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INTRODUCTION

The title of this monograph, *Writing-Intensive: Becoming W-Faculty in a New Writing Curriculum* points to what is clearly not a modest undertaking. We were latecomers, like most others in Canada, to the institutionalizing of writing at our university. But we gave serious attention to the reports of colleagues in other institutions, mainly American, which made it clear what would be involved if we also became serious about investing in student writers. Like others, we had noticed an increase in student literacy problems, and also like others, had begun to realize that laying the blame elsewhere, on the parents, the kindergarten teacher, the high school, or the TV culture, was not a solution. We could not ignore a growing student population that was different, both culturally and linguistically, from earlier decades. Investment in these students as writers might qualify, from some points of view, as a means to move them to more conscious and correct use of Standard English. From other points of view, however, investment in students as writers could set processes in motion that would affect their entire educational experience. Such processes would or could entail, I suggest, a cultural transformation at the university.

As David Russell and others have pointed out, approaching writing across the disciplines “asks for a fundamental commitment to a radically different way of teaching” (Russell 2002, 295), and encourages a new and articulated awareness of the role of discourse in the making of disciplinary knowledge. Correspondingly, there is new awareness of the learning and reconfiguring, perhaps re-inventing, of that knowledge by students. In the writing classroom, roles and purposes shift, new values emerge and adjust to new standards; relationships to subject matter are reconceived. New pedagogies in these classrooms may make a significant difference to the students in particular courses, but these pedagogies need to be part of much more widespread shifts in values, norms, and structures if they are to transcend individual behaviors. A new curriculum at the institutional level that applies across disciplines establishes the intention of a larger social purpose. Accomplishing it as a cultural reality in the scale of the institution is a more complex process than in the individual classroom. It would be achieved incrementally, and, in a university, by consent, not imposition.

The university is not a place where such shifts occur readily. In his account of reform in higher education, Richard E. Miller offers many

cautions. He points out that the complications inherent in moving from a reform proposal to implementation require, beyond the fixed fiscal and material realities, an understanding that “. . . intellectuals, administrators, and students are not different from anyone else who works in a large bureaucratic system: they need to be *persuaded* that change is necessary, they would prefer to exercise some control over how change is implemented and assessed, and they want to be certain that the proposed changes will not make their own work obsolete or more difficult. If those conditions aren't met—and they almost never are—then the affected parties offer public conformity and private resistance, engaging in what Scott calls an ‘undeclared ideological guerilla war’ that is fought with ‘rumor, gossip, disguises, linguistic tricks, metaphors, euphemisms, folktales, ritual gestures, anonymity’” (Miller 1998 137, 249). Miller's characterization of potentially obstructive bureaucratic and personal, relational elements finds its explication in the documentation of writing program developments across the country. These exemplify ways to bypass the emergence of ‘guerilla war,’ and illustrate the kinds of faculty interactions likely to be persuasive and pedagogically sound. They provide evidence that the use and teaching of writing can be constitutive in disciplinary pedagogies and become “everybody's business” (Fulwiler and Young 1990; Kipling and Murphy 1992; Monroe 2003; Segall and Smart 2005; Thaiss and Zawacki 2006; Townsend 2001; Waldo 2004). They also demonstrate Miller's caveat that, in spite of obstacles, “one finds a place where individuals acting alone and collectively have an opportunity to express their agency, albeit in the highly restricted realm of relative freedom” (Miller 1998, 8). As our university embarked on integrating writing in the disciplines, these pioneers were a *Guide Bleu* to consult about the territory, the pitfalls, and the options.

In joining this cornucopia of exemplars, this account confirms what have been marked as best practices, and offers fresh perspectives. The initiative at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and this book about it are distinguished from our predecessors in several ways. Set in motion by SFU's Vice-President Academic, John Waterhouse, and led by his appointed Ad Hoc Committee, inquiry and discussion of the undergraduate curriculum drew participation from across the campus through surveys, department meetings, committee and sub-committee deliberation, widely distributed interim reports, presentations in Senate, and individual lobbying and information-seeking. Independent of this university-wide inquiry about the overall undergraduate curriculum, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), John Pierce, set up the Centre for Writing-Intensive

Learning (CWIL) in the Fall semester 2002 with two faculty members to assist professors, on a by-request basis, to use and teach writing more effectively in their content courses; that is, to make them writing-intensive. Concurrently, as CWIL's Director, I was one of many people being consulted about how to improve student writing university-wide. Once the Ad Hoc Committee decided upon improving writing by instituting new requirements, and the decision became official through Senate, our unit, CWIL, moved from being dedicated to faculty support in FASS writing into becoming the principal resource for assisting instructors across all the faculties and disciplines in writing-intensive course (W-course) development. In the interim, we had developed a discipline-based pedagogy informed by new rhetorical genre theory that served as the framework for our approach to implementing the new writing curriculum.

Our view of genre was influenced by Carolyn Miller's original work in "Genre as Social Action" (1984/1994) and elaborated, among others, by a number of our Canadian colleagues who, through what Freedman has termed "Rhetorical Genre Studies" (1999/2001), have researched the learning and use of genres in both academic and professional settings (Artemeva and Freedman 2006; Coe 2002; Dias 1999; Freedman and Medway 1994; Giltrow and Valiquette 1994; Schryer 1993). Their work has demonstrated the significance and impact of rhetorical contexts, student motivation and relevance of the genre to course or situational exigencies, and invited reflection on the nature of genre pedagogies. Freedman's research into students' acquisition of legal discourse, for instance, challenged assumptions about the need for explicit teaching of genre features (Freedman, 1993 222–251). More recently, others have compiled classroom illustrations of genre pedagogy across disciplines and institutions (Herrington, 2005) or proposed approaches for such a pedagogy (Devitt 2004; Hyland 2004) that appear to counter Freedman's objections with some level of explicit teaching of genre. The account of our experience in this book represents the implementation of genre pedagogy at the course and curriculum level in a single institution. As a consequence, there was a theoretical consistency in the approaches we took in assisting in the development of the W-courses, but the particularities of local situations meant that this consistency did not lead to formulaic teaching across the disciplines.

Taking a new rhetorical genre perspective equipped us to engage our discourse analytic skills with the professor's intimate knowledge of the social action of their particular disciplinary genres. Together, we uncovered their often tacit knowledge, bringing it forward to a discursive level that helped us in identifying genres important for their students' initiation

into the discipline, and in revealing the relevant textual regularities of those genres. New rhetorical genre theory anchored our stance, but rarely did we find it necessary to be explicit about that overarching theoretical framework. We suggested and developed strategies at a micro-level for communicating the features of the disciplinary genres to students. These strategies reflected criteria appropriate to a genre-based, process pedagogy. They included assignments and instruction offering rationales for, and explicit analyses of, the target genres, and structured engagement in writing processes with response and revision. The professors did not see themselves as writing teachers; they were teaching their subject matter with written work as a means of assisting and assessing student learning. They assigned writing for their own purposes in the genres they valued and that they themselves largely defined. By consulting with them, we largely avoided the concept of genre as formulaic, learning from them the fluid and evolving characteristics of the genres they knew as writers, and that they wished to encourage in their students as writers.

The new genre pedagogy had a significant effect on instructional processes and patterns of relationships in the classrooms. It also had the effect of creating and transforming the discourse around writing, providing a new context for discussing teaching and learning that the thinking about, and teaching of, writing had made more visible. The bringing together of faculty from across the disciplines created, in Wendy Bishop's words, "sites of terminology where far-flung constituents can meet and speak a second language" (Bishop and Ostrom 1997, xiii). The discursive space that was opened up contributed to constituting a community of faculty, who could share their experience as a basis for further action. In a 1994 revisiting of her earlier analysis of genre, Miller cites Joseph Rouse's argument about the ways in which "narrative has specifically the function of holding heterogeneity together" (Miller 1994, 75). Though they came from very different disciplinary cultures, the W-faculty were sharing in a common project. Their overlapping interests in this particular project made it possible for them to begin to construct what Rouse argues would be "a common narrative which gives common sense to everyone's endeavor" (cited in Miller, 75). Taking on a new discourse was a means of creating new and binding collegial relationships at what might be seen as a meta-disciplinary level.

Further, by taking a genre approach that was located in the disciplines, not in composition courses, we were working in the social and cultural contexts that could provide authentic exigences and make rhetorical demands that arose out of the course content and goals. By developing

a genre pedagogy, we opened up opportunities for discussion about writing that were clearly situated in the disciplinary context and that helped reveal the work of learning to write as complex, multi-faceted, and deeply embedded in disciplinary knowledge and discourse.

The actual innovation itself was not seen as the introduction of a program as such, although the satellite and supporting services that were subsequently initiated may eventually constitute what could be defined as a program. The innovation was more in the nature of a project that had goals, but was perpetually in flux, responsive to, and learning from, the participants, both faculty and students. It proceeded on the assumption that the success of the new writing curriculum for students would largely depend on developing faculty's expertise and knowledge of their own writing and disciplinary discourse practices, and the consultants' willingness and skill in helping them articulate that genre knowledge and use it in their teaching. It remained to be seen whether and how the introduction of a new pedagogy and new curriculum would ultimately affect the climate for teaching and learning, rather than reflect a shift in the wind in a few sheltered places.

Few books address applications of new rhetorical genre theory to programs for teaching writing, and few offer comprehensive studies of developing a program at a single institution. Edited collections necessarily decontextualize. A distinguishing feature of this book is that it treats the curriculum initiative holistically, and illustrates the complex and nuanced realities of development. These include individuals' troubling uncertainties, as well as their sense of dynamism in their classroom practice. The chapters which follow illustrate and explain the ways in which the principal actors and stakeholders—the administration, the departments, and the instructors in the classrooms—are implicated in each event of the curriculum change. The sequence of chapters and topics is intended to reflect the institutional context within which the innovation took shape: the first two chapters address the inescapable complexities of the bureaucratic and administrative framework that both enable and constrain the work of the faculty; the next five chapters illustrate that work; the book closes with an assessment that returns to the administration; it considers the interactions of the administration with the faculty and the implications of those interactions for the future of the new curriculum initiative.

The opening chapter, *Forty Years On: The University Mission in a New Context*, traces the developments at the senior administrative and local department levels, two separate but related arenas that eventually converged in a symbiotic relationship out of which emerged the particular

characteristics of SFU's *writing-intensive* requirements. The implementation of such requirements would have significant implications for the institution's teaching and learning culture, as well as for its budget and marketability: it could not be accomplished by administrative fiat. As such, the chapter also discusses the need for faculty collaboration and compliance, allocation of adequate resources, and the composing of a coherent, articulated vision that could be understood and shared by everyone affected by the innovation, including students. Finally, the chapter offers an examination of the local contingencies and contexts that helped to explain the pragmatics and rationale for the approach taken at SFU: (a) creating committees and consultative processes to investigate the case for change; (b) articulating departmental and faculty level concerns and needs; (c) negotiating the terms and purposes of the new requirement; (d) researching for precedents and exemplars to justify the pedagogical model being recommended; and (e) defining the role of the Centre for Writing-Intensive Learning in the implementation process.

Deciding to introduce writing-intensive courses (W-courses) to enhance student writing and learning was only the first step. Faculty who supported the initiative understood that it was essential to conceptualize "writing-intensive" as richly and fully as possible, and to encourage commitment to that conceptualization through effective communication of its meaning. The second chapter, *Criteria for Writing-Intensive Courses: Rules or Reasons?*, presents the ongoing and collaborative process of arriving at an understanding of how to implement W-courses within defined criteria, and the complex and varied forms of influence on those processes.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section sets out the array of vantage points from which the distinguishing details of a W-course were contemplated and critiqued by those involved in the pilot phase of the initiative. The second section provides an explanation of the development of the set of criteria put forward in light of those vantage points, and in response to the ongoing dialogues with departments and individual faculty members. The third section outlines the research and theory on which each criterion rests and could be justified. The fourth and final section describes the challenges posed by the certification process, as a new process had to be put in place to designate W-courses. The chapter reflects the multi-dimensional process of defining the criteria, and establishes the foundational role of the criteria in providing reference points for the future development of W-courses, a map to transcend disciplinary boundaries but also accommodate discipline-specific routes.

In recognition that change is not accomplished by fiat, nor without disruption, the third chapter, *In Defense of Stumbling: The Map is Not the Territory*, shifts the focus from the institutional framework to the classroom. It presents a candid discussion of the risks of undertaking a W-course: risks shared by the faculty member, the TAs, the students, and the writing consultant. Such risk-taking requires the transformation of the relationships among students, TAs, faculty, and consultants. A change in course materials and engagement with those materials are also required. The chapter acknowledges that if the course is to succeed, then it must try to satisfy everyone's needs and expectations, despite the demands of the new context, which in the W-classroom are demonstrably the deliberate choice of the professor. The chapter offers an exploration and analysis of the risks involved in undertaking a W-course and the inevitable stumbling; it presents both as key to navigating unfamiliar territory towards new understandings of the issues involved.

The context for this exploration and analysis is a third-year economics course taught by a senior professor with two teaching assistants (TAs) and a class of 97 students. The chapter traces the development of the course as a W-pilot course, from the first meeting of the writing consultant and the professor, through to implementation. Attention is given also to the contemporary student-as-customer culture of the academy and the initial challenge for the writing consultant with the professor and TAs to negotiate a pedagogy, and engender a level of trust and willingness to countenance the uncertainty of outcomes. Against the backdrop of student expectations and both institutional and departmental culture, the matter of developing trust and collaboration in a new setting played itself out in multiple ways during the course: in negotiations over course and writing objectives, in assignment planning, in grading and values assigned to student written work, in relations between the professor and the TAs, and in modes of feedback and tutorial interaction. The chapter describes each of these scenarios, and offers an analysis of both the stumbling and the insights, which make significant contributions to an understanding of what is entailed in implementing W-courses across disciplines.

Each of the participants involved in planning and teaching a W-course necessarily experiences the course differently, and different elements assume different degrees of relevance for their overall impressions and interpretations, as well as for their daily work with students. As with the economics course described in Chapter 3, the next chapter provides an account of processes and outcomes in a particular course; they need not be understood as particular to the course or discipline, however, and

therefore what is contained in this chapter is widely relevant to attempts at pedagogical reform. Chapter Four, *What Happened in This Course? Reflections from Three Perspectives: Joan Sharp, the course instructor; Erin Barley, the TA; Wendy Strachan, the W-consultant*, presents the sometimes consistent and sometimes divergent reflections of instructor, TA, and writing consultant, in their collective responsibility for modifying an existing course to meet the writing-intensive criteria. The chapter opens with an outline of the course context and goals for a large (250 students) lecture/lab course and the two shared goals of consultant, instructor, and TA: first, to inquire into the feasibility of integrating new purposes and processes of writing instruction with a cohort of 14 TAs, most of whom were inexperienced in giving such instruction, and who required training and mentoring; secondly, to attempt to assess the outcomes of the modified W-course on student writing and learning. Through each of the three accounts, the chapter overall takes into account the key factors that affected the collaborative process: the size of the class, the number of TAs, the complex schedule of labs and tutorials, departmental skepticism about the process, the precedents for writing in the course, and the limited time and opportunities available for consultation and collaboration.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, the instructor explains what was entailed in revisiting the purposes and processes by which students learned from her challenging course material. For her, modifications brought a new understanding of the structure and design of the course, an enhanced awareness of student strengths and weaknesses, and a more collegial relationship with the TAs. In the second section, the TA contrasts her previous content-focused and question-driven practice in tutorial with her newly acquired pedagogy of using writing as a means of learning, and reflects on how this shift in focus repositioned her in relation to the students so that she became more engaged in their learning process, in skills development, and in their struggle to write. In the third section, the consultant/author offers a tentative assessment of the effect of the process on student writing and learning, including reference to student feedback surveys and to findings from analysis of writing samples on an essay exam in the course.

Chapters Three and Four exemplified engagement by faculty in economics and Biology. Both included references to proposing and developing writing assignments that reflected genres appropriate to those disciplines in the context of offering their new W-courses. In the fifth chapter, *Taking a Genre Approach to Teaching Writing: The Consulting, Collaborative Process*, I take a more direct focus on genre. I explain how applying

principles from genre theory effected a transformation in discourse about writing and in faculty understanding and recognition of the complex and subtle relationship between the features of text and rhetorical situation that gives rise to genres, and makes understanding their function in those situations so important in planning and implementing successful writing assignments. I use three examples from faculty with whom we consulted for W-courses in Biodiversity, Environmental economics, and Philosophy. I demonstrate how the genre approach that CWIL adopted invited them to re-examine their assumptions and expectations for student writing, reconsider the sequences they planned for writing assignments, revise the ways they conceptualize writing and the teaching of writing, and consequently, their performance as writing teachers. Each example is framed by Coe's (2002) three basic principles for teaching with genre theory:

Genres embody socially established strategies for achieving purposes in rhetorical situations.

Genres are not just text types; they imply/invoke/create/(re)construct situations (and contexts), communities, writers and readers (i.e. subject positions).

Understanding genre will help students become versatile writers, able to adapt to the wide variety of types of writing tasks they are likely to encounter in their lives (Coe 2002, 197–210 198–200).

Since our practice was to begin with existing course material and faculty goals and objectives, the examples described here explain the ways in which we assumed the role of interpreters and mediators between genre theory as our text and the faculty's own texts to enable changes in the ways faculty used existing materials to achieve their goals for student writing. The account begins with a detailed descriptive analysis of one particular course as illustration of the process and principles that directed our practice. The following two examples are briefer echoes of this approach with genre; I point out particular aspects that differentiated the applications of genre from one course to another, putting the focus on those particulars rather than accounting for them in the context within which they occur.

While examples of the planning and mentoring characteristic of CWIL's interaction with both faculty and TAs serve to illustrate the processes of the implementation of a new genre pedagogy, they were mediated in these first chapters mainly through my representation as the narrator. Except for Joan Sharp's and Erin Barley's pieces on the biology course, they do not

represent directly the experiences of faculty or their reflections on those experiences. Chapter Six, *Am I Really a Teacher? Reflections and Discoveries from Across the Disciplines*, invites the stories and voices of individuals who participated as early adopters in the initiative. It draws on interviews with ten W-faculty from nine different disciplines, each of whom volunteered to reflect on and discuss their experiences of teaching W-course(s).

The first section of this chapter takes the form of faculty comments and observations (from the interviews) woven together to provide a detailed representation and analysis of how the faculty articulated writing as both a process of production and a means of engagement in social situations. The weaving of their perspectives, situating these in relation to the discourses in their fields, provides a unique illustration and affirmation of the rationale behind the university's decision to situate the teaching of writing in the discipline. The second section opens with clusters of observations the W-faculty make about being a teacher in a post-secondary institution, a role that, for some, is clearly secondary to being a researcher, and for others creates conflicts in their sense of identity. The observations are followed by a series of snapshots, each of which seeks to capture an aspect of the challenges that emerged for each of the faculty from the process of teaching a W-course. The significance of these snapshots is that although they present discipline-specific examples, they also transcend disciplinary contexts and boundaries, and, as a collection, testify to the valuable learning that occurs when faculty from across the disciplines exchange ideas and experience about teaching.

The faculty involved in the W-courses not only had views on their personal teaching experience, but also were deeply interested in and concerned about that experience in the context of the university-wide initiative. Chapter Seven, *Collected Wisdom and Expanded Horizons: A Forum Discussion*, brings the voices and perspectives of the faculty from Chapter Six into a shared forum to discuss the political, economic, historical, intellectual, and simply bureaucratic elements at the department and university levels that framed, and in some respects constrained, their work in the classroom.

By constructing an exchange of ideas among the participating faculty in the format of a forum moderated by the author, this chapter draws on observations and responses recorded during two small group dinner meetings, and notes from individual interviews. The forum is structured around the topics that reflect concrete indicators of what the group regarded as essential elements for successful W-implementation, including questions about: (a) the way teaching is valued at the university; (b) how it

is, or might be, recognized, evaluated, and rewarded; (c) how W-teaching specifically might be made more visible; and (d) how the initiative needs to be communicated to, and understood by, students, TAs, and the general public. The forum affords insights, from the faculty perspective, into the larger contexts within which curriculum change occurs. The discussion also reflects the ambiguities, limitations, and range of vision that can be expected when people are brought together who occupy highly differentiated positions in the institutional hierarchy but who share a commitment to work together.

The final chapter, *Through Transition in Search of Stability*, reviews and assesses the preparation period. It draws on quantitative and qualitative data to assess the extent to which progress was made toward creating an environment that seemed likely to sustain and develop the writing initiative and its genre-based approach beyond that pilot period. At all levels of the administration, and within departments, the impending start date prompted a heightened state of activity and development (acceleration of course preparation and certification, and the creation of additional services, for instance), requiring considerable patience, collaboration, and consultation. In this chapter, I try to map out the varied and interdependent markers at the faculty, department, and administrative levels at SFU that signaled where we had made progress as well as what had been overlooked, or warranted more attention. Successful programs, whether designated Writing-in-the-Disciplines (WID) or Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), tend toward characteristic features (Townsend 2001) and, also characteristically, appear to move through a series of four stages (Condon 2006) before becoming sufficiently integrated into the curriculum and into the university's sense of its mission to be self-sustaining. Using Condon's continuum of this staged process and Townsend's summary of characteristics as reference points, I detail the scene at the university as it appeared immediately before the semester of university-wide implementation (Fall, 2006). I conclude with an assessment of the prospects for the future of this ambitious curriculum venture.

I do not and cannot claim that the architects of the new curriculum requirements for writing at our institution were thinking in terms of cultural transformation. The purposes, as outlined in the documents describing the intended changes, were more pragmatic than idealistic, the implications for change in pedagogy more practical than philosophical. Nor indeed, would it be politically or ethically acceptable to the faculty to be informed that taking on a new writing curriculum meant endorsing a fundamental shift in their teaching and learning culture. That "writing

disrupts the traditional pattern of classroom instruction” (McLeod and Miraglia 2001, 16) is not a rationale usually offered in plans submitted for Senate approval, nor is it an inducement to faculty participation in writing instruction. Neither, witness others’ long experience, could any such outcome be predicted with any certainty. The process of change is a journey, as McLeod and Miraglia suggest, “not a blueprint.” Embarking on a path toward a new pedagogy, however, in an activity as central to scholarship and teaching and disciplinarity as writing has the potential to unsettle and bring about fundamental cultural shifts.

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