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THE PLACE OF ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION IN WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

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In truth, assessment has always been just another kind of research designed to provide us with information about student performance or the performance of the programs we design to help students learn.

—Brian Huot

Assessment is, as any reader of this collection doubtless knows, one of the hottest words in higher education today as well as one of the most irritating. Many a dean, provost, accrediting agency, or faculty colleague heralds assessment as a cornerstone of academic work, embracing its potential to inspire reflective practice and to generate new ideas. Peter Ewell, senior associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and renowned researcher on institutional effectiveness, argues that “assessment constitutes a powerful tool for collective improvement that is highly consistent with core academic values and . . . infusion of the logic of assessment directly into classroom and curricular settings is perhaps the most powerful means we have at our disposal to transform the logic of pedagogy itself” (1999, 147). Such a statement is consonant with composition’s disciplinary values—much of our research and core disciplinary values are associated with a desire to transform pedagogy. But from a faculty view, program assessment often seems externally driven (by accrediting bodies, for example), inconveniently timed, focused on trivialities, and an activity that takes up time better spent generating classroom materials or conducting disciplinary research.

WPAs can’t afford to take up these attitudes, if for no other reason than they find themselves in the midst of campus assessment efforts; any campus serious about general education is likely to be asking questions about the effectiveness of first-year composition programs (not to mention the fact that on many campuses, any cranky colleague who wonders

why the student who “can’t write” passed first-year composition may be capable of setting an assessment inquiry in motion). In this chapter, I look at ways a reconceptualized view of program assessment can change the way we do our jobs for the better. Using my campus’s recent experience with the Consultant-Evaluator Service of the Council of Writing Program Administrators as a touchstone, I will develop principles to guide administrative efforts with program assessment integrated into the daily work of a program.

Such work is essential to our efforts to make sense of the multiple levels of discourse that a WPA addresses on a regular basis. I argue here that it is our responsibility to make assessment activities the cornerstone of our administrative work, for to do so is to interact with the most important questions facing our local professional lives. Assessment done well can be perhaps the most important route to crafting an understanding of our programs. As the introduction to this volume notes, we interact with multiple hierarchies and are dependent on bureaucracies we are often trying to change. A postmodern analysis of writing programs as open structures—always in process and dispersed through the university in complex ways—opens new possibilities for the ways we see ourselves and for the ways we help others see and interpret our work. New approaches to assessment offer the chance to shape our own stories—not in a grand narrative that will dismiss postmodern complexities, but in a multifaceted and multi-voiced story that creates a fluid and proactive program identity.

REHABILITATING ASSESSMENT

Any argument that aims to make assessment the central work of a writing program should probably begin by establishing some common ground with people who are rolling their eyes and thinking “oh no, not another call for more assessment.” So let me preface my ultimate argument with a preamble: assessment is, to some extent, what teachers do all the time. If we think of assessment not as the thing we need to do for the accreditors, but rather as a way to find out what’s worked and not worked in the past so that we can move into the future, it seems like common sense. What teacher doesn’t regularly stop to consider what students have learned in a given day, week, or unit? Assessment done well simply encourages us to ask—often in conversation with our colleagues—questions that are at the heart of any teaching enterprise. Assessment can be a form of values clarification. Bob Broad argues eloquently for a particular way of reconceiving assessment notions (to

move beyond the use of rubrics), asserting that communal assessment addresses four questions:

- How do we discover what we really value?
- How do we negotiate differences and shifts in what we value?
- How do we represent what we have agreed to value? And
- What difference do our answers to these questions make? (2003, 4)

These questions can apply, rightly, to any kind of assessment activity. They are rooted in rhetorical values. If we consider assessment as a way to find out something we want to know, it becomes a valuable part of our work. If we further consider assessment as a way to shape inquiry and the representation of our values and accomplishments, it becomes the foundation of all the work we do.

It is not always easy to view assessment that way, particularly in an environment where demands for information about, say, a department's goals for student learning and an assessment plan in relation to those goals seem to come down from on high at the busiest point in the semester. Traditional notions of faculty work haven't included attention to communal assessment. Teaching has traditionally been a private affair: we teach with our doors closed, we rarely team-teach in American colleges and universities, and the patterns of specialization in many four-year schools mean that people don't always teach the same courses. At institutions where teaching loads are more generalized they are typically higher, and there may or may not be time in the work week for common conversation about teaching. Different sections of the same courses don't always use the same texts. Assessment mechanisms that require people to articulate common goals, common outcomes, or common evaluations can seem to violate that privacy. To the extent that assessment makes teaching public, it is at odds with the traditional position teaching occupies in our professional lives. This tension is probably a good thing, although that's an argument outside the scope of this chapter.

Another factor leading some faculty to resist assessment is our training. Most English faculty are not trained in writing assessment, and few faculty in any discipline are trained in assessment more generally. Assessment thus seems unfamiliar and threatening (and to the extent that assessment and grading are related terms, burdensome and argument-producing). Brian Huot's extensive scholarship on assessment has offered the field multiple strategies for broadening the role of assessment in composition. In *(Re)Articulating Writing Assessment* (2002), Huot

attempts to rehabilitate the term *assessment* by couching it in terms that faculty already endorse relating to research, shifting the discussion from assessment as *strategy* to assessment as *inquiry*. His overview of writing assessment's history correctly notes that writing assessment has been viewed as technology, defined in terms of the methods used rather than the underlying questions (see his chapter 7 for the full argument). In other words, people confronted with an assessment challenge frequently ask "Should we use portfolios? What scoring guide should we create?" rather than asking "What do we want to know about our students or our program?" Given that much writing assessment research has been conducted by people outside of English and the humanities, it is not surprising that many English faculty find such research hard going.

Despite the efforts of scholars like Huot, Yancey (1998), and White (1998) to bridge gaps between fields, most WPAs aren't comfortable with assessment. We still view assessment as a burden rather than an opportunity. But what would our jobs be like if we took assessment seriously? After all, as administrators we nurture curricula that help students suss out their values as they conduct reasoned inquiry; we encourage our colleagues to participate in faculty development opportunities that support faculty values; we conduct research to develop knowledge in the field. If assessment addresses fundamental questions of value and helps to construct knowledge, it deserves to be front and center in our administrative work. If we conceptualize *administrative activities as a dynamic triangle of relationships among research, reflection, and administration*, we will establish a rich and generative foundation for our writing programs. In making this argument, I build on Huot's contention that assessment is an outgrowth of writing research. Through reflective assessment, writing programs can become agents—agents who learn from the past and plan for the future. Here I want to outline some fundamental assessment principles which WPAs can use to structure a reflective approach to assessment (see figure 1).

REFLECTION AS THE FOUNDATION OF AGENCY

We readily accept reflection as essential for learning in many other settings. In any class that uses portfolios, the reflective piece (transmittal memo, writer's memo, writer's letter, self-analysis—it goes by many names) is a key component, and it may well be the first place readers look when they begin to assess the portfolio. As practitioners, we are urged to be reflective, to look back at our own teaching practices and to research them (Schön 1982). Almost a century ago, John Dewey urged

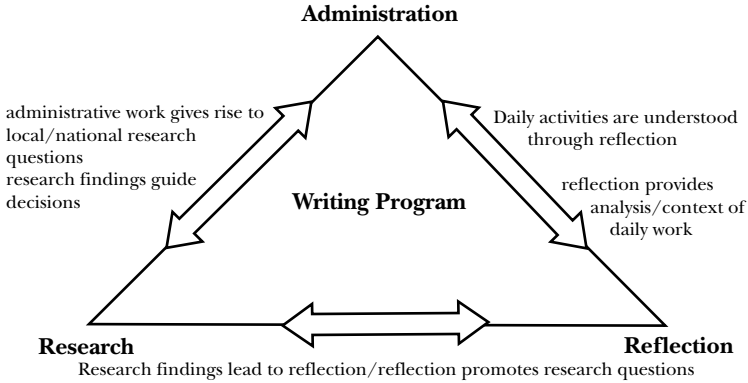


Figure 1

educators to consider the connections between thought, democracy, and education. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey argued that “education means the enterprise of supplying the conditions which insure growth,” an enterprise connected to learning at any age (1916/1944, 51). For Dewey, reflection and thought are synonymous, and it is reflective experience which carries the most meaning, promoting development. Reflection offers the opportunity to understand “the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence” (145). Most discussion of reflection is aimed at student learning. It can be most profitably applied, however, to issues connected to programmatic learning and administrative work.

I am not the first to explore the question of what reflective administration looks like. The move within WPA circles to promote a scholarship of administration has encouraged much excellent local research with broader applications (see, for example, the fine essays in Rose and Weiser’s edited collections *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist* (2002) and *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher* (1999), as well as the essays in Diana George’s *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, Troubadours* (1999) for only a few examples). Such research, written with an audience of the discipline at large, has obvious benefits for the field. It vividly illustrates how WPA work can fulfill the two criteria for intellectual work noted in the Council of Writing Program Administrators Statement “Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration”: “First, it needs to advance knowledge. . . . Second, it results in products or activities that can be evaluated by others.” How this research filters back into the sponsoring institution, and how a writing program as a whole can participate in such research, is an open question. Thinking

of administration as research prompts us to define questions, to gather information, to analyze patterns, and to draw conclusions. It prompts us to use empirical evidence from our own programs as the basis for local decisions, and it prompts us to set our local evidence in a national or disciplinary context. Considering issues of research has helped us increase the professional profile of writing program administration. Huot's conceptualization of assessment as research into student—or program—learning focuses attention on assessment as inquiry and reinforces the importance of informed decision making in administration.

Considering assessment as research doesn't necessarily address issues of program evolution, however. Research projects can be discrete entities, even if we consider a research agenda to be something that unfolds over the course of a career. Most researchers develop different lines of questions that may or may not be related to each other. As teachers, we work with our students to foster self-awareness about writing processes and products. As administrators, how do we foster increased self-awareness in our programs? I suggest we look to the same strategy we use with our students: reflection. Using reflection as an administrative and assessment tool moves us toward inquiry and research, but also moves us to ask questions like "What is the program learning?" "How is that learning occurring?" and "Where do we want to go next?"

Let's start by looking at Kathleen Blake Yancey's notion of reflection. As she puts it, reflection is "dialectical, putting multiple perspectives into play with each other in order to produce insight. Procedurally, reflection entails a *looking forward* to goals we might attain, as well as a *casting backward* to see where we have been" (1998, 6, original emphasis). In Deweyan terms, such thinking "is the intentional endeavor to discover specific connections between something which we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous" (Dewey 1944, 145). The simultaneous looking forward and backward with a pragmatic eye involves assessment questions: what have we done, what difference did it make, and is what we have done consonant with our goals, principles, and direction? In Yancey's work, reflection is as much process as product. It is "the dialectal process by which we develop and achieve, first, specific goals for learning; second, strategies for reaching those goals; and third, means of determining whether or not we have met those goals or other goals" (6). While the literature on reflection in composition universally addresses issues of student learning, Yancey's definition of assessment can easily be applied to administrative work. What processes can we establish, as administrators, which lead to

meaningful goal-setting? What specific strategies do we use to reach articulated goals? And how do we know what has been accomplished?

Yancey's comprehensive treatment of reflection offers several categories of analysis. First, she examines reflection-in-action, "[T]he process of reviewing and projecting and revising, which takes place within a composing event, and the associated texts" (13). Reflection-in-action is what most of us commonly associate with reflection: writer's memos or reflective essays. This type of reflection is largely a public affair, written for an audience and tangible. Constructive reflection, on the other hand, is "the process of developing a cumulative, multi-selved, multi-voiced identity, which takes place between and among composing events, and the associated texts" (14). This is largely private work for students, although there are ways to use public assignments to nurture constructive reflection. It is developed over time, and involves invention of a self. It is an abstract affair. Yancey says it is valuable "for what it captures *between and among and outside and inside the drafts: the writer inventing him or herself*" (68; original emphasis). We can easily see the ways in which the work of a writing program is analogous to the work of a teacher: programs develop curricula, grading standards, and make policies, and those actions all have clear analogs in a classroom with its own syllabus, grading constructs, and policies. Considering the ways the work of a writing program is analogous to the work of a student is less common but important to do. Yancey celebrates the ways teachers can access the "*between and among and outside and inside*" of student work, and as administrators we too can access those dimensions of the everyday program work we do. This access can throw light on the kinds of texts we produce and identities we develop for the program itself. In my program's history, our work with the C-E service was a key moment in our reflective history. The act of reflection and research helped capture the inner dimensions of the program, holding them up for evaluation and contestation.

ASSESSMENT AS REFLECTION: INVENTING IDENTITY

One of the basic challenges facing WPAs is that of identity. Many directors work without job descriptions, or have job descriptions that go unnoticed by other colleagues. A common theme in WPA scholarship, and an implicit rationale behind the Portland Statement, is that WPAs need to define their work as intellectual work. The C-E service exists to help evaluate and develop writing programs, and one rationale for bringing in outside consultants is that outside voices may carry weight

with department and campus administrators who oversee a writing program. In effect, one job of the C-E service is to help educate the campus about the identity of the writing program. Thus the C-E service models one kind of reflection and assessment.

A short overview of the C-E process is probably helpful here. Campuses requesting the C-E service work with the C-E coordinators (currently Deborah Holdstein and Edward White) to articulate their needs so that appropriate C-Es can be assigned to the campus. The formal part of the process involves four stages:

- The program completes a self-study that identifies key issues it faces.
- The program hosts two C-Es, who remain on campus for a day and a half. They interview faculty, students, and key administrators, including the chief academic officer.
- The C-Es send a detailed report to the campus following the visit, offering suggestions for future action.
- The program writes a formal response to the report, planning ways to implement or otherwise act on the suggestions.

The self-study guidelines ask for a comprehensive set of materials addressing issues of program history, staffing, curriculum, resources, and material support. The self-study is the key to the entire visit, as it lays out the program's agenda for the visit, and introduces the campus to the C-E team. It constructs a primary frame for the visit. It also puts a public face on the program, committing one version of the program to paper. It serves as an authoritative history.

My program's self-study was an interesting enterprise, as we discovered that seemingly factual matters were, in fact, open to dispute. (I should note that our program has a wealth of administrative riches: there are six people with administrative responsibilities for different aspects of the program and we work together in a collaborative structure that eliminates some of the loneliness single WPAs may feel; see Harrington, Fox, and Molinder-Hogue 1998 for a more complete description of our history and working relationships.) Without any kind of previous program history to guide us, the dates and priorities associated with major shifts in the program were hard to capture. In addition, the motivations for past hiring decisions and administrative moves were remembered differently by different people, and these competing histories led to conflicting understandings of the present. We had divergent views of whether particular events had served to marginalize the Writing Center or whether efforts had been made to bring the Writing Center

into a focal position in the Writing Program; indeed there was dispute about whether or not the Writing Center was even properly part of the Writing Program, and dispute about why the program's administrative committee was set up as it was. Were all members equal or were some serving as, in effect, outside consultants to others who were doing the day-to-day work of the program? There were also different understandings about whom, if anyone, the director of writing supervised. All these views had been left unarticulated (precisely because of the conflicts they uncovered) until the job of constructing a program history became necessary for the self-study.

When I began the job of compiling the self-study from texts and charts written by my colleagues, my first impulse was to reconcile the histories. But to do that would have meant selecting one version of history and program structure, and I decided to simply let the histories stand parallel in the self-study. This process ensured that every voice was heard, and it illustrated both for us and for the C-Es how our issues had emerged. I thought back to this process as I read Yancey's words about constructive reflection: she says that student writers "see themselves emerge as writers with practices and habits that transcend specific texts. Working in the particular, they mark and map the general" (59). This reflection is exactly what happened as we wrote our self-study: working with the particulars of the past, we recognized general patterns that characterized our working relationships. We realized that we had consistently been unable to discuss the relationship between course teaching assignments in classrooms and in the Writing Center, we had consistently been unable to discuss administrative goal-setting, and we had consistently been unable to discuss issues about hiring faculty into new courses. We became aware of habits of (mis)communication and practices associated with faculty and curriculum development. These communication failures were the products of various accidents (whose office was near whose), departmental policies (vagueness in the relationship between how annual reviews were conducted and the responsibilities of course directors), and a department culture that valued individual goal-setting, not collective goal-setting (so the relationship of my goals as director and the goals of a course coordinator or Writing Center coordinator were never examined). For the most part, we found much to celebrate in a long history of collaborative work. But we also noted patterns of disconnection and isolation that allowed frustrations to build over time.

Turning back to the triangle in figure 1, we can see the relationships among my program's experiences as a multidimensional continuum,

with reflection being the point on the triangular continuum that fuels the relationships between administration and research. Through reflection, my colleagues and I came to understand the daily activities that comprised the history of our program. Individually, we could have listed the major shifts in program history (e.g., major hirings and faculty departures, the introduction of writing process, the introduction of portfolios, key changes in placement practices). But those events or experiences did not mean the same things—or even mean anything—to us. Dewey would characterize our experiences as having elements of “hit or miss or succeed” to them, in that we understood *what* had happened, but we did not see the connections among our discrete experiences (144–45). Through reflection we began to move toward understanding how our experiences were related to each other, although imperfectly at first. As we reflected on the text that emerged in the self-study, we interpreted our experiences, generating additional questions. Thus the reflection generated administrative activities—building the paper trail necessary for the C-E visit—as well as research questions. In the short term, research questions sent us to our college archives to answer some specific questions: What year did full-time non-tenure-track faculty first get hired? When was the Writing Center established? In the longer term, the questions also generated a larger research project on academic ranks. Some of the questions raised in the self-study (as well as a university-wide initiative to convert part-time to full-time positions) propelled us to examine Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) faculty experiences in light of national issues. This project is generating a coauthored article (Harrington, Williams, Fox, Weeden, and Worley) as well as various department policies and position statements on promotion criteria for lecturers and a statement on qualifications for teaching courses at different levels.

ARTICULATING PRINCIPLES FOR REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

As the person coordinating our C-E experience, I spent a good bit of time reflecting on the process, particularly as I organized the follow-up work as we responded to the report. In order to successfully negotiate the fault lines exposed during the process, we had to address issues of values. What values could we agree on that would help us forge a plan for the future? Exploring those questions led us to realize that there are five assumptions built into the way we handled our self-evaluation which we can take as cornerstones for any reflective assessment process.

- Programs need to set their own agenda. Starting with the self-study, it's important to articulate a program's themes, challenges, and goals. As Ed White pithily put it in an online discussion on the WPA listserv, "Assess thyself or assessment shall be done unto thee."
- Outside voices are good. Multiple perspectives help develop insight. Marcia Baxter Magolda makes the same point about student learning, that students are best positioned to become what she calls self-authors if they are led to understand that "*knowledge is complex, ambiguous, and socially constructed in a context*" (Broad 2003, 4; original emphasis; quoted in).
- History is useful. Understanding the past is a helpful guide for the future. Shirley Rose has argued that "archival research allows us to evaluate what we have done well in the past and what needs further development by providing us with the facts and figures necessary for identifying significant changes and trends. Archival research on our programs encourages and allows us to take a long-term perspective on the development of the program by aiding us in constructing the "big picture" (1999, 108).
- Programs need support from the top and the bottom. While this metaphor is perhaps needlessly hierarchical, it is important that programs get support from the campus administrators who are ultimately responsible for budgets and resources as well as support from the faculty who carry out the program every day.
- Programs need a plan for addressing the future connected to local values.

In short, the C-E model urges a reflective approach to assessment, a simultaneous looking backward and looking forward, working with multiple perspectives in order to move ahead. Classroom reflection models this dialectic process for us. Reflection during the semester provides a safe haven for students to slow down, stop, and write about their learning. I made reflection central to the administrative tasks associated with the C-E process. Although the meetings were fast-paced and eventful (one big difference between an administrative committee's reflection and a student's reflection is the larger number of voices in the conversation at once), considering our work as reflection made it easier to do. It allowed us to tolerate ambiguity and to invite interpretation.

The final response report is the documentary heart of the assessment process. In our case, the report's appendices are the most telling. Our report included the following sections:

- Background to the C-E visit
- Recommendations of the consultant-evaluators and actions taken in response

- Challenges that remain
- Appendix A: Budget request from the Writing Steering Committee [a new committee formed in the wake of the C-E process to craft the emerging writing major, create opportunities for faculty to develop new courses, and to support closer coordination between first-year courses and the major]
- Appendix B: The Writing Steering Committee report, 2001–02
- Appendix C: English major: Concentration in writing and literacy [a new track in the English major]
- Appendix D: Writing Coordinating Committee (WCC) report, 2001–02 [the Writing Coordinating Committee handles first-year composition, a two-course sequence, and the Writing Center]
- Appendix E: WCC three-year plan
- Appendix F: WPA job descriptions
- Appendix G: Professional development plans for lecturers, Department of English

Our report documents reflection-in-action. We needed to craft a public document that recorded (and indeed would shape) our thinking. Having a public document to work on helped focus our writing. The simple fact that we needed to write a report galvanized two different committees—the Writing Steering Committee focusing on the major, and the Writing Coordinating Committee on first-year writing—to get something done in order to have something to report (in that respect, we aren't so different from our students working to meet a deadline). Yet the more important aspect of our reflection was constructive reflection. This form of less-tangible reflection is not explicit in the text itself, yet it is perhaps the most important benefit of the C-E process. Composing a three-year plan (see appendix A) enabled us to construct a new public identity as a program, offering better job descriptions that addressed challenges like the place of the Writing Center in the Writing Program. The three-year plan also announced an agenda for the program in advance. It enabled us to *claim our own priorities and become more proactive and public*. We formed an identity rooted in our past accomplishments, looking toward the future. We named the formation of a teaching community as a public priority. This was a profound development in the history of the program.

Assessment is the crux of the three-year plan. Over the three-year period (a length of time chosen as it corresponds to the terms of service for each administrator), each major portion of the program (the Writing Center and our four core courses) receives assessment

attention. Through assessment we announced our priorities, for we defined our agenda in part by announcing what it is we need to know in order to do our jobs well. In some cases we already know what we want to know (does our Stretch Program improve retention and student performance, for example); in other cases, the particular questions will be developed later. But by planning a range of assessment schedules, we ensure that each portion of the program receives administrative attention. By naming our priorities, we took control of our own agenda, and set up a working schedule that didn't seem jam-packed. We also reorganized administrative roles so that an administrative position is associated with each priority area. As programs to link writing courses with other first-year courses have proliferated on our campus, we wanted someone to have responsibility for those programs; hence we eliminated one position and created a coordinator of special programs. Our schedule is busy, to be sure, but it is one we can live with. And so we construct a public and shared identity using our multiple voices, allowing for conflicts, and aiming for shared articulation of values.

INVENTING A PROGRAM

I will close with the proposal that regular and reflective assessment is the best way to ensure that the writing program (re)invents itself. Only if we understand what we have already done can we look to the future in an organized fashion. Assessment allows us to see ourselves better if we adopt a reflective stance as we research our practices. Gathering empirical evidence about the work we have done, asking ourselves how this work has crafted an identity for the program and how it defined different administrators in relation to each other, and then forming a plan to move toward new goals cultivates a productive administrative cycle. The process treats the writing program as a unit with the same care with which we approach our students each semester. And it allows us to use assessment to help ourselves do our jobs better, serving students, faculty, and ourselves in a humane and focused manner.

The triangle of relationships between administration, research, and reflection ensures that a writing program becomes a learning unit, drawing on inquiry to sustain momentum and using planning and assessment tools to set directions, limits, and boundaries. WPAs as individuals and writing programs as entities easily become overcommitted (see Holt 1999; Holt and Anderson 1998; for a fascinating discussion of the WPA attitudes about work); we can also easily become enmeshed in the

regular work of staffing courses, ordering books, developing curricula, and handling complaints. Indeed, to get all that work done is an accomplishment. But to frame that work so that we can learn from it requires assessment; to understand that work requires reflection; to put the work in context requires research. Each point on the triangle reminds us to balance the work, and to keep the different dimensions of our work in dialogue with each other.

Seeing administration, reflection, and research in a dynamic relationship means that we would take a number of steps.

- Make time to stop and reflect. Whether using the C-E service, a periodic department or internal program review, or an end-of-year retreat or focused meeting, administrators and faculty should find time to think about common goals and values. In particular, reflection-in-action can be implemented after key events. Reports on workshops can summarize and interpret faculty comments on their work.
- Craft texts that reflect values and priorities. Having a program plan serves several uses. It keeps a program's agenda on the minds of those both in and out of the program. Other texts that can reflect and communicate values include curricular documents, newsletters, guidelines for common assessments or portfolio meetings, charges to committees evaluating textbooks, or Web sites. We represent ourselves as we write, and the textual record is a key part of programmatic identity.
- Seek out research opportunities. Research opportunities may be formal and lead to publication (for example, we researched the effect of switching our placement test to an electronic format) or informal, aimed at in-house uses (we are currently examining enrollment patterns to explore differential faculty workloads in the department).
- Find opportunities to share those texts with program constituencies. Whether via Web sites, memos, curriculum documents, motions in meetings, or general announcements, use texts to promote a public identity grounded in the values that assessment reflects and shapes.

Bob Broad has done more than anyone to study the connection between assessment and value. The assessment triangle I propose is another way to represent the activities that are driven by our core values, and which in turn shape those core values. In *What We Really Value*, Broad argues that assessment is useful precisely because it leads to a public articulation of values, as well as a public grappling with important open questions. He advocates a process he calls dynamic criteria mapping (DCM) to get at the heart of a program's values. DCM involves first

collecting information about what faculty actually value as they read student texts (in a discussion of sample texts, scribes would record the terms faculty use as they explain why they evaluate the samples as they do), and then analyzing that data to represent the collective values. DCM requires careful attention to detail—as he notes, the process of articulating and mapping a program’s actual instructional values takes time. For one, data collection should occur after the semester or quarter, so that faculty are not simultaneously working to teach and reflect on that work (2003, 131). Broad cautions that “the analysts [must] work slowly and methodically from those data through small steps of abstraction and reconceptualization” (132–33). Once it has been determined what faculty *do* value, the program can turn its attention to discussing what they *should* value (133). The final step involves a public document and additional resources that display for students, faculty, and any other interested parties what the program values (134). These maps and sample papers should be periodically revisited to ensure that the program’s public articulation of its values remains current. Note that Broad’s DCM process occurs mainly on the administration/reflection side of the triangle. But if research were applied to the questions that emerge in the debates about what a program does and should value, then the conversation becomes all the richer. Indeed, research would help move the program along toward the next mapping period. So looking at all sides of the triangle promotes a full and lively program.

There are as many ways to explore the triangular relationships among research, assessment, and reflection as there are writing programs. DCM and the C-E program are only two possible ways in which the research/administration/reflection triangle can be engaged. Ultimately, a multidimensional approach to writing program administration rooted in reflection will nurture a writing program that learns over time. Our field has been enriched by scholarship advocating that individual administrators see their programmatic work as part of an ongoing intellectual project. We will be similarly enriched by a view of reflective assessment that leads to programs, not simply administrators, taking on intellectual work. If we conceive of the program as a living and learning unit, we will build on our teaching and research experiences to shape the futures of students and faculty.

Appendix A

WCC THREE-YEAR PLAN

This three-year plan will be updated and extended each year. Each program administrator has an individual three-year plan for his or her area; those area plans are more detailed. The committee plan enables us to coordinate administrative work and strengthen ties between areas of the program.

In setting up this first three-year plan, our priorities included work that will

- build a more vibrant teaching community;
- increase coherence across and within courses;
- coordinate assessment across the program;
- increase faculty involvement in planning and programming;
- provide common resources and common celebrations of student/faculty achievement.

The plan is by necessity more detailed in the early years than in the more distant years. Each year, the plan will be extended and elaborated as needed. At the first meeting of each academic year, the committee will schedule reports on pressing projects for the year in order to ensure oversight of its plans.

2001-02

Administration/Assessment

Develop peer observation proposal
Finish three-year plan
Redesign Web sites
Hold assessment seminar
Preliminary assessment of English W130

Curriculum

Pilot W231 curriculum
Update all curriculum guides
Create English as a Second Language (ESL) W131 guide

2002–03**Administration/Assessment**

Review placement needs
Review honors course needs
Begin University Writing Center assessment
Develop handbook for UWC
Review UWC fellow recruitment strategies
Assess Stretch Program
Begin assessment of W131 online
Assess W131 (particularly grading)
Assess revised W231

Curriculum

Implement revised Stretch, W131, W132, W231, and W396 curricula
Begin addressing issues of text selection in W131
Cultivate connections for two linked versions of W132
Articulation project (W132, W210, and W290)
Complete UWC technology grant work
Offer peer-tutoring graduate course as independent study

Faculty Development

Implement community of inquiry

2003–04**Administration/Assessment**

W132 assessment
Program coherence assessment
Review links with university college courses
Review reading in Stretch Program

Curriculum

Implement new readings in W131
Offer linked W132 sections (two maximum)

Faculty Development

Provide orientation for all faculty on Stretch Program

2004–05

Administration/Assessment

Review of writing and literacy concentration and connections to introductory courses

Curriculum

Publish book of student writing from introductory courses