

Notes

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Although there has been some improvement since the advent of affirmative action, academe is still very male-dominated. Sally Barr-Ebest surveyed WPAs in 1992 and reported her findings in “Gender Differences in Writing Administration”; she found that despite their common training, duties, and responsibilities, men fared better as WPAs than did women: they were paid more, they published more, and they were more likely to get tenure.

² The preview issue was bound as a double issue with *New York Magazine*.

³ The resolution was first drafted at a conference of the Council of Writing Program Administrators held in Portland, OR.

⁴ Like the Portland Resolution, this position statement has not been without its critics. See Schneider and Marback.

Notes to Chapter 3

¹ In the past decade a few required writing courses have appeared in Canada and in parts of Europe, especially the Netherlands.

² Harvard was established by the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, William and Mary by the Anglicans, Princeton by the Presbyterians, Brown (then the College of Rhode Island) by Baptists, Rutgers (then Queen’s College) by the Dutch Reformed Church, and Dartmouth by the Congregationalists (see Spring 61–62).

³ Although the “common school” movement of the 1830s and 40s had begun to establish the basis for the present American public school system, very few students attended what we now think of as high school in any form (see Spring Chapter 4). It wasn’t until a landmark decision by the Michigan Supreme Court in 1874 that school districts were required to maintain tax-supported high schools (Spring 195–96).

⁴ Wallace Douglas argues that the Statute of the Boylston Professorship was an essential factor in the origins of Freshman composition in “Rhetoric for the Meritocracy.” It is interesting to speculate about Hill’s journalistic

career as one of the reasons for the focus on correctness in Harvard's composition courses.

⁵ Donald Stewart discusses the dominant influence of Harvard men in the early years of the Modern Language Association in "Harvard's Influence on English Studies," and what he calls the "Harvardization" of English in "Two Model Teachers and the Harvardization of English Departments." In his discussion of the teaching of writing during this period, however, S. Michael Halloran argues that the influence of Harvard on English studies has been exaggerated ("From Rhetoric to Composition").

⁶ Hill's 1895 *Rhetoric* began with a section on grammatical purity, followed by a section on words and word choice, a section on arrangement that focused on clearness, force, and ease, and a final section on kinds of compositions: description, narration, exposition, and argument.

⁷ Brereton objects to the term "current-traditional," stating that such a term "by its very nature lumps together a vast array of practices in the interest of making a larger point. And it discourages us from looking at a whole range of educational practices that were occurring in those supposedly weak composition courses that proliferated for nearly a century. In other words, interpreting the history of composition as a loss and then a revival of rhetoric has given a partial view, a view that explicitly devalues almost a century of teaching and learning" (*Origins* xiii). Nevertheless, the term provides a useful shorthand for a model of composition instruction that assumed a deficit model of student writing, one that was widespread up until the 1970s.

⁸ JoAnn Campbell discusses the effects of rising enrollments on the workload of faculty at Vassar during Gertrude Buck's time there, 1897–1920, in "Women's Work." Susan Miller, in an examination of selected university catalogs over the period from 1920 to 1960, documents the fact that the teaching faculty in English Departments doubled over that period [67]; although the ranks of the faculty were growing, that growth was not keeping pace with rising enrollments. She lists the catalogs she examined as follows: "Arizona, Berkeley, Colorado, Cornell, Georgia, Harvard, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oregon, Stanford, Washington, and Wisconsin-Madison" (67).

⁹ There is an odd twentieth century parallel in the history of Michigan's English Composition Board (ECB), one of the oldest writing across the curriculum programs in the country. For reasons similar to the demise of the Rhetoric Department, as well as for budgetary reasons, the ECB also disappeared as an independent unit. See McLeod, "WAC at Century's End: Haunted by the Ghost of Fred Newton Scott."

¹⁰ Winifred Bryan Horner notes this fact, including herself among the group of early WPAs trained in English Education as well as Edward Corbett, James Kinneavy, C. Jan Swearingen, and Frank D'Angelo (Ramey and Takayoshi "Watson Conference Oral History #4").

¹¹ Like many early WPAs who were strong personalities, Baird's influence extended beyond Amherst; Ann Berthoff referred to those who were influenced by English 1–2 and who then went elsewhere to teach as the “Amherst Mafia” (72). Varnum includes Walker Gibson and William Coles, among others, in the list of those influenced by the course. John Brereton, in a discussion of his own history as a scholar-teacher, states that as a graduate student learning to teach writing at Rutgers, he was led by people who had gone through the Amherst program and who passed on many of the principles of that program to them: an extremely close examination of text, “intense concentration on the exact wording of assignments,” a close link between one assignment and the next, and a breaking down of assignments into careful steps, leading up to the actual writing assignment, often couched as an invitation (“Symposium”495). Brereton states that there are still traces of this Amherst-to-Rutgers heritage in linked assignments and carefully wrought assignments in the work of David Bartholomae, Don McQuade, Bob Atwan, Linda Flower, Patricia Bizzell, and Bruce Herzberg, all of whom were in the Rutgers graduate program in literature during the late 1960s and early 1970s (495).

¹² There were in fact eight sessions sponsored by the Teaching of Writing Division that year (nine counting the cash bar), as listed on p. 986 of the conference program: #9 (Plenary Session), #139 (Training and Retraining Writing Teachers), #212 (Writing and Reading), #384 (Measurement of Growth and Proficiency in Writing), #415 (Research in Teaching Writing), #448 (Writing Program Administration), #538 (Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of Writing), and #637 (Organizational Meeting).

¹³ Some members of CCCC who remembered the early days of the organization were none too happy about the formation of this new organization. Richard Lloyd-Jones recalls that in the mid-1970s CCCC was not sure of its own life—after large conferences in the 1960s, the meeting at Anaheim in 1974 had fewer than 600 attendees. “As civil rights issues grew and more and more of the comp people came from two year colleges (which did not encourage professional memberships), CCCC was pressed[. . .]. Some CCCCers saw WPA as taking away their reason for being. I'd say that CCCC had already abdicated that basis, but didn't realize it.” (e-mail).

¹⁴ The title of the Portland Resolution was meant to echo that of the Wyoming Resolution, a grass-roots attempt to address the low professional status of composition teachers that was endorsed by the Executive Committee of CCCC at the Business meeting of the 1987 Conference (see Robertson et al. and the report from the CCCC Committee on Professional Standards for Quality Education). Although the Portland Resolution was almost universally hailed as a document that helped to define the work of the WPA, it was not without its critics. Gunner argues that the job of the WPA is “fundamentally and necessarily a political one; the job is not to administer,

effectively or otherwise, the courses whose object is the production of the conformist citizen” (“Politicizing the Portland Resolution” 29).

Notes to Chapter 4

¹ Further, they found that most first-year writing curricula seem to be textbook-driven. The majority of textbooks used by the respondents were readers, rather than rhetorics or handbooks; in half the cases teachers were required to use a particular book. The fact that most curricula are textbook-dependent is, of course, directly related to the fact that most writing courses are taught by TAs or contingent faculty, some of the latter hired at the last minute (and many of them with literature rather than composition training); a common textbook is then a convenient way of assuring truth in advertising—that all sections of a multi-section course, no matter who the teacher is, are at least using the same book. It is also a way of establishing consistency over time because there are new TAs and faculty coming in every year. Establishing the curriculum for the course often comes down to deciding which textbook(s) to use, and fortunately, there are now a number of such texts written and field-tested by experienced WPAs that can be used in shaping a curriculum.

² Sometimes this course is offered for university credit, and sometimes not, depending on local contexts and histories.

³ There are also essays on writing center pedagogy (Eric H. Hobson) and the pedagogy of writing across the curriculum (Susan McLeod), which are somewhat tangential to the present discussion. There is a chapter entitled “Rhetorical Pedagogy” (William A. Covino) which I did not include; as Richard Fulkerson says, it is “mis-named and ill-fitted to the volume” since it focuses only on history and theory (“Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century” 672).