

TRAINING GRADUATE STUDENT WRITING TEACHERS:
COMPOSITION HISTORY, THEORY, AND APPLICATION

A Thesis

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by

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Morehead State University, 1994

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The long standing belief that teaching writing requires relatively little training is evident when one looks at the field's practitioners, especially graduate student writing teachers. Despite the recent rise of doctoral programs in rhetoric and composition, most of these teachers have had little or no formal training in composition. Moreover, many of these graduate student writing teachers are being trained in literature and are not primarily interested in teaching writing as a career. While there is a growing number of rhetoric and composition scholars, many practitioners (particularly graduate student writing teachers) are still unaware of the theories by which they teach. Thus, new graduate student writing teachers who have not had any formal training in composition studies begin teaching writing from a relatively uncritical perspective of the field; such a

perspective limits what these practitioners can offer their students and it limits the success of composition as a professional academic discipline.

The following thesis examines what graduate students can learn and ought to know about as they become writing teachers. The first chapter surveys composition's history and offers a rationale for graduate students to know where composition (the course) comes from. The second chapter describes the development of process theories of composing and composition instruction since the field's birth as an academic discipline. As I argue in that chapter, understanding the developments of these theories can inform contemporary practice. Chapter three is a proposal for Morehead State University, Morehead, KY to develop a graduate assistant preparation program that takes into account the history and theory of composition in order to complement the current mentoring system in use at Morehead State University.

The suggestions in Chapter 3 are based on the strengths of the program's intuitive design--that graduate assistants have two semesters for observation and participation in two composition classes prior to the start of their own teaching--and are intended to push the program further so that graduate students can become more informed writing teachers and can, as a result, better meet the needs of their students and the discipline. As a whole, this thesis is my way of reflecting on my own experience as a graduate student writing teacher in order both to acknowledge that teaching writing is better performed when practical experience precedes full

course responsibilities as well as to assert that writing teachers who have a historical and theoretical knowledge base of composition studies will be more informed and more successful teachers.

I offer this thesis as an examination of composition's history, its contemporary theories of composing and their significance for the classroom, and a training program proposal so that graduate assistants may also learn that composition is a discipline with theories and scholarship and a history, all of which contribute significantly to defining the profession, a profession in which graduate student writing teachers can be more closely aligned.

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**Training Graduate Student Writing Teachers:
Composition History, Theory, and Application**

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In some ways, Chapter three may seem very prescriptive, but it is intended to be a useful proposal for Morehead State University's English graduate assistant preparation program. The suggestions in Chapter 3 are based on the strengths of the program's intuitive design--that graduate assistants have two semesters for observation and participation in two composition classes prior to the start of their own teaching--and are intended to push the program further so that graduate students can become more informed writing teachers and can, as a result, better meet the needs of their students and the discipline. As a whole, this thesis is my way of reflecting on my own experience as a graduate student writing teacher in order both to acknowledge that teaching writing is better performed when practical

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Chapter 1

A History of Composition Instruction

A detailed account of composition instruction's history not only proves that composition instruction does, in fact, have a history, but it shows that effective teaching corresponds with knowledge of the discipline's history and the utilization of the discipline's scholarship and research. With that in mind, I will examine the complexities of professionalizing composition's transient practitioners. While there are problems associated with professionalizing many different kinds of writing instructors--adjunct, fixed term, literature faculty, graduate teaching assistant--it is the graduate student writing teacher on which this discussion will

focus. Whereas adjunct faculty and fixed term writing teachers make up a segment of the field's lifetime practitioners, graduate student writing teachers are a transient portion of composition's practitioners in that they have not typically pursued writing instruction as a lifelong career. The transient nature of this group complicates the probability of professionalizing them. However, because graduate students make up a large part of composition's instructors and are a constant part of the discipline's faculty, professionalization of graduate student writing teachers is essential for the discipline's effectiveness. Therefore, this chapter will describe the history of composition instruction and its importance for new teachers of writing, specifically the graduate student writing instructor.

A Brief Introduction to Composition Studies, the Field

For most of its history, composition was more of a practice than an academic field. According to Stephen North and others, composition became truly professionalized in 1963 when Albert Kitzhaber asserted that rhetoric should be the subject of composition courses because

[i]t is a discipline that performs the invaluable function of helping the writer or speaker to find subject-matter for a discourse, to evaluate and select and order it, and to give it fitting expression It will be the only course a student takes in which the quality of his thinking and of his written expression, together with the

principles that underlie both, is the central and constant concern.

(481)

In support of Kitzhaber's demand for rhetoric to be respected in the academic community, Wayne C. Booth delivered a lecture at the 1964 MLA convention entitled "The Revival of Rhetoric." Booth made several recommendations to English departments. He stated that

[i]n a rhetorical age rhetorical studies should have a major, respected place in the training of all teachers at all levels . . . and that in such an age, specialization in rhetorical studies of all kinds, narrow and broad, should carry at least as much professional respectability as literary history or literary criticism in non-rhetorical modes. (12)

Because these two leaders defended rhetoric's place in the academy, the call for research began to overshadow the authority of the practitioner, who until that time had been a viable mouthpiece for the field. Composition studies began to demand serious scholarship, research, theory and application, and it called for training for new members in the field from then on. Even though composition became an academic discipline, however, attitudes about writing instruction lingered from the many years in which practitioners were composition's only instructors.

Early Landmarks In the History of Writing Instruction

In order to examine composition studies as a field and composition instruction in particular, it is necessary to look at the circumstances under which postsecondary education has been conceived and taught. Because composition has historically been housed in English literature departments, it is with the English department's success in securing itself in the college curriculum that this discussion shall begin. According to James Berlin's chronicle of writing instruction in America, the establishment of the Modern Language Association in 1883 was the most significant event that provided English a stable place in the college curriculum (*Rhetoric and Reality* 32). Just prior to the formation of the MLA, Harvard instituted an admissions test that was based on a series of required readings. Other universities soon followed Harvard's lead, though many of these required readings varied from school to school. As a result, high school English teachers felt pressure to include these readings in their curriculum. Because there were so many different readings, however, all of them could not be included. Therefore, students who applied to more than one college were at a disadvantage because they had not been able to study all of the required readings in high school. To address this problem two regional lists were adopted by 1894, which gave students a definitive number of readings to study for college admissions tests (33).

While responding to the complaints of college-bound students, the Uniform Lists, as they were called, created a problem for the remainder of high school English students. According to Berlin, these students accounted for 96% of the high school population at the time (33). The developers of the Uniform Lists had the college-bound students in mind, and thus the readings that appeared on these lists were not geared toward the needs and abilities of the majority of high school students. Thus, high school English teachers were forced to develop a curriculum based either on college admissions requirements or the needs of the majority of their students, who were not concerned with such requirements. Teachers who were concerned about meeting the needs of both student groups called for a meeting to discuss the issue. That meeting was held in 1911 and was to become the first meeting of the NCTE (33). Because of its core commitment to students, the NCTE was relegated to the domain of teaching concerns, while the MLA focused its efforts on scholarship (32).

Writing Instruction in the Twentieth Century

Berlin groups his chronicle of writing instruction into four distinct periods. The first phase introduces the three dominant rhetorical approaches that the new college curriculum employed. The second period centers on the explosion of progressive education between the years of 1920 and 1940. The third phase emphasizes the popularity of the communications course between 1940 and 1960.

The fourth period, beginning just before composition became "Composition" as North describes it (15), details the explosion of rhetoric and the teaching of composition.

In order to understand the current state of composition studies, it is necessary to outline some of the major contributions from these four periods. It is also important to note that one period's contributions enabled future research and expansion of the field's definition and purpose. While each contribution and/or approach to teaching writing is situated in a historical framework, some theories and research findings have repeated themselves over the course of the discipline's history. This is neither good nor bad, but part of the complexity of composition--it has always reflected the political, economic and social needs of particular moments. Composition's history attests to its constant companions, politics and social thought.

Writing Instruction in the New College Curriculum: 1900-1920

At the turn of the century, three major approaches to the teaching of writing became prominent (Berlin, Rhetoric and Reality 35). The most well-known and most enduring was the current-traditional rhetoric, found at Harvard and Columbia and several state universities. A rival to current-traditional rhetoric was the rhetoric of liberal culture, which was situated in universities such as Yale and Princeton (35). The third approach, the rhetoric of public discourse (or

transactional rhetoric) was "primarily a Midwestern phenomenon" (35). Each of these approaches was employed as a response to institutional as well as social, economic and political activities at the time.

Current-traditional rhetoric originated at Harvard and became the dominant form of writing instruction out of its devotion to "the meritocracy of middle-class professionalism" (36). While in the past, educational institutions in America were primarily interested in educating the socially and politically privileged, universities at the beginning of the twentieth century "invested [their] graduates with the authority of science and . . . gave them an economically comfortable position in a new, prosperous middle-class culture" (36). As a result, emulation of the scientific method in writing instruction "placed truth in the external world," where meaning existed "prior to the individual's perception of it" (36). That is, current-traditional rhetoric was based on the belief that the scientific method could be used to discover and validate meaning in any and all areas of human behavior (35-36). Answers to questions in writing were then to be found in the external world as well. As a result, emphasis in writing was placed on external features of correctness, including spelling, punctuation, usage, and syntax, ignoring issues of content (38).

The practical aspirations of current-traditional rhetoric were countered by the rhetoric of liberal culture, which was aristocratic and proposed to teach only

the truly gifted students to write. Unlike Harvard, which espoused the belief that "writing instruction should be required for all and should simply cultivate 'good language habits'" (43), Yale concentrated its efforts not on writing instruction for all, but literature for all and writing for the few. The rhetoric of liberal culture was concerned with writing as "the embodiment of spiritual vision, a manifestation of the true significance of the material world" (45). Writing from this approach applauded the individual, as long as an individual's expressions remained within the boundaries of that specific class, namely the educated "aristocracy of leadership and privilege" (45).

As was the rhetoric of liberal culture and current-traditional rhetoric, the rhetoric for public discourse (or transactional rhetoric) was an integral part of the progressive educational movement led by John Dewey and Fred Newton Scott. This third approach to writing instruction combined experiences of the external and the perceptions brought to these experiences by the writer. Reality, then, became "the interplay of observer (writer or speaker), other observers (audience), the material world, and, implicated in each, language" (48). Inherent in this third approach was the value placed on the composing process instead of the final product (50).

Writing Instruction and Progressive Education: 1920-1940

While current-traditional rhetoric continued to be the prevalent approach to

college writing instruction, the 1920s' celebration of the individual challenged current-traditionalist practices, and as a result, variations of this approach emerged. According to Berlin, "the single most significant force behind these new rhetorics . . . was that of progressive education" (59). Progressive education restored faith in institutions' abilities to serve their constituents. It was "concerned with the school serving the well-being of society, especially in ensuring the continuance of a democratic state that would make opportunities available to all without compromising excellence" (59).

As a means for understanding students, progressive education endorsed and consulted the social and behavioral sciences. John Dewey became, for this period, what the transactional rhetoricians were to the early 1900s. Dewey, instead of choosing either the psychologists' interest in the individual or the sociologist's in society at large, attempted to integrate the two (59). Before World War I, social reform was the emphasis; after the war, development of the individual was emphasized without regard for society. Berlin asserts that all writing during this time was seen as creative in nature, whether for individualistic or social ends (60). That is, writing during this time reflected the needs of American society, at one point socially-oriented and at another individualistic to the complete exclusion of society.

One purpose did not completely overcome the other, however, as seen in

the shift back toward socially concerned writing in the late 1920s, after the economic crisis forced Americans to abandon rugged individualism in order to survive (60). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s then, current-traditional rhetoric re-established dominance in writing instruction, though developments within this approach occurred (65). The most significant was "the shift from rhetoric to literature as the basis for study" (71). This shift manifested itself in curricula's emphasis on liberal culture, or education of the elite, not the masses.

Liberal culture "indirectly encouraged the development of expressionistic rhetoric through its philosophical idealism and its emphasis on the cultivation of the self" (73). The Expressionists asserted that "each individual has uniquely creative potentialities and that a school in which children are encouraged freely to develop their potentialities is the best guarantee of a larger society truly devoted to human worth and excellence" (73-74). For the expressionist, meaning could only be discovered by the individual writer, alone, and could not be delivered in "normal, everyday language" (74). Thus, writers were taught the value of metaphors as vehicles of personal expression. An important consequence of the notion that all writing had become viewed as art is that writing teachers were required to be literary artists also. As a result, student writers and teacher-writers became cognizant of the process of writing, or crafting, their art (76).

In 1932, the outcomes from an expressionistic writing class were offered

by J. McBride Dabbs. His students were among the first to use writing portfolios for class production and evaluation. According to Berlin, McBride Dabbs' students kept journals and submitted their portfolios at the end of the semester. While students received an evaluation based on the quality and quantity of the portfolios, they benefitted the most from the value placed on the entire writing process (78-79).

At the same time, a rhetoric of social concern reemerged and increased during the Depression. Writing instruction returned to assigning tasks that "would be needed by adults" (81). In other words, students could no longer afford to spend precious school time on purely expressive pursuits. The effects of the Depression made it necessary for students to acquire skills that they could in turn use in their professional lives. Policy statements during the thirties all articulated the rejection of individualism for communal responsibilities (Applebee 116).

Writing Instruction as General Education: 1940-1960

Between 1940 and 1960, general education became a movement unprecedented in American educational history (Berlin, Rhetoric and Reality 92). Never before had such large numbers of students been enrolled in colleges and universities. Berlin relates that enrollment increased from 1,500,000 in 1939 to 2,444,900 in 1949 (104). General education programs were led by Harvard, which proposed to make college education "essential to the responsibility of every

student" (92). In other words, education was no longer solely the domain of the upper class. Although Harvard led the way, it did not take part in the most prominent feature of the majority of general education programs, the communications course (93). This course combined writing instruction, speech, reading, and listening, and had a tremendous influence on the future of college writing instruction (93). The formation of the communications course came about as a response to the overwhelming number of students enrolled during this time, due largely to the scores of veterans returning from World War II. In order to accommodate such a large student population, the communications course was taught in a variety of disciplines; many schools also made use of writing clinics. The course focused on practical concerns, including lessons in argument, exposition, and critical awareness of bias. In addition, study groups were formed to introduce students to college life. Some of these groups held sessions on library use, reading textbooks, taking notes, and writing exams (97-98). By 1948, over 200 colleges offered a communications course and more were formed in the fifties. While communications courses were widely discussed in academic journals during the forties and fifties, they declined significantly by the mid 1960s due to "the threat they posed to departmental autonomy and academic specialization" (104).

Before the communications course disappeared, however, it generated

enough interest to merit a professional conference devoted to the topic. In 1947, Chicago hosted a conference on communications courses, sponsored by the Speech Association of America and the NCTE. Although that meeting did not generate the interest that its organizers had hoped for, it did facilitate conversation among members of the academic community about the function of writing in university education. In 1948, George Wykoff spoke at the NCTE convention on "the importance of freshman composition to the college student" (105). The participants at that meeting engaged in such an intense conversation following Wykoff's presentation that a spring meeting was proposed to continue the discussion (105). That meeting, held in Chicago in 1949, attracted 500 people. It was sanctioned by the NCTE and was the beginning of what was to be the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Composition's movement toward full recognition as a discipline began as writing teachers started to voice their desire for equal status with literature specialists. With the birth of the 4Cs, and its accompanying journal, College Composition and Communication (CCC), the process of becoming fully recognized officially began.

During the 1950s, however, "English department members began to protest any method of teaching writing that was not based on the study of literature" (107). Their reasoning was that if the English department was going to be forced to provide courses in writing, the department should be able to organize those

courses around its specialty, literature (108). Writing courses that centered on literature, then, provided students and teachers alike with "salvation" from writing courses' doldrums, and teachers could maintain their professional status at the same time (109). This insistence on literature in the writing course was also a response to the climate of the Cold War, when collectivism became the catchword for communist sympathies. Literature was the vehicle through which any divergent, oppositional impulses could travel and not harm the fragility of American democracy at the time (111).

At the same time, an interest in rhetoric as a discipline arose. According to Stephen North, Albert Kitzhaber was the most prominent spokesperson for the rediscovery of rhetoric as course subject in the late 1950s (14-15). Kitzhaber's poignant publications were the ultimate catalyst for the field's true birth as a discipline, especially as educational reform became a prominent feature of the American political system in the late 1950s, largely as a result of the launching of Sputnik in 1958. For Americans, education became a "Cold War crisis, a matter of national defense" (11). The quality of education in American was highly criticized, which made it possible for the National Defense Education Act of 1958 to be passed. The NDEA did not include funding for English until 1964, but Project English, an extension program of the Cooperative Research Program, encompassed literature, language and composition (Berlin 121).

The events that occurred during 1958 and 1959 signaled a sharp turn for writing instruction. National funds were allocated to study the quality of education in American, including the "Basic Issues" conferences funded by the Ford Foundation to examine high school English (121). The English reform movement urged that "English must be regarded as a 'fundamental liberal discipline,' a body of specific knowledge to be preserved and transmitted rather than a set of skills or an opportunity for guidance and individual adjustment" (North 10). Of critical importance during this time, literature continued to be the emphasis of English studies; it was composition, however, and not literature that had attracted federal support. It followed, then, that experts in composition should teach composition (13). Writing instruction at this time, however, was still considered a service course to many. As a consequence, finding "experts" proved to be difficult. English's other components, language and literature, contained their own respective experts, professionals who had no reason or desire to jump their safe, respected ships for a field with little or no respect and a very uncertain future. In light of this, the only people left who could step forward were the very people who had been teaching and administering first-year writing courses in colleges and universities. In fact, this call for composition experts gave these people a chance to become part of the professional world within English studies (North 14). It made perfect sense, and they had nothing to lose.

The events of 1959 propelled these writing instructors into a new era. The "Basic Issues" conferences of 1958 produced a document that was attached to College English in 1959, entitled, The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English. This pamphlet "identified potential research questions," ending with what was, to many, the most important one: "Can the teaching of composition be raised to the same level of academic respectability as the teaching of literature?" (Berlin 124-125). There was much dispute over this question, but Albert Kitzhaber, who chaired the 4Cs meeting in 1959, was asked to respond to a proclamation by Warner Rice that composition instruction should not have to be taught at the postsecondary level. While Rice argued that the abolition of composition would enable college teachers to turn to "different, and more attractive, channels" (362), Kitzhaber replied that what was needed was not abolishment, but improvement. He argued that, as linguistics had its "New Grammar" and literature its "New Criticism," composition needed a "New Rhetoric" in order to complete the triad that made modern English studies (Berlin 126). Kitzhaber continued to publish articles on this issue in College English and CCC and his work launched what was to become modern composition, the discipline, which claimed its subject to be rhetoric.

The Professionalization of Composition Studies: 1960-1975

Kitzhaber's most important contribution to writing instruction was his

book-length study, Themes, Theories, and Therapy: Teaching of Writing in College, which was published in 1963. His proposals were based on a national study of the first-year writing course, funded by a major Carnegie Corporation grant. Kitzhaber found that while high school writing instruction was improving, college-level courses were not. College instruction in writing had remained a service course based mainly on current-traditional rhetoric. According to Berlin, "Kitzhaber proposed in place of the 'service' concept . . . an approach based on the rhetorical tradition . . . [thus] the subject matter of such a course is rhetoric" (129). Kitzhaber named two crucial elements necessary for composition's prosperity. First, the first-year writing course should be based on rhetoric as its subject, and second, English departments should offer rhetoric and teaching writing courses to all future high school and college teachers, as well as encouragement of the same to do research in these areas. Kitzhaber believed that if these two suggestions were implemented, a "New Rhetoric" would emerge as a result (Berlin 130).

In addition, North describes Kitzhaber's proclamations as a "challenge [to the 4Cs] for the exertion of authority over knowledge about composition: what it is, how it is made, who gets to say so and why," instead of what it had done, namely to "spearhead promising new trends or to condemn outworn practices" (North 14-15). Unless writing instruction became more than a service, a

remediation for future and more important work, the first-year writing course would never become a stable part of the college curriculum with a subject matter valuable to its students, and those who taught it would never be more than the para-professionals, or practitioners, that they were.

With Kitzhaber's call for an increase in rhetorical study both as a subject for the first-year composition class and for prospective high school and college writing teachers, others began to explore the possibilities for research in the field, now defined as Composition. The 1960s saw an enormous growth in composition research, ranging from essays and articles to several books on the subject. An important part of these contributions was Martin Steinmann, Jr's "Rhetorical Research," which, like Kitzhaber's work, called for more comprehensive research in rhetoric. Steinmann took his position one step further, however, by outlining five major areas of needed research. Berlin defines these as basic rhetorical research, metarhetorical research, pedagogical research, research in rhetorical criticism, and historical or comparative rhetorical research (132). Berlin's in-depth description of this study suggests that Steinmann's work was a necessary step toward the further professionalization of the field. A brief summary of each of these categories will show that Composition was truly becoming a field of its own.

According to Berlin, Steinmann summarizes basic rhetorical research as

work that would invoke "theories about what makes for effective expression" in order to produce metatheories, or "description and prescription of what makes for an adequate theory" (132). Pedagogical research, in turn, would be used to "develop theories about how best to teach rhetoric" by "studying effective ways of cultivating writing or speaking ability" (132). The theories developed from pedagogical research would then be used to evaluate rhetorical texts and fall under the category of rhetorical criticism. The fifth area, historical rhetorical research, compares various rhetorical theories to each other, thus offering scholars a historical perspective on current teaching approaches and theories (132).

Several book-length studies quickly followed Steinmann's work. In 1967, Gary Tate and Edward P. J. Corbett published Teaching Freshman Composition which explained new rhetorical approaches in the context of classroom application (Berlin 134). W. Ross Winterrowd's Rhetoric: A Synthesis appeared in 1968 as an examination of current developments in the field, and James Kinneavy published A Theory of Discourse in 1971, which Berlin describes as a "historical, philosophical, and linguistic basis for discussions of rhetorical discourse" (134). Also published in 1971 was Janet Emig's landmark study, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, in which the process of writing was for the first time examined at length. Emig found that writing is not created in a linear fashion; rather, it occurs recursively over time. She also discovered that students

indicated greater interest in writing that was not school-based. In other words, Emig found that writing instruction was both uninteresting to students and unrealistic in both content and procedure. Students were expected to produce writing that seemed pointless to them in a manner that was not consistent with their actual composing processes. Emig's study identified the need for writing instruction to provide meaningful writing opportunities to students in a manner that would incorporate the recursive processes of production (4).

While a substantial amount of research began to emerge, however, Berlin claims that "no dominant body of rhetorical theory emerged then or has emerged since to satisfy [Kitzhaber's call for] a New Rhetoric" (137). He continues:

Instead, there has appeared a multiplicity of rhetorics, each attempting to describe in its unique way the elements of the rhetorical act and the manner of conducting it . . . While one system may emerge as dominant--the one preferred by the powerful, for example--it will simultaneously be challenged by other systems, these challenges proliferating in proportion to the freedom tolerated in the society involved. (137-138)

Three Major Rhetorical Approaches:

Objective, Subjective, and Transactional Rhetoric

Acknowledging that a plethora of approaches and theories emerged

between 1960 and 1975, Berlin found that they could be grouped into three distinct categories: the objective, the subjective, and the transactional. The first of these, objective rhetoric, contains "positivistic theories that locate reality in the material world" (139). While current-traditional rhetoric continued to play a prominent role during these years, "the rhetoric most obviously based on a positivistic epistemology during this period arose out of the influence of behaviorist psychology" (140). Although these behavioral theorists did not receive great recognition, their work affected the way that writing teachers perceived the writing process. According to Berlin, Lynn and Martin Bloom and Robert Zoellner argue that "rewarded behaviors tend to persist while punished behaviors tend to be dropped" (Rhetoric and Reality 141). Using this claim as a starting point, they then explored how good writers actually write, in order to verify if successful writing strategies and habits were, in fact, being rewarded (Berlin 141). Bloom and Bloom observed students writing and talked with these students about their composing processes. They recommended that the thinking process of writers needed to be visible both to the student and the teacher. To accomplish this, Berlin explains that Bloom and Bloom "developed a set of workbook exercises to bring about this kind of behavior . . . [by assignments in three areas, namely] generating ideas, construction of the paper, and self-evaluation" (142). These two objective rhetorical theorists also recommended that evaluation criteria

should be thoroughly explained to students, so that they would be able to take more responsibility for their work and have a fully informed vision of their writing abilities at that time (142).

Robert Zoellner supported Bloom and Bloom's call for teachers to observe students' writing processes in his 1969 essay, "Talk-Write: A Behavioral Pedagogy for Composition" (142). He urged teachers to offer "visible rather than invisible" instruction in the various stages of the writing process rather than a set of guidelines for the final written product (143). However, Zoellner claimed that the writing process could not be made visible by what Bloom and Bloom called "approximations toward preferred goals of writing," in which students are made "aware of a given writing problem, . . . generate several possible solutions to it and then select the best one" (131). Zoellner argued that writing processes could only be made visible by emphasizing talk, not thought, for talk was an observable behavior. By replacing students' thoughts about writing with conversation as the means for observation, Zoellner argued that instructors would agree that learning is indeed a "replicable and measurable external event" (274). According to Berlin, Zoellner's belief in visible instruction in the writing process required students to engage in "particular acts rather than strive for particular qualities or models," acts that could, because they had been observed, be reproduced (143). Thus, objective rhetoric called on behavioral psychology to address the

complexities of the writing process that, until that time, had never been considered with such conviction.

The second category of rhetorical approaches Berlin describes during this time period, the subjective rhetoric, was dominated by a group of approaches referred to as expressionistic. "For the expressionist," writes Berlin, "reality is a personal and private construct . . . solitary activity is always promising, group activity always dangerous" (145). A wide variety of expressionistic approaches appeared, each with certain degrees of skepticism toward the role society should have in individual expression. According to Berlin, the federally funded research of Gordon Rohman and Albert Wlecke, published as Pre-Writing: The Construction and Application of Models for Concept Formation in Writing in 1964, was "the earliest and most theoretically complete statement of an expressionistic rhetoric found in this period" (146). Rohman and Wlecke established "the language of process in discussions of writing--considering the stages of prewriting, writing, and rewriting in composing, and especially emphasizing the value of the first" (146). These expressionists viewed writing as a means to the "discovery of the self" (146). In order for self-discovery to occur, however, Jean Pumphrey contended that "a shift in emphasis from teacher-student to student-peer evaluation, and an opening up of the classroom to let in real problems" needed to happen (148).

Unlike the behaviorists, whose composition classes did not reflect the political instability in America at the time, the leading expressionists were concerned that their courses addressed social issues. While the focus of these teachers was on helping their students define themselves, their purpose included society's well-being to some extent. In Writing Without Teachers, Peter Elbow's purpose is for students "to become less helpless, both personally and politically" (vii). Berlin suggests that for Elbow, however, "the personal is the political--the underlying assumption being that enabling individuals to arrive at self-understanding and self-expression will inevitably lead to a better social order" (155).

While subjective and objective rhetoric approach meaning through either an internal or external sense of perception, Berlin describes a third category, transactional rhetoric, that "discovers reality in the interaction of the features of the rhetorical process itself--in the interaction of material reality, writer, audience, and language" (155). Three rhetorical approaches exist within this category: the classical, the cognitive, and the epistemic.

Classical rhetoric revived Aristotelian rationality as the basis for writing instruction. The most prominent of the classical rhetoricians was Edward P. J. Corbett, who published Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student in 1965. Corbett's work detailed the history of classical rhetoric as well as presented a

rhetorical pedagogy for writing teachers. Although rationality and reason were emphasized, Corbett argued for a "holistic response to experience" which included emotion and ethics (157). As a result, Corbett's classical rhetoric involved the whole person, emphasizing "invention, arrangement and style, guiding the student at every step of the composing act" (157).

Like classical rhetoric's reliance on the rational progression of the composing stages, the rhetoric of cognitive psychology "is distinguished by its assertion that the mind is composed of a set of structures that develop in chronological sequence" (159). At the same time, however, cognitive rhetoric acknowledges that a person's environment can be a major determining factor in human development (159). Janet Emig's 1971 study of composing processes falls into the category of cognitive rhetoric. While Emig found that students' writing stages were more recursive than linear, she asserted that certain stages existed, nonetheless. Emig's observation of students' writing processes did not match the typical assertion of writing stages in composition texts. Her work exposed major inconsistencies between the practices of established writers and what was being expected of less experienced student writers. Emig's findings suggested that writing instruction needed to be revised to incorporate the "complex and unsystematic nature of composing" into classroom practice (161). Because of this study, more and more teachers began to incorporate various stages of the writing

process into their composition curricula.

The third approach Berlin includes within transactional rhetoric is epistemic, which claims that "there is no knowledge without language" (167). Unlike the subjective rhetorics, in which the individual reaches or finds knowledge as a solitary act, epistemic rhetoric is based on the belief that a multiplicity of discourses exists because each community practices language differently. That is, each community's language habits come with a set of conventions; and these conventions change as a community changes. Thus, knowledge is socially dependent and highly unpredictable (167). Richard Ohmann provides further explanation of epistemic rhetoric. In his essay, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric" (1964), Ohmann asserts that while old models emphasized persuasion--a writer trying to influence an audience--modern rhetoric included "communication, contemplation; inquiry, self-expression, and so on," or writers making knowledge and sharing it with others (169). Berlin summarizes by saying that "writing always takes place within and reflects a conceptual system . . . or world view" (169).

In addition to Ohmann's research, Kenneth Bruffee offered recommendations for alternatives to absolute teacher authority in the writing classroom. Grounded in epistemic rhetoric, Bruffee, like the expressivists, contended that teachers cannot teach composition. According to Berlin, Bruffee

asserted that instead, they can "arrange optimum conditions" in which students might learn to write. Collaborative learning opportunities, coupled with the teacher's relinquishment of control in the class, were Bruffee's main concern and hopes for the future of Composition (175).

Modern Composition Instruction: 1975-1985

During this time period, as different rhetorical approaches clamored for the spotlight in composition, college education became available to the American population at large, a phenomenon that changed the course of writing instruction forever. Universities were no longer sanctuaries for the already well-educated, upper class citizens. Mass education necessitated change in many areas of the academy, including the English department. In 1970, the City University of New York developed the Open Admissions Policy, which guaranteed every city resident with a high school diploma a place in one of its eighteen colleges, tuition-free (Shaughnessy 1). A wave of students soon appeared in the university, students who had never before been able to attend college. This wave of students included economically disenfranchised students whose high school work was admirable considering their resources, students who were rewarded financially by their parents for staying in New York to attend the new tuition-free school of their choice, and students who came from illiterate family backgrounds, students who enrolled in college because it was an opportunity that had never before been

available to them.

Of this new wave of students, those who had never truly been a part of the language and structure of high school education--those who hadn't learned the rules of academia--were the students who caused many composition instructors to panic during the first several years of the new policy. In brief, they seemed to have come from "a different country" (2). Indeed, many of these students did come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds than the standard American college student. Although most of them were New York natives, many of them came from the ethnic neighborhoods within the city. The language they encountered at home was completely different from the English they heard in school; coming to terms with these opposing languages was very difficult for them. Thus, these students' essays shocked their composition instructors with their apparent lack of basic language skills. Both student and teacher were at a loss for appropriate action. Neither knew the other's language and it was this very lack of understanding that prompted one composition instructor to investigate further, to try to bridge the gap between her understanding of language and theirs.

As the result of almost a decade of data compiled from her own composition students and their work, Mina Shaughnessy produced Errors & Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing in 1977. Shaughnessy attempted to address the particular needs of the new college students who were

obviously underprepared for college-level work. Because this type of student was so unlike the typical college student, some teachers believed that these students were simply "irremediable" (3). Shaughnessy dispelled that belief, however, by examining the specific difficulties of these "basic writers," as she named them, and by "demonstrat[ing] how the sources of those difficulties can be explained" (4). Shaughnessy found that basic writers "write the way they do, not because they are slow or non-verbal, indifferent to or incapable of academic excellence, but because they are beginners and must, like all beginners, learn by making mistakes" (5). The mistakes Shaughnessy focuses on are broken down into six sections: handwriting and punctuation, syntax, common errors, spelling, vocabulary, and sentence combinations. Each of these sections reflects the disparity between basic writers' spoken and written language. Shaughnessy states:

The single most important fact about BW [basic writing] students is that, although they have been talking every day for a good many years, they have been writing infrequently, and then only in such artificial and strained situations that the communicative purpose of writing has rarely if ever seemed real. (14)

Thus, problems with punctuation, syntax, spelling, etc., are not simply problems that have been addressed unsuccessfully; rather, they are problems that appear in a basic writer's work for a variety of reasons, primarily because written

communication is foreign and uncomfortable to the basic writer. Shaughnessy argued that when writing instructors recognize the complexities of a basic writers' work and strive to identify, with that writer, ways in which these complexities can be reduced to make writing more natural, basic writers will begin to feel more at home with written language (15).

Shaughnessy's work has direct implications for composition's instructors. Her suggestions imply that instructors need to be aware of basic writers' timidity with writing and that they will proceed accordingly, not in an attempt to keep these writers at composition's door, but to invite them to participate in a language that can be theirs, no matter what their background. Implicit in Shaughnessy's work is the need for instructors to be familiar with different student populations and their particular writing experiences. This particularly includes graduate student writing teachers, who not only need to know the theories of student writers' complexities, but need the resources with which to approach these complexities. Shaughnessy's work has been an invaluable resource for such instructors, and as writing specialists slowly emerged and began to take over the responsibilities of writing program administrators, resources such as this have become more widely recommended for graduate student writing teacher preparation.

Shaughnessy's work was the first of its kind and heralded a wealth of

further studies on students' varying levels of exposure to composition and their respective needs in college composition classes. Following her study, David Bartholomae contended in a CCC article "The Study of Error" that Shaughnessy only touched the tip of the problem regarding writing instruction for basic writers. In order to issue a call for more teachers to examine the pedagogies involved in the way they approached basic writing, Bartholomae echoed Shaughnessy's position that

[t]hose pedagogies that served the profession for years seem no longer appropriate to large numbers of students, and their inappropriateness lies largely in the fact that many of our students . . . are adult beginners and depend as students did not depend in the past upon the classroom and the teacher for the acquisition of the skill of writing. (253)

In one of the first professional statements about student subjectivity, Bartholomae argued that writing teachers need to know not only what their students need, but how to help meet those needs.

In addition to the growing amount of research in the field, scholars began to produce rhetoric and composition sourcebooks and research anthologies as one means to prepare writing instructors for the classroom. One of the earliest publications of this sort was Gary Tate and Edward P.J. Corbett's The Writing

Teacher's Sourcebook, which appeared in 1981. Still widely used today as required reading for graduate courses in writing instruction, Tate and Corbett's selections cover a wide range of issues from composition's history to the composing process to issues in style, audience, and teaching. The sourcebook is an invaluable, easily accessible source for writing teachers, notable for its list of additional readings at each chapter's end and an extensive annotated bibliography of important books on writing and teaching writing.

Following Tate and Corbett's publication came Erika Lindemann's A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers in 1982, which divided the field into three major concerns for teachers: the composing process, rhetorical theory and practice, and teaching as rhetoric. She offers a comprehensive overview of these three areas and then provides applications of the various theories for composition teachers. Practical in intention and outcome, this manual speaks directly to the teacher who wants or needs to learn more about composition but doesn't have time to complete an independent search for the major contributions and concerns in the field. While these resources served many writing instructors' needs, the development and growth of Ph.D. programs in rhetoric and composition have been by far the most comprehensive means of preparation for writing instructors.

The Rapid Growth of Ph.D. Programs in Rhetoric and Composition

Shortly after composition's birth as an academic discipline, doctoral

programs began offering courses in rhetoric and composition; several institutions established programs that were devoted entirely to the study of rhetoric and composition. However, a substantial number of rhetoric and composition programs did not appear until the 1980s. Compiled by David Chapman and Gary Tate, the spring 1987 issue of Rhetoric Review offered a comprehensive overview of doctoral programs in rhetoric during 1985-1986. This issue updated the work of William Covino, Nan Johnson and Michael Feehan in 1980, entitled "Graduate Education in Rhetoric: Attitudes and Implications" and Nan Johnson's article of the same year, "Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric" (Chapman and Tate 133).

Chapman and Tate identified 53 programs in 1986 that offered specialization in composition or rhetoric, an astounding increase of 33 programs in operation since 1980 (124-125). Of those, more than half were instituted in 1980 or later (128). Chapman and Tate found, however, that of these 53 programs, only 38 provided documentation describing their specialization, "and many flatly admitted that their programs had not been formally recognized or that they did not have the faculty to make the program viable" (125).

The doctoral programs with specializations in rhetoric that Chapman and Tate studied were not unified in many ways. They did find, however, that three types of programs existed: the multidisciplinary, the integrated, and rhetoric and communication itself (130). Most of the identified programs belonged to the

multidisciplinary group in which students often took the majority of their course work in literature, whereas integrated programs are more recent in origin and propose that students receive a mixture of literature and rhetoric studies. The third type of program, the rhetoric and communication program, seems to solve many of the problems of interdisciplinary and integrated programs. At the time of Chapman and Tate's study, only two programs existed within this category, Carnegie Mellon University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The most intriguing feature about these programs, aside from their concentration on rhetoric as their subject, is that these programs are highly research-oriented and they receive major national grants (132). In addition, and perhaps most noteworthy, these programs are the most articulated in terms of philosophy and planned curriculum. In conclusion, Chapman and Tate pose a question for the future of these programs: "Does the study of literature remain the primary mission of the department or should this mission be broadened to include the study of all kinds of texts and the way in which they are produced by all kinds of writers?" (133).

This question can be answered, in part, by the evolution apparent in these programs, as discussed in the February 1994 issue of Rhetoric Review. The current catalogue of doctoral programs in rhetoric and composition, compiled by Stuart Brown, Paul Meyer and Theresa Enos in 1993, attests to the ever-evolving expansion of the field. Since 1987, the number of programs in rhetoric jumped

from 38 with printed documentation to 72 (Brown et al. 240). Of that number, 21 of those programs had been established since 1986. Correspondingly, the number of students pursuing these programs has more than doubled since 1987, with approximately 1,174 students currently enrolled. Brown's group also found that as the programs increased, so did the various specializations:

In 1993 there is much more diversity in program focus. Scientific and technical communication, literary studies, linguistics, literacy programs, cultural studies, creative writing, and teaching are all formally allied with rhetoric and/or composition in one or more of the various programs. Programs are specializing, seeing different ways of integrating themselves with English studies and with the academic world outside English studies, with the result that programs are in many ways becoming less comparable than in the past. (243)

This study concludes with the sentiment that "the discipline has seen a great deal of change in its brief history since the Fall 1948 Conference on College Composition and Communication . . . Rhetoric and composition has obtained an integral and important place in English departments" (250). Indeed, most Ph.D. programs in rhetoric and composition are currently housed in English departments. However, there are several that have become a separate department altogether,

with rhetoric and composition at their core. Whether part of English departments or independent departments of rhetoric, these doctoral programs have grown and, more appropriately, adapted to the ever-changing population of students and instructors walking through a university's doors.

Concerns For Composition's Professionals

As writing instruction found a place in the university curriculum and the need for writing specialists was acknowledged, an efficiency movement began to sweep American institutions. According to Berlin, "objectives and accounting procedures characteristic of the business community began to appear in discussions of academic matters" (*Rhetoric and Reality* 53). A joint study by the NCTE and the MLA indicated that the effectiveness of writing instruction was impeded by the amount of work for which those instructors were responsible. The study identified the average number of students in a writing class and the amount of written work produced by each student per week. Based on those factors, the report found that college writing teachers had an average of 31 hours of student manuscript reading per week, in addition to their other teaching responsibilities. In an attempt to insure efficiency, the report recommended that writing teachers' work loads should be calculated by the number of students rather than the number of teaching hours (53). As a result, the NCTE and the MLA recommended that college writing teachers should never have more than 35 students per term and

that these writing classes "should be taught by the best teachers in the department, not the newest" (54).

Many of the "newest" teachers, however, were English graduate students who subsidized the cost of their education by staffing writing courses. Because they were also still students, however, low salaries and heavy workloads were justified by department and university administrators in the name of attaining practical experience. Thus, universities perpetuated the very problems addressed by the NCTE and the MLA by encouraging inexperienced English graduate students to staff writing classes. Economically-driven decisions such as this were also political in nature. While writing instruction had found a place within English departments, the purpose and content of these classes had not been universally defined. Differences in language theory and, in turn, course content varied widely among colleges but more damaging were the differences found among colleagues within individual English departments--specifically a resistance to teaching such courses. Trained in literature, the faculty members who did teach composition did not have any specific expertise other than believing that they were good writers themselves. Thus, composition instructors were practitioners, not writing specialists, and because there weren't any specialists yet, writing instruction fell to the hands of those who were least likely to be in positions to refuse, namely, graduate students. The inability of instructors to

define composition thus enabled college administrators to exploit graduate student writing teachers; these teachers provided cheap labor for a course that, according to English department faculty, did not require any special knowledge about writing. This exploitation of graduate student writing instructors and, as importantly, the disservice to student writers, would continue well past the year of composition's professionalization.

Composition has become more defined, however, as researchers and Ph.D.s in rhetoric and composition have proliferated, adding to the body of authorities in the field, authorities who direct composition's purpose and goals. The theories of writing instruction that these new authorities have developed have contributed largely to the call for all writing instructors to be professionals. With current theories of writing instruction acknowledging that a multiplicity of discourses exists, researchers began to question teachers' preparedness for such a diverse, growing number of language performances existing within a broad definition of English. In the past, questions had been raised about the lack of training for graduate students, whose primary responsibility--as graduate teaching assistants and as neophyte professionals--would be composition. These questions, however, had never been more than superficial arguments that nobody in the field had attempted to solve. As the major rhetorics put more and more demand on teachers not only to be writers themselves, but to be able to articulate the theories

of composing inherent in their experiences as writers and teachers, those who taught writing witnessed--and sometimes resisted--the revolution in writing instruction. Instructors were no longer able simply to be practitioners and yet, at the same time, training for new members of the writing faculty was sporadic, at best. Practitioners still inundated the field, and those who had educated themselves about certain areas of writing instruction were suspect. As specialists in a specific area of writing instruction, these people were often not acknowledged as authorities in the field by those who still suspected the disciplinarity of composition. Thus, authorities began to emerge in the midst of an often hostile working environment.

Because there has been such great suspicion about composition's validity even after it has become an established discipline, the transformation of instructors from practitioners to specialists has been problematic and has not been completed to this day. This has been especially true for graduate student writing teachers. As composition's history has shown, writing instruction has been largely influenced by economically and politically-driven decisions. While composition scholars began to emerge and challenge the wisdom of the practitioners, economics and politics continued to shape the state of composition, the discipline. Over and over again, research showed that instructors were undertrained and overworked. One of the most comprehensive reports on the profession's

instructors was Kenneth Eble's 1972 essay, "Preparing College Teachers of English," in which he argued that even though teaching writing occupies the majority of most faculty members' time, it is given equal status neither in graduate education nor within the profession itself (385).

Like previous reports, however, Eble's study did not receive the attention he had hoped for. Part of Eble's report itself offers an explanation. He reported that graduate students were encouraged to become scholars in their field--which was still primarily literature--while at the same time supporting themselves by teaching composition. A great division still existed between scholars (literature specialists) and teachers (the emerging composition specialists). Even though many instructors taught composition, enjoying it was not something a "professional" was encouraged to acknowledge. This attitude was clearly visible to new graduate student writing instructors, and hoping to secure their place within the academy, they imitated the disparaging attitude. This departmental attitude (one that university administrators had as well) exacerbated the problems underlying training for graduate student writing teachers. Supporting an integrated, full-blown training program for graduate student writing teachers--as Eble and others before him had recommended--would require both economically and politically that the English department and its supporting institution recognize the importance of composition not only in undergraduate education but for

graduates as well. Until more writing specialists emerged and gained authority, the call for training of new composition instructors would remain disregarded.

Fortunately, more writing specialists have begun to emerge, largely because of the growing number of doctoral programs in rhetoric and composition. As more and more composition specialists are hired, the resources they bring with them have enabled departments to plan and develop more comprehensive approaches in which graduate student writing teachers can become professionals. In addition, these graduate student writing teachers now have more opportunities to become writing specialists than at any other time in composition's history. Although these instructors are very transitory, staying at one particular institution for no more time that it takes to complete their degrees, composition's history has shown that writing instruction's effectiveness rests on its instructors' knowledge of the field and application of its principles. Therefore, it is essential that writing instructors be professionals, whether they be graduate student writing teachers, adjunct or fixed term faculty, or full members of a university's composition faculty.

Graduate student writing teachers differ from other members of composition's faculty, though. As students, they have more opportunities for learning than full-time faculty members. Even if their primary interest is in literature, courses in writing instruction and composition theory are available and

should be an integral part of all graduate student writing instructors' education. Unlike adjunct and fixed term writing instructors, who may not have access to such courses, graduate student writing teachers represent the hope for composition's future success as a discipline. If institutions support training programs for these writing instructors, their professionalization will increase composition's validity and effectiveness, thus helping make composition a field in which instructors must be writing specialists, not merely good writers.

Chapter 2

Contemporary Theories of Composition

As specialists in rhetoric and composition have grown in number and infiltrated English department writing programs, a call for informed teaching has emerged; unlike similar advocates in the past, these specialists have the background, the interest, and a firm place within the academy from which to substantiate the call. As a result, practitioners are now being encouraged to study various theories of composition and their implications for the classroom. Because a large number of these practitioners are graduate students, opportunities for instruction in composition theory are crucial for the field's continuing efforts toward professionalization. While university administrations--guided by economic forces--will likely continue to use graduate students as cheap labor to staff

composition classes, these instructors can, at the very least, be more informed--that is, more professional--teachers of writing.

In order for graduate student writing teachers to become informed professionals, contemporary theories of composition should be introduced and studied in close association with the history of composition instruction. Composition specialists have developed theories of writing based on the evolution of the field, particularly of composing processes. Without an understanding of early theories of composition and the research that reassessed and revised them, these writing instructors will have difficulties defending their practices. It is essential that graduate student writing teachers not only know and utilize these current theories of composition, but have an understanding of their exigency and implications, as well. This chapter, then, will describe the theories of composition in practice today, some of which are continuing to be revised and challenged, given specialists' knowledge of composing processes and the incredibly diverse population of students now enrolled in universities. Implicit in this discussion is the realization that every theory of composition comes replete with beliefs about language use and a definition of literacy as well as the consequences of those beliefs.

Currently, there seem to be three major categories of composition theory recognized and practiced by composition scholars. While such specialists refer to

these categories by different titles, Lester Faigley's descriptions appear to express them best. To use Faigley's terms, then, the three categories of composition theory are the expressive, the cognitive, and the social (527). Although composition specialists employ one or more of these three theories, many practitioners (faculty who teach writing but are not composition specialists) continue to follow what Berlin describes as the current-traditional theory of composition (Rhetoric and Reality 7). While all four of these theories are in use, many composition specialists argue that the social theory is the most beneficial to students and most useful given the demographics of composition classrooms today. This claim becomes more evident as one looks at the development of each theory in light of composition's history. Without a knowledge of the field's evolution, then, new writing instructors have none of the profession's landmarks by which to judge the origins of their practices. Like any other discipline, composition's success rests on professional developments in both its research and application. Therefore, the purpose of the following discussion is to introduce both the widely-used current-traditional theory of composition as well as the three major theories in use today by composition scholars and to explain some of the advantages and disadvantages of these theories. If graduate student writing teachers are thoroughly familiar with composition's history and the theories of composition that have emerged out of that history, they will be able to

pick and choose among particular theories of writing instruction as informed professionals in the field.

Current-Traditional Theory of Composition

Berlin's chronicle of writing instruction in America establishes that current-traditional rhetoric has been the most dominant theory throughout the twentieth century (36). As detailed in the previous chapter's discussion of current-traditional rhetoric, this theory was introduced when universities began to offer instruction to middle class citizens in addition to the education of the social elite. Instructors applied the principles of the scientific method in order to teach the fundamentals of writing.

Those who support current-traditional rhetoric understand reality to be located in the material world, which is assumed to be the same for everyone. Thus, truth exists as a constant through a shared vision of the world, and writing instruction's purpose is to teach students the correct means of expressing that truth. Berlin asserts that for the current-traditional theorist,

[T]ruth in written discourse is conceived exclusively in empirical and rational terms, with emotion and persuasion relegated to oral discourse. The writing class is to focus on discourse that deals with the rational faculties: description and narration . . . exposition . . . and argument. (8)

Therefore, writing instruction for the current-traditional theorist becomes a series of lessons in the modes of discourse. Current-traditionalism does not dismiss the importance of language, however. Berlin asserts that, according to current-traditional theorists, an author's attention to language is crucial to her success; she must be precise in communicating her message in order to avoid distorting the truth (9). As a result, current-traditional rhetoric focuses on the precise communication of truths which are easily accessible through the correct use of language--that is, the language conventions of the educated upper class.

Current-traditional rhetoric's popularity stems from its belief that writing can be shaped into a concrete set of areas for instruction. The modal approach enables instructors to provide specific plans for a semester's class in which students are required to write a certain number of essays or themes through certain modes. In such a class, students are taught that there is one correct performance of language, so each assignment is based on the same expectations of language use. Students benefit from the emphasis on correctness by learning that careful editing is essential to a piece's success. The craft of writing precisely and correctly is the intended outcome of such a course. According to the current-traditional paradigm, learning the correct use of language gives students the ability to write well in any variety of modes.

There are a number of disadvantages to this theory of writing, however,

which have in part led to the three current theories of composition in use by writing specialists today. One of the major drawbacks to the current-traditional theory of composition is its belief that reality is a fixed or neutral component in the writing equation. When university students came from similar (i.e., upper class) economic, social and ethnic backgrounds, instructors could assume a shared experience of language usage that followed upper class conventions and views of the world. As universities began to admit a wider variety of students, however, shared perceptions of reality could no longer be assumed. Thus, the writing instructor who follows such a theory denies the possibility of students' differing realities. The emphasis on arrangement and superficial correctness is then a way to address surface deviation without having to address issues of content or differing world views. Comments entirely devoted to issues of style and correctness do not fully satisfy students who are genuinely interested in expressing a world view other than that of the student majority (if there is one) or the instructor. Such views are not subjects for discussion in the current-traditional classroom, for the purpose of such a classroom is to enable students to attain "professional competence in a technological world" (Knoblauch, "Literacy and the Politics of Education" 75). In other words, current-traditional theorists believe that literacy "safeguards the socioeconomic status quo" because the literate dictate the level of literacy to be taught to the masses (76). As much as the current-

traditional theory of composition may reward already prepared students, its limitations for serving a more diverse student population prompted change in composition instruction. The remainder of this discussion will focus on three theories currently in use that both respond to current-traditionalism's limitations and embrace its strengths.

Expressive Theory of Composition

The expressive theory of composition emphasizes the need for students to write with what Ken Macrorie and others call an "authentic voice." Criticizing writing that does not allow students to discover individual perceptions of truth, those who support the expressive theory of composition encourage students to write from their personal experiences in their own particular language. Macrorie argues against the use of traditional academic writing, what he calls "Engfish"--the "phony pretentious language of the schools" (Telling Writing 11). When students stop writing Engfish, the theory goes, then student texts become interesting to students and teachers alike.

For the expressive theorist, truth cannot be taught, but individuals can discover truth through their own experiences with writing. While some would argue that good writers are born, not made, other expressivists have dismissed that argument by emphasizing each student's potential to produce quality writing (Faigley 531). Good writing is that which expresses an individual's intentions in

her natural voice. The writer's voice identifies a piece of writing as either truthful or deceitful. Good writing mandates truth, but ultimately the only person who can say if the writing is truthful or not is its author. While readers may not experience an entire piece as a truth, the author is responsible for making any changes, and all changes are made only if they will increase the author's sense of truthfulness. Readers may make suggestions, but they aren't privy to the author's particular perception of the world and, thus, her conception of reality. Writing classes, then, become an opportunity for students to write from their personal realities. Instead of assigning themes, teachers expect students to write from their experiences, thus encouraging individual authority over texts rather than group or teacher authority. While reality can't be taught, instructors foster an environment that encourages individuals to discover their realities. Writing instruction is not really instruction, then, but discussion, and student texts are the only textbooks in such classes.

Classroom applications of the expressive theory of composition cover such exercises as those found in Ken Macrorie's Telling Writing, including free writing, sharing, responding, tightening, as well as creating form and observing conventions. Macrorie suggests that each composition course begin with several classes devoted entirely to free writing and sharing. For Macrorie, writing freely is an activity that helps students begin to tell truths and speak in their own voices.

Macrorie describes writing freely as an exercise that begins without focus and remains the foundation for his entire course:

Write for ten minutes as fast as you can, never stopping to ponder a thought. Put down whatever comes to your mind . . . If nothing comes, . . . look in front of you or out the window and begin describing whatever you see. Let yourself wander to any subject, feeling, or idea, but keep writing. When ten minutes is up, you should have filled a large notebook-sized page. (18)

Macrorie assigns several rounds of this non-focused writing, stressing the importance of the act, not the content:

Go beyond ten minutes if the river keeps flowing. But don't expect anything. You're just warming up. Maybe none of your ten-minute writings will produce an interesting sentence. Don't worry. Write. And don't think about punctuation or grammar or style . . . Maybe your writing will be completely uninteresting to others. As long as you are trying to write honestly and you are writing as fast and steadily to fill up a page or two without stopping, you are writing freely. (22)

With this exercise as an introduction to writing with an "authentic voice," students not only produce a large amount of writing from the very start but they get to hear

what other members of the class are writing. Macrorie collects the assignments and distributes copies of pieces that appeal to him. Students then comment on the copies as they wish, either orally or on the copy itself. Commentary is strictly voluntary. Macrorie's only restriction for the first few discussions is that comments be entirely positive. As the class reads more and more free writing pieces chosen for discussion, students hear more and more about what makes the pieces interesting, whether troublesome, fascinating, dark or humorous. The idea is that students will drop any non-authentic voice when it becomes apparent to them that writing for the instructor is neither expected nor desired.

When students have communicated positive comments about their peers' writing for some time, Macrorie allows critical comments to enter class discussions. Inherent in this shift is the expressivist's belief that readers' criticisms point to insufficient expression of a particular writer's truth. While readers offer suggestions, it is ultimately up to the author to make revision decisions. Macrorie suggests that students will comment most positively on pieces of writing that meet the following criteria:

1. They do not waste words. 2. They speak in an authentic voice.
3. They put readers there, make them believe. 4. They cause things to happen for them [readers] as they happened for the writer (or narrator).
5. They create oppositions which pay off in surprise.

6. They build. 7. They ask something of readers. 8. They reward them with meaning. (34)

Not all of these qualities are necessarily present in an initial attempt but as the result of several attempts. Macrorie calls part of this process "tightening," in which unnecessary portions are deleted and unexplored areas are addressed (35). In addition to tightening, writers look for cliches, repeated words or messages, and things that get in the way of the facts. All of these details help writers stay true to their voice, and when the voice rings true, readers instantly connect with it even if they understand it in a way entirely different from the author's intentions.

Another one of Macrorie's practices is the I-Search paper. Instead of assigning traditional research projects, Macrorie requires students to pursue an "I-Search," in which "[a] person conducts a search to find out something he needs to know for his own life and writes the story of his adventure" (preface, The I-Search Paper, n.p.). Requiring an I-Search paper is another way Macrorie convinces students that English is not desired. Macrorie advises students, "[not to] be satisfied with something you can do that seems proper for school. You're in command here, and there must be a payoff for *you*" (62 author's italics). Like his other classroom exercises, the I-Search paper encourages students to write in an authentic voice and to make learning meaningful for their lives.

Like Macrorie, Peter Elbow encourages students to write from personal

experience in order to make learning meaningful, but Elbow also recognizes and addresses the complications that arise when students are given complete authority for their productions. In his article "Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process," Elbow suggests that academic standards and student authority can be reconciled in the composition classroom (221). In order to accomplish this, he recommends that teachers discuss institutional standards at the outset of any given course, along with that particular instructor's expectations. Elbow recognizes the dilemma that teachers encounter when they want to help students focus on personal discoveries through the process of writing in their own voices, on the one hand, while being expected to enforce academic language standards for written products, on the other. Elbow's solution is one of accommodation. He believes that if teachers inform students of the specific expectations for any given course--the standards to which the teachers are accountable--teachers can then spend the majority of the course as coaches, helping students reach these expected standards (229). Unlike Macrorie, who devalues institutional expectations that students achieve proficiency in the conventions of academic discourse, Elbow recognizes that students who do not meet such expectations will be penalized for their deficiencies. Thus, Elbow's application of the expressive theory of composition integrates his belief that students have to strive to reach institutional standards for written academic discourse in order to be taken seriously.

For the new writing instructor who chooses to follow the expressive theory of composition, the purpose of writing is to discover and express reality as individuals perceive it. Expressive theorists are committed to giving students ample opportunities to discover these realities. Regardless of a student's experience with writing, proponents of the expressive theory of composition assert that every student will be able to find an "authentic voice" via the free writing exercises described. In addition, writers will be able to refine that voice according to readers' responses regarding points in which the authenticity of their voice wanes. Particularly for students who are not very familiar and/or comfortable with written discourse, the expressive theory of composition seems to offer a nurturing atmosphere in which to grow.

There are drawbacks to the expressive theory, however. If the discovery of truth is a personal experience, as expressivists contend, a student must rely on her own abilities to maintain an authentic voice. Others' suggestions do not mandate revision. Thus, the relationship between an author and her world--her audience, her society--is limited. In other words, expressive theorists isolate the discovery of truth and the corresponding expression of reality to the individual so much that the result is "a turning away from the relation of the individual to the social world" (Faigley 531). While the encouragement of personal growth is commendable, students in most educational settings are usually required to

communicate some understandable concept to a reader. Unfortunately, expressive theorists do not believe that knowledge can truly be shared and this belief manifests itself in their classrooms. There are no formulas for students to follow in order to discover truth or express a reality. Therefore, students are often left to their own devices to discover and express particular truths and to refine their uses of language to fit academic expectations.

Cognitive Theory of Composition

While some writing instructors believe that composing is an unpredictable, individual and absolutely personal process, other instructors have developed maps of composing processes by observing their students. These instructors have embraced cognitive science by claiming that, while writing may be a personal activity, it is an act that can indeed be predicted. As a consequence, students can then be expected to follow a somewhat universal model of the composing process. For the cognitive theorist, then, writing is a process that can be taught. These theorists believe, however, that each student's decisions during the writing process vary according to the writer's goals and/or restrictions for a piece of writing. In other words, there are certain elements involved in the process of writing, but these elements do not combine in any one particular configuration to make "the writing process," though they do believe that all of these elements are required parts of the process (Flower and Hayes 375). Instead, writers use elements of the

process as they are needed--some writers call on a certain element primarily at the beginning of the process, while others might use that same element all the way through the process. Despite these variations, however, the process of writing can be defined and captured.

The main difference between the expressive and cognitive theories of composition, then, deals with the ability to communicate and identify writers' processes. For the expressive theorist, the writing process is a personal journey that cannot be anticipated or mapped. Arrival at truth comes from the discovery of an authentic voice. For the cognitive theorist, however, the writing process can be anticipated and therefore mapped. In fact, the cognitive theorist would argue that writers follow universal laws concerning the production of texts. The writing process is then naturally communicable. Thus, the cognitive theory of composition captures the expressive theorist's desire to encourage personal discovery in that it provides students with a model of the composing process, comprised of discrete components which lead to such discovery.

Two cognitive theorists who have had a great impact on the process approach to writing are Linda Flower and John Hayes, who used protocol analysis to form the foundation for a cognitive process model of composing. In "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," Flower and Hayes outline four major components of their theory. The first point describes the writing process as "a set

of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing" (366). While this point may seem logical, Flower and Hayes contend that these processes do not occur linearly, as earlier research suggested. Supporting Janet Emig's assertion that writing is a "recursive" process, Flower and Hayes suggest that thinking and re-thinking processes occur throughout the composing process.

The cognitive process model, then, reflects "elementary mental processes" instead of stages of completion (367). There are three major elements that Flower and Hayes identify: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and writing processes, which include planning, translating, and reviewing. Students begin any writing task with a rhetorical problem. The students' understanding of that problem is part of the task environment, which restricts and defines some of the earliest decisions made in the writing process (369). Flower and Hayes' model addresses issues of topic, audience, and exigency in this first stage and they recognize that students often define their rhetorical problems only to the extent that they can solve these problems (369). In other words, students are likely to overlook parts of rhetorical problems because writing assignments have largely focused on surface features of arrangement and style and have ignored issues of content depth and purpose. As students are given opportunities to write from rhetorical problems that they create themselves, they will correspondingly be more

apt to solve these problems in more comprehensive ways.

Following the rhetorical problem, Flower and Hayes' model addresses the influence of a writer's long-term memory on the process of composing. A student's long-term memory contains her knowledge about the topic and her audience as well as internalized ideas about what makes writing good. Of the other two elements in the model (rhetorical problem and composing processes), long-term memory is associated only with writing processes (370). Therefore, the model suggests that a writer's long-term memory can be invoked in association with her actual process of writing but not as part of the process of identifying the rhetorical problem. Thus, long-term memory is not readily accessible and is most useful when adapted to the particular demands of the rhetorical problem, namely, the writing processes. Writing processes involve planning, translating, and reviewing. During any work in this element, the writer also becomes a monitor, constantly evaluating the needs of the work and herself. For instance, the monitor guides the process of planning, which may include various amounts of generating ideas, organizing, and goal-setting. These areas may or may not be represented through formal language; rather they form an "internal representation" of a writer's plans for a piece (372).

Flower and Hayes stress that planning done at one point in the process may in fact lead to redefining the rhetorical problem and, in turn, lead to more

planning. As a result, planning occurs at many times during the composing process. Translating is the process of transforming the internal representation of a rhetorical problem into written text that meets the demands of formal English (373). These demands must correspond with the writer's developmental stage as a writer; otherwise, translation will either interfere with planning or it will lack the formal characteristics of English required to expose a writer's plan (373). In addition to translating, room for reviewing is a key component to the cognitive process model of composing. Not only can reviewing lead to further translating but it can accompany planning and translating. In other words, reviewing can occur at any time during the process, serving as an evaluative method that may lead to revision--further planning, goal-setting, translating.

Flower and Hayes developed the cognitive process model of composing to describe what the composing process actually looks like. Inherent in their argument is the belief that writers use certain parts of the model according to the goals that the writers themselves establish for the specific writing task, and that students' use of the model will vary even when similar goals are reported. However, Flower and Hayes' cognitive process model does not address students' differing cognitive development when their primary languages are not standard American English, the expected discursive outcome of the process. The absence of such distinctions is unfortunate, for it then appears that the scientifically-

developed cognitive model is not concerned with the composing difficulties students encounter as non-native speakers of English, let alone English-speaking students whose primary dialect is not Standard American English.

For the writing instructor who chooses to adopt a cognitive theory of composition, the writing process is an activity that can be broken down into discrete, recursive pieces for instruction. As a reaction against the extremely loose structure of the expressive theorist's classroom, the cognitive theorist's composition course is structured around the various stages that construct the writing process. Students learn that the pieces to the process can be called upon at any time and do not have to follow any given pattern.

However, the cognitive theorist tends to deny some students' realities by assuming that there are discrete components that each student utilizes during the process of writing. Students who do not fit into the traditional education paradigm--good academic citizens who know what and how to perform in school and are familiar with Standard American English--will not benefit from such a universalized plan for writing. While such a plan identifies major components that occur during the process of writing, it does not explain how a writer moves from one piece of the puzzle to another or when such moves should happen. For underprepared students, many barriers to becoming accomplished academic writers still exist. Like the current-traditionalist and the expressivist, the cognitive

theorist does not account for the growing diversity of students' experiences with language in a way that can combine both individualism and social conventions of language use. Because cognitive theorists believe there are set components to the writing process that all writers utilize, any experience that differs from their universalized map is discounted. Difference is acknowledged, but still not incorporated as a central component of the course. Thus, differences in language use are minimized to such an extent that the cognitive theory of composition does not acknowledge the difficulties students may have who are not familiar with standardized written discourse, for any number of social, economic, ethnic and gender-related reasons.

Social Theory of Composition

The diversification of university student populations over the last thirty years has led some composition specialists to believe that universal laws of composing can not possibly exist. Instead, social theorists claim that certain writing conventions operate in particular settings and therefore negate the cognitive theorists' universalized picture of the writing process because different conventions are required for different writing occasions. For instance, Standard American English has been the typical language convention of academic discourse. Each specific setting--what social theorists call a discourse community--has its own set of conventions and as the community changes, so do its conventions. At

the center of the social theory of composition is the belief that knowledge is created not in isolation but by discourse communities and that knowledge changes as the conventions of such communities change; without society, or distinct discursive practices, there is no knowledge and thus no truth (Bizzell 79). In this respect, then, social theorists would also challenge expressivism's belief in the isolated, individual act of composing. Thus, for the social theorist, writing instruction is not a forum for isolated, personal discovery nor a universalized plan for composing, but a course in which the conventions of academic discourse communities (which vary from discipline to discipline) are introduced, explained, and (ideally) practiced.

Although some would argue that writing instruction is not political, the social theorist argues that all instruction is embedded in society and, therefore, undeniably political in nature. Patricia Bizzell, one of the social theorists' leading advocates, claims that when the existence of discourse communities is acknowledged, the politicization of the classroom cannot be ignored (99). Thus, the language agenda of any writing instructor would be brought to the forefront of instruction because it informs the discussion of the conventions practiced in various discourse communities and the values inherent within them.

Bizzell's claims that knowledge is created in particular social contexts and changes over time parallels Berlin's description of the epistemic form of

transactional rhetoric. As discussed in the previous chapter, Berlin asserts that social-epistemic rhetoric is the transaction between the material, the private, and the social; truth is created when all three of these interact through language (Rhetoric and Reality 16). Therefore, social-epistemic theorists believe that knowledge is a social construction, always dependent on the particular conventions of a certain discourse community.

Unlike the current-traditionalist's belief that there is one set of acceptable language conventions that can be plugged into any writing task, social theorists argue that different writing tasks require different conventions. In other words, social theorists believe that different kinds of writing and their different purposes dictate the conventions which writers use. Maxine Hairston describes three classes of such writing situations: maintenance or message writing (which many people do on a regular basis and is not normally the subject of scholastic assignments), complex but self-limiting writing, and extended reflective writing (444). Hairston states that Class II writing primarily involves the organization of materials into a cogent argument or statement and is often the type of writing that students are asked to produce in school. Class II writing requires students to draw upon the conventions of academic discourse and the current-traditional and cognitive methods of composing. Class III writing is more generative than organizational and asks students to generate original thoughts on academic topics;

Class III writing invokes the expressive theory of composing as well as requiring students to mold their texts into the conventions of academic discourse. Hairston argues that students ought to be introduced to both Class II and Class III writing:

Our goal in teaching writing should be to teach students . . . to understand how the classes differ and when each is appropriate . . . One class isn't better than another; each has its place, and each has its own kind of excellence. We should also show them how to move between Class II and Class III writing on some writing tasks--relying on discovery and intuition at some stages, but turning to strategies for getting down what they already know or applying problem-solving strategies at others. (451)

In other words, Hairston argues for an integration of current-traditional, expressive, and cognitive approaches to writing because students will be required to produce different types, or classes, of writing in different contexts. Her argument supports Bizzell's and Berlin's claims that language cannot be separated from society; different writing tasks are embedded in different discourse communities and require different conventions.

The social theorist's belief that discourse communities shape knowledge and, in turn, language offers some explanations for students' difficulties with academic writing that other composition theories have not addressed. Social

theorists argue that students' difficulties with the conventions of standard academic discourse do not imply that they are illiterate and incapable of mastering such conventions, as early theories (including the present manifestation of current-traditionalism) suggest. Rather, students' difficulties represent reasoned choices in an attempt to imitate academic discourse, even though such choices may not always appear successful. David Bartholomae argues that students who are unfamiliar with the conventions of academic discourse have to

invent the university . . . 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)

In the process of trying on the discourse of academia, such student writers will make mistakes that signal their newness as academic language users. Bartholomae has studied such mistakes and he argues that they directly reflect a student's attempt to "carry off the bluff" of writing for an unfamiliar discourse community ("Inventing the University" 135). Instead of tagging these students as incapable, Bartholomae suggests that teachers should talk with students about the language choices they make in an attempt to understand the logic of their decisions. As a result, teachers can identify and explain differences between the conventions that students follow and those of academic discourse. Bartholomae argues that

students need opportunities to learn these differences instead of being expected to write as if they were automatically comfortable with the conventions of academic discourse (157).

The social theory of composition not only acknowledges that a multitude of differing discourses are at work in a single composition classroom, but proposes that introductions to such different discourses be integrated into class discussions.

Lester Faigley describes the social theory of composition this way:

[T]aking a social view requires a great deal more than simply paying more attention to the context surrounding a discourse. It rejects the assumption that writing is the act of a private consciousness and that everything else--readers, subjects, and texts--is 'out there' in the world. The focus of a social view of writing, therefore, is not on how the social situation influences the individual, but on how the individual is a constituent of a culture. (535)

Thus, for the graduate student writing teacher who chooses to follow the social theory of composition, her purpose is not simply to acknowledge that particular writing habits and uses come from the conventions of specific discourse communities, but that such differences become the central point from which her composition courses begin.

Just as the current-traditional, expressive, and cognitive theories of composition contain limitations, there are drawbacks to the social theory of composition. Faigley acknowledges that literacy acquisition as a "social activity within a specific community will not necessarily lead us to a desirable end"--that is, conventions established by communities exclude individual choices and can lead to oppression within a community (538). Thus, if social theorists suggest that the conventions of academic discourse be brought out into the open in composition classrooms, such theorists should also be able to explain why such conventions are crucial to the educational system in America and how the mastery of said conventions will empower students, particularly those who have lived by other discourse communities' conventions until they began formal schooling. The social theory of composition seems to suggest the political reality that students should be introduced to various language practices and conventions; graduate student writing teachers who apply this theory should be able to contend with the costs of acquiring such conventions.

What These Theories Give Graduate Student Writing Teachers

In conclusion, each theory of composition implies different purposes for literacy. Expressive theory proposes that literacy is for personal growth and development. To the extent that this type of literacy does not upset the status quo, C. H. Knoblauch argues that administrators welcome it as a means of meeting the

needs of marginalized groups (78). Cognitive theory represents successful writing as the result of a series of universal components that make up students' writing process. While individuals develop at different speeds and under various environmental influences, these differences do not affect the universalized process of writing because they are subdued, incorporated into other more "important" sections of the process model of composing, such as planning and translating. Like the expressive theorist, the cognitive theorist also defines literacy as that which educates but maintains the status quo because difference is recognized but not integrated into the process of learning (79). The social theory of composition, however, proposes that literacy "constitutes a means to power, a way to seek political enfranchisement" (79). Unlike the current-traditional, expressive, and cognitive theories of composition, the social theory suggests that literacy empowers people to question those who hold power over the illiterate. Literacy then is for political and social change (76). The differences between these three theories of composition are important because they form the bases for graduate student writing teachers' theoretical choices. For such teachers, then, understanding the different theories of composition enables them not only to construct a theory that best matches their beliefs and goals but to understand their department's and university's positions on composition.

Chapter 3

Recommendations for Graduate Assistant

Teaching Preparation

Numerous studies describe the characteristics of graduate assistant training programs in generic terms. Although such studies are helpful, I am most interested in describing a formalized preparation program for graduate assistants who work in the English department of a four-year public university that has an emphasis on education and teacher preparation and has a small but free-standing Master's program in English. Morehead State University is such an institution. The Master's program in English at Morehead State University has primarily granted degrees to secondary school teachers seeking permanent certification; such graduate students have not held graduate assistantships. As a result, the number of graduate students with assistantships has been small. However, the graduate program in English has recently begun to offer more GA positions and thus more graduate assistants the opportunity to teach first-year composition.

Because graduate student writing teachers are a relatively new phenomenon in MSU's English department, this seems to be the perfect opportunity to formalize the GA training program if the English department is going to continue to ask GAs to teach composition. A good way to begin this formalization is to develop a preparation program that incorporates formal course work in

composition history and theory with practical experience and mentoring opportunities to encourage informed pedagogical choices for new practitioners. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to provide ways in which MSU and universities like it can formalize their graduate assistant preparation programs. The following suggestions are broken down into three sections: When to Put GAs in the Classroom, Suggestions for a GA Preparation Seminar, and Anticipated Results. The recommendations in these sections represent one way for universities such as MSU to prepare graduate assistants for their teaching responsibilities. If such preparation is available to all graduate student writing instructors, these practitioners will contribute more fully to composition programs and, in turn, help strengthen the field while becoming more informed, professional writing teachers themselves.

I. When to Put Graduate Student Teachers in the Classroom: Mentoring Programs and Independent Teaching

Many institutions require graduate assistants to assume full responsibilities for composition courses without any classroom experience. This practice is harmful to these instructors and to their students, not to mention the credibility of composition as an academic field. Without careful training, graduate assistants will have difficulty contextualizing the preparation they have received and adjusting their newly-formed teaching pedagogies accordingly before they are responsible for a composition class. Thus, graduate student preparation programs

in small programs like MSU should try to include opportunities for observation in composition classrooms before GAs assume full responsibilities for composition courses. Since MSU is an institution that has a relatively small graduate program in English and is consequently one where the majority of first-year composition courses are taught by faculty members and not graduate assistants, such opportunities seem possible. In fact, universities that offer such opportunities may become model programs for the comprehensive preparation of graduate assistants who teach composition (MSU currently offers GAs opportunities for observation before independent teaching is required of them and this system will be included in the discussion that follows regarding a formal mentoring program).

If graduate students are to receive classroom experience prior to teaching composition, such opportunities need to occur through a systematic mentoring program in which qualified composition instructors introduce graduate students to the composition classroom. While identifying and recruiting qualified instructors who are interested in mentoring is a difficult task, the wide range of pedagogies employed by different instructors can expose graduate assistants to considerable diversity of classroom application. Therefore, all faculty members who teach composition should be invited to volunteer as contributors to as well as participants in the preparation program for GAs. If a large number of faculty were involved, GAs would be exposed to various pedagogies by which writing is

taught, and faculty members would have the opportunity to learn about other instructors' pedagogies; as a result, both GAs and faculty participants would become more informed writing instructors.

Ideally, graduate assistants should participate in a formal mentoring program for two semesters before assuming full responsibilities for a composition course. GAs should have one semester in which to observe a mentor's class while being concurrently enrolled in a teaching preparation seminar (see section II), and a second semester during which the GA would observe a second mentor's class and take on some of the responsibilities for that class. If GAs have such mentoring opportunities, they will be better able to formulate informed pedagogies and refine them according to the experiences they have in their mentors' classes.

The First Semester in a Mentoring Program

Prior to the start of a GA's first semester, the GA should be paired with a faculty member who has volunteered to participate in the mentoring program; introductions could be made at a general English faculty meeting and perhaps furthered at an informal social gathering for the participants of the mentoring program. Such introductions would be an ideal way for students to begin their professional roles as faculty members before formal course work and their graduate assistant duties commenced. During the first semester, a GA should be expected to observe her mentor's composition class, learn about the logistics

involved in teaching such a class, and begin to formulate her own pedagogy. Because first-semester GAs are just beginning to learn about composition as an academic discipline, these GAs should be responsible for no more than 25% of the course workload; they could accomplish that through conferencing with students, commenting on students' drafts, or participating in and/or facilitating class workshops or small group tasks. These contributions should not be required of the GA until the latter portion of the first semester, when she will have been introduced to such components in her preparation seminar by then.

Mentors should be expected to familiarize themselves with the graduate program and the GA or GAs under their care and should be able and willing to articulate the pedagogies by which they teach. Mentors should foster a reflective learning environment by engaging with GAs in discussions about composition; rather than offering "the" way to teach writing, mentors should provide a rationale for what they do without expecting or pressuring the GA to agree and follow suit, especially without first reflecting critically on the mentor's pedagogy. At the same time, mentors should provide compelling arguments for GAs to consider. A mentor's purpose is to expose her GA to the composition classroom and its possible manifestations (which include that mentor's teaching philosophy) and give the GA opportunities for practical experience within that classroom under the mentor's close supervision and guidance. At no point during the first two

semesters of the mentoring program should GAs be the sole authority in the course, regardless of their contributions to the class or the amount of workload assumed. In other words, GAs need opportunities to contribute to the class and to practice being teachers, but they should not be ultimately responsible for the course. It is important that mentors remember that they are ultimately the designers of their own courses while GAs are there to learn, observe, and begin practicing. Unlike graduate teaching assistants (TAs), GAs are not in mentors' composition classes to be graders but to learn how things operate. Without such teaching responsibilities, GAs will be able to learn from their mentors in a relatively low-risk environment.

GAs and their mentors should establish a set time for weekly conversations so that a consistent dialogue can be sustained throughout the semester.

Conversations during the first semester should address the following matters:

1. The instructor's pedagogy for composition
2. The course policy statement and syllabus and the rationale behind it
3. Reflections about the course: students' progress and problems
4. Reflections about teaching and learning, in association with the GA's seminar
5. GA adjustments to graduate school (that is, being both a student and a teacher)
6. The GA's possible professional goals and ways to attain them
7. Office hours: setting, keeping, and utilizing them
8. Institutional policies such as:
 - procedures for midterm and final grade recording and deadlines
 - add/drop procedures and deadlines
 - withdrawal options: procedures, deadlines, and penalties

- statement of relationship between grades and financial aid/scholarships
 - statement on and filing procedures for plagiarism
 - sexual harassment statement and filing procedure
 - statement on acceptable student/teacher relationships
 - academic grievance provisions: filing procedures and faculty responsibilities
 - pay schedule for graduate assistants and dates for the year
9. Departmental policies such as:
- procedures and deadlines for ordering textbooks
 - deadlines for filing midterm and final grades
 - procedures for requesting xeroxing and other office help
 - office supplies available to graduate assistants

The logistical information mentioned above should be documented in a handbook for GAs and mentors and any policy statement that could affect the GA or the mentor should be included; such a handbook contributes to the formalization of the program and adds to the resources to which a GA can refer.

In addition to regular dialogue between the GA and her mentor, the mentoring program should provide several opportunities for GAs and mentors to converse as an entire group. Large group meetings should be organized around a particular topic for conversation (i.e., grading, assignment design, how to run a writing workshop, etc.). As a result, participants would be exposed to a diversity of mentors' pedagogies. The mentoring program should not be developed as a means of indoctrinating graduate assistants in one "right" way of becoming a writing teacher; rather, it should be the means by which GAs develop their own ways of becoming writing teachers, based on a variety of theoretical positions and

practical experiences.

The Second Semester of the Mentoring Program

Graduate assistant preparation programs that include two semesters of participation in a mentoring program increase the opportunities for GAs to construct informed pedagogies primarily because a second semester of classroom observation grants the GA time to reflect on her first semester's observational experiences and the preparation seminar before having to implement any of her pedagogical decisions. Ideally, GAs should work with a different faculty participant in the program during the second semester in order to examine another composition instructor's pedagogical perspective. The second semester should begin in much the same way as the first; new GA/mentor pairs should be introduced and have an opportunity to talk informally before the semester officially starts.

While the GA will work with a second mentor during this time, the GA and her first mentor should continue a mentoring relationship. Mentoring should be an ongoing process that continues throughout the GA's graduate education. A continued relationship between the GA and her first mentor adds continuity to the program and gives GAs opportunities for multiple perspectives on their learning experiences; thus, GAs should meet with their first semester mentor at least twice during the second semester. This continuing relationship also allows such mentors

to share in GAs' development over a longer period of time. Ideally, by the time the GA graduates, she will have formed significant relationships with at least the director of the first-year writing program (who serves as the GA preparation program coordinator) and two faculty mentors.

Second-semester GAs should be expected to participate more frequently in class discussions and student workshops and they should be willing to conduct conferences with students. In addition, GAs should comment on students' writing and begin to contribute to student evaluations and assessments. Because the GA has observed a mentor's class for a full semester and completed a GA preparation seminar, the second-semester GA should be able to assume 50% of the course workload. Because GAs are still in a mentor's class, though, the mentor should always be responsible for the course. Thus, the GA's second-semester mentor cannot assume a reduced workload just because her GA has taken on a large portion of the work; instead, that mentor will have the benefit of a second voice regarding students' writing.

GAs' second-semester mentors should be expected to help GAs continue the process of critical reflection begun in the first semester; requiring regular discussion times for GA/mentor pairs throughout the semester will encourage GAs to do so. Discussions should include some of the same matters addressed during the first semester because of the new GA/mentor relationship; in addition, mentors

should give GAs opportunities to articulate their formative pedagogies. The following list highlights some of the things that a second-semester GA/mentor pair should address:

1. The instructor's pedagogy for composition
2. The course policy statement and syllabus and the rationale behind it
3. The GA's proposed pedagogy, policy statement, and syllabus (see section II)
4. Reflections about the course: students' progress and problems
5. Reflections about teaching and learning, continued from first semester
6. The GA's balancing act between being a student and becoming a teacher
7. The GA's possible professional goals and ways to attain them
8. Logistical concerns for the GA's upcoming first semester of teaching:
 - knowing how to choose a text, if one is required/desired
 - procedures and deadlines for ordering a text and an instructor's copy
 - revising proposed syllabus and policy statements (written during GA seminar) to include required departmental details and any pedagogical changes made since the seminar
 - timeline for submitting syllabus and policy statements for xeroxing
9. Anticipating the first week, and possible problems:
 - what to do the first day
 - how to contend with students who appear after the first day
 - drop/add issues: procedures and deadlines
 - possible bookstore delays if texts are requested
 - how and when to revise the syllabus if a change is desired
 - how to maintain professional teacher/student relationship

In order for GAs to continue the process of forming and reforming their individual pedagogies, GAs should be required to write a statement about their learning processes during their participation in the mentoring program. Like the writing assignments required in the preparation seminar (see second section of this chapter), graduate assistants should continue to write reflectively about their

experiences, particularly about the exigency of any pedagogical or philosophical changes that have occurred since the seminar. This reflective document should be added, along with the GA's revised policy statement and syllabus, to the writing assignments completed in the graduate preparation seminar to encourage GAs to continue to situate themselves as lifelong writers and learners. Ultimately, these documents will become a portfolio of reflective pieces that will demonstrate the GA's transformation from student writer to graduate student writing teacher.

Independent Teaching

After two semesters of observation and participation in a structured mentoring program, graduate assistants should be given the opportunity to assume full responsibilities for a composition course. While the GA will no longer be as closely associated with a mentor once the GA is teaching her own course, GAs and mentors should continue to dialogue with each other. Once GAs are teaching their own courses, continuing conversations between GAs and their mentors will keep GAs linked to the mentoring program and the department at large. Such a link is an important component of the GA's education because such conversations are bound to include GAs' continuing formation of individual pedagogies and experiences as graduate student writing teachers.

Another way for GAs to maintain a connection to the mentoring program is for teaching GAs to assume mentoring roles to new GAs in the program; the GA

mentor provides a second source for the new GA's questions, a source that is closer to the experience of a GA than the faculty mentor would be. The new GA's questions may give the GA mentor an opportunity to explain what she has already learned, and such questions may also remind the GA mentor that much is yet to be learned about teaching composition. The participation of teaching GAs as mentors encourages them to continue learning in dialogue with both their faculty mentors and the new GAs. Thus, the mentoring program encourages critical pedagogical dialogue and reflection among faculty, experienced GAs, and new GAs.

While such dialogues are crucial for GAs as they move through the GA preparation program, maintaining such relationships with mentors often becomes difficult once GAs are teaching their own courses and, ultimately, when GAs graduate. In anticipation of these changing relationships, graduate students should learn how to sustain a pedagogically reflective practice without depending on a mentor's instigation. One way for graduate assistants to do this is to self-assign private, regular critical written reflections. Because self-assignment can be a formidable task, the GA should be strongly encouraged to produce such a reflection just before she graduates. This reflection should document the GA's growth over the course of her graduate education as both a student and a teacher. A description of such growth should include the following: an explanation of the

GA's pedagogical choices and revisions; a discussion of the process of critical reflection and its influence on the GA as a student and as a teacher; a list of areas in which the GA feels particularly strong and/or weak; and a critique of the preparation program itself. This private document will complete the graduate student writing teacher's portfolio and should be revisited in order to prompt self-assigned critical reflections; such reflection will help shape her future pedagogical choices and make her a more informed writer and teacher of writing.

In addition to this personal document, GAs should be required to contribute self-selected pieces from their graduate student writing teacher's portfolios towards the creation of a public portfolio for new GAs to examine as models for their own assignments. This collection should include student papers and GAs' comments, sample syllabi and policy statements, examples of self-designed teacher evaluations, and reflections on the composition courses they taught. The ongoing compilation of such a portfolio by successive GA classes would document developments in the field over a period of years, thus demonstrating that teaching composition requires a commitment to lifelong learning, consistent reflection, and continual adaptation.

II. Recommendations for a GA Preparation Seminar

While graduate assistants are participating in a mentoring program, they should also be simultaneously enrolled in a formal, for-graduate-credit preparation

seminar. If GAs take a preparation course while they are observing a faculty mentor's practices, they will be able to contextualize the content of the seminar--explorations of composition studies--in a practical setting, the composition classroom. In addition, GAs will be able to explain classroom applications if they understand the theories and histories behind the pedagogies at work in the classroom. Thus, the mentoring relationship should begin at the same time that a new GA enrolls in a formal preparation seminar. This combination provides the optimum introduction to teaching composition for new GAs.

The graduate assistant preparation seminar should introduce at least the following four areas, which will be discussed as subsections to this section: Introduction to Literacy Experiences; History of Composition Instruction; Theories and Applications; and Assessment Issues. A seminar based on these four categories should provide a solid background in composition studies. In combination with participation in a mentoring program, such a seminar should encourage GAs to make better informed pedagogical choices when it comes time for them to assume full responsibilities as composition instructors.

1. Introduction to Literacy Experiences

Suggested Readings

Brodkey, Linda. "Writing on the Bias." College English. Forthcoming.
Goodson, Ivor F., ed. Studying Teacher's Lives. New York: Teachers College Press, 1992.

- Rodriguez, Richard. Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez.
New York: Bantam, 1982.
- Rose, Mike. Lives on The Boundary: The Struggles of America's Underprepared.
New York: Free Press, 1988.
- Villanueva, Victor, Jr. Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color.
Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1993.

An important element of any preparation program is participants' recognition that their individual literacy experiences have shaped their beliefs about education, in general, and writing, in particular. Readings, discussions, and written reflection about such experiences will help participants begin to reflect critically on these very beliefs. Without a conscious integration of readings and critical reflection, preparation programs will not serve their purpose--to educate and facilitate informed pedagogical choices. The suggested readings in this category will give students concrete examples of several different types of literacy narratives: a working-class and gender perspective (Brodkey), an experience in minority assimilation (Rodriguez), a story of minority ambivalence (Villanueva), an examination of immigration and vocation education policies (Rose), and a collection of teachers' literacy experiences (Goodson).

Participants will not be able to read all of these narratives given a semester's time constraints as well as the importance of readings in the other three areas of the seminar. Thus, students should read Brodkey's essay-length narrative and one of the book-length narratives in order to familiarize themselves with various styles and purposes of such writing. While I have not completely read all

of these narratives, I have examined them enough to argue that they offer a variety of perspectives on schooling and writing. Since one of the purposes of the preparation course is to address literacy experiences in order to encourage participants to situate themselves as writers, it is important that graduate students have the opportunity to construct their own literacy narratives. Thus, a useful writing task would be one that asks participants to reflect on and analyze one or two significant literacy events. As a result, individuals would understand where some of their beliefs about writing come from and, in turn, where their students' attitudes about writing may originate. The purpose is to recognize that there is no universal literacy experience from which every student in a writing class starts.

2. History of Writing Instruction

Suggested Readings

Berlin, James A. Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987.

North, Stephen. The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton, 1987.

As graduate students begin to realize that their experiences with writing have shaped their attitudes and beliefs about writing instruction, students should be ready to familiarize themselves with the institutional history that has likely influenced those beliefs. Berlin's account describes how composition has become the "university's most enduring required course" (Peterson 3), while North

focuses on the field's knowledge-makers--practitioners, scholars, and researchers who have organized the discipline. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 1, a knowledge of composition's history helps its practitioners understand where composition comes from and how it has been performed. Thus, seminar participants should read Berlin's chronicle and North's section on practitioners in order to learn that composition does, in fact, have a history that enables instructors to understand and/or justify the practices by which they teach. A pertinent writing assignment for this segment of the course would require students to construct a composition timeline; such a document could be used to remind graduate assistants of the landmarks in composition's history that will likely influence the pedagogical choices they make.

3. Theories and Applications

Suggested Readings: Theories

- Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing Process Problems. Ed. Mike Rose. New York: Guilford, 1985. 134-65.
- Bizzell, Patricia. Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992.
- Faigley, Lester. "Competing Theories of Process: A Critique and a Proposal." College English 48 (1986): 527-542.
- Flower, Linda, and John R. Hayes. "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing." CCC 32 (1981): 365-87.
- Harkin, Patricia, and John Schilb, eds. Contending With Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age. New York: MLA, 1991.
- Lunsford, Andrea A., Helene Moglen, and James Slevin, eds. The Right to Literacy. New York: MLA, 1990.

Tate, Gary, and Edward P.J. Corbett, eds. The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

As I have argued in Chapter 2, graduate assistant teachers need to read about contemporary theories of composition in order to be able to make more informed pedagogical choices as graduate student writing teachers. One of the most beneficial resources for composition theory is the sourcebook, which has inundated the field over the last ten years. Of the various sourcebooks listed in this section, students should be responsible for reading at least one of them. I suggest Tate and Corbett's The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook because it has compiled some of the field's most influential articles on composition theory and composing processes and has become standard reading in many graduate assistant preparation programs. In addition, students should read several articles on contemporary composition theory found in more recent anthologies and journals. For example, C.H. Knoblauch's essay, "Literacy and the Politics of Education" in Lunsford et. al. claims that literacy is "always literacy for something" (75). This claim is examined more thoroughly in the essays of Bartholomae, Bizzell (see especially "Arguing About Literacy"), Faigley, and Flower and Hayes, each of which contextualizes contemporary composition theories within a particular political agenda. When seminar participants read these selections, they will learn about various contemporary theories of composition and the contexts in which they apply. In other words, students will learn that each theory of composition

contains certain beliefs about the world and the function of literacy within it.

Suggested Readings: Applications

Atwell, Nancie. Side by Side: Essays on Teaching to Learn. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991.

Kutz, Eleanor, and Hephzibah Roskelly. An Unquiet Pedagogy: Transforming Practice in the English Classroom. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1991.

Lindemann, Erika. A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford, 1987.

Myers, Miles, and James Gray, eds. Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Composition. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1983.

As graduate assistants learn about various contemporary theories of composition, they also need to learn how to apply such theories in the composition courses they will teach. The graduate assistant preparation seminar that exposes participants to a range of applications will help graduate assistants in constructing their own pedagogically informed classes. Teacher training manuals have been developed in response to this need. In fact, Erika Lindemann claims that she wrote her training manual as a response to a comment made by Mina Shaughnessy, namely that "we need not learn everything at our students' expense" (Preface to the 1st edition, n.p.). Thus, if participants learn how to apply the theories of composition that they choose before they assume classroom responsibilities, they will help fulfill Shaughnessy's wishes by sparing their students some of the inconsistent pedagogical moments that many untrained new writing teachers experience.

Because seminar participants will not have time to read all of the suggested teacher training manuals in a one-semester preparation seminar, they should read both a more generalist manual along with one that more clearly represents politically situated recommendations for teaching writing. Though I have not been able to examine Atwell's or Kutz and Roskelly's manuals, my understanding is that they take more philosophically specific positions on teaching writing, while Lindemann and Meyers seem to convey a broad and less critical range of suggestions about teaching writing. Students should at least read several selections from each of the two groups so that they will get both general and particular recommendations for applying composition theories in the classroom. At this point in the seminar, students should be asked to design a preliminary policy statement and a course syllabus as a means of testing their own ability to apply and defend an individually chosen, preferred theory of composition to be used in the composition course they will teach.

4. Assessment Concerns

Suggested Readings

- Belanoff, Pat, and Marcia Dickson, eds. Portfolios: Process and Product. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1991.
- Cooper, Charles R., and Lee Odell. Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging. Buffalo, NY: NCTE, 1977.
- Elbow, Peter. "Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking: Sorting Out Three Forms of Judgment." College English 55 (1993): 187-206.

As many composition specialists know, teaching writing as a process of

discovery and communication is problematized by traditional grading policies. Because of grades, students' attention will never be entirely focused on the process of becoming a better writer because a final course grade has very real consequences. As long as the grade point system includes composition courses, students will continue to focus on final products. As the process theory of writing has developed, however, scholars have begun to rethink grading procedures. Such revisioning has led to more process-oriented assessment, which has diverted the focus of composition courses away from grades, at least until the course's end. While Belanoff and Dickson, Cooper and Odell, and Elbow do not pretend to have solved the inconsistency between process theories of writing and traditional grading requirements, they offer some alternatives that seem to encourage students to focus more on their writing. For instance, Belanoff and Dickson's collection highlights writing programs in which traditional grading procedures are revised by students' creation of portfolios. Students are still assessed on final products, but they are given opportunities throughout the semester to revise and refine the pieces that make the final product, the portfolio. While assessment is unavoidable, programs that use portfolios focus on the ongoing development of student texts, texts that are not necessarily assessed until the semester's end.

Peter Elbow supports an emphasis on students' developing texts rather than traditional intervals of assessment throughout a semester. He asserts that numeric

or single letter grading is "inaccurate or unreliable, it gives no substantive feedback, and it is harmful to the atmosphere for teaching and learning" (188). In its place, Elbow offers several suggestions: more descriptive evaluations, evaluation-free assignments, and efforts toward liking student writing. Because Elbow is concerned that ranking "leads students to get so hung up on these oversimple quantitative verdicts that they care more about scores than about learning" (190), he suggests that writing teachers provide students with more substantive feedback in order for students to receive suggestions for improvement. If students are given more substantive feedback as well as opportunities to write without being assessed at all, Elbow contends that students may shift from entirely grade-driven writing to writing with another purpose, to learn. Elbow believes that students make this shift more easily if teachers articulate the possibilities of students' texts instead of their limitations.

While the process of developing and refining writing emphasizes students' growth as writers, final assessments cannot be avoided in traditional educational institutions. Cooper and Odell's collection describes ways in which assessments can be both made and justified. For example, Cooper argues in his article "Holistic Evaluation of Writing," that "[w]here there is commitment and time to do the work required to achieve reliability of judgment, holistic evaluation of writing [ranking of student writing by two or more trained readers] remains the

most valid and direct means of rank-ordering students by writing ability" (3). Cooper contends that "[w]hether we need scores for prediction, placement, exemption, or growth measurement, or whether we need a guide to informal diagnosis or feedback, analytic scales [lists that identify main features of writing in a particular mode] can be useful" (20). In addition, Mary H. Beaven claims in her article, "Individualized Goal Setting, Self-Evaluation, and Peer Evaluation," that students who participate in assessments, both of their own writing and of peers' texts, are more likely to become responsible for their own growth as writers (136). Beaven contends that students will improve as writers if authority for assessment is not solely in the hands of the teacher. Thus, Beaven, Cooper, and the authors included in Belanoff and Dickson's collection attempt to tackle ways in which assessment can be more than just a numerical summation of a student's written proficiency level at a particular moment in time.

By reading the selections from this list, participants in the preparation seminar will learn that, while complications exist within the current theoretical movements in composition, leaders in the field have tried to pose alternatives to traditional educational assessment standards and that graduate student writing teachers will have to contend with these complications, as well. Therefore, participants should be required to complete several practice assessments in which they grade a student's individual pieces of a portfolio as well as grading that

student's portfolio as a whole. As part of the assigned practice assessment, participants should consider how such grading practices affect the student's resulting final grade. Such practice will help students realize that assessment is a very complicated affair replete with real consequences for students.

III. Anticipated Results

Following both the preparation seminar and the first two semesters of participation in the mentoring program, graduate assistants should have a personal and historical, theoretical and practical base from which to construct informed, individual pedagogies in anticipation of their own teaching responsibilities. If implemented, such a preparation program would foster ongoing dialogues among full-time composition faculty (including writing program administrators), faculty who teach some composition courses, and graduate student writing teacher peers. Conversations about composition that include all of these instructors seem to be an important step for the discipline's advancement. If all interested English faculty participate, such conversations would benefit not only graduate assistants who are new to the field, but also faculty members who are unfamiliar with composition's history and its impact on current theories and practices. In addition, those who know composition research can contribute substantially to the overall knowledge base of the mentor program by giving their insights. Throughout the GA preparation program, participants and contributors should keep in mind the

arguments that Nancy Welch makes in her study of graduate assistant preparation that participants in any preparation program should not accept any one theory of composition or its corresponding application unless it can be carefully constructed, critically examined, and continually challenged, as the field continues to produce research and scholarship that will, in turn, affect such beliefs about the field (398).

The proposal for a graduate assistant preparation program described in this chapter is designed for universities that require composition course work of most students, but do not require heavy teaching loads of its graduate assistants. The pre-existing conditions of such universities indicate that such a proposal could be implemented without requiring major changes in the composition program, the graduate program, or the university at large. Institutions that have both a strong commitment to teacher education and a pool of English graduate students available to teach first-year writing should consider formalizing their existing graduate assistant preparation programs in order to include graduate student teachers in their devotion to teacher preparation. Because composition is such a universally-required course and graduate assistants provide universities with cheap labor, their employment as writing instructors is very likely to continue. In an effort to offer students the best possible education, such institutions should offer formal preparation programs for graduate student writing teachers. MSU is such a

university and has the means with which to formalize its graduate assistant preparation program. I recommend that it do so.

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