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The Space Between Dual-Credit Programs as Brokering, Community Building, and Professionalization

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A few summers ago at the annual Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) conference, I was part of a roundtable concerned with the impact on the profession of dual-credit courses, that is, courses taught in high school for which qualified students can also receive college credit. Several speakers described with alarm the efforts of their state higher education systems to out-source or launder college composition credits through the high schools, including slapdash arrangements lacking adequate instructor preparation or a standardized college-level syllabus. We could all appreciate the slippery slope dual-credit programs might provide profit-seeking administrators. In the interest of contrast more than apology for the downside of dual credit, I described my school's Advance College Project (ACP), a twenty-year-old cooperative program between Indiana University and ninety selected high schools in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. The program offers college credit to about fifteen hundred seniors a year who enroll in IU English, math, chemistry, psychology, and history courses offered in their high schools by teachers who are funded to participate with IU faculty in a summer seminar, fall and spring colloquia, and classroom site visits. For the last decade, I have taught the thirty-five hour seminar that introduces selected high school teachers to current methods in college composition and strategies for teaching the IU English department's first-year course, emphasizing analytical reading and writing. I also hold a composition colloquium in the fall that brings fifty or more of the English teachers in the

ACP back to campus for follow-up sessions to share pedagogical concerns and materials we've developed.

While students' reasons for taking a dual-credit composition course have to do with getting a head start on college credit and the academic work that will be expected of them, my reasons for working with a program that is technically outside my job description have to do with the bridging of high school and college English—a connection I have come to believe affects nearly everything we do and hope for as teachers of writing.

Dual-Enrollment Arrangements as Delivery of College Composition

Questions about delivery of dual-credit composition courses are inevitably tied to questions surrounding the delivery of all composition courses in the context of conditions at particular institutions. When writing program administrators whose programs rely on instruction provided by graduate teaching assistants who receive stipends based not on their teaching experience but on their scholarly potential have to defend the integrity of a composition curriculum, they know instruction in their program is only as good as each instructor's ability to deliver it. Programs dependent on contingent teaching labor can find themselves unable to meet the demand for sections of first-year composition, particularly when institutions increase the number of undergraduate admissions at the same time graduate programs providing teaching assistantships are shrinking. Faced in August with full sections of comp to which no instructor has been assigned, WPAs often hire last-minute replacements who may lack the background and preparation of the regular teaching staff. While failure (or refusal) to staff additional sections of composition may precipitate discussion of the need for more permanent budgeted lines in composition, unstaffed sections may also call higher administrative attention to a program's failure to generate maximum revenue within the current institutional configuration of first-year composition. If the English department can't come up with enough instructors, maybe there are other departments or new programs that can deliver lucrative courses required of all first-year students. No one knows better than writing program administrators, as Joyce Neff demonstrates, the extent to which required first-year composition in research universities delivers financially. In providing support for graduate students and in freeing a relatively large tenured-stream faculty to engage in specialized teaching and research, composition makes possible what Sharon Crowley refers to as English's "institutional base from which to operate an academic empire" (18), often with enough revenue remaining to float the rest of the liberal arts. In short, it's all market driven—the labor saving, the cost cutting, the replaceable workers. It's all corporate.

Comfortable before a group of fellow WPAs at the summer conference, many of whom face delivery dilemmas, I admitted to relief that the incoming freshman class that fall included a sufficient number of students who had

already completed our dual-credit version of composition in their high schools before arriving on campus. A fellow roundtable discussant was appalled, insisting that nothing could substitute for the experience of students in his program's first-year course on campus. While I had no doubt as to the soundness of his curriculum or the rigor of his teaching assistants' preparation, I asked if he could guarantee the quality of what was taught in all sections of composition simply because instructors had attended an orientation workshop, taken a proseminar, or followed a common syllabus. Although I will defend the quality of TAs' teaching any time and anywhere, especially given their status, wages, and working conditions, I still have to ask, is the instruction provided by someone still engaged in graduate study, relatively new to teaching, and perhaps uninterested in composition automatically superior to that delivered by an experienced high school English teacher with some investment in how eighteen-year-olds think and write?

Maybe it's a matter of honor among WPAs, but generally we are the first to admit that what is taught is not always what is learned. Of course, the same can be said of dual-credit courses; what is delivered is still in question. Just because we pore over notebooks full of materials in a workshop for a week does not mean high school teachers provide all that I would hope for in a college-level writing course. In the last several years, however, rather than focus on what might prove that the two courses—on campus and off—are equivalent, or fixate on what makes the two versions of the course different, I have tried to pay more attention to how the composition courses taught in both sites might be strengthened as a result of a collaboration between the faculty, the TAs, and the high school teachers who work every day with the students we will see on campus in less than a year. Such collaboration was the focus of a recent endeavor that brought together first-year, advanced, and graduate-level composition courses and the reflective practice of preservice, high school, and college teachers. I will report on this project in my conclusion, but first, some context for my decision that dual-credit arrangements alone will not build a strong enough bridge between high school and college writing.

Over the last decade, my colleagues and I have worked to improve the delivery of the composition course our university offers for college credit in the high schools. We particularly wanted to avoid the dual-credit arrangement composition specialists fear, in which a university merely signs off on the curriculum of high school teachers it believes are doing a good enough job teaching "the basics" that professors would like to see addressed before students come to college. To undertake more than this, however, in my collaboration with experienced secondary teachers, I have had to work through some longstanding institutional assumptions that elide the important differences between high school and college—including the notion that any outreach by postsecondary institutions to high schools is automatically a smart and necessary thing. Or that because dual-credit teachers are experienced practitioners, university English faculty need only allude to lesson plans and strategies rather

than model them as we would for instructors new to a particular course on campus. Over the years I have found it necessary to work more with what it means that we teach not just in different locations, as Paul Bodmer explains in the next chapter, but also in different cultural sites. The positions secondary English teachers occupy in their institutions, the sources of their authority with students and colleagues, and their attitudes toward the university intersect with old and new knowledge about the teaching of writing and have to be taken into consideration as we negotiate ownership of a dual-credit composition course that finally is not the same course as it is delivered into different sites.

Understandably, economics is also a factor in the delivery of this shared enterprise. IU's dual-credit program operates on the assumption that experienced teachers with master's degrees require a week of further professionalization in their subject area, for which they are paid a stipend plus travel, hotel, and meal expenses. (Many dual-credit programs assume teachers need even less preparation.) Instead of additional salary, the high school teachers with whom I work accept the "privilege" of adjunct faculty status and the opportunity to use real college texts and teach one or two of their classes every year to the top college-bound seniors. Since dual-credit programs typically do not and cannot hire, fire, or pay high school instructors, there is an understandable reluctance to be too critical of their pedagogy. Site visits to the schools provide an opportunity to observe classroom interaction, examine student papers, and discuss the challenges of implementing a college course in the high school setting. For these exchanges to be productive and not merely pro forma, though, site visitors ideally should have recent experience with the composition curriculum, if not with secondary teaching. Several years ago, the number of dual-credit composition offerings had grown too large for me to make all the site visits around the state, even with the help of half a dozen other English department faculty, most of whom, except for me, had not taught composition, much less high school, in a very long time, if ever. While the high school teachers welcomed the visits and chats with some of the very faculty they had known as students, they sometimes felt more annoyed than professionally engaged in dialogue about pedagogy. There came a point when I felt that I could continue my involvement with the program only if we started taking the follow-up professionalization of teachers more seriously. I did not, however, just want to lay down more rules and restrictions. As is the case with the graduate instructors I supervise on campus, the teachers could be a community of peers who reflect on the changes they make in their teaching, in the process making for a stronger common curriculum than one constantly imposed and evaluated from above. Thus, I encouraged the ACP office to hire several of our very best retired ACP high school teachers to make many of the site visits and teach a section of the first-year composition course on campus, where they confer and collaborate with the faculty and graduate student instructors of the course. In recent years, based on their experience and, in one case, doctoral study in both English education and composition studies, we collectively developed an advanced

composition course specifically for preservice secondary English teachers seeking certification. It is important that we share where the field of composition has taken us in the years since many of the teachers got their degrees and their high school positions and, at the same time, that we offer a content area composition course for new secondary teachers that attempts to unify English and language education writing pedagogy. We have managed to go from what felt like a top-down dissemination of the university course to the high schools toward a delivery shared among specialists, many of whom are familiar with English teaching in both sites.

The Role of Changes in Curriculum in Dual Enrollment

What has made this collaborative enterprise more complex is the extent to which the campus version of the first-year composition course has become increasingly focused on academic reading and writing across the curriculum. Key features of the process approach informed the curriculum of our dual-credit composition course in its early years, just as it did the course on campus, and traces understandably remain in that half of those teaching today were originally trained in that model twenty years ago. It was assumed that teachers needed to be brought up to speed on the so-called paradigm shift from product to process and urged to assign drafts, use peer writing groups, and de-emphasize form and correctness. While some veterans of the early days of the dual-credit program have recalled for me their enthusiastic embrace of the academic reading and writing approach adopted fifteen years ago, a good number admit their conversion took some time as the program's original, more expressivist emphasis was consistent with the role writing already played in their own lives or with the student-centered philosophy to which they were exposed in some of their education methods courses. In short, delivering the college-level course to the teachers who were to deliver it to the high school students used to be a simpler matter.

About twenty-five years ago, innovations in K-12 and college-level writing were more in sync. For instance, when I first taught K-12 English in an alternative school, the James Moffett I discovered in *Big Rock Candy Mountain: The Education Supplement to the Whole Earth Catalogue*, advocating a developmental sequence based on the distance between writer and audience, was the same James Moffett discussed at a conference I attended on composing at State University of New York-Buffalo when I worked as a poet in the New York City schools, and the same James Moffett I would later read in my first graduate seminar in composition theory. For a time, English at all levels shared a zeal for the process-not-product movement rooted variously in progressive politics, humanistic psychology, and cognitive research, resulting in what Bartholomae has called a celebration of the individual as fundamentally (or ideally) congruent with culture and history ("Writing with Teachers" 486). Hand in hand with the belief that solutions to more meaningful and effective

writing lay in the processes of the individual mind was the assumption that conversion to the process model resided in the individual teacher, who (re)discovers herself as a writer and then replicates that discovery in her students. Connections between the improvement of student writing and teachers' own writing practices remain in college composition, but receive greater emphasis in K-12 initiatives like the National Writing Project and in English education methods courses (see Romano).

In the 1980s efforts to decenter authority in the classroom and not get in the way of students' efforts to express themselves, à la Donald Murray, replaced school writing that lacked personal and intellectual consequences, that is, the bullet-proof five-paragraph theme and the battleship term paper that sails into port at the end of the semester. Acknowledging, however, as does David Bartholomae, that "there is no writing that is writing without teachers" just as "there is no writing done in the academy that is not academic writing" ("Writing with Teachers" 481), my predecessor Barry Kroll expertly guided both the campus and the dual-credit program toward a new emphasis on academic writing that called for students to locate their positions in relation to the ideas of experts by moving them through a sequence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluative assignments tied to exploration of topics typical of disciplines across the curriculum. At first, this shift to a reading-and-writing-with-sources course was not so easily assimilated by all the high school teachers. Teachers whose chief capital lay in facilitating self-discovery through writing, in conveying a love of literature, or in the surveillance of form and correctness struggled to find their footing.

Perhaps because the process model allowed us to tap into awareness of our own writing habits (stages of drafting and revision, finding a voice), it was easier to sell and more comfortable to teach than trying to make visible the moves that successful academic writers inside the academy seem to intuit or imitate on their own. For a long time, many of the high school teachers adapted to the academic writing approach by focusing mainly on stages of the writing process or on students' manipulation of sources. Appropriate quotation, paraphrasing, and citation—all important skills, to be sure—got more attention in class and in the evaluation of papers than did students' critical involvement with the ideas in the readings taken from disciplinary or professional conversations. On my site visits to the high school classrooms, I observed a good number of teachers leading classroom discussion of complex issues based on the readings having to do with obedience to authority, gender roles, or genetic engineering, but few engaged the class in rhetorical or ideological analysis of the essays themselves. Good college-level writing, I believe, grows from work on both the interpretation and the construction of texts, and both are necessary if students are to understand the positions they are taking and the writing they are producing as "located in the perspective afforded by prior texts" (Bartholomae "Inventing" 596).

Instead of facilitating conversations with the ideas in texts, many of the high school teachers I observed engaged in what Sharon Sperry calls "brokering" for

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the university, assigning writing in order to dispense warnings about the writing that is yet to come from college professors whom some teachers construct as tougher, less merciful versions of themselves. The brokering position enabled some ACP teachers to draw on their prior teaching strengths as well as lore concerning error, proper format, and late papers, while others capitalized more on the contrast they imagined between personal and academic writing: "In high school, you have been writing about your experiences and opinions, but in college, it's all about other people's ideas; they're not going to care what you think. From now on, never use the personal pronoun *I*." In fact, just as in college, the weakest student papers I saw were those that cut and pasted together facts or received opinions, those in which students were unable to get out in front of their sources with an earned position of their own. Several summers of workshops finally convinced me that, while it is valuable to model student papers that do and don't grapple with complexity, that do or don't do a good job of weighing evidence or analyzing and synthesizing sources, these activities are apparently not enough to turn around hard-core notions of good writing and experienced teachers' roles in the production of it. Why were teachers perceiving only a portion of what we meant by academic writing? What, if anything, does the site in which the course is delivered have to do with that misperception?

Inventing the University Collaboratively

I finally came to the conclusion that because most of the high school teachers had been away from the university for a while, what they were missing were opportunities to engage in academic inquiry themselves in order to view the work of the university in that way. The dichotomizing of personal and academic writing, for instance, betrays a lack of awareness (or a forgetting) of what academics and professionals do when they make and debate knowledge and forge new but situated positions. On campus, we talk all the time of how one reads and writes not just to master material but to question, to refine and complicate ideas, and to join ongoing conversations in fields in which reasonable people can disagree. But what does that look and feel like?

Unlike most of our faculty colleagues and graduate teaching assistants, who readily branch out from mastery of texts and skills to ways of negotiating with one's culture and with other observers of that culture, the high school teachers are often reluctant to extend their authority beyond what they consider their traditional area, English, pure and simple. At first, some are anxious about teaching the readings from the required anthology (Behrens and Rosen's *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*) or assembling their own topical units, believing they lack expert knowledge on issues like gender roles and business ethics. I can appreciate that delivering information about good writing or delivering interpretations of *The Scarlet Letter* permits them a greater sense of authority than simulating nonliterary inquiry in the way that composition is delivered now. After all, the public perception of what makes for good writing

and what works of literature mean is what has given postsecondary English a place to stand in the university as well.

Of course, when I say to the high school teachers, "Let's construct a classroom environment that invites the best sort of inquiry in college, and let's make the writing reflect that inquiry," perhaps I too am inventing a university—an ideal one that would locate the positions of students and teachers in a dialogue with the knowledge of experts in ways that, frankly, many colleagues in disciplines across the campus never do when they assign writing. Still, why settle for less? Why not try for even more than what the university expects? High school teachers can and do deliver more. In one summer seminar a teacher from a tiny rural high school told us that she now felt that introducing her students to the notion that writing is part of the way in which members of various professions make sense of competing theories for analyzing and solving messy problems would be the greatest gift she could give them, not just for college but for life. She chose to put together a unit on moral and ethical decision making because she felt her "sheltered" students needed to critically examine the reasons for their beliefs (for similar reasoning, see Meiland, "The Difference Between High School and College"). This sort of decision making on the part of the teachers alters what it is that they have authority over. They aren't our brokers and salespeople, but professionals. Nevertheless, many teachers, old and new, will teach as they are taught. So I decided in *my* delivery to concentrate less on the production of what can become overly prescribed assignments for papers and more on how to get students invested in academic inquiry. In short, if we want these teachers to invite inquiry—and if what we deliver is inevitably what they will attempt to deliver—we have to show them by inviting it ourselves.

We found that we could not just tell teachers how disciplinary conversations work; instead we now spend more workshop time investigating issues and texts that are perhaps new to all of us. In our last summer seminar, we explored controversies surrounding weight and body image in America, writing and sharing critiques, analyzing passages in articles from a variety of fields on the subject as well as scenes in Hollywood films like *Shallow Hal*. Rather than simply walk through the criteria for the trend-analysis paper assignment, framed by some theoretical essays on trend spotting (Gladwell), we explored together several trends that tap into particular cultural myths—including the Cinderella makeover as represented in a plethora of TV shows and films featuring plastic surgery, wardrobe consultation, and home improvement. A teacher who for some time was assigning a pretty standard five-paragraph "causes of a trend" paper that was light on analysis came to life, responding to the question "Why is this obsession with becoming someone else happening now?" with the suggestion that because Americans are frustrated in efforts to control the world situation, they have turned to a fixation on controlling personal image. "Like anorexia, it's about control," she said, "not the imitation of fashion models or the worship of pop stars."

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Finally, a different mode of delivery—engaging in inquiry themselves—has to replace teachers' outmoded or nostalgic invention of the university as concerned only with deadlines, Fs for errors, professors who would have no time or patience to search for your thesis, or who won't care what you think. As a result of our changing focus in the summer and fall seminars, I have begun to see more writing as an ongoing activity in classrooms that take students' critical investigation of ideas as their subject matter. I still felt, however, that in order for teachers to exercise even more authority over the course, we needed to level the playing field by further professionalizing rather than patronizing them. For a long time I had thought it was important to let them in on more of the recent work in composition studies, a disciplinary conversation they could join for real in order to debate, resist, and negotiate what it is that we teach.

A Summer Session's Enhancement Grant for a "Bridging High School and College Writing" project made it possible last year for me to integrate a graduate course in composition pedagogy for English graduate students and returning high school teachers with an advanced expository writing course for preservice English teachers and two sections of first-year composition taught by two selected ACP teachers. The students in both the graduate and the preservice teacher courses read current composition theory and research relevant to the connection between high school and college writing in an effort to find common ground. Joseph Harris' *A Teaching Subject*, Victor Villanueva's *Cross-Talk* anthology, and Robert Tremmel and William Broz's *Teaching Writing Teachers of High School English and First-Year Composition* were useful for getting a diverse group of teachers and teachers-to-be talking about their literacy histories, writing processes, and experiences with academic writing on both sides of the desk. We focused particularly on the relationship between the writer's self and other voices and texts in academic writing with Harris' historical and theoretical categories of growth, voice, process, error, and community framing our discussion. I taught the graduate course and Ted Leahey, a retired high school teacher now conducting site visits and teaching composition on campus, taught the advanced writing course for the preservice teachers. We both required the students in our classes to read some of the same essays as the first-year students and to try their hand at writing several of the papers. In addition, our students constructed teaching portfolios that included reflective teaching statements, annotated redesigned writing assignments, and a case study of a student or phenomenon in one of the two sections of first-year composition. In addition, students in the 500- and 300-level courses took on several of the first-year composition students for tutoring on one of the paper assignments, which they later redesigned in light of what they learned. When they were not engaged in ethnographic observation, our students led several class sessions in the first-year courses, putting into practice strategies for finding an analytical focus, using evidence, or conversing with sources from the composition textbook with which we were all familiar on and off campus, *Writing Analytically*, edited by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen. Once a week, the 300- and 500-level classes met

together, giving us an opportunity to discuss readings, evaluate sample papers, and discuss student writing problems and progress with the two teachers of the first-year composition courses who were also graduate students in my course.

Taking Stock

At this writing, we have only begun to take stock of what we all learned from this valuable collaboration. Returning ACP high school teachers were able to study up close on-campus college students' experiences with writing in the course and with writing in their other college courses at the same time that they were bringing some composition theory to their reexamination of practice. Because of access to the preservice teachers' discussion and final portfolios, we learned that they valued sustained attention to the teaching of writing, which they felt they were not getting in their methods courses, and the opportunity to examine students' difficulties with writing in light of composition theory and the writing they were themselves producing for the class. Perhaps most impressive are the returning high school teachers' case studies. One examined attitudes toward analytical writing of older returning students compared with traditional students in the first-year course; another looked at whether students with a professed religious commitment had more difficulty writing about religion than those without it.

In sum, we have all learned—processes and texts—that will help us reshape and deliver the high school and the on-campus composition courses. The teacher research on questions that arose in their practice underscores how we all contribute to the making of knowledge in composition, how we all practice not just writing, as the National Writing Project has long advocated, but critical inquiry, and how we all, including those of us on campus, still have much to learn from one another.

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Is It Pedagogical or Administrative? *Administering Distance Delivery to High Schools*

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When my campus began offering courses delivered over interactive television from our campus to area high schools as a way for high school students to accelerate their education, our vice president of instruction insisted that we were not changing the courses, only the delivery system. If delivery means being transported and if what is being transported is a fixed commodity, as in the case of a loaf of bread delivered by bicycle or station wagon, then my vice president was right—the delivery system does not matter.

For much of education, that is perhaps so. The professor owns the content, the information, and he or she delivers that information to the student—in the form of a lecture, a book, or a video, each one a means of delivery based on the assumption that knowledge can be not only banked but indeed transported, like a commodity, from one vessel to another. Put another way, knowledge is a bulk of material that can be absorbed or assimilated by a person who can be tested to see what percent of that knowledge has been absorbed. By and large, that is the view held by both public and academy. To verify this claim, walk over to the newest classroom building on your campus and count the number of rooms designed primarily for presentations or lectures, from large halls to small classrooms. The majority of rooms will have student desks facing one wall, and that wall will have some kind of focal point, whiteboard or chalkboard or projection screen, punctuated by a lectern of some sort. The message: Knowledge is a commodity that can be delivered to an audience. Making knowledge is not