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# Chapter 1

## **“IS STRATEGIC INSTRUMENTALISM THE BEST WE CAN DO?”**

During a recent Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) presentation, I summarized the central appeal of contemporary K–16 articulation reforms: in the globally competitive present, only common standards and assessments can improve *all* students’ access to opportunity. From this perspective, writing teachers’, scholars’, and administrators’ rejection of standardization should not be understood as a public defense of professional judgment. Rather, this rejection should be understood as an admission of failure to recognize the way the world is. Such a failure requires transformative change, for when composition expertise no longer serves the public good, professionals can no longer deserve their privileged standing to define the goals and measures of public education in literacy. A competitive world requires a competitive marketplace of expertise, for only good markets can make for good democracy.

This appeal is rarely stated *quite* so flatly. The Common Core claims that increasing students’ access to college and careers requires internationally benchmarked standards and assessments. Likewise, Complete College America insists that underprepared students can “complete to compete” only when “remediation” (basic writing) has been eliminated. And the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) maintains that standardized outcomes assessments alone can ensure that college graduates are adequately prepared for the global workplace. But the political-economic stakes of these reform proposals are

clear. Since policies based in professional judgment offer poor returns on investment, educational expertise itself must become competitive. Only *then* can expertise serve democracy.

I argued that the success of this appeal, demonstrated by corporate-political platforms becoming policy at the institution and state levels, suggests that we in composition need to reconsider how *access* works in public debate. What was once "our" term is now part of the lexicon of reform, and our conventional appeal, that professional judgment in context ensures the democratic representation of our diverse publics, is being displaced by another vision, in which increasing access requires a policy marketplace that invites public choice among competing providers of expertise.<sup>1</sup> In such a marketplace, it doesn't matter whether professionals or testing companies and political think tanks define the goals and measures of public education in literacy; it only matters who can codify the skills students need for success in the globally competitive scene. If choice among service providers displaces teachers', scholars', and administrators' professional standing, that is simply democratic participation in action.

In discussion after the panel, an audience member asked a question tinged with resignation: "is strategic instrumentalism the best we can do?" In other words, if the link between democratic ends and professional judgment is being eroded, must we abandon our conventional appeals to pluralism and counter reform's claims of skills and results with the promise of more skills and better results? Rather than reappropriating the discourse of reform, I suggested, we might begin to counter groups like Complete College America (CCA) by renewing composition's longstanding efforts to represent basic writers' experiences (Adler-Kassner and Harrington 2002; Horner and Lu 1999; Lu 1992; Rose 1985; Rose 1988). Inviting our publics' inquiry into current students' experiences, I argued, could foster alternatives to CCA's images of basic writing as waste and futility. Moreover, such images could dramatize "access" in ways that our conventional appeal to professionalism as the bulwark of democracy might not. But I couldn't say more at the time

about how we might innovate on going public amid the constraints of contemporary K-16 reform.

Since that discussion, I have attempted to unravel the thicket of issues implied in the audience member's question, and this book is the result of that inquiry. If our rhetoric of professionalism is being displaced by the rhetoric of standardization-for-competition-for-democracy, how should we innovate on the ways we go public? Specifically, as the audience member wondered, should we reappropriate and redirect the rhetoric(s) of reform in the hope of steering the development of corporate-political standards and assessments? Or, as the weary tone of the audience member suggested, should we reassert our professional judgment in our preferred terms despite the limits of our appeals in the contemporary scene? Or should we envision an alternate rhetoric of professionalism?

In the following chapters, I explore and engage with scholars' responses to these questions. Following Joseph Harris (2012), my aim is a "sympathetic counterstatement" (xi) to the disciplinary conversation about going public. I recognize the redirection of reform and the reassertion of professionalism as composition's primary rhetorical means of advancing our pluralistic judgment, and I appreciate these strategies as nuanced negotiations amid profound constraints. But I also explore how these strategies can limit our pursuit of an equally important aim, building professionals' potential to foster democratic public participation in reform. I trace this limit to pragmatism, the value that scholars frequently invoke to guide their innovations on going public. For example, pragmatism authorizes scholars' calls to reappropriate the discourses of institutional standardization (e.g., R. Miller 1998a) and redirect neoliberal reforms as a means of advancing composition's democratic aims (e.g., Adler-Kassner 2008; Adler-Kassner and Harrington 2010; Adler-Kassner and O'Neill 2010; Fleckenstein 2008). These scholars open critical inquiry into the consequences of going public and call for an alternate response to the political economy of reform. And, as I explore in the following chapters, such responses can claim demonstrable policy outcomes. However, I

argue that these pragmatic innovations can also minimize our attention to the public consequences of reappropriating and redirecting reform discourses that construe democratic participation as assent to management or consumer choice.

I identify a similar selection and deflection of attention in the reassertion of professionalism. Scholars emphasize the need for our contextual inquiry into diverse contexts of literacy teaching, learning, and assessment to inform education policy (e.g., Gallagher 2011). Since we perform this inquiry, the policy implication of "being there" is clear: only *our* professional judgment can be counted on to serve the public good. Here, pragmatism authorizes us to claim our professional inquiry as a form of public representation. This claim rightly reasserts our epistemic advantage over the acontextual standardization-for-competition of neoliberal reform. But this pragmatic innovation, I argue, can also minimize our attention to the democratic consequences of our claim to possess an expertise that we alone can exercise in the name of the public.

My concern with these pragmatic innovations is that while they attend to the professional consequences of going public, they also limit our attention to the public consequences of our rhetorical judgment. This is not to say that public goods are unimportant to the scholars cited above; indeed, the stated aims of bureaucracy, reframing, and public engagement are to increase students' democratic access to opportunity. Rather, I am arguing that these pragmatic innovations are working from limited rhetorical resources. These resources are the primary rhetorics of reform: namely, appeals to bureaucratic standardization, market competition, and professionalism. These appeals tend to minimize roles for our publics in debate over how to improve K–16 literacy teaching, learning, and assessment.<sup>2</sup> Instead, these rhetorics construe public voice as a choice among predetermined, politically secured options in the political economy: governmental standardization for the sake of efficiency, market choice for the sake of competition, or professional judgment for the sake of public representation. Minimized in such a choice, however, is a role for our publics in assessing and potentially authorizing

our contextual judgment as responsiveness to public experience with writing. To foster such public participation in reform, I argue, entails expanding composition's efforts at redirecting reform or reasserting professionalism. Rather than defending our professionalism by narrowing the role of public participation in reform, an alternate response would seek to enlarge it.

To pursue this aim, I recover an alternate pragmatism for going public. I explore composition's innovations genealogically by reading the pragmatism invoked against the pragmatism enacted. Like contemporary proposals to reappropriate the rhetoric of bureaucracy (e.g., Graff and Birkenstein 2008), I heed William James's (1907) call to attend to consequences. I recognize the need for a rhetoric of professionalism that can secure material benefits for all students amid the neoliberal energy of contemporary reform. But in addition to recognizing the material consequences of going public, I call equal attention to the experiential consequences of our rhetoric—how it might form non-expert publics around the questions of reform. Based on this broadened conception of consequences, I reimagine pragmatism not only as a warrant for professionals to reappropriate the discourse of standardization but also as a prompt to renew our inquiry into public experiences with literacy, experiences that can qualify reform's calls to eliminate "remediation." Like proposals to redirect the market-driven rhetoric of contemporary reform (e.g., Adler-Kassner 2008), I find common cause with Cornel West's (1989) "prophetic pragmatism": I recognize the need for professionals to do more than denounce reform. But my reading of West suggests not only the limits but also the potential of professional critiques to sponsor public participation in discussions of key reform proposals like machine scoring. And, like proposals to reassert professional judgment (e.g., Gallagher 2011), I draw on John Dewey's (1927) vision of public professionalism. I recognize the need for our local judgment to scale up to the political economy of reform. But in addition to claiming our privileged standing to make judgments on behalf of our publics, I also envision a rhetorical means of sponsoring critical public participation that can authorize our contextual

judgment (and not externally-imposed outcomes assessments) as responsiveness to public experiences with literacy.

The aim of this recovery and reinscription of pragmatism is to forward a goad and resource for composition's efforts at going public. An alternate pragmatism prompts us to tell a different story about our professionalism, one that resists the tendency of reform debate to reduce our judgment to the conventional political-economic grounds of standardization, competition, or expertise. But while such a story disrupts our conventions of going public, it also offers us a resource for innovation focused on our unique potential in contemporary reform debate. Unlike bureaucratic standardization and market competition as models for public policy, an alternate pragmatism recognizes composition professionals' capacity to foster critical public participation in national discussions about the teaching, learning, and assessment of writing. The point of sponsoring this participation is not only to promote our contextual judgment as superior to the standardization forwarded by proponents of bureaucracy or markets, although I imagine few professionals would object to that aim. Rather, the larger goal of sponsoring engagement is to enable our local publics to assess the adequacy of contemporary standardization-for-competition to reflect their experiences with writing. The hope of such engagement is that it can reshape broader public discussions of reform when we scale up, or circulate accounts of the local, the contextual, and the participatory to sponsor similar inquiries in other contexts. The story of an alternate rhetoric of professionalism, in other words, is one of local engagement as a driver of national engagement. With national discussions of reform stalemated between calls for market competition and professionalism, I read fostering critical public participation as a potential third way for us in composition to go public.

#### SCALING DOWN TO SCALE UP

This rhetorical engagement with the political economy of reform is an attempt to scale up from local experience. Starting

in 2010, Maja Wilson and I interviewed middle school parents about their children's writing in language arts classes (Webber and Wilson 2012, Webber and Wilson 2013). We wanted to know how parents assessed a local teacher's progressive pedagogy against the backdrop of national attention to the then-emerging Common Core. More broadly, we wondered if professionalism's characteristic appeals to pluralistic contextualism could contend with national reforms' appeals to standardization-for-competition-for-equity. To our surprise, professional contextualism fared better than expected, but only when parents approached it through a process of inquiry. For example, in one conversation with parents, we learned about an eighth-grade boy's attempt to emulate the writing of the Beats. This writing unnerved the boy's parents since it resisted conventional expectations of propriety and tone, and these parents accused their son's teacher of not "doing her job" by allowing space for stylistic experimentation instead of exclusively emphasizing conventional correctness. But as these parents talked more, they admitted that their son's pursuit of facility in a style helped him use school assignments for his own purposes. And this shift in orientation, the parents acknowledged, helped their son see writing as an activity in which he could invest himself deeply. By the end of the conversation, these parents' inquiry into their son's act of writing helped them re-envision writing as more than the mastery of conventional styles and professional judgment as more than common standards.

We took from this study the insight that "public values are more capacious than public discourse" about literacy education (Webber and Wilson 2013, 217). And, we took from this conversation a methodological orientation for public engagement resembling what Jeffrey Grabill (2012) calls a "research stance." That is, we formed "a set of beliefs and obligations" (211) that shaped how we acted as researchers. We recognized that local inquiry into acts of teaching, learning, and assessment could, in admittedly limited ways, open space for discussion beyond the logic of standardization-for-competition. Based on this insight, I began to wonder whether composition professionals could



invite similar public inquiry into the acts of writing central to *college* reforms. Could we in composition prompt our students to evaluate the proposals of groups like Complete College America and the Collegiate Learning Assessment as responses to their experiences with writing? And could we circulate accounts of such local inquiry to sponsor critical public discussions of nationally prominent K–16 reforms? Could we scale up in a different way?

These questions arose at a time when it was hard *not* to foresee corporate-political groups displacing composition professionals' standing to define the goals and measures of public education in literacy. As recently as 2012, the Common Core and its assessments were being implemented in forty-three states (Common Core State Standards Initiative 2015), and over seven hundred institutions in the United States and abroad had adopted the CLA to "benchmark value-added growth in student learning" (Council for Aid to Education 2016). In 2017, however, the trajectory of these reforms appears less certain. At the K–12 level, the Opt Out movement has publicly, if incrementally, undermined implementation of Core-aligned assessments (Saultz and Evans 2015; Strauss 2016). At the college level, the Voluntary System of Accountability (2012) now recognizes the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics for reporting learning outcomes, suggesting that, at least for the time being, the goals and measures of college writing are to be defined by faculty in specific contexts rather than by groups like the CLA.<sup>3</sup>

Still, the lifecycles of past K–16 reforms suggest that neoliberal standardization often succeeds by "failing." Even though the American Diploma Project never went national with its college- and career-readiness measures in the early-to-mid-2000s, it cultivated the "state-based" strategy that moved the Common Core from corporate-political platform to public policy reality.<sup>4</sup> Despite the recent slowing of the Common Core, this strategy continues with CCA's efforts to measure "pre-major learning," particularly students' writing development in introductory-level courses (Complete College America 2011). CCA seeks data

to determine whether public institutions are moving students quickly toward majors, programs, and credentials. The ultimate goal of CCA is a system of "performance funding," a policy lever for governors to incentivize greater efficiency in instruction (Complete College America 2013). Only greater efficiency, CCA argues, can strengthen state economies and students' preparation for the global marketplace, and only public choice among increasingly efficient options can transform higher education to serve its democratizing function.

The political horizon of performance funding reminds us that even if the Common Core and the CLA are slowing in the face of public and professional recalcitrance, we in composition are likely to face these reforms' appeals again soon. We may be able to redirect CLA-style reforms within our professional spheres as the AAC&U has done. But we may also need to contend with these reforms in public debate, and in this work we are likely to struggle. Groups like CCA successfully exploit the commonsense of college students and parents as consumers rather than as partners of writing teachers, scholars, and administrators. Within this market frame of reform, neoliberal standardization is *the* public good: common outcomes allow states to measure public institutions' performance, performance data allows public choice among institutions, and public choice drives innovation in efficiency. We in composition have recognized this choice-for-efficiency as a means of displacing our professional judgment, and in our scholarly journals and professional associations, we have decried the Common Core's tendency toward formalism (Bomer et al. 2009; Hansen 2012; Summerfield and Anderson 2012;) the K-12 assessment consortia's reliance on machine scoring (Anson et al. 2013), and the Collegiate Learning Assessment's methodology (Haswell 2012). We have forwarded these critiques to demonstrate our professional judgment and to argue that reformers cannot serve the writing needs and experiences of our diverse publics. Yet our critical responses to reform's "innovation" have not invited the public participation that appears to be blunting K-12 reformers' calls for neoliberal standardization.

Given the likely public contests to come, we will need to innovate on the ways we go public. But how? This question arises at another moment of transition. The last few years saw college student action on issues ranging from athletics to race to sexual violence.<sup>5</sup> These actions frequently concerned inquiry into administrative decisions made on students' behalf. In one of the most prominent cases, the University of Missouri group Concerned Student 1950 publicized campus leaders' efforts to address racial equality. Concerned 1950 issued a list of demands, such as removing Missouri System President Tim Wolfe, increasing black faculty and staff system-wide, and developing a strategic plan for increasing minority student retention.<sup>6</sup> After displays of solidarity with Concerned 1950, in which faculty threatened a campus-wide walkout and the Missouri football team refused to play, President Wolfe resigned. These events were notable in Missouri to be sure, but this critical action scaled up beyond the local when accounts of mass student demonstration circulated online and sponsored similar events at other institutions. In the terms of publics theory, students at Missouri and elsewhere assembled critical counterpublics around their concerns and successfully demanded policy change.<sup>7</sup>

Like the publics of composition amid reform, the publics of student action are both local and national. But unlike the largely professional publics envisioned in composition's responses to reform, student actions like those in Missouri sought to sponsor counterpublic resistance as a response to power. That is, student action recognized the potential for otherwise marginalized and excluded publics to participate in debate about higher education policy. These actions' tenor was one of antiprofessionalism—experientially grounded resistance to rhetorics of power in higher education—and in 2015, this antiprofessionalism appeared more powerful than our appeals to professionalism amid reform. When following the student actions of 2015–16, I was struck by the potential common ground between the antiprofessionalism of college protests and that of the K–12 parents Maja Wilson and I interviewed. In both cases, local inquiry demonstrated the potential to unsettle seemingly impervious

rhetorics of power in public discussions of education. And while this inquiry was local in our experience with parents, it scaled up in the student case. It circulated its tenor of critical inquiry and demanded the responsiveness of those in power.

Granted, students have not yet inquired into "the discourse of student need" (Horner 2015) as reform's warrant for neoliberal standardization. Still, we have good reason to seek out and anticipate resonances between student concerns and the claims of reform. Reform groups insist that standardization-for-competition will democratize access to opportunity, and we professionals insist that our expert judgment in context ensures the democratic representation of our diverse publics. But students, and particularly our most vulnerable students, rarely have the opportunity to challenge or authorize these claims. Inviting local inquiry into the teaching, learning, and assessment envisioned by professionals and reformers can restore student voice to a debate stalemated between appeals to markets and professionalism. Inviting and circulating local public inquiry may not safeguard us against deprofessionalization by reform, but what this proposal gives up in safety, I argue, it gains in participatory potential. By scaling down to local experience and scaling up to institutional, community, state, and national reform discussions, we might begin to draw on the participatory energy of public inquiry to support the professional goal of improving the discourse of reform.

This turn suggests a way to bring two of composition's central efforts into conversation with each other. That is, going public would draw on the resources of public engagement. Following Jeffrey Grabill's (2012) methodology of community research, we would attend to the ways student groups assemble publics through the creation of things (194) and the ways these assemblages invite or disinvite participation in public discussion (196). We would attend to these acts of public-making with the aim of helping students bring new publics into being (197). As institutional insiders, we would seek to help students work with existing discourses (199) that enable valuable kinds of activity (200) with specific materials

(201). In context, this would mean that we could guide students' inquiry into institutional reforms dealing with writing amid K-16 reform. But as non-students, we would also seek to understand how the stance and tenor of student engagement sponsors public discussion in ways that conventional professional rhetoric has not. This methodological stance describes the vision of this book: we can help our students sponsor public engagement around the question of publicness in teaching, learning, and assessing writing.

Put differently, we would become curators of public experience with literacy. The authorizing grounds for this role come from Linda Flower's (2008, 216-17) *Community Literacy*:

the privileged become empowered to speak by becoming able to speak for the hidden agency of marginalized, silenced, or disempowered others . . . It is the caring, patiently precise, and writerly work of drawing out, documenting, and giving visibility and presence to the agency of someone else (in their own eyes and the eyes of others) when that person is presumed to lack such capacity, insight, or expertise. In this rhetoric of engagement, students and educators become rhetorical agents by seeing, supporting, and giving a public presence to the agency, capacity, ability, and insight of community partners. Such engagement takes different forms, from supporting to documenting to public fashioning.

In this light, our role would become helping our students create counterpublics around their literacy experiences. The shift here is that I am concerned with composition's professionalism amid reform; Flower is not. In recognizing the potential of an antiprofessional rhetoric of professionalism, however, I am *not* arguing that we abandon the professional publics we attend to by attempting to redirect reform or reassert professionalism. Rather, I am arguing that we expand our rhetoric of professionalism to engage the antiprofessional energy fostered by students' inquiry, circulation, and participation. With our appeals to professionalism frequently ignored by institution-, system-, and state-level administrators tasked with implementing K-16 reforms, we need an alternate basis for the authority of our judgment. One potential basis is the public participation of our students.

To develop this public rhetoric of professionalism, I recover the antiprofessional commitments of the pragmatic tradition that tend to be marginalized by efforts to reappropriate the rhetorics of reform or to reassert professional judgment. I then use these commitments as lenses through which to envision a participatory tactic of going public—a way of inviting critical public inquiry into the teaching, learning, and assessment envisioned by groups like Complete College America. Even if CCA ends up not being our primary concern in a few years, our challenges will be similar. We will still need to innovate on going public to counter our deprofessionalization by neoliberal reform.

#### THE EXIGENCIES OF GOING PUBLIC

The contemporary moment has a long history. Much scholarship explores how the rhetoric of reform tends to displace the professional judgment of literacy educators, as in the case of the Committee of Ten (Marshall 1995), "Johnny Can't Write" (Suhor 1994), *A Nation at Risk* (Varnum 1986), K–12 National Standards (Mayher 1990, 1999; Myers 1994), the Boyer Report (Marshall 2004), *No Child Left Behind* (Gallagher 2007), the Common Core (O'Neill et al. 2012), and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (Haswell 2012). I trace composition's current rhetorical exigency, however, to the 2009 emergence of the Common Core, which introduced not only an argument for K–12 standards and assessments but also a rhetorical style template for contemporary educational reform. This template was not new in 2009, but the Common Core refined reform's familiar appeals for the current moment. In this style, the world represents a warrant for reform, and in this world, the only viable policy choice is to standardize and centralize educational judgment: "today we live in a world without borders. To maintain America's competitive edge, we need all of our students to be well prepared and ready to compete with not only their American peers, but with students from around the world. These common standards will be a critical first step to bring about real and meaningful transformation of our education

system to benefit all students" (Common Core State Standards 2008). Today, this style has been taken up by Complete College America and the Collegiate Learning Assessment. As these groups argue, global competition demands improved *college* readiness, completion, and outcomes for all students. To assess and improve performance across institutions and contexts, the goals and measures of literacy education must be common. Implied by this argument is a market model of public policy: since teachers and scholars refuse to standardize, policy development itself must become competitive. That way state leaders can invest in policy providers who best define what students need to succeed in the global marketplace. Such choice is not only economic: as the opening anecdote of this chapter demonstrates, reform frames market choice as the driver of *democratic* change. For students, parents, and state leaders, choosing among policy providers *is* public engagement, and this engagement is the driver of equity and justice.

As the 2016 CCCC theme attests, taking action in response to these appeals is composition's current public concern, but conceptualizing rhetorical innovation for public action has also been an ongoing disciplinary concern. In attempts to elaborate a standard of professional rhetorical judgment suited to the challenges of going public, composition scholars have appealed to pragmatism. Scholars have invoked this value to argue that defenses of our professional standing cannot simply decry reform amid the material, political, and rhetorical constraints surrounding professionalism. Over the last twenty years, most invocations of pragmatism have underwritten the argument that teachers and scholars can account for these constraints by working *from* the discourse of markets, whether at the institutional level or in the political sphere of education reform. For example, proponents of a bureaucratic or managerial pragmatism suggest that if institutional or political reforms value standardization, we can leverage this value to get better material support for students and instructors (R. Miller 1998a; R. Miller 1998b; White 2010; White 1991). Similarly, proponents of reframing argue that if reform demands students better

prepared for global competition, we can redirect this emphasis to build on our pluralistic judgment (Adler-Kassner 2008; Adler-Kassner and Harrington 2010; Adler-Kassner and O'Neill 2010; Fleckenstein 2008). As I noted in the introduction, these innovations invoke pragmatism not only to authorize their own rhetorical judgment but also to discipline alternate judgments. While these scholars recognize professional critiques of reform as first steps toward going public, their conclusions are clear: critique must give way to alternate strategies better suited to the profound constraints of the contemporary context.

This is not to say that the rhetorical disciplining of bureaucracy or reframing has gone uncontested. As scholars of writing program administration and assessment have argued, these innovations on going public tend toward their own consequences: a pragmatism of reappropriation and redirection can limit composition to a "management theory of agency" (Bousquet 2003, 26) and subordinate our local practice to externally imposed ends (Gallagher 2012, 45). This pragmatism can also direct our attention away from alternate goals of going public, such as building solidarity with our publics (Bousquet 2003, 27) and remaking rather than redirecting the globally competitive scene of reform (Gallagher 2011). But while these counterstatements have driven dialectic in composition's disciplinary discussions, they remain largely unoperationalized in our practices of going public. That, I argue, is because these critical perspectives invite us to explore our rhetoric of professionalism from an alternate vantage point. Against the largely *politically* pragmatic innovations of bureaucracy and reframing, these critiques recall a central text in the *philosophically* pragmatic tradition, John Dewey's (1927) *The Public and Its Problems*.<sup>8</sup> For Dewey, the task of professionals facing displacement by markets is not to reappropriate the conventionalized appeals of bureaucracy and markets but to refashion professional judgment as responsiveness to the diverse contexts of public experience. He cautions that "rule by an economic class may be disguised from the masses; rule by experts could not be covered up. It could be made to work only if the intellectuals became the willing tools of big economic interests.



Otherwise they would have to ally themselves with the masses, and that implies, once more, a share in government by the latter" (205–6).

In a similar vein, Bousquet (2003) and Gallagher (2011) urge us to read our professional standing as contingent on its publicness, not its viability within a managerial or a competitive logic. From this perspective, a democratic defense of professionalism must be adequate to public participation and engagement. In this spirit, the innovations of bureaucracy, reframing, and public engagement seek to articulate a public rhetoric of professionalism for composition. But as I have argued here, these innovations tend both to advance and stymie Dewey's aims: we embrace *and* limit the vision of a participatory expertise. To attend more fully to his democratic aim for going public, I attempt to elaborate Dewey's vision with a rhetorical style for composition teachers and scholars responding to reform.

Such an effort at rhetorical innovation recognizes going public as a negotiation between two contending aims. While defending professional standing against bureaucratic standardization and marketization is our primary concern, another equally pressing challenge is facilitating public participation in professional responses to reform. Our conventional defense of professionalism, in which the diversity of the world requires expert judgment in context, attends to the first concern but tends to envision little role for our publics beyond assent to expertise. Following Dewey's vision of public-professional collaboration, I envision an alternate rhetoric of expertise that would invite public inquiry into what is erased by calls for reform: students' experiences with writing that unsettle the single scene of global competition. Moreover, this rhetorical style would invite our publics to re-assess our professional judgment as responsiveness to public experience. Such a rhetoric wagers that the diversity of contexts, purposes, and practices in our publics' experiences with literacy can support, rather than discount, our pluralistic professionalism.

This methodological hope resonates with calls in composition to attempt public engagement as a means of improving educational policies, K–16 (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher

2007; Gallagher 2010; Gallagher 2011; Goldblatt 2007; Parks and Goldblatt 2000; Rose 1995; Rose 2009; Rose 2010). Chris Gallagher's (2011) "Being There" offers the most recent call for this method of engagement: instead of claiming stakeholder status amid the neoliberal scene of assessment, Gallagher argues, we should seek to remake the scene to reflect our primary agency. We can assert that "being there matters," and we can form networks of like-minded groups and organizations to affirm our situated judgment in debate. Yet as I argue below, this rhetorical innovation also has its likely limits: amid the stalemates of reform debate, "being there" tends to collapse into the conventional assertion of professionalism that the diversity of contexts for teaching, learning, and assessment requires professional judgment in context. In other words, while "being there" reasserts the local against the global, the local still tends to stand in for, rather than invite, public participation.

My effort is to complement bureaucracy, reframing, and public engagement by contributing an alternate rhetorical method of inviting and circulating accounts of public inquiry. Along the lines Dewey articulates, I describe opportunities for composition teachers, scholars, and administrators not only to assert the epistemic advantage of locality but also to perform the professional inquiry that forms our expertise. I elaborate an alternate rhetorical style that forwards acts of teaching, learning, and assessment and invites local public inquiry into these acts as a means of disclosing perspectives discounted by reform. The aim of this rhetorical shift is to make the grounds of professional judgment available for public participation in reform. Rather than defending our professional standing as the means of democratic public representation, this alternate tactic would dramatize the grounds of our professional judgment for public assessment and authorization.

This approach to critique has a rhetorical aim that is, in Kenneth Burke's (1969a, 43) words, "neither a form of relativism nor a form of eclecticism." That is, my aims with this style are broader than disclosing a multiplicity of possible perspectives on an act of literacy teaching, learning, or assessment.

Rather, I am seeking to disclose these perspectives in order to highlight the realities omitted or marginalized by standardization-for-competition-for-democracy. An alternate style is a way of forwarding these realities to sponsor public recalcitrance (Burke 1984a, 47), a desire for reforms to develop terms adequate to reflect diverse experiences with the teaching, learning, and assessment of literacy. By inviting public participation and dissent, an alternate style attempts to shift the conventional relationship between composition's rhetorical means and its democratic ends of going public. Rather than asserting professionalism's conventional link between experts and expertise, an alternate style imagines public participation as composition's means of pursuing the democratic aim of pluralism.

#### **THE RHETORICAL STYLES OF MARKETS, PROFESSIONALISM, AND DEMOCRACY**

This proposal recognizes reform debate as a stalemate between two distinctive rhetorical styles. Reform enacts what rhetorical scholars of political economy call "realist style": proponents simultaneously invoke the competitive world as a warrant for one policy action while discounting alternate approaches as failing to grasp the world as it is (Asen 2009a, 14; Aune 2002, 42; Hariman 1995, 18; Hirschman 1970; Hirschman 1991). This style has clear political consequences in reform debate: it allows reformers to displace the professional standing of composition professionals who would otherwise claim privileged standing in the development of educational policy. But a realist style also has public consequences. By figuring public policy as mere accommodation to the world, and by defining that world as irreducibly competitive, realist style reduces the scope of public policy values to competition, efficiency, and instrumentality (Aune 2002, 36–37). Beyond the professional concerns of reform, then, market discourse is also a public concern because it "corrodes the persuasive norms that are the ground of republican culture" (Hariman 1995, 47) and undermines the democratic process of persuasion and deliberation (Aune 2002, 42).

In response to reform's realist style, we in composition tend to employ a contending style. We argue that the diversity of contexts for teaching and learning writing requires professional judgment in context. We forward professionalism as *the* means of democratically representing our diverse publics. This is our appeal, to be sure, but it is not unique; political theorists recognize this style as the quintessential rhetoric of professionalism. In Eliot Freidson's terms, we professionals conventionally assert that our "judgment resists standardization, commodification, or reduction to mechanical processes" (Freidson 2001, 17). What sets us apart from bureaucrats and market share-seekers is not just our expertise but our "devotion to a transcendent value which infuses [our] specialization with a larger and putatively higher goal which may reach beyond that of those [we] are supposed to serve" (122). When we defend our professional standing, then, we are concerned with asserting our "devotion to the use of disciplined knowledge and skill for the public good" (217), and to serve this good fully, we insist upon our independence. We claim a "duty to appraise what [we] do in light of that larger good, a duty which licenses [us] to be more than passive servants of the state, of capital, of the firm, of the client, or even of the immediate general public" (217).

In Burke's terms, this style's orientation is "idealist" (Burke 1969a, 128–31): while we may define the *scene* of teaching and learning as diverse and draw on the *agency* or means of research, we insist that the public good cannot be served without us, a designated class of *agents*. In reform debate, this dramatic resolution of terms plays a key role: as political theorist Magali Sarfatti Larson (1977) argues, this style allows professionals to figure their services as "inextricably bound to the person and personality of the producer," thus "constitut[ing] and control[ling] a market for their expertise" (xvi). If reform aims to improve teaching and learning, our rhetoric of professionalism insists that the goals and measures of literacy education cannot be defined by other agents such as testing corporations or political think tanks. Only *we* can make expert judgment on behalf of the public. Thus reform efforts seeking to improve teaching

and learning must work through professionals with the understanding that our expert judgment is pluralistic and contextual and incompatible with the standardization of bureaucracy or the consumer choice of markets.

Like reformers' realist style, however, professionals' idealist style also has public consequences. When we go public, our stories resolve predictably: the scenes, agents, and purposes of literacy education *always* resolve to professional judgment in context. This appeal secures our professional standing but tends to offer our publics a narrow role in discussions of reform: assenting to our monopoly on expertise. As sociologist and political theorist Albert Dzur (2008) argues, professionals' style tends to elevate themselves to the status of "trustees" (45) who "work *for* the public but not *with* the public" (75). The problem with this rhetorical self-elevation is that it imagines little use for public participation in shaping and authorizing professional judgment.

In *The Public*, Dewey (1927) puts this critique more strongly: "no government by experts in which the masses do not have the chance to inform the experts as to their needs can be anything but an oligarchy managed in the interests of the few" (208). To create a collaborative model of expertise, Dewey argues, experts must do more than *assert* the publicness of their judgment. Instead, experts must improve "the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion." As Dewey imagines it, the role of experts shifts from making judgment on behalf of the public to sponsoring local public inquiry into shared issues and then circulating accounts of this inquiry beyond the original context (153). This circulation, in turn, can invite other publics to examine local concerns in light of ongoing inquiries elsewhere. By drawing on local knowledge and circulating accounts of it to inform broader conversations, Dewey argues, experts can develop collaborative relationships with their publics (205) and potentially earn trust in their judgment. Scaling down to local public experience through inquiry becomes a means of scaling up to the political economy of expertise.

These perspectives on reform's realist style and professionalism's idealist style highlight a similar tension: both rhetorics

tend to minimize democratic public participation in the formation of policy. My concern in this book is with the ways that composition's central innovations on going public address the probable democratic consequences of these rhetorical styles. The innovations of bureaucracy and reframing, I argue, encourage us in composition to bracket rather than contend with the potential public consequences of realist style. While reappropriating and redirecting the bureaucratic and market discourses of reform can advance our professional judgment under constraint, these strategies also tend to entrench the real of realist style—the implacably competitive world as a warrant for foreclosing public participation in debate about educational reform. With this critique, however, I am *not* arguing that the innovations of bureaucracy and reframing lack concern for the democratic consequences of realist style. Instead, I am arguing that these innovations forward a standard of pragmatic judgment that encourages us in composition to define the scope of going public as achieving material and policy consequences (means) that can serve our democratic ends. The point of going public, in other words, becomes advancing professionalism so that professionals can advance democratic access. This orientation is the concern of Dewey and contemporary theorists of the political economy of professionalism. I draw out this concern in order to read bureaucracy and reframing adjacently—that is, with a critical eye toward their rhetorical style and its likely public consequences.

The innovation of public engagement, by contrast, attempts to enlarge the scope of going public by reversing the prevailing means-ends judgment. Rather than defending professionalism to improve democracy, a strategy of public engagement seeks to improve democracy to defend professionalism: proponents invite participation in the hope that a greater public role will unsettle reform's appeal of standardization for competition and improve public discourse about writing. In this sense, the innovation of public engagement aligns with my argument in this book. Yet my positioning alongside public engagement still seeks opportunities to extend its potential. I have argued that

the appeal of "being there," despite its emphasis on the locality of experience and contingent judgment, still tends, amid the stalemates of reform debate, to collapse into the conventional appeal of professionalism: the contingency of the world requires expert judgment in context. While this rhetoric of public engagement critically conceptualizes the publics formed by realist style, I argue, it only partly addresses the publics formed by idealist style.

As pragmatic innovations on going public, both the reappropriation and redirection of reform and the reassertion of professionalism advance composition's efforts to contend with Dewey's goad toward public professionalism. And yet these innovations also tend to close down the avenues that Dewey seeks to open. My emphasis here is on *tending*: these critiques are not certainties by any means, but they are attempts to envision the probable consequences of our rhetorical judgment. To account more fully for Dewey's vision, I argue, is to expand on the redirection of reform's realist style and the reassertion of professionalism's idealist style. In this book, I seek to complement these strategies by envisioning a potentially public rhetoric of professionalism, one that features multiple grounds of educational judgment—in the terms of Burke's (1969a) pentad, the acts, the scenes, the agencies, the purposes, and the agents of teaching and learning. With this broader set of appeals, I aim to create alternate opportunities for our publics to affirm the publicness of professional judgment.

## PRAGMATIC RHETORICAL INNOVATION

As the current reform arguments suggest, however, public debates are deeply stalemated over definitions of the scene, agency, purpose, and agent of education. The 2009 exchange between the Common Core and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (Bomer et al. 2009) dramatizes these standoffs. Should the *scene* of literacy education be understood as global and single, as reformers insist, or diverse and local, as we argue? Should the *agency* or means of education be standardized or pluralistic?

Should the policy *agent* be any service provider, or must the agent be a designated professional? And, should the *purpose* be competitiveness or democratic preparation?

Amid these calcified struggles over policy meaning, composition teachers, scholars, and administrators would appear to have little room for invention. Hence the appeal of bureaucratic innovation: if the only viable agency or policy in the contemporary scene is standardization, at least it can be standardization that reflects our participation. And, hence the innovation of reframing: if the only viable scene is the globally competitive, at least this can be a diverse world that requires our pluralistic judgment. Public engagement attempts a different kind of innovation, one that seeks to shift the scene: if reform's scene is global, then the scene of professionalism must be contextual and feature agents making judgment in context. Thus "being there matters" for teaching, assessment, and learning; thus local judgment in context must be preserved to serve the public good. In this light, the only agent who can enact this local judgment is the professional.

While these innovations focused on scene and agency make productive use of the available means in debate, they tend to marginalize an avenue for rhetorical invention. A term rarely featured in realist or idealist style is *act*. That is, in efforts to make arguments at the policy level, reformers and professionals tend to avoid emphasizing specific acts of teaching and learning. For reformers, the competitive global scene encompasses all factors and determines policy; for us in composition, expert agents reflect all factors and determine policy. In this standoff, acts of teaching and learning are subsumed within the emphases on scene or agent. To emphasize acts in going public, then, is to depart from the conventions of reform debate.<sup>9</sup> But Burke's alternate realist perspective suggests that performing our inquiry into acts can serve an important role in going public by disclosing a range of factors often cropped out of reform debate: the scenes in which an act takes place, the agents who act, these agents' purposes, and the means with which these agents act. This disclosing function describes the dynamic of conversations



Maja Wilson and I had with parents: public inquiry into acts of writing restored pluralism to discussions otherwise narrowed by reform's neoliberalism or professionalism's preservation of expertise. This inquiry also lent us grounds for breaking, if only momentarily, from composition professionals' rhetorical habit of calcifying the existing stalemates of reform debate.

Like the realist style of reform and the idealist style of professionalism, an alternate realist style also has its likely consequences. It attempts to fashion professionalism less as a monopoly on expertise and more as an effort to facilitate public engagement that may affirm, correct, or qualify expert perspectives. Monopoly is a fighting word, to be sure, but it reflects what political theorists consider *the* basis of professionalism. As Freidson (2001) argues, "those specializations which embody values held by the public at large, the state, or some powerful elite are given the privileged status of monopoly, or control over their own work. *This monopolistic control is the essential characteristic of . . . professionalism from which all else flows*" (32; emphasis in original). While I recognize that composition teachers, scholars, and administrators have a tenuous relationship with professionalism (Horner 2000), and that faculty are increasingly "managed professionals" in the contemporary university (Rhoades 1998; Rhoades 2007), our efforts at going public continue to appeal to what Freidson calls "the essential characteristic" of professionalism: the public good of maintaining the exclusivity of our expertise.<sup>10</sup>

A participatory vision of professionalism, however, would shift the practice of going public closer to an antiprofessional mode of public engagement, Burke's (1984a) comic critique. Rather than envisioning themselves outside the dialectic of perspectives, Burke argues, comic critics recognize themselves as participants in a larger drama: "when you add that people are necessarily mistaken, that all people are exposed to situations in which they must act as fools, that every insight contains its own special kind of blindness, you complete the comic circle, returning again to the lesson of humility that underlies great tragedy" (41). In this drama, Burke argues, "debunking" contending

perspectives may be useful for "polemical and disintegrative purposes" (93) but it is not helpful for "transcendence upward," or for envisioning more encompassing terms and perspectives adequate to reflecting the experiences of a greater range of participants in debate.

To pursue this goal of enlarging the discourse of debate, Burke argues, critics need not only share the "bureaucratization" (246) of their perspectives—their favored terms for their values—but also foster the *experiences* of inquiry and critique that can dramatize the grounds for these values. This broader aim lends discussion and debate a sense of "wholeness." When a critique is too "efficient," meaning that it seeks the establishment of a certain set of terms *more* than a fulsome dialectic among perspectives, it endangers the sense of comic fallibility that can unite proponents of clashing views (248–50). From this perspective, an enlarging criticism is one that does not resolve too quickly or reliably to a favored vocabulary. This delayed resolution to calcified terms is the aim of an alternate realist style. Rather than immediately resolving policy questions to the professional agent, the aim of this style is to foreground the factors—the scenes, agents, agencies, and purposes encompassed by an act—cropped out of reform. Rather than asserting professionalism as the democratic representation of our diverse publics, an alternate realist style attempts to foster public participation as a means of constructing a more democratically adequate set of terms for literacy education.

This approach suggests a rhetoric and sociology of professionalism that departs from the conventional in composition. As Giles Gunn (1988) notes, a comic critique seeks not to reclose debate around a favored set of terms but to restore to a conversation the elements excluded (72). This comic aim does not allow us to escape from the imperative to defend professionalism but rather helps us find "transcendence" (79) within that imperative. That transcendence, Gunn argues, is remaining "supple and quixotic enough to resist the seductions even of [our] own performance." In other words, "to be fully effective in resisting the pull of its own pieties, our criticism must reflect

what Burke calls 'our fundamental kinship with the enemy'" (82). In rhetorical terms, this means we in composition would recognize our reliance as professionals on idealist style as parallel to reformers' reliance on realist style. These vocabularies make up the available means for professionals and reformers to advance competing social logics amid the political economy of reform. At the same time, both rhetorics represent what Burke (1984b) calls "trained incapacities" for public engagement. Realist and idealist style tend to work against the public participation both Burke and Dewey envision as central to democratic professionalism. In a comic mode, going public would seek to foreground the failures of conventional rhetorics of expertise to represent public experience and point toward an alternate, more adequate rhetoric—one that, of course, we *hope* will feature the contributions of professionals. But the difference between a comic critique and a conventional rhetoric of professionalism is the role of public participation. In Burke's antiprofessional vision, professional judgment is authorized through public participation and dissent.

This openness to public inquiry and participation may seem implausible for composition professionals amid the present scene of reform. While many of us acknowledge that our professional perspectives are selective and limited, few of us acknowledge in reform debate that our judgment is "necessarily mistaken"; fewer still emphasize our "fundamental kinship" with reformers. Even scholars advocating public engagement rarely frame going public as *our* opportunity to revise perspectives. But Burke's comic stance poses a trenchant challenge regarding our purpose in professional critiques of reform: is it to move the dialectic upward, discovering more encompassing terms that can enable broader participation? Or is the purpose to move the dialectic downward toward narrower terms that allow for professional power through control?

Burke's perspective goads us toward the former and against the latter. As David Blakesley (1999) reads Burke, the task of "resourceful critics and artists" facing stalemated debates becomes "cultivat[ing] alternative perspectives by shifting the

'vocabulary of approach'" (71). But Burkean dialectic does more than disrupt—it also offers a resource for our rhetorical innovation on idealist style. This rhetorical judgment and action recognizes that a comic stance has the potential to move the dialectic upward. It attempts to restore what Burke (1969b) calls a "babel of voices" to discussions narrowed by dominant perspectives. Such rhetorical disruption may sound promising at a time when reform's appeals to standardization-for-competition-for-democracy appear to be displacing our professional claims to expertise. Yet the specific stance of criticism Burke seeks is not all outwardly aimed; on the contrary, M. Elizabeth Weiser (2008) argues, the comic frame places the critic—and especially the *professional* critic—among the world of necessarily mistaken perspectives. By seeking to recreate a new babel, Burke suggests that critics can forge a new unity, a more encompassing or transcendent one that can reflect merger and division (127). This unity is ironic, Weiser admits, but the experience of forging a cooperative vision is the "transcendence of the conversation," the opportunity to "[find] the level at which perspectives seemingly in opposition can be merged to determine the best aspects of each and the manner in which each is 'pervaded by the spirit' of the other" (131). The payoff of a comic critique is the potential for a fuller dialectic among participants in debate rather than the establishment of professional authority.

For composition's efforts at going public, a comic critique charts a departure from the judgment informing the rhetorical innovations of bureaucracy and reframing. Rather than separating composition's rhetorical means and democratic ends, a comic critique seeks to rejoin these means and ends. Like the innovation of public engagement, a comic critique seeks to form publics based on local inquiry, but a comic critique also extends the aims of public engagement beyond the defense of professionalism. For Burke, the purpose of professional critique is to facilitate the maturation of perspectives so that they can encompass the broadest and fullest participation of all involved. This is the democratic challenge that Burke's and Dewey's pragmatic inquiries pose to the practice of going public. How can

we in composition foster the kind of democratic dialectic that we value in public spheres while also contending with the threat of our own professional displacement amid neoliberal reform? In the next chapters, I explore how our existing innovations on going public have taken up this challenge.

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The historical arc of this book begins in the late 1990s and early 2000s when a set of scholars began to question the capacity of professionals' critiques to account for the material constraints of institutional life (R. Miller 1998a; R. Miller 1998b; Porter et al. 2000; J. Harris 1997). In the place of critique, these scholars advocated a qualified embrace of the prevailing rhetoric of institutional power, standardization, an embrace that has since been termed bureaucracy or managerialism (Bousquet 2003; Strickland 2011). While these scholars focus on institutional and administrative contexts, I explore their arguments because their conceptions of pragmatic rhetorical innovation inform present efforts to address the constraints of national reform.

In chapter 2, I analyze arguments for a bureaucratic pragmatism of going public. This pragmatism questions two rhetorical conventions among composition professionals: critiquing the democratic limits of standardizing institutional and political reforms, and invoking the transcendent democratic good of professionals' pluralistic judgment. Instead of following these conventions, proponents of a bureaucratic pragmatism encourage composition teachers, scholars, and administrators to reassess the potential use of the discourses of their contexts for democratic ends. Here bureaucracy engages with a key concern in the philosophically pragmatic tradition, the fashioning of rhetorical ends-in-view (Dewey 1935) as strategies to address specific consequences (James 1907). But I argue that the rhetorical innovation of bureaucracy tends to emphasize one form of consequences—the material benefits we can gain from appropriating the dominant discourses in our institutional and political contexts. While this emphasis on the material is framed as necessary to deliver

democratic goods, I explore how the rhetorical discipline associated with material consequences tends to limit our pursuit of an equally central consequence in the philosophically pragmatic tradition—namely, inviting public participation in authorizing professional judgment. Based on this critique, I reconsider the institutional and professional concerns of a bureaucratic rhetoric within the broader public context of contemporary reform. With standardization now serving as a means for marketization in contemporary reform, I argue that composition's rhetoric of professionalism needs to address not only bureaucratic concerns but also those of public engagement.

In chapter 3, I explore the recent period of 2008–12 when a set of scholars began to take up themes central to the earlier discussion of bureaucracy: the seeming futility of professional critiques to effect policy change and the necessity of tactical rhetorical action to redirect reforms framed by market discourse (Adler-Kassner 2008; Adler-Kassner and Harrington 2010; Adler-Kassner and O'Neill 2010; Fleckenstein 2008). Unlike scholars advocating a rhetoric of bureaucracy, scholars forwarding reframing identify themselves not with managerialism but with democratic activism. As I argue in this chapter, however, the innovation of reframing urges a similar rhetorical discipline for professionals going public: teachers', scholars', and administrators' task is to reappropriate and redirect the dominant discourse of reform, but in the national sphere rather than in the institutional setting. To guide this rhetorical judgment, proponents of reframing invoke two key pragmatic aims: melioration, or the improvement of public discourse, and Cornel West's (1989) "prophetic pragmatism," a "form of cultural criticism that attempts to transform linguistic, social, cultural, and political traditions for the purposes of increasing the scope of individual development and democratic operations" (230). Yet I argue that the practice of reframing is likely both to advance and foreshorten these aims. By envisioning pragmatic melioration as the redirection of existing policy arguments, reframing discourages composition's attention to the antidemocratic consequences of reform's realist style. And in its effort to manage

professionals' public critiques of reform, reframing minimizes opportunities for our non-expert publics to inquire into and respond critically to reform. To expand reframing's pragmatism for going public, I reconsider the potential of professional critique to be "artful"—that is, to account for local public experiences with reform. I take the possibility of an artful critique as a reminder that going public can not only defend professionalism but also foster forms of public participation that can authorize professional judgment as publicly representative. To illustrate such critical participation, I describe current opportunities for going public on the issue of machine scoring.

In chapter 4, I examine a set of arguments that began developing in the 1990s but have taken on a new urgency in the contemporary era of reform (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher 2007; Gallagher 2010; Gallagher 2011; Goldblatt 2007; Parks and Goldblatt 2000; Rose 1995; Rose 2009; Rose 2010). These perspectives, which I term public engagement, attempt a rhetorical departure from the pragmatism of reframing and bureaucracy. Rather than disciplining critique or advocating the redirection of institutional and political commonplaces, public engagement envisions an alternate rhetoric of professionalism. This rhetoric is aimed at unsettling the decline narratives of education reform. This aim—what Dewey (1927, 168) terms breaking up "conventionalized consciousness"—calls on composition teachers, scholars, and administrators to sponsor public inquiry into teaching and learning *and* to circulate accounts of this inquiry as a means of improving public discourse and potentially building public trust in professional judgment. Where public engagement can be extended, I argue, is in its elaboration of professionals' rhetorical practice. While scholars seek to represent public perspectives on literacy education, the favored rhetorical style of going public tends to remain "idealist": that is, to represent the diversity of public experiences with literacy, we should preserve professional standing to define the goals and measures of public education. Rhetorically, this style risks reducing public participation to the act of assenting to expertise. To engage more fully with the antiprofessional energy of pragmatic

inquiry, I recognize public engagement as a search for an alternate style—a rhetorical means of returning reform debate to local, experiential contexts and facilitating public participation in reform. I conclude by envisioning such a response to college outcomes assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment.

In chapter 5, I explore the consequences of adopting an alternate style for going public. I argue that such a rhetoric of professionalism helps us pursue the pragmatic aims highlighted in this book: attending to consequences, improving public discourse, and facilitating public participation. In that sense, an alternate realist style offers us a resource for composition's rhetorical innovation amid reform. Yet an alternate realist style also presents a goad: it invites us into dissenting modes of going public, it commits us to rhetorical circulation outside our professional spheres, and it opens up our own professionalism to critical inquiry. These likely consequences remind us that teachers, scholars, and administrators seeking to foster public participation in reform are not only engaging in rhetorical but also sociological innovation. And with this innovation comes an ethical question about professionals' roles in circulating public experiences of inquiry. Whose interests are we serving? While the circulation of public inquiry unsettles our role as curators of public experience with literacy, I defend an alternate realist style as a means of expanding, rather than closing down, public participation in reform debate. An alternate realist style begins to reconcile the defense of professionalism with the sponsoring of public participation against the tide of contemporary reform.

## NOTES

1. These arguments dramatize the tension between what economist Albert Hirschman (1970) calls voice and choice as models of public education reform. Corporate-political reforms emphasize consumer choice (and market competition) as a mechanism for improving teaching and learning while professional models praise public voice and participation as the primary means of improvement. Like Hirschman, I embrace voice as a democratic principle but also recognize the role of rhetorical critics in "bringing out the hidden potential of whatever . . . is currently neglected" (126) in debate. Given the dominant role of choice in con-



temporary reform, I make the case for professionalism as a mechanism for voice. However, I argue that the first step in making professionalism a mechanism for public voice is to develop an alternate rhetoric of professionalism, one suited to inviting public engagement.

2. I explore bureaucracy, markets, and professionalism as rhetorics for social logics. A bureaucratic social logic defines consistency and efficiency as the public goods that can be delivered by public policy. Accordingly, a rhetoric of bureaucracy appeals to these goods against the goods of consumer choice forwarded by proponents of markets and contextualism forwarded by proponents of professionalism. The clash among these appeals is stalemated because—as political theorist Eliot Freidson (2001) argues—public faith in the image of each of these logics drives policy choices as much as or more than the content of policy itself (3). To go public in composition, then, is to envision a *public* rhetoric of professionalism, a way of defending professionalism as a public good. To go public is to intervene in the rhetoric of political economy.
3. The American Association of Colleges and Universities' VALUE rubrics claim to offer "Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education" (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2014). AAC&U is careful to emphasize the centrality of faculty in rubric development and the need to translate its rubrics into "the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses."
4. The American Diploma Project (ADP) foresaw how the National Governors Association could channel the corporate-political platforms of groups like Achieve, Inc. to state leaders, who would adopt this platform as public policy, thus bypassing legislative and public review. Compare, for example, Achieve's 2004 *Ready or Not* (Achieve, Inc. 2004) to the NGA's 2005 *Action Agenda* (Achieve, Inc., and National Governors Association 2005): like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the NGA publicizes corporate-political platforms.
5. Students at Northwestern University sparked national discussion of the "amateur" status of athletes. University of Missouri students thrust into the national spotlight the question of institutions' role in achieving racial justice. And students at Columbia University (and elsewhere) dramatized the need for public discussion of sexual violence.
6. The *Columbia Tribune* has published the October 2015 demands of Concerned Student 1950 (Concerned Student 1950 2015).
7. Counterpublic resistance is mostly commonly understood as the practice of subaltern groups petitioning the state for rights. But as Robert Asen (2009b) points out, members of the conservative intelligentsia embraced a counterpublic strategy in the 1970s to consolidate power against a perceived liberal hegemony. Following Asen, I understand counterpublic resistance as a group's performance of marginality and exclusion that aims to construct an ethos of gaining access to public debate. This performance is Concerned Student 1950's central rhetorical resource: performances of exclusion drive local action, motivate the digital and rhetorical circulation of these local actions, and sponsor parallel efforts

- elsewhere. This cycle of action resembles what Asen and Brouwer (2001) call a "public modality," a productive practice through which counter-public groups engage each other and institutions in a process of change.
8. As I discuss in chapters 2 and 3, proponents of bureaucracy and reframing invoke the philosophically pragmatic aims of attending to consequences and prophetic melioration. These proponents enact these aims rhetorically by reappropriating standardization and redirecting competition. But these rhetorical enactments also limit these pragmatic aims. That is why I read bureaucracy and reframing as "largely politically pragmatic" innovations. Their rhetorical performances attend to the concerns of the consequences foregrounded in the politically pragmatic tradition (policy and the material) while also marginalizing those emphasized in the philosophically pragmatic tradition—the public-forming functions of rhetoric, the role of critical public participation in democracy (Festenstein 1997). Despite this reading, my analysis does not aim to discount bureaucracy's and reframing's contributions to going public so much as anticipate the consequences of their rhetorical choices. Based on my attention to these consequences, I have made a contestable judgment—that the rhetorical performances of bureaucracy and reframing both enable and undermine composition's capacity for public professionalism.
  9. Burke (1969a, 128–31) terms an emphasis on act a realist perspective, but this perspective is not the same as reform's "realist style." Reformers invoke the globally competitive scene as a warrant for action and as a means of denying the need for alternate perspectives. Thus reform's realist style would more accurately be termed a "materialist" style since its drama invokes the world in order to *close* critical inquiry into the relationship between the world invoked and the policies proposed. Burke's realist perspective, by contrast, seeks to *reopen* critical inquiry into the relationship between the world invoked and policies proposed.
  10. As sociologist Gary Rhoades (2007) argues, "professors have historically been conceptualized as professionals independent of the state" (120), yet "such a perspective overlooks the realities of the workplace and ignores another vantage point for considering the professions . . . all professors work in large organizations, where the scope of their autonomy is delimited by various sorts of managers" (121). In large organizations like the university, "more than one professional group operates" (127), which is to say that there are managerial professions. These managerial professionals are the fastest growing category of professional employment in higher education (128). "Simply put, though they may neither realize nor acknowledge it, professors are not the only professionals on campus" (129). Because the managerial professionals have neither academic freedom nor intellectual property rights, they are much more "closely connected to management" (130).