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Introduction

“AT THE SLASH”

Leigh Gruwell and Charles N. Lesh

We can trace the motivation for this edited collection to a specific moment. Or rather, we can trace it to a place: a basement room in a convention center in Kansas City. We suspect some of you were in Kansas City at the time too, in 2018 for the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). *Languaging. Laboring. Transforming.* And like many of you, before the conference started, we sat down and decided which panels we'd like to attend, together or separately.

As two pre-tenure faculty members in rhetoric and composition at Auburn University, we had recently been in talks with administration on adding a methodology course to our graduate curriculum.¹ “Graduate students in writing studies *need* a methods course,” we would tell anyone who might listen. And finally, they did listen. As a member of the Graduate Studies Committee, Leigh was tasked with drafting a proposal and justification for the seminar, and if our faculty up-voted the curricular addition, she would go on to teach its first offering.

Back in 2018, our goal at CCCC was to attend as many panels on methods and methodology as we could, in an attempt to develop our own approach and to articulate the importance of methodological training in writing studies to folks outside the field.² This is what brought us to the small, brightly lit basement room for a roundtable session titled Preparing Graduate Students for Research.³ Exactly what we needed. And based on the attendance of the panel, it was also what a lot of others in our field needed. The room was packed, standing room only, by the time the first speaker started introductions.

During this engaging and informative session, panelists shared a variety of anecdotes, curricula, and course designs intended to communicate and model methodological thinking to emerging researchers. As we listened to these reflections, as we filled our notebooks with ideas, we began to see a link, however implicit, emerging between methodology and *mentorship*: that how we know and come to know things about

writing—that is, methodology—is constitutively tied up in who we know and how we know them—that is, our performances of mentorship. As we left the room and ascended the stairs to another session, we decided that, in our own work at Auburn, we had to start locating our thinking on methodology at this intersection with mentorship.

Over coffee later that day, we began thinking about our own experiences and histories at that intersection. While the methods course Charlie took at Northeastern University during his doctoral work was surely important, the actual critical orientation he developed in his ethnographic work with graffiti writers grew more directly out of the relationships he had with faculty members who guided his project and, maybe especially, the community members who participated in it. Both groups—faculty and community partners—directly mentored him through the rhythms of the research process. It was in those mentoring spaces where he developed what Jeff Grabill (2012) has called a research stance, his own “position or set of beliefs and obligations that shape how one acts as a researcher” (211).

Likewise, Leigh recalled how her dissertation research on feminist rhetorics in digital communities was shaped by the mentorship she’d benefitted from at Miami University. She’d purposefully chosen to work with faculty members with expertise in feminist methodologies, but soon found that the values that drove her advisors’ research also informed their approach to mentorship. That is, the “care, collaboration, dialogue, ethics, mutual respect, and hope” (Enoch, Jack, and Glenn 2019, 12–3) that define feminist methodologies were foundational to the relationships she formed with her mentors and, accordingly, the research that resulted from those relationships.

In retelling these experiences, we began to position mentorship as a primary location from which new approaches to research surface (or fail to surface), where new methodologies emerge (or fail to emerge). In other words, we began to see mentorship, through the research it nourishes, *as the location where the future of our field is invented, or where the past is reproduced*. In this initial conversation, we began to articulate some key questions that drove our decision to undertake this edited collection: What is the relationship between mentorship and methodology, and how can we make that relationship more visible? How can our methodological work change what counts as mentorship, and how might our diverse performances of mentorship (re)invent our methodologies? How are methodologies shaped, diversified, or constrained by mentoring relationships? What does this intersection, between mentorship *and* methodology, mean for current and future work in writing studies?

Fast-forward a few years and through a few conference panels of our own on the subject, and here we are, still thinking about that "*and*": mentorship *and* methodology. These conversations laid the foundation for our earliest articulation of this project and its primary provocation: that mentorship plays a central role in the production of innovative and potentially more equitable approaches to research, a sensitivity to the how and why of research integral to pushing the field in new and progressive directions. If we are to understand mentorship in this way, we must acknowledge and make visible mentoring arrangements performed across a variety of institutional, disciplinary, and community contexts. We hold strong to these convictions. The aforementioned course proposal was ultimately approved. Leigh taught the first offering of that course in fall 2020, and Charlie taught it in fall 2022. In this and other work, we find ourselves positioning these two core disciplinary terms in tandem.

Or it might be more accurate to say that we find ourselves positioning them *always already* in tandem. That is, as we began to compile and edit this collection of essays, we began to rethink the "*and*" in our initial formulation. At the beginning of this project, we saw ourselves bringing two distinct but clearly related conversations in writing studies into generative contact. Here is mentorship. Here is methodology. Now we have mentorship and methodology. But then we started to actually build this project. We read and we wrote. We called for proposals and reviewed chapters. We collected and edited the essays in the collection you now hold. In this process, we began to wonder if what we were really trying to do was bring two terms, with discernible boundaries, into contact and conversation. Rather, it began to feel like what we were trying to do was make visible their already convergent, mutually constitutive natures.

As we discussed this project, with each other and with colleagues, we found ourselves defaulting to "mentorship/methodology," with the slash performing its more convergent function. In the slash, we hope to signal dialectic interplay, definitions contingent on contact. Rather than separating these two terms, we see the slash signaling the productive overlaps, tensions, and encounters that exist between them. We've come to see this project and the essays that comprise it as not bringing two discrete concepts together but rather inhabiting and theorizing the spaces where they are already colliding. At the slash, we've come to embrace a way of thinking: that in writing studies there is no methodology without mentorship and no mentorship without methodology. And once this interdependence is articulated, a revised set of questions arises: Where have current arrangements of mentorship/methodology taken our field? Where do these points of intersection exist? In performance

and practice? In theory? In research? What image of our field do they produce? Who and what do they serve? How can we revise them? And how can we better articulate, and write about, these spaces—like our own experiences above—where mentorship and methodology collide in productive disciplinary work?

We are certainly not the first people in writing studies to recognize the transcendent power of mentorship, how it moves between and affects other spaces of disciplinarity. As one instructive example, in “Mentoring as Mosaic: Life as Guerilla Theater,” Lynn Z. Bloom (2007) offers the image of the mosaic to demonstrate the way that mentoring can color the entirety of our curricular and extracurricular lives. She catalogs the ways we

can experience the mosaic of mentorship, acquiring the elements of what we need to know and do to survive, even prevail, in professional situations. In real life, these invariably leech into the person, but to keep the metaphor intact let’s imagine straight, precise edges rather than the blurs and blots of an Impressionist painting. When the pieces are assembled and adjusted to fit the contours of our individual personalities and our particular work, the mosaic delineates a professional portrait that is like no other. (87)

We find Bloom’s metaphor of the mosaic to be generative. The disparate components of the mosaic, the roles we’ve taken on and perform, appear chaotic when viewed up close. Yet with the privilege of distance, they form a coherent, legible pattern. And still, as Bloom herself notes, the clear boundaries between these parts are illusory, creating a false sense of separation, of discrete things *brought together*. Mentorship and methodology. In reality, these simultaneous parts of our identities—researcher, teacher, mentor, mentee, and so on—swirl together, existing within the “blurs and blots” of everyday life. This collection attempts to capture those messy moments, to theorize what it means when our work as researchers, mentors, and mentees collides in the production, revision, and reproduction of our field and our roles within it.

We dwell on the slash here, with all its “blurs and blots,” because we think that a more explicit interrogation of the ways that mentorship and methodology collide in productive or unproductive ways is increasingly urgent. In the slash, we see a space in which an exclusionary status quo is maintained or, potentially, where a more equitable future is imagined. It can be either, but it can’t be both. Conditions in writing studies have prompted recent disciplinary reckoning around issues of identity-, race-, gender-, and class-based inequities in our field that have long been swept under institutional rugs. As we discuss in more detail below, many

of the most important conversations on mentorship and methodology revolve around issues of identity, exclusion, and justice.

For example, in a recent symposium in *Rhetoric Review*, Ersula Ore, Kim Wieser, and Christina V. Cedillo (2021) bring together a range of "counternarratives that tell how these particular BIPOC scholars size up and subvert an oppressive system to find the nurturance and community they need to succeed in often hostile spaces" (208). While distinct, the narratives that comprise this special issue share common features, the editors note, often linked by the various permutations of inequity found within academic spaces. Mentorship becomes central to any effort to mitigate these challenges, to the extent that they can even be mitigated in settler institutions like academia. "Mentorship and community-building," as Ore, Wieser, and Cedillo powerfully put it, "are central to this work—and to keeping BIPOC in the academy" (209).

Black and women of color feminists in writing studies and beyond have been especially incisive in their arguments about how mentorship is crucial to undermining the racist, sexist hierarchies of academia. bell hooks (1994) has written extensively about the radical potential of teaching and service, seeing the mentorship practices implicit in both as critical to building a more inclusive and just academy. Such work not only creates spaces that value racialized identities but is essential to sustaining academia itself (29–30). Closer to our disciplinary home in writing studies, Carmen Kynard (2020) has repeatedly highlighted the stark "ontological absence of Black women" (18) that marks the field, and argues that an equity-oriented model of mentorship needs to go beyond simply "teaching young Black faculty the rules of the academy" and instead must be "about centering Black thought and Black life in people's lives at the academy" (18). What Kynard, hooks, and many other Black and women of color feminists (Hull, Shelton, and Mckoy 2019; Ribero and Arellano 2019; Scott et al. 2021) teach us is that mentorship *is* methodology, and that both must focus on racial justice. If not, we rob each of its transformative potential.

Embedded within these conversations about mentorship, methodology, and identity is a question of that slash, the ways that mentorship in all its forms—formal or informal, radical or conservative, institutional or community, ad hoc or sustained, vertical or horizontal—(re)produces different patterns of disciplinarity and disciplinary research. In the slash, then, we find both the perpetuation of harmful systems of exclusion and the potential for change, for more equitable forms of mentorship and research to mutually nourish each other and move our field toward more inclusive practices. Attending to the slash, making it more visible,

presents significant opportunities to support and cultivate diverse ways of knowing and being in writing studies, something that many of the chapters in this collection articulate in local and global ways.

As two white, cis-het, recently tenured professors, we recognize that we are hardly the people to do this work alone. We also recognize that inhabiting these and other subject positions of privilege while attempting to do this work requires attention to the relationship between editing and identity. How can we ensure that our curation of this conversation doesn't solely include experiences that reflect our own? Of course, this question is never answered in an entirely satisfactory way. We suspect any reader who has ever edited a collection of their own feels this tension. Still, this question motivated us, and continues to motivate us, to have conversations with each other, with mentors, and with editors on equity- and justice-oriented approaches to collection creation. It's not enough, we learned, simply to identify our own subject positions in the introduction, note how they likely limited the perspectives found in the book, and move on. Rather, we have to interrogate those positions and our own editing practices, and actively work to mitigate their limiting potential. We also have to recognize that this mitigation can never be entirely successful.

A more equitable field begins, in part, with editing practices that include intentional discussions of who has access to collections, where the call for proposals (CFP) circulates, and how the contributors are mentored through the publication process. In their work on "inclusion activism" in editing practices, Blewett et al. (2018) write, "If we want equitable representation in our scholarship and in our field at large, we have to create the conditions to make it happen" (275). This involved us in two initial ways: the CFP and its circulation. In the CFP, we included language that signaled not only our interest in publishing diverse perspectives on mentorship and methodology but also our belief that any collection on the subject without those perspectives would fail to capture the field as it currently stands. To prompt this sort of inclusion, we also paid particular attention to how we circulated the CFP: to larger, discipline-wide venues (WPA-L, for example), but also to graduate-student specific venues, individual SIGs, and social media. This intentionality, we hoped, would ensure a diversity of perspectives and voices, particularly from communities historically underrepresented in our disciplinary venues. As we made these editorial and circulatory decisions, we did so with the explicit intention of crafting our collection in a way that "builds upon the diversity that has historically marked our field's teachers and classrooms, but not our published scholarship"

(Selfe, Villanueva, and Parks 2017). While we have undoubtedly fallen short of this goal, we do believe it is worth making these choices explicit as we continue to strive toward more equitable editing, mentoring, and research practices.

These behind-the-scenes conversations are a manifestation of the larger hope we have for the collection. In the aforementioned symposium issue, Ore, Wieser, and Cedillo (2021) offer thoughts on what allies might do in mentorship spaces given the enduring inequities in the academy:

It means offering mentorship to your BIPOC students and colleagues with the understanding that many of us navigate the academy all by ourselves, minus the structural support that we are assumed to have had and that many of our privileged colleagues did. It means trusting your students and colleagues and refusing to silence or ignore their grievances because they are not part of your experience or could potentially "cause trouble." But it also means admitting that "many pockets of bigotry, intolerance and repugnant elitism" exist, and fighting to keep them out of our classrooms, organizations, and institutions (see Brooks). It means being upfront with mentees about what they should expect from whom—who is safe and who is not—and speaking up and taking action when abusers strike. It means centering the needs of the most vulnerable in our academic communities, including students, adjuncts, and staff.

Our hope, realized in part by this collection, is that locating these conversations at the intersection of methodology and mentorship might promote some of this work—that in the exploration of the moments and spaces where these two concepts collide, we might begin to make visible more ethical mentoring spaces and more ethical methodologies that, taken together, might push the field in more equitable, and even radical, directions.

It is a lofty hope. But in the essays collected here, we find glimpses into projects that begin to perform this convergence in productive ways. In the remainder of this introduction, we offer some framing thoughts for those chapters. We consider how our field has theorized and studied mentorship, how we've theorized and studied methodology, and the stakes of theorizing and studying their intersections. We conclude with a brief overview of the chapters in this collection.

MENTORSHIP AND METHODOLOGY: A SHORT LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing studies has regularly sought to interrogate where our methodologies emerge, including the positionalities and relationships that

inevitably inform our methodological commitments (Banks, Cox, and Dadas 2019; Fleckenstein et al. 2008; Powell and Takayoshi 2003; Sullivan and Porter 1997). Central to these conditions are the mentoring relationships that produce and bind members of our field. Despite this disciplinary history of reflecting on and refining models of mentorship (Ballif, Davis, and Mountford 2008; Bloom 2007; Eble and Gaillet 2008; Okawa 2002), existing scholarship on mentoring rarely addresses how often it directly informs and is informed by methodology, while scholarship on methodology doesn't typically acknowledge its relationship to mentorship. Here, then, we trace how the field has taken up these two terms—mentorship and methodology—separately, noting how the slash we see as connecting them has been implicit, if unexamined, all along.

Mentorship

Mentorship has always been foundational to writing studies, which has decades worth of scholarship devoted to exploring varied structures, effects, and practices of mentorship. Scholars have shared personal stories of mentorship (Bloom 2007; Horner 2008), seeking to understand how mentorship changes across specific institutional locations such as writing programs (Denny 2010; Meeks and Hult 1998; Moore 2018) and graduate education (Clary-Lemon and Roen 2008; Kameen 1995; Madden 2020; Turner et al. 2017). Collaborative scholarship also dominates mentorship research, as differing configurations of mentorship relationships reflect on, theorize, and model their experiences making knowledge together (Browdy et al. 2021; Gindlesparger and Ryan 2016; Rodrigo et al. 2014). Taken together, this scholarship evidences the field's long-standing interest in making mentorship visible as well as its belief that mentorship is essential to professional (and often to personal) success. Yet, our understandings of mentorship have evolved alongside the field itself: as writing studies matures into a fully fledged discipline, discussions of mentorship have expanded from uncritical lore to examinations of how mentorship functions as a prerequisite for a healthy, sustainable discipline.

While this abundance of research all agrees on the importance of mentorship, it also continually highlights the frustrating institutional invisibility of mentorship work. Indeed, some scholars point to the implicit but durable assumed connection between mentorship and teaching to explain why the intellectual and emotional labor of mentorship is so often overlooked (Clary-Lemon and Roen 2008; Day et al. 2013; Rodrigo et al. 2014). If mentorship is simply an extension of

teaching duties, traditional thinking goes, then it deserves no special recognition or support within departments or institutions more widely. Frequently this dynamic is especially amplified for scholars of color (particularly women), who often find themselves assuming large mentorship responsibilities without formal recognition or resources (Kynard 2020; Mullings and Mukherjee 2018; Ore, Weiser, and Cedillo 2021). One solution to this persistent problem, suggest Day et al. (2013), is to simply recategorize mentorship: rather than seeing it as teaching or service, we should instead see it as scholarship. "Like editorial and curatorial work," they explain, "mentoring advances scholarship in the field, forging relationships among scholars that make possible new and potentially innovative work and allowing voices to be heard that might otherwise remain silent" (202). We agree that positioning mentorship as intellectual work is crucial, not just to ensure appropriate credit in annual reviews and for tenure and promotion but also to highlight how foundational mentorship is to a diverse range of disciplinary knowledge-making practices. Supporting mentorship, in other words, supports methodological advancement, perhaps most especially for underrepresented scholars.

Many writing studies scholars have made this case bluntly, framing mentorship as a matter of survival for those who have not traditionally been welcomed into the academy. Feminist scholars especially have been vocal in arguing for the importance of diverse approaches to mentorship attuned to the needs of women, often in explicit opposition to traditional, hierarchical models of mentorship (Balliff, Davis, and Mountford 2008; Fishman and Lunsford 2008; Morris, Rule, and LaVecchia 2020). Feminist mentorship tends to advocate more collaborative, egalitarian approaches such as "mentoring networks" (Eble and Gaillet 2019), "feminist comentoring" (Godbee and Novotny 2013), and "horizontal mentoring" (VanHaitisma and Ceraso 2017). Mentorship, in these configurations, is a political act that seeks to recognize and support the many (sometimes competing) aspects of women's identities so that they may better navigate and even undo the exclusionary structures of academia.

Advocates have also extended these discussions of mentorship-as-survival to explore mentorship's potential to support racial and ethnic minorities including Black and Latinx scholars in the academy. In one notably early example of such an approach to mentorship, Gail Y. Okawa's (2002) CCC article "Diving for Pearls" argues for "the need for better support systems for scholars of color," noting that mentorship in this context is necessarily an "activist practice" that "is critical to the survival and success of graduate students and junior faculty of color in the academic culture" (509). More recent scholarship echoes and amplifies

Okawa's call to see mentorship as necessary to the survival of BIPOC scholars. Ore, Weiser, and Cedillo (2021) explain that "because universities were not created for BIPOC and we were never intended to succeed in those spaces" (208), mentorship is critical to ensuring BIPOC scholars can "create spaces where we *do* belong" (209). Even when BIPOC scholars are able to create such spaces, many are still faced with the realities of navigating primarily or exclusively white environments (such as graduate programs), having to rely on white mentors who believe that they "do not have to push for change so long as they offer advice or simply warn those under their care" (Garcia et al. 2021, 55). Indeed, writes Kynard (2015), BIPOC scholars must learn to navigate "a field whose central knowledge-making industry—both its journals and the processes of selecting its editors—reproduces racist logics" (3). Thus, while mentorship can be liberatory, a means of reshaping the academy to eliminate the kind of exploitative or demeaning relationships that can silence or exclude BIPOC and other marginalized scholars, it (especially in its most uncritical formations) can also be fraught for those scholars who must rely on often regressive mentorship relationships based on raced hierarchies in order to ensure access to the academy.

Shannon Madden (2020) echoes this concern in her introduction to the edited collection *Learning from the Lived Experiences of Graduate Student Writers*, arguing that "traditional" approaches to mentorship can risk stifling scholarly and methodological advancement: when graduate mentorship is limited to "learn[ing] to perform research by carrying out faculty study designs," we risk not just privileging "certain ways of knowing" but ultimately the stifling of "writers from marginalized identity groups, as well as the future of knowledge across fields" (16). Mentorship, then, is powerful in both its progressive and conservative forms: while on the one hand it can serve as a gatekeeping mechanism, it also has the potential to reshape scholarly practice in writing studies by validating the embodied knowledge-making of scholars who have traditionally been excluded from disciplinary conversations. Mentoring that acknowledges or makes space for different, traditionally underrepresented or excluded epistemological positions can ultimately create a more inclusive academy as well as more just theories of writing and rhetoric.

Methodology

Methodologies are the larger epistemic commitments that guide how a researcher understands processes of knowledge-making, including decisions about specific methods. Feminist methodologies, for example,

tend to emphasize reciprocity, reflexivity, and social justice-based outcomes for participants (Kirsch 1999; McKee and Porter 2010; Powell and Takayoshi 2003). These values would thus shape how a researcher selects or performs specific research practices such as interviews or participant representation. Because methodologies determine *how* we know, they are also critical factors in *what* we can know. Methodological decisions, that is, are rhetorical decisions. For this reason, writing studies scholars have long encouraged researchers to examine how one's positionality might shape their epistemological claims, invoking metaphors like "orientation" (Banks, Cox, and Dadas 2019), "ecology" (Fleckenstein et al. 2008) or even "messiness" (Rickly 2007) to highlight the reality that research is not a neutral, distanced event but instead emerges from the unique and complex networks of identity, body, and relationality that define every research project.

From this perspective, knowledge-making is embodied, situated, and located; we do not know beyond our bodies and the relationships we form both within and outside academia. It is a process of forging, sustaining, or troubling our connections with other knowers, perhaps particularly those we might consider mentors. In one notable study, for example, Takayoshi, Tomlinson, and Castillo (2012) surveyed researchers in writing studies to better understand how they made methodological decisions. They found that "82% of participants identified experiential knowledge as the source of their methodological choices" (108). Their participants also suggested that one important source for generating research questions / methods is "connecting with esteemed and intellectually stimulating colleagues" (111). In other words, researchers make methodological choices based on their experiences and their relationships. As Jennifer Clary-Lemon (2018) puts it, "Our research and chosen methodologies [function] as part of a network of intersubjective human relations," inextricable from "other flows of information, complementary ways of knowing, and interrelationships" (208). In this collection, we seek to highlight the fleshy relations that govern our research's visibility, as we believe doing so can invite not just new methodologies but new ways of being and relating to one another.

Recognizing the ways in which methodology emerges from our varied embodied subject positions necessitates deep reflection. An important part of this process, writes Jacqueline Jones Royster (2000), is "an acknowledgement of passionate attachments," which asks the researcher "to specify attachments, to recognize who has produced the knowledge, what the bases of it are, what the material circumstances of its production entail, what consequences or implications are suggested by its

existence, and for whom the consequences and implications hold true” (280). Understanding our many “passionate attachments”—including who we make knowledge with and for—will, in many cases, require a reimagining of our methodologies, as we may need to employ “a broader, sometimes different range of techniques in garnering evidence and in analyzing and interpreting evidence” (251). Royster (2003) emphasizes that this work is fundamentally generative, so that “a different sense of the [disciplinary] landscape can be made visible, can be deemed valuable, and can become instructive in the re-envisioning of what constitutes knowledge” (161).

Thus, acknowledging from whom and where our methodologies spring is explicitly antiracist and decolonial. In their book *Race, Rhetoric, and Research Methods*, Lockett et al. (2021) explain how racism “affects how we design research, what we claim is the truth about what we observe, how we learn, our decision-making, and ultimately who we will communicate with and who we will try to become” (17). Our methodological choices will necessarily reflect the racist assumptions and biases that undergird all facets of contemporary life, including our disciplinary work. As Ruiz (2021) explains in her solo-authored chapter in the same book, such “epistemological racism” continues to mark even the field’s so-called critical methodologies, such as feminist methodologies, which “are embedded in traditions of Whiteness and Western oriented epistemologies” (39). One way to uncover these racist and colonial legacies, we believe, lies in unpacking the contexts from which our methodologies emerge, including the exclusionary structures and practices that continue to dominate the field.

As we hope to have made clear, we recognize a capacious and multi-sited approach to mentorship, one that values but exceeds traditional graduate student-faculty advisor relationships. Likewise, we also embrace an expansive rendering of methodology, recognizing its ability to articulate not just our research practice but all of our academic labor, including teaching, service, and mentorship. The slash that unites these terms thus invites similarly generative approaches to knowing and being within writing studies.

Mentorship/Methodology

It is at this intersection between how we know and who we know that we locate the work of this collection and, ultimately, our hopes for it. As we’ve said, we believe that spaces of mentorship/methodology can counter instances of epistemic injustice—what Beth Godbee (2017) describes

as "harm done to people in their capacities as knowers" (207). Yet these spaces can also perpetuate harm. We hope, then, that in emphasizing spaces at the slash, we see them for what they are: spaces of potential, of either maintaining the status quo and the discipline's complicity in systems of domination, or of radical chance, where we might counter that complicity and project new ways of knowing. Because we recognize how our privileges limit our capacities to perform this work, we believe the conversation at the slash must be multi-vocal, must contain a diverse cacophony of voices pushing the slash in productive directions. The four parts that comprise this collection reflect that sometimes harmonious, sometimes dissonant, chorus.

Each chapter in part 1, "Making Space at the Slash," invites readers into the production of the new spaces required for this work, the critical practices implied in this type of slash work. To start us off, Elise Dixon, Trixie Smith, and Malea Powell consider how the spaces of graduate mentorship, particularly during dissertation writing stages, might be informed by the principles of cultural rhetorics. This type of responsive, even radical, mentorship reflective of larger methodological criticality challenges existing models of graduate student training, where graduate students are mentored into the field's methodologies. In his chapter, Brad Lucas likewise describes the futility of these types of generalized, one-size-fits-all spaces of methodological mentoring. Blending personal history with disciplinary currents, Lucas challenges us to think beyond the methods seminar toward something like mentoring methodologies: structures of training that move beyond exclusionary surveys toward more hyper-local, justice-oriented training. To understand this (re)production of core disciplinary spaces, we need new vocabularies. Eric A. House, Kelly Medina-López, and Kellie Sharp-Hoskins offer language to understand this type of spatial work. Building on feminist work by Black, Indigenous, and women of the global majority (BIWGM), House, Medina-López, and Sharp-Hoskins argue that we need new spaces of methodology and mentoring "that do not dispossess, bypass, or white-wash students' (home) language, literacies, and embodied expertise." To that end, these authors offer "gentefying" as an alternative to the ways our disciplinary block is and continues to be gentrified. This takes work, and Devon Fitzgerald Ralston provides a glimpse into some of what that might look like. Drawing on autoethnographic narrative and histories of writing centers, Ralston argues for a deliberate centering of mentorship in writing center work, to think of mentoring "as a methodology, one that is deliberate and focused and one that can be flexible and evolving as we open spaces for previously underrepresented voices."

In all of this work, we see how the slash can open up new spaces for disciplinary work, both new work to be done and structures to be built.

As this collection acknowledges the need for the production of these new spaces at the slash, it likewise acknowledges the need to consider the sustainability of these spaces, their ability to survive within increasingly unstable institutional landscapes. The chapters that comprise part 2, “Sustainability at the Slash,” theorize and document programs designed to flexibly and sustainably continue the mentoring work of methodology, and the methodological work of mentorship, albeit on different scales and in different ways. For example, Gregory J. Palermo, Qianqian Zhang-Wu, Devon Skyler Regan, and Mya Poe describe a cross-generational assessment project at Northeastern University designed to both mentor future generations on the crucial, but often overlooked, assessment practice of writing program administration and make assessment work there more responsive to the school’s international population. This blending of the local and global—to build mentoring spaces at once responsive to local conditions and broader disciplinary needs—is a current we see running through this section. In their chapter, Alisa Russell and Thomas Polk describe the experiences of graduate students and faculty inhabiting larger disciplinary spaces of mentoring: the Cross-Institutional Mentoring Program (CIMP). In pairing graduate students and new faculty with more experienced Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) scholar-practitioners, the CIMP provides the authors a context to study the ways WAC methodologies, broadly defined, are circulated and transmitted within the field. Jessica Clements and John Pell likewise seek to render visible what is often invisible in our field, namely paths toward academic publication. Drawing on a rich archive of social media posts on the topic of publication and on their own experiences as editors at *Present Tense*, Pell and Clements survey more ethical and, frankly, more productive methodologies for publication mentorship. Lesley Erin Bartlett, Jessica Rivera-Mueller, Sandra L. Tarabochia’s chapter again demonstrates the diversity of these spaces at the slash and that sustainable mentorship/methodology work requires us to theorize mentoring spaces that stand outside of hierarchical, neoliberal models. In introducing “slow mentorship” in the context of an informal writing group, these authors give name to many of the sustainability practices we see at the slash, a mentorship practice that is “holistic and counter-cultural, that values ‘excess,’ identity work, and agency.”

Part 3, “Methodological Innovations: Bridging the Slash,” asks readers to consider the varied methodologies we might adapt to study, theorize, and improve mentorship across the discipline. The chapters

in this section all underscore the need for intentional, if flexible, methodologies for understanding mentorship, ultimately demonstrating that an impoverished view of one is an impoverished view of both. Elizabeth Geib Chavin and Beth A. Towle offer an exploration of how labor practices within writing centers have shaped methodologies within writing center studies, ultimately advocating for additional investment in methodologies specifically focused on decolonizing writing center spaces, practices, and scholarship. Also located within the disciplinary location of writing center studies, Anna Sicari's chapter provides three case studies to argue for the value of institutional ethnography as a methodology for studying—and improving—mentorship. At the same time, Sicari draws attention to how responsive writing center mentorship practices can make institutional ethnography methodologies more attentive to the specific needs of marginalized identities. Finally, Keaton Kirkpatrick presents the results of a mixed-methods study of a course-embedded undergraduate mentorship model. Not only does Kirkpatrick highlight the value of this specific approach to undergraduate mentorship, but his chapter also demonstrates the importance of methodological diversity when studying mentorship.

We conclude the collection with part 4, "Complicating the Slash: Futures in Mentorship/Methodology." The chapters here work intentionally to expand and even in some cases undo the slash that we imagine holding mentorship/methodology together. Together, they invite readers to critically examine the narratives, bodies, and experiences we rely on to understand how we learn and do within the discipline. Leslie R. Anglesey and Melissa Nicholas introduce "leaky" as a metaphor to describe the ways in which our messy, imperfect bodies inevitably inform our ways of knowing and relating to one another. Using an approach informed by disabilities studies, Anglesey and Nicholas argue that their "crippled version of mentoring" can create spaces for similarly expansive, embodied, crippled methodologies. Michelle Flahive's chapter follows, serving as both a model of and an argument for *testimonio*, a methodology for understanding how lived experiences shape knowledge claims. Examining her own experiences as a Latina graduate student navigating a predominantly white institution (PWI), Flahive makes a compelling claim for *testimonio*'s potential to not only highlight how knowing is tied to bodies tangled in systems of power but to counter larger epistemic injustices. To close the collection, Aurora Matzke and John Paul Tassoni present what we see as a productively oppositional understanding of mentorship/methodology, one that counters many of the commonplaces that ground the rest of the chapters. They rely on

mediated discourse theory to explore the ecological nature of learning and becoming together, complicating (and even refusing) traditional mentorship narratives in the process.

The cases, illustrations, and reflections readers will find here traverse our disciplinary landscape: from writing centers to faculty offices, from homespaces to lecture halls, from writing groups to cross-institutional networks, to spaces beyond and in between. As they move, they cast mentorship/methodology in sometimes quite different ways. There are palpable tensions, discrepancies, and differences: an instructively muddled mosaic, perhaps, to return to Bloom's (2007) metaphor. But read together, they produce mentorship/methodology as an important and urgent disciplinary location, a place where we can take stock of the work we've done and haven't done, the work we're doing and the work we must do. This collection attempts to capture and theorize those messy moments when our work as researchers, mentors, and mentees collides in the production, revision, and reproduction of our field and our roles within it.

NOTES

1. We've chosen to use the term "pre-tenure" to describe our positions, but we wish to call attention to the difficulties of naming institutional locations, especially in the context of mentorship relationships. Language like "mentor/mentee," "expert/novice," or "early-/late-career" can imply problematic hierarchies that don't often reflect the varied subject positions within academia. Nor does this language necessarily reflect the expansive approaches to mentorship this collection presents. We asked authors to be attentive to the politics inherent in and enacted by these terms; that is, we asked them to be intentional and critical with the language they use to describe institutional positions. We'd like to thank one of our anonymous reviewers for bringing this to our attention. We also encourage readers to reflect on the ways our disciplinary vernacular can undermine the creation of new relationships within institutional structures.
2. Our department at Auburn University is integrated, with faculty and undergraduate/graduate students from literature, technical and professional communication, creative writing, and rhetoric and composition. In this introduction, we use writing studies to speak to the broader field that includes rhetoric and composition as well as technical and professional communication, although readers will notice that authors across this collection have chosen to use a variety of names for the field.
3. Our thanks to roundtable participants Keith Grant-Davie, Elizabeth Keller, Breanne Matheson, Kate Pantelides, Rebecca Rickly, Nancy Small, and Eric Stephens for their work on this panel.

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