REVIEW

# Review of *Academic Writing Consulting and WAC: Methods and Models for Guiding Cross-Curricular Literacy Work.*

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Jeffrey Jablonski. *Academic Writing Consulting and WAC: Methods and Models for Guiding Cross-Curricular Literacy Work.* Hampton Press, 2006. 217 pages.

AS SOON AS I SAW the title of Jeffrey Jablonski's *Academic Writing Consulting and Models for Guiding Cross-Curricular Literacy Work,* I expected it to make an important contribution to the practices of Writing Across the Curriculum—or the more current and more extensive term, "Cross-Curricular Literacy Work." WAC workshops have been an important practice in the field for the past few decades, but the question of what happens after the workshop ends is less often discussed in publications. Chris Anson's *The WAC Casebook: Scenes for Faculty Reflection and Program Development* (2002) is full of cases of "after the workshop" problems and questions, and can be seen to exemplify the range of teacher-to-teacher consultations that do not work out as expected. Jablonski addresses these person-to-person contacts, which constitute a substantial portion of the time spent on developing WAC programs and initiatives.

I anticipated a much-needed guide to holding consultations with faculty across the curriculum, but this book offers much more. Jablonski analyzes four WAC consultants'

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accounts of their experiences and practices using collaboration theory (drawn from learning theory) and consultation theory (drawn from management theory), and in so doing complicates the usual assumptions about collaboration as an individual skill or a happy chance. Moreover, he distinguishes between consulting and collaborating, a difference that is apt to be glossed over by those of us doing this work. He notes that most collaborations fail, in one way or another, as Anson's book of case studies suggests. Jablonski's use of ideas and research from fields that rhetoric and composition scholars usually ignore brings a much-needed frame with which to examine how cross-curricular teaching and learning about literacy may actually work in the institutions that try to foster it.

Jablonski is particularly adamant about the necessity of withdrawing both from the "missionary" approach to Writing Across the Curriculum projects (in which projects are evaluated only according to WAC agendas), and from the concept that our collaborations with faculty in other fields are non-hierarchical. Cross-curricular literacy work, he argues, involves negotiations among individuals, within a hierarchical university system, in which research, teaching, and service are differently valued and sometimes differently defined. His case studies illustrate how this work is negotiated in different institutional situations, and he uses them to examine the interplay of interpersonal relationships, institutional features, and intellectual interests that go into working relationships in cross-curricular literacy. It is not sufficient, he argues and I agree, merely to invent and develop consulting practices. We must understand the implications of what we do and how we do it. According to Jablonski, "the limitation of most WAC studies is that they conceive of interdisciplinary collaboration as a research *method,* but not an appropriate research *object*" (38). In this book, Jablonski not only argues that we should see this limitation, but also demonstrates how to overcome it.