The "Idea" of a Writing Program: Three Major Models Worldwide and How the Idea Has Changed since 2019

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The following essay has two parts: an address given by the author at four Argentine universities under a Fulbright grant in 2018, followed by a briefer update that describes significant changes to the concept of "writing program" under the influence of transnational societal and technological changes since 2020.

I will begin this talk by noting three principles:

First, the idea of a writing program in higher education must come from a strong belief *that writing ability is important for university students to develop and to use*.

Second, how we shape a writing program depends on *what we believe writing is and the purposes for which university students need to use it*.

Third, in order to spend money and time to build and maintain a writing program, we must also believe *that the university has a responsibility to help students develop these abilities – however we define them – and to put them into practice*.

Without any one of these core beliefs, it is unlikely that a university will build any kind of writing program suitable to its students, and certainly it will not sustain that program. Let me give two scenarios to illustrate how these principles might work.

Scenario One: the faculty of a university believes that most of its students already are able to do all the writing that courses may require of them. They have not as a group thought much about how writing might be different from discipline to discipline or course to course. They assume that writing is mainly about correct grammar and what they vaguely call "good organization," and they believe that these are skills that students should have learned in their prior schooling. They also believe (and this is a view I saw expressed often as I did the research for my book *Writing Programs Worldwide*) that if some students cannot do the writing that may be required of them, then those students should not be in the university, because it is not the university's responsibility to teach students what they should already have learned. The result? These faculty will not be likely to want the university to spend money on a writing program.

Now *Scenario Two*: The faculty of a different university believes (1) that higher education offers students challenges in thinking and communicating that they have not encountered in earlier schooling. Tertiary education requires different abilities from what was emphasized earlier, and writing expectations differ greatly from discipline to discipline, not only in vocabulary but more importantly in research methods and what counts as evidence. Not only that, but students (2) will now have access to technologies that will affect how and what they write and present their work. Therefore, the university has a responsibility to help students learn the skills that will enable them to meet these challenges. As a result, designing and maintaining some form of a writing program will become a priority for funding and sustainability. Moreover, this faculty also recognizes (3) that some of their students may need more assistance toward meeting these challenges than do others; thus, the program that they design and maintain will try to provide this assistance.

Now, you may recognize your university in these two scenarios, or perhaps somewhere between these two extremes. Indeed, my experience has been that every university will have some people who hold the view of Scenario One and some who hold the view of Scenario Two. Indeed, in thinking about designing a writing program, one of the major goals my colleagues and I have had is to try to get more faculty away from the attitudes of Scenario One toward those of Scenario Two. While we tend to think of writing programs as focused on the students, often there will

need to be as much focus on the instructors and the administrators who affect the students. I ask you to keep this in mind as I describe the major options for writing program design.

So what options does an institution have for the writing program it may design? In fact, the options are many. Among major categories are *writing centers, required courses, and types of programs that focus on writing across the curriculum and in disciplines (WAC/WID)*. I will describe these major options in some detail later in the talk. But what I'd like to explore for a bit now is why and how no two programs are the same –and thus why their programs will need to reflect these differences.

For almost forty years, it has been my privilege to have visited a wide range of colleges and universities in the US, and sometimes in other countries, in order to work with faculties and administrators to help them design and make adjustments to their writing programs. One thing that I have observed again and again is that *no two programs are identical*. While some programs may be similar in major ways, they also differ in important ways. What are some of these differences?

One difference is the *size* of the institution. A small institution that is fortunate to have small classes may be able to give more individual attention to students than can a very large university with many large lectures and few seminars. On the other hand, the large university may have recognized years ago that it needs to provide support services for its many thousands of students, and so has a large enough budget to, for example, hire writing specialists to lead a writing center, and post-graduate students who can be trained to staff required writing courses for first-year students. The small college may be able to assign a substantial amount of writing in almost every class, and expect instructors to give constructive commentary on that writing. In contrast, the large university may struggle to decide which courses can require writing, and both when and how to give students constructive commentary. The teaching methods appropriate and most helpful in each type of institution will be different.

A second major difference will be the *mission* of the institution, which can vary greatly from place to place. A research university such as UC Davis, whose main mission for over a century has been to prepare leaders for California in the sciences, engineering, agriculture, and medicine, will likely recognize that tertiary students must be prepared as writers and

speakers to become publishing researchers themselves and to be ready to go into companies and agencies that work with the public. In contrast would be, for example, a two-year community college, whose mission will be to admit any student who has graduated from secondary school, regardless of the quality of that secondary school, and whose background in the academic language of instruction may be very weak. This community college might focus its writing instruction on bringing its diverse student body to a level that will enable every student to function in the technical workforce or to transfer to a four-year university. Each of these institutions will have a great range of challenges to meet in fulfilling its complex mission, and these challenges should determine the sort of writing program that is designed.

A third major difference will be an institution's *traditions and culture in relation to teaching*. In research universities where faculty are judged mainly on research productivity (publications, grants, patents, etc.), it may take years to develop the core beliefs about students and learning described earlier. The leaders of cultural change in these universities will be a persistent core of faculty who understand and enjoy teaching, aided by a few sympathetic administrators. Most faculty will always feel tension between the pull of their need to publish and bring in funds versus the learning needs of their tertiary students. My career has been spent in two research universities, and so I have wrestled in my own life with these tensions, and seen how my colleagues have tried to juggle and balance these competing needs. The cultural change toward more emphasis on teaching in such institutions will have to include rewards for teaching excellence, as well as expectations of good teaching in how faculty are evaluated. The good news in this scenario is that there are many examples of such patient cultural change happening in universities. The other piece of good news is that once this cultural shift happens, universities are open to maintaining and often expanding their learning-focused programs, including those on writing.

A fourth major difference among institutions in regard to their writing programs is in the *administrative structure*. Institutions vary greatly in terms of reporting lines. When I visit universities, I always look closely at the administrators to whom the writing program reports. Is this a person who actually understands and appreciates student writing, teaching, and

language development? Is this a person who has power and the desire to bring funding to the program? Will this person be an advocate for the program to higher-level administrators? If the answer to these questions is no, then I always urge the program leaders to try to cultivate professional relationships with those administrators who do have such understanding and leverage. This can be done positively by such means as publicizing successes of the program, inviting administrators to program events, and requesting small amounts of support to carry out program research.

A fifth major difference among institutions in regard to building writing programs is *the persistence of those leading the program*. In her PhD dissertation (2016) on the sustainability of programs in writing across the curriculum and in disciplines (WAC/WID), my student Tara Porter interviewed the directors of many such programs in the U.S. In seeking to distinguish between those programs that were succeeding and those that were not, she asked her informants to talk about why they thought their program was moving forward or why it had stagnated. What she discovered was a clear distinction between directors who were quick to blame others in the university for their problems and who saw the situation as impossible, versus those who were always looking for new allies and ways to publicize student achievements. Researchers of programs in writing wisely assume that there will always be obstacles –and that there will also always be opportunities. Those program developers who persist will always look for, and find, the opportunities and will not be stopped by the obstacles.

A final difference always to keep in mind: *how a "program" looks when it is being initially shaped will look very different from what it might grow into*. I often use the term "initiative" to describe ventures just beginning. The word "Program" implies a large and complex and established entity. And many initiatives become just that. *But they never begin that way*. I've spent many enjoyable meetings over the years helping initiators at colleges and universities envision how their ideas can take shape into a plan, how they can secure a bit of university funding, how they can begin to interest other faculty and a few administrators in their idea.

Maybe their particular initiative begins with a small meeting of a few teachers/researchers who believe that students should have real attention paid to their writing. Maybe it begins with a consultant from a more

established "program" being invited to a campus. Maybe it begins with a single professor or tutor or lecturer using teaching methods described at a conference or in an article, and being so happy with the results that they wish to share the good news with colleagues. Sometimes it begins with a call for papers or proposals from a professional organization or from a state education agency. In my own experience, I can recall writing-based initiatives that began with all of these and more. And my successful colleagues in the profession all have their own "initiative" stories that can give inspiration and hope to those others just starting out. Two compendia that contain such "initiative" stories are McLeod and Soven (2006) and Thaiss et al. (2012).

Now that I have described some of the major reasons why no two programs can be the same, I want to describe the major categories of writing programs and what makes them suitable options for those just starting the design process--or those looking to shift, or grow, in new directions.

Writing Centers

The websites of the International Writing Centers Association and the European Writing Centers Association can provide avenues into learning more about the many different types of writing centers across the world. In *Writing Programs Worldwide*, the most common category of writing program described is some type of writing center. And a great thing about the profiles in the book is that each writer talks about their steps and their struggles in building their center. While each of these centers is quite different from one another, they all share certain features.

In most cases, the writing center is a tutoring service for students that allows them to use it as they feel they need it. Unlike a required course that demands regular attendance throughout a term, center services are used at the will of the student, maybe once a term or more regularly. The center may be staffed by faculty or by post-graduate students or by tertiary "peer" tutors or by professional staff who are not faculty. But all these staff are trained in tutoring methods by a director or by experienced tutors.

There is a rich and growing literature (e.g., Lerner, 2009) on teaching methods in centers as well as on physical and virtual spaces for centers,

plus annual conferences around the world. (See the websites of the European Writing Centers Association and the International Writing Centers Association for more information[1]) Once a center is established on a campus, there is no end to the variety of services it might offer to help the university achieve its mission. Besides tutoring, established centers frequently hold workshops on particular academic writing topics, such as research methods, or workshops for specific groups of learners, such as those whose first language is not the language of instruction. Some centers, such as that at Sweden's Chalmers University of Technology, offer on a contract basis courses and modules for specific departments.

Such is the importance of centers that they have in many cases become the hub for faculty development initiatives as part of WAC/WID. The research of the international WAC/WID Mapping Project (in 2010[2]) showed that more than 80% of U.S. WAC/WID programs were on campuses with writing centers, and in many cases the WAC/WID program had begun in the writing center.

My own career has been vitally connected with the development of writing centers. At George Mason University, where I taught from 1975 to 2006, my very first job was to serve as the first tutor of its brand-new "writing lab" (as it was called) in Spring 1975, while I was in Washington, DC, to finish writing my PhD dissertation for Northwestern University. After I was hired as an assistant professor by George Mason in 1976, I became the director of the writing center, and I helped it grow until 1984 in the number of tutors and in its ability to serve students. Since that time many years ago, a succession of directors, each dedicated to its improvement, helped the Writing Center at George Mason grow into a more and more important part of the fabric of the university.

When I went to UC Davis in 2006 as the Clark Kerr Presidential Chair, I knew that the University Writing Program that I would be directing had begun many years before as an entity known as the Campus Writing Center. Now that Center was never a tutoring Center. It had begun as a series of linked courses between some departments and the English literature department. That Center evolved into a multi-stage program of

1 European Writing Centers Association: https://europeanwritingcenters.eu/ - International Writing Centers Association: https://writingcenters.org/

2 http://mappingproject.ucdavis.edu/

courses taught today by 75 faculty, with several levels of courses, a writing minor, and a PhD emphasis. The tutoring of writing is now carried out by a different writing center as part of multi-discipline tutoring services.

The stories at both George Mason and UC Davis show how initiatives in writing that began very small, with the vision of one or two faculty, could become programs that the campus recognized as essential to the mission of the university. Such growth depended on the persistence and vision of many people over the years. When I went to Davis in 2006, I was the fortunate inheritor of a culture of writing that had been built over many years by many dedicated people.

Now I turn to the second major model of writing programs: *Required Courses*.

In the U.S., the most common idea of a writing "program," even more common than that of a writing center, is of one or more term-length writing courses required of first-year students. This structure is almost ubiquitous in U.S. colleges and universities, so much so that a huge publishing industry in first-year writing textbooks has thrived in the U.S. for over a century. The structure is so common in the U.S. –yet so rare elsewhere– that most U.S. academics consider it inevitable and don't question where it came from nor why. Many U.S. academics have heard the story that a required first-year writing course began at Harvard in 1870, and they figure that if Harvard did it, it must be good. So it's ironic that in 2018, the most common U.S. institutions to have moved away from the required first-year writing course is the very kind of college that Harvard was back in 1870 –a small autonomous liberal arts college. Many of these have moved to a first-year seminar model based on the idea of WAC/WID, to which I'll return a bit later.

Rather than Harvard, what really gave impetus to the first-year required course in the 19th century was the idea of the "land-grant university," which the U.S. government launched in 1862 to fund engineering and agricultural colleges in all states and territories –on federal lands "granted" to each state or territory for that specific purpose. This act of Congress signed by President Abraham Lincoln greatly expanded higher education across the young country –and it brought into higher education a greater range of people (though still mostly white men until the 20th century), from different classes and with very different backgrounds and

ambitions. These students at the land-grant universities were different from those that had been served by the elite small colleges in the Eastern states. Writing, or "English composition" as it was called, was one of several courses, also including literature, history, and mathematics, that the designers of these new institutions felt that these new students needed to take, regardless of the discipline on which a student focused. These required courses made up a "general education," as it was called, which after this point became a staple of U.S. higher education that continues today, and which is the subject of ongoing experimentation, political debate, and renovation.

The idea of "general education" is based on the belief that higher education has a responsibility to make up for any shortcomings in the secondary education of its diverse students, and also to introduce ways of thinking about these subjects that are more sophisticated –"college level"– than students had been challenged with earlier.

So the required first-year writing course has always had a conflicting reputation. On the one hand, many see it as a "remedial" course, to make up for what students should have learned earlier, but didn't. On the other hand, many others see it as challenging students with new genres and with a more complex and sophisticated understanding of language and its purposes.

Today, at this stage of its development and growth after a century and a half, the required first-year writing course has morphed into a huge range of models and sizes and theoretical varieties and approaches, way too many to go into here. It has sparked a venerable and voluminous research literature and multiple professional organizations, refereed publications, and post-graduate degree programs. Moreover, in most U.S. colleges and universities, it is no longer one course, but multiple, often with multiple levels depending on the proficiency level of the student. In UC Davis, for example, teaching of required writing occurs in what is called a "vertical curriculum," with levels of courses for first-year students and many courses in the third and fourth years, as students prepare for the challenges of post-graduate education and working in professions.

Moreover, in more and more U.S. universities (140 at last count), what began as a single required course on a given campus has become a degree program for tertiary students, often in their own departments or

independent programs. Meanwhile, more than 80 U.S. universities offer PhD degrees in writing studies.

But I will stress yet again that no writing program based on a required course ever began as a complex of courses and levels, but started very small. Even, sometimes, a required course began as a group of students who wanted more time and attention on their writing and who asked a teacher to meet with them.

Now I turn to the third major model for writing programs: WAC/WID (Writing Across the Curriculum and in Disciplines).

When scholars and higher education faculty in the 1970s in the U.S. began to advocate for what they called "writing and learning across the curriculum" (a title of a book by British researcher Nancy Martin –Martin et al., 1976–), they did so in part in opposition to the prominence of the separate first-year required writing course in higher education. These advocates (of which I was one) were inspired by research done in the U.K. by James Britton, Nancy Martin, and others. This British research demonstrated the power in primary and secondary teaching of methods that used student writing, speaking, and group work to learn subjects of all kinds. This U.S. use of British research was ironic, because the U.K. at the time had no stand-alone required writing courses. But what was occurring was an overall decline in the amount and variety of student writing in schools, which they correlated with declining academic achievement and with declining adult literacy. The evidence they accumulated over ten years in British schools was so startling and positive about WAC/WID methodology that it fueled a U.S. movement that has spread ever since.

A writing program based on WAC/WID principles recommends writing assignments and tasks to be integrated into existing courses in all disciplines, from the humanities, to the social sciences, to the STEM fields. "Pure" WAC/WID programs would instill appropriate writing (and speaking) exercises into every course in the university. The goal would be to create to some extent in every course a writing and speaking community, which, like a professional community of researchers, would advance understanding and new knowledge through the sharing of perspectives and ideas. No course would evaluate students only through multiple-choice standardized tests. "Active learning" was the goal, not the passive listening of the typical lecture course.

While WAC/WID advocates mostly tolerated the required first-year writing course as better than no courses with writing, they critiqued it for creating an illusion among university faculty that writing development could be sufficiently "taken care of" in one (or two) early courses. When faculty across disciplines complained that students were not able to perform well on the writing assignments they gave in their specialized disciplinary courses, they tended to blame the English department for the "failure" of its lone course. The advocates of WAC/WID pointed to these complaints as evidence of the illusion of sufficiency that the stand-alone course had created.

Instead, they recommended a very different approach. Don't imagine, they said, that a stand-alone writing course offered in one department could anticipate all the writing genres and expectations that a student would meet in a range of specific fields. Instead, bring faculty together from all fields –and even in each field– to discuss how each discipline could create writing activities and instruction appropriate to its research methods and specialized language. Make individual faculty and every department responsible for designing assignments and giving students feedback that would help them achieve what the discipline wanted to see in student work.

Under this WAC/WID model, writing specialists could help with this work by facilitating such meetings and by conducting workshops for faculty to offer advice and practice exercises based on research about the most effective methods of designing assignments and of giving students feedback on their writing. But the writing specialists would not be teaching the disciplinary courses themselves –in which they were not expert. That would be the responsibility of the disciplinary faculty. If there were a writing center on campus, it could help, too, by providing students some feedback as well, but the main responsibility would remain with the disciplinary faculties. This model is very different from the single required course taught in one department. As shown in the WAC/WID Mapping Project results, more than half of U.S. universities today in fact include both the required course and some type of WAC/WID effort.

One particular challenge faced by program initiators in the WAC/WID model is convincing faculty in disciplines that they both should and can assign writing to tertiary students and, even more challenging, give

those students commentary on their writing that can help them improve their thinking, their evidence, their organization, and their expression. This seems a lot to do for professionals trained in something other than writing studies. When I've met annually over many years at meetings of the International Network of WAC Programs (now the Association of Writing across the Curriculum), the attendees at these meetings, who have come from all over the U.S. and from many countries, always have this challenge on their minds. Fortunately, there is a wealth of material available to help faculty include writing in meaningful ways in their teaching and answer the helpful feedback challenge. One very helpful book is John Bean and Dan Melzer's *Engaging Ideas*, now in its third edition from Jossey Bass, which deals with all the salient issues in assignment design and the feedback process. But the very best source for a wide range of information on all WAC/WID issues is the WAC Clearinghouse at Colorado State University.[3]

More important in the teaching development process are the faculty training workshops that most established WAC/WID programs offer to disciplinary faculty. These workshops can last as little as a few hours or as long as a week or more. A few universities conduct term-long seminars for faculty. Writing specialists lead participants through processes of designing actual assignments that they will use in courses. In the longer workshops, participants constructively critique one another's assignments and they revise what they plan to give students. They also take part in commentary and assessment sessions in which they give feedback to actual student work and compare their methods with one another.

Workshops also help participants create informal exercises that teachers can ask student to do that will help students focus their thinking or respond informally to questions the instructor asks in lecture. Workshops help especially in an instructor's process of creating and managing longer, more formal assignments that carry a substantial portion of a student's grade. Other types of workshops, for example, can help entire departments determine the responsibilities of different courses or devise an assessment rubric that can guide grading in the department.

3 http://wac.colostate.edu

Structures such as these have steadily worked in many institutions to change the culture of the university toward greater respect for teaching and understanding of how writing can be vital in student learning, as well as pivotal in student success post graduation.

I'm happy to say that I've been privileged to be part of two universities over forty-five years where WAC/WID initiatives have flourished and grown, though not without consistent obstacles. I've also been privileged to advise many other colleges and universities, to help them realize their visions for writing programs in accord with their unique missions. As I've stated before in this talk, what emerges in every instance is unique to that institution, but it also shares some principles and structural elements with other universities. The WAC Clearinghouse is the best source to go to for information and publications about a wide variety of WAC/WID issues, both in regard to program development and in regard to teaching methods for WAC faculty.

In both universities in which I've taught and directed programs, what has emerged over the years includes a writing center, required writing courses, and much responsibility for writing development shouldered by faculty in the disciplines. Both these programs started very, very small, but were blessed to have a succession of good, persistent advocates for students.

It has also been my good fortune to be a member of professional organizations in which the members share their knowledge and experiences and continue to inspire one another. Without these communities of researchers and teachers, the success of any one of us would not be possible.

A Brief Update since 2018: Three Major Events that Have Changed the Concept of a Writing Program

Since 2018, when I gave versions of the preceding essay as addresses to faculty at four Argentine universities, massive changes in the field of writing studies, brought about by massive changes in the larger society transnationally, have changed how we conceptualize the idea of "writing programs." I would summarize these changes as three, all interrelated:

1. the influence of the covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022) on how writing education is delivered and where people learn writing
2. the steady "de-standardization" of writing, and indeed all communication, as respect for multi-modal tools, for regional languages and dialects, and for racial, ethnic, gender-related, and social-class identity groups grows
3. the sudden emergence in 2022 of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT), readily available to billions of users, that have redefined authorship, redefined the role of the teacher, and undermined the formerly standard idea of intellectual property

Many books and articles have been published on all three phenomena, with more appearing regularly, but I would like very briefly to offer my analysis on how these phenomena have at least begun to influence the idea of a "writing program".

I will not depart from the three-part taxonomy of writing programs I gave in my 2018 addresses. Writing centers, programs of required courses, and writing-across-the- curriculum (WAC/WID) programs are still useful concepts to help us understand how the teaching of writing is structured in colleges and universities. But what has changed and is changing are

- the very definition of "writing"
- what "learning to write" means
- where learning to write occurs and
- new kinds of expertise that must be developed by those who help writers learn

I will take each of the three phenomena in turn and very briefly outline how they have changed our conception of "writing programs."

1. the influence of the covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022) on how writing education is delivered and where people learn writing

The 2020-2022 covid-19 pandemic closed schools and colleges in most of the world for at least a year, and forced tertiary education, including writing education, to move almost entirely online. Of course, online education had been happening for many years, but the pandemic forced almost all teachers and almost all institutions to give up in-person education for a time. For writing education, such techniques as *peer review, group composing, oral presentation of written work, and face-to-face*

teacher or tutor conferences had to be given up or at least re-conceived during this period.

Ironically, as the *oral and conversational* components of writing education were curtailed, interactions between students and teachers and between students became even more *writing-focused*. Indeed, as was the case in my own teaching of Writing in Science, the students and I carried out the course almost entirely *through writing*: including my assignment instructions, my responses to student proposals and drafts, the students' peer reviews of their classmates' drafts, and our weekly discussion forums on course topics. Oral discussion was more or less gone, and writing carried the burden that lecture, conversation, and oral Q and A had formerly carried. So, in such a changed circumstance, *writing education took on a whole new dimension*, with informal writing, or what might be called *transactional curricular* writing, becoming as important as the drafting and revision of formal assignments.

Equally important, the role of the teacher or tutor as *speaker and physical presence*, by which so much of the instructor's authority is earned in face-to-face classes or writing center conferences, became the role of the teacher/tutor as *writer*. I found myself, as I know many of my colleagues did, having to build interpersonal course-focused writing strengths of my own that I'd never had tested so strenuously before.

Further, with almost all students away from campuses and trying to carry out their educations in their home environments, the idea of a college education could –and often did– become a kind of unreality for students, its value strongly questioned. With so many daily distractions and often responsibilities at home, and with students being often thousands of miles from the campuses (as was true of my international students), the idea of a writing class or of a campus writing center, could quickly seem irrelevant-- particularly when the languages of instruction differed from the languages of home.

Conversely, if a writing instructor could not only recognize the new learning environment, but make it part of the writing education, students could be brought to see the wider relevance of a writing education. Teachers who used this circumstance to have their students *write about literacy in their home communities* might help students see how writing, maybe even their own, is consequential wherever it occurs. Powerful

learning could occur if students wrote, for example, about their own literacy adventures from home to college and home again, or if they designed writing artifacts for members of their home communities (as I had and have my students do in Writing in Science).

Indeed, though the pandemic closures have disappeared, teachers discovered techniques and tools that will have ongoing impact on writing instruction –and on how and what it means to write. Teachers (like me) who taught online for the first time acquired skills, assignments, and technologies that will become permanent parts of their repertoires. Students learned to dissociate their literacy from explicit "schooling" and so broadened their own literacy education, as well as their own questioning of the dominance of the physical school. Writing occurs everywhere, and the pandemic helped to teach that.

2. The steady "de-standardization" of writing, and indeed all communication, as respect for multi-modal tools, for regional languages and dialects, and for racial, ethnic, gender-related, and social-class identify groups grows

All of these "de-standardizing" factors have been growing for some time, but perhaps the pandemic, as noted above, accelerated all these trends by replacing face-to-face, teacher-dominated campus communities with far-flung online networks, which gave students both greater individual responsibility and greater agency/power in how they defined who they were and what they needed to learn. For example, it had been far easier for teachers in face-to-face classes to require a cadre of students all in the same environment to write conventional alphabetic essays and hand in actual papers. The pandemic diaspora of students made it harder to expect similar homogeneity from every student in a huge array of home environments, all flimsily "connected" by electrons.

Moreover, the online universe routinely presents viewers/users, regardless of subject area, with rhetorically-savvy *multimedia* compositions, publications, and podcasts. Photographs, videos, and infographics are a common and increasing suite of tools for writers. Therefore, it's just a matter of time –and instructor versatility– before writing education becomes redefined as *multi-media design*. My own teaching of Writing in Science, to cite just one example, has been transformed by student enthusiasm and capability for one assignment I designed

back in 2008, the "Popular Science Project," that requires multimodality and experimentation with tools and genres, as well as with reaching non-academic audiences. (My 2019 textbook, *Writing Science in the Twenty-First Century*, explores multimodality and genre experimentation in depth.)

Similarly, we've seen how steadily over the past two decades writing studies has become transnational and translinguistic, made possible by the internet and made easier by AI translation programs. The pandemic could have chilled this diversification by restrictions on overseas travel, but Zoom and similar platforms took on the job so readily that transnationality and translingualism have accelerated (e.g. Hall and Horner) and these platforms continue to be widely used.

Indeed, the past few years in writing studies have seen dramatic growth in pedagogies that respect and encourage rhetorical diversity in audiences, styles, grammar, and vocabulary, as part of respect for racial, ethnic, gender-related, and social class differences. For example, the U.S.-based professional organization, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), "reaffirmed" in 2014 its *Statement on Students' Right to Their Own Language*, by which is meant "their own patterns and varieties of language –the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style." This great broadening of what may be acceptable in college writing education reinforces the transformation to a much broader understanding of the genres and styles that can be rhetorically effective in a wide variety of professional and community environments. This great broadening certainly expands what might formerly have been acceptable writing in academic settings.

3. The sudden emergence in 2022 of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT), readily available to billions of users, that have redefined authorship, redefined the role of the teacher, and undermined the formerly standard idea of intellectual property

Over my fifty years in writing education, I have never before seen the panic that has ensued among writing studies teachers and program planners since the company Open AI announced ChatGPT in fall 2022. Of course, the panic among writing educators pales in comparison to the panic among educators in all other fields, who are likely to teach larger

classes and know their students' work less well than we know ours, and therefore may be less likely to detect plagiarism.

Since writing studies, and almost all writing education, features writing as a process of invention/creativity, revision, and editing stages, the field can build techniques that both study and use AI chatbots and adapt the process paradigm to this new technological challenge. So prepared is the discipline to answer this challenge that already a number of publications describe classroom techniques and responses of whole programs to student use of AI.

Most of these publications recognize that AI chatbots –and advances such as Dall-E 2 that blend media– will transform much composing that occurs in business and across disciplines, so writing programs need to help students learn how to use new tools as part of their composing development. Students (and we teachers) will need to incorporate AI into their own processes, but to do so critically and ethically. One new text that has gathered teaching ideas from many practitioners is Vee et al., *TextGenEd: Teaching with Text Generation Technologies* (2023). Another new resource is the CCCC collaborative website *Exploring AI Pedagogy: A Community Collection of Teaching Reflections*, to which teachers anywhere can contribute their teaching practices in response to AI.

My own program at UC Davis has held regular meetings of faculty to gather ideas and create classroom research projects, as well as to design materials that the entire University faculty, not only in the writing program, can use in managing writing assignments across the curriculum.

Nevertheless, the new prevalence of AI composing and design software will impact writing, all writing education, and writing program design in ways that we can't entirely foresee. Writing education over recent centuries has operated on a theory of intellectual property that does not condone authorial behavior that takes from anyone's and everyone's work without citation, credit, and permission, and with disregard for accuracy and validity. Plagiarism and irresponsibility are exactly what define AI chatbots. Much of what happens going forward will depend, inevitably and unfortunately, on courts to decide in response to plagiarism and malfeasance lawsuits from artists, writers, companies, and injured parties of many kinds.

Until that happens, writing teachers, tutors, and administrators, as well as teachers who use writing in their teaching across disciplines, will bear more responsibility than ever to help students navigate these treacherous new waters. Hence, designing writing programs suitable to each institution will continue to be essential.

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