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STRATEGY SHEETS

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Labor, Writing Studies, and Writing Program Administration

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On June 19, 2018, something rare happened. "The AP has just broken some new news," Rachel Maddow explained on her MSNBC show as she was handed news in the middle of her broadcast.

She stopped, visibly flustered, and she tried again without looking at the camera.

"Um, this has just come out from the Associated Press. This is incredible. The Trump administration has been sending babies [her voice cracked] and other young children . . ." She paused, waving her finger at the screen. "Hmm, hold on . . . to at least three [waving her finger and shaking her head]. Put up the graphic of this," she directs, finally making eye contact with the camera. "I think I am going to have to hand this off."

In that unfiltered moment, we were reminded that a newscaster's job is not only to share the news but often to hear the news first and carry the weight of that news even as they are expected to appear emotionally detached, somehow untouched and unaffected by whatever news they are charged to relay. The incident was so shocking and so memorable because for a moment, we saw what Rachel Maddow carried and the effect it had on her.

Later that evening Maddow tweeted, "Ugh, I'm sorry. If nothing else, it is my job to actually be able to speak while I'm on TV."

The next day there were several news stories about Maddow's broadcast with headlines like "Rachel Maddow breaks down in tears on air while reading report on 'tender age' shelters" (Schmidt 2018).

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Commentary from the press and the public ranged from praise for her bravery and compassion to conspiratorial theories and petty insults about her gender, sexuality, and acting skills, which were referred to by one commenter as worse than those displayed in *Sharknado*. The response to Maddow's broadcast illuminated, among so many other things, the typically tacit expectation that newscasters present the information in an appropriately stoic manner and do so without visible emotions or vulnerability. Suppression and emotion management are part of the job, and the constant negotiation of these prevailing dialectical tensions is emotional labor.

As writing program administrators (WPAs), we felt a deep resonance with Maddow's struggle to constrain her emotions. We recognized the powerful tension between how we are perceived separately as professionals and as people with emotions. We certainly know what it is like to apologize when our emotions and our work collide or cross trajectories.

If you ask a WPA to draft a brief list of their responsibilities, it would likely include scheduling classes, training teaching assistants, developing and assessing curriculum, observing and evaluating faculty, and maybe arbitrating student complaints about instructors and grades. It probably wouldn't include fielding aggressive responses and pointed questions about policies passed down by upper administration, helping homeless students find housing and helping adjunct colleagues obtain food stamps, or sharing with a classroom full of students that their teacher passed away suddenly the day before—concurrently aware that your next steps need to be getting the classes covered, compiling information for the new instructors, initiating compensation paperwork, and supporting colleagues and students through the mourning process even though you are likely also struggling with the loss. There is a weariness simply in reading that last sentence. Yet, many of us have lived it.

If you ask a WPA to describe their work, you will likely not get a sense of how rewarding that work can be even as they struggle with the constant effort to find balance in their working lives (How do you find time to conduct research and write? When do you have time to grade assignments and plan for class? How do you have the energy to plan professional development and assessment activities? Why haven't you answered my email? When will I know what courses I teach next semester? Why weren't you in your office when I came by this morning?) and their personal lives. Most WPAs have learned to present a persona rooted in professionalism and energetic commitment to improving

student writing. But inevitably, many of those same WPAs struggle with burnout, depression, and a sense of powerlessness. Administering a writing program can be equally exhilarating and tumultuous. It can be easy to disregard, ignore, or minimize the emotional labor of writing program administrators, though as our experiences, the scholarship of our field, and the chapters in this collection illustrate, we carry plenty.

We put this collection together in a cultural moment that is saturated with traumatic events, such as mass shootings, sexual assaults, racial violence, and hate crimes; and we recognize that everyone involved in the work of writing programs—including WPAs, instructors, and students—carry things seen and unseen. Readers will doubtless recognize that we borrowed from Tim O'Brien's famous collection, *The Things They Carried*, for the title of this collection. In calling back to this book, we do not mean to suggest that the experiences of WPAs are somehow analogous to the horrors of war—although we may sometimes feel tempted to make such a suggestion. Nor do we mean to suggest that the things we carry are to be seen as inherently negative, as burdens we would prefer to put down when given the chance. Rather, like O'Brien, we believe we must examine the things we carry and think about the narratives attached to those things. As O'Brien (1990, 255) put it, "Stories can save us." We see this collection as an opportunity to embrace the power of storytelling as a means to build theoretical approaches to emotional labor. We see the stories that comprise the exigence of each chapter as the basis for reflection, for engagement with scholarship, for continuing the work of theorizing emotional labor in writing studies, and for seeking practical strategies for writing program administration.

The chapters in this collection in one form or another all find their origins in stories, and it is our hope in assembling these stories and building scholarship around them that we will provide a resource to help all WPAs, whether they're experienced first-year writing program coordinators, pre-tenured writing across the curriculum directors, or non-tenure-track writing center directors (WCDs). We use the term *WPA* as an inclusive term that encompasses the work of many kinds of faculty and staff at many kinds of institutions. As we selected and worked with the authors in this book, we kept as a central tenet the need to represent the diverse range of WPAs at work in higher education. We hope readers will find that representation both useful and welcoming as we seek to extend the conversation about emotional labor in writing program administration.

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEORIES OF EMOTIONAL LABOR

Though we can date the concept of emotional labor back to Aristotle, it was sociologist Arlie Hochschild many years later in her book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (2012), first published in 1983 and republished many times since, who coined the term *emotional labor*. Hochschild (2012, 7, 35) defines emotional labor as the "management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display [that] is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value" and differentiates between two different types of emotional labor: deep acting and surface acting. More broadly put, according to Hochschild's (2012, 7) framework, emotional labor calls for "a coordination of mind and feeling." As Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah H. Figart (1999, 9) explain, emotional labor is also "the relational rather than the task-based aspect of work." The scope of emotional labor is perhaps best illustrated through Hochschild's (2012) examples, which include the hospital coordinator who rallies the staff to tackle a shared goal set by the administration, the judge who returns home after having had to practice objectivity while observing evidence of monstrosity, and the Wall Street trader who works to manage the anxiety of their clients. Hochschild's study suggests that "one-half of women workers" and "one-third of all workers" experience emotional labor (Steinberg and Figart 1999, 24).

In the years since Hochschild's coining of the term *emotional labor*, several scholars across many different fields have built on the definition and added categorizations to help us better recognize it. In "Emotional Labor: Why and How to Teach It," Sharon H. Mastracci, Meredith A. Newman, and Mary E. Guy (2010, 125) take the definition beyond the outward display described by Hochschild, defining it as "the expression of one's capacity to manage personal emotions, sense others' emotions, and to respond appropriately, based on one's job." Some scholars have responded to these more capacious definitions of emotional labor by adapting Hochschild's initial heuristic to include different categorizations (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Morris and Feldman 1996; Glomb and Tews 2004). Guy, Newman, and Mastracci (2008, 5–6) provide perhaps the most detailed list of "dimensions to emotional labor," which includes, but is not limited to: Verbal Judo, Caritas (or caring labor), Gameface, Show Time, Compassion Fatigue, Emotion Management, Professional Face, Deep Acting, Emotional Suppression, Emotional Equilibrium, and Emotional Facade. Though they use different categories to describe emotional labor, the scholarship seems to agree with few exceptions that recognition of and research about emotional labor are important

because "silence" about emotional labor "means avoidance: avoiding crucial conversations, mismanaged emotions, and mismanaged emotion regulation" (Mastracci, Guy, and Newman 2014, 19). Silence, dismissal, or minimization of emotional labor can also lead to burnout, decreased trust in people and institutions, anxiety, and anguish (Mastracci, Guy, and Newman 2014, 9). Though many scholars focus on what could be seen as the burdens of emotional labor, other scholars (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Wharton 1993; Constanti and Gibbs 2004) make a point of discussing the ways it can also be positive, though Panikkos Constanti and Paul Gibbs (2004) do still suggest that it often goes unrewarded.

Work in emotional labor studies takes place in numerous fields (criminal justice, economics, academic advising and education, hotel management and hospitality, industry and retail, linguistics, nursing, psychology, public service, sociology, and tourism) and spans multiple continents, including Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia. Scholars have also studied copious disparate populations, ranging from Hochschild's (2012) study of the service economy to Guy, Newman, and Mastracci's (2008) works relating to public service. The resulting insights, data, and heuristics aptly apply to the work of WPAs. Of particular interest to WPAs is the understanding that emotional labor is "part of an occupation, not just something that a person brings to the job" (Mastracci, Guy, and Newman 2014, xv) and the unfortunate reality that such labor "is seldom recognized, rarely honored, and almost never taken into account by employers as a source of on-the-job stress" (Hochschild 2012, 153).

EMOTIONAL LABOR IN WRITING STUDIES AND WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The rich history of WPA stories housed in iconic texts, such as Diana George's (1999) *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours*, helps WPAs understand how our individual struggles connect to larger disciplinary and institutional issues, provide emotional connection, and illustrate that the struggles of the profession need not stay silent. In addition, recent work by affect scholars, such as Sara Ahmed, Brian Massumi, and Lauren Berlant, opens opportunities for scholars in rhetoric, composition, and writing studies to consider applications of affect theories to WPA work and complicates such theories by considering material conditions WPAs experience. Because of the important groundwork covered by colleagues, this more recent strain of scholarship exploring the relationship between work and emotion from scholars such as Laura

Micciche, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, Nicole I. Caswell, Kelly Ritter, Elizabeth Saur and Jason Palmeri, Laura J. Davies, and others explores how emotions work and relate to different institutional contexts. This work has become so prevalent and been so transformative and empowering that in a recent review essay, Erin Rand (2015, 161) describes a contemporary "affective turn" in academic discourse.

Almost every treatment of emotion in writing studies refers back to Lynn Worsham's "Going Postal: Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion" (1998), an article that takes the eponymous phrase; explores its adaptation to cover multiple forms of violence, such as what we now with far too much familiarity call mass shootings; and theorizes what she calls a rhetoric of pedagogic violence. Worsham (1998, 216) defines violence from a disciplinary (à la Foucault) perspective, asserting that a "rhetoric of pedagogic violence will focus specifically on the way violence address and educates emotion and inculcates an affective relation to the world," then defining emotion itself as "the tight braid of affect and judgment, socially and historically constructed and bodily lived, through which the symbolic takes hold of and binds the individual, in complex and contradictory ways, to the social order and its structure of meanings." Worsham's definition recalls Hochschild's (2012) explanation that emotional labor emphasizes the relational aspect of work.

Worsham's work was followed shortly thereafter by Dale Jacobs and Laura Micciche's (2003) collection *A Way to Move: Rhetorics of Emotion and Composition Studies*. Echoing Worsham's turn to violence, Jacobs and Micciche (2003, 1) write that their book was drafted "in the shadow of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001," noting that those attacks and their aftermath required "immediate response." As chapters in our collection also highlight, such massive events can make emotional labor more visible, but Jacobs and Micciche are careful to emphasize that emotional labor can also be seen in the extraordinary and the more mundane tasks of teaching and administering. Their collection offers ways to theorize emotion that build on the classical rhetoric concept of pathos, which historically has been denigrated as a lesser form of persuasion. The collection includes chapters by Alice Gillam, Brad Peters, and Mara Holt, Leon Anderson, and Albert Rouzie that specifically explore workplace emotions in writing program administration.

Laura Micciche's *Doing Emotion: Rhetoric, Writing, Teaching* extends the work of that collection. Micciche (2007, 7) asserts that we cannot dismiss emotion as "subjugated knowledge" that has functioned as "analog to women, opinion, the personal, and the body." Instead, rejecting that dismissal "is to take seriously the work that emotions do in the

context of disciplinary formation, teaching, and administering writing" (7). Micciche includes a chapter specifically focused on WPAs called "Disappointment and WPA Work" in which she claims that disappointment and WPA work are often joined together. She calls for a resistance to this common narrative through the promotion of WPA work built on attention to the materialist conditions of emotional labor and the mentoring of graduate students in administrative work. This collection is in many ways a response to her call.

Scholarship on affect and emotion in writing studies has taken several directions in recent years. The *Composition Forum* 2016 special issue demonstrates the range of scholarly treatment of emotion in writing studies. Edited by Lance Langdon, the issue includes an author retrospective from Laura Micciche (2016), who advocates that we as a field need to "stay with emotion." Articles address student disposition and transfer (Driscoll and Powell 2016), empathy as pedagogy (Leake 2016), and emotion as critical inquiry in community-based writing courses (Prebel 2016). The issue also offers a section titled "Reflections on Emotional Labor," which includes brief articles on teaching in the aftermath of traumatic events (DeBacher and Harris-Moore 2016), writing center administration as emotional labor (Jackson, Grutsch McKinney, and Caswell 2016; see also Caswell, Grutsch McKinney, and Jackson 2016 for a book-length work on this topic), and training consultants to handle the inherently emotional labor of writing center work (Perry 2016). As a whole, Langdon's special issue illustrates that writing studies has accepted Micciche's call to stay with emotion.

While the *Composition Forum* 2016 special issue is a useful illustration of the range of issues within writing studies that scholars are using emotional labor as a lens to explore, scholars are also publishing on emotional labor elsewhere. Attention to emotional labor has proven productive in areas such as failure (Carr 2013), the academic job market (Sano-Franchini 2016), responding to student writing (Caswell 2014), plagiarism (Robillard 2007), TA training (Reid 2017; Saur and Palmeri 2017), and departmental politics (Schell 2006). The recent edited collection *Bad Ideas about Writing* (Ball and Loewe 2017) aims to dispel popular myths about writing, and implicit in that collection is the emotional labor of repeatedly responding to such myths. Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe acknowledge the emotional work of the collection in the introduction: "The project has its genesis in frustration, but what emerges is hope" (2). Rand's description of an affective turn in writing studies is supported by the significant body of scholarship that continues to grow addressing emotional labor in writing studies.

Within writing program administration itself, scholars have approached transitions as important emotional moments. For example, Laura J. Davies (2017, 49) examines the sense of grief instructors experienced when she replaced a beloved WPA, noting that "we are called on to take care of the people within our program by attending to both their professional and emotional needs." Along another line of inquiry, Amy Rupiper Taggart (2018, 155) attributes a loss of professional identity to an unexpected disruption of her role as writing program administrator due to illness, writing that she "felt unseated and tetherless." Scholarship on the fluidity of WPA positions also draws attention to how our sometimes complex or unstable positions in hierarchy can affect our work. Referring to untenured or uncredentialed WPAs as "liminals," Talinn Phillips, Paul Shovlin, and Megan Titus (2014, 62) assert that the positions of WPAs are far from stable and that liminals "will continue to enact positive change at their institutions, even while simultaneously experiencing the anxiety, frustration, and exploitation that comes with liminality."[1]

WPAs must also consider establishing sustainable practices for the long term. Cindy Moore's (2018) "Mentoring WPAs for the Long Term: The Promise of Mindfulness" emphasizes the need for mentorship at multiple stages of a WPA's career and offers mindfulness as a framework for sustaining WPAs through their careers, whether they transition to other positions or not. Regardless of the roles they hold, WPAs routinely experience tumultuous emotional responses in their work. Kristi Costello (2018) captures this sentiment well in her article on listening to complaints about writing centers from faculty members: "During my first year as a WPA and WCA, I kept (outwardly) calm and diplomatic during these kinds of conversations though a stream of expletives was surely flowing through my mind." She ultimately suggests that "the best way to build this rapport and set the stage for real work, real improvement, and real talk is to begin with listening," an approach that may lead to progress but certainly is not without emotional labor.

While recent work to make emotional labor visible takes a more explicit and theoretical look at administrative affect, less attention has been paid to concrete strategies for negotiating the emotional labor inherent in these real-life work situations. How should a WPA or WCD respond to a traumatic massive local shooting, to their eighth sexual assault report of the year, or to the tragic and untimely death of a beloved tutor, research partner, and friend? *The Things We Carry: Strategies for Recognizing and Negotiating Emotional Labor in Writing Program Administration* offers scholarly interventions into such conversations and pushes the field forward by applying and re-theorizing work outside of

rhetoric and composition in emotion and affect theory; offering concrete and practical strategies for a wide range of larger traumatic events faced by the administrator, students, teachers, and the community; and providing strategies aimed at preserving our senses of self and balance.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

We have arranged the collection in three sections: Preserving Work Identities, Preserving Communities, and Preserving Balance. Authors draw from fields such as positive psychology, sociology, and higher education broadly as well as from the interdisciplinary field of affect studies. While a number of potential themes run across these chapters, we have decided to highlight both the broad areas of the work that tend to require emotional labor—a WPA's own work identity, a WPA's fostering of community in writing programs, and a WPA's balance of the professional and the personal—and the larger hopeful theme of preserving. The three areas of WPA work these sections interrogate are represented in the chapters through very diverse WPA positions, identities, institutional contexts, and, thus, types of emotional labor. More than just covering a wide array of areas of WPA work that are influenced by emotional labor, we hope the sections' emphasis on preserving speaks to our goal for WPA negotiations of emotional labor. That is, we want to open up a conversation in this collection about what to do with emotional labor and offer options for how to respond, giving readers tools while also recognizing that the act of negotiating emotional labor is an ongoing process that is not intended to eliminate emotions. We believe that preserving acknowledges that emotional labor is neither good nor bad; it's necessary to feel and to reflect upon emotional states as opposed to the continual movement away from emotions.

Preserving Work Identities

The first section includes chapters that critically examine the emotional labor of different WPA contexts and discourses and offer strategies for making that emotional labor more visible and productive. The first three chapters of this section consider the specific emotional labor that different institutional contexts create throughout different points in WPA and WCD careers. Carrie S. Leverenz examines the emotional strain of reentering a WPA position mid-career and uses positive psychology to offer concrete strategies for working toward well-being. Anthony Warnke and his coauthors trace the creation and evolution of the WPA

position at their two-year college (TYC) across four administrators who held it; they offer a TYC perspective on the emotional labor throughout this evolution as well as a nine-part heuristic mantra for persevering. Kate Navickas examines the emotional labor of both transitioning into a new WCD position and of influential field narratives around the work that constrained her happiness through an interview with the previous writing center director.

The last two chapters of this section consider the emotional influence of two related documents: professional documents and the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity's (NCFDD) promotional materials that foster faculty writing for tenure and promotion and the kinds of documents we use to chronicle our professional lives. Janelle Adsit and Sue Doe look at the affective implications of the NCFDD's discourses that foster some of the very writing Amy Ferdinandt Stolley examines in the following chapter. Stolley offers survey data on the documentation of emotional labor of WPAs in professional documents (job materials, writing, and institutional documents) and a heuristic for accounting for emotional labor and including it in such professional documents.

Preserving Communities

The second section considers the emotional labor of the WPA as well as of the communities the WPA engages with and supports. Specifically, these chapters offer strategies for supporting first-year composition (FYC) teachers, students, and tutors in the face of traumatic events and the everyday emotional labor of composition. The first three chapters in this collection speak to the emotional labor a community struggles through in response to trauma. Kim Hensley Owens explores the logistics and effect of eight sexual assault reports for students in FYC courses—the logistical movement of students and confidential support of teachers, the programmatic decision for all FYC courses to teach students a consent activity, and the preservation of herself as well as student victims in the program. In response to the 2017 Las Vegas Strip shooting of fifty-eight people, Kaitlin Clinnin shares a strategy that emphasizes a larger process of prevention, response, and recovery as well as the ongoing work of identifying and understanding student and instructor needs. In the third crisis-response chapter in this section, Carl Schlachte analyzes interviews that question instructors and a WPA on the emotional labor of teaching after Hurricane Sandy in New York City in 2012. Similar to Clinnin, Schlachte argues for the need for programmatic preparedness strategies that are grounded in sensibility and casuistry.

The final two chapters in this section consider the emotional labor of communities of teachers, students, and tutors in specific, non-crisis situations. Such routine emotional labor is just as important to address as the kinds of labor we deal with in crisis situations because the day-to-day emotion work of WPAs can be equally as intense given that we handle such issues regularly. Matthew T. Nelson, Sam Deges, and Kathleen F. Weaver offer a quantitative understanding of "emotional contagion" in tutoring, when tutors empathetically take on the emotions of their tutee; they offer strategies for WCDs to support their tutoring community in tutor training. Elizabeth Imafuji considers emotional labor in the specific context of religious institutions, ultimately advocating for preemptive teacher training about how to handle student disclosures.

Preserving Balance

The third section of this collection asks WPAs to consider the personal dimensions of their professional emotional labor, including frameworks and strategies for thinking about how the personal and professional interact as they seek to achieve emotional balance. The first two chapters in this section draw attention to the additional difficulties WPAs may face because of the particular bodies they inhabit. Sheila Carter-Tod examines the intersectionality of black women WPAs through interviews, pinpointing additional sources of emotional labor they experience and the effects of such emotional labor. Turning attention to a different often-marginalized group, Joe Janangelo explores the emotions gay WPAs can experience. After presenting a variety of difficult situations he was placed in because of his identity as a gay WPA, Janangelo discusses some possible reactions WPAs in similar positions may have and how to work through and with the anger that can accompany clearly discriminatory and oppressive workplace environments.

Shifting attention from particular bodies to more general strategies, the last three chapters in this section interrogate what it means to be a WPA and how to create sustainable approaches to the workload, goals, and challenges of writing program administration. Elizabeth Kleinfeld explores how WPAs can experience emotional labor from grief (the simultaneous loss of a tutor and a friend) both inside and outside of their jobs, ultimately concluding that sometimes it is useful and even necessary to recalibrate programmatic and career goals to make such work and a personal life manageable. Christy I. Wenger offers a specific strategy—mindfulness—to help WPAs thrive as professionals and as individuals. Finally, Courtney Adams Wooten builds on such calls for

greater attention to the personal, calling on WPAs to embrace the label of "bad" as they challenge common happiness scripts that often include overworking and as they seek to achieve a sustainable work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

We conclude the collection with a series of one-page handouts, what we are calling strategy sheets, that correlate to each chapter in the collection. When conceptualizing the collection, we realized that these brief, condensed handouts derived from the chapters would help emphasize the practical goals of the text. This collection aims to help WPAs navigate the emotional labor of their work, and we envision the conclusion as a means of offering readers vital (and quick-reference) resources for applying the fine scholarship of our authors.

Regardless of whether it is recognized, documented, or appreciated, emotional labor is part of the work of writing program administrators. We often carry emotional labor beyond events, into unrelated meetings or into our personal lives during evenings and holidays, and often we carry it for longer than we need to. Sometimes we emote more than we'd planned or hoped, and other times we may hide more than we need to or should. It's the experience and memories of negotiating these kinds of emotions—shame, guilt, suppression—that lead us to admire the visibility and vulnerability of Maddow's emotions and those expressed by the authors in this collection.

Together, we are working to make emotional labor more visible and more normalized. Through reading this collection, you, too, are a part of this effort. Though we recognize the contextuality of each instance, institution, and individual, we hope this collection offers strategies for acknowledging the emotions intertwined with and engendered by writing program administration while working to preserve and sustain ourselves. We hope you will find these chapters and the strategies therein helpful for discovering and negotiating the things we carry.

NOTE

1. See Adams Wooten, Babb, and Ray 2018 for more on the impact of transitions on WPAs.

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