

# Rewriting Disciplines, Rewriting Boundaries: Transdisciplinary and Translingual Challenges for WAC/WID

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*What kinds of intellectual labor can we begin to perform through the critical deployment of "trans-" operations and movements? Those of us schooled in the humanities and social sciences have become familiar, over the past twenty years or so, with queering things; how might we likewise begin to critically trans- our world?*

—Special issue of *Women's Studies Quarterly* on Trans- (Stryker, Currah, & Moore, 2008, p. 13)

We live in the age of trans. In this special issue, our focus will be on transdisciplinary and translingual challenges for WAC/WID, but let's take a moment at the outset to see our efforts here as one part—a very small part—of a much broader *trans* moment. Most prominently, of course, trans in contemporary culture points to *transgender*, *transsexual*, and related terms. For persons who identify as trans, it is both a deeply personal matter, yet also inevitably a socially-constructed one. Transing requires that social categories such as gender be seen as malleable, as arbitrary and imposed, and therefore subject to change, as opposed to natural, biological, and inviolable. Brubaker (2016) argues that trans may be seen as “part of a much broader moment of cultural flux, mixture, and interpenetration, as suggested by the burgeoning discussions of hybridity, syncretism, creolization, and transnationalism in the last quarter century” (p.11), and issues a call to “think with trans” (p. 4).<sup>1</sup>

Thinking with trans in the context of WAC/WID is the challenge that our contributors take up here, working with, as Brubaker has suggested, three basic ways of thinking about this categorical malleability:

- 1) Trans as the possibility to migrate, to *transition* from one category to another. This version actually leaves the categories themselves mostly intact, just enables a (usually) one-way transportation between them. Here we might think about the *acrossness* of Writing Across the Curriculum. How would Writing Trans the Curriculum be different? And what do we mean by “the”? Is “the curriculum” a parameter that we must work within, or a contested field in which we may negotiate?
- 2) Trans as emphasizing the *betweenness* of the journey rather than its endpoints. This version suggests that we are never fully *in* a category, but are always *in transit*, perpetual motion, shuttling between, swimming in a middle condition where the categories themselves are fluid and merge into each other. This meaning of trans is especially important when we are thinking of a translingual approach to language difference, where languages themselves are understood as always emergent, influencing each other, bouncing off each other, interpenetrating, where the borders dissolve.
- 3) Trans as moving *beyond* the categories, *transcending* them. This is easier said than done, of course, and it's not even all that easy to say, because language thrives on oppositions, and much of

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Western thought is enabled by dichotomies. What if the borders between Writing and Non-Writing were to be eradicated?

As Stryker, Currah, and Moore (2008) argued in a special issue of a different journal, “the time was ripe for bursting ‘transgender’ wide open, and linking the questions of space and movement that that term implies to other critical crossings of categorical territories” (12). That “time” was fully ten years ago, and it was in that interim that “translingual” became an important category in writing studies. This is neither to say that translingualism was derived directly from work on transgender issues, nor that it was something brand new—one of the arguments taken up by several contributors to this issue is that translingualism must be situated in a historical transdisciplinary context. Rather, we call attention to work in other types of trans studies in order to point to a broader intersection of tendencies in widely diverse fields of study and practice. Thus the time is even “riper” than it was ten years ago for a new examination of trans theory and practice, to take up the call to “trans- our world.”

## Transing Disciplines

*Dividing up a problem so that it can be addressed by different theories doesn't encourage the dialogue we need. Rather we need to move beyond difference towards overlapping and intruding expertise...[O]ur efforts thrived in proportion to the amount of linguistics our educators could learn, and the amount of educational theory and practice our linguists could absorb. (Martin, 2000, p. 121)*

The Writing in the Disciplines movement has traditionally respected disciplinary boundaries: WID professionals have seen our job as helping faculty to articulate their discipline-specific writing goals, and to socialize students into the conventions of writing and research methodologies of that particular discipline. But what is to become of WID if the very idea of a discipline is being challenged? What, that is, do we mean by “In”? Is there room in our pedagogical, administrative, and research practices for that “overlapping and intruding expertise” that is characteristic of transdisciplinary encounters?

A discipline is, first and foremost, a community of practice, consisting of a complex network of predecessors, mentors, peers, colleagues, collaborators, post-docs, graduate students, technicians, undergraduate researchers, and students enrolled in courses. Membership in this community—or provisional, perhaps temporary membership in the case of students—implies acceptance of certain ideas, methods, procedures, habits of mind, epistemological assumptions, rhetorical conventions, genre practices, and publication/dissemination procedures. Given the personal and intellectual commitment required to be accepted as a member of such a community, disciplinary identity is clearly a powerful force in a researcher’s life—though Marcovich and Shinn (2011) probably go too far in asserting that it is “indelible” (p. 7) or that “the entirety of the actions of scientists unfolds inside the space set by the boundaries of his [sic] home discipline” (p. 8). In defending a concept of “new disciplinarity” that bends but does not break, in which a discipline adjusts and transforms from within rather than losing its coherence, Marcovich and Shinn can only imagine “trans-boundary exchange” as “practitioners of separate disciplines, each standing in his discipline’s own area of the common borderland, and each versed in a particular language, shouting back and forth to each other across the dividing boundary wall” or perhaps engaged in a “handshake” (9). In this vision, members of adjacent disciplinary communities may choose to enter the “borderlands” cautiously for particular interdisciplinary projects, but a safe retreat is always available. It is precisely that comfort that transdisciplinarity seeks to disrupt.

Transdisciplinarity as a concept has a contentious 50-year history, which we may (over)simplify for present purposes by dividing the approaches into the “beyond” and the “between” versions of trans discussed above. The most prominent champion of the “beyond” approach is Basarab Nicolescu, whose “Levels of Reality” approach was summarized by Max-Neef (2005) in terms that echo the famous

mathematical incompleteness theorems of Kurt Gödel: “the laws of a given level of reality are not self-sufficient to describe the totality of phenomena occurring at that same level” (p.13). Nicolescu (2010) himself cites not only Gödel but also Heisenberg, as well as the phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger, and Cassirer as reinscribing the Subject as part of the scientific enterprise. Peter Osborne (2015), in introducing yet another special issue, cites an alternate tradition of transdisciplinary works in the humanities and social sciences, including Horkheimer and Adorno, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, Habermas and Sloterdijk (p.14). Most of the names on Osborne’s list are customarily described as participants in various *post-* movements, especially post-structuralism and post-modernism. To be *post-* is to still be trapped in the horizon of what came before, though one can see its fatal limitations; to re-position these thinkers as *trans* rather than *post-*, as Osborne does, is to emphasize their potential escape from the post- trap, to highlight the continuing movement of these thinkers between and beyond various disciplinary spaces and identities, and to begin to offer a more accurate description of the ways that *theory as transing* has exerted profound influence on multiple disciplines, from literary criticism to philosophy to anthropology to linguistics and beyond, without the theorists themselves being clearly located in a univocal disciplinary identity. This potent intersection of science, philosophy, and theory of various stripes suggests that transdisciplinarity as “beyond discipline” is not some pie-in-the-sky future aspiration but rather an existing force that has already been driving widely diverse intellectual endeavors for several decades.

While transdisciplinarity as “beyond,” as “theory,” might even be described as the mainstream in the humanities and some social sciences—though certainly not without controversy or resistance—a more pragmatic “between” approach to transdisciplinarity has prevailed as the principal discourse in STEM fields. Jahn et al. (2012) offer a consensus definition of what might be dubbed the “social problem approach” in that it concentrates on issues that are too large for any one discipline to tackle alone: climate change, hunger, globalization, etc.

Transdisciplinarity is a reflexive research approach that addresses societal problems by means of interdisciplinary collaboration as well as the collaboration between researchers and extra-scientific actors; its aim is to enable mutual learning processes between science and society; integration is the main cognitive challenge of the research process. (p. 4)

In this version, transdisciplinarity erodes the borders not only between disciplines but between “science and society” by including “researchers and extra-science actors” in a “mutual learning process.” The goal of “integration” is also the primary “challenge” of this variety of transing: how to remain indefinitely in that “between,” in that mutually created knowledge space, without retreating into disciplinary corners.

As Martin (2000) argues, notions of “overlapping” and “intruding” are central to transdisciplinary projects, which otherwise may have hardly anything in common with each other except that they don’t allow the participants to remain securely ensconced in their disciplinary silos, but instead to experience friction, discomfort, ambiguity of affiliation, weakening or erasure of boundaries, learning and integration of elements from different disciplines, overlapping of intellectual territories, blurring of academic identities. Our contributors to this special issue affirm these unfamiliarities as they take up the sometimes uncomfortable challenge of transing WAC/WID.

## Transing Pedagogy

*Students, teachers, and researchers situated in and navigating frontera (borderland) communities are transfronteriza/os (border crossers). Each is fluent in different types of border crossings and these multiple crossings, whether physical or metaphorical, shape their identities, lives, perspectives, and actions.*

—Special issue of *Bilingual Research Journal* on Transfronterizos (Fránquiz & Ortiz, 2017, p. 111).

If transdisciplinarity complicates research by challenging existing divisions of intellectual turf, it also poses a parallel yet somewhat different challenge for pedagogical movements such as WID. Most higher education courses are structured, in part, as an invitation to disciplinary socialization, a gradual inculcation, depending on the level of the course, into a discipline's epistemological assumptions, subject matter, research methodologies, and network of authorities: the rules that constitute the construction of knowledge in the field. For students, these processes often remain invisible, lost in the struggle to understand a rapid succession of complex and novel concepts. Even for the instructors, the processes of making knowledge in their discipline are seldom taken up as a conscious topic, unless they identify as "theoreticians." But McClam and Flores-Scott (2012) argue that a key responsibility of higher education instructors is "lifting the veil of normalization and exposing the social work or practices associated with disciplined knowledge production" (p. 239) by means of a Foucauldian examination of practices of knowledge making, which is an inherently messy, recursive, non-linear, leaps-and-bounds, trial-and-error type of process. In other words, perhaps one aspect of WID work may be urging or nudging instructors to let students in on the intellectual sausage-making rather than presenting neatly-wrapped supermarket packages of knowledge. Within the WAC tradition, this pulling back of the curtain resonates with the Writing Across Communities approach, which "calls for transdisciplinary dialogue that demystifies the ways we make and use knowledge across communities of practice" (Kells, 2007). Thus one task for WAC/WID is to examine the ways that students manage multiple languages and disciplines in the course of their education. What might Writing trans the Curriculum look like?

For undergraduate students, especially in the U.S. system, their education is inherently transdisciplinary, as general education requirements insist that they sample a wide variety of disciplines, at least at an introductory level. This tasting-menu approach provides the opportunity to choose a full-meal major at a leisurely pace while necessitating a rapid pivot from course to course and paper to paper within the same semester and across the initial years of college. The only constant is the student-as-writer, selecting courses within constraints, and developing a writerly persona—or rather multiple writerly personae—as they complete successive assignments in different academic contexts. In their article for this special issue—"Rewriting Disciplines: STEM Students' Longitudinal Approaches to Writing in (and across) the Disciplines"—Anne Ruggles Gere, Anna V. Knutson, & Ryan McCarty trace longitudinally the writing paths of three undergraduate writers who struggle, with varying degrees of success, to juggle multiple academic identities in their written work. Gere et al. argue that these students' writings are best seen as inhabiting a "borderland." And yet the students, even in their relatively early stages of gradual socialization into the network of references and structures of knowledge of a discipline, come to recognize, with varying degrees of conflict or resistance, that being a member of a discipline requires, well, discipline—being disciplined, thinking in a disciplinary manner. One of these students experiences the initiation into disciplinarity as a process of "streamlining and loss," while the other students adopt various strategies for stretching the boundaries of their newly-adopted disciplines by experimenting with alternate genres (e.g., creative writing). None of the students exactly finds a transdisciplinary place, but they continue to work the borderlands of the university in an effort to find opportunities for agency and self-expression within their academic work and their burgeoning disciplinary identities.

Also in this issue, several of our contributors explore transdisciplinary pedagogical collaborations. In our opening article, "Advancing a Translingual, Transnational, and Transdisciplinary Framework: A Professional Development Series for Teaching Assistants in Writing and Spanish Programs," Alyssa G. Cavazos, Marcela Hebbard, Jose E. Hernandez, Crystal Rodriguez, and Geoffrey Schwarz describe the opportunities and challenges of living in borderlands without either the option of or the desire for an escape route—constantly crossing and re-crossing borders that are physical (their institution is located near the U.S. / Mexico border), linguistic (the institution is officially bilingual, and a large majority of

both students and instructors make use of both English and Spanish), and disciplinary (the authors are all located in a newly-created Department of Writing and Language Studies). In discussing the sometimes uneasy collaborations between instructors in first-year composition and in Spanish language courses in a translingual and transnational context, the five authors describe their condition as that of “transfronterizo collaborators.” Recognizing that most of their students and, in many cases, themselves are simultaneously living *acá y allá*, transfronterizo instructors must intentionally interrogate the “multiple daily transactions” across borders that form the basis of complex language, personal, and intellectual identities. Transfronterizo may be seen as, in one sense, an inescapable condition emerging from situated dichotomies beyond individual control: the physical border is an artifact of history, the stakes of language difference are rooted in ideology, and disciplinary identities are under pressure from institutional re-organization. In such a situation, to retreat from the borderlands into the supposed safety of a stable disciplinary identity would be to ignore language difference and the liminal existence of a borderland residence. It’s not enough to shout across the wall, or even to shake hands; rather, their students are in constant movement even when they are sitting still in the classroom, and the instructors need to move with them. Because while transfronterizo may be seen as an involuntary identity imposed from without, it is also characterized by voluntary movement and by intentionality in tracing “the movement of discourse across different contexts,” a movement that is both necessary and chosen, combining individual agency with the uncontrollable effects of ideologies and power relations. Cavazos et al. describe the opening stages of collaboration across disciplinary boundaries, a situation in which no one’s pedagogy remains unchallenged or unchanged.

Transdisciplinary projects imply a journey, and whether one emphasizes the endpoints, the in-between process of being in transit, or some more subtle transformation of identity, every journey leaves its mark. We never return from travel exactly the same person as when we left—not if we’re doing it right. The dangers and rewards of collaboration that Cavazos et al. describe also are explored by Joel Heng Hartse, Michael Lockett, and Melek Ortabasi in “Languaging about Language in an Interdisciplinary Writing-Intensive Course.” The title implies a certain recursiveness in the pedagogical approach, as language is both the topic of this course about translation and also the method of exploration. In the course of collaboration, Harste et al. explain, “disciplinary and genre lines were blurred in a course focused on metalinguistic knowledge via ‘hands-on’ experience with language, texts, and multilingual communities.” Any true collaboration requires the participants to venture out of their disciplinary comfort zones, and while that is true of the instructors in this team-taught course, it is also true of their students. The course’s assignments, particularly the “translingual re-write,” created a safe space for students to experiment with the various elements of their complex language backgrounds. This is the heart of translingual pedagogy: in a world where deviations from a supposed monolingualist “standard” entails risk of rejection or misunderstanding, a course such as the one described here invites students to negotiate variations on language difference in a favorable environment. The world outside may appear non-negotiable on these points—though there may actually be more wiggle room than is customarily imagined—but in this classroom students can ask themselves what these often neglected or hidden or restricted-to-the-“home” languages actually mean or might eventually come to mean in their lives, in their language identities, and in their academic aspirations. With translation problematized as a movement across discourses but engaging translingual repertoires of meaning, Hartse et al.’s course provides a safe space within which students are freed and encouraged to explore transfronterizo identities.

The topic of translation is also central to the course described in Guillaume Gentil’s “Modern Languages, Bilingual Education, and Translation Studies: The Next Frontiers in WAC/WID Research and Instruction?” This wide-ranging article explores the constraints imposed by the national Canadian bilingual policy, exacerbated by the contradictory condition of an English-medium university in predominantly French-speaking Quebec. The course itself required negotiation across departmental boundaries, across language policies (the course was in the French department but the instructor obtained

permission to use some English-language texts), and individual students had to find their own way through a thicket of pushes and pulls between English and French. Gentil prefers “translanguaging” to the term “translingual,” maintaining that the two languages are in fact two languages and are not melting into each other, even though students need to be using them both in complex ways. For example, his graduate student Katia shows her own agency in her determination to publish her dissertation, which has to be written in English, in French eventually, perhaps as a book. And yet the same student, despite her loyalty to French, finds that when she opts to write one of her exam essays in French, she is trapped in between languages, where many of the English technical terms of her discipline have no easy equivalent in French, which can be a serious matter when working on a timed examination essay. Translation is an interesting frontier for translingual studies: at the extremes, it is very clear that languages such as French and English exist, and that they are not mutually intelligible—and yet translingualism insists that there is a middle ground where they meet and co-exist and influence each other in the mind of the translingual language user. In such a situation, how do we trace the movement of discourses from one context to another? In the realm of translation studies, we potentially are not merely translinguals but transfronterizos.

## Transing Boundaries of Languages and Disciplines

*At heart, a move to ‘trans-’ in applied linguistics signifies the act of languaging as an always on-the-spot dynamic assemblage and negotiation of resources for meaning making. Rather than focusing on a particular named or namable language, it positions actors, or authors, and their fluid and creative adaptation of a wide array of semiotic resources at the center of its inquiry.*

—Special issue of *Applied Linguistics*, “Considering ‘Trans-’ Perspectives in Language Theories and Practices,” (Hawkins & Mori, 2018).

In recent years WAC/WID has opened a dialogue with second language writing, critical applied linguistics, TESOL, second language acquisition and other approaches to language learning. All of these fields have in turn come to face a critical challenge regarding how their disciplinary explorations should be affected by a translingual re-conceptualization of language and language relations. There is considerable confusion about the relationship between translingual work and other work (e.g., comparative rhetoric, rhetoric, second language writing) as well as potentially useful explorations of intersections with issues of transfer, mobility, genre, and modality: translinguality seems to demand transdisciplinary work despite the challenges and problems of engaging in such work. How might WID scholarship and teaching respond to these challenges?

We see this special issue as continuing the tradition of *Across the Disciplines* special issues focused on linguistically diverse students (Johns, 2005) and WAC and second language writing (Cox & Zawacki, 2011), and as mirroring, within the WAC/WID context, shifts between and among different theoretical and pedagogical approaches to language difference in composition studies more broadly (ESL, multilingual, plurilingual, translingual, comparative rhetorics, etc.). Both of those language-oriented issues of *Across the Disciplines* explicitly encouraged interdisciplinary collaborations, and thus point toward the questions of how transdisciplinary and translingual orientations, separately or together, affect or are affected by WAC/WID.

We have suggested that there are multiple transdisciplinary approaches that have pedagogical consequences for WAC and especially for WID. One of the suppositions of this special issue is that there are also multiple translingualities, such as proposed by Canagarajah (2018), who reiterates a familiar definition of translingualism as “transcending autonomous languages,” and then adds three more: a translingualism reconceived as transcending -lingualism, a bias toward language as words as opposed to broader semiotic resources; a translingualism calling into question the distinction of text/context; and a translingualism that challenges existing social structures. The key recognition here is that translingualism

itself needs to be (re-)situated in a transdisciplinary context. As translanguaging is gradually expanded and re-defined to include not only visible signs of language mixing such as code meshing but also the invisible, behind-the-scenes operations of multiple languages influencing the emergent text, researchers will increasingly need to take account of the embeddedness of language in the physical world, its embodied status in the individual, and, for WAC/WID, its role in transiting the curriculum itself.

Even as the popularity of translanguaging topics has grown within rhetoric & composition and writing studies more broadly, the novelty aspect has perhaps been overemphasized, as opposed to an investigation both of its historical roots and its relation to parallel developments in other fields, under other names, and to the pedagogical implications of those developments. Several of our contributors take up the challenge of *transdisciplinizing translanguaging*, and of connecting developments in the WAC and WID worlds with developments in other fields, such as transfer studies, comparative rhetoric, second language writing, applied linguistics, and others.

In “WAC and Transfer: Towards a Transdisciplinary View of Academic Writing,” C. C. Hendricks traces the tenuous relation between WAC/WID and transfer studies—two fields centrally concerned with the connection between writing and learning—and argues that the road to the missing link between these two student-centered pedagogical fields leads through the recent rapprochement between WAC/WID and second language studies. DePalma and Ringer’s (2014) argument about “adaptive transfer” turns out to be central for Hendricks here, in two important ways. First of all, the focus on “adaptive” emphasizes the agency of students in making transfer happen. Sometimes transfer is described as something that just automatically occurs, as we casually refer to hopes that information or skills or learning “will transfer,” as though these things acted on their own. Rather, transfer is a verb that requires a human subject: skills don’t transfer; students transfer skills. And for the most part they won’t do so unless they are actively prompted to do so in their subsequent classrooms—and even then the process is far from straightforward, direct, or standardizable. The second key point about WAC/WID and transfer is that it is in the context of focusing on multilingual writers that Hendricks, in one of the rare “crossover” articles that considers WAC/WID and transfer together, also centers on issues of language difference in the classroom. Translanguaging pedagogy and the practice of adaptive transfer share a parallel process of intentionally invoking and activating students’ prior knowledge and capabilities, and mobilizing them for use and—crucially—modification in the tasks of the present course, because we are talking about *adaptive* transfer, not something that happens automatically, not something that instructors can simply assume, not even something that works the same way for different students in the same class, or for the same student in different classes. The triangulation of WAC/WID, transfer, and translanguaging points to what Hendricks sees as “a transparent model of transfer that is collaboratively defined by stakeholders from a variety of disciplines, potentially leading to more inclusive—and transdisciplinary—understandings of students’ academic and non-academic literacy practices.”

Christiane Donahue, like Hendricks, also cites DePalma and Ringer’s concept of adaptive transfer, and goes on to suggest that the trinity of WAC/WID, transfer studies, and second language studies is far from accidental. Rather, Donahue’s wide-ranging article, “We Are the ‘Other’: The Future of Exchanges between Writing and Language Studies,” traces a deep and, in writing studies, largely untapped tradition of exploring transfer in the context of language learning. Donahue argues that it’s only the “othering” of language and linguistics in U.S. writing pedagogy that has prevented this development up until now. In fact Donahue’s main point about writing instructors’ professional identities is that statements like “I don’t teach language, I teach writing” are self-defeating and self-ghettoizing. For Donahue, “teaching language” means far more than focusing only on the earliest stages of acquisition, or the corollary that “multilingual writer” is synonymous with struggling English learner. Especially in the world of WAC/WID, whose central concerns involve intersections among advanced cognition, disciplinary expertise, and the adaptation of writing experiences to new discursive challenges, we should be comfortable with the idea of students digging deep into their multiple language repertoires in order to perform at high levels in our

courses. Meanwhile Donahue's critique of the linguistic concept of "code" may lead to a re-thinking of the ways that we describe some central practices associated with translingualism and translanguaging, such as "code-meshing," "code-mixing," etc.

LuMing Mao's "Thinking Through Difference and Facts of Nonusage: A Dialogue Between Comparative Rhetoric and Translingualism" explores the (potential) intersection of translingualism and comparative rhetoric. One consequence of exploring Canagarajah's extended senses of translingualisms may be that the study of languages increasingly comes to intersect and intertwine with the study of rhetorics. Mao argues that both comparative rhetoric and translingualism occupy similarly disruptive locations within their broader respective fields, a means of deconstructing, within rhetorical studies, the centrality of Aristotelian and other Western models, and, within writing studies and language studies more broadly, the primacy and structural integrity of named languages. In their places, comparative rhetoric offers situated analyses that, like Canagarajah's extended translingualism, transcend the text/context distinction, focusing not only on the construction of discourses but on the surrounding situated practices, emerging genres, and negotiated receptions. Meanwhile, translingualism insists that language use is not governed by a set of prescribed rules, nor is it merely an assortment of impersonal patterns to be described, but rather it is the sum of billions of microchoices by individual speakers every day, overlapping and shifting communities created moment by moment as speakers select features in context, negotiating through expressions of individual agency. Just as comparative rhetoric seeks to meet specific rhetorical practices on their own terms within their situated cultural context of discourse, so translingual approaches refuse to essentialize languages as separate impermeable "codes." If prescriptivists look for rules and descriptivists look for patterns, translingualists look for choices.

Of all the disciplinary boundaries that translingualism, as a transfronterizo phenomenon, has crossed and repeatedly re-crossed, perhaps the most contested is that between second language writing (SLW) and rhetoric and composition (R&C). In "The Translingual Challenge: Boundary Work in Rhetoric and Composition, Second Language Writing, and WAC/WID," Jonathan Hall traces the history of translingual ideas in both disciplines and then seeks to locate translingualism not as an anomalous or local phenomenon within U.S. writing studies, but rather as part of a much broader transdisciplinary movement that involves second language acquisition, applied linguistics, and literary translingual studies, among others. Other approaches to the R&C/SLW continuum in this issue include Donahue citing "communication challenges" between the disciplines, while Jay Jordan, in his response, addresses his own ambiguous position as a signatory to both the translingual statement and the SLW "open letter" critiquing some treatments of translingualism. Bruce Horner, in "Translinguality and Disciplinary Reinvention," distinguishes between what he terms the material institutional locations of disciplinary work—what he terms "departmentality"—and disciplinary work itself. Horner argues that disciplinary work is not coterminous with but relatively autonomous from the ongoing departmental locations in which that work takes place. From this perspective, the anxieties of some and hopes of others that translingual theory threatens work in second language writing are misplaced; instead, the material infrastructure known as "second language writing" can be expected to go on apace regardless of any critiques of concepts that might appear to be fundamental to the field as discipline, and in fact those critiques contribute to sustaining the discipline as an active field of inquiry.

Several contributions to this special issue of *Across the Disciplines* are an outgrowth and adaptation to a WAC/WID context of a roundtable panel at the 2016 Conference on College Composition and Communication, "Reworking Boundaries of Language and Discipline." Our respondent in this special issue, Jay Jordan, was one of the participants in that panel. His focus on "Trans-work" as "taking place" emphasizes the fundamentally situated nature of our contributors' work, immersed as it necessarily is in local institutional contexts, particular disciplinary histories, implicit or explicit ideological commitments, and complex overlapping communities of practice. If in this introduction I have emphasized the wide reach of trans- phenomena as causing cognitive dissonance among multiple disciplines and professional



identities, Jordan's focus on what he calls *emplacedness* can serve as a corrective reminder that we have to research one study at a time and teach one course at a time.

Special issues like this one can call attention to particular trends within a field, but our hope is that this collection serves as an invitation to enter into parallel conversations that have already been going on regarding trans approaches in a broad variety of academic fields and publishing venues, among scholars with widely differing "home" professional identities. Just as post-structuralism shook up the existing structure of scholarly inquiry in the mid-20th century, our current trans moment—which shares certain affinities with that earlier transdisciplinary phenomenon—promises (or threatens) a re-thinking and hopefully a re-invigoration of transdisciplinary exchange and mutual influence. Our selections here can serve as an instance of that process, and we append a (far-from-complete) list of recent special issues of other journals relevant to the issues discussed here. We wish all our readers happy transing.

## Relevant Special Issues:

- Lu, Min-Zhan, & Horner, Bruce (Eds.). (2016). Translingual work in composition [Special Issue]. *College English*, 78(3).
- Cox, Michelle, & Zawacki, Terry Myers (Eds.). (2011). WAC and second language writing: Cross-field research, theory, and program development [Special Issue]. *Across the Disciplines: A Journal of Language, Learning, and Academic Writing*, 8(4). Retrieved from <http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/ell>
- Fránquiz, Maria E., & Ortiz, Alba A. (Eds.). (2017). Who are the transfronterizos and what can we learn from them? [Special Issue]. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 40(2).
- Hawkins, Margaret R., & Mori, Junko (Eds.). (2018). Considering 'trans-' perspectives in language theories and practices. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(1).
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