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Maryland's Junior Writing Program began from top down, when the University's Board of Regents reported community dissatisfaction with the writing ability of Maryland graduates. The Faculty Senate responded to their concern and to an internal review by instituting an upper-division writing requirement in 1980. As first conceived, the new three-credit writing requirement could be met by a new upper-division writing course or by special writing intensive sections of existing courses offered by other departments. Furthermore, the original plans called for special sections for many majors, for example, Junior Writing for psychology majors, Junior Writing for Pre-veterinary medicine majors, ad infinitum. That scheme quickly disintegrated, partly because of scheduling difficulties and partly because faculty in other areas discovered that teaching writing is no easy thing. The responsibility for the entire program was deposited in the English department where the program's first director, Michael Marcuse, established the basic courses and the administration and evaluation procedures for a program that now runs 120 sections serving approximately 2200 students each semester.

Courses and Curriculum

In its six years, the Junior Writing Program has constantly revised its courses to satisfy the spirit of the original Faculty Senate mandate as well as the goals that professionals trained in rhetoric and composition value. When non-professionals think of writing, they all too often think only of usage and correctness. The Junior Writing courses at Maryland have a much more ambitious goal: they are rhetoric courses that aim to teach students how to write, in the words of the program goal statement, "responsible public information and persuasion." As upper-division courses for students who have identified majors, Junior Writing could focus exclusively on preparing students for the kind of professional-to-professional writing they will do in their careers. But as rhetoric courses, committed to the principle of audience accommodation, Junior Writing tries to teach students how to address readers who differ greatly in their background knowledge of and interest in a topic. We try to go beyond basic skills and aim for versatility and the beginning of a mature command of techniques of persuasion.

A pre-professional rhetoric course is hardly a new idea. The ancient progymnasmata strove to train statesmen and lawyers, the makers and keepers of counsels of state. A later goal of rhetorical training was to produce clergymen skilled in the arts of homiletics. Now, of course, our notion of profession has expanded greatly and we are responsible for training future accountants, directors of county social services, molecular

biologists, satellite engineers, and, in the DC area especially, future bureaucrats. Our students' protean career possibilities can hardly be catered to individually, so instead of either a host of over-specialized courses or one generic course, students at Maryland can choose among three forms of Junior Writing, depending on their orientation and career plans. The science and engineering students take technical writing (English 393), the business students take business writing (English 394), and the humanities and social science students take advanced composition (English 391). We also run a few special sections each semester of Junior Writing for pre-law students (English 392).

Embracing the ancient purpose of rhetorical training for the professions does not, however, automatically provide a curriculum. Though an avalanche of textbooks in technical and business writing offers course designs, their very availability creates problems as well. Too intense a desire to match classroom activities to on-the-job writing can lead to a curriculum designed around formats or the conventional modes of communication within certain broadly defined professions. The "format curriculum" is very much the operating rationale for business and technical writing courses, both of which have older histories than junior level pre-professional writing courses. The traditional business writing course takes a student through memos, letters of inquiry, complaint and application, short reports, and long reports or studies. The typical technical writing course runs through its own set of variations: the proposal, progress report, feasibility study, etc. To teach these formats well occasionally requires elaborate simulations or mock exercises of what these processes would be like in real life. One favorite permutation in technical writing is to set up a mock corporation or R & D firm and have the students exchange documents.

The overwhelming problem with a format curriculum is that it can degenerate very easily into a cookbook approach. For instance, students writing an application letter are tempted to pick and choose among stock phrases in sample letters. Twentieth-century business writing students thus have much in common with medieval scribes studying the ars dictaminis from texts of model compositions.

Clearly the format approach also has limitations because formats do not necessarily control messages. The memo, for example, can be used within a company to propose policy, to refute criticism from one division to another, to announce a new intercom procedure, or even to solicit contributions for a going-away present. Teaching minutiae of format such as headings and margins instead of rhetorical strategies to achieve different purposes would clearly be a mistaken emphasis.

Our curriculum goals, therefore, have consistently been to make the standard business and technical writing courses truly rhetorical and not simply refresher courses in usage or hanging indentation. To what end we have evolved a variety of new assignments in technical writing such as a prediction/evaluation argument addressed to lay readers. This assignment represents a common genre in technical writing today: the analysis of a new technology

and its likely impact along with an evaluation, a weighted discussion of the pros and cons of this new technology. We add the requirement that this argument be addressed to non-expert readers whose lives may be affected by the new technology.

The most important thing we have to teach our future engineers and financial experts is audience accommodation. To that end, we favor various forms of the "double" assignment, a writing task that asks students to produce two versions of the same topic addressed to different audiences. English 391 students may be asked to explain a concept for two distinct audiences, technical or business writing students may be asked to describe a process or a mechanism for two different kinds of readers. This assignment demonstrates emphatically how much more than the mere transmission of information is involved in a successful written communication. Student writers have to construct the exigence as well as to vary arrangement and style for their target audiences.

Another tactic we use to change format courses into true rhetoric courses is to construct as many assignments as possible with real audiences. At times the Junior Writing classroom is a post office as students turn in their assignments with the stamped envelopes to send them to their intended readers. Complaint letters in business writing, for example, an absolutely standard assignment, become much more meaningful when they are actually sent and students actually receive deferred salary or car repairs or free products. As a corollary assignment, copies of complaint letters can be redistributed through the class so that everyone can have a try at writing an adjustment letter. These letters are then compared with the real adjustment letters received. We also insist that the final research projects in Junior Writing be conceived in relation to real audiences and, unless there are valid obstacles, actually sent to those audiences.

Lately we have also tried to incorporate experiences with collaborative writing into our syllabi. In groups of four or five, students find "public" documents that are in need of revision and improvement--for example, the Maryland Drivers' Handbook or the bylaws of a union or the real estate code. Selecting either all of a short document or part of a longer one, the collaborative teams produce a revision, write a memo explaining their changes to the instructor and then send the improved version, with a cover letter, to the institution that promulgated the original. They may pilot their improvements with a representative sample of intended readers. Obviously this assignment has several purposes, not the least of which is to make students critical of, rather than passive before, the public documents that communicate entitlements or responsibilities to affected audiences. By criticizing existing documents and asking students to try to do better, we once again serve our program goal of teaching "responsible public information and persuasion."

While the development of our technical writing and business courses has been a constant struggle to change format/cookbook courses into genuine rhetoric courses, our general advanced composition course, English 391, has been easy to lead in the

proper direction. It is currently a course in written argumentation based on a revival of the classical invention heuristic known as the stases. After preliminary assignments--an autobiographical/career goals statement such as a student would write when applying to graduate school and a double-audience explanation, students choose a research topic which they stay with for the entire semester. They write a series of arguments, usually one in each of the stases, defining a situation, arguing its causes into place, evaluating it, and finally proposing a solution. In the writing classroom, we do have the luxury of targeting these different arguments to appropriate audiences, and we urge, as I said above, that the final proposal argument be sent to an appropriate audience. Our students have an impressive record of provoking responses and even bringing about changes. Sometimes, however, when other departments or offices on campus are subjects of their enquiry, they provoke irritation as well, creating occasional public relations problems for our program. But listening to a complaint now and then is a worthwhile penalty to pay to awaken students from their usual lethargy.

Staff

The teaching staff in Junior Writing has altered dramatically in its six years. In the beginning, each college on campus supplied a quota of teachers, some regular faculty members, and some instructors hired for the occasion as in engineering. Regular faculty members took the assignment as punitive, as it probably was. At any rate, individual departments relinquished their staffing responsibilities within the first two years; they transferred funds to the English department to be used to hire instructors. The English department itself was given six faculty positions and hired primarily literature faculty with some experience in writing programs to be involved in the program's initial development and administration. At first, the department committed its junior faculty and occasional volunteers from higher ranks to teach. It subsequently hired faculty with specialties in rhetoric and composition, not only for its writing programs, but also for its concurrently developed graduate program in rhetoric and composition. The interaction between Junior Writing and the department's graduate program is perhaps its greatest strength; we have even developed a graduate level course in the teaching of technical and professional writing.

Changes in the university's humanities requirement and in the profile and requirements for majors across the campus have put a large demand on the department's regular faculty. As a result, the lion's share of instruction in the program is done by part-time faculty. The trend of Maryland matches the practice at many other institutions, and at some point the profession must examine the practice of peonage within its ranks. Meanwhile, if the practice of hiring part-time instructors is ever justified, it is probably justified in the Maryland/D.C. region. A large number of our instructors are consultants, technical writers, proposal writers, even lawyers who work in the enormous

business/government complex in the area. We arrange schedules at this commuter university so that full-time writers can teach evening or morning sections.

There are enormous advantages in both directions from this arrangement. The part-timers receive health benefits when they teach two sections, five credits of tuition remission (so many of them take courses), the highest per-section stipend in the area, and, after they have been with us a year, a guarantee of the teaching assignment of their choice. Thus, teaching in our program provides some security against the vagaries of consulting work tied directly or indirectly to the government. Furthermore, our instructors' association with the University's upper-division writing program is a credential in their favor in the Washington consulting market.

The program in turn receives the services of professionals engaged in the very activity they are teaching. The situation could scarcely be improved. What better instructor in a pre-professional writing course than, for example, a lawyer teaching the pre-law sections or a former government editor for the Department of Agriculture teaching technical writing. Our part-timers have given our program enormous credibility with our students; they receive the highest evaluations; they are selected by student groups as outstanding teachers; they make the most innovative curriculum contributions; they are, in short, our best teachers. Unfortunately the turnover rate among them is not negligible as they move easily into full-time positions in the various local contract firms and government agencies. Those who stay with us prize the interaction with students; they do not resist it as an obstacle to their pursuit of tenure. To give our instructors some incentive to stay with us, we offer them "core" status after at least a year of teaching. A member of the core faculty receives a higher stipend per section and a guarantee of employment and scheduling preferences for the year.

Administration

The program's administration currently consists of a director and assistant director, who are faculty members in the English department with one-half and one-third release time respectively, two full-time instructors, who each teach two sections per semester in addition to their work in the program, and a student advisor/office manager who is assisted by a secretary and student workers. Anyone with some experience of university administration can readily estimate the amount of routine work involved in a program the size of Junior Writing. The program's administrators train and supervise new faculty members, maintain the resource center, and constantly conjure up new ways to improve our courses and our teaching. Aside from curriculum development, administrators evaluate new instructors and instructors who may be promoted to core by visiting classes, examining portfolios of student work, and reviewing student evaluations.

Computer-Assisted Instruction

One of the full-time instructors is in charge of the program's new computer lab. Last year Junior Writing received a grant from Sperry Corporation of a personal computer, printer, and mini computer which supports eight work stations. One of our computer-assisted sections of English 391 uses this lab, while other computer-assisted sections of technical writing use the word processing capabilities of the university's main frame on terminals located across campus. Our college is in the process of assembling a large personal computer lab which will be available to writing students generally, but the two computing environments we now use, the mini lab and the main frame, are configured to allow our instructors to call up student drafts in progress and comment on them. A student who goes back to work on a paper may find her instructor's comments and encouragements appended to her text. As has been observed elsewhere, the process of revision runs much more smoothly when the hassles of producing copy are reduced.

Future Directions

Aside from constant curriculum improvement, we have several goals for the future. First, we would like to develop closer relations with the government agencies and businesses in our community. We plan to survey our graduates about their professional writing experiences as to how our courses have helped or could better help prepare them for their career writing demands. The University of Maryland has established the precedent of reaching out to the local business community as in the College of Arts and Humanities' unique "Liberal Arts and Business" program.

Second, we would like to strengthen the connection between our writing program and the department's graduate program in rhetoric and composition. First, we should do more to bring speakers to campus who can talk about the latest research in technical and professional writing. Every few years we sponsor a one-day conference which attracts approximately 200 participants from area colleges to hear speakers such as Jim Kinneavy, Frank D'Angelo, and Dwight Stevenson. We would like a regular program of speakers. Second, we would like to initiate a more consistent research effort in our program. We have had a number of doctoral dissertations based on research in our classes but we need a centralized effort. In all these and in other ways, we hope to make our instructional program part of a larger research and teaching initiative in the rhetoric of the disciplines.