Writing beyond the Curriculum: Fostering New Collaborations in Literacy

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"In dreams begins responsibility"
W. B. Yeats

As Susan McLeod noted more than ten years ago, the movement for writing across the curriculum at its best has been about "change in the entire educational process at the university level" ("Defining" 23). From its inception in small liberal arts colleges to its broad application in land grant universities and Ivy League schools, WAC has challenged teachers in every discipline to think more about the context and nature of student learning than they might within the traditional content-driven model of college teaching. WAC's attention to students' learning precedes the recent drive in higher education circles to shift universities "from teaching to learning" (Barr and Tagg; M. Miller; Schneider and Shoenberg).

Indeed, WAC practitioners have become institutional leaders in faculty development and activist program design. Writing program administrators (WPAs) are often asked to participate in service learning task forces, teaching excellence advisories, technology roundtables, and core revision committees. Writing programs are now involved in service learning projects that connect the classroom to the community (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters; Cushman "Public"; Herzberg; Schutz and Gere) and in new instructional initiatives that draw on information technology and the Internet (Anson; Faigley; Hawisher, et al.; Walvoord; or see on-line journals such as *Kairos*). Our colleagues in the National Writing Project have for many years

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been working with teachers on writing pedagogy in elementary and secondary school (Silberman).

The growing involvement of college writing teachers in various community, technology, and school initiatives signals a shift in writing program emphasis that invites us to reconsider the original social compact out of which WAC was formed. David Russell has suggested that WAC combines elements of competing camps in early twentieth century education: progressive educators' concern for "child-centered teaching" and the modern consolidation of disciplinary knowledge. In Russell's view, WAC strikes a balance between those two, reflecting John Dewey's vision that "students' use of language must lead systematically from the experience of the individual to the collective experience of the culture as represented by organized disciplines" (26). However, his history of WAC also emphasizes the extent to which "writing" thus became tied to the university's structure of specialized departments. The movement won battles to shift instruction away from mechanical "skills" and toward the discourse of text-based disciplinary communities (25), but it gained its success because it "linked writing not only to learning and student development but also to the intellectual interest of specialists" (39). At the end of the century, universities are changing again, and the deal WAC struck with departments and disciplines—to train students in the major and forward the move to specialized education—may not generate and sustain the sort of literacy instruction necessary for students in universities of the next century.

Even from the point of view of faculty, maintaining an uncritical alliance with disciplines does not serve the interests of many colleagues. Faculty who collect folklore or oral histories, sponsor community writing projects, or facilitate school-based publications often have no forum within the university's disciplinary structure to share the results of their research with colleagues of like mind but different discipline. Indeed, absent a central site to explain and develop a broader conception of writing and reading, traditional models of literacy and faculty collaboration dominate. If compositionists reframe WAC to reach beyond university boundaries, we can foster cross-pollination and interdisciplinary discussion of how knowledge is shaped and conveyed in culture. In short, WAC could integrate a multiplicity of writing and reading modes with a conception of literacy instruction not limited to serving the needs of established disciplines.

This article begins by reviewing calls for an expanded conception of WAC and looks at the tension between the standard structure of college writing programs and the increasing external demands on these programs. We then describe an example of a program that carries writing instruction and literacy research beyond university boundaries. Finally, we suggest problems and benefits that may accompany this change of orientation for writing programs. The argument is not that WAC needs to abandon its traditional support for writing in the disciplines, but that we should imagine our project as one that combines discipline-based instruction with a range of

other literacy experiences that will help students and faculty see writing and reading in a wider social and intellectual context than the college curriculum. Such a reconceptualization of WAC requires increased collaborations among university, school, and community partners as well as a greater sense of commitment by writing program administrators to literacy in the regions where our institutions are located.

INSTITUTIONAL DEMANDS AND
NEW CHALLENGES FOR STUDENTS

An expanded conception of WAC responds both to current institutional demands and to new challenges in literacy faced by undergraduate students. In a sense, both involve recalibrating the "balance" David Russell describes in WAC "between the individual students's experience and the collective experience that a discipline and its teachers represent" (41). Institutionally, universities are under enormous pressure to provide a wider range of study to a more diverse population through an extended spectrum of instructional modes, while the financial resources for the universities—especially public universities—contracts. As Anne Herrington and Charles Moran have warned, WAC grew as funding for the universities expanded after World War II, and if "such expansion was a factor in the origin and development of writing in the disciplines, then the present contraction may be a factor in its demise" (236). WAC will need to suit itself to the changing conditions of university funding, and in many ways an expanded conception of WAC is quite suited to the new environment in which recruitment and retention of students gains importance and undergraduate student learning is valued over research and graduate education.

At the same time, students are facing new challenges in terms of what they must know in work and civic life. They often think they are looking for vocational training, but they must be prepared for much more complicated demands than job preparation. They must learn abilities that will sustain them through multiple career changes, new roles in marriage and community life, and forbidding political crises in the environment, economy, and social justice. If compositionists and rhetoricians are to act upon the current research and theory in our own journals, writing programs can no longer be limited to introducing students to the rhetoric of academic fields and majors. Our attention to public discourse (e.g., Cushman "Public"; Mortensen; Wells), critical literacy in schools and community settings (e.g., Cushman "Critical"; DeStigter), cultural studies (e.g., Berlin and Vivion), and the weaving of personal stories into academic argument (e.g., Brodkey; Goldblatt; R. Miller) suggest that writing and rhetoric teachers have much to offer students beyond either traditional belletristic notions of the essay or discipline-specific understandings of effective prose.

First, consider the institutional demands on writing programs. In her 1996 meditation on "The Future of WAC," Barbara Walvoord issued this challenge: "WAC

programs, which have traditionally focused on micro issues, must now devote signif-
icant attention to macro issues. The first macro challenge is the need to work with
other organizations" (68). She pictures WAC as a social movement and recommends
that WPAs should work more directly with national organizations such as the Amer-
ican Association for Higher Education, university-based institutes for higher educa-
tion research and leadership such as those at Syracuse and elsewhere, foundations
such as Pew Charitable Trusts, and governing bodies such as accrediting agencies,
boards, and legislatures. She recognizes that WAC has lost some of its early vigor but
calls on us "to act now as a mature reform organization" and take a role in "what his-
tory may call the era of teaching" (74).

An alliance among university instructors and teachers both in K–12 and adult
basic education is particularly crucial, even if it appears today to be quixotic. Too
often university faculty do not frame even our teaching mission in such a way as to
class ourselves with schoolteachers or community educators. The differences in priv-
ilege and autonomy make such alliances seem impossible. There is also little in the
tenure or promotion reward structure to encourage long-term engagement by fac-
ulty with public school or community organizations (see "Making Faculty Work
Visible"). In addition, the decisions made by both public schools and universities (for
example, curricular initiatives or building projects) often alienate neighborhood res-
idents and take no account of community literacy projects.

And yet "teaching literacy" is a term under which a considerable range of edu-
cational efforts—from graduate school to adult job training to daycare—could be
united. This term authorizes educators to work on vexing community problems by
joining hands and minds across institutional boundaries. To take a particularly strik-
ing example, in one Philadelphia public high school that serves a predominantly
Latino population, the average entering 9th grade cohort is approximately 1,200
students. On average, only 200 students receive diplomas (North Philadelphia
Community Compact Data Report). Of those, few were capable of entering a four-
year college program without tremendous transitional support. Numbers like these—
tantamount to genocide in poor neighborhoods throughout the United States—have
significant impact on college enrollments as well as welfare and crime statistics, but
in human terms educators simply must develop a principled and effective response to
such a social catastrophe. Mike Rose has written eloquently about the good to be
found in American public schools in the most stressed neighborhoods, and he has
called for

> a different kind of critique, one that does not minimize the inadequacies of curriculum
> and instruction, the rigidity of school structure, or the "savage inequalities" of fund-
> ing, but that simultaneously opens discursive space for inspired teaching, for courage,
> for achievement against odds, for successful struggle, for the insight and connection
> that occur continually in public school classrooms around the country. (4)

A network of people concerned with literacy in a region could develop a supportive and constructive critique of public education that would make solutions possible across traditional educational and community boundaries.

Nor should the banding together of teachers at all levels be seen as inimical to research. One might argue that today, when productivity is the main measure of work, teaching in the humanities looks more defensible than unfunded research in all but the most elite institutions. But the making of knowledge should not be split off from the conveying of it. Our hope lies in the opposite direction: just as we foster better teaching at all levels, we should also support more educators and students in the project of inquiry. By asserting the place of writing not only within the curriculum but within the local social context, academics will be in a better position to explain to a skeptical public just why research and publication really do matter to the society at large.

Urging us from a more practical direction is Susan McLeod in a recent article on the nature of WAC. Even more directly than Walvoord, she focuses us on what it takes to create programs that survive: "Wise WAC directors will also look for outside funding for their programs . . . and will integrate their programs with important campus initiatives—assessment, technology, general education reform, so as to braid WAC into ongoing issues rather than having it as a free-standing (and more vulnerable) entity" ("WAC at Century's End" 72). Her metaphor of "braiding" seems particularly appropriate for describing the way WAC can become involved with a variety of projects not immediately associated with writing. As her 1997 work with Eric Miraglia makes clear, enduring WAC programs need strong administrative funding, grassroots support, and consistent leadership that remains active and vibrant over time (Miraglia and McLeod 48). Of course there is great danger in paying for a writing program through grant money, but McLeod makes an important point when she urges that writing programs must seek funding for projects to make new contacts and to achieve the proper integration into the fabric of a particular university and a specific region.

The grant-writing process has the added advantage that, by articulating new goals and re-creating established programs, it can help reinvigorate a program staff or oversight board, consolidate faculty support, capture administrative attention, and broaden the role of community and public school participants. Grant writing leads the writing program beyond the curriculum, for funders are often looking for novel approaches to link programmatic efforts that have heretofore operated in isolation. This is not to say we should work beyond disciplines in order to chase money, but the funding possibilities can be a good incentive to contact the people we have long regarded as allies but we were always too busy to meet.

Another voice calling for compositionists to reach beyond campuses and traditional roles is Kurt Spellmeyer's. He echoes Walvoord's call in a very different key:

> We will need to become ethnographers of *experience:* I do not mean armchair readers
> of the "social text," but scholar/teachers who find out how people actually feel. And far
> from bringing English studies to a dismal close, the search for basic grammars of emo-
> tional life may give us the future that we have never had, a future beyond the univer-
> sity. (911)

Spellmeyer is addressing compositionists as members of an English faculty engaged
in a large-scale cultural undertaking. He seems to be advocating that writing teach-
ers become peacemakers with colleagues in literary studies, that we search for com-
mon ground—to use the title metaphor of his 1993 book—on which to revive the
teaching and production of written language.

As Spellmeyer suggests, reasons for reaching beyond the curriculum are not
purely programmatic or institutional. Increasingly, theorists in composition have
described writing and writing classes in terms of identity formation and transforma-
tion in ways that supersede the old debate between expressivist and social models of
writing pedagogy. Richard E. Miller suggests that writing is "a place where the per-
sonal and the academic, the private and the public, the individual and the institu-
tional, are always inextricably interwoven" (267). Through a meditation that is both
intensely personal and markedly academic, he calls for writing and writing instruc-
tion that allow students and authors to test out various discourses against one another
and thereby use language that demonstrates "an ability to imagine a transformed
reality" in lived experience (284).

Both Spellmeyer and Miller might be dismissed as simply repackaging the bel-
letristic tradition, but despite traces of Emersonian yearning for transcendence,
both develop a view of literacy more capacious and tolerant than is usual in our lim-
ited academic horizon. They willingly step beyond skepticism and the narrow poli-
tics of theory debates, and this opens writing instruction up to a world beyond
academic discourse while not denying the importance of knowledge as it is practiced
and elaborated inside universities. Conceiving of writing beyond the curriculum
does not deny the value of disciplinary knowledge, but it allows us to think through
and across and outside disciplines so that, as Miller hopes, "the personal and the aca-
demic are set loose and allowed to interrogate one another with no predetermined
outcome" (284).

An expanded WAC draws on Ernest Boyer's vision of a renewed higher educa-
tion in this country. When the late president of the Carnegie Foundation described
a model of postsecondary school that stands apart from the two traditional American
models of excellence in higher education—the small, high-priced liberal arts college
and the large, research-intensive land grant university—his words seem now to apply
to our own endeavor:

> What I'm describing might be called the "New American College," an institution that
> celebrates teaching and selectively supports research, while also taking special pride in

its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice. This New American Col-
lege would organize cross-disciplinary institutes around pressing social issues. Under-
graduates at the college would participate in field projects, relating ideas to real life.
Classrooms and laboratories would be extended to include health clinics, youth cen-
ters, schools and government offices. Faculty members would build partnerships with
practitioners who would, in turn, come to campus as lecturers and student advisers.

   The New American College, as a connected institution, would be committed to
improving, in a very intentional way, the human condition. (A48)

Boyer calls for an engaged institution, one in which research informs community ser-
vice as well as teaching and disciplinary knowledge production, one for which the
campus is just one of many learning sites possible for student and teacher alike. As our
epigraph and title suggest, our dream leads us to new responsibilities but also to new
cooperative partnerships. In the succeeding section, we describe institutional struc-
tures designed expressly for the purpose of bringing university students and faculty
into collaboration with community groups and schoolteachers and their pupils in
order to foster new cultural practices and more active types of learning. Building that
ambition into the WAC program is what will take writing beyond the curriculum.[1]

STRUCTURE VERSUS FUNCTION: MODELS FOR A DREAM

The basic outline of writing programs has settled into a pattern over the last years
since Susan McLeod outlined the components of WAC in 1987 ("Defining"). Figure
1 presents a four-component writing program. Sometimes schools may be missing
upper-division courses, and sometimes writing centers are underdeveloped or absent.

**Figure 1: A common configuration for WAC/WID programs.**
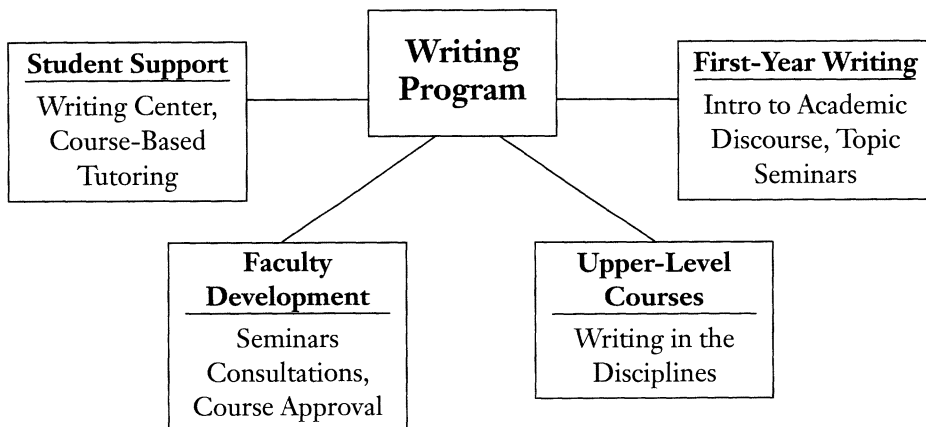
Even the first-year writing course—the mainstay of writing programs—has occasion-ally been excised in favor of a broader WAC effort. Some schools have initiated WAC programs tied to public speaking and communication, a move not reflected in our dia-gram. But we think the diagram indicates a basic structure for writing programs.

Figure 2 indicates a constellation of functions possible for most writing pro-grams. This is hardly an exhaustive list, and yet any WPA will feel exhausted just con-templating such an array of demands. Not all writing programs serve all of these purposes, but most are under pressure to serve many purposes, and—at least in an informal way—most programs do more than the basic structure in Figure 1 would suggest. WPAs and their assistants or allies regularly field community phone calls, give local talks, write grant proposals, serve on boards and committees, organize sym-posia, or consult with schools for purposes not reflected in our basic structural dia-gram. For this reason, the basic structure may no longer be meeting the demands of contemporary writing programs. At Temple University, we are rethinking the pur-poses for the writing center, recognizing its growing importance as an information technology leader and faculty teaching resource. We are developing service and expe-riential learning within advanced writing and rhetoric courses and establishing the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture to support these courses as well as research and outreach in the regions and the schools (Sullivan et al.).

One outcome of our new orientation is a set of questions we have begun to ask about the relationship between English education teacher training programs and WAC. Typically, these two have little to do with one another because one is based in

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Figure 2: Functions for writing beyond the curriculum.
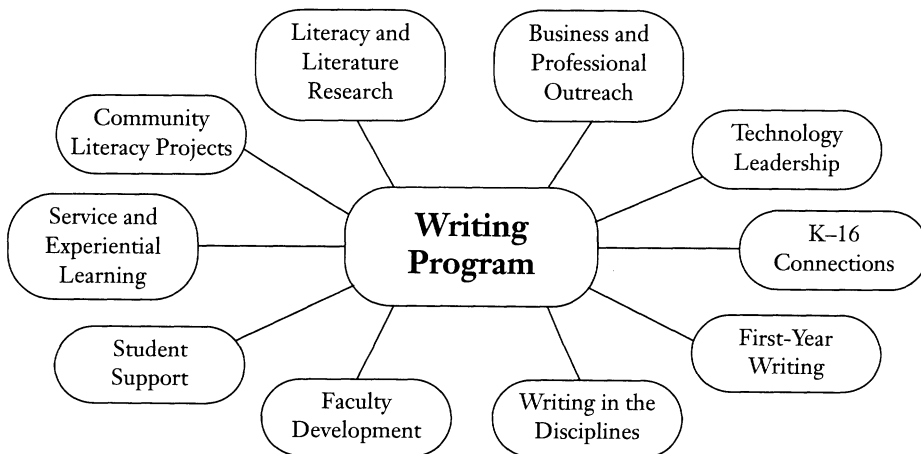
a university's education school and the other in its college of arts and sciences. But why shouldn't future teachers work as tutors in the writing center or as fellows for writing-intensive courses in the disciplines? And why shouldn't compositionists and education researchers be close colleagues? Why shouldn't National Writing Project teachers converse with first-year writing TAs? Why shouldn't WPAs know about high school writing curricula in their regions?

Several painful conflicts emerge when we talk to professors and administrators on both sides of the institutional divide at other universities. One is that too often compositionists and literature faculty in English either don't know or don't respect their colleagues in English education, and this sets up a corresponding resentment among education faculty against anyone in English. Another is that education majors are not highly respected as students and thus are not recruited to be writing tutors. A third source of mutual hostility is that education colleges tend to be jealous of their relationships with the schools where their students practice teaching, and they fear that "content-area" departments such as English and history want to cut in on the action.

At the same time, both education and liberal arts colleges are in serious crisis at the moment. Education programs are under intense pressure nationally from legislatures and the public to produce more knowledgeable and effective beginning teachers (witness the recent outcry in Massachusetts over teachers' performance on standardized certification tests). Meanwhile, in a recent national survey of public attitudes toward liberal arts education, researchers found that only about "one-third of parents and a quarter of high school students and university graduates view the liberal arts positively" (Hersh 19). In composition, English-trained and education-trained writing specialists read much the same literature but do not recognize each other as colleagues often enough. Literature faculty and education professors who teach the teaching of literature rarely, if ever, even meet one another, let alone talk about their fields together. Certainly we all face very real problems, but we simply cannot solve them without each other.

Recently, Peter Rabinowitz from literary studies and Michael Smith from English education collaborated on *Authorizing Readers*, a fascinating consideration of how current literary theories can be productively and ethically applied in secondary school classrooms. This kind of cooperative project is all too rare in the fields of literary and literacy studies. There should be more alliances of this sort—in research, teacher training, and program design—within and without the college campus. One means by which the writing program at our university has reached out and across boundaries is the founding of the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture. The institute is by no means the only instance of our writing beyond the curriculum effort, but we think it is perhaps the most innovative and indicates the possibilities that open once we reconceptualize WAC. We turn to a description of the institute now.

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE, LITERACY, AND CULTURE

The Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture is an alliance of university, public school, and community educators. Housed in the Departments of English, the institute sponsors courses, seminars, workshops, and lectures designed to bring together the educational community surrounding Temple University around a common set of principles:

- Every student should have the support necessary to achieve at high standards and gain an understanding of the social context of literacy instruction.

- A collaborative relationship should exist among knowledge-producing institutions and disciplines.

- Communities should have the means to produce and distribute written and artistic materials that can present and shape group identity as well as forward civic debate.

These goals are based upon the belief that an integrated and productive educational environment requires an active dialogue between educators, neighborhood members, and students about the future of their region.

The institute is governed by an advisory board, fellows, and a director. The advisory board is structured to ensure representation from all aspects of the educational community surrounding Temple University. At present, the board has representatives from the city school district, a network of community-based teachers, the arts community, Temple's School of Education, and faculty from the humanities and social sciences. Their role is to consider how a particular project from one site can be "braided" into other existing projects or goals. For instance, we recently strengthened a proposal to create a service-based cultural studies program at Temple through discussions with board members about work being done in the public schools and the community. What might have remained a "strictly academic" enterprise was reformulated as a tool to create common educational objectives across institutions.

Institute fellows are responsible for the actual work of producing interdisciplinary and interinstitutional programs. They create and oversee projects that bring different elements of the community into contact with each other. For instance, one fellow organized a national conference on Alain Locke, the African American philosopher of the Harlem Renaissance. Another developed a lecture series titled "Converging Cultures in Urban Environments," while a third conducted seminars on Shakespeare and performance in public schools. A fourth fellow, who holds a position in the provost's office, helps us link our activities with the city school district. This year, fellows will expand the institute's connections to cultural and literacy centers in the greater Philadelphia region and create service-learning courses around

issues such as homelessness and urban housing. The work of the fellows is supple-
mented by the work of the institute-affiliated faculty and teachers, whose research,
disciplinary knowledge, and classroom practice serve as the basis for much of the
institute's programmatic development.[2] The director is responsible for maintaining
alliances with community and school organizations, providing support for fellows,
exploring new connections, and discovering funding sources.

Although the institute's overall goal is to integrate different educational com-
munities, its projects might be broken into four distinct areas of work: schools, com-
munities, university, and research and publication.

Schools

One guiding principle of the institute is that every student should have the support
necessary to achieve at high standards. The institute has made a conscious decision to
frame its work with teachers around the demands of their classrooms, and it has also
made an effort to work with school districts that have revised their curriculum along
the lines of the national standards movement. One of the outcomes of this decision is
that university faculty who partner with teachers must focus on the application of even
the most sophisticated analysis or theory to secondary and undergraduate classrooms.

One example of this effort linked the standards' language of "interdisciplinarity"
and "cross-competencies" in a workshop focusing on Shakespeare and performance.[3]
The seminar was led by a university faculty member and two public school teachers.
Its participants included high school teachers, principals, graduate students, and
undergraduate education majors. Participants read different historical accounts of
Shakespeare's time, decided how this information might alter the reading of a text,
and then performed that interpretation using limited props. Participants then
blended this technique of performance with historical study to generate standards-
based lesson plans. These plans were taken into the classroom, tested, and evaluated
by participants. Here it was particularly important that the workshop included high
school teachers who could evaluate whether the standards were addressed by the
assignment and who could explain the value of this technique to university faculty
and students. In the next stage of this project, a few participating teachers will have
their students perform a Shakespeare play for their local community.

This focus on hands-on learning, links between the university and schools, and
standards-based applications appears in our teachers' writing groups as well. Com-
posed of public school teachers and led by a graduate of the English Department's cre-
ative writing master's degree program, the seminar encourages teachers to explore
their own writing lives and then bring their writing experience into the classroom.
Participants read fiction, write their own stories and poems, and discuss their work
with each other. Some bring in half-written manuscripts, and others come with ideas
for writing projects they have long harbored. As with the Shakespeare and perfor-
mance seminar, participants eventually develop lesson plans which can carry the

excitement and intensity of a creative writing workshop into their classroom (and perhaps into the community, too, with readings and publications). The process is similar to approaches developed in National Writing Projects across the country. The innovation here is that the institute opens a doorway between teacher development and the creative writing program, where earlier there had been no connection.

Community

The institute's primary objective in working with community groups is to ensure that collaborative relationships develop among knowledge-producing institutions. Our current programs include the Norris Homes Girls' Group and the revitalizing of Teachers for a Democratic Culture. The girls' group consists of ten preadolescent and adolescent girls and is held in a local health center near Temple University. Originally, this was a support group for girls where they could discuss health and sexuality issues, but it soon became apparent to the leaders that "health" and "sex" were wrapped up in complex social and emotional issues not easily explored in a weekly discussion. At the request of the health center's director, the institute arranged to have a graduate assistant—as it happens, a student from the Department of African-American Studies who had previously tutored in a Chicago housing project—meet weekly with the group and encourage them to write about their lives. Here the goal was not only to generate a sense of group identity, but to publish that identity as a way to spark community awareness. Within a year, the students had published their first collection, *United Sisters*. It contains personal observations, poems, and essays about growing up in their community. During the course of this project, the girls' group also participated in university programs and events. The girls were offered use of Temple University's writing center and math resource center for academic help. Students from the African-American Studies program attended girls' group meetings to share their insights about growing up in an urban environment. Academic events, such as a tribute to the poet Sonia Sanchez, allowed the girls to meet established African American writers.

Central to the institute's work is the belief that the coordinated efforts of educators, students, and community members across institutions help to promote social justice. For this reason, the institute also agreed to take on the task of revitalizing Teachers for a Democratic Culture (TDC). Growing out of the culture wars of the early 1990s, TDC quickly became an organization in which over 1,600 faculty and graduate students organized their responses to attacks on multiculturalism, feminism, and progressive scholarship. As with most progressive faculty organizations, however, TDC soon suffered from its own success. The burdens of maintaining such a membership and struggling against well-funded right-wing organizations such as the National Scholars Association or Lynne Cheney's Alumni Association soon led to its faltering. In addition, an inability to focus the organization's activities on transforming actual educational practices both within classrooms and in local communities led to a lack of purpose once the initial burst of activism had ceased.

Now housed in the institute but separate from it, TDC (www.temple.edu/tdc) is a nonprofit organization linked with other progressive faculty groups. It has also expanded its vision to include teachers from a wide range of educational institutions. More to the point, TDC now uses its membership dues to initiate local and regional alliances and joint projects among literacy institutions. For instance, working from the premise that literacy education should also occur within the struggle for basic community rights, TDC cosponsored the Poor People's Summit in Philadelphia. This two-day conference was designed to highlight the effects of welfare reform in one local neighborhood and to educate community members about how to organize politically. Speakers and activists from all over the country came to share information, teach organizing techniques, and create alliances. TDC has also created a Progressive Information Network (www.temple.edu/tdc/pin) to supply progressive editorials for use by members in local newspapers as well as Labor Matters (www. temple.edu/ tde/publications.html), a weekly e-paper on labor activism. Finally, it is developing a Faculty Activist Directory as a resource for teachers nationwide (www.temple. edu/tdc/fad). Positioning itself as an alternative professional organization, TDC works to foster and link local moments of struggle to national efforts to expand citizen rights. We hope it will carry the mission of the institute into a national arena.

University

The institute has worked to develop both undergraduate and graduate courses that focus on service-learning projects linked to acknowledged community needs. For instance, the Shakespeare and performance seminar was also linked to an undergraduate literature class for future teachers. In addition to the seminar, some undergraduate students led a Shakespeare drama club at a city public school. In other classes, oral history projects at nearby public schools were linked to an undergraduate English class developing an anthology of "City Voices," and a communication studies course enabled students to formulate "guerrilla" media projects around community needs. In a project planned for next year, student ethnographers will investigate public housing and social justice issues for an anthropology course. Others will work with a welfare rights organization to produce newsletters and information packets.

Each of these courses provides valuable learning and research possibilities for those involved. We believe, however, that the ability of future faculty to teach such courses depends upon graduate education taking on an interdisciplinary and service-learning focus. For this reason, the institute has developed a certificate open to graduate students in any discipline. Students will take courses in cultural theory, community politics, and the politics of literacy institutions. They also must serve an extended internship at a local literacy or cultural center, applying their course knowledge to the dynamics of actual community politics. In addition, many of the courses

offered are designed to allow students to link their study with literacy institutions. Blending academic knowledge with community involvement, students will leave the program with the skills necessary to support such work, whether inside or outside academic careers.

Research and Publication

We believe that cultural work should be shared across communities. A community should be able to produce written and artistic materials which can develop and enrich its own identity and at the same time spark productive political debate in the larger social arena. In order to circulate a variety of materials to local and national audiences, the institute established a publishing house called New City Press and TDC aligned itself with the academic journal *Annals of Scholarship*.

New City Press was designed to publish community-based histories and narratives as alternatives to the ones fostered by the mainstream media. The press was patterned in part on the *Journal of Ordinary Thought*, a grassroots publication associated loosely with University of Illinois-Chicago. Each issue of *JOT* focuses on a different neighborhood writing group. For example, in one issue, "Mixed Feeling" (No. 3, Oct. 1995), people who had lived in or around a housing-project building slated for demolition wrote about their memories and frustrations associated with its closing. We also admired the activist publishing done at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh (Peck, Flower, and Higgins). Another source of inspiration was the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP). This organization links, advertises, and distributes the work of community presses in the United Kingdom. Rather than sponsor any particular publication, the FWWCP provides expertise to community groups who wish to start writing groups and publishing ventures. They work with presses that enable local communities to recount and preserve their history. For instance, an affiliated press in Brighton, Queenspark Books, regularly publishes histories of its port community and its residents. Queenspark is currently developing a "countermap" for tourists who wish to understand Brighton as more than a beachtown.[4]

New City supports a variety of community projects. For instance, one of its first publications was a coaches' handbook for a city neighborhood baseball league (www.temple.edu/isllc/ncp). The handbook, written and compiled by volunteers in that community, offers tips to new coaches on practice organization and skill building, and it not only serves to instruct coaches and parents in the league, but models teaching and organizing skills for neighborhoods that want to start their own leagues. A future project will feature oral histories of a local neighborhood completed by public school students. Working with Asian Americans United, the press will also publish a folktale-based story written about the need to keep a local library open. In these and other projects, New City Press provides publishing expertise to local organizations

and the legitimacy of publication to nontraditional histories and small-scale but vital civic projects.

New City also supports the institute's general effort to link educators from a variety of communities. A prime example of this is *Urban Rhythms* (*UR*). This publication was the idea of students in a service-learning literacy course sponsored by the institute.[5] Originating as a class project, *UR* has become a collaborative project linking faculty, students, and community members from the schools, colleges, and neighborhood organizations surrounding Temple University. Similar to the *Foxfire* magazine of the early '70s (see Wigginton), *UR*'s goal is to document and disperse the insights, folk traditions, and community visions of city neighborhoods. Although the journal is less than one year old, it has already become a means by which teachers from a variety of institutions can share the work of students. One middle school class uses the journal as a weekly exercise in creative writing. Another school incorporates the journal into the mentally gifted curriculum. Several university classes have allowed students to focus their work around guest editing special editions. Finally, graduate students and visiting faculty have come to see the journal as a way to expand their links with the schools and communities.

This push to link the production of knowledge to community activism also marks TDC's alignment with *Annals of Scholarship* (*AOS*). While *AOS* has a long history of publishing academic articles on multiculturalism, global studies, and critical theory, the journal will now feature an additional section each issue which links such scholarship with local and national activism. We hope that what *UR* does at the local level with college students and city schools, *AOS* will do on a national level with faculty, universities, and the regions they serve.

Crossing Categories

The activities described in the preceding sections would be of little value if they remained isolated in their distinct categories (schools, community, university, publication and research). While we have tried to suggest that every project challenges the categories, it is important to realize that each project allows other links to occur within the institute. In Figure 3 we list many of the projects discussed earlier.

One way to read the figure is left to right. The emphasis on local stories runs through the Norris Home Girls' Group, student oral histories, literacy classes, and New City Press. Similarly, a focus on community activism runs through the Poor People's Summit, the Alain Locke Conference, TDC, and NCP/*UR*/*AOS* publications. It is also possible, however, to move from the Poor People's Summit to neighborhood histories, literature/education courses (taking education to mean community goals), and NCP publications. That is, the goal of the institute's activities is to allow alliances and partnerships beyond traditional town–gown or disciplinary boundaries. Fellows, students, community members, and affiliated faculty are able to

**Figure 3: Current projects of the Institute
for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture.**

Community	Public Schools	University	Publication/Research
Norris Homes Girls' Group	Oral Histories	Literacy Courses Service Learning	New City: Individual Histories
People and Stories	Multicultural Curriculum	Multicultural Lit/Service Learning	New City: Community Histories
Public Theater Performance	Shakespeare	Lit/Ed Courses	*Urban Rhythms*
Activists' Network	Neighborhood Histories	Project SHINE	New City: Guidebooks
Poor People's Summit	Alain Locke Conference	Teachers for a Democratic Culture	NCP/*AOS:* Academic Texts

use the institute as a place to weave together community, university, school, and publication projects. Possibilities for collaboration are created where individuals who may not have thought of each other as allies can find a space to work together. Essays formerly available only to academics can now be read and discussed by teachers and health care workers; communities can assemble histories which academic and civic leaders might need to read. Through this work, we hope to achieve the "braiding" McLeod describes as the next step for WAC programs.

The figure also highlights the potential political conflicts that emerge when forming alliances with community, regional, and (in the case of TDC) national partners. By cosponsoring the Poor People's Summit or the standards-based lesson plans, the institute clearly positions itself within the local and academic community. By helping to organize the poor, for instance, the institute is sending a signal about current welfare legislation and local homeless laws. By supporting efforts to bring standards-based education into the Philadelphia school system, the institute may alienate teachers and community members who perceive standards as bad pedagogy and potentially racist. Even choosing a Shakespeare workshop over one on Toni Cade Bambara could potentially send troubling signals to certain constituencies.

As the scope of these projects indicates, however, it is difficult to reduce the institute to any one ideological flavor. Standards might seem to contradict progressive editorials; a poor people's summit might seem an odd pairing with Shakespeare. This is as it should be. Communities are politically complex. There is no single ideological navel from which all institute programs derive. They emerge from the combined insights of the institute's community, university, and public school members. This process is not always pretty. Participants argue, worry, storm out, compromise, then

drink coffee together. There is dialogue and there is debate. Hard feelings emerge and, sometimes, are smoothed over. People come to a place where they disagree with a particular program but continue to participate. The idea of a broad, integrated educational community has slowly transcended any one person's objections to a program. The political test has become whether the imagined community that brought us around the table is becoming a reality.

CONCLUSION

A vision of university writing programs that stretch beyond the curriculum and campus presents exciting possibilities to program designers and administrators. As this vision becomes reality, it is important to be explicit about the potential problems as well. While the hope still remains that this direction will lead to a richer environment for literacy instruction, the shortcomings and inherent limitations in the venture can sometimes appear painfully obvious. In this conclusion, we share some of our questions about writing beyond the curriculum, speculating on the reward structure and the approach to graduate education necessary to sustain the sort of program we have set out to construct.

For the sake of brevity, we limit ourselves here to three problematic areas for our writing program and the institute: maintaining focus, gathering support, and building alliances. In some sense they are all a function of the same virtue, arising from the explosiveness and multidirectionality of a new, unfolding idea. It is easy to get lost in the array of paths that could be taken once you step off the sidewalk. It is even easier to overreach resources in the rush to try too many projects at once. And it is perhaps easiest of all to affront potential allies in your eagerness to make a new program succeed.

One of us gave a talk about our program at a major southwestern university last year. Afterward, one sympathetic faculty member asked this simple question: "If you follow up on all these new directions for WAC, how do you prevent yourself from getting distracted from the business of writing instruction and assure your home constituency that first-year students are still learning to write for their college courses?" We find ourselves returning again and again to this question, and not only because it stands as a warning for us when we contemplate yet another cross-institutional project. It also makes explicit certain terms underlying writing pedagogy that we must interrogate in order to move into a new phase. What, for instance, is our "home constituency" and what "business of writing instruction" are we in? Does an orientation toward "academic discourse" in our first-year course sequence preclude or require a counterbalancing emphasis on writing outside the walls of the academy? Is it possible to explore many new institutional connections and still maintain a focus in a reconfigured writing program? And what if we feel we have maintained our focus, but our colleagues—inside and outside the English department—perceive us as impossibly scattered and quixotic?

We cannot answer all these interrelated questions here. Our best provisional response to the whole complex is that we must be committed to assessment and reflection—always interrogating ourselves, our colleagues, our project partners, and our students about what learning is taking place inside and outside the classrooms. Does the imagined program actually help anybody, or does it just rack up more lines on the program track record? Does a proposed project support agreed-upon or implicit community goals? Does it support the integrative vision of diverse groups within a region? Is something older but more valuable lost in the rush to shape something new? Enthusiasm for the large-scale goal should not blind us to crucial little failures along the way.

At the same time, it would be unwise to be bound by the expectations of a higher education system that no longer exists. As Richard Hersh has noted, fewer than 5 percent of college students attend small liberal arts colleges, still the "gold standard for undergraduate education" for most liberal arts administrators (16). In a study that Hersh's Hobart and William Smith Colleges commissioned, a large majority of high school students and their parents indicated that "college is important because it 'prepares students to get a better job and/or increases their earning potential' " (20). Students are more and more conscious of their college education as an investment in a future they cannot fully predict but are wary about nonetheless (see Carnevale; Menand). If they ever did, certainly today universities no longer function primarily as that Shakespearean green world to which young swains and damsels repair for a night of revelry, in preparation for their dawn weddings and coronations. At our own university, more than 80 percent of students work twenty hours a week or more; they have precious little time for midsummer night dalliance.

Meanwhile, graduate education cannot simply churn out young adults who have served five to eight years of indentured servitude in exchange for their degrees, only to have them undertake more servitude in the adjunct mills. The MLA says that "fewer than half the seven or eight thousand graduate students likely to earn PhDs in English and foreign languages between 1996 and 2000 can expect to obtain full-time tenure-track positions within a year of receiving their degrees" (Gilbert 4). To the extent that the job crisis is caused by the deliberate downsizing of all human services in U.S. society today, graduate students and faculty must engage actively in debates and protests over public priorities if we wish to rectify this situation. However, are even those who find employment being prepared for the kind of employment they will find in the next century? As Chris Anson has pointed out, "technology will soon change not only how we work within our institutions but also how 'attached' we may be to an institution, particularly if we can work for several institutions at some physical (but not electronic) remove from each other" (274).

If preparing for the struggles and the opportunities in the days to come means a little distraction, it must be risked. In a publication of the Association of American

Colleges and Universities, Carol Schneider and Robert Shoenberg put the situation
this way:

> The shift from a teaching to a learning paradigm of instruction, the incorporation of
> information technology and all it makes possible into the fabric of the institution, the
> increasing engagement with the local and global community, the new awareness of an
> assertive and rapidly expanding for-profit higher education sector and the reconsider-
> ation of such issues as tenure collectively exemplify the quite profound transforma-
> tions now in process. We are indeed in the midst of a time of great change. (3)

While such futurist rhetoric in higher education circles might itself be cause for
concern—sometimes the prophetic tones mask corporate attitudes and expectations
among some deans and provosts—there can be no doubt that major changes are
occurring. Writing programs are often the first places in a school to feel the tremors.
What may look like distraction in WPAs now may eventually seem a principled (if
feverish) response to challenges others have not yet recognized or are trying desper-
ately to ignore.

Consider the work of gathering support and building alliances. Both the liberal
arts college and the central administration at Temple University have been support-
ive of the writing beyond the curriculum efforts because they perceive such work as
attractive to new students, friendly to service-learning initiatives, helpful for faculty
development, and timely as a connection between and among colleges that need to
find ways to work together.[6] At the same time, we have been concerned from the start
that any particular move might be perceived by factions within English and in other
areas of the college and university as empire building. In such a context, it has been
important to negotiate with every center, institute, department, or program that has
a common interest in projects we propose, always stressing mutual benefits over turf
battles. We have approached a number of local and national foundations, first infor-
mally to let them know our new direction and then through proposals for one or
another project. Where we have worked with school districts or community organi-
zations, we have stressed partnership over paternalism and slow building of trust over
quick deal-making.[7]

Working with the College of Education has been particularly gratifying. The
Writing Program and Education had only a very scant history of cooperation until
recently, but today planning has begun on a number of joint projects. We have key
allies in the education faculty, and we work closely with the Professional Develop-
ment Schools, the committee that oversees relations with schools where students
practice teaching. The First-Year Program cooperates with the Teaching English as
a Second Language program in Education to provide ESL versions of our writing
courses. The Writing Program and Education collaborated on a conference this year
for high school teachers and college WPAs on expectations for student writers in col-
lege and secondary school; next year another conference is planned that addresses

assessment issues. The more work done side by side, the easier it will be for graduate students and undergraduates to understand the intimate connections between literacy and literature on the one hand and pedagogical theory and practice on the other.

Finally, we must add a word about the reward structure and graduate training that underpins faculty life. People tend to do what they are most rewarded for and what they are trained to expect rewards for. In any academic field the rewards traditionally go to those who do research or creative work; grants for such work are the highest form of legitimization, and—in fields where grants are scarce and small—publication, exhibition, or performance records stand for achievement in one's field. Teaching has come to be more valued in many schools in recent years, but publishing still determines tenure and promotion in research universities and many teaching colleges. Our institute arose in part from discussions supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) on the reward structures for faculty (see Gips and Stoel). Members of the Temple FIPSE group quickly came to the conclusion that, rather than working against the commitment to research in our Research I institution, we should work with that commitment but support new directions in which faculty and graduate students could grow. Thus arose the fellowships and graduate certificate program described earlier.

Our next step is to think more expansively about graduate training and teacher preparation. Jerry Gaff and Leo Lambert have pointed out how important it is to train students not only to be "better students" and "better teaching assistants" but to prepare them to be "better assistant professors" (44). It seems necessary to go beyond this goal, admirable as it may be, because the job placement statistics suggest that at least some of our graduates will choose to seek employment outside the college classroom. We are developing connections so that graduate students in literature and creative writing, as well as in composition/rhetoric, could explore work in communities and schools, in unions and businesses, in government agencies and hospitals. This is not an attempt to short-circuit the traditional training they receive, but to build upon it, to widen the context in which students learn to interpret and generate written texts.

Peter Mortensen has recently suggested that "teacher/researchers should search for ways to accommodate their writing about college composition to broader, non-academic audiences" (198). He wants us to enter debates, such as the current controversy over remediation in the City University of New York system, because we can offer a perspective on students and literacy often missing in the popular press. He warns, though, that "for such writing to be ethical, it may indeed be anchored in national concerns, but it must attend to the local because it is there that political and social issues of great consequence can be deliberated and acted upon" (198). In a sense, the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture and the idea of writing beyond the curriculum is our version of that ethical commitment. We are building on the insights of social theory in composition research by engaging in the world our

students come from and go to, and we intend to add our voices especially in the local scene because that is where we teach, raise our kids, and pay taxes. In this sense, writing and literacy instruction go beyond the "beyond." This is simply where we live.

NOTES

1. Paul Heilker seems to be the first to use the expression "writing beyond the curriculum" in print, though he did not specifically apply the expression to WAC programs.

2. Faculty interest in the institute has been quite strong. An initial call for participation resulted in over forty faculty from a variety of departments, all affiliating with the institute in the space of three weeks.

3. Cross-competencies is the term used by the school district to denote lesson plans which ask students to perform to several standards across subject and skill areas. For instance, students working on a science project which will be presented to a city council representative will be expected to meet science, writing, applied learning, and public-speaking standards.

4. We must also mention here another remarkable journal. *Rising East: The Journal of East London Studies* is a research journal overseen by an advisory board of faculty, teachers, government representatives, and community members from the East London area. Its aim is to bring the collective insights of literacy and community experts to bear on discussions of East London's future. Each issue carries political, economic, and cultural analysis of the area. Although the journal demands a high level of literacy in its readers, it is written free of specialty terminology. It represents the collective voice of a community speaking out about its future—a voice to which local politicians and business leaders often feel the need to respond.

5. This project would not have been possible without the outstanding work of students such as Mike Carter, Ribu John, Alima Saffell, Brian Sammons, and Robyn Wilcox or without the cooperation of teachers such as Sharmaine Ball and Joel Moore.

6. For instance, from the College of Liberal Arts, the institute has received course reductions to support fellow positions as well as a small annual budget. The graduate school has funded a graduate student assistant. In addition, the institute has received grant support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Fund to Improve Postsecondary Education, the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development, Philadelphia Education Fund, and the Community Outreach Partnership Center, among others.

7. We have been particularly aided in this process by Lori Shorr, Director of School/Community Partnerships. She has been energetic and creative in making durable connections with teachers and administrators, enabling us to develop exciting projects in a very short period of time.

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