CHAPTER 4.

"THE TENSION'S IN THIS ROOM!:" NEGOTIATION AND RESISTANCE IN IE FOCUS GROUPS

Ruth Book
Rochester Institute of Technology

Institutional ethnography has much to offer writing program administrators generally, but perhaps one of the most important things it provides is an approach to difference and resistance as an asset. IE presupposes that there will be "disjunctions, divergences, and distinctions" in any site and provides an opening for researchers to study the complex negotiations that members of the institution undertake as part of their everyday work (LaFrance 35). Writing program administrators are typically no strangers to resistance, sometimes coming from multiple directions at once: students, teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders. While new TAs' resistance to first-year writing program pedagogies has been well documented by WPA scholars, resistance does not simply dissipate once the TAs are no longer "new teachers." Though these feelings may shift and change as teachers' own experiences do, instructor resistance and ambivalence often remain—especially when a writing program undergoes a significant change in its curriculum and identity, which was the exigence for developing the study that I describe in this chapter.

My purpose here is to show how institutional ethnography allows researchers to uncover and examine the usually invisible negotiations that occur on the interindividual level between individuals and the institution. In the course of their everyday work, individuals constantly negotiate their responsibilities, experiences, and identities not only within the institution but also collaboratively among each other. Throughout this chapter, I show how institutional ethnography provides a way for WPAs to view how instructor resistance is performed and negotiated within the writing program, and I suggest that focus groups are a method of data collection particularly well suited to IE inquiry because they show these resistances and negotiations *as they happen*. While the institution presents instructors with particular roles and guides their practice in those roles through institutional circuitry, instructors' identities and identifications with the writing program are multiple and shifting. IE provides a method for WPAs to

DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2023.2029.2.04

honor the lived experiences of the members of the writing program, including a diversity of (dis)identifications with and resistances to the writing program.

I begin with a research narrative of my study that provides context about the local writing program and its members. I then briefly explain the potential for focus groups as a method for exploring resistance and negotiation in the writing program before turning to a discussion of particular moments of instructor resistance that are mediated by local and extralocal concerns based on their standpoints in the institution. Throughout this chapter, my goal is to consider how institutional ethnography can help WPAs open lines of inquiry into the ways instructors negotiate the various roles they fulfill within the institution, form their individual and collective identities as teachers, and experience ambivalence and resistance to programmatic values and practices.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND NARRATIVE

The first-year writing program where I conducted this study had approximately 85 instructors at the main campus; of the 105 course sections taught in the Fall 2017 semester, when data collection began, slightly more than half were taught by graduate students (both M.A. and Ph.D.) in literary studies, medieval studies, and rhetoric and composition, with another 40% taught by adjunct faculty, and only 3% taught by full-time faculty. In addition to the main campus, there are also four regional campuses, each with a faculty writing coordinator and a robust early college experience program, where FYW is delivered in more than a hundred high schools across the state. Having been both an instructor[1] and graduate student administrator in this program, I was uniquely positioned to investigate the identity of the program as both a participant and a creator of the collective identity of this writing program as it underwent a significant shift.

Beginning with the arrival of a new director in the 2016–2017 academic year, the writing program began transitioning to a multimodal curriculum. The program's website describes the initiative as "a component of the FYW program designed to teach rhetorical composition practices with a diverse range of technologies and communicative modes" ("Writing Across Technology"). When I began this study in Fall 2017, the transition was already in motion, and by the following year, new graduate instructors were fully trained by the summer workshop staff in multimodal composition in their week-long orientation and fall-semester pedagogy course and practicum. Returning instructors had also

1 I use the word "instructor" to refer to anyone who teaches FYW at our institution, which is common practice in our program. Though graduate students teaching in our program are classified as "graduate teaching assistants" (GTAs) by the university, they design and implement all of their teaching.

begun to implement digital and multimodal elements into their courses with varying degrees of engagement since the new director's arrival.

I collected data across four semesters (Fall 2017–Spring 2019), including ten years of training materials, (beginning with the year that the first participant entered the program), focus groups with instructors, and interviews with the writing program's directors, graduate assistant directors, and regional campus coordinators. I used the training materials (called "resource books") to develop an initial coding scheme for analyzing the materials and the responses from instructors in the focus groups, according to their stated values and practices as teachers. I invited all active instructors via email and paper flyers. Twenty-eight instructors responded and participated in six randomly populated focus groups that explored the ways instructors felt that they embodied the values, goals, and practices of the still-shifting program. In our focus groups, I asked instructors to reflect on their experiences to discuss what roles they fulfilled in their teaching and whom they identified with or were influenced by as they continued to craft their own teaching identities.

Choosing to use focus groups rather than individual interviews with instructors was not simply an efficiency measure; they proved essential to the project since my goal was to investigate the relationships that instructors sustain and the ways that they negotiate their experiences in their current institutional situation. For reasons that will be explained in the later sections, the focus groups were the site of most of the significant insights for this project, despite or because of their messiness. In addition to the focus groups, interviews with the WPAs and the programmatic documents were useful in establishing the ruling relations of the site and seeing the trajectory of the identity of the writing program across time.

Many studies of the developing identities of writing teachers begin with new graduate instructors, many of whom are teaching for the first time, as they navigate the difficulty of being teachers and students through their first semester or year (see, for example, Ebest; Grouling; Restaino). My study, by contrast, looks at the ways in which all instructors' identities shape and are shaped by a change in the program's identity resulting from a new director and a change in curriculum. As I've found through this research, writing instructors often take up certain aspects of the collective identity of the program to which they belong while upholding their own values and goals—sometimes in addition or in opposition to those of the writing program, all of which contribute to the performance of their identity as teachers of writing. As they manage the expectations set out for them by the institution, many instructors find creative and subversive ways to fulfill their roles as teachers of writing. While much of what happens in the day-to-day experience of writing instructors is invisible to WPAs, I suggest in the next section that focus groups provide a social and rhetorical site

for exploring the negotiations that shape the professional and local identities of writing instructors.

FOCUS GROUPS AND IE

Together with other forms of data collection, focus groups can provide the institutional ethnographer a view into the institutional negotiations that writing program members participate in *as they are happening*. Focus groups might be a method of data collection especially suited to institutional ethnography because of the interactional nature of the meeting itself. Focus groups aren't merely "group interviews," and, as Sue Wilkinson has noted, researchers should be prepared to analyze the results of focus groups not only in terms of *what* is said (content) but also *how* it is said (interaction). A focus group is not a clear window into the goings on of the institution; instead, a focus group meeting is itself an enactment of the negotiations the individuals experience within the institution.

For the institutional ethnographer, focus groups have much to tell us about the strategic, rhetorical interactions among the participants, including how they are positioning themselves within the conversation, how they interact with others, and how they co-construct meaning within the institutional site. Focus groups, when "sensitively analyzed," can "offer insights into the relational aspects of self, the processes by which meanings and knowledge are constructed through interaction with others, and the ways in which social inequalities are produced and perpetuated through talk" (Wilkinson 123). Wilkinson reminds us that focus group data are just as constructed as surveys or interviews are, with the added element of interaction. A focus group is an event occurring within the institution, not somehow outside of it, and therefore it is a site where the program's identity is negotiated and shaped in real time among the participants and moderator. My own presence as a moderator and member of the community surely shaped the participants' experience, though not in a quantifiable way; it is likely that preexisting relationships with me and each other led to both a willingness to disclose their experiences as well as some instances of careful negotiation and politeness in crafting their responses sensitively. In any case, my asking them to participate in this research study shaped the way they perceived the writing program and their place within it. Indeed, the research site is never undisturbed by a focus group taking place. Instructors' performances in the focus groups were instances that shaped the program's identity for me and for the other instructors who were present. As I analyzed the data from the focus groups, I attended to the ways that the participants constructed responses to the questions that displayed both their particular identities and practices as well as how they interacted and collaborated with me and each other in the space.

NEGOTIATING PROGRAMMATIC VALUES AND PRACTICES

In order to determine the key values and practices of the local writing program, I gathered ten years of resource books, training manuals that a team of experienced graduate student teachers revise each summer in preparation for new-instructor orientation. As a product of sustained collaboration, these resource books often contain the program's most current values and practices, and they were especially useful in understanding how the program communicated its curricular changes to teachers. Ranging from around 400 pages (in 2011) to a more concise 75 pages (in 2018), the resource books contained descriptions of the course outcomes, guiding principles, sample assignments and lesson plans, and suggestions for approaching teaching and assessing writing.

At the program level, the resource books constitute what Alice Griffith and Dorothy Smith refer to as a "boss text," a higher-order text that shapes and mediates the work of individuals within the institution. While there are certainly other boss texts that shape instructors' work at the program, university, and disciplinary level, the resource books are significant in that they have "accrue[d] a particular type of authority within local settings, as they circulate ideals of accountability, professionalism, and disciplinarity" (LaFrance 80). These documents bear much of the burden of introducing instructors to the identity of the writing program and certainly shape their everyday work, even if indirectly. Not every instructor reads the resource books cover-to-cover or in the same manner, but their significance rests in that they are a shared resource taken up by individuals as they go about their work; they inform the individual and collaborative practice of teaching writing in the local writing program.

A writing program is made up of, at least in part, the documents and textual artifacts that circulate among its various stakeholders. Christopher Burnham and Susanne Green suggest that a writing program's identity is "embedded, if not clearly represented, in program literature, from catalog materials and common course syllabi to department and program (and faculty and GA) websites" (176). But these texts, themselves, do not constitute the identity of the program in its entirety. The replicability of texts is central to the ontology of organizations and institutions, according to Smith ("Texts"), because they "provide for the standardized recognizability of people's doings *as* organizational or institutional" (160; emphasis added). The institution comes into being, as Dylan Dryer explains, as it is "materially (re)constituted in the everyday uptakes of recurrent textual forms" (653). The texts themselves must be activated by members of the institution as they go about their work (Smith *Institutional*).

To approach analyzing these programmatic materials, I developed a qualitative coding scheme that cataloged all of the values and practices discussed in the

resource books. Though it is outside the scope of this chapter to explore in great detail, there were clear ways that the resource books connected with extralocal ruling relations that establish how and why we teach writing in particular ways. For example, disciplinary texts such as the "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing," NCTE position statements, and the ACRL's "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," all informed particular values and practices, such as developing habits of mind, encouraging multimodal composition, and outlining practices for ethical research. This catalog of values and practices allowed me to map significant programmatic changes across time and served as a backdrop to explore the instructors' conversations in the six focus groups.

After I had developed a system for cataloging the values and practices recommended in the resource books, I turned to the focus group transcripts to see the ways that the values and practices outlined in these training materials shaped instructors' understanding of their work as writing teachers. In the first round of coding, I analyzed the focus group conversations by coding their transcripts according to the values and practices established in the official documents. Across the six focus groups, participants discussed key values and practices that appeared in the official discourse of the program: *Reading*, *collaboration*, *rhetorical awareness*, *multimodal composition*, *assessment*, *writing* (as an activity in class), *multimodality*, *revision*, *reflection & metacognition*, and *process writing* all emerged strongly as key terms across both the resource books and the focus groups. Tracing the key terms, values, and practices of the program through the resource books and focus groups allowed me to see how instructors were engaging with and embodying official program discourses in the construction of their individual and collective identities as instructors. LaFrance suggests that "tracing key terms is one pathway to understanding how the specific faces of an institution are co-created in the space between larger social discourses and individual standpoints" (113). By tracing these key terms as they emerged in the focus groups, I was able to identify what the writing instructors valued based on how they responded to questions and interacted with each other through their identity performances and negotiations in the focus groups.

I began the six focus groups by asking instructors to write about and then share their primary goals as writing instructors. Then, I asked them to continue by talking about what they viewed as the goals and values of the program in general. By the third focus group, I opened this second question with a joke that it wasn't a test, trying to ease some of the tension of performing for each other and for me, but their nervous laughter indicated to me that they were, in fact, worried it was a test to be evaluated by me and their peers around the table. Though I'd assured them that their responses would be private and deidentified to everyone outside of the room, my own role as the graduate student writing program

administrator (and in many cases, my differently positioned role as peer or friend) was certainly not lost on participants. As I was analyzing these moments, the complex rhetorical nature of the focus groups became clear: They were inhabiting this space with me, an administrator, and their peer instructors, which invariably shaped the ways that they performed their identities as instructors. The focus groups themselves were still operating within the institution, rather than as a neutral site to gather data. Throughout the focus groups, participants negotiated their participation in ways that showed they were engaged members of the writing program by aligning with the espoused values and practices of the writing program, as well as instructors capable of agency and independence by subverting or flouting those values and practices.

As they answered this question about the program's values and practices, each instructor answered with something that was recognizably part of the identity of the writing program but that was also something that marked their own teaching identity as unique. Their responses to this question showed that each instructor was performing an act of identification with the writing program while asserting and maintaining their own individuality. I asked the question to twenty-eight instructors, and I received twenty-eight different responses to what they believed were the most important values and practices of the writing program. Some emphasized writing process, reading and critical literacy, multimodal composition, academic writing, information literacy, and metacognitive practices in writing, among other values and practices. Though the list of values and practices from the resource book was extensive, nearly all of them were discussed at some point during the six focus groups with instructors. The wide range of responses suggests that instructors were not merely reciting what they felt they ought to value, but rather choosing to emphasize elements of the shared community that resonated with their own histories, backgrounds, and goals as writing instructors.

After I accounted for the ways instructors discussed the "official" values and practices, I marked places in the transcripts where the coding scheme did not account for the content of the focus group conversations. Once I had refined these moments into categories, 11 new values and practices emerged, which are shown in Table 4.1. While some values or practices were more idiosyncratic (e.g., self-expression, appearing only once), others represented a significant amount of the conversation between instructors in focus groups. For example, there were 49 coded references to *affective or emotion work* as integral to their pedagogical practices and values, spanning topics such as instilling confidence in student writers, managing student stress, responding to students with enthusiasm and generosity, and other forms of emotional labor. Deeply connected to this kind of emotion work was a discussion of *embodiment*, including the ways

that differences in gender, sexuality, ability, and race informed their teaching and how physical and material space and resources shaped their interactions with students. These additional values and practices revealed the embodied work experiences of instructors in the writing program and ways that they negotiated their own lived experiences within and outside of the traditional classroom.

Table 4.1. New Value and Practice Codes from Focus Groups

New Value and Practice Codes from Focus Groups	Number of Coding References
Self-expression	1
Critical literacy	3
Invention	4
Fairness and equity	6
Critical thinking	8
Page requirement	9
Political engagement	10
Play & experimentation	19
Embodiment	20
Teaching for transfer	23
Affective & emotion work	49

Isolating the new values and practices provided a way of understanding the limits of official discourses (e.g., training manuals) for describing the lived, embodied experiences of instructors. As I will explore in the next section, these additional values and practices also uncovered some tensions instructors had with these official discourses, especially when their deeply held values, stemming from their embodied experiences or disciplinary backgrounds, came into conflict with the program's espoused values.[2] It is not surprising that a training and resource manual does not encapsulate the affective and embodied work of teaching writing and belonging to a writing program, but we can see from the focus group conversations how significant these additional values and practices were for instructors as they navigated their day-to-day experience. In concert with other codes, (e.g., *political engagement*) *affective & emotion work* and *embodiment* revealed the complexities of instructors' identifications with the program's values and practices.

2 For a discussion of how instructors negotiate tensions between boss texts and their embodied experiences of their work, see Elisabeth Miller's chapter in this collection. Miller shows how one particularly powerful boss text and ruling relation loomed large for workers in a community writing center even as they felt it inadequately addressed the very real and embodied needs of the community with whom they worked.

EMBODIMENT, DISCIPLINARITY, AND RESISTANCE

Embodiment and the affective aspects of teaching emerged as an important consideration for writing instructors in the focus group discussions, with 69 unique references across all six meetings combined. Though embodiment and emotions were not connected explicitly to values or practices mentioned in the official program materials, these considerations emerged as significant to how instructors viewed their work. For example, some instructors shared how their different embodiments and experiences shaped the teaching work that they do and what they value in the classroom. Among other topics, instructors expressed that gender, race, sexuality, and disability shaped their experience in the classroom and writing program. One instructor, James, described his overall goals in teaching writing as connected to the goals of the program:

> I think I'm interested in that space, making quote unquote "inquiry," but I put like—*I borrowed the terms from First-Year Writing*, right—like, critical literacy, rhetorical awareness, that I think are like very important. And essentially, right, like, hopefully being able to develop sustained, concrete arguments that make use of texts in ethical and responsible ways.

In describing the terms he "borrowed from First-Year Writing," this instructor shows his connection to the program while maintaining some agency in how he chooses to interact with the values of the program. While he expresses here that he emphasizes inquiry, critical literacy, and rhetorical awareness, these values are mediated by and negotiated alongside other emphases on affect, experimentation, play, and embodiment throughout the rest of the focus group. Later, he shares that for him, "Affect becomes a very sort of critical tool. And emotions—how do you feel?—that becomes a sort of way into the conversation, so making use of that. I also think to denaturalize some of the, like, straight modes of writing." For James, the experience of working as a queer scholar also shapes his priorities in the writing classroom. Maintaining these two sets of goals, ones informed by the writing program and others by his scholarly interests and approach, did not seem to create feelings of tension or resistance for James (or, at least, he did not express that they did in our meeting). There were other moments, though, where instructors' roles or embodied experiences did conflict with what they viewed as the values of the program.

In some cases, the affective and embodied elements of their work raised ambivalence or resistance from instructors. Many instructors emphasized emotional labor as something that they felt was part of their work of teaching writing, even if they sometimes felt ambivalent about that work. Emotional and affective

labor is not officially or institutionally part of the work of teaching writing—it does not appear in job descriptions, training materials, or messages from the program leadership. Still, this work emerged as significant for instructors across the focus groups. Multiple instructors, for instance, mentioned that alleviating student anxiety was a key component of how they see their work, and, as a product of that, they expressed a goal of increasing students' confidence in their identity as writers.

For some instructors, the ways they went about alleviating students' anxiety sometimes, they felt, ran counter to some of the expressed goals of the first-year Writing program. When I asked one focus group about what goals, values or objectives they had in addition or in contrast to the FYW goals they had already named, they continued to discuss this affective goal from earlier in the conversation:

> **Riley:** We talked a lot about student anxiety, and that's something that I don't think first-year writing necessarily directly addresses.
>
> **Kate:** And I think a lot of the way that instructors address student anxiety is through talking to them about formal strategies, and I think that that's something that's not probably—it's, like, consciously not prioritized by the first-year writing program.
>
> **Riley:** Yeah, that's actively sort of suppressed.
>
> **Kate:** Yeah, so, that suggests to me a kind of disjunction of goals or priorities.
>
> **Riley:** I understand why first-year writing does it, right, because they don't want us to be teaching the way that [their previous institutions] or whatever does, where it's this very structured, like, "this is an introduction, these are the ways that introductions work, please write your sentences following this model." Like, I understand that they don't want that autopilot sort of course, but there is definitely a place for strategies or for talking to students—like, even getting them to understand that you can use the structure of a paper to get the point across in the same way you use the prose.

In this conversation, Riley and Kate collaboratively work through the "disjunction" between their own, which they appeared to share in common, and the writing program's goals or priorities. The program's materials and messages from the director discouraged instructors from focusing on rules of grammar,

formatting, or essay structure in favor of encouraging inquiry-based writing projects. In the conversation above, "formal strategies" is a euphemism that the other instructors understand to stand in for templates or conventional essay structures. Cognizant of the context of the focus group conversation, they quickly acknowledge their understanding and identification with the writing program while expressing their resistance to or tension against the program's typical practice. They also both bring their previous experience in other writing programs to the fore in this conversation and emphatically distance themselves from their previous experiences, perhaps as a way of creating a shared identification with the others in the focus group conversation.

In this conversation, the participants worked collaboratively in the focus group exchange to explain their resistance to a program practice (not emphasizing "formal strategies") and the ways that it connected to an overarching goal of providing support to students and alleviating anxiety. In Chapter 3 of this volume, Nugent et al. explain the significance of peer relationships as instructors acculturate to a writing program or department and learn to navigate the social rules of the space. Drawing on responses to an open-ended faculty survey question, they reveal how policy is often mediated through conversations with colleagues rather than through direct consultation with a boss text, such as a handbook. These instructors' interaction in this conversation also shows the ways that focus groups can be useful in understanding how members of the writing program are engaging with each other and with their conceptualization of the institution. Even when she was explaining a tension or "disjunction," as Kate put it, with the practices of the writing program, Riley maintained that she understood why "first-year writing does it" in that way. As Jocelyn Hollander explains, "focus groups can tell us what people say in particular social contexts and how group meaning, consensus, or dissensus is constructed" but "they do not reliably tell us what individuals think or feel. Therefore, no group composition can ensure 'honest' disclosure" (628). Institutional ethnographers might be more comfortable with this statement than many other researchers because our goal is not to strive toward "truth" in an objective sense but to gather data toward coming to understand the ways people's lives and work are organized at the local and extralocal levels. Because they understand that the institution itself is textually mediated and constantly shifting based on standpoint, IE researchers are well positioned to approach focus groups (and, indeed, all of their data) as rhetorical and socially constructed. In this case, we can see that instructors' resistances or ambivalences are motivated by other goals—here, alleviating student anxiety—and they carefully construct their responses to frame their experience as understanding of the program's values and practices even when they disagree.

The transition to a more multimodal curriculum created ambivalence and resistance from instructors on both technical and ideological grounds. While some instructors worried about how to assign, create, or assess multimodal writing, others wondered about the underlying purposes behind the shift. *Political engagement* and *teaching for transfer* were two values that many teachers discussed as significant for motivating their teaching experiences, though these are not explicitly discussed in the resource books or other programmatic materials. In one focus group conversation, two participants, Samantha and Cassandra, discussed the tension between "political" and "practical" (or "professional") approaches to teaching writing:

> **Cassandra:** So, I think that the word "practical" is a point of tension in this program right now. And maybe this comes from, I was in pedagogy [the practicum/training course] with [a previous director], right? But I also study the corporate university, so that word freaks me out.
>
> **Ruth:** And so how are you, how is that word circulating for you? Where is that coming from?
>
> **Cassandra:** Well, let's connect it to maybe, like, the multimodal changes that are happening, which are often phrased as being more practical genres of writing than the traditional essay.
>
> **Samantha:** I will say I agree that's definitely a tension that I've seen, but it's also, I don't know if it's like, different years, necessarily, who came in with what teacher [of the practicum/training course], because I know several people who were in [the course] with me who have the same aversion to practicality. I'm deeply, deeply in love with practicality.
>
> **Cassandra:** The tension's in this room!
>
> **Samantha:** I know!

Though this was a light, joking conversation in one of the focus groups, it revealed instructors' perceptions of tensions among multiple values and motivations central to their teaching. Cassandra's response to the program's change to a more multimodal curriculum was informed by her disciplinary research on the corporate university and her concerns about transitioning to a more "practical" and instrumental approach to teaching writing. Throughout the focus group, Cassandra emphasized *political engagement* for students in most of her responses to the questions, which she viewed as distinct from or in tension with "practicality" and *teaching for transfer* to other writing courses in the university (which

was a significant motivation for Samantha and other instructors across multiple focus groups).

LaFrance writes that a writing program is "always a site of contestation, disorder, divergence, and disagreement—created in the interactive tensions between what are loosely related sets of individual practices that live below official, institutional, and professional discourse" (113). This kind of institutional ethnographic analysis provides writing program administrators with a way of exploring these tensions, and it also shows how the focus groups themselves are performances of individual and programmatic identity. Through these conversations, participants were able to articulate their values and practices in collaboration with others. Their negotiations were made public to the other participants, and the collaborative nature of the focus group may have helped instructors to articulate tensions and resistances that they experience as well.

CONCLUSION

Moments of true resistance, where instructors completely rejected the values or practices espoused by the writing program, were rare in the focus groups for this project. This isn't surprising in itself—the nature of the study, where instructors came together with me, a graduate student administrator, for an unpaid focus group meeting, shaped the types of responses they were likely to share. Instructors who were passively resistant to the values of the writing program, perhaps viewing their teaching not as part of their own identity but as something that helped to finance their "real work" as graduate students, were unlikely to participate in the first place. But tensions and ambivalences, where instructors had difficulties or "mixed feelings" about their work, appeared frequently in our conversations. In her discussion of the work of "linked courses," LaFrance explains that "even empowered and aware individuals must work within the co-constituted contexts of their sites," and therefore "[m]oments of resistance and divergence, even when significant in the slow processes of long-term change, are often invisible to all but a small handful of people" (68). Within the framework of institutional ethnography, focus groups offer opportunities to make these "moments of resistance and divergence" public and visible to other members of the writing program. Sharing these moments with each other in the space of the focus group is important in itself, but analysis of these moments also provides researchers and WPAs perspective on the ways that resistance is often mediated by institutional ruling relations that shape teachers' experiences of their work.

Institutional ethnography allows us to recast resistance and difference as natural processes within any workplace and gives us the means to uncover the

lines of power and ruling relations that organize these resistances. I want to suggest that resistance, especially resistance to change in a writing program, is not merely stubbornness or inflexibility, but rather comes about from disjunctures in the roles that instructors play in the institution and the values that accompany those roles. The instructors' experiences that I have presented in this chapter suggest that invisible aspects of their work (such as emotional labor) may create tension for instructors in fulfilling the expressed values of the writing program. As LaFrance reminds us in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this volume, institutional ethnography allows researchers to reconceptualize work to include the often-invisible labor that surrounds negotiating emotions, values, and identities, both individual and collective, through the material lived experiences of people in institutions. Doing so allows researchers, WPAs, and instructors to understand, acknowledge, and co-create more sustainable programs that make space for ambivalence and resistance. IE also allows us to see how deeply held values from other aspects of their embodied or disciplinary identities inform the ways that instructors interact with and take up their work in the teaching of writing. Rather than simply resisting resistance, we can create spaces for discussion and negotiation of the programm's collective identity while still listening to and privileging the experiences and values that instructors bring. By slowly uncovering what is happening in our programs and institutions, IE may also allow us to work toward creating space for all members of the writing program to retain agency in the ways that negotiate their individual teaching identities as they work together toward a shared enterprise in the writing program.

WORKS CITED

Burnham, Christopher, and Susanne Green. "WPAs and Identity: Sounding the Depths." *The Writing Program Interrupted: Making Space for Critical Discourse*, edited by Donna Strickland and Jeanne Gunner, Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2009, pp. 175-85.

Dryer, Dylan B. "The Persistence of Institutional Memory: Genre Uptake and Program Reform." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2008, pp. 32-51.

Ebest, Sally Barr. *Changing the Way We Teach: Writing and Resistance in the Training of Teaching Assistants*. Southern Illinois UP, 2005.

Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. American Library Association, 2 Feb. 2015, http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing. Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the National Writing Project (NWP), 2011, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED516360.pdf.

Griffith, Alison I., and Dorothy E. Smith. "Introduction." *Under New Public Management: Institutional Ethnographies of Changing Front-Line Work*, edited by Alison I. Griffith and Dorothy E. Smith, University of Toronto Press, 2014, pp. 3-22.

Grouling, Jennifer. "Resistance and Identity Formation: The Journey of the Graduate Student-Teacher." *Composition Forum*, vol. 32, Fall 2015. https://compositionforum.com/issue/32/resistance.php.

Hollander, Jocelyn A. "The Social Contexts of Focus Groups." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 33, no. 5, Oct. 2004, pp. 602-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241604266988.

LaFrance, Michelle. *Institutional Ethnography: A Theory of Practice for Writing Studies Researchers*. Utah State UP, 2019.

Restaino, Jessica. *First Semester: Graduate Students, Teaching Writing, and the Challenge of Middle Ground*. Southern Illinois UP, 2012.

Smith, Dorothy E. *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. AltaMira Press, 2005.

---. "Texts and the Ontology of Organizations and Institutions." *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, vol. 7, no. 2, Jan. 2001, pp. 159-98. https://doi.org/10.1080/10245280108523557.

Wilkinson, Sue. "Focus Groups: A Feminist Method." *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 2, June 1999, pp. 221-44. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1999.tb00355.x.

"Writing Across Technology Overview." First-Year Writing. University of Connecticut. http://fyw.uconn.edu/resources-for-instructors/writing-across-technology/. Accessed 13 Mar. 2019.