CHAPTER 5.

NAVIGATING OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM: OUR JOURNEY SUSTAINING WRITING STUDIO

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Today, mainstreaming those labeled as basic writers into regular First-Year Composition (FYC) courses seems a mainstream practice itself. Increasingly, the question is not whether to mainstream but how. With its emphasis on "third spaces," Writing Studio differs from other mainstreaming forms as it encourages student learning to take place outside, not only alongside, the regular FYC classroom. But we can also think of studios as opportunities for teachers and administrators to work out how to sustain and enrich all writing spaces, not live apart from them. In this chapter, I draw on one institution's twenty year history of administering and teaching in a writing studio program to describe the dynamics of our process. Two key areas of engagement emerge. The first area is placement and enrollment. In our experience, placement strategies should take into consideration two realities. The first is the way students and their families make decisions about first-year schedules. The second is the management of studio enrollment over time. In our experience, test scores should be a tool to initiate placement, not define it. The second area is how teachers engage productively with studio students and each other. Studio teachers and students benefit most from clear lines of communication that lead to mutual respect and trust, and studio and FYC teachers should work together to identify and meet the needs of students as individuals. Productive collaboration may seem like a buzzword, but when a non-traditional "third space" becomes part of the curriculum, the quality of that collaboration may make or break a new studio program. My insights are based on my personal experience as a studio teacher and coordinator, and on survey data on placement, course content, and teaching strategies collected from FYC teachers, studio teachers, and studio students in 2007 and again in 2012.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT OUR STUDIOS LOOK LIKE

Springfield College is a small private college in Western Massachusetts with

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an undergraduate residential enrollment of about 2,000 plus students. The average size of the incoming student population is about 500. First-Year Composition is a two-course sequence, each course worth three credits, and each course is taken in the first year. The courses are called College Writing 1 and 2, and they are part of the general education requirements. Each semester, approximately 25 sections of College Writing are offered with about 20 students in each. College Writing classes are taught by faculty in the Humanities Department. Approximately one-half to two-thirds of the sections are taught by full-time faculty, most of whom specialize in literature or writing.

When I arrived at Springfield College in 1995, I was aware of the criticism of traditional remedial/basic writing classes through my reading of Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* and Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations,* and my head was still full of Paulo Freire and Ira Shor and others from my graduate school days in the early 90s. I'd started teaching in the early 80s in basic literacy and GED programs because literacy education seemed like a lasting way to empower people to improve their lives. My story is not that unusual.

What may be unusual is that Rhonda Grego and Nancy Thompson's work fell into my hands at an opportune moment. I knew little of the nascent mainstreaming debate/movement in basic writing. I was familiar with the emerging criticism of basic writing (Adams, 1993; Bartholomae, 1993), but I didn't know that criticism was being translated into new writing program initiatives. I knew nothing of the Stretch Program at Arizona State University, the enrichment program at Quinnipiac University, or the Accelerated Learning Program at Community College of Baltimore (all cited in Adams, Gearhart, Miller, & Roberts, 2009). I also didn't know about the enrichment course at CUNY or the mainstreaming program at Cal State Chico (Fox & Rodby, 2000).

Grego and Thompson's Studio approach seemed to be a model for doing two things I thought would be feasible and beneficial for students and faculty at Springfield College. First, since no remedial writing courses then existed at the college, I could quickly create a course for struggling writers that wouldn't disrupt existing FYC courses. Second, Studio would create opportunities for me to talk about teaching writing with the teachers who taught FYC, some of whom I thought might benefit from re-thinking the way they had been teaching writing for many years.

Our students come from mostly middle-class backgrounds and often come to the college because of its reputation as a school for Division 3 athletes who want to prepare for athletic and health-related professional careers. Some students come well-prepared for college work, while others struggle to adapt to these demands. Although the college is not an open-access institution, it is also not a highly selective one. Students can be admitted with relatively low SAT

scores. The college depends on those tuition dollars. When the administration embraced writing studios, it knew writing support was necessary for some. Studio was a good fit for the kind of student who needed extra attention but in a small group setting.

From the beginning, we believed Studio would focus student attention and create opportunities for learning activities in small group settings. Many students at the college identify as experiential or kinesthetic learners (a trait perhaps common in student athletes), and Studio was perceived to be more conducive to this type of learning than traditional remedial classes. As a support system, Studio might also contribute to increased retention rates, an important factor in maintaining enrollments and revenue. Students might be more likely to remain at the college because they were successful from the beginning.[1] They might also be more likely to graduate in four years, a concern that has increased as the certification requirements in professional programs have become more demanding. These demographic and institutional realities laid the groundwork for establishing our studio program and helped to achieve "buy-in" from vital stakeholders. These structural considerations are very much aligned with the "efficiency" narratives described by Cardinal and Keown in this volume. Studio first needed to be perceived as a program that would both enhance the success of students and contribute to the financial stability of the institution. Studio also needed to help facilitate the goals of the established FYC courses. Many stakeholders needed to "buy in" to Studio, and key leaders needed to enable a collective satisfaction with Studio. All of this needed to happen in line with what Cardinal and Keown call "convergence theory." Studio may be seen in different ways by parents, by administrators, by FYC faculty, by students, and finally by the faculty who teach Studio. All of these groups' interests needed to "converge" in order to achieve agreement that Studio was beneficial. It is worth noting that what studio instructors might value most, namely interactional inquiry, was enabled but not necessarily endorsed by other stakeholders.

When Warnick, Cooney, and Lackey described their struggles beginning a studio program, the obstacles they encountered were named the "enemies of sustainable Studio programs everywhere: a lack of buy-in from undergraduates, a lack of support from faculty, and an inadequate administrative support structure" (2010, p. 82). We were also concerned about achieving faculty support and an adequate administrative support structure. Two key players that helped smooth the way were the chair of the Humanities Department, who oversaw all writing faculty appointments and curricular decisions, and the Director of Academic Advising,

1 According to data collected by the Director of Academic Advising over the last twenty years, students enrolled in Writing Studio are more likely to remain enrolled at the college than those who did not enroll in Studio.

who supervised the enrollments of all new incoming students. We wouldn't get students enrolled in Studio without help from Academic Advising, and the right people wouldn't teach it unless the Humanities chair took on the task of building it into the right faculty work plans. Our small size also helped us do this more quickly and efficiently than if many programs were impacted by Studio.

My job at the beginning was to help the Humanities chair understand what Studio was about and what shape it might take at our college. My first concern was that course sizes for Studios remained as small as possible. Since the three-credit FYC course cap was 22, the administration settled on a studio enrollment cap of 15 students for the equivalent of one three-credit course. It was also important that Studio be an "add-on" to FYC, not another full course in addition to it. Also, in order to expedite enrollment, we shrunk the footprint of Studio, making it worth only one academic credit. The smaller the commitment, the more likely students would enroll and the more easily the department could adapt to it. Studio thus became a one-credit, recommended option. For workload purposes, full-time and adjunct instructors, who also teach FYC, would teach three one-credit studio courses that would count as one three- credit course. Each one-credit course would be capped at five, since three sections of five each would total 15. Making Studio worth only one credit also made it easier to schedule many sections at many different times and dates, which in turn made it easier to work into both student and instructor schedules. Students from any FYC class might be placed in any studio section that met their scheduling needs. While this met an institutional need for flexible enrollment, it also invited interactional inquiry among FYC and Studio faculty over assignments and student needs, and among first-year students generally about what college writing means.

Although we've made some small adjustments to studio enrollment based on the survey responses, the existing course caps and teaching load requirements remain the same. Approximately 100 students are enrolled in Studio every fall, with a reduction of about 20 to 25 during the spring semester as some choose not to re-enroll. However, about ten new students add Studio in the spring.

PLACEMENT

Our Initial Policy

From the beginning, we sought to establish a reliable referral and placement process for Studio. We recognized Studio not as an "optional" program that students could choose to participate in once they enrolled in other courses (as described in this volume by Santana, Rose, and LaBarge at Arizona State), but as a separate, credit-bearing course that would be recommended to students based

on a referral process. To do that, we made use of an existing program. New students come to the campus every June to participate in a process called "SOAR" or "Student Orientation and Enrollment." They get to know the campus and other new students, and work with advisors to determine their course schedules. We initially administered a required writing sample during the day's visit that took about 45 minutes to complete. I collected the samples and brought them to a waiting group of FYC faculty, and together we evaluated them holistically on a six-point scale. Students who scored a one or two were recommended to Studio. These assessments were made while students were doing other pre-enrollment activities. I and another FYC faculty member would then take the studio recommendations to the location where advisors were working with students to determine their fall schedules. Students would generally, but not always, follow our writing-sample-based recommendation and enroll in Studio. I used the time during the administration of the writing sample to explain to students what Studio was and to encourage them to enroll if they thought they would benefit from it. In this way, I was re-telling the "story" of studio work, defining a utopian narrative to new students that emphasized benefits over punishment (as described in this volume by Cardinal and Keown). I never used the language of deficiency, but as Cardinal and Keown would say, created a climate emphasizing "novice" writers over deficient ones. This referral process filled most of the roughly 100 studio seats available each fall semester, but during the first week of class, FYC instructors also explained what Writing Studio was and referred students to Studio based on their own preliminary assessment of students' writing.

For roughly ten years this was our referral process, and it usually worked to maintain enrollments. Participants understood their role, and the process of how students were recommended was clear to students. Without a clear referral process, the novelty of Studio could have led to confusion about who should take it and why. Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson described this difficulty when a standardized referral process was not implemented and their Studios were "populated by overlapping and knotted social, cultural, and institutional contexts and constraints. Students had been referred to the Studio through various diagnostic devices (writing placement recommendations, scores from a computer editing skills test, advising recommendations, and self-sponsorship" (Tassoni & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2005, p. 81).

Our studio enrollment was consistent because placement and purpose were clear to students. Studios were not required of all students. They were not used as a means of increasing the efficient use of time and FYC classroom space (like at a large institution like Arizona State). They were separate, third-space *courses* with their own credit-bearing weight and evaluation criteria based on clearly articulated goals, not drop-in opportunities similar to writing center visits.

This doesn't mean our referral system was without flaws. Despite my efforts to impact the narrative of novice writers, first-year students were sometimes embarrassed when told they should enroll in Studio. Since Studio was always recommended, not required, some students might not enroll, using the excuse of schedule conflicts or athletic commitments. Advisors, parents, and FYC faculty would work during the space of a single day to convince students that Studio was a good idea and would not be an extra burden. But data from surveys showed that instructors felt the neediest students were sometimes not enrolling, even though both instructors and students believed that a writing sample and instructor referrals were the best methods for placement. Although efficient, over time we began to appreciate the flaws in this system from the perspective of how students and their families make decisions about the first semester of college. We moved to a different referral process that enabled another element of Cardinal and Keown's "efficiency narrative" by locating placement out of the public eye and into the private decision-making realm of the family.

Placement Policy Changes

Writing samples sent an early message to students that writing was important at the college, and allowed writing teachers to get a general sense of new students' writing abilities long before the first day of classes. But the samples were underutilized. I had imagined other uses of them, such as benchmarks in student portfolios or as faculty development tools. For many reasons, this didn't happen, and the rating system seemed unnecessary since we were only using them to determine who would be recommended to Studio. The criticism of using writing samples as one-time assessments was increasing, and our referral system seemed too dependent on filling as many seats as possible in a single day.

So the decision was made by the Director of Academic Advising to use SAT scores to initiate studio placement recommendations. This decision was based largely on expediency in enrollment management. The scores would be known long before SOAR began, giving Academic Advising an opportunity to do two mailings to new students.

The first letter went out to students who scored in the bottom third of SAT scores. These students were pre-enrolled in a yet-to-be-determined section of Studio. The letter explained what Studio is and why the student was being referred to it (SAT scores). It was then up to students to respond by email if they did not want to be enrolled. Out of the approximately 50 students who usually received this initial letter, typically two-thirds would not reject enrollment. The Director of Academic Advising attributed this to two factors: the perceived credibility of SAT scores among parents, and the extent to which these scores reinforced students'

perceptions of their writing abilities. Students may have already felt they were poor writers. The SAT scores probably confirmed this for many. Roughly half of the 100 studio seats were usually filled after the first letter went out.

Once the first 50 seats were filled, a second letter went out (still before SOAR) to students from the middle third of SAT scorers. This letter was called a "priority enrollment letter" and also explained what Studio was but did not inform students they were "auto-enrolled." Instead, these students were asked to email the Office of Academic Advising if they DID want to be enrolled. The course was described as a "bonus" (again, implementing the story-changing goal described by Cardinal and Keown in this volume) that would help students succeed. Two-thirds of this group typically responded by requesting enrollment.

At this point, most studio seats were filled. If seats were still available, a second letter went out before classes started to the second group that did not respond by requesting Studio, giving them one more chance to respond. After that effort, the few remaining seats (usually no more than ten) were filled at the beginning of the semester through referrals from FYC instructors who requested writing samples from FYC students and/or gave students an opportunity to self-identify as someone who would like to enroll in Studio. Although it could be more difficult to enroll students at this point due to schedule conflicts, fewer students seemed to slip through the cracks with this system, no one was embarrassed during student orientation, and families could discuss the recommendation privately in a timely manner.

Along with these placement changes, students enrolled in Studio during fall semester are now auto-enrolled in Studio for spring semester. If they have a schedule conflict due to their new spring schedule, they are temporarily held in studio sections that have not yet been assigned a time or date until all student schedules and studio enrollments have been determined. Studio enrollment does typically drop off between fall and spring semesters. On average, 22 out of 100 students don't continue in Studio after fall semester because they drop the class, but approximately 10 new students do enroll, leading to a net loss between fall and spring semesters of about 12 students, or three sections of Studio. Students may not enroll in spring semester for a range of reasons, including problems with the instructor, the sense they don't need it, or because they are leaving the college. Each year, the past year's enrollments are reviewed to determine how many sections to offer in the coming year.

In survey data, a majority of both FYC and studio instructors, as well as students, indicated they felt like a writing sample (done by our faculty) was the best way to place students. But with SAT placement, there were few complaints that students were wrongly recommended to Studio or that students were slipping through the cracks. Instructors could continue to recommend students through

a writing sample, and some still do, but there are advantages to placing students as early as possible in order to establish faculty and student schedules early on in the process.

As of this writing, we continue to leave open options that will balance administrative concerns (for example, having a writing sample done before student registration) with the need for adequate placement information. Directed Self-Placement (DSP) might be considered (Royer & Gilles, 1998), but at least one study indicates DSP is no better at predicting success than standardized test scores (Balay & Nelson, 2012) and would negate what many studio participants believe is the best way to place students: writing samples. Arguably, we already offer students a DSP-like choice through the letters inviting students to enroll in Studio. We might choose Accuplacer, a College Board product that would return us to using writing samples, but these assessments could be no more useful for our purposes than SAT scores. We could also invest in a more meaningful assessment, such as iMOAT, an on-line placement system created by MIT that enables local faculty assessments of writing done by students at home in response to a meaningful reading assignment. But again, for what purpose?

Whatever the next phase entails, we will probably keep in mind Elbow's (2012) reflections on when and how evaluation should be done; in an essay in honor of Edward M. White, Elbow recommends evaluations that are pragmatic, no-nonsense, and what he calls "good enough." In good enough evaluations, educators move beyond dualistic, polarized arguments over the value of different forms of evaluation and towards assessments which are feasible and do no harm. Although Elbow (and White) tend to see single score assessments as more harmful than useful, Elbow believes placing students in a one-credit supplement to their regular FYC course could be done by FYC instructors during the first week of classes (2012, p. 317). In the past, we have opted not to wait that long, even if it means relying on standardized scores. Although we would not use such scores for high stakes assessments, the use of these scores to initiate placement recommendations for a one-credit course has seemed reasonable. We agree with Elbow that during the first week of classes FYC instructors can and should make recommendations to Studio. But we also need a pragmatic approach to determining first-year student schedules before they come to campus. We have yet to determine how to do that pragmatically and intentionally with local placement tools.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS IN STUDIO

When we talk about Studio at Springfield College, we start with the goal of helping students make the transition to college life in general and college writing in particular. This is difficult because, as one studio teacher said in a survey re-

sponse, if they are in Studio, "writing is a mystery to them. They may have good ideas, but not know what to do with them for a college class." Writing can be a hit or miss activity done "their way" successfully or not at all. In a FYC class with 20 or more students, this hit or miss approach may be enabled when the student fades into the background of a class lesson plan. Students can feel safe in their anonymity, but may not be. The collision of teacher and student expectations for their writing may just be postponed. Writing instruction and expectations are also different in college compared to high school for developmental and pedagogical reasons. These differences can lead to conflicts when students use old methods to solve new problems. Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) showed that new college students will cling to genres learned in high school regardless of the new tasks requiring new genres for college. For example, students who were taught to write using five-paragraph themes in high school in order to learn structure and organization in their writing may struggle to move beyond that in college assignments.

Writing Studio can be a space to take on this transition. Students reported in survey responses that Studio is a safer and more relaxed place for them than FYC. Because of the smaller class size, and because the studio instructor may be less of an authority figure than the FYC instructor, students may get to know and trust studio teachers sooner. Studio is a place where they may feel safer asking questions or making comments than if they were in a larger classroom, so their anxiety levels may be lowered. More one-on-one discussions take place with the studio instructor, who may need to understand the expectations of several different FYC classes. The studio teacher's interactions with students needs to be positive, since, as one instructor observed, "these students need gold stars." The smaller class size also encourages students to witness and imitate the positive writing behaviors of their peers. They may then feel more confident about trying new approaches rather than fall back on old strategies that are no longer effective, especially when the instructor draws attention to more successful strategies.

All of this might be possible in any remedial/basic writing classroom. But in our Writing Studios, teachers may not always define the agenda. As one studio instructor said, "It's what they [students] bring to you, not what you bring to them." And even though what they may be "bringing to you" is usually coming from an FYC class, students must own and accurately represent the problem, issue, and agenda in Studio. As a result, pre-determined lessons for studio work only to the extent that the instructor is able to anticipate student needs related to FYC requirements. Teachers used to being the center of attention find they must shift from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered one in Studio. When the curriculum is student-centered, intervention into individual student problems can happen sooner. FYC instructors noted this as a benefit in

survey data, suggesting that the content of the traditional basic writing class may not lead to appropriate interventions that address problems the student faces in real FYC classes, while the focus on FYC assignments in Studio enables students to respond to actual course-related writing problems. This approach is consistent with what researchers are discovering about knowledge transfer. Wardle (2007) tracked the knowledge students transfer from FYC to other courses, and found that an awareness of what strategies "work" for them is what "sticks," not particular "skills" taught by teachers. She also found that as students completed new and different writing tasks, they needed context-specific support to complete those tasks. Studio can enable both of these outcomes.

However, FYC instructors also noted that success within this student-agenda focus depends to a great extent on the individual studio instructor. As years passed, it became clear to us that some instructors were not meant to teach Studio. Some have misunderstood their role, taking advantage of Studio's intimacy to have discussions that had little to do with writing. Others have seen Studio as an opportunity to teach the same content as in a traditional basic writing class, only in a small group. And some have not communicated with FYC instructors or each other in productive ways.

Studio teachers also come to recognize a range of challenges to teaching what can seem like an "easy" course. Logistical challenges can be difficult, including keeping track of the different assignments students are working on, managing the amount of time they spend individually with students, dealing with student pessimism and adjustments to their first year of college, and navigating unclear assignments from FYC instructors. Studio instructors must also make decisions on the fly for each student in Studio: whether and how they should be working on intervention strategies, editing drafts, reorganizing material, or rethinking their purpose in writing. Studio instructors have to know what intervention, activity, or discussion is appropriate for each student in Studio, and they often have to make that determination quickly in order to keep everyone on task. All of this is usually done as students are mulling over an assignment. The best studio instructors tend to be veteran teachers who also understand larger global concerns such as departmental expectations and dynamics as well as the institutional climate.

THE VALUE OF TEACHER DIALOGUE

In our program, it's been essential that faculty who teach Studio also teach FYC classes. This ensures that studio discussions are between colleagues who know and respect the challenges of teaching FYC. As I mentioned at the onset, this opportunity for collegial dialogue drew me to Studio from the outset because of the potential for constructive pedagogical exchange.

From my perspective, and at its best, interactional inquiry has meant not only redefining "dominant stories about writers and writing" through student dialogue about writing (Cardinal and Keown, this volume) but creating a new form of dialogue among faculty members talking to each other about student issues and sharing strategies for addressing those issues. This discussion usually starts by talking about what's going on with students. Often it doesn't get much beyond the personal information the student allows to be shared: how the student has been sick or had family problems or is struggling with one issue or another. When the talk is about writing, the best place to start is often with what feels like shared values—how the student can't seem to get started, doesn't know how to organize her thoughts, or seemingly can't write a thesis sentence—and especially what's happened in Studio to address those goals. This sort of discussion establishes common ground and encourages further follow-up discussions. This sort of talk is embraced by Leach and Kuhne (this volume) who recognize the unique collegial needs of studio instructors. Instructors can benefit from on-going communication, reflecting on both the mundane, like attendance, and the major, like curriculum and assignments.

But these discussions can sometimes be more an ideal than a reality. Del Principe (2004) described the conflicts between basic writing teachers who believe in a process of linear development that requires students to work from the "simple," usually sentence-level, work before they can take on more "complex" research or other activities, and those who work beyond "the ground level." The gap between teachers grounded in "lore" and their own experience (but usually not research) and those grounded in a more complex view can be huge. One particular studio instructor in our program became unable to work with any other FYC instructor's students in Studio because of the distance between his reductive vision of what was necessary in both FYC and Studio compared to what other faculty members valued. He was appeased for several years by allowing only his FYC students to enroll in his Studios. Eventually, he was reassigned so he no longer taught Studio. Fortunately, he has been the exception. Most studio instructors have been eager to work with FYC instructors in order to help students succeed. At the same time, surveys from both in 2007 and 2013 show that both FYC and studio instructors were frustrated when communication did break down or when there was disagreement about what should be going on in either the FYC class or Studio. Studio instructors have, on occasion, questioned the value of an FYC assignment or activity; and FYC instructors have occasionally felt that studio work wasn't addressing student needs.

Some form of regular communication between faculty members about course content can sometimes head off these conflicts, especially since students can inaccurately report FYC class activities, poorly explain the purpose of an assignment,

or even misremember assignment due dates. Teachers who may disagree about how or what students should be taught can nevertheless agree on the common goal of helping a student to succeed, and when departments define their goals for FYC, those goals can be agreed upon. But even when there is buy-in on goals, attention to communication issues can make a big difference in program success. Seemingly small adjustments, such as enabling all parties to have easy access to assignments, can lead to less confusion about expectations and reduce potential conflicts. Online access to all FYC course materials means less dependence on forgetful students, and regular communication means faculty members can quickly relate basic information about whether a student is showing up or what is or is not going on in Studio or FYC. In this volume, Leach and Kuhne describe the way their blog became the place where follow-up conversations that might be initiated on the way to class can continue in more depth later.

Although technology can be indispensable, the best way to have the most important discussions, in my experience, has been face to face. Questions are more easily answered, confusion more easily clarified, and a bond between colleagues more readily made, even if the interaction is relatively brief. When our Studios began, email was new, and many faculty members didn't yet use it. Going to faculty offices and chatting in doorways for five minutes before a class was often the best way to find out what was going on in both FYC and Studio. Grego and Thompson's dialogue sheets never really took off for our program. We tried them briefly, and FYC faculty lost or ignored them. However, one of our studio instructors used a form of a dialogue sheet. At the end of a studio class, each student wrote on a 4 x 6 card what they had done in Studio that day. The student then brought the card to their FYC class and placed it on the instructor desk or table at the beginning of class. At some point during the class, the FYC instructor read the card and wrote a brief response before returning the card to the student, who then-brought the card back to the next studio class. The student enabled communication between the two instructors, but could also add their own comments or questions to the card. This worked as long as the FYC instructor didn't have too many studio students in the class and didn't have to write the same thing repeatedly on many cards. But even at their best, dialogue sheets don't provide FYC and studio instructors with an opportunity to bond as a team working to serve the needs of a particular student the way face-to-face communication does.

Are there other ways to achieve face to face dialogue? Regularly scheduled meetings might be the answer for some programs, but like most schools, we rely on adjuncts to teach both Studio and FYC. Their schedules often prevent them from attending regular meetings. Those of us fortunate enough to be full-time faculty members need to take on the responsibility to communicate with those

who can't stay on campus all day. Our program has also benefitted from a full-time faculty member whose duties include coordinating the concerns, observations, and insights of all studio instructors. This person can organize meetings at different times, provide support materials, and serve as a liaison between the department and administration. Electronic tools can help with this process, but they are only a part of the solution.

Email is now a typical way for FYC and studio teachers to communicate about their students, and electronic classroom management systems have enabled everyone to have the same information. Our campus currently uses Moodle 2.3 (soon moving towards D2L). Studio teachers can be added as guests, making access to everyone's course materials easily done.

Even with the benefit of electronic resources, communication between faculty members does not necessarily go smoothly. A small number of faculty members who teach FYC are reluctant to share syllabi, allow access to Moodle, or generally correspond with studio teachers because of perceived threats to academic freedom. They may assume that a conversation about what goes on in their classroom is not appropriate unless initiated by an authority figure. Much depends on the level of trust that develops between studio and FYC teachers. Cooperation, not confrontation, most often leads to trust. But sometimes achieving that sense of cooperation is more a goal than a reality. Some faculty may be well-meaning, but hard to track down or slow to respond. Although a more standardized communication system might help, we haven't yet figured out how to do it in a way that formalizes consistent communication between faculty members. There are real limits to the extent to which technology can help, because real people are always the ones making the technology work.

NEGOTIATING CONFLICTS AND FINDING COMMON GROUND

Students are usually evaluated in Studio on the basis of attendance, preparation, and participation, as well as the quality of the one-on-one interactions outside of Studio. In other words, they are mostly evaluated in terms of the extent to which they model successful student behaviors in general rather than the quality of their writing. Evaluations take into consideration the answers to questions such as: Did they bring their most recent FYC assignment or draft to Studio? Do they demonstrate an understanding of what the assignment requires? Have they started to work on the assignment? Did they bring a draft in progress to Studio? Do they move forward and make progress on that work during Studio? Do they have an understanding of the genre expectations, purpose, and audience for an assignment? And do they follow up by meeting with the studio instructor

outside of Studio when necessary to discuss their progress? It is ultimately up to FYC teachers to formally evaluate the quality of a student's writing. But what if there's a conflict between FYC and studio instructors over that quality?

One of Grego and Thompson's goals for Studio was to challenge the overly prescriptive curricula of some writing classes. In order for any of us to be open to change, we need a safe space where that can happen. Studio can be a space where students initiate discussions with teachers. According to Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson:

> Students and instructor work together in the workshop to examine individual, diverse writing curricula in order to uncover the rhetorical situation, including the contextual constraints and determinants, of particular writing assignments; teacher expectations; and social issues in students' lives at home, work, and in the university. All these form the "place" from which students must write . . . . In short, understanding "place" requires a "space" from which to view it that is both inside and outside its boundaries. (2005, p. 70)

It's possible to imagine the studio instructor as limited to the role of "outside" service-provider or at best a framer of rhetorical constraints, as someone who has no territory to maintain but is negotiating the expectations of others. Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson recognized this in their discussion of third space as a contested zone, an "intersection of emplaced interests and concerns constitutive of our campus" (2005, p. 75). In order to negotiate this contested zone and maintain an on-going dialogue with FYC teachers and students, studio teachers must sometimes subordinate their own agendas to those of others. Tassoni and Lewiecki-Wilson recognized that sometimes Studios can become "complicit with the values and approaches to writing external to it" (2005, p. 87) when teacher dialogue breaks down and the values of those outside the Studio creep into it. How do we balance what the FYC teacher wants with what studio teachers or students believe to be important? How do studio teachers teach both "outside" and "alongside" the FYC teacher?

This question would be familiar to most faculty who have taught Studio, and may lead some to see Studio as a flawed agent of empowerment. Studios may challenge hegemonic models of teaching writing, but they might also reinforce those same models if the studio instructor does not respond to them. Still, the same instructor might both challenge certain FYC practices and reinforce them in the space of a single session, ideally choosing carefully when and how to engage with others based on an understanding of classroom circumstances and student needs. From this perspective, Studio's third space can be a malleable and

selective tool for affecting change, perhaps more so than other mainstreaming models which tend to contain the "extra assistance" within established course boundaries and maintain established classroom "silos" that preserve the pedagogical status quo by discouraging dialogue across boundaries. In this sense, studio instructors must negotiate Cardinal and Keown's "interest-converging arguments" that sometimes focus on student success over conflict about the curriculum (this volume).

Since we began using Studios, not only has our placement strategy evolved, but the purpose and tone of the dialogue between FYC and studio teachers has become more predictable and purposeful. We are more likely to find common ground over what a student needs most, not disagree about whether the assignment is worthy. We are more likely to learn from each other's assignments when we acknowledge common student needs. But the core principals of Studio remain: mainstreaming students while creating and maintaining a third space to work and talk about writing, not necessarily settle conflicts over what's going on in FYC. Studio faculty members can "see" and "be seen" by others as we work together to understand each other's goals and meet student needs.

WHAT STUDENTS GET OUT OF STUDIO

Studio instructors are usually grateful for the opportunity to work both one-on-one and in groups with students in an environment that feels "out of class." They see meaningful benefits in having the time to review assignments from FYC, but they especially appreciate the relationships they form with students. Studio instructors see themselves as friendly supportive advisors providing guided assistance and helping students to enter the academic mainstream. But what do students value?

A student-centered approach focused on attendance, preparation, and participation means if students don't bring something meaningful to Studio—whether it be questions about an assignment, a rough draft of a paper, or some other starting place—they demonstrate a lack of personal responsibility, one cause of student failure in college. If they do come prepared, they have taken the first step in beginning a dialogue about their writing, and when the Studio becomes the place where the dialogue begins, they see their own writing process in action over time in a different location than FYC. This is where student perceptions of the benefits of Studio begin.

More than 75% of students reported in survey data that Studio helped them start essays earlier and learn to self-correct errors, both indicators of becoming more independent learners. Studio allows a space for these habits to be nurtured, most importantly by the studio teacher. But because students listen to not only the

studio teacher but also each other in Studio, they get a sense of how others think about and approach various writing tasks. Students may sometimes be from other FYC classrooms with different assignments. Studio students explain to each other what their assignments are about and how they've responded to them. Students may read each other's drafts from different assignments with fresh eyes and see problems the writer hadn't seen or considered. Writers can also defend a rhetorical choice based on the nature of the differing assignments, and studio instructors can model rhetorical thinking about different assignments. As students begin to write more about what they read, Studio can also be a place where diverse reading strategies are discussed from a wide range of reading assignments.

Studio student survey responses indicated that students see working with peers as being an important benefit of Studio. Over the years, we've experimented with different combinations of students in a studio section in order to understand the benefits of various configurations. We wondered what the benefits would be if students in one studio section all came from the same FYC class compared to a section with students from different FYC classes, or even half from one FYC class and half from another. When students are all from the same FYC class, the Studio is typically easier to manage, and students are more likely to talk about shared reading and writing assignments. Students are also more likely to see how their peers approached the same writing assignment in different ways. When students are from different FYC sections and instructors, they see peers working with a wider range of writing assignments, but are less likely to see what their peers are doing as helpful to them since they may be doing something very different. Our experience suggests that quality peer relationships start with shared experiences in the FYC classroom, but can also be nurtured in Studio. We are currently moving towards studio groups in which students are all from the same FYC class, but the studio teacher is different than the FYC teacher. Our goal using this iteration is to enhance peer cohesion while maintaining Studio/FYC teacher dialogue.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

Writing Studio at Springfield College continues to be a work in progress, but one with a past anchored in pragmatically meeting the needs of new students as they adjust to the demands and expectations of college writing. As illustrated in this discussion, Studio cannot succeed without a keen understanding of who your students are and how they learn. Studio also cannot succeed unless the goals and "efficiency narratives" of the institution are taken into consideration. In our case, that especially means retaining and graduating students on time. Placement needs to be done responsibly and consistently, but also efficiently

and with flexibility so that no student who needs what Studio offers will be left out. The identities students bring with them to college must also be taken into consideration. We may not have a perfect referral process, but we will continue to explore a range of consistently reliable methods that respond to the ways students and their families make decisions about their class schedules. In the process, Studio needs to be framed in a positive way to students and their families so that it is always seen as a course that will enhance students' self-confidence as writers and improve their chances of success in FYC and at the college generally.

Teaching Studio will always be a student-centered enterprise. Studio teachers will always work both alongside and outside the regular FYC classroom for the reasons reviewed in this chapter. That work depends on successful communication between studio and FYC instructors. Although this communication may never be perfect, when done well and consistently, students who struggle in FYC are less likely to be forgotten. If student writing and academic struggles are neglected early on, students are more likely to drop out, transfer to another institution, or face academic challenges later that they are not prepared to meet. Studio teachers improve the likelihood that students will succeed and also sustain the value of the studio program by engaging in this dialogue with FYC teachers in a way that is not threatening but purposeful and constructive, with students at the center of the discussion. Studio teachers must be both patient and helpful, because Studio success depends on success in FYC.

This sort of faculty-led interactional inquiry may be one of the most noteworthy distinctions between Studio and a more generic stretch course. Among stretch programs, Studio is uniquely situated as both a student support system and a faculty development initiative. Faculty dialogue can enhance the potential for faculty development, but it can also model the sort of space where students experience writing as a rhetorical process. Studio students should listen to how their peers address writing challenges, and they should talk about their own writing on a regular basis outside the FYC classroom. Studio works best when writing teachers and students are talking to each other in order to work together to solve real writing challenges. Under the best of circumstances, faculty and students grow and develop both individually and as a community in order to help students adjust to the demands of college writing. That's what student writers and teachers of writing should want.

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