A review of
Reference Guide to Writing Across the Curriculum

XIAOLI LI AND DAN WU, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Charles Bazerman, Joseph Little, Lisa Bethel, Teri Chavkin, Danielle Fouquette and Janet Garuris. *Reference Guide to Writing Across the Curriculum*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Parlor Press, 2005. Also, on The WAC Clearinghouse. pp.188.

IMAGINE THAT YOU have just arrived at a new place that you haven't visited before. At the visitor center you are given a map, and you know you will be able to explore this place by following the map. *Reference Guide to Writing Across the Curriculum* is such a map with which you will be able to explore all the aspects of writing across the curriculum (WAC), such as definition, history, pedagogical approaches and philosophy, administration, classroom practices, and assessment both at the student writing level and the program level. Extensive as it is, it is not in-depth instructions on how to incorporate writing practice because, as its title suggests, it is a reference guide.

Reference Guide to Writing Across the Curriculum is divided into three parts. Part I is "The WAC Movement," which provides a review of theoretical origins from the British secondary education system through the historical development of the WAC movement in the United States. It introduces the key concepts to understand WAC, such as WAC, WID, writing-intensive courses, writing in the professions, and first-year writing. This part also describes the programs from the early stages of the WAC movement to the mid-1980s and WAC programs in K–12 education. It briefly introduces the earliest programs with the names of the schools (both private four-year liberal arts colleges like Central College in Iowa, Carleton College in Minnesota, and Beaver College in Pennsylvania, and public universities like Michigan Technological University and

University of Michigan) that instituted a WAC program, key players at each institution, different program models and approaches adopted by each institution, and refers to publications by individuals from each institution for readers who want to learn more about the programs and use them as models for a program at their own institutions.

Part II illustrates three different approaches to theory and research that are closely associated with programmatic and pedagogical developments in WAC. The first approach looks closely at classroom practices and students learning to write within disciplines and explains the demands of academic writing within university class-rooms. The second approach, writing to learn, claims that writing practice could assist in achieving student-centered engagement with disciplinary materials by students writing journals and other forms of expressive writing to encourage them to explore and develop their thoughts on paper. The third approach, the rhetoric of inquiry or writing in the discipline, contributes to a common picture of writing practices in the various disciplines and the relation of those processes to the production and use of disciplinary knowledge. These inquiries help us understand how different disciplines construct knowledge through different textual forms, and the kind of challenges students must meet when learning to write within their chosen fields (p. 66).

In addition to discussing these three approaches to theory and research, Part II also addresses two ongoing concerns in WAC: the particularity of disciplinary discourses and the place of students in disciplinary discourse. The former concern is related to the question of to what degree academic writing is the same or different across disciplinary settings when it comes to evaluating students and shaping curricula. Some argue for generalized writing skills, general criteria of writing quality, and instruction in general principles and procedures, while others view writing as a discipline-specific activity and argue that students should respond to the particularity of the situation, task, and means. Scholars like Bazerman and Russell see the engagements WAC makes with the practices of different disciplines as opening up inquiry into the specialized tasks of writing. Because of this inquiry into the particularities of writing tasks, they use genre and activity theory as ways of articulating these differences. The latter concern centers upon students' involvement within academic and disciplinary discourse, such as their position, stance, voice, and agency.

In Part III, the authors provide practical guidelines on the institutional opera-tions of WAC programs, assessment in WAC, and a few subject-specific (mathematics, literature and language arts, psychology, economics, and history) examples of WAC classroom practices. Topics in Part III on how to coordinate WAC with other campus resources such as writing intensive courses, writing centers, and peer tutors might be of

interest to a wide range of readers: administrators, writing center directors and tutors, writing program directors and advisors, ESL instructors, and writing-intensive course instructors. These readers might also be interested in such new topics as electronic communication across the curriculum (ECAC), service learning, and interdisciplinary learning communities, which are also discussed.

Assessment or evaluation of practices or the application of theories is a vital part of a successful movement, and WAC is no exception. Chapter 10 of this reference guide starts with two questions concerning assessing students' work and assessing the success of programs. First, WAC challenges the traditional assessment based on general skills displayed in undifferentiated testing situations. In a WAC program, forms of writing and what counts as good writing vary from discipline to discipline and from one writing task to another. Second, assessment of WAC programs is even more problematic than the known difficulties of assessing writing problems given the heterogeneity of WAC programs, the range of faculty involved, and the multiple desired outcomes of student performance (p. 120). This reference guide presents the three stages of assessment literature: the anecdotal accounts of programs in the early 1980s; the more methodical and more empirical studies before the mid 1990s; and the more theoretically analytical approaches since the mid-1990s, such as Moran's business model, Selfe's contextual model, and Fulwiler's goal-oriented model. The chapter concludes that both the assessing process and the presentation of the assessment results are rhetorical, which means that it is important to consider the purpose, context, kairos (timing), and audience.

As a reference guide, this book provides necessary and concise information, especially for an American readership. But although the last decade has witnessed a rapid WAC movement in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, this book does not cover other countries or compare the WAC movement in the US with that in other places.

The bibliographic section of this book deserves special attention. Thirty pages long, the bibliography provides a comprehensive coverage of WAC literature from 1962 to 2004. It is an excellent resource for all WAC stakeholders (administrators, faculty, and students) alike. The concepts clarified in the text of the book lay a solid foundation for understanding WAC, and then the bibliography points the way to articles and books to deepen one's understanding.