REVIEW OF *WRITING PROGRAM AND WRITING CENTER COLLABORATIONS*, EDITED BY ALICE JOHNSTON MYATT AND LYNÉE LEWIS GAILLET

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Myatt, Alice Johnston, and Lynée Lewis Gaillet, Editors. *Writing Program and Writing Center Collaborations*. **Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. $109.**

Alice Johnston Myatt and Lynée Lewis Gaillet's edited collection *Writing Program and Writing Center Collaborations* brings together eleven academic collaborative programs characterized by writing centers, English departments, the Writing in the Discipline (WID), Writing Across Curriculum (WAC), and disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Notably, this collection offers insights into how theory can be used as a heuristic to design, develop, enact, assess, and sustain successful collaborations, especially complex collaborations which often require collaborators to "cross disciplinary, organizational, national, and/or cultural boundaries" (15). Building on previous descriptive work on collaboration in the field of composition studies, this collection aims to understand "the *why* and *how* of successful programmatic collaboration" (viii)). To do so, the contributors of this collection "explore both theory and praxis" of their collaborative programs (ix).

Encouraged by Joseph Staling's advice of being "less timid about theory" (qtd. in Myatt and Gaillet ix), a specific focus in this collection is on how to use theory and research to support productive academic collaborations in the field of composition studies. This book starts with Myatt's review of the theoretical frameworks regarding complex collaboration from the fields of organization studies, business management, public administration, and economics, based on which she synthesizes six useful principles. Then, by examining the challenges that collaborative partners may encounter, she explicates how to use those principles to enact effective complex collaborations. In the subsequent chapters, eleven projects are delineated to illustrate the practical application of the theories in those collaborative praxes among individuals, programs, departments, disciplines, and civic communities. Lastly, each chapter concludes with a "Postscript from the Editors" where the editors highlight the connection between theory and practice,

reflecting on how the principles of collaboration are applied in each collaborative project.

Another appealing feature of this book is its intention to invite and inspire readers to find opportunities and develop partnerships that suit their own contexts and professional goals. The collection also invites readers to expand, improve, or promote existing partnerships and relationships in local contexts, rather than claiming the specific patterns or methods for crafting collaborative programs in the book's featured programs are universally applicable. With this intention in mind, the contributors of this collection not only analyze, assess, and reflect on the successes and challenges of their collaborative projects, but also elucidate the theories and research these projects are built on, giving readers insights into the features of successful collaborations and elements that sustain their development. These collaborative programs range from basic partnerships involving individuals to complex initiatives that require collaborators to engage in diverse cultural and linguistic practices and transcend multiple boundaries. Though each collaboration is unique and contextualized, the successful endeavors featured in this collection share similar hallmarks: they are built on complex collaboration theories, and they employ pragmatic tactics. These tactics can be adapted, reshaped, or remade by readers for their own collaborative ventures.

Among this wide range of collaborative programs, some are institution-based and initiated by the programs' administrators. Chapter 2 illustrates how to find a common ground on which a partnership can be built between two institutions, each of which works independently and has its own "force field" (27). The director from one institution's writing center and the administrator of that institution's writing program (WPA) agree—after many communications—that their collaboration has to be built on "collaboricity": the combination of "collaboration" and "reciprocity" (40). This successful project suggests that shared values and goals, reciprocal caring and respect, and dynamic interactions between the two parties are key to successful collaborations.

As challenging as enacting collaborations between two organizations is, it is similarly difficult to form

collaborations amongst different disciplinary departments, such as STEM and English departments, because they often hold different perceptions of writing. Readers who are interested in cross-disciplinary collaborations can be enlightened after reading Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5, the collaboration is a ten-year long project between the instructors from the Animal Sciences Department and the graduate student coordinators from the English Department. Instead of celebrating successes, the authors of Chapter 5 focus on the limitations of their Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) model. The obstacle in this cross-departmental writing program is mainly derived from the tension between the "writing to learn" approach desired by the English department's WAC coordinators and the "learning to write" approach wanted by the faculty members from the Animal Sciences Department. What readers can learn from this unsuccessful cross-disciplinary collaboration is that negotiations and compromises should be made between administrators and instructors if they intend to initiate and sustain a cross-disciplinary program on campus.

Contrary to the project in Chapter 5, the collaboration between a STEM program and the English Department portrayed in Chapter 6 is very successful. The triumphal collaboration results from two aspects. First, the curriculum is collaboratively designed on "shared tenets and methodologies" (119) of English and STEM-based learning. Second, a mini-writing center was established specifically to meet the "curricular, thematic, and rhetorical demands" (123) of the STEM-based program. Nevertheless, the lessons from Chapter 5 and successful experiences from Chapter 6 both showcase the importance of shared perceptions and methodologies of teaching writing in cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Collaborations do not always happen between organizations. More often, they can be between individual faculty members like the collaboration in Chapter 3 between two individual lecturers of two courses—Composition Theory/Pedagogy and Writing Center Pedagogy—for pre-service tutors and teachers. However, some collaborative projects start on an individually-based level but then are expanded to institution-based programs. A case in point is Chapter 4, which describes a successful institution-based collaborative project that was expanded from a "grassroots" collaboration between a lecturer in the first-year-composition (FYC) program and the writing center administrator (WCA). What the administrators face in this writing-center and FYC program is different from the collaboration imposed on individuals from upper administration in Chapter 2.

When individual-based collaboration seeks to develop into an institution-based program, the "democratic" and egalitarian nature of grassroots collaborations is disrupted by the traditional "vertical hierarchies" (77) of institution-orientated programs. In this circumstance, the key to a successful grassroots collaboration lies in a compromise and balance between the needs of students and tutors, the "academic freedom" of instructors, and the goals of programs and institutions (90). To ensure that local exigencies and needs are will be considered seriously by administrators in negotiations, assessment of the program should be conducted and reflections from instructors, tutors, and students should be collected regularly.

Regardless of whether a collaborative program is composed at an individual or institutional level, a collaboration can be developed to serve specific individuals, such as faculty members, undergraduates, graduates, international students, and high school students, as illustrated in Chapters 7, 8, 10 and 11. The project in Chapter 7 involves the collaboration between tutors, students, and disciplinary teachers, where tutors' narratives concerning their own experiences as student writers were utilized to improve faculty's pedagogy regarding how writing is taught in the curriculum, institutional policies related to writing, and attitudes towards multilingual writers. Chapter 8 describes and evaluates a collaborative mentoring program among the composition program, the writing center, faculty, and veteran graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) for new GTAs in a composition program. Chapter 12, the last chapter, engages the collaboration between first-year composition students and high school students from the local community. The collaborative workshop program in Chapter 10 is for serving new coming English as a Second Language (ESL) students and for training their writing center tutors. From the above projects, readers can be prompted to creatively design or customize their own collaborative initiatives to serve their specific purposes.

The most complex collaboration is presented in Chapter 11, "Collaborating to Support International-Student Writers." The program is launched to facilitate a group of international undergraduates to make successful cultural, academic, and social transitions at an American university. What makes this collaboration the most complex is that this project involves eight ventures: a student-affairs unit, six different undergraduate college writing programs, and a writing center. Coordination and cooperation among these units is particularly challenging because these programs and institutions are significantly different in pedagogy, philosophy, and structure. Again, as collaboration

theory and praxis verify, it is the common goals, a shared vision, and mutual trust among these units, established through listening, understanding, negotiating, and discussing, that contribute to their successful partnership.

Finally, it is worth noting that in addition to their focus on both theory and praxis, each project is accompanied with well-developed teaching materials, empirical-based assessment, and reflections on the project's successes and limitations, which can be conveniently adopted by readers for their collaborative attempts. For instance, in Chapter 3, the two authors include their narratives, reflections, research questions and methods, collected data, and their findings, from which readers can clearly see how the authors use research to collaboratively develop a curriculum to address a group of pre-service teachers' academic needs. Another example can be found in Chapter 4 where the authors used interviews and forums to assess the communications between FYC director, WCA, and teachers. These interviews and forums offer teachers opportunities to articulate their "dissent" and to "voice their concerns about the structure of the collaboration," as well as to recommend strategies to promote communication practices, such as holding regular face-to-face and online forums to develop collaborative initiatives (83). Meanwhile, the assessment allows the administrators to realize the communicative obstacles caused by the traditional hierarchy between administrators and teachers. There are many pragmatic and handy scenarios in this book from which readers can learn about these programs' accomplishments, ponder over the limitations and weaknesses reflected on by the authors, duplicate their practice, and apply the detailed teaching materials and course design in their own programs.

Writing Program and Writing Center Collaborations brings up some current discussions about academic collaborations involving diverse writing programs and writing centers among various ventures in variegated contexts. Yet, despite the diversity of issues and topics contributors provide in this collection, there are still many questions to be asked regarding collaborations. In Chapter 9, the proposed collaboration possibility between writing centers and writing programs to support students' multimodal composing projects still needs to be tested, though that suggestion is established on the findings of an empirical research. On the whole, this book encourages readers to address those unanswered questions through transcending the collaborative boundaries of disciplines, organizations, and communities as well as continuously committing to their collaborative efforts.

Overall, this collection, highlighting both theories on complex collaboration and their praxis, can serve as a valuable resource for writing program administrators, writing center directors, and faculty in many disciplines who are building, planning, or sustaining their collaborative projects.

Works Cited

Myatt, Alice Johnston, and Lynée Lewis Gaillet, editors. *Writing Program and Writing Center Collaborations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Staling, Joseph. "Centering: What Writing Centers Need to Do?" *Writing Center Perspectives*, edited by Byron L Stay, Christina Murphy, and Eric Hobson, NWCA Press, 1995, pp. 146-154.