16 The Praxis of Innovation in Writing Programs

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Abstract: This chapter describes ways our Georgia Tech Writing and Communication Program fosters innovation and argues that any writing, writing-across-the-curriculum, or English-across-the-curriculum program can nurture similar innovation appropriate for their local institutions and communities. We argue that faculty members who practice innovation transform themselves as well as their environment, benefiting students and, often, their community partners. We begin by presenting background information about our program; we then argue that our two-part programmatic mission—one part focusing largely on our responsibility to faculty and another part on our responsibility to students—creates a space for innovation. We then discuss five characteristics of faculty-centered professional development: professional culture, working conditions, expertise, long-term careers, and an exploratory mindset. The penultimate section discusses five characteristics of teaching and learning: rhetoric, process, multimodality, collaboration, and assessment. The chapter concludes by posing questions for other programs considering ways to stimulate innovation.

Keywords: educational innovation, writing programs, professional development, teaching and learning, rhetoric

In Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program, we value innovation. Our students innovate in their work in our first-year composition, business and technical communication, and research classes. Our faculty innovate in their teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development. And our program innovates in the ways our curriculum, pedagogies, and professional development adapt to a changing world. Innovation is important because it provides intellectual excitement and practical value and because it is often transferable "across different disciplinary areas, time periods, and cultures" (Tierney & Lanford, 2016, p. 1), the very thing we want our students to do with their learning and our faculty to do with their scholarship and pedagogy.

What does this innovation look like? On a typical day, in our composition courses, students might build optical toys—kaleidoscopes or zoe-

tropes—to understand media archaeology or develop graphic novels that address mental health issues for community clients. In our upper-level business and technical communication courses, students might create suites of workplace artifacts (e.g., memoranda of understanding (MOUs), white papers, websites, or podcasts). In creating these workplace artifacts, students might be involved with a community-based project to help a neighborhood reduce problems with easy access to healthy food for local residents. Or students might be involved with a campus-based project to create and design poetry machines to be used in public spaces across campus. In hallways and offices, faculty members discuss classroom activities, their aggressive scholarly agendas, and their service and outreach work. Faculty members plan events with speakers such as the University of California-Berkeley linguist who invented Klingon or the Cisco co-founder who supports Jane Austen scholarship. Or they plan curricular innovations—like a Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon—or write grant proposals to be submitted to government agencies. And beyond their classrooms and programmatic work, they prepare for a diverse array of careers, from tenure-track faculty members to user experience analysts at tech companies.

In the following case, we describe ways our program fosters innovation and argue that any writing, writing-across-the-curriculum, or English-across-the-curriculum program can nurture similar innovation appropriate for their local institutions and communities. We begin by presenting background information about our program; we then make our argument about the ways our two-part programmatic mission creates a space for innovation. Then we discuss five characteristics of faculty-centered professional development: professional culture, working conditions, expertise, long-term careers, and an exploratory mindset. In our penultimate section, we discuss five characteristics of teaching and learning: rhetoric, process, multimodality, collaboration, and assessment. We conclude by posing questions for other programs considering ways to stimulate innovation.

Background

Our Writing and Communication Program (WCP) serves 5,000-6,000 undergraduates in approximately 250 class sections per year in courses including learning support, first-year multimodal composition, multimodal business and technical communication, and proposal and thesis writing. WCP has 40 faculty (36 limited-term Brittain Postdoctoral Fellows and four lecturers and/or visiting lecturers, all with Ph.D.s) and a robust leadership team that encourages innovation.

Faculty design courses to address our programmatic outcomes—some set by the State of Georgia Board of Regents and the rest determined by our program. Our outcomes are consistent, our standards are high, our criteria for assessing student work are common across all courses, and faculty determine their course themes based on disciplinary expertise. Our WCP faculty arrive with strong disciplinary knowledge and teaching experience, and they look forward to expanding their pedagogical repertoire.

We encourage faculty to use campus and community resources, which help students understand that multimodal communication extends beyond the classroom. The following are representative examples of our first-year multimodal composition projects:

- Course theme: social justice. Students read U.S. Representative John Lewis' (2013) graphic novel *March* and then hosted Representative Lewis for a Q&A session before creating their own comics.
- Course theme: 18th-19th century literature. Students participated in a workshop in the institute's Paper Museum, learning about broadsides (public announcements common in the period) by making rag paper and learning about changes in literacy practices as they prepared to create their own public broadsides.
- Course theme: environmental activism. Students met with representatives from a local nature preserve, who brought area animals (including opossums, falcons, owls, and snakes) whose habitats are stressed by encroaching urban infrastructure.
- Course theme: Shakespeare. Students partnered with a class of incarcerated men studying the same plays, each group reading and responding to the other's critical essays.

Creating projects such as these requires a professional and pedagogical culture of innovation—one that recognizes and uses local resources and that encourages pushing disciplinary boundaries.

Creating a Space for Innovation

In defining innovation, we agree with Tracy Bridgeford, Karla Kitalong, and Dickie Selfe (2004) that "to *innovate* means to introduce a new idea or to reintroduce an old idea, perhaps in a new way or context" and that "an *innovative approach* is one that introduces, rearticulates, or creatively juxtaposes theories or practices, especially those not currently or commonly used within" a particular context (p. 5). Building on this definition's emphasis on ideas and context, we see innovation as rhetorical, attending and adapting

to particular rhetorical situations, each with its own exigencies, affordances, technologies, and available means of persuasion. For us, potentially innovative situations include (but are not limited to) the classroom; the program, unit, or institution; the discipline; and the local and global communities—as well as the myriad micro-situations that constitute these, such as individual discussions with students, committee meetings, hallway chats with other faculty, and conferences. We support the view that faculty members who innovate transform themselves as well as their environment, benefiting students and, often, their community partners (see Boden, 2019).

Figure 16.1 illustrates that our faculty begin with commonly accepted means of persuasion—that is, knowledge of core elements for teaching writing, such as rhetorical situation, process, and conventional genre. They begin with what they know—their disciplinary body of knowledge and their familiarity with the foundations of rhetoric and process. As they move through our program, they learn about additional means of persuasion—what for them become pedagogical and curricular innovations, expanding their knowledge and experience. We encourage and support their curiosity about ways to take advantage of our culture, expectations, and resources. Their curiosity fuels innovation that, as Figure 16.1 shows, moves beyond the boundaries of their entry-level status quo to include attention to multimodality and digital pedagogy.
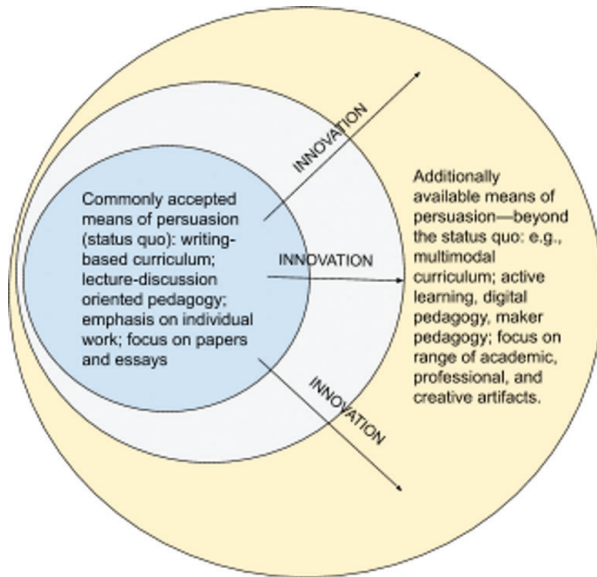

Figure 16.1. Expanding the available means of persuasion in the writing and communication curriculum.

We create a space for innovation through our two-part mission (Figure 16.2), with one part focusing largely on our responsibility to faculty and another part on our responsibility to students. The two parts of our mission support each other synergistically to encourage innovation.

Programmatically, we cultivate and model the interaction between the two parts of our mission to encourage our faculty to push the boundaries of their thinking and doing, prompting them to test, explore, and investigate alternatives. We want faculty to be confident and brave about recognizing the means available to them and taking risks in trying those means. In our program, we are not just preparing students to be global leaders; we are also preparing and supporting our faculty who will themselves be leaders.
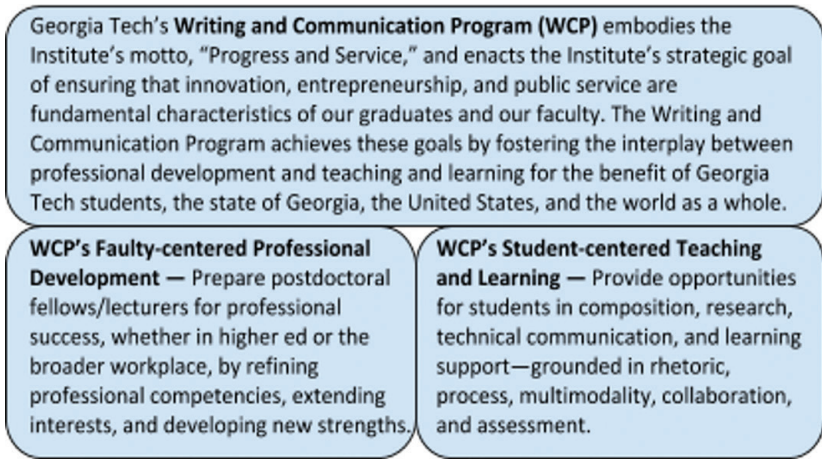
Georgia Tech's **Writing and Communication Program (WCP)** embodies the Institute's motto, "Progress and Service," and enacts the Institute's strategic goal of ensuring that innovation, entrepreneurship, and public service are fundamental characteristics of our graduates and our faculty. The Writing and Communication Program achieves these goals by fostering the interplay between professional development and teaching and learning for the benefit of Georgia Tech students, the state of Georgia, the United States, and the world as a whole.

WCP's Faulty-centered Professional Development — Prepare postdoctoral fellows/lecturers for professional success, whether in higher ed or the broader workplace, by refining professional competencies, extending interests, and developing new strengths.

WCP's Student-centered Teaching and Learning — Provide opportunities for students in composition, research, technical communication, and learning support—grounded in rhetoric, process, multimodality, collaboration, and assessment.

Figure 16.2. Two-part mission of our Writing and Communication Program.

Faculty-Centered Professional Development

As indicated in our mission statement, our program emphasizes *faculty-centered professional development* in order to equip, permit, and encourage faculty to innovate. This development is grounded in five areas: professional culture, academic working conditions, existing and emerging expertise, long-term careers, and exploratory mindset. Within each section below, we discuss professional development practices. While many could certainly benefit from funding, they primarily require time, effort, and a long-term commitment to creating a supportive professional culture. That these actions do not necessarily require extensive funding is important; it means that they are adaptable and usable in a broad number of institutions that have limited financial resources.

The following extended examples illustrate ways two faculty members developed over their time in our program. These examples highlight ways in which professional development opportunities and teaching and learning opportunities work together to spark innovation.

In the first example, a faculty member expanded her perspective about her career path, shifting from a tenure-track academic career to an industry career. The faculty member (a Brittain Fellow with a Ph.D. in media studies) used her experience and expertise along with opportunities and support available in our program to secure a position as a user experience (UX) researcher, first for a national company dealing with data analysis and later with a company engaged in market research. Despite success in teaching and publishing, the faculty member decided she did not want to continue as an academic. She explored new career paths, developed new competencies, and rebranded herself in language familiar to the corporate workplace:

- The Brittain Fellow met with WCP leadership to discuss resources about using her Ph.D. experience and expertise for careers outside the academy. She received assurance that seeking an alternative career was a responsible decision and then engaged in conversations during professional development meetings to explore career alternatives.
- WCP leadership supported the Brittain Fellow in considering ways to re-label her skills; for example, her educator role as "classroom facilitator" who manages 15 teams in three classes, working on 15 different projects, is akin to the workplace role of "project manager" responsible for personnel, schedule, task assignment, resource allocation, problem resolution, assessment, and so on.
- The Brittain Fellow applied for workplace internships and training sessions that coordinated with her teaching and other professional responsibilities and attended workplace meetups with UX professionals to increase her network.
- WCP leadership and the Brittain Fellow coordinated a plan to offer digital materials, individual consultations, and small-group career transition workshops for other Brittain Fellows.

In the second example, a faculty member used her experience, expertise, and opportunities available in our program to secure a tenure-track assistant professor of technical communication position at a public university in the eastern United States. The faculty member (a Brittain Fellow with a Ph.D. in technical communication) took advantage of programmatic opportunities to reinforce her existing professional competencies and to develop new ones:

- The Brittain Fellow had the opportunity to design and teach linked

courses, one connecting an upper-level technical communication course with a first-year multimodal composition course and another connecting upper-level technical communication courses with upper-level computer science courses.

- The Brittain Fellow had the opportunity to coordinate WCP's linked technical communication–computer science capstone courses, leading orientation and new faculty development. As coordinator, she collaborated with faculty in revising the curriculum for this course sequence.
- WCP leadership facilitated a part-time consulting position for the Brittain Fellow with the university's Office of Information Technology to work on campus-wide technical documents, videos, and a website introducing a new learning management system.
- The Brittain Fellow generated conventional academic work—serving as a principal researcher on a project funded by a national professional organization, creating a podcast to highlight her research, co-authoring articles for peer-reviewed journals, and presenting and co-presenting at national conferences.

As these opportunities show, our program is committed to supporting faculty in a professional culture—with positive working conditions, targeted development of teaching and scholarly expertise, long-term career guidance, and an exploratory, creative approach to work. These opportunities, in combination with the teaching and learning practices discussed below, enable faculty to innovate in their teaching, research, service, community outreach, and careers.

Development of Professional Culture

For us, developing a professional culture involves developing the professional identities of individual faculty as well as the collective identity of our programmatic community. Creating and maintaining a professional culture provides a basis for faculty development and collegial support for innovation. For innovation to be possible, faculty should understand the status quo and the leading edge in the disciplines in which they are teaching and creating; they should understand the nature of institutional, programmatic, and community cultures; and they should feel acknowledged and accepted by the local community as having expert knowledge and experience. Attending to professional identity results in discernible benefits:

- Faculty who are respected, supported, and recognized feel more confident in their ability to innovate pedagogically.
- Faculty who are knowledgeable about institutional processes and poli-

tics are better able to function within the institution and use its resources to aid student learning and their own professional development.

- Faculty who are a part of a community have a range of people and resources to turn to when developing new pedagogical opportunities or facing pedagogical challenges.
- Faculty who have opportunities for curriculum development, policy development, programmatic assessment, and other forms of program-matic decision-making are more likely to be motivated to innovate in their classrooms and to build curriculum/programs.

The ways teachers feel about and identify themselves are critical to their professional success. These benefits are supported by "psychological processes . . . involved in the development of a teacher identity: a sense of appreciation, a sense of connectedness, a sense of competence, a sense of commitment, and imagining a future career trajectory" (van Lankveld et al., 2017, p. 325). Our program's attention to professional culture reinforces these research-based conclusions.

Development of Academic Working Conditions

Experience has taught us that faculty input about the conditions in which they work is foundational to supporting faculty, student, and programmatic innovation. This input includes topics such as the design of classrooms, the availability of office space and technology, and equitable pay and benefits. This input ensures that faculty expertise in teaching and research is reflected in the educational environment and that faculty have input in selecting the resources they need to teach, research, and innovate. Attending to working conditions—and involving faculty in efforts to improve their working conditions—results in discernible benefits:

- Faculty who are well-supported with adequate space, technology, and other material conditions are likely to be more creative and innovative in their pedagogy.
- Faculty often know about successful teaching practices that can influence the design of learning environments and resources.
- Faculty can design courses that make innovative use of spaces and resources.
- Faculty are aware—through transparent, formative evaluation and feedback—of areas for growth and experimentation in their teaching.

Access to and support for digital technology is one aspect of working conditions we prioritize. While writing and communication can be taught with traditional technologies (e.g., paper and pencils), global communities

and workplaces expect college graduates to demonstrate competence in using digital technology. Likewise, colleges and universities in the US increasingly expect faculty to use and teach digital technology. Samantha Adams Becker and her colleagues (2018) summarize trends, challenges, and developments in educational technology that "are likely to impact teaching, learning, and creative inquiry in higher education" (p. 2). One of the long-term trends they identify is "advancing cultures of innovation" (p. 2). We agree with Becker and her colleagues that organizations need to "remove barriers that limit the development of new ideas" (p. 8). For us, that means making sure that faculty have access to and training in digital technology and that they have good working conditions (e.g., safe, clean, and well-equipped workspaces and classrooms; reasonable workloads and class sizes; adequate compensation; and access to professional and pedagogical resources). Good working conditions also include encouragement and support for engaging in innovative activities.

Development of Existing and Emerging Expertise

We value and support both faculty members' previous experience and their existing disciplinary expertise in a range of areas (e.g., digital humanities, multimodal composition, rhetoric, business and technical communication). We also support their emerging expertise and provide mentorship and career guidance. For example, we provide opportunities for them to innovate at the intersection of scholarship and teaching. Encouraging faculty to extend their own interests and expertise results in discernible benefits:

- Faculty members have intellectual interests that provide a rich site for innovation, pushing them to see the synergy between their scholarship and their pedagogy.
- Faculty members develop expertise that enables them to create courses that push students to think and communicate about complex concepts and difficult questions and to pose innovative solutions to world problems.
- Faculty members' broad, interdisciplinary perspectives (especially at a STEM university) reinforce their credibility as scholars and their authority in the classroom.
- Faculty members have expertise as writers, speakers, designers, and collaborators that enables them to create innovative strategies in a variety of modes and media.

In thinking about expertise, we agree with Elizabeth Wardle and J. Blake Scott's (2015) argument about the necessity for faculty to have (following Col-

lins and Evans, 2007) at least "interactional expertise." This form of expertise engages disciplinary knowledge and conversations related to teaching writing courses—even as those faculty may not have a degree, or even coursework, within the relevant domains (e.g., rhetoric and composition, technical communication, writing center studies). Finally, we believe in the importance of supporting faculty in developing expertise outside of either their disciplinary expertise or their pedagogical expertise—expertise that, as we discuss in the next section, supports their long-term career plans.

Development of Long-Term Careers

We believe in supporting faculty members in their search for stable, fair, long-term employment, even in the face of a job market in the United States that has more qualified professionals than available positions. This approach reinforces foundational practices of developing a professional culture and productive working conditions. It also supports faculty members in using their intellectual curiosity to expand their interests and expertise in order to innovate. Supporting faculty in their long-term career plans results in discernible benefits:

- Faculty members create a professional narrative that explains the ways in which their divergent and varied interests signal an innovative career path.
- Faculty members identify aspects of their graduate training that apply to a broad array of professional possibilities in and outside the academy.
- Faculty members see their long-term career trajectory as one that enables them to be change agents—that is, disciplinary innovators who influence the direction not only of students but also of disciplines, organizations, and institutions.
- Faculty members are encouraged to learn new technologies and other skills applicable to a range of career paths.

Long-term career development for faculty members involves attention both to scholarship and to pedagogy. We believe a number of strategies identified by Laura F. Huenneke and her colleagues (2017) as ways to increase research capacity of faculty members throughout their careers apply equally well to long-term career development. We have found that four of the strategies they described are especially fruitful: ongoing attention to professional development and career planning, involving faculty in programmatic and institutional culture and operations, facilitating opportunities through partnerships or collaborations with other units, and providing early support for their workable innovations (particularly in teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development).

Development of an Exploratory Mindset

We encourage exploration, experimentation, and creativity in thinking about teaching, scholarship, service, community and professional involvement, and professional development. We emphasize bravery, taking risks, and a growth mindset. Following from D. E. Berlyne's classic studies (1950, 1960, 1966), we consider an exploratory mindset as based on curiosity and the search for novelty. An exploratory mindset aligns strongly with a rhetorical understanding of innovation as leveraging novel means of persuasion within complex situations—like the classroom or the academic job market. Supporting faculty in developing an exploratory mindset results in discernible benefits:

- Faculty members work in a culture of exploration, experimentation, and creativity that acknowledges and supports innovation (e.g., awards for innovative pedagogy, newsletter stories about innovative research or service).
- Faculty members work in a culture that provides a safety net for experimentation.
- Faculty members are provided with peer and programmatic examples on which to build.
- Faculty members are provided resources for experimentation (e.g., professional encouragement, maker spaces, and networking suggestions).

An exploratory mindset encourages educators to update their competencies and strategies as well as re-think their pedagogical paradigms so they can envision policy changes, design transnational frameworks, tackle digital revolutions, and engage in self-assessment—all as part of their transformative powers (Caena & Redecker, 2019). In our program, an exploratory mindset forms the basis for pedagogical innovation as faculty experiment with new modes of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning for Students.

As our professional development mission equips and supports faculty for innovation, our student-centered teaching and learning mission provides the concepts, tools, and practices that instantiate innovation in the classroom and elsewhere. Scholars investigating innovation are clear that diversity, intrinsic motivation, and autonomy "almost invariably impact innovation in a positive manner" (Tierney & Lanford, 2016, p. 23). We encourage these factors so faculty can innovate through rhetoric, process, multimodality, collaboration, and assessment—the core concepts of our teaching and learning mission.

The following extended example about the Ivan Allen Digital Archive highlights ways in which professional development opportunities as well as teaching and learning opportunities work together to spark innovation. Our institution's cultural history features social justice, environmental sustainability, and urban development appropriate for our work with this archive.

- As part of a university grant, some of our faculty helped digitize the Ivan Allen Digital Archive, a collection of mayoral documents from the period Ivan Allen Jr. was mayor of the city of Atlanta (1962 to 1970), an extraordinarily contentious period of racial tension and urban development in the United States.
- As part of another university grant, some of our faculty used the Ivan Allen Digital Archive to develop innovative assignments for undergraduate classes, applicable to many course themes (from social justice to urban transit, from architecture to sports, from unemployment to white flight) and available to all our program's faculty.
- Our students can work with documents in the Ivan Allen Digital Archive (including letters, memos, city committee reports, photos, and newspaper articles), creating multimodal projects about issues related to social justice, environmental sustainability, and urban development. Students use archival materials from the city where they are studying to connect them to current issues.
- The students' innovative archival projects have been featured at public exhibitions on campus; photos and videos of their work have been featured on our program's website and on social media.
- As part of their scholarly productivity, our faculty use their pedagogical experiences to prepare and deliver professional conference presentations and to write articles for publication. The presentations and publications draw attention to historical documents with current sociopolitical concerns.

As this extended example shows, we are committed to professional practices that enable faculty to approach teaching and learning—addressed in our program via rhetoric, process, multimodality, collaboration, and assessment—in innovative ways.

Rhetoric

All writing programs need a strong, explicit theoretical grounding; it is part of what makes the knowledge generalizable to other situations and part of what differentiates the art and the craft of writing. For us, that grounding is

rhetoric. Students attend to available means of persuasion, discovering unexpected perspectives as rhetorical elements—context, audience, purpose, role, argument, organization, design, visuals, and conventions of language and images—work together in new ways. Asking questions about new means of persuasion provokes critical thinking, helping students to gain an understanding of social and cultural texts and contexts in ways that support productive communication and interaction.

In our program, the classic elements of rhetoric form the structure that enables innovative thinking, melding traditional logic and appeals with new technologies. Students use rhetoric as the basis for their work, creating *logos* in arguments, attending to *ethos* in the context, adapting *pathos* for the audience. In doing so, they select and organize persuasive evidence, consider the affordances of various modes and media, develop an appealing and usable design, and respect professional conventions and style in language and images. Students in a first-year multimodal composition class, for example, used rhetoric to analyze the expectations of an audience wanting to learn about the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. As part of their work, students visited the nearby Center for Civil and Human Rights to gain further contextual background. They then designed a website to explain the historical event, mining a historical archive for pithy examples (in this case, the Ivan Allen Digital Archive).

Process

Programmatically, we expect faculty to help students broaden their understanding of ways to draft and revise their artifacts, since learning productive processes is as important as creating products. Students learn that processes for communication—for example, creating, planning, drafting, designing, rehearsing, revising, presenting, publishing, and disseminating—are recursive, not linear. They also learn that processes are seldom isolated and individual but, instead, take place in environments that involve interacting with others (both in face-to-face and in virtual interaction) at every stage of the process. We also encourage a nuanced perspective about reflection, an essential part of our process(es). Because reflection is not an intuitive behavior for students, our faculty teach it, model it, provide a rationale for it, and build in time to do it regularly (expecting students to reflect on one or more aspects of each assignment during and immediately following the assignment), not just at the end of the course.

In our program, process provides the *how to* of innovation, emphasizing translation, transformation, and transference. These three processes receive

special attention because they are critical in academic, community, and workplace communication (Burnett & Cooper, 2019):

- *Translation*. Adapting information for new audiences (e.g., translating an argument from an academic essay to a public blog post, translating information in a medical journal to a mass market newspaper, and translating an aerospace engineering drawing for non-experts watching CNN)
- *Transformation*. Changing and reshaping ideas or information—for example, changing *genre* (print to web), *scale* (thumbnail to poster), *medium* (live demo to video), *mode* (written to oral), *scope* (instruction manual to tip sheet), or *color palette* (four-color to black and white)
- *Transference*. Applying communication strategies from one context or situation to another (e.g., transferring appropriate use of metaphors from academic to workplace situations)

Multimodality

Multimodality informs all the examples of innovative student, faculty, and programmatic work we have discussed in this chapter. We call our curriculum WOVEN, for communication in written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal modes. The WOVEN components work synergistically, though faculty may choose to emphasize one mode over another from project to project. The emphasis depends on the rhetorical situation and the affordances of the modes and media. We support the principles presented in "On Multimodality: A Manifesto" (Wysocki et al., 2019). We agree that while students need to develop technological competence, they also need to analyze media critically, recognize the "inseparable natures of thinking, acting, making, and doing" (Wysocki et al., 2019, p. 19), and respond to the affordances of technologies. Our multimodal emphasis enables students to see that what they are learning in their classrooms connects to the world around them. They are encouraged to innovate—to translate, transform, and transfer—in ways that respond to their developing needs to present arguments to public audiences so that their work has power and influence.

Collaboration

While the initial purpose of a collaboration may not be innovative, collaboration increases the likelihood of generating multiple means of addressing a problem—and the multiple means increase the likelihood that the resulting solution will be innovative. This attention to innovation matters

because "organizations are increasingly relying upon the diverse perspectives and expertise of teams to produce novel, innovative solutions" (Thayer et al., 2018, p. 363). The same benefits occur in the classroom, giving students alternative ways to approach assignments. So what do students need to learn about collaboration in order for it to serve as a means to innovation? Researchers note that strong collaborations require both cognitive and social strategies (Thayer et al., 2018). Even though our students have been engaged in collaborative work since kindergarten, few of them have specific skills and strategies for engaging in productive collaboration, so WCP faculty explicitly teach collaborative strategies. These strategies include attention to factors such as cultural context, models in interaction, leadership, team demographics, equitable contributions, time management, and conflict resolution.

Assessment and Evaluation

What we have elsewhere called our "ecology of assessment" (Burnett et al., 2014) includes five categories of formative assessment and summative evaluation: self-assessment, peer assessment, instructor assessment, client assessment, and, finally, programmatic assessment (based on analysis of reflective portfolios). Particularly important is that we use the same criteria, regardless of the categories of assessment or evaluation. For example, the questions faculty teach students to ask themselves about argument or design in their self-assessments are much the same questions the program asks of itself.

How do we use the same categories and criteria for all formative assessment and summative evaluation? Two specific tools are particularly important: First, our *programmatic feedback chart* provides rhetorical categories and assessment criteria unconnected to grades and, instead, connected to feedback. The categories and criteria in the feedback chart are used for all kinds of formative assessment and summative evaluation, modifiable for particular assignments and projects. Second, our programmatic assessment is based on faculty review of selected *cumulative reflective portfolios*, applying the same criteria used for all formative assessment and summative evaluation across the program. Assessment provides students, faculty, and the program with ways to identify processes and concepts that are successful and those that need work. In addition, assessment helps faculty, students, and the program identify processes and concepts that are innovative—that is, what is new to their own processes and products, what risks they have taken, and what strategies they can carry with them.

Conclusion

This case study explains ways our faculty are empowered and supported to use rhetoric, process, multimodality, collaboration, and assessment to create new learning experiences for and with students—innovative courses and assignments, like those discussed in our introduction. Moreover, as the interplay between our program's professional development and teaching/learning missions evolves, faculty model (and students practice) innovation as a constant, critical adaptation to the changing world. The result of this interplay is a culture in which instances of innovation are common, for faculty, students, and the program administrators alike. As with all case studies, though, the generalizability of the culture we describe is, at best, limited. The innovations in our program at Georgia Tech have emerged for a number of reasons tied to our local situation, not the least of which is that our institution is consistently funded, its culture rewards and expects innovation, the leadership strongly advocates for faculty development and curricular rigor and innovation, and our program has been lucky in finding allies in administration who believe in creating stable, secure positions for non-tenure-track and contingent faculty. At the same time, we believe that our argument about the need for writing programs to innovate *is* generalizable and *is* something for all writing program administrators to consider.

What innovation looks like—the problems and opportunities it responds to, the experiments it inspires, and the solutions it prompts—is necessarily different in different situations. We do not argue that a multimodal curriculum or robust technological infrastructure, for example, is required for innovation in writing programs or that innovation is defined by its disruptive nature. Ultimately, innovation in writing and communication programs occurs one step at a time over the long term. As programs consider ways to encourage innovation, they should consider the following questions:

Goals

- What are the goals of the program? How do these goals serve the educational mission of the program and institution? How do these goals advance teaching and learning for students and/or professional development for faculty?
- How does innovation fit into the goals of the program? How does innovation serve the educational mission of the program and institution? How does innovation advance teaching and learning for students and/or professional development for faculty?
- In what ways can the program lay the foundations for innovation,

through curriculum development, improved working conditions, new faculty development efforts, or otherwise?

Arguments

- What are the available means of persuasion?
- How can available resources, technologies, concepts, or allies be integrated?
- What relationships can be built? What arguments can be made?

Collaboration

- How can collaboration with faculty, staff, and students be used in considering and implementing innovation?
- How can collaboration be used with community partners?

Support

- What small steps can be taken, even in the absence of funding? For example, what changes can be made related to programmatic processes, access to information, or the involvement of various stakeholders?
- How can the program strengthen the agency of faculty to explore, experiment, and create? How can the program provide methods of formative evaluation and feedback that support faculty innovation?

More broadly, we hope that writing program, writing-across-the-curriculum, and English-across-the-curriculum administrators and faculty see the urgent necessity for innovating within programs, institutions, and disciplines. We hope to innovate not for the sake of originality, disruption, or public relations. We hope to innovate not just to adapt to the various "new normals," from the precarization of working conditions to the ubiquity of social media. Ultimately, we hope to innovate in order to prompt and support ways of thinking and communicating about the world as it changes and, hopefully, to help it change for the better.

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