



Letter from the Editor

Sharon Quiroz

This issue of *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* is dedicated to articles that grow out of presentations at the *Fourth National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference* held at Cornell in June of 1999. The first such issue was Volume 2, Number 2, drawing on the *Third NWAC*, which took place in Charleston in February, 1997. The *Fifth National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference* is scheduled for May 31-June 2 of 2001, in Bloomington, Indiana, and *LLAD* looks forward to continuing this relationship. The *NWAC* Conference is unique in its efforts to reach out across the disciplines and literally take in other voices. Organizers of the Conference seek to invite presenters from very different positions within the field: differences are disciplinary, ranging from biologists to astronomers to sociologists. And differences include those between the new WAC professional and the more experienced, and between the new and old WAC professionals and the new and old practitioners. The voices of the conference and the voices of the journal are therefore multiple, which makes it more than a little risky to generalize about differences in the whole enterprise on the basis of articles that appear in these associated volumes of *LLAD*.

Still, I will make a provisional note. As I look at Vol.2, No.2, to compare it with Vol. 4, No.1, what strikes me as most different is the mode of presence of practitioners. In the earlier issue three articles talk about teams of one sort or another: team teaching, advisory boards, faculty readers. In the newest issue these other voices are heard at a greater distance, the relationship seems a little more theorized. Linda Bergmann's essay, "WAC Meets the Ethos of Engineering: Process, Collaboration, and Disciplinary Practices" and Stephanie Vanderslice's review "Listening to Everett Rogers: *Diffusion of Innovations* and WAC" take quite a distanced view of the community of the practitioners, with Bergmann explicitly critiquing WAC orthodoxy from an engineering perspective, while Vanderslice is more in the orthodox mode, emphasizing the WAC role as change agent. The articles "Does Writing Matter?" by Patricia A. Connor-Greene and James Murdoch and "On Writing Instruction and a

Short Game of Chess,” by Mya Poe, also reflect values from other communities back onto WAC practice. Connor-Greene/Murdoch offers valuable research into the positive effects of writing-to-learn in an experiment that works with traditional disciplinary emphasis on testing and grading. Poe’s article asks us to recognize “multiple intelligences,” drawing on Peter Smagorinsky’s argument that WAC needs to recognize other modes of composing that are the preferred tools of other disciplines. That argument resonates with Bergmann’s call for recognizing, as rhetoricians, that engineering as practice is legitimately a site for our inquiry.

Joanna Tapper and Paul Gruba draw upon the disciplinary commitment to conferences as a means of disseminating knowledge in their article, “Using a ‘Conference Model’ to Teach Communication Skills in a Communication Across the Curriculum Program.”

And finally we do, as often as possible, have at least one voice from a discipline speaking to all of us directly. The earlier NWAC volume included an article by an astronomer. This issue we have a mathematician, Robert Jameson, on “Learning the Language of Mathematics.”

If these articles represent the field, rather than *LLAD*’s taste or that of the Cornell organizers, one might see a slight movement from structural and administrative concerns reflected in the issue from the Third NWAC Conference to perhaps slightly more discipline-centered concerns in the Fourth NWAC Conference. The theme of the Fifth NWAC Conference calls for us to consider “the context.” It will be interesting to see what meaning for that term emerges.

Our regular section of program descriptions includes this time “Faculty Collaboration on Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Assignments: Linking Teaching and Scholarship,” by a team from Washburn University made up of Margaret Stewart, Pat Mower, Dianne McMillen, Mary McCoy, Patti McCormick, Pam MacDonald, Donna LaLonde, Sarah Cook, and Gary Baker. Yvonne Merrill’s “Anchoring WAC by Focusing on Rhetorical Analysis in First-Year Composition,” describes a model for relating WAC and First-Year Composition, a topic we find endlessly engrossing.

Some Changes Made

Language and Learning Across the Disciplines is extremely pleased to announce that Bill Condon has joined us as managing editor, bringing along with him Jerry Brown, a very capable business manager. We are all very grateful for this new energy and expertise.

And there’s more: *LLAD* is now associated with **academic.writing** edited by Michael Palmquist at Colorado State University (<http://aw.colostate.edu/index.html>). Back issues of *LLAD*, plus subscriber and submission information, can be found at <http://aw.colostate.edu/llad/index.htm>. In the future *LLAD* and **academic.writing** plan to publish joint

issues, giving us all the advantages of both online and hard copy publication. The first joint effort will be a special issue devoted to writing centers and WAC.

And finally, *LLAD* gratefully acknowledges funding from the Academic Resource Center at Illinois Institute of Technology.