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CCCC Statement on Globalization in Writing Studies Pedagogy and Research

Conference on College Composition and Communication
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Executive Summary

The CCCC Strategic Governance Vision Statement includes a mandate to “provide conditions under which teachers and scholars can discuss, build, and practice sustainable, relevant, and ethical models of teaching and learning.” This document works to achieve this mandate by outlining key relationships and recommendations that writing program administrators (WPAs) and scholars and teachers of writing should consider as they respond to globalization. The Appendix provides an extended, albeit limited, bibliography of resources for further reading.

Introduction

Globalization is both a worldwide force and an everyday local phenomenon. Movements of people, ideas, goods, services, and capital under both peaceful and conflict-ridden conditions challenge ways of being that have been traditionally tied to discrete nation-states. Such challenges can be especially apparent in educational institutions, which frequently articulate explicit interests in attracting students with a wider range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, sending students abroad, and preparing graduates to enter globalizing societies and economies. At the heart of these educational efforts is a conflict: On one hand, colleges and universities may recognize, respect, and respond to the complexities of globalization by reimagining administration, teaching, and research. On the other hand, they may use the pretext of globalization in a limited fashion to enhance institutional reputations, identify new sources of revenue, and entrench received standards.

The implications of globalization for writing pedagogy and research are varied and complex. For writing programs, globalization can increase demands to provide uniform and universally transferable writing instruction to students. For writing teachers and administrators, globalization adds pressure to find low-cost means of addressing the needs of increasing numbers of international students. For writing scholars, teachers, students, and administrators, globalization provides the opportunity to develop alternative perspectives on writing and its study and teaching. Globalization can also encourage the building of new relationships across global and local lines and set new directions for the work of teaching and studying college writing.

Given the ubiquity of both foundational and cross-curricular writing courses, writing programs are often directly and immediately impacted by shifts in educational institutions’ missions. Responses to globalization are no exception. Among the questions facing WPAs and faculty are the extent to which relevant global concerns should be integrated into curricula; whether or how the role of writing in globalization should be articulated to higher-level administrators; what impact globalization should have on graduate education in writing studies; and, understanding that writing is a global research concern, what levels of support or encouragement should be provided to scholars who might pursue relevant objects of study in collaboration with international partners where appropriate.

Defining Globalization

Globalization is tied to questions of (im)migration, (dis)location, (trans)nationalism, and trans- or multilingualism, and therefore the term must be used purposefully, especially at institutions of higher education that are recruiting increasing numbers of international students while espousing relatively uncomplicated notions of the “global” in their educational missions. We define *globalization* as follows:

Globalization is most often seen as a growing interdependence in the world, fueled not only by the economy but also by the environment, communication technologies, health, energy, politics, immigration, and other forces. Globalization implies less rigidly defined boundaries and a more mobile meshing of cultures, languages, and nationalities. The term is often conflated with *internationalization*; however, the root of globalization, “global,” implies a whole or universal experience, which, for better or for worse, minimizes the reality of borders and difference and their associated politics. Globalization influences higher education generally, and writing studies more specifically, in many ways, including traditional roles of teaching, research, and service as well as training, communication, recruiting, retention, assessment, and administration. Such influence may come “from above”—for example, as the result of institutional imperatives—or “from below”—for example, as the result of teachers or students raising and investigating questions that tie local issues with global trends.

Globalization in Relation to Writing Pedagogies, Research, and Organizations

Writing Pedagogies

At all levels, in all types of higher education institutions, and in all types of programs and curricula, including first-year/lower-division writing, writing across the curriculum, writing in disciplines, writing centers, and graduate-level writing support programs, pedagogies need to be designed in ways sensitive to the complex effects of globalization.

Questions about writing pedagogies must be considered in terms that account for global movements of people, capital, and goods across borders, including trade, travel, displacement, and forced or voluntary migration. Educational institutions have long responded to and participated in this global movement by sending students abroad and by recruiting and enrolling students from other countries. Educational entities have become participants in globalization by establishing programs and even branch campuses in other countries. At the same time, colleges and universities continue to identify international students as promising sources of enrollments, and they are increasingly partnering with transnational companies that package recruitment, credentialing, support, and even teaching services.

Writing Studies Research

Research on writing and its teaching and learning necessarily contends with the means and effects of global circulation and global geopolitical relations. Even what might appear to be strictly local concerns about writing practices and pedagogy articulate with global and transnational forces and contexts. Further, researchers’ practices—who researches whom and what, how, prompted by what exigencies, with what sponsors, and with what aims—are implicated in global geopolitical relations and the transnational circulation and transformation of writing knowledge. Research in a globalized world demands particular sensitivities.

CCCC and Other Organizations

CCCC encourages the kind of knowledge exchange that will benefit members of CCCC as well as members of relevant organizations outside of North America, and it seeks to build alliances with these organizations. CCCC members will benefit from being aware of the rich traditions and contexts in which writing is taught and studied outside of North America and the numerous organizations outside of North America that aim to promote the study of writing practices and pedagogies in other national and regional contexts.

Recommendations

CCCC makes the following recommendations for researchers, teachers, and WPAs.

Institutional Terminology

When possible, researchers, teachers, and administrators should share examples demonstrating the complexity behind any terminology that is used to describe programs or curricula for cross-border exchange.

Writing Pedagogy and Curriculum

Writing programs should create professional development opportunities that include the study of relevant developments in applied linguistics, English as a lingua franca, foreign language pedagogies, rhetoric and composition, second-language writing, translingual approaches to composition, and related approaches, disciplines, and fields. Writing programs should also prepare teachers to address linguistic and multicultural issues through both graduate seminars and workshops that include interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Writing program leaders and directors should seek equitable and mutual relations with stakeholders in and outside the university that emphasizes respect for different kinds of knowledge in cross-institutional and transnational curricula. They should also fully involve peer colleagues at partner institutions in articulating cross-institutional and transnational curricula; for example, WPAs could join with English Language Institutes and similar offices to cross pedagogical and disciplinary borders. Leaders of writing programs should push institutions to provide all students (including and especially English monolinguals) with support structures to expand their language repertoires, not only in introductory courses for writing in and across the curriculum and years of study at the institution. And finally, WPAs should devise local assessment tools to evaluate multilingual students' writing performance that reflect the values of both the institution and individual students and teachers.

Faculty in writing (studies) programs and departments should consider the ways that they might emphasize and invite exploration of a wide range of sociocultural and linguistic experiences and practices. They should also seek access to key university committees and offices involved in internationalization and globalization efforts. Writing faculty should keep all students in mind when selecting teaching materials and pedagogical strategies. Teaching materials should promote intercultural communication and understanding in class and beyond. Pedagogies should take into account students' prior literacy experiences across languages and dialects, valuing students' ways of life, ways of knowing, and ways of making meaning. And faculty in writing studies should capitalize on new technologies to conduct collaborative, virtual teaching across national and institutional borders and design those experiences very carefully in the mode of equal exchange.

Graduate programs in writing studies should actively recruit a globally diverse range of students and faculty, including faculty with greater familiarity with a diverse range of traditions in the teaching and study of writing. We also encourage these programs to incorporate attention to writing research from an array of research sites, representing a broad range of research traditions and including publications in diverse languages. Graduate programs should bolster traditional foreign language requirements for advanced degrees in order to ensure students' meaningful and sustained contact with diverse linguistic populations.

Writing Research

Research is needed on subjects such as the applicability and adaptability (or not) of composition theory across international contexts; writing and writing instruction in languages other than English; how writing studies may transcend "traditional" borders along national, cultural, or linguistic lines; the establishment or growth of North American-style writing programs outside of North America, with comparative analyses, and the exportation and importation of writing curricula across borders; transnational/global/local connectedness in writing programs, perspectives, and approaches, with a focus on cross-language research; writing courses and programs that intentionally work across languages or national boundaries; the ways in which globally networked electronic communities and subcommunities with different purposes and memberships are shifting understandings of writing, teaching writing, and learning writing; cross-cultural graduate education and the experiences of working across differences in language and culture in the teaching and practice of writing; translation as a part of writing; and employment and preparation practices across cultures and national boundaries.

Writing researchers should employ a variety of **methods** that foster responsive global exchanges among teachers and scholars of writing. Scholars should also conduct research with students to understand their backgrounds, and with faculty to understand what they bring to the project, including dispositions toward language, methods, contexts, and expectations. They should also conduct archival research on teaching traditions across cultures; ethnographic studies to elicit responses from students or colleagues as they discursively map the field by occupying and moving around and through the institutional spaces of international programs and opportunities; and context-specific, nuanced, ethical comparative studies on how we understand the common, shared, or “universal,” particularly in relation to the specific or local, across borders, however we might imagine these in a dynamic, shifting, globalized world.

Writing researchers should also consider how research is **represented**. When possible, researchers should place the research site and kind of research conducted in the context of globally diverse sites and traditions of writing and writing research. They should also acknowledge, and draw on, a diverse and broad range of available writing research, including research in languages with which the researcher is not familiar. This work should be accessed through collaboration with those familiar with those languages. And researchers should draw from global research traditions in the study of writing and its teaching.

Appendix: Resources for Further Reading

This statement is grounded in the following list of resources. Although the list is not comprehensive, it may provide a useful starting point for further reading on the topic.

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- Ganobcsik-Williams, L. (Ed.). (2006). *Teaching academic writing in UK higher education: Theories, practices and models*. London: Palgrave.

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