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## INTRODUCTION

### *Faculty Writing as a Research Area for Rhetoric and Composition*

Much of our scholarship within the field of rhetoric and composition focuses on how writing “happens.” We’ve studied the composing processes of twelfth graders, first-year composition classes, adult learners, workplace writers, community college students, non-native speakers, and the incarcerated, among other populations. We’ve even studied faculty writers from other disciplines (for two examples, see Eodice and Geller 2013 and Thaiss and Zawacki 2006). But the writing processes rhetoric and composition faculty use to compose the intellectual labor and scholarship of our field—the oft-cited monographs, the award-winning articles, the textbooks, the edited collections, and the new media essays that include films, images, sounds, and hyperlinks—are largely a mystery. In short, we know very little about how *writing* faculty write.

This lack of self-study of our own writing habits is disconcerting for several reasons. For one, writing is our field of study. The field of rhetoric and composition investigates the most effective composing strategies under a variety of conditions and within a range of contexts. From the research we conduct and the textbooks we publish, writing faculty, we might assume, “know” the tricks of effective writing and how to navigate issues that faculty of all disciplines often struggle with: combatting writer’s block, juggling multiple deadlines, representing research accurately and fairly, etc. We might even assume that writing faculty have more tools for academic writing success than faculty in other disciplines. Because rhetoric and composition faculty share the writing challenges of the interviewees featured here: no time to write, heavy teaching loads, etc., learning the strategies successful faculty writers use within a variety of contexts is key for understanding how to ground and potentially improve faculty writing practices within the discipline. Yet beyond preliminary research by Wells (2015) and Soderlund (2015) and a few essays on how collaborative academic writing between writing faculty affects careers in the field (see Day and Eodice 2001; Ede and Lunsford 2001; Ronald and Roskelly 2001; Yancey and Spooner 1998), we’ve only

been working around the edges of a conversation about our composing practices as faculty. We ultimately don't know if field-based knowledge shapes our own academic writing practices or influences our scholarly output as authors of rhetoric and composition publications, yet faculty writing within rhetoric and composition is a rich area of study central to our broader mission of studying how writing works.

Moreover, writing faculty have a discipline-driven, philosophical impetus to write. Unlike other academic disciplines, a key tenet in the field of rhetoric and writing is that writing teachers *should be writers*. A disciplinary identity as a writer differs from the way that other academics define themselves, as faculty in other disciplines choose instead to think of themselves as “readers or problem solvers or project managers or scientists” (Geller 2013, 7; Toor 2015). In contrast we are *writing* faculty in both senses of the term. Rhetoric and composition scholars such as Richard Gebhardt (1977), Maxine Hairston (1986), Donald Murray (1986), and E. Shelley Reid (2009) argue that writing teachers, especially, have an obligation to write because the process of writing and the teaching of writing are inseparable. As rationale, Hairston argues,

Teachers who do not engage in the writing process themselves cannot adequately understand the complex dynamics of the process, cannot empathize with their students' problems, and are in no position either to challenge or to endorse the recommendations and admonitions of the textbooks they are using. (Hairston 1986, 62)

This goal is so essential; it has remained the number one expectation for training writing teachers since the Conference on College Composition and Communication (1982) issued a position statement on the preparation of writing teachers in 1982. And many faculty *do* write both with students in classes and in reflective activity outside of class (see Eng 2002 for a useful overview). In National Writing Project workshops and similar professional development activities such as the Institute for Writing and Thinking at Bard College, instructors primarily write as part of learning to teach writing more effectively. Gebhardt (1977, 140) makes the case for these efforts, arguing writing teachers should write about the teaching of writing as a mode of learning, as a means of both understanding and arguing for personal practices and theories. Likewise, Brannon and Pradl (1994) consider the dual identities of writing teacher and writer as inseparable. Still, despite repeated research suggesting that engaging in writing is essential to be an effective writing teacher, the field of rhetoric and composition has not explored how our disciplinary connection influences the writing that is the academic currency of most tenure-track and tenured positions.

Equally important, we should not overlook the fact that many of us *like* to write and chose to become writing teachers as a result. In contrast, our counterparts in other disciplines often dislike academic writing and struggle to compose (Boice 1990; Dwyer et al. 2012; Fairweather 1999), requiring interventions from department chairs and faculty developers to motivate them (Eodice and Cramer 2001; Geller and Denny 2013; Lechuga and Lechuga 2012). Faculty who teach writing understand that writing for a specific audience and having published work recognized among peers is both motivating and rewarding, because the process of writing itself is intellectually satisfying and engaging. As Donald Murray (1986) points out, “publishing promises a lifetime of exploration and learning, active membership in a scholarly community, and the opportunity for composition teachers to practice what we preach” (146). While we also compose for non-peer reviewed venues such as scholarly blogs, articles for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or *Inside Higher Education*, lecture videos and podcasts, as a field we still appreciate well written peer reviewed scholarship and rely on such work for our own research and to make cases about our writing centers and programs. Rhetoric and composition scholars understand the inherent value in academic writing, but the writing habits that lead to publications and make some writing faculty highly productive in terms of scholarly output are, for the most part, invisible.

Learning more about our own faculty writing practices also might serve our political interests as a discipline. Rhetoric and composition has historically struggled to overcome the reputation as a service discipline for a legitimate place within higher education. Faculty publication is an investment most universities are interested in because publications and grants offer academic recognition, donor opportunities, and funding avenues. The university stands much to gain the more published and prolific its faculty members are. A faculty that knows how to write is a more attractive payoff to administrators than getting the majority of student writers through first year writing (especially when there is a financial incentive to have students repeat classes). It’s also expensive when faculty members are denied tenure because they don’t write. Given the increased emphasis within higher education on faculty performance and accountability (Bellas and Toutkoushian 1999; Fairweather 2002; Hardré and Kollmann 2012; Lincoln 2011; Savage 2003), study of academic publishing patterns (Baldwin and Chandler 2002; Henderson 2011), and faculty motivations for publishing (Hardré et al. 2011; Tien and Blackburn 1996), and the concern for the well-being of the professoriate (Stupnisky, Weaver-Hightower, and Kartoshkina 2015), rhetoric

and writing faculty can play a key role in understanding the relationship between faculty members' writing habits and job success. Writing faculty can offer an educated knowledge base about the academic writing process vs. general faculty development efforts which tend to focus on productivity and don't always work (Brown 2014; Webber 2011).

Finally, and most important, in our field there are graduate students, faculty members at all ranks, untenured Writing Program Administrators (WPAs)/Writing Center Professionals (WCPs), and adjuncts struggling to write. In a 1985 *College Composition and Communication* article, Robert Boice suggests composition as a field tends to focus on process and product within the classroom, but neglects productivity—the regular output of publishable material in unstructured spaces beyond the classroom—and this carries over to publishing habits of writing faculty. He argues,

the prescriptions of composition researchers seem to apply only to the context in which they typically do their research and theorizing—the classroom within an academic semester or, more often, within a few sessions of writing. In my experience, the same people who had excelled in writing classes may not have learned to write in other settings—where guidelines are ambiguous, where writing is easily put off, and where the consequences of writing include promotion and tenure. (Boice 1985, 473)

Despite knowing academic writing as a discipline, many of us aren't doing it. Maxine Hairston's research affirms what Boice describes, commenting "almost any publishing academic with whom I have talked about their writing admits having trouble" (Hairston 1986, 64). While two specifically rhetoric and composition-focused writing advice guides exist (Olson and Taylor's 1997 *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition* and Gebhardt and Gebhardt's 1997 *Academic Advancement in Composition Studies*), both are two decades old and the conversation has not progressed much since. In contrast to the dated nature of rhetoric and composition resources for faculty writing assistance, fields such as nursing actively work as a field to prepare graduate students and colleagues for academic writing, and publish several new articles a year on how to write (Steinert et al. 2008). While our discipline is not alone in neglecting graduate writing (see Brooks-Gillies et al. 2015; Caplan and Cox 2016; Grego and Thompson 2007; Rose and McClafferty 2001; Russell 2002; Sallee, Hallett, and Tierney 2011), increasing calls for more explicit graduate writing instruction within the field of rhetoric and composition continue to emerge (Micciche and Carr 2011; Soderlund 2015; Wells 2015). And though field specific time management issues have been studied (Boice 1985; Enos 1990, 1996), research is needed as to

how WPAs/WCPs and faculty who teach composition actually manage to write despite these time constraints. Due to a lack of knowledge about optimal field-based writing practices, most new rhetoric and writing faculty learn what little they know about academic writing within writing studies on the job (Soderlund 2015; Wells 2015). For all of these reasons noted above, the time is opportune for rhetoric and composition to study disciplinary faculty writing practices for publication.

What we *do* know about faculty productivity in rhetoric and composition is that the nature of our discipline puts us in danger of not completing the writing so essential in most academic positions for tenure and job security. With scholarly “productivity” typically defined as the number of publications at most institutions (Fairweather 1999; Gebhardt and Gebhardt 1997; Olson and Taylor 1997; Tien and Blackburn 1996; Townsend and Rosser, 2007), having time to devote to academic writing for publication is essential. And time is one resource rhetoric and composition faculty often don’t have. Our faculty positions are simultaneously tied to time intensive marking of papers and to time intensive administration as WPAs, WCPs, or writing across the curriculum (WAC) coordinators. We spend more time grading and conferencing than our counterparts in other fields (Applebee 1977; Connors 1990; Naylor and Malcomson 2001) because, unlike other disciplines such as literature or history, composition requires an “individualized pedagogy” (Connors 1990, 110). Practically translated, this means that a writing instructor must individually comment or conference on each student paper at least some of the time. Assuming that an instructor of introductory composition might assign three or four papers per semester, plus rough drafts, the workload is demanding. Interest in multimodal composition has also increased the time needed to prepare for teaching, as instructors must attend to student technology concerns and learn how to teach using technology resources—further straining a heavy workload (Bernhardt, Edwards, and Wojahn 1989; Dangler 2010; Reinheimer 2005; Takayoshi and Selfe 2007; Tulley 2008). In one study, faculty who spent more time on teaching produced up to 10 percent fewer publications or similar research projects (Webber 2011; see other scholarship by Fox 1992; Townsend and Rosser 2007; Trice 1992), and teaching effectively in writing studies takes more time than in other disciplines. Narratives within the field offer cautionary tales about how teaching and service affect progress toward tenure (see Danberg 2011; Gindlesparger 2011; Leverenz 2000). Writing faculty, in other words, are at higher risk of not writing for publication because they have to allocate more time to teaching.

Moreover, because many faculty positions in rhetoric and composition come with an administrative assignment to direct a WAC initiative, first-year composition program, or writing center, our discipline is especially susceptible to the paradoxical impulse to be a good university citizen versus productive faculty member. Writing program or center administrators have a difficult and daily choice to make as to how to allocate time—do they “focus on the success of the center or program which is what the institution values or publishing which matters for career advancement and dissemination of our field knowledge?” (Geller and Denny 2013, 103). Administrative positions often expand to include all writing-related issues on campus, including encompassing abstract issues such as “Our students can’t write; what are you going to do about it?” (Smith 2008, 123). Consequently, rhetoric and composition faculty serve time on consuming administrative and accreditation related projects even during summers and breaks instead of using this time for academic writing. Due to these field-specific productivity challenges, explicit knowledge of what it means to be a rhetoric and composition faculty member who writes is sorely needed. We know what circumstances hinder some rhetoric and composition faculty from writing for scholarly publication, but little about the disciplinary practices that make successful writing faculty productive.

As a response to this gap, this study takes as its focus the project of finding out how writing faculty write. Using the *Paris Review* “Writers at Work” model, I asked fifteen rhetoric and composition faculty with significant publications or growing influence in the field about their writing processes, as well as how teaching, administration, and service influence publication rates. Through a series of interviews with these productive, prolific scholars in our field, I investigated question such as:

- What do the writing habits of writing faculty look like?
- Do we follow disciplinary advice about best writing practices?
- How do we convey our experiential knowledge about writing to our students?
- How do we collaboratively write for academic publication?
- How does our work as editors in the field affect our own writing?
- How do we balance writing with notoriously heavy service, administration, and teaching loads?
- What does it mean to be a writing professor who writes within the disciplinary location of rhetoric and composition?

In his introduction to the first series of *Review* interviews, editor Malcom Cowley remarks that despite the diversity of interviewees, “what

emerges from the interviews is a composite picture of the fiction writer” (Cowley 1967, 6). The goal of *How Writing Faculty Write* is to provide a similar composite picture of rhetoric and composition faculty within the following chapters. The interviews about writing processes not only reveal answers to the above questions but, as a collective, provide a snapshot of how we view our own writing as a field. Maintaining the conversational spirit of the *Paris Review*-style interviews, the goal is not to present the “right” way to compose or a definitive picture of the writing habits of rhetoric and composition faculty. Instead, the collection offers a more nuanced and varied scope of how writing scholarship is produced. In their own words, faculty describe their writing habits, time management strategies, how they feel when they write, how they cope with writer’s block, and more, including the backstories behind many landmark works in the field. For faculty productivity research within writing studies, the interviews, taken together, offer strategies for both graduate students and writing faculty for maintaining a writing schedule, getting started and restarted, juggling multiple writing projects, and serving their disciplines *and* their institutions successfully.

As noted in the Preface, I was initially inspired by the *Paris Review* interviews because these dialogues capture writers talking about how they write. Encouraging writing faculty to talk more openly and explicitly about their writing processes offers rich terrain for what it means to be a professor who writes. In the following sections I argue for the *Review* interview style as a deliberate methodology and ideally suited for this type of research. I follow with a brief introduction to the interviewees and several patterns for analysis that emerge from the interviews. These patterns illustrate, as a group, interviewees share two attitudes of accepting the academic writing process as messy and challenging and finding joy in building a work for publications. They also share three recurrent writing techniques of thinking rhetorically, using invention strategies that scaffold writing, and calling on “quick focus” to write in the short time segments they have available. I conclude with a readers’ guide to help specific populations (graduate students, mid-career administrators, established faculty, and writing researchers) use *How Writing Faculty Write* as a resource.

#### THE PARIS REVIEW-STYLE INTERVIEW AS A METHODOLOGY

For this project the *Paris Review*-style interview was aptly matched to the types of interviews about writing processes I wanted to conduct. Like the *Review* interviews of famous literary writers whose work was featured



in the magazine, I wanted to interview well-known writers within the discipline. The *Review* interviews worked well largely due to the fact that interviewees were asked unstructured questions about writing and the conversation could take a natural direction. Though unstructured interviews do have drawbacks such as a lack of reliability because each interview is unique, when an *aide memoire* or agenda is used to establish similar topics that might be covered in each interview (i.e., questions about how to start writing, best time of day to write, etc.), there is “a certain degree of consistency across different interview sessions” (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009) useful for general analysis (Briggs 2000; Minichiello et al. 1990).

To model the *Review* interviews as closely as possible, I developed open ended questions similar to those established by Cowley and maintained the *Review*'s practice of tailoring questions to each writer. Though interviewees were asked similar questions about how they start a writing project, avoid writer's block, revise, etc., other questions were personalized to the interviewee (e.g., Joe Harris revised one of his most well-known works, and a question of how he revised himself was asked). Therefore, the interview questions were unstructured in nature, but not all participants received the same unstructured interview questions (see appendix for a list of typical *Review*-style questions used in the interviews featured in this collection).

I also followed *Review* interview protocols as closely as possible with technological updates. Early interviews of literary authors were done by two reviewers, as Cowley describes:

Interviewers usually worked in pairs, like FBI agents. Since no recording equipment was available for the early interviews, they both jotted down the answers to their questions at top speed and matched the two versions afterward. With two men writing, the pace could be kept almost at the level of natural conversation. Some of the later interviews . . . were done with a tape recorder. After two or three sessions the interviewers typed up their material; then it was cut to length, arranged in logical order, and sent to the author for his approval. (Cowley 1967, 5)

I updated the recording aspect by using Skype to record digital interviews and a digital audio recorder to record face to face interviews. However, to mimic the early partner protocol described above, two graduate students transcribed the recorded interviews and I compared versions for a match due to potential variations in emphasis during transcription. Though interviews were also cut to length, most were preserved in the order the questions were asked. Interviewees were also sent copies of their interviews for clarification and approval.

Rather than coding the interviews for analysis down to keywords and specific themes in a manner similar to thematic network analysis (see Attride-Stirling 2001), the original *Review* interviews were read for broad patterns by editor Malcom Cowley (“Let’s see how they go about their daily task of inventing stories and putting them on paper”) (Cowley 1967, 7). I chose to read interviews in a similar manner. While coding is valuable, and can provide a level of detail not featured in this collection, participants were not asked the same open-ended questions central for coding effectively (Scott and Garner 2013). Like the original analysis of *Review* interviews by Cowley (1967), I used answers to similar interview questions (e.g., “How do you get started on a writing project?” or a variation) to determine what general habits the majority of writers follow. These patterns for analysis are presented in the following section.

Mode of publication is also a methodological choice, and I do recognize that our discipline, perhaps more so than others, has sought to argue for a wider understanding of scholarship. A printed book highlighting traditional faculty publication practices might seem to undermine this project. Rhetoric and composition has struggled as a field with how to reconcile digital scholarship, including issues of open access, with the traditional peer-reviewed print expectations of the institutions where we work (Ball 2004; Look and Pinter 2010). There is no doubt that “our work in rhetoric and composition suffers under the definition of what constitutes scholarship” (Enos 1996, 13) as activities central to our discipline such as writing program administration (including WAC efforts), writing center administration, software development, textbook publication, and journal editing are neither recognized as scholarly nor given equal weight as traditional publication in tenure and promotion processes (Alred and Thelen 1993; Enos 1996; Thaiss and Zawacki 2006).

As a former WPA, I certainly support a wider definition of scholarship after having firsthand experience with the effort required to publish the required number of items in case my administrative work did not count for tenure. I wholeheartedly agree more progress is needed in this area. Yet, our discipline, like others in the humanities, “[persists] in an academic culture rooted in dissemination and vetting of original work, intellectual capital on the page that confers and accrues in powerful ways” and as a result, “The quantity and quality of published scholarship is crucial to one’s ethos as a ‘real’ academic” (Geller and Denny 2013, 118). To succeed on the tenure track our intellectual labor typically must include knowledge dissemination through traditional outlets in addition to making arguments for dissemination and evaluation through other venues (e.g., through a Council of Writing Program

Administrators' review of a writing program to determine the value of a WPA's scholarship).

With this recognition in mind, I deliberately focus many of the interview questions on the production and publication of monographs, textbooks, edited collections, and peer-reviewed articles in both print and digital formats. Some of these "count" more than others for tenure and promotion depending on local context, but all reflect the labor of getting words on the page or screen. This labor directly translates to success as a writing professor in the current academic environment. As Peter Elbow and Mary Deane Sorcinelli neatly sum up: "Professors write things. If they don't write things, they don't get to be professors (Elbow and Sorcinelli 2006, 19). Despite the push to expand scholarship to include other types of work, productive, regular writing, and publication of peer-reviewed scholarship from that writing, remains key to most successful careers as rhetoric and composition professors. The *Paris Review* methodology is well suited to find out how professors write for academic publication.

More important, from a methodological perspective, part of the appeal of the original *Review* interviews was that when read together, they offered a narrative about how writing happens within a community of writers. I argue a similar narrative manifests in *How Writing Faculty Write*—readers of these interviews can likewise see who "writers are as persons, where they get their material, how they work from day to day, and what they dream of writing" (Cowley 1967, 4).

#### ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEES

After informally asking graduate students and faculty across all ranks whose writing practices they wanted to know more about at conferences and via email, I sent out twenty initial email invitations based on the most frequently mentioned names. Fifteen accepted an interview invitation. Not surprisingly, many in the field wanted to know about the habits of past and present journal editors and disciplinary organization presidents who published regularly—some of the busiest people in the discipline—because they wanted to know how these prolific colleagues managed to write. As a result, seven interviewees are former Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) chairs (Anson, Harris Glenn, Powell, Royster, Selfe, Tinberg, and Yancey) and past presidents of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (Anson, Roen, and Yancey). There are also seven past and present journal editors featured (Alexander, Blair, Harris, Powell, Selfe, Tinberg, and Yancey). Many interviewees (Blair, Enoch, Roen, Royster, and Yancey)

are current or former WPAs, WAC coordinators, writing center directors, or university administrators who are well aware of time conflicts posed by administration. In addition to disciplinary leadership both on their campuses and within the discipline, the interviewees have won the highest awards for scholarship in our field and beyond, some at the earliest stages of their careers (Enoch, Rickert, and Yergeau). Beyond the accomplishments, interviewees have taught 4–4 loads and all served on multiple university committees. This mix of experience combined with publication success makes them ideal candidates for interviews about the academic writing process.

As a caveat, I recognize that the interviewees featured here are not typical of many rhetoric and composition faculty, or faculty in general. Like *Review* interviewees, they are accomplished members of the field and were similarly selected for interviews as a result of their publication achievements. The faculty featured here have either tenure track or tenured positions and are those among the lucky few with privileged positions in a field that has a history of overworked, underpaid labor and untenured administrators. Yet a view of how successful writing faculty write is a useful starting point for broader study of faculty writing practices in rhetoric and composition. Like all published authors, at some point they had to compose using a pen and paper, or a keyboard, microphone, or web or video authoring software. Moreover, most of the faculty featured here have served or are serving in the time intensive positions as writing center directors, writing program administrators, chairs of undergraduate departments and graduate programs, student success center directors, and teaching excellence center directors. They have experienced firsthand the time constraints within rhetoric and composition known to derail writing productivity, yet have developed productive writing strategies despite these conditions. Though most are currently working at Research 1 (R1) institutions, many have previously served as faculty members at small liberal arts colleges, regional state schools, and comprehensive universities where teaching loads and service loads are high and still managed to publish regularly early in their careers. Every interview chapter starts with a headnote to contextualize interviewees' working contexts. Interviewees also hail from many corners of the field: writing program administration, Native American rhetorics, computers and composition, feminist historiography, and more; together they provide a rich and varied picture of the writing practices used to compose the still-developing field rhetoric and composition. In the following section, I provide an overview of patterns for analysis that emerge from reading the interviews as a whole.

**HOW ARE WRITING FACULTY WRITING? PATTERNS FOR ANALYSIS**

Despite variances in writing strategies and local contexts, several patterns emerge from the interviews. These patterns are useful for illustrating what interviewees know about academic writing from their insider location in the discipline and what writing faculty articulate about themselves as writers. Though interviewees also adopt strategies that productive faculty across disciplines use—relying on a multiple project planning system, developing a plan for writing with collaborators before the project gets underway, and combining writing projects with other faculty responsibilities such as teaching or service—contextual knowledge of writing and its influence on the composing process clearly emerges in these conversations. As fellow writing faculty Donald Murray reminds us, “If we can discover the attitudes and the techniques that allow us to write we will experience the joy of writing” (Murray 1986, 153), and the interviewees offer first glimpses of what these attitudes and resulting writing techniques look like within our discipline. The writing techniques of thinking rhetorically, using invention strategies that scaffold, and quick focus to write in short bursts described in the introduction tell us what writing faculty *do* when they write, and the attitudes described below tell us how they *feel* when they write. Both behaviors and attitudes are necessary for successful, and more important, workable academic writing habits in today’s writing faculty positions. These broad patterns encompass a combination of process, product, and productivity strategies Boice (1985) notes are essential for rhetoric and composition faculty academic publishing success.

*Attitudes that Allow Writing****Writing Faculty Accept the Writing Process as Difficult and Persist through Frustration***

Interview research suggests that writing faculty succeed because they tacitly accept a key tenet of our field: academic writing, like all writing, is a recursive, messy, and sometimes frustrating learning process. Perhaps surprisingly, the interviews reveal that disciplinary knowledge does not translate into making the academic writing process easier for writing faculty. Like the *Paris Review* interviewees who initially inspired this collection, faculty featured here are also “writers at work,” and the work is sometimes, well, work. Though the stereotype of the English major/English professor as a fluent writer may persist (Reid 2009), interviewees admitted to struggling with academic writing for a variety of reasons despite knowing invention strategies, techniques for revision, grammar

rules, and even experiencing previous publication success. Sometimes the challenge is just getting started; a familiar problem for academics across disciplines (Belcher 2009; Carnell et al. 2008; Scott 2014). Howard Tinberg admits in his interview, “Writing has never come easily for me so it can be a bit of struggle to get the meaning out and onto the screen,” and Cindy Selfe agrees, noting, “I slog through my scholarly work.” Sometimes the difficulty stems from the scope and vastness of a new project, as when Selfe describes her writing process as “a slow, hard slog through materials, collecting the materials, doing the research if I’m doing the research or finding the scholarly sources and then fitting them together in a way that makes sense to me.” Malea Powell agrees that managing scope is a problem that takes time to address remarking, “I frequently struggle with how to chop giant ideas down to size.” Developing an appropriate methodology to use is another challenge that slows down writing when starting to write for publication as Cheryl Glenn describes: “Nobody had any methodology for me to use, so it took me several years to develop a feminist, historiographic methodology, a lens through which to read my materials and write my work.” Faculty also mentioned speed of writing as a factor. Jessica Enoch explains: “I see myself as a slow writer because I feel like I write very slowly. If someone told me to write a ten-page paper by tomorrow, I would not be able to do that. I write very slowly but I write every day . . . I could never write a lot at once.” Kris Blair agrees: “I believe in those sorts of adages of ‘write a page a day,’ ‘don’t procrastinate,’ and others because I’m not a quick writer. I really do need time to think and write badly and then see how the little bad things I’ve written get better with each passing day.”

These writing challenges echo sentiments of faculty outside of rhetoric and composition, as many academic writers experience similar frustrations with getting ideas on paper/screen, clarifying methodology, and even speed of writing. Even from their vast knowledge base of writing practices, rhetoric, and composition, these excerpts illustrate faculty don’t necessarily sail through the composing process, confirming previous research by Hairston (1986) and Scott (2014).

As such, there are important lessons to be learned about both frustration and persistence here from the attitude of acceptance of writing difficulty threaded through the interviews. Interviewees understand that sometimes a lot of thinking must happen before words can be captured in print or multimodally, and though spending time on thinking prior to and during writing sessions may be frustrating, it’s necessary. Royster describes these bouts of thinking as essential moments of “focusing” prior to writing:

I've always made the case that the difficult part about writing is not the writing, it's the thinking. You know, getting myself to the point where I feel that I'm thinking well, coherently, and consistently about whatever the topic of concern is the challenge. I want to feel that I'm in focus. I can try to get myself in focus but the real challenge is *feeling* in focus. "Oh yeah, this is where I want to be with this idea. I like this sentence. Oh right, this is a good article that I want to keep in scope or this is the thought that I want to carry from this part to that part." So it's the thinking part. The writing for me has always been a moment of joy.

As Royster's excerpt illustrates, writing faculty often view the thinking moments combined with the writing moments as a larger process of "writing to learn" (Murray 1984). Viewing the writing process as an opportunity for learning, even when difficult, is a different attitude than viewing the academic writing process as merely the capture of research on paper. Even when academics manage to publish regularly, many view writing as a reporting mechanism. This is limiting. As Hayot (2014, 1) argues, "Writing as though you already know what you have to say hinders it as a medium for research and discovery; it blocks the possibilities—the openings—that appear at the intersection of an intention and an audience." The interviews illustrate that writing faculty as a group accept the need to use the early stages of writing to find these openings, and we do follow what we tell first-year writing students: the early stages of writing are for discovering what we want to say as academic writers.

Though writing to learn might be viewed as "procrastinating" from actually writing, watching for the openings Hayot describes is a natural part of this thinking process, a thinking process rhetoric and composition faculty accept as essential. In his interview, Joe Harris reframes procrastination as incubation, and like Royster, claims the need for time to think through projects before and during early process phases. He argues:

I do think, by the way, that some of that procrastination is actually something more like incubation. When I begin a project, I really have to think about it, and it takes me awhile to sort through what it is that I want to say and to think about how I want to begin and what books I want to have on my desk and so on, and that's not a particularly organized process. It's just a lot of time walking the dogs and walking around the house and thinking about the piece and thinking I should be writing, but yet for some reason not quite being able to do it.

Faculty development literature suggest there is much shame associated with not writing, and shame contributes to blocking, hindering overall productivity (Boice 1990; Hairston 1986; Shahjahan 2014).



Yet excerpts such as the one above illustrate that interviewees don't frame these stops in writing as traditional blocks per se. Here Harris recognizes that incubation does not mean that writing time is wasted; instead incubation *is* the writing process. Chris Anson similarly and cheerfully describes the thinking process as incubation versus a block in writing: "I think I was incubating the CCCC's address for a year [laughs] because I was thinking about it on my runs, and I was thinking, but actually I didn't start it until about three months before." Because interviewees accept struggling to start a writing project as a natural part of the reflective academic writing process, they don't have the sense of panic or shame about non-writing periods that may contribute to blocking (and in fact, only Yergeau ever described being blocked, and then only when dealing with disturbing research she needed to write about).

Moreover, because rhetoric and composition faculty recognize writing is sometimes a struggle, many of the interviewees do have preemptive strategies to keep writing flowing. One common strategy is to switch between writing projects, so writing is never stopped and there is always forward progress on at least one project. Kathi Yancey describes this technique when working on a draft:

There are sometimes places in the middle where I know something's not working but I don't know what it is and but then what I tend to do is just flip to something else. I've always got something else going on. So I'll go do the something else or I'll take some kind of a break and then I'll come back. I've never had writer's block in the sense that you're spending weeks or months or even days on end unable to write.

Switching projects allows the writer incubation time to work out a problem, but at the same time moves another writing project forward. The interviews demonstrate writing faculty tend to be kinder with themselves about their relationship with academic writing and thus less frustrated with the lifecycle of academic publications. In one *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Ted McCormick points out that faculty who enjoy the writing process recognize good thinking "can't be forced or even routinized in a reliable way" and take time to reflect (McCormick 2017, n.p.), and the interviewees similarly illustrate an awareness of the importance of reflection to think through writing problems. This attitude may be in part because writing faculty understand from their disciplinary location that "Current composition pedagogy is based on the premise that writing well *is* difficult" (Reid 2009, W202; emphasis mine). Here our disciplinary knowledge is clearly an advantage for academic publication. Rather than leading to paralysis or writer's block, the struggle to write is recast by



writing faculty as natural and after an incubation period/writing to learn session they are able to start or restart writing.

***Writing Faculty Enjoy Process as Well as Product***

Writing faculty interviewed for the collection tend to cast the writing process as a pleasurable activity because they enjoy clarifying and organizing ideas as well as demonstrating writing skill. Kathi Yancey describes what is so satisfying about writing: “It’s really within the last five years where I get a lot of pleasure out of revision . . . I like how William Gass talks about ‘makingness of a text’ and I like the makingness of a text. I like working with words. I like working with document design. I like working with visuals. I like making all of that come together in a composition.” DeVoss captures how many writing faculty feel when they first begin a new project: “When I have a chance to write it is the best feeling in the world because I have on my computer probably ten or fifteen different folders with outlines for manuscripts I haven’t had a chance to get started on, that at one point I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, I have to write this [one manuscript], this is going to be so epic, this is amazing, this needs to be out there! I can pull these students in . . . we’ll work on it together and all this is great!’” These responses confirm research from Packer (2013) that when faculty experience satisfaction with the academic writing process it contributes to “gross personal happiness” (85).

Enjoyment with the writing process goes beyond just starting a project. Revision is another area faculty enjoy as it leads to new discoveries, as Thomas Rickert points out: “The most inventive material you will ever come up with comes from working with revising a draft. Typically, my greatest insights will come from that and forcing me to go back and do various forms of revision, but it always comes from working out a problem that I wasn’t aware was a problem yet.” Joe Harris actually considers the revision of writing, the working toward a finished product as the actual “work” of writing itself and the most pleasurable part of writing: “I really imagine the work of composing at the point of revision rather than the point of invention. That’s where I feel more in control. That’s where I take more pleasure in craft.” This is not to say that revision is necessarily easy—indeed Yancey describes it as an “acquired skill.” Yet many interviewees commented specifically on the satisfying, deeper level of engagement writing revision provides and use this satisfaction to work a draft to a finished product.

Experiencing joy from the writing process is another way writing faculty move writing forward. As Jackie Royster argues, “I can get passionate about writing projects and that passion helps me stay in focus. I’m

always thinking about the subject even when I'm not working because I'm engaged with the topic." Joy helps writing faculty incubate writing even during non-writing periods, confirming research on the relationship between faculty writing and joy (Packer 2013; Tulley 2013).

Perhaps most important, writing faculty featured here view the overall academic writing process as joyful versus the end publication. Melanie Yergeau notes, "I find putting together a project that matters to me, and hopefully to others, extremely satisfying." Jessica Enoch voices something similar: "[Writing a book has] been really fun. I love it. I mean I love working on it and it's kind of been like a safe thing. I'm working on this book that I really like and I love being able to go to these places and do this archival work, but now I'm pushing towards, I hope, the final quarter and asking 'What am I going to do?' [laughs]." The passion helps use open moments for writing and moving projects forward versus checking email or over-prepping for classes. Writing faculty clearly identify as writers and are productive because they enjoy researching and writing. This behavior confirms previous faculty productivity research by Lechuga and Lechuga who contend "faculty members whose locus of self-worth and identification reside in the domain of scholarly research are more likely to focus their attention to those events that reinforce the value of scholarly research" (Lechuga and Lechuga 2012, 78).

This impetus to write reinforces habitual, and more important, workable academic writing habits even when writing is difficult. A writing faculty approach of accepting the writing process as challenging and treating writing times as pleasurable interludes directly contrasts with faculty development imperatives imploring faculty to write quickly and "get it over with." These attitudes suggest our disciplinary knowledge about writing contributes to intrinsic satisfaction from the writing process. Such satisfaction propels the interviewees to pursue writing even when another faculty meeting or committee work project threatens writing time. Though not the focus of this project, satisfaction with the writing process clearly carries over to non-academic writing projects as evidenced from Duane Roen's daily journaling practice with his wife, Malea Powell's romance novel writing, and Jonathan Alexander's creative writing projects, discussions which all worked their way into interviews about academic writing. These interviewees are administrators and editors, yet their central identities as writers have helped them continue to write for both academic and personal projects despite the additional workload. Writing faculty aren't only writing because they want to, but because they need to: "I think writing is in my DNA" (Yancey, this collection).

*Writing Techniques for Process, Product, and Productivity****They Think Rhetorically (Process)***

Writing faculty “think rhetorically” at the start of a writing project to determine potential audience, existing conversation on the issue, structure of writing, and mode of delivery. As Jonathan Alexander surmises in his interview, “It seems very useful to just to think rhetorically. To whom do I want to talk and how do I want to talk to them?” Malea Powell notes she starts academic pieces with this similar foundation: “Here are four things I want to say. Here are the moves I’m going to make.” In their interviews, Jessica Enoch and Dànielle DeVoss likewise describe how they regularly engage in rhetorical thinking to see how a new writing project fits into an existing conversation and locate potential publication spaces where that conversation happens. In early writing process stages, for these writing faculty thinking about a potential audience means talking with potential audience members and sharing early writing with that audience to participate in the conversation on an issue. Deliberately considering the audience first counteracts expressivist advice from the field to ignore audience when starting to write. In his manifesto “Closing My Eyes as I Speak” Peter Elbow claims audience awareness often “disturbs or disrupts our writing or thinking” and writers should write to discover what they want to say without limitations (Elbow 1987, 51). Some faculty development literature supports this position as fear of audience response is cited as a frequent contributor to writer’s block for academics (Hardré 2013; Kasper 2013). Yet, as Jessica Enoch advises in this collection, considering audience at the start of a project does not have to be a limiting endeavor and is often a useful method to start writing:

Jack Selzer told me in graduate school to imagine your essays like a conversation. You know you’re not competing against someone but just try to add to the conversation. I think that takes a lot of the pressure off in terms of saying that every essay has to be this groundbreaking text. Instead how can you just contribute in a smart way to a conversation you’re really interested in?

This shared pattern of thinking rhetorically reveals one way writing faculty are productive. They tend to write about a central (if unfocused) idea as a starting point which helps determine (or re-determine) audience, mode, and focus. In other words, writing faculty have a sense of direction when starting.

Once writing moves from the process to the drafted product stage, interviewees commonly share writing with likely readers who may eventually serve as manuscript reviewers, a strategy also advised by faculty

development literature (Carnell et al. 2008). Therefore, they go beyond thinking rhetorically to taking action in the early process stage as well. For example, both Jessica Enoch and Howard Tinberg argue early feedback from likely readers increases chances of publication because this is the audience who will read the article or cite the project when it is published (Thrower 2012), and audience awareness is essential to developing a quality publication and one of the reasons an article is published (Belcher 2009; Thrower 2012). The interviewees' responses show that writing faculty work carefully to understand the audience at the earliest writing stages. Sharing writing with colleagues also models peer response, a valued component of composition pedagogy. Peer feedback provided prior to submission to a journal strengthens the quality of the contribution and sharpens the focus on the potential audience—factors which increase a manuscript's chance at publication. An additional benefit of using peer response to think rhetorically is that readers who view prepublication drafts will know about the research and possibly want to cite the finished work—giving added incentive to the faculty writer to complete it.

***They Use Invention Strategies that Foreground Discovery and Organization (Product)***

Along with establishing rhetorical concerns such as audience and mode, writing faculty begin writing using two primary types of invention strategies, often simultaneously: writing to discover (sometimes called writing to learn) and outlining/scaffolding. Donald Murray (1984) considered writing a tool to uncover key ideas and careful revision of writing as a means to clarify those ideas. His writing to learn approach is already used successfully in faculty development efforts within our field such as the National Writing Project and the Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking, and interviewees here model similar principles. In his interview, Duane Roen notes how writing to discover solves the question of where to start:

One of the most challenging parts for me is to find out exactly where I want to go in the piece of writing so there is a little of that writing to discover, that Don Murray thing. But a lot of it is writing to discover in very rough prose composed of fragments and bullet items. Then once I know where I want to go with this chapter or article everything starts to fall into place. Once I have that rough outline I have a better feeling of where I want to go.

A key difference in Roen's writing to discover approach versus free-writing (a stream of consciousness outpouring of writing) is that Roen is simultaneously organizing his discoveries into bullets and scaffolding

the frame, which helps the piece take shape. Melanie Yergeau, Cindy Selfe, and Joe Harris follow a similar strategy of establishing an early structure even if it changes as the piece develops. In other words, writing faculty are already thinking about an end product. Consistent with Roen, Yergeau writes in small idea fragments and organizes them using Scrivener concept mapping software, “so even though I still am writing in bits and pieces, which is in some ways problematic, it actually works from an outlining perspective.” And when starting, Selfe asks “What’s going to be the super structuring, sub-structuring, and how are these pieces related, and am I giving my audience the cues that they need in order to see the structure that I’ve composed for them?” and establishes an overarching framework or scaffold based on these answers as she writes.

Though outlining is criticized for being the opposite of freewriting or writing to learn due to its hierarchically-based containment structure (Crowley 2010), this consistent pattern among interviewees suggests that these successful faculty writers rely on the balance between the freedom of writing to learn and more structured techniques that scaffold and prioritize information as ideas develop. In other words, writing faculty are constantly thinking about how to organize information for a final product even when still exploring initial ideas. For example, Harris summarizes how a product-focused mindset helps structure his writing: “I start with the end, with the insight, with the point that I want to make in the end,” and that paragraph moves “further and further down the page” once he adds more information to support his argument. These interviews indicate that writing faculty work to organize a writing piece even in its earliest stages, which may help lead them more rapidly to a thesis and overall structure. One of the top reasons a piece is rejected from scholarly publication is that the writing is unclear or disorganized (Belcher 2009). Having both a central idea and a structure makes it easier for writing faculty (and future journal readers) to envision the piece as an eventual publication.

#### *They Use “Quick Focus” in Small Writing Times (Productivity)*

Though most interviewees write almost every day, such regular writing only happens in brief stints. Eleven of the fifteen writers featured mentioned specifically writing in open “moments,” “pockets,” and “interstices” of the day. While several faculty do write at a set time each day (Alexander, Enoch, Rickert, and Roen) as writing advice guides advocate, have dedicated writing days (Powell), or occasionally binge write (Alexander, Rickert, and Yancey), writing in small moments during the day (even in five minutes) is the norm for most interviewees. One of the

most compelling findings of this collection is that in a lot of ways writing faculty *don't* write in set times or blocks each day the way faculty writing guides advocate and still manage to be productive. Due to the time strapped nature of our disciplinary work, odds are stacked against writing faculty for having a dedicated block of writing time, though research has shown these do work (Boice 1990; Webber 2011). The interviewees recognize that writing projects seldom happen in isolation from other spaces of academic life such as teaching, serving on committees, and preparing for accreditation visits and must frequently jump between academic writing and other university duties. The language they use to move between projects differs, but the process is surprisingly similar. Dànienne DeVoss describes this process of flipping between projects as “togglng,” a term often described when computer users switch among applications or screens. Jonathan Alexander describes it as “layering,” with deliberately overlapping projects at different points in the writing process. Chris Anson describes moving between projects during the work day as “shuttling.”

Even writers who block out a certain time to write each day describe togglng between writing projects or between a draft and other work such as writing a lecture, in a single day, or toggle only as they tire of one writing project and want to move to another. Though Duane Roen tends to work on a single project at a set time when possible, he also “jumps around” within singular large projects such as a textbook. Here he describes a typical scenario: “This morning I might wake up and decide that I want to work on this section of this chapter and then later in the day I might decide that I want to work on another section. My mind gets a little weary working on a section, then I do a load of laundry, let’s say, and that perks me up because just changing to that new section refreshes me.”

Though waiting for open moments may look like a haphazard way to write, Anson argues for togglng as a productivity strategy and advocates for leaving windows open for various projects and advises writers to “leave [a writing project] there so there’s a constant reminder that there’s a project waiting for your attention.” DeVoss also notes this behavior works for her claiming, “I have usually 15, 16 apps open on my computer, and I just toggle between projects all day.”

My interview findings confirm a pair of recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* pieces that argue writing must be done in extremely short time bursts due to the typical schedule of many academics for it to happen at all (Jenkins 2014; Semenza 2014). Notably, faculty development research provides little to no guidance as to how faculty can write

productively during these small segments though more demanding faculty schedules illustrate this knowledge is badly needed (Howard 2015; Jenkins 2014; Wilson 2010). While productivity guides typically advocate for daily writing sessions of at least a half hour to two hours a day (Belcher 2009; Boice 1985, 1990; Rockquemore and Laszloffy 2008), the reality is some faculty do have an hour a day but it is scattered into ten- and fifteen-minute intervals, requiring the toggling that writing faculty describe. How faculty can make best use of these intervals and get restarted quickly is rarely described in faculty writing research, in contrast to the detail provided by the interviewees. Consider this example by Cindy Selfe, who describes how she makes small writing times work:

None of us anymore have long, leisurely, uninterrupted days to write . . . so much of my writing is done in these small little moments of the day . . . Ten minutes, five minutes, you know two minutes, depending on what I'm writing. In between a student conference and a committee meeting, in between a class that I have to teach and my yoga exercise. There are all these demands in our day, so if I can't use these small times or interstices of my day . . . then the projects don't get done.

Though interviewees express longing for larger blocks of time for writing, they have adjusted to working in any available time, including a few stolen minutes during the work day, by using a method of quick focus as they toggle between projects.

Because writing faculty lack time to leisurely reorient themselves to a project, they restart projects quickly during these available moments (after a class, or meeting, or a student conference); a strategy Jackie Royster calls "quick focus." She claims this habit has allowed her to use whatever writing time she has, arguing, "if I've got one morning, I have to find a way to quick focus. If I've got a day on a weekend, I have to find a way to quick focus so I'm so intently focused on what I'm doing that I try to make whatever progress I can make." As one example of a way to quick focus, Dànielle DeVoss, Cindy Selfe, and Chris Anson argue for keeping writing projects on screen and returning to them often during the day even just to tweak a sentence, add a reference, or reread a difficult section to let it percolate before a meeting. This practice prevents long stretches before the writing is worked on again and saves faculty writers time needed to reorient themselves to a project, increasing overall productivity. Otherwise, as Anson notes, "I've learned that if you leave a project open on the screen and never either minimize it or put it away in a folder, whenever you open up the computer to do something else that piece is sitting staring at you, and as soon as you put it away, as soon as you put it into a folder, it's gone, and you have to force yourself



to go reopen it. So, it can be gone for days.” Selfe uses quick focus by deliberately ending a writing session with something enjoyable to do:

I always try and leave writing at a point where I know what the next step is going to be so I always come back saying, “Oh, this is the point where I was going to pick up” and I always try and leave [a project] so it’s like a positive thing that I want to do. You know, “Here’s something I really want to do, so, oh good I get to do that!”

Selfe also stops when she knows exactly what to do next upon returning to writing (i.e., caption a video). This technique is another means to quick focus as no time is wasted figuring out how to start again. Leaving a writing session with a sense of enjoyment and a clear sense of direction for the next writing session helps maintain a sense of forward momentum necessary to engage in academic writing (Boice 1990; Boice and Jones 1984; Elbow 1987; Mayrath 2008).

As another example of a quick focus technique, Anson uses a method he calls a “semi-drafting” process where he freewrites but inserts ideas in brackets that potentially interrupt the flow as a way of recognizing them but leaving them in a safe place for later. He then keeps writing in the short blocks of time available. Anson is able to get restarted quickly because, as he notes, “I’m actually trying to write the text, but it also has all these sort of interpellations with my commentary that are the semi part, that are the ‘maybe you need to do this’ or ‘what if you do?’ . . . it’s sort of an ongoing commentary to myself . . . It makes the writing feel a little bit less like you’re under pressure.”

Leaving notes within his draft also has the added bonus of leaving him a map of where to start when he comes back to the draft the next time as these bracketed areas can be starting points for the next writing session. In this example, Anson is writing to discover, but at the same time he doesn’t forget the steps he needs to take that emerge through discovery process. Cheryl Glenn uses a similar strategy particularly when faced with interruptions during a writing session. She notes when her students come in to her office, she’ll say “Just let me finish this sentence and let me write down what I was going to say next” and have them wait for a minute. She returns to writing using these notes to get started again.

Here disciplinary practices confirm research that short bursts of regular writing (Belcher 2009; Boice 1985, 1990; Elbow 1987; Hayot 2014; Rockquemore and Laszloffy 2008) indeed are necessary to move writing forward. As Elbow explains, “The productive scholar is in the habit of writing, at least notes, at least lists, at least fragmentary drafts, at least something that keeps the topic alive and growing so that writing will come that is ready to be written” (Elbow 1987, 148). Repeated contact



with the writing helps the writer to restart quickly because less time is needed to revisit where writing was left off. Though toggling or shuttling between projects is not the model typically advocated by faculty development resources, it has the added benefit of fitting flexibly within the open moments for writing in combination with the quick focus method of writing in small time periods that writing faculty have adapted to.

As these patterns illustrate, instead of working with a vague “big idea,” rhetoric and writing faculty work quickly to sort through the noise around the big idea and organize to set a clear path as they write. A clear path, even if it is revised as writing progresses, helps faculty work deliberately through various scattered and small writing sessions. Faculty development research indicates getting restarted after several days of not writing is extremely difficult and one of the most common reasons faculty don’t write (Belcher 2009; Boice 1990; Hardré 2013). The technique of quick focus, combined with the techniques of thinking rhetorically and using invention strategies to discover and scaffold information in concert, help writing faculty members combat the impulse to make circular versus forward progress on their writing projects. This is particularly important when writing faculty are often writing in short, fragmented bursts on most days.

#### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The patterns for analysis described above are a useful starting point for any researcher wanting to look at specific trends among writing faculty habits. Yet this collection of interviews offers additional openings for rhetoric and composition scholars to use the findings as writing advice for various points in a career. In this spirit of opportunity, I envision four ways readers might use *How Writing Faculty Write* and describe potential applications below.

##### *For Graduate Students Entering the Discipline*

Advice is often given to graduate students to establish writing habits that will serve them well as future faculty, but research has shown we don’t yet do this. Laura Micciche described her graduate experience as a rhetoric and composition student learning to write for an academic career as a stressful one, noting “. . . so overwhelmed we were by all that we had to know in order to create writing that made a contribution, no matter how minor, or just made sense” (Micciche and Carr 2011, 479). The “complexity of becoming socialized into a field of inquiry”

frequently contributes to the struggle Micciche describes—to get words on the page as a writer grapples with a new field or new subject for an article. Reframing this same struggle as a requisite part of the scholarly inquiry necessary to write (Scott 2014, 65), as writing faculty do, allows movement beyond writing blocks. More specifically, threaded through discussions are descriptions of how to start projects and how to revise writing both speak directly about how to become an academic writer versus how to get published, a conversation lacking in rhetoric and composition graduate education (Micciche and Carr 2011; Soderlund 2015; Wells 2015). Keeping this gap in mind, I'd urge graduate student readers to pay attention to two specific conversations on starting projects and revising that will serve them well regardless of the type of institution they end up at as faculty.

As a faculty developer as well as a rhetoric and composition faculty member, I regularly work with new faculty who are not sure how to start a new project once they have exhausted all publication and presentation possibilities from dissertation work. As a group, writing faculty think rhetorically to get started as noted in the “Patterns for Analysis” section above. But they also get started using a variety of concrete strategies graduate students can observe from interviews from Dànielle DeVoss who begins drafting a future publication onsite with her conference panel at a professional conference, Joe Harris who uses research on student writing from his classroom as an entry point, Kathi Yancey who uses slides as an invention technique after learning something new, or Thomas Rickert who describes how he starts with web searching to begin a multimedia project.

As revision strategies are notoriously difficult to teach students and something unlikely that graduate students pick up in their programs (Micciche and Carr 2011; Soderlund 2015; Wells 2015), they also need multiple models of how publishing writing faculty are moving from a draft to a publishable final product. In his interview, Chris Anson refers to revision as a craft and makes the argument for how writing studies as a field values good academic writing: “I like writers who really craft their writing. I think too often we forget as compositionists, we want to be writing really well in addition to researching well.” In her analysis of *Studies of Higher Education* articles, Helen Sword (2009) finds that though most academics claim to prefer reading academic articles that are well crafted, only six of the fifty articles she analyzed had well-crafted sentences. Echoing the findings from the interviewees who work to develop well-crafted writing, Sword argues, “We owe it to our colleagues, our students, our institutions and, yes, to ourselves to write as the most

effective teachers teach: with passion, with craft, with care and with style” (Sword 2009, 334). Revision not only increases the chances of publication because the writing is better organized and developed but also ensures that the product demonstrates high quality writing that Anson notes scholars in the field of writing should strive for. Though most of the interviews discuss revision, wonderfully detailed conversations on various revision processes can be found in interviews with Harris, Rickert, and Yancey.

*For New Faculty and Novice Scholars Thinking about Their Writing Lives*

At this early career stage, productive writing habits become essential to publishing regularly for tenure, career advancement, and/or employment mobility. Two conversations are especially useful here—time management strategies based on life stages and the importance of building a publishing network. As new rhetoric and composition faculty make the transition from graduate school into full-time faculty positions, most realize that open blocks of writing time they may have had as students no longer exist and/or binge writing episodes to get dissertation chapters completed won’t function in a new faculty position when teaching early classes. Though some graduate students already regularly navigate an intense schedule, for example working students or those juggling child or elder care responsibilities, many new faculty come to find the realities of teaching a 4–4 load with high service expectations and possible writing program administrative work leaves little time for writing. It is here the interviews are most useful as models for these readers based on circumstance. Working parents might find interviews by Enoch, Rickert, and Royster helpful as all three address balancing work and families. Those with 4–4 loads or otherwise jam-packed schedules can see how different attempts at carving up writing times into specific segments of the day such as early mornings (Alexander, Roen, Enoch) or, more randomly, in small interstices of the day (Anson, DeVoss, Selfe) help writing faculty make forward progress.

A second thread of conversation for new faculty to follow is how networks are built among writing faculty, which contributes to a pipeline of publication opportunity. Faculty featured here continually publish because new projects are constantly thrown their way. An acquaintance will develop an edited collection or textbook and ask interviewees interested in the same area to contribute (DeVoss, Roen). Others will talk after a conference panel, meet potential collaborators, and make plans to develop a project (DeVoss). Still others maintain relationships

with their graduate students once those students move on to become colleagues and work on future publications (Blair). The message here is that writing faculty are not (only) holed up in their offices trying to write alone. While initially they may focus on solo-authored scholarship to get tenure (see Yergeau, who describes navigating this process) they are also building connections and networks that foster new projects in the future. Such networking ensures a steady workflow, particularly because rhetoric and composition is a collaborative field.

*For Mid-Level/Senior Faculty Wanting to Know More  
about How These Scholars Work and Write*

While the secret writing lives of colleagues featured in *How Writing Faculty Write* might be an initial draw, the interviews offer advice for effective collaborative writing, managing multiple projects, mentoring other writers, and choosing projects later in a career.

Many famous writing pairs within the field rhetoric and composition exist (Ede and Lunsford, Flower and Hayes, Hawisher and Selfe, etc.), and collaborative writing is a valued practice in the field. Earlier research within the field describes successful collaborations (Ede and Lunsford 1990; Haswell and Haswell 2010; Yancey and Spooner 1998), and interview findings build on these, offering a deeper look at how collaboratively produced writing gets started, exchanged, and revised. For Kathi Yancey, asking pointed and specific questions about how a collaboration will function lays out the map to finishing a writing task:

How are you going to start? Is one of you going to draft one section, another of you is going to draft a different section, then you're going to swap? Or is somebody going to do basically a concept and then another person is going to take that concept and run with it and then swap it back and forth? When you swap back and forth are you going to use track changes [in Microsoft Word] or are you going to give people permission to overwrite your prose and you won't know where they changed it?

To learn how writing faculty answer these questions, Blair's interview on writing with graduate students stands out here, as do interviews by Enoch, Selfe, and Roen who offer specific strategies for writing effectively with colleagues, describing everything from how to actually exchange the writing to how to navigate the blending of voices.

Mid-level and senior faculty take on more work and have to manage multiple writing projects. Several faculty have developed systems that work for tracking projects from idea to published artifact that these faculty may find helpful as models. The big picture perspective helps

writing faculty see what is completed and how much work can be done at any given time. Organizing writing projects is essential to make sure that projects get completed (Goodsen 2012), and having an organization system is even more crucial when working on projects in fragments. Chris Anson makes “grids” to track projects as well as map writing time, a habit he started as an assistant professor: “I started making these grids that tracked projects from either an early idea or a conference paper all the way through to eventual publication. I started filling these grids out thinking, ‘I’ve got to keep pushing each of these things forward until it gets out in print,’ and these also served as maps for writing days.” Interviews with Anson, Alexander, and DeVoss all describe effective methods for organizing multiple projects.

Beyond effective organization techniques, interviews from senior leaders discuss how having passion for projects and strategies for cultivating passion is essential once tenure has been achieved. As a group, the interviewees are not as interested in getting published as in the work they are publishing, and this attitude may come with more experience in the field. As a result, post-tenure they pursue projects that sustain their interest. Malea Powell sums up an attitude frequently in evidence from the interviews: “I don’t want to be engaged in doing work that I think is not interesting just in order to get the next rung on the ladder.” Sometimes they perform, as Thomas Rickert describes, “academic triage” and focus on saving only the writing projects worth saving even though they have multiple publication opportunities on offer. Writing faculty find passion for projects in many different ways such as sharing writing with colleagues (see Enoch, DeVoss), developing a signature writing style or methodology (see Glenn, Rickert), collaborating with students or faculty (see Blair, DeVoss, Roen), or working in mediums that are better suited to their purposes (see Powell, Rickert, Roen, Selfe, Yergeau).

A final thread senior faculty may find useful is one about mentoring. Though mentoring may not seem like it has a direct impact on writing productivity, as senior faculty describe how they mentor others, they are writing themselves. Cheryl Glenn models writing in her office while leaving the door open so graduate students can see her writing and understand it takes physical work and time dedication (i.e., writing doesn’t happen mysteriously or automatically). Duane Roen explicitly teaches his graduate students “habits of mind” for writing success (see Council of Writing Program Administrators 2011) noting, “When I work with student writers, one of the things that I try to convince them is you don’t have to be brilliant to be a productive writer, but you do have to have these good work habits.” He then models his own work habits.

Cindy Selfe assigns “model” articles with her graduate students to not only teach them how to use academic language in an argument but also to revisit herself what makes articles effective. And Kris Blair actively works with students on her own writing projects as part of graduate instruction, building their own publication records in the process. All of these interviews are useful maps for mentoring but also offer additional strategies for writing effectively. Teaching and modeling the processes of academic writing allows interviewees to not only continue to write (and therefore keep academic writing central to daily work) but to use previously mentioned writing process strategies such as rhetorical thinking or product strategies such as collaboration simultaneously.

*For Historians of Rhetoric and Composition and Metadisciplinary Scholars*

Many interviewees featured here are early members of the field (Glenn, Harris, Roen, Selfe, Yancey, etc.) and as such, they provide a narrative history of how writing practices as a field have developed collectively. Despite anthologizing other corners of our field such as our journals (Goggin 2000) and our WPA practices (Enos, Borrowman, and Skeffington 2008; Ostman 2013), this is an area that more research is needed to capture. Interviews featuring discussions of landmark works such as Joe Harris’s *A Teaching Subject*, Alexander’s *Understanding Rhetoric*, or Glenn’s *Rhetoric Retold* are a useful starting point for capturing our writing history. The interviews with field leaders also offer a look at the history of our field that has yet to be written (see Glenn’s discussion of revisiting Ed Corbett’s *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* and Timberg’s potential memoir of working as a teaching scholar at a community college, along with other “dream projects” described by Blair, Enoch, and Harris). Moreover, with a history of computers and composition more than thirty years old, interviews offer a reflective look at what writing within the field looks like at this moment of technological impact. Interviews from Blair, DeVoss, Selfe, and Yergeau all describe writing process tensions that rhetoric and composition scholars currently navigate when publishing in both print and digital mediums.

Looking ahead to the interviews featured here, there have been calls to do *Review*-style projects asking about faculty writing practices. In 1986, Murray invited rhetoric and composition faculty to “reveal their own craft [of writing] so those who join our profession can become productive members of it—and share the secret pleasure in writing which we feel but rarely admit” (146). In one of the only open discussions of faculty writing within writing studies, he described specific methods for

prewriting, drafting, and publishing. In the process, Murray revealed tidbits such as the fact that he used a planning notebook to write in small fragments of time and that many of his articles had a five-year publication timeline due to an incubation process where he occasionally stopped writing to think about ideas. That same year, Maxine Hairston issued a similar call and invited writing teachers to share how they write with faculty colleagues and students. To model this process, she revealed that she experienced the “imposter syndrome” after receiving an advance contract for a book and struggled to write (Hairston 1986). These first models of how writing faculty might talk about writing for publication echo the ways *Review* interviewees talked openly about the “back story” of the real writing processes behind famous pieces, and the conversations ahead are similarly honest and enlightening. Though a reader’s guide is offered above, interviews, or parts of interviews, can be read in any order.

Let’s get the conversation started.

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