberal Arts College, the writing centers were housed and staffed by the Writing programs. Writing majors made up the majority of writing center staff at Liberal Arts College; Private Research University offered two upper-division peer-tutoring courses. And one student in my research, Gina, spoke about herself as a frequent user of writing center services. Future research might investigate Writing majors as writing center tutors *and* clients. As tutors, for example, how do students understand their work in relationship to their learning within the Writing major? If, as Michael Pemberton argues, "we have an ethical responsibility to respect" the more instrumentalist concerns that bring students to writing centers, then certainly that responsibility runs also to students whose goals *do* "mesh [more] fully with some of our own" (265). Attending to the motivations of Writing majors who visit writing centers may be illuminating in a number of ways. Do Writing majors bring critical and/or creative texts to the writing center? Do they invoke or enact concepts from coursework to describe what they're writing? What kinds of "not-talk" (Reiff and Bawarshi) do they employ?

CONCLUSION

Taken together, these chapters show that important developments take place within Writing major programs that may not always surface in scholarly representations. The students within the present study offered an astonishing range of concerns, insights, and experiences. Clearly, teachers and administrators planned and worked diligently to create curricula that facilitated students' complicated creative, critical, and professional efforts. At the same time, students' uptake of these curricula—their struggles and successes, their contributions—deserve

more explicit and direct representation. I hope this dissertation adds to the robust Writing major research agenda. In particular, I want even more to promote research that includes the voices, experiences, and texts of students. Moreover, I aim to support the belief that students themselves can contribute to professional scholars' deliberations about what it means for undergraduates to engage in scholarly, political, and professional projects that align with the rhetorical vision of literacy that Writing Studies practitioners promote. Students in this study affirm my belief that both the teaching *of* writing and our teaching *about* writing are important within undergraduate programs of study. And even as we engage in both kinds of teaching as means by which to instruct students in our courses and programs, we have much to learn from students who elect to become Writing majors.

Appendix: Survey Instrument

Writing Majors' Experiences, Attitudes, and Engagement

Study Background and Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in a research study. Rebecca Moore Howard is the Primary Researcher and T J Geiger is a graduate student researcher at Syracuse University. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. This webpage will explain the study to you.

We are interested in learning more about the experiences of writing and rhetoric majors and how they are engaging with their programs of study. You will be presented with a series of questions that have a range of responses. You may also provide additional comments to any questions where space is provided. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. You may volunteer to be contacted about a follow-up interview by providing your email address. If you do not volunteer to be interviewed, your survey responses will be completely anonymous. If you volunteer to be interviewed, your name and contact information will be kept confidential. All of the data will be kept on password-protected computers.

In any dissertation chapters, articles, or presentations based on this research, we will use a made-up name for you, and we will not reveal specific details about where you go to school.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping us to understand the experiences of writing majors and how they engage with their program of study. This information should help researchers, teachers, and administrators better understand the perspectives of some writing majors. By taking part in the research you may experience the benefit of better understanding your own experiences in your major program. You will receive no direct compensation or benefit from your participation.

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the "done" button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded.

There are no foreseeable risks from your participation in this study.

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints about the research, contact T J Geiger at 830-265-8086 or Rebecca Moore Howard at 315-443-1235. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you have questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, or if you cannot reach the investigator, contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315-443-3013.

By clicking "next," you acknowledge that you are at least 18-years-old and that you would like to continue with the survey.

Writing Majors' Experiences, Attitudes, and Engagement

Demographic Information

*1. Where is the college or university you currently attend for writing classes?

◯ New York

◯ Pennsylvania

*2. Are you currently a college or university student working on a major or minor in Writing and Rhetoric?

☐ Major

☐ Minor

☐ Not a Writing major/minor

Please list any other majors

[   ]

3. You identify as

☐ female

☐ male

☐ no answer

other

[   ]

4. What is your current status as a student?

◯ First-year student/Freshman

◯ Sophomore

◯ Junior

◯ Senior

Comments

[   ]

5. Which descriptors best characterize the writing major at your university? Check as many as apply. Is the focus on:

☐ Rhetoric/Writing

☐ Technical, Professional, or Scientific writing

☐ Nonfiction and Creative Writing

☐ Other. Please provide a brief description of your program's focus:

Writing Majors' Experiences, Attitudes, and Engagement

Confidence and Satisfaction

Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

6. I am satisfied with the coursework offered by the writing program.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Moderately Agree

○ Neutral

○ Moderately Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Comments

[ ]

7. I am satisfied with the internships and "hands on" learning opportunities offered by the writing program.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Moderately Agree

○ Neutral

○ Moderately Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

If you would like to, please briefly describe your experience with internships, community engagement, or experiential learning:

[ ]

8. In my writing classes, I feel able to pursue questions and issues of interest to me.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Moderately Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Moderately Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Please list topics meaningful to you that you have taken up in your writing classes:

9. I see my writing instructors as personal mentors as well as academic and professional mentors.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Moderately Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Moderately Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Comments

10. I feel more confident in my writing abilities since becoming a writing major or since taking classes in the writing major.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Moderately Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Moderately Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Comments

11. I feel more confident in my research skills since becoming a writing major or since taking classes in the writing major.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Moderately Agree

○ Neutral

○ Moderately Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Comments

12. I am generally able to adequately explain the nature of the writing major to other students to my satisfaction.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Moderately Agree

○ Neutral

○ Moderately Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Comments

Questions about writing coursework and concepts

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

13. Rank the top three of the following items in terms of their importance to your personal decision to major in writing or to take classes in the writing major (with 1 as most important and 3 as third most important):

	1	2	3
To work on and improve my own writing	○	○	○
To have a range of career prospects	○	○	○
To study theories and histories of writing and rhetoric	○	○	○
Encouragement and interest from faculty	○	○	○
The sense of community among writing majors	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

Please offer any comments on your answers, or if other, please specify:

14. Did you take a university or college required writing or composition course before choosing to major in writing or to take classes in the writing major?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Comments

15. Did your required writing course influence your decision to be a writing major or to take classes in the writing major?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Comments

16. Approximately how many courses have you taken in writing or rhetoric, including those in which you are currently enrolled?

○ 0

○ 1-5

○ 6-10

○ 11-19

○ 20 or more

Comments

17. Approximately how many papers or reports (including informal work) of 20 or more pages have you been asked to write in your writing classes?

○ 0

○ 1-5

○ 6-10

○ 11-19

○ 20 or more

Comments

18. Approximately how many papers or reports (including informal work) between 5 and 19 pages have you been asked to write in your writing classes?

○ 0

○ 1-5

○ 6-10

○ 11-19

○ 20 or more

Comments

19. Approximately how many papers or reports (including informal work) of fewer than 5 pages have you been asked to write in your writing classes?

○ 0

○ 1-5

○ 6-10

○ 11-19

○ 20 or more

Comments

20. In general, do you ask questions or contribute to discussions in your writing courses:

○ at almost every class meeting?

○ at more than half the class meetings?

○ at less than half the class meetings?

○ at none of the class meetings?

Comments

Writing Majors' Experiences, Attitudes, and Engagement

21. In general, do you ask questions or contribute to class discussions in your writing courses:

- ○ significantly more than in your non-writing courses?
- ○ somewhat more than in your non-writing courses?
- ○ the same amount as in your non-writing courses?
- ○ somewhat less than in your non-writing courses?
- ○ significantly less than in your non-writing courses?

Comments

22. How often do you begin a project in one writing course that you continue to work on in some way in another course?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Can you briefly comment on the topics or genres of these projects?

23. How often do you discuss course readings or ideas with writing faculty outside of class time?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Comments

24. How often do you discuss with writing faculty personal concerns or issues not directly related to the course(s) you took, or are taking, with them?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Comments

25. How often do you have in-person, email, or social media contact with writing faculty after your class(es) with them were over?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Comments

26. How often do you meet informally with writing faculty to discuss possible career or graduate/professional school options?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Comments

27. How often do you discuss writing course readings or concepts with those individuals close to you who are not also taking writing classes?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Comments

28. How often do you find yourself drawing on ideas, theories, or practices from a given writing class in other writing classes or in non-writing classes?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently

Comments

29. How do you define "writing" and/or "rhetoric"?

Further Research Opportunities

Thank you for completing this survey. At this point, I'd like to present you with two more opportunities to contribute to this research project that are also completely voluntary and that ask only a minimal additional commitment of your time.

30. Would you be willing to share a piece of your writing for this research that demonstrates your skills and interests as a writing major or as a student taking writing classes?

○ Yes

○ No

31. Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview to be conducted at a time and in a medium (in-person, Skype, phone, or email) convenient for you that would follow-up on some of your survey responses?

○ Yes

○ No

32. If you answered that you would be willing to submit written work or to participate in an interview, please provide an email address and/or phone number where you can be reached:

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